

Combining different activities in family-style group care:
how Professional Foster Parents show listenership towards adolescents during dinner related
activities.

8360 words, 101 kB

Paper for Discourse Studies, version 3

Ellen Schep & Martine Noordegraaf

Christian University of Applied Sciences Ede/ University of Groningen

Author Note

Ellen Schep
hhschep@che.nl

Martine Noordegraaf
mnoordegraaf@che.nl

Abstract

This research focuses on dinner conversations in family-style group care. Children, who cannot live with their biological families anymore, are given shelter in these family-style group care settings. For the development of an attachment relationship between children and their Professional Foster Parents (PFPs), it is important that the children feel that they are listened to in order to get an affective and intimate relationship with the parents. In this conversation-analytic research we analysed PFPs' involvement in multiple activities simultaneously, namely listening and eating, which is referred to as 'multi-activity'. The analyses have shown systematic ways in which PFPs coordinate their involvement in the activities of 'doing' listening and eating, which are (i) when parents avert their gaze from the telling child, they break the social rule which states that hearers need to look at speakers during the telling. We found that when averting their gaze, PFPs do head nods and linguistic means or positioning their bodies in the direction of the telling child. This research contributes to knowledge about interaction between adolescents and PFPs. It further contributes to knowledge about how human beings are able to coordinate multiple activities simultaneously.

Keywords: Professional Foster Parents, Family-Style Group Care, Adolescents, Attachment, Multi-activity

Autobiographical Note

Ellen Schep is a researcher and teacher at the University of Applied Sciences in Ede (The Netherlands). In 2020 she completed her PhD-thesis (at the University of Groningen) on ‘attachment in interaction’. She has used the method of Conversation Analysis to investigate how attachment is displayed in the interaction between Professional Foster Parents and adolescents in family-style group care.

Martine Noordegraaf is pedagogue and completed her PhD-thesis on face-to-face interactions between social workers and prospective adoptive parents. Since 2008, Martine is Lector and teacher at the Christian University for Applied Sciences in Ede, department Social Work.

Combining different activities in family-style group care: how Professional Parents show listenership towards adolescents during dinner related activities.

Interaction is the main way in which people show that they are social human beings (Gardner, 2001). In social interaction, people have different roles, the main ones being the alternating roles of speaker and listener. Conversations are characterized as a joint and collaborative activity (Schegloff, 1982). In interaction, the speaker is the one producing utterances. However, the listener can be seen as a co-producer: recipients show in their response how they have understood the interaction thus far, and by doing so, they co-construct the development of the conversation (Gardner, 2001; Goodwin, 1979; Sacks, 1992).

This paper focuses on dinner conversations in family-style group care. When children need to be placed outside their own families for compelling reasons, they can be placed in a family-style group care (Bartelink, 2013). Family-style group care provides permanent youth care in a family-like setting, with PFPs who have been trained in caring for children with difficult backgrounds and behaviour.

In conversations, it is important for both the teller and the recipient to show an active attitude to help the conversation continue (Goodwin, 1981). In family-style group care, it is important for the parents to show themselves to be active listeners in order to build and maintain an affective and intimate relationship with the children (Van IJzendoorn, 2010; Juffer, 2010). Sensitivity and responsivity – that is, being sensitive to and responding to the signals given by the child – are elementary conditions for this affective and intimate relationship between children and (professional) parents to be built and maintained (Ainsworth et al., 1978). The way in which PFPs show listenership, towards a telling adolescent, will be examined in the current research. As we are focusing on dinner conversations, PFPs are occupied with multiple activities: besides

‘doing’ or ‘showing’ listening, PFPs are also occupied with the activity of having dinner.

Although we are aware of other activities PFPs are involved in during dinner, this research focusses on how PFPs combine the activities eating and listening.

Before we will discuss our findings concerning the ways in which PFPs combine the activities of listening and eating, first relevant research on the topic is outlined, after which the research data and methodology will be presented.

Attachment, sensitivity and responsivity

Family-style group care offers the possibility to provide a continuous placement for children (Gardeniers and De Vries, 2012). Continuity is crucial for a healthy development, but is often absent in the life of out-of-home-placed children. Children in family-style group care have frequently had to move from one place to the other (Leloux-opmeer et al., 2016). However, when children have a continuous placement with the same caretakers, they have the possibility to build and maintain an attachment relationship with these parents. Attachment is the inborn tendency to seek care from someone who is stronger, an adult who can protect and help the child (Juffer, 2010, p. 7.). John Bowlby (1907-1990), the founder of the attachment theory, stated that parents who act sensitively to the signals of their newborn, contribute to establishment of a safe parent-child attachment relationship. In departure from earlier presuppositions, we now know that children over the age of six also benefit from positive attachment experiences, so-called corrective attachment experiences (Bowlby, 1988; Juffer, 2010). These new insights are important for the care of out-of-home-placed adolescents, because they often have troubled experiences in the relationship with their own parents and other adults as a result of their frequent relocation (Sarti and Neijboer, 2001, Van Ooijen, 2010; Leloux-opmeer et al., 2016; Repetti et al., 2002). Children with a long history of problems and movements experiences greater

difficulties reattaching with a new caretaker. For this reason, Juffer (2010) underlines the importance of an available sensitive and responsive PFP and the stability of such an relationship in order to provide these children with corrective attachment experiences. The body of knowledge regarding interactions between professional caretakers and adolescents however is still limited and we can therefore not tell yet how sensitivity and responsivity in interaction with (troubled) youngsters look like.

Tellings

Speaker and listener

In our study, we analyse tellings of adolescents to their **PFPs**, focussing on so-called *discourse units* (DU) (Houtkoop-Steenstra and Mazeland, 1985). Within a *discourse unit*, the teller is the *primary speaker* and has the right to finish the telling. Other interlocutors within the participation framework have the role of recipients of the telling: their contributions to the speaker's turn are limited to short responses, or continuers, between the turns of the teller (Houtkoop-Steenstra and Mazeland, 1985; Schegloff 1982).

In interaction, the speaker and the listener have an active role in the conversation to make it successful. For PFPs, listening, or at least 'showing listenership', is also meaningful in the light of sensitivity and responsivity. In interactions, it is important for a child to feel that a parent is interested and that he or she is worth listening to (Bartelink, 2013; Cassidy, 2001; Gardeniers and De Vries, 2012; Gecas and Schwalbe, 1986; Juffer, 2010; Van IJzendoorn, 2010). According to Manen (1991), sensitivity can be seen in the responsivity of the caretaker in such actions as eye contact, talking with a child, attitude towards the child. Moreover, in interaction

with adolescents, parents need to strike the right balance between remaining at a distance or providing proximity with a view to reaching autonomy (Allen, 2008).

Various studies within the field of Conversation Analysis (Gardner, 2001; Goodwin, 1979, 1981; Heritage, 1984b; Jefferson, 1984; Sacks, 1992; Schegloff, 1982) have shown the role of the listener as recipient and co-producer in conversations. These studies demonstrate the complex role of active recipientship and the consequences of minimal actions for the continuation of the conversation. In their responses, listeners show elements of their interpretations of the telling and these interpretations contribute to a collaborate allocation of meanings (Goodwin, 1979). Interlocutors are in a continuing process of establishing mutual understanding (Heritage, 1984b Schegloff, 1982, Mondada, 2011). We are unable to see or read the thoughts of our interlocutors, and therefore we ‘show’ understanding in conversations by using verbal and non-verbal signs (Heritage, 1984b; Schegloff, 1982; Goodwin, 1981). For example, a recipient can react with minimal responses, such as *hmm hmm*, *oh, yes*, as a sign that the turn can be continued, but thereby also showing that the recipient has a good-enough understanding of the things mentioned by the speaker (Goodwin, 1986, Goodwin, 1980; Jefferson, 1984; Schegloff, 1982). Furthermore, for showing understanding and recipientship we can use embodied signs (Goodwin, 1979; Streeck et al., 2011) such as nods and gestures. What also plays an important role in ‘doing listening’ is (persistent) gaze direction (Goodwin, 1981). As Goodwin (1981, p. 30) states: ‘[...] gaze is not simply a means of obtaining information, the receiving end of a communication system, but is itself a social act’. The gaze direction of a speaker to another participant in the conversation shows that the participant is seen as the addressee. Gaze direction also plays an important role in doing listenership in interaction, where (persistent) gaze in the direction of the speaker can be seen as a sign of listenership (Bavelas et

al., 2000; Goodwin, 1981, 1984; Rossano, 2013). Goodwin (1984, p. 230) speaks of a general social rule, namely that when a speaker looks at a recipient, the recipient ought to look at the speaker. Accordingly, a violation of this rule occurs when a speaker looks at a recipient who does not look at the speaker during the telling.

There are different ways in which a speaker can appoint someone an addressee of the telling (Goodwin, 1981; Hayashi, 2013). A teller can call the name of the recipient or use gaze direction to address a person. Because of the reciprocal character of conversations, a listener needs to gaze back to the speaker to show the status of the recipient (Bavelas et al., 2002).

Multi-activity

Given the important role of listening of the PFP in building and maintaining an attachment relationship, this paper focusses on the ways in which PFPs show listenership when adolescents tell something during dinner. It is important to note that the telling adolescent is not just telling, and a PFP is not just listening, but that they are both at the same time also engaged in another activity: the activity of eating. Dinner conversations are seen as central moments in daily life and a context in which people engage in conversation with each other (Schegloff, 1998). According to Mondada (2009, p. 4), ‘dinner conversations are social moments in which ‘doing being a family’ and being together are reached, and relationships are expressed by the use of various actions’. These actions are both verbal (talking about the taste of the food, requests to pass something, or talking about eating in general) and non-verbal (the action of eating itself or tasting the food). Dinner time is also a moment to review the day, to be together with family and friends, to laugh and to cry, because this is commonly the first joint moment when parents and children are together after a day of separation (Ochs et al., 1989).

The ways in which two or more activities can be interwoven within social interaction is called *multiactivity* (Haddington et al., 2014). Moreover, apart from the adolescent there are also other family members present around the table who often also demand for the attention of the PFP or sometimes try to participate in the conversation (Sacks et al., 1974). When participants are involved in different activities, they usually have to combine verbal and non-verbal behaviour to show involvement within these multiple activities (Raymond and Lerner, 2014). Multiactivity is a social phenomenon; it must be clear to other participants that the speaker is engaged in different activities in order to make the interaction successful (Raymond and Lerner, 2014). Furthermore, Streeck and colleagues (2011) underline the ‘co-occurrence of talk and embodied behavior as interdependent phenomena, not separable modes of communication and action’ (p. 7). It is therefore of interest to know more about how PFPs employ verbal and non-verbal behaviour to show active listenership when they are involved in the activities of eating and listening (Goodwin, 1981, 1984). Adolescents in family-style group care we focus on in our study are in need of corrective attachment experiences, but often have troubled experiences in close relationships. Attachment relationships are important for giving adolescents the possibility to have a good transition from adolescence to adulthood (Bowlby, 1979). More knowledge about building and maintaining an attachment relationship with adolescents in family-style group care is an important necessity to having their care needs met. Being heard when you initiate a telling is a way of showing responsiveness and is therefore a starting point for a reattachment experience. This study addresses the ways in which PFPs ‘do’ listening while simultaneously being involved in another activity.

Method

The aim of this paper is to analyse the ways in which PFPs show listenership towards telling adolescents and thereby combine the activities of eating and listening. The data and methodology used in this research are outlined below.

Data

The data used for the analysis consist of 50 hours (selected out of 300 total hours) of video recordings of dinner conversations in six Dutch family-style group care settings. These dinner conversations have the characteristics of informal mundane conversations as well as institutional interactions, since PFPs are professional care-takers, but the children are at the same time given shelter in a family-like setting (Schep et al., 2016). The six family-style group care settings were selected according to several criteria: 1) at least one of the children in the family-style group care has to be an adolescent; 2) the PFPs in the family need to have had at least one successful placement (i.e., an adolescent left the house at the age of eighteen or older); 3) the PFPs needed to hold a bachelor's degree or higher (with the aim of transferability of results to the context of students studying for a bachelor's degree in social work at our University for Applied sciences). The cameras ran every day from 4 to 7 pm, from the same angle in the dining room or kitchen. All recordings were made without interference from any of the researchers, as they were turned on and off by members of the family-style group care themselves.

Analysis

In this study, the dinner interactions were analysed by the use of Conversation Analysis (CA). CA provides tools for analysing every detail of a conversation (Sidnell and Stivers, 2013). This paper focuses on the way in which PFPs show the in-home-placed adolescents that they are listening. Due to the cyclic procedure of CA-research, conclusions are based on literature and on

the data itself: data and literature are studied alternately, where the data is always the starting point (Ten Have, 1999).

CA is characterised by the use of audiotaped or videotaped data to analyse natural settings, in mundane and institutional environments. As mentioned, our analysis is based on videotaped data. The advantage of videotaped data compared to audio data is that it offers the possibility to analyse both verbal and embodied behaviour of the participants in the conversations, both of which are important for describing attachment behaviour. After looking at the conversations, we studied relevant literature and watched the data again. For the analysis in the current paper, we made a selection of relevant moments within these recordings (i.e., moments at which children initiated tellings to the PFParent(s)), which resulted in a 35 conversations. Transcripts were made of this fragments using the conventions described by Jefferson (2004). All tellings are initiated by adolescents.

Transcription

As noted, the conversations were transcribed according to Jeffersonian transcription conventions (Jefferson, 2004). All conversations took place in Dutch, but were translated into English for publication. Names of family members including children were anonymised using pseudonyms. Given the importance of gaze direction and bodily behaviours in ‘doing listening’ (Goodwin, 1981), gaze direction and embodied behaviour of the different interlocutors have been included in the transcripts. For this purpose we used the transcription conventions for embodied conduct of Mondada (2007), as explained below. According to Goodwin (1981, p. 53), gaze direction is operationalized as ‘the direction of the eyeballs’ or, when this cannot be determined, the gaze direction is operationalized as ‘the orientation of the head of the interlocutors’. We will

use the following symbols to visualize gaze direction and embodied behaviour of the interlocutors in addition to verbal behaviour (based on Mondada, 2007):

- >> The action described begins before the excerpt's beginning.
- >> The action described continues after the excerpt's end.
- Action's preparation.
- Action's apex is reached and maintained.
- ,,,,, Action's retraction.
- luc Participant doing the described embodied action
- x Moment of eye contact
- { Simultaneous action and verbal utterance.

Results

This paper focusses on PFPs 'doing listening' when adolescents initiate a telling by themselves. First, we will describe the various ways in which PFPs show listenership to the telling adolescent in combination with the activity 'eating' or eating-related activities using verbal and non-verbal signs of listenership. In the second part, we will describe how the 'absence of listener responses' works out in the interaction and how adolescents react to that during their telling.

'Extra work' when gazing away: verbal signs

Minimal responses. Our data show that when and after the listener glances away, 'extra work' (Goodwin, 1981, 1984), can be done by such verbal signs as 'minimal responses' (Goodwin, 1986, Goodwin, 1980; Jefferson, 1984; Schegloff, 1982). By doing this, recipients show that they are still oriented to the telling, even though their gaze is not directed at the speaker (Goodwin, 1981, 1984). An example of these minimal responses will be shown in the

next excerpt: a telling of Karolien directed to her PFF about Amber, who is doing ‘city training’.

According to Karolien, Amber has a dilemma and she explains why. Excerpt 1 contains a part of the introduction of Karolien’s telling and displays how the PFF shows listenership by saying ‘hmm hmm’, while he places food on his fork and averts his gaze from Karolien (line 4).

Excerpt 1

Family-style group care 1, 13-11-2013, 5: 9.45-10.29

KAR= Karolien, 16-year-old; PFF= Professional Foster Father.

- kar* -----KAR gazes towards PFF-----
- 1 *KAR* tot half zes zes uur zit ze nog op schoo:l, (.)
until half past five six o'clock she is still in school
- pff* -----PFF gazes towards KAR-----
- Kar* -----KAR gazes towards PFF-,,,
- 2 *KAR* want dan volgt ze city trainen.
because then she does city training
- pff* ---PFF gazes towards KAR---,,,
- 3 *PFF* hmm ↑hmm
- 4 *pff* ((puts food on his fork))

The extract of the telling shows that Karolien gazes continuously in the direction of her PFF (lines 1 & 2). Lines 2 and 4 show that the PFF is constantly gazing back. However, in line 4 we see that he averts his gaze at the end of Karolien’s turn in line 2, after the word ‘training’. Immediately after he averts his gaze he says ‘hmm hmm’ (line 3) while he starts orienting himself towards his plate and puts some food on his fork. By this utterance (‘hmm hmm’) the

Father shows that averting his gaze from the speaker Karolien is probably not a preferred action (Goodwin, 1981, 1984), but that he is still oriented to Karolien's telling. Karolien continues her story, by which she shows that there is no problem in the PFF averting his gaze.

Collaborative turn constructions. When two or more interlocutors construct a turn together, this is called a *collaborative completion* (Lerner, 1991, 1996). Recipients have various ways in which they can show understanding and knowledge about the content of the telling. However, *collaborative completions* are considered to be the most convincing way to show understanding and knowledge, because it allows a recipient to show understanding of the turn in process as well as understanding the speaker's interactional-action-in process (Lerner, 1996).

Analyses of our data shows that, next to minimal responses, PFPs also perform these *collaborative completions* when they avert their gaze from the telling child. In the excerpt 2, we can see an example of this when Kasper tells his PFM Eef about a girl in his class who tore a muscle in her hand during basketball:

Excerpt 2

Family-style group care 1, 15-11-2013, 4: 7.10-7.30

KAS = Kasper, 14-year-old; PFM = Professional Foster Mother.

- | | | |
|---|------------|--|
| | <i>pfm</i> | -----KAS gazes towards PFM-x----- |
| 1 | KAS | en die heeft nu twee van die dingen {zo om d'r vinger
and now she has two of these things on her finger |
| | <i>kas</i> | {((shows his hand)) |
| | <i>pfm</i> | ..x-gazes towards Kas- |
| | <i>kas</i> | -----,,, |
| 2 | KAS | zodat eh
so that eh= |
| | <i>pfm</i> | -----,,, |
| 3 | PFM | {=het goed strak blijft
it stays tight |

pfm { ((puts food on her fork))
kas ((gazes towards his plate))
4 *KAS* ja
 yes
kas ((puts food on his fork))

PFM Eef gazes towards Kasper in line 1, when he shows how ‘two things are on her finger’ (line 1). The PFM gazes away from Kasper in line 2 while he is still telling and directs her gaze to her plate. At that moment, she finishes Kasper’s turn by saying: ‘it stays tight’ (line 3). Doing a ‘collaborative turn construction’ can function as ‘extra work’ (Goodwin, 1981, 1984) to show the speaker that, even though recipients have averted their gaze, they are still oriented to the telling.

Asking questions. Our collection shows a third verbal way in which PFPs show listenership towards a telling adolescent. When a PFP averts his or her gaze from the telling child, an orientation towards the telling can be shown in ‘asking questions’. Extract 3 displays a part of the conversation between adolescent Kasper and his PFF. Kasper tells about Robin, a classmate, who suffers from diabetes. During the telling, The PFF is eating his dessert. Prior to this part of the telling, Kasper told that Robin is often unable to go away from home because of his disease. In line 1, Kasper explains why:

Excerpt 3

Family-style group care 1, 18-11-2013, 3: 10.45-16.05

KAS= Kasper, 14-year-old; PFF= Professional Foster Father

kas -----Kas gazes towards PFF-----
1 *KAS* en dan kost het ook heel lang voordat ie pas weer thuis is of
 and then it takes a long time before he'll will be at home or
 ((PFF is orienting to his dessert))
kas -----Kas gazes towards PFF-----

- 2 KAS dat z'n moeder er pas is. (1.0) of °stel je voor.°
until his mother is there (1.0) or imagine
pff {((PFF gazes towards dessert))
- 3 PFF {en dat is zo'n prik die die niet zelf mag geven,
and that is an injection that he's not allowed to give himself
 kas -----Kas gazes towards PFF -----
 kas -----Kas gazes towards PFF -----
- 4 KAS ja dat mag die wel, (.) maar ehm (.) hij kan ook naar het
yes that is allowed but ehm he could have to go to
pff ...-PFF gazes towards Kas-
 kas -gazes towards PFF-
- 5 KAS ziekenhuis moeten
the hospital
pff ((gazes towards dessert))

In line 1 Kasper says that when Robin suddenly gets sick, it will take a while for him to get home or for his mother to arrive or 'imagine' (line 1). At the transition relevance point, after 'imagine', the PFF starts averting his gaze from Kasper, and starts looking at his dessert. Yet, while averting his gaze, he simultaneously asks a question in line 3, asking whether Robin could not just give the injection himself. The response of Kasper, i.e., 'yes, that is allowed', demonstrates that asking a question while gazing away, is accepted as showing an orientation to the telling.

'Extra work' when gazing away: non-verbal signs

Nodding. In addition to verbal signals, our data show how PFPs do 'extra work' (Goodwin, 1981, 1984) while averting their gaze from the speaking child by non-verbal signals. In excerpt 4, we see an example of nodding as a non-verbal signal of listenership. Ronaldo (18-year-old) tells about his work at a restaurant, directing his telling to PFF Roel. He starts by saying: 'sometimes you have just two courses and then you have an appetizer and dessert' (line

1). The PFF nods at different times in the conversation, while he simultaneously averts his gaze from Ronaldo.

Excerpt 4

Family-style group care 5, 18-12-2013, 5: 20.40-21.00

RON= Ronaldo, 18-year-old; PFF= Professional Foster Father.

- | | | |
|---|-----|--|
| | Ron | -----Ron gazes towards PFF----- |
| 1 | RON | soms heb je maar twee gangen, (.) en dan heb je <u>voor</u> en <u>na</u> ,
<i>sometimes you have only two courses and then you have appetizer
and dessert</i> |
| 2 | pff | { ((nods)) |
| 3 | pff | { ((gazes towards Ronaldo))
--towards PFF-- |
| 4 | RON | <u>voor</u> en <u>hoofd</u> .
<i>appetizer and main dish</i> |
| 5 | pff | { ((nods)) |
| | pff | { ((> averts gaze to plate)) |

During Ronaldo's telling the PFF averts his gaze, and while doing so, he nods and starts looking at his plate (line 5). By nodding, the PFF can show that he is still oriented to the child's telling (Goodwin, 1981, 1984).

In our collection, nodding is often used when parents are chewing their food. This is a moment when it is impossible, or at least not desirable, to give a verbal response. Several researchers (Goodwin, 1986; Goodwin, 1980; Jefferson, 1984; Schegloff, 1982) have suggested that a nod treats the turn as being in progress and allows the teller to continue the telling. Stivers (2008) refers to this as 'alignment', where a recipient can show that '[...] a storytelling is in progress and the teller has the floor until story completion' (p. 34). Therefore, when the PFF is unable to gaze in the direction of the adolescent, by nodding he encourages Ronaldo to continue his story.

Combined glancing. To combine the activities of eating and listening, a recipient may need to be inventive in order to coordinate these activities in such a way that these activities can be performed simultaneously. Our analysis showed that parents use various ways to give shape to this task, as we have shown in the previous paragraphs. Yet we also found another inventive way in which these parents combine these activities; in some instances, PFPs, during childrens' tellings, bring their spoon or fork to their mouth and simultaneously glance quickly in the direction of the speaker. After this brief glance at the telling child, parents continue the activity of eating and start looking at their plate again. This systematic process will be called 'combined glancing'.

An instance of such 'combined glancing' is shown in excerpt 5, where Kasper is telling his PFF about his 'status' about shoarma (most probably referring to a 'status' on social media because he is talking about 'hashtags'). At the beginning of Kasper's telling the PFF is doing the 'combined glancing' (line 2), visible in the transcript as 'X': a small x reflects the movement with which the recipient of the telling directs his gaze to the speaker, while simultaneously putting his food in his mouth. A capital X displays a direct gaze to the speaker and the commas the aversion of gaze.

Excerpt 5

Family-style group care 1, 13-11-2013, 5: 12.20-12.36

KAS= Kasper, 14-year-old; PFF= Professional Foster Father; KAR= Karolien, 16-year-old.

	kas	...-----
1	KAS	dat hadden Fra- Frans en ik eh [eerst als sta:tus. <i>Frans and I did have that as status</i>
2	pff	[xxx XXXXX {,,,
	pff	[((pu[ts spoon in mouth
	pff	{((gazes
		towards plate))

kas -KAS gazes towards PFF-,,,,,
 3 KAS toen dat we bij hem [gingen eten {toen hadden we
 when we had dinner at his place we had
 4 KAR [°oh ja°
 oh yes
 5 kas {((gazes toward
 Karolien))
 ↓ kas gazes towards pf
 kas -----,,,
 7 KAS hashtag shoarma: hu[huuh
 PFF [(mhaha)
 pff --PFF gazes towards plate--

Before Kasper starts his telling, the PFF is helping his daughter Janna (5-year-old), with her food, and directs his gaze to his plate to continue eating. However, after 2.5 seconds, Kasper starts his telling in line 1, and halfway the first line of his telling, the PFF puts his fork to his mouth and gazes in the direction of Kasper while simultaneously putting his food in his mouth, after which he starts looking at his plate again (line 2 & 3) and continues eating while Kasper continues his telling. In this way, the PFF shows an orientation to Kasper's telling, as he now has quickly looked at Kasper, while he immediately thereafter looks at his plate. In this way, the quick glance seems to reveal something along the lines of 'I'm still hearing you'. Here, as in the other cases described in the previous paragraphs, Kasper indicates that this way of the PFF 'doing listening' is adequate, as he continues his story.

Body position/half gaze. Another sign of listenership is seen during dinner conversation when PFPs move their body and head partly towards the speaker and thereby show an orientation to the teller. When parents show an orientation to the telling, but do not look directly at the telling child, this can be seen as a 'half gaze'. The place from where parents sit when they use a half gaze is often diagonally opposite to the telling adolescent, or when parent and adolescent

‘share’ the corner of the table. In these situations, it can be difficult to look continuously at the speaker because of the body torque (Schegloff, 1998) required for eye contact. Fragment 6 shows Ronaldo doing a telling (about the ‘Ankerstichting’, which is an organization where he works) to his PFM while gazing directly at her. PFM scoops up the food while Ronaldo is telling. It is striking that Anke has shifted her upper body a little to the left. Moreover, her head is also somewhat directed at Ronaldo. With this body position, she can still show an orientation towards Ronaldo’s telling. After Ronaldo’s utterance, she also shows a verbal way of listenership, using a continuer (‘yes’, line 3).

Excerpt 6

Family-style group care 5, 12-12-2013, 0: 2.00-2.45

RON = Ronaldo, 18-year-old; PFF = Professional Foster Father; PFM = Professional Foster Mother.

- | | | |
|----|------------|---|
| | <i>ron</i> |----- |
| 1 | RON | ik heb ook eh (.) Ronald gesproken, (.) de baas van de
<i>I also have talked to Ronald (.) the boss of the</i> |
| | <i>pfm</i> | ----- |
| 2 | RON | ankerstichting
<i>Ankerstichting</i> |
| 3 | PFM | {ja,
yes |
| 4 | pfm | {((is dishing up food))
- LINES 5-10 OMITTED - |
| 11 | PFM | en [wat heb je besproken dan
<i>and what did you discuss</i> |
| | <i>ron</i> | ...----- |
| 12 | RON | [hij eh (.) vindt het <u>ook</u> jammer dat ik wegga,
<i>he uh also regrets that I'm leaving</i> |
| | <i>pfm</i> | ...-----,,, |
| 13 | PFM | {ja, |

- Yes
- 14 pfm {((continues serving food))
ron -----
- 15 RON hij komt eh (.) de volgende dag komt ie nog effe een handje geven.
he comes uh, the next day he will come by to shake hands
- 16 (1.6)
pfm ,,, 'half gaze' towards RON
- 17 PFM [en waarom eh- waarom (.) hij dan wat- wat heeft hij voor
and why eh- why (.) him then what- what kind of
ron -----
- 18 functie dan
function does he have then
ron -----
- 19 RON nou hij is zeg maar de baas van de Landster
well he is, you could say, the boss of the Landster
pfm ,,,---half gaze towards RON---,,,
- 20 PFM ↑o::h (.) en heb je hem al eens eh
oh and have you had him eh already
- 21 (0.4)
ron -----
- 22 RON nou ik moet- [ik
well I have I
- 23 PFM [ge↓had
ron -----
- 24 RON moest re- ik moest- regelmatig moesten we- moesten we dingen voor
had to- I had to- frequently we had to- had to make things for

- 25 hem maken,
him
- 26 PFM ↑o::h

- 27 RON d'r was toen ook eh een diner moesten we voor hem maken,
at that time there was also a dinner that we had to make for him
- 28 PFM ↑o::h
ron -----
- 29 RON voor de hele (.) projectgroep

for the whole project group

30 PFM ↓hmm

In line 11, PFM Anke asks a question, and in the second part of this question she looks directly at Ronaldo. She is still gazing towards Ronaldo when he is giving an answer (lines 13 & 14), but at the end of his answer (line 13), she averts her gaze from him. While she averts her gaze, she does ‘extra work’ (Goodwin, 1981, 1984) by uttering a response token: ‘yes’ (line 13). Moreover, while she averts her gaze, it becomes clear that she starts orienting herself to another activity as well: spooning the food (line 14). Ronaldo continues his telling in line 15, and subsequently the PFM asks another question (lines 17 & 18), without gazing towards Ronaldo but using a ‘half gaze’ to show an orientation to the telling. The Mother asks another question (lines 22 & 25), and during the following part of Ronaldo’s telling she uses a ‘half gaze’ towards Ronaldo and gives minimal responses (lines 28 & 30). At the end of the telling, she says ‘hmm’, which she seems to use as an acknowledger, as suggested by the falling intonation, which could reflect a ‘sense of completion’ (Gardner, 2001, p. 104).

In this interaction, the absence of a direct gaze from the PFM seems to be unproblematic, because Ronaldo continues his telling even though the Mother’s gaze is not directed to him.’ By making use of a ‘half gaze’, thereby torqueing her body (Schegloff, 1998), she still shows an orientation to the telling. The use of minimal responses exhibits ‘listenership’ as well (Gardner, 2001), which could also explain why a direct gaze is not always necessary to show an orientation to the telling.

Body turn/walking away and still showing listenership. In the previous paragraph, we outlined how PFPs make clear they are oriented to the telling of the adolescent by turning their bodies and/or heads somewhat toward the teller. We will now discuss how our data shows

examples of a more explicit body turn. While preparing dinner or spooning the food, PFPs sometimes have to take something from the kitchen counter or a cabinet in the kitchen. To do so, they have to turn their body away from the table and therefor from the telling child. In excerpt 7, this action is shown. Adolescent Peter sits opposite his PFM at the dinner table and is telling that ‘he read a Dutch football coach finally had his coach diploma’ (not included in the transcript). In line 1, he continues his telling ‘but I think he won’t be that [i.e., the coach] of Ajax’ (a professional football club from Amsterdam). Immediately after this utterance, the PFM slides her chair backwards and turns her body away from the table to take something from the kitchen cabinet, and while doing that she asks ‘what?’ (line 2).

Excerpt 7

Family-style group care 2, 27-11-2013, 1: 4.29-5.10

PET = Peter, 14-year-old; PFM = Professional Foster Mother; JUL = Julian, 13-year-old;

Kristian, 11-year-old.

	<i>pet</i>	<i>-----,,,</i>
1	PET	maar ik denk dat ie dat <u>niet</u> van Ajax wordt= <i>but I think that he won't be that of Ajax</i>
	PFM	<i>...-----</i>
	pfm	<i>=((slides chair backwards and turns somewhat to the left backwards))</i>
2	PFM	{wat? <i>what</i> <i>{(> gazes towards Kristian grabs something out of the cabinet)}</i>
3	JUL	jo:h Frank de Boer is ↑beter <i>well Frank de Boer is better</i>
6	PFM	ja? <i>yes</i>
	<i>pet</i>	<i>...-----</i>
7	PET	ja: hij wordt eh denk ik coach van Feyenoord waar hij heeft <i>yes I think he will be the coach of Feyenoord where he has</i>

```

      pfm          ...-----
      pet          -----
8      PET      ge↑speeld
           played
9      pfm      -----,,,
      PFM      {okay:,
      pfm      {((sits down at the table again))

```

As we can see in the fragment, the PFM shows an orientation towards Peter's telling even when she takes something from the kitchen cabinet and therefore is unable to show listenership by continuously looking at him. She does so instead by asking 'what?' while simultaneously walking away from the table. In this way, although she is no longer at the table, she still shows she is interested in what Peter has to say.

Absence of signs of listenership

Not all tellings initiated by adolescents are successfully received. It is possible for a recipient to miss the utterance(s) of the speaker when something happens in the interlocutors' environment to attract the attention of the recipient, or for the recipient simply not feel like listening. Active listenership on the part of the recipient seems to be necessary in order for the teller to finish his telling successfully (Bavelas et al., 2002). Consciously or unconsciously, speakers prefer a recipient who gazes at them, making it seem almost impossible to talk to someone who makes no eye contact. Heath (1984, p. 249) speaks of '*establishing copresence*', which gets done with a '*display of reciprocity*': conversation partners must show each other verbally or in embodied ways that they are open to receiving each other's messages.

Excerpt 8 describes an example of the fragments in which listenership of parents seems to be missing and of the reaction of a telling adolescent. We see an example of an orientation to 'an object of distraction', where Karolien initiates a telling and directs it to her PFM Eef, by calling

her name (line 1) and by gazing in her direction. These are two explicit ways to addressing someone as a recipient (Sacks et al., 1974). However, on the other side of the table, Kasper (14-year-old) and his PFF are wrestling with each other, and the mother seems to be focusing on that scene (line 1), showing that she is not oriented to Karolien's telling.

Excerpt 8

Family-style group care 1, 15-11-2013, 5: 3.46-5.10

KAR = Karolien, 16-year-old, PFM = Professional Foster Mother (Eef); PFF = Professional Foster Father (Dirk), KAS = Kasper, 14-year-old.

- kar -----, , , -gazes towards PFF-----
- 1 KAR die man die op zaterdag (.) [Eef (.)° (die {komt helpen})°
that man who comes to help on saterdays Eef
- pfm {((gazes in the direction of PFF))
- kas --gazes towards PFF-----
- 2 KAS [jullie alle twee jullie zitten
both of you are sitting
- kas than towards PFM--
- 3 veels te languit
too much low down
- kar -gazes towards PFF-
- 4 PFM {het is één grote voetenorgie onder de tafel man
it is one big foot orgy under the table man
- pfm {((bends under the table))
- kar --gazes towards PFM-----
- kas --gazes towards PFM-----
- 6 KAS ja [die {daar}o
yes look there
- kas {((gestures with head in the direction of PFF))
- 7 PFF [zet ze gauw weer terug,
put them back quickly
- 8 pfm ((comes back from under the table))
- kar ---gazes towards PFF, than gazes towards PFM---
- 9 KAR die man Eef die op zaterdag eh al (openmaakt),

that man Eef who (opens) on Saturdays

pfm ...--gazes towards KAR--

pfm -gazes towards KAR-

10 PFM Harmen (.) denk ik

Harmen I think

While Karolien is trying to tell something to PFM Eef (line 1), Eef is looking at her husband and Karolien seems to follow Eef's gaze (line 1, 3). Yet Karolien seems to try to capture Eef's attention again by gazing in her direction (line 4). This is without success, however, as Eef starts to do something under the table (line 4). When the mother comes up from under the table again, Karolien gazes in her direction (line 8), repeats her utterance and explicitly mentions Eef's name again (line 9). At that moment, Karolien captures Eef's gaze and starts her telling again. What we see in this instance, therefore, is that the PFM does not show an orientation to the telling of the child, either by providing verbal responses, or by showing a non-verbal orientation (e.g., directly looking at the child). It also becomes clear that the child treats this as problematic, as she does not continue her story. When the child does eventually get the mother's attention, she tells her story.

Overall, when PFPs orient themselves to another object in the direct environment, telling children follow the gaze of the PFP. The addressee's eye contact of seems to be necessary for children to tell something, which is in accordance with earlier findings (Bavelas et al., 2002; Heath, 1984). To establish eye contact, the children in the family-style group care we analysed perform different actions as shown in the example above: they follow the gaze of the addressee (Goodwin, 1981), call the name of the addressee (Hayashi, 2013) or restart the telling (Goodwin, 1981, 1984). These performed actions are interesting, because they show us ‘the work’ adolescents do to enter into interaction with their parents (see also: Schep et al., 2016).

Conclusion

Social interaction has a collaborative character: both speaker and listener need to take an active stance in order to make the interaction successful (cf. Bavelas et al., 2000; Schegloff, 1982). In this paper, we were interested in the ways in which PFPs in family-style group care show active listenership during tellings of adolescents in their care. Due to the many difficulties in the background and behaviour of these adolescents, they often have difficulties building and maintaining an affective relationship with new care takers. However, this stable relationship with PFPs in family-style group care gives adolescents the opportunity to have positive and corrective (attachment) experiences (Juffer, 2010). Sensitivity and responsivity from the side of the PFPs are seen as one of the basic elements for building and maintaining an affective relationship (Bowlby, 1988). Listenership displaying sensitivity and responsivity on the part of the PFPs during adolescents' tellings could therefore be regarded as very important (Manen, 1991). Moreover, a parent who shows listenership and interest in a child demonstrates that the child is worth listening to (Bartelink, 2013; Gardeniers and De Vries, 2012; Gecas and Schwalbe, 1986; Juffer, 2010; Van IJzendoorn, 2010).

In dinner conversations in family-style group care, PFPs are involved in multiple activities such as: listening and eating. Moreover, other family members are often present around the table who try to attract the attention of the PFP or interrupt the conversation. Our analyses therefore focussed on instances in which PFPs are doing different activities simultaneously. The fact that they succeed in doing so, and that youngster with a troubled background initiate tellings spontaneously is a signal that PFP's in family-style-group-care succeed in providing an environment for reattachment experiences.

When the direct gaze of PFPs towards telling children is absent, it can be seen as undesirable because it influences the ‘interactional rules’ (Haddington et al., 2014; Goodwin, 1984). We found three main ways in which PFPs still show listenership while also doing another activity: 1) they use verbal signs; 2) they use non-verbal signs and 3) they combine verbal and non-verbal signs. Our analyses reflect that the telling children treat these ways, in which the activities of ‘doing listening’ and ‘eating’ are combined, as unproblematic, since they continue their telling even if the parents’ gaze is not directed at them.

However, in some cases, PFPs do not show an orientation to children’s tellings. This can occur for various reasons, as when other children require for help or too many things are going on at the same time. Our analysis showed that adolescents then use different strategies, both verbal and non-verbal, to get the attention of the PFPs or to let their telling succeed, such as directing themselves to another participant at the table or calling the name of the PFP. In this way, children do treat parents’ behaviour as problematic, as they do not continue or finish their telling.

Our analysis shows how PFPs deal with their involvement in multiple activities, i.e. ‘multiactivity’ (Haddington et al., 2014), by using verbal and embodied signs. The subtlety of combining different activities shows that people are able to coordinate involvement in multiple activities in social interaction simultaneously. Besides, the analysis shows that adolescents can deal with the fragmented attention of their PFPs, when they are engaged in multiple activities. This is interesting for two reasons. First, in order to build and maintain (attachment) relationships with adolescents in family-style group care it is an important need for them to be heard and thereby get the feeling that they are worth listening to. Given their difficult background and problematic behaviour, these adolescents often have an even greater need for positive interaction.

Second, during dinner, PFPs in family-style group care are almost always busy in simultaneous activities. Besides having dinner and coordinating the dinner itself, they have different family members around the table who are all entitled to their attention. It may be helpful for (aspirant/other) PFPs to see the different strategies PFPs in our study use to fulfil this interactional task.

In this study, we analysed how PFPs show listenership towards the telling adolescents while having dinner within the context of family-style group care. There are many similarities with foster care by virtue of the shared family-like environments. Additional research would be interesting to explore whether our findings are also representative for interactions between foster parents and the adolescents in their care and for other age groups. Besides, it would be interesting to see if our conclusions are also applicable to other activities. For example, is it also possible to combine reading a newspaper or sending WhatsApp messages with showing listenership towards a telling adolescent? Does it with these activities also suffice for adolescents to receive fragmented attention or an averted gaze from the PFP?

Acknowledgements

The authors are grateful to the six family-group care settings who participated in this research project. Besides, we want to thank Lotte van Burgsteden and Tom Koole who have actively contributed to this paper. We are also thankful for the anonymous reviewer, who gave critical and helpful comments on the first draft of this article. This study was funded by the Netherlands organisation for scientific research (NWO).

References

- Ainsworth MDS, Blehar MC, Waters E, et al. (1978) Patterns of attachment: A psychological study of the strange situation. Hillsdale, N.J.: Erlbaum
- Allen JP (2008) The attachment system in adolescence. In Cassidy J and Shaver PR (eds), *Handbook of attachment: Theory, research, and clinical applications* (pp. 419-435). New York, NY, US: Guilford Press.
- Bartelink C (2013) Uithuisplaatsing: Wat werkt? [Out-of-home placement: What works?]. Retrieved from [http://www.nji.nl/nl/\(311053\)-nji-dossierDownloads-Watwerkt_Uithuisplaatsing.pdf](http://www.nji.nl/nl/(311053)-nji-dossierDownloads-Watwerkt_Uithuisplaatsing.pdf)
- Bavelas JB, Coates L and Johnson T (2000) Listeners as co-narrators. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 79, 941–952.
- Bavelas JB, Coates L and Johnson T (2002) Listener responses as a collaborative process: The role of gaze. *Journal of Communication*, 52, 566-580.
- Bowlby J (1979) *The making and breaking of affectional bonds*. London: Tavistock Publications.
- Bowlby J (1988) *A secure base. Clinical applications of attachment theory*. London: Routledge.
- Cassidy J (2001) Truth, lies, and intimacy, An attachment perspective. Attachment and Human development. *Attachment & human Development*, 3, 121-155.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14616730110058999>
- Gardeniers M and De Vries A (2012) *Continuïteit in gezinshuizen: Ervaring gezinshuisouders en onderzoeksgegevens verzameld* [Continuity in professional foster care: experiences of Professional Foster Parents and research data collected].

<http://www.gezinspiratieplein.nl/publicaties/over-gezinshuizen/48-continuïteit-in-gezinshuizen/file>.

Gardner R (2001) *When Listeners talk: Response Tokens and Listener Stance*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

Gecas V and Schwalbe ML (1986) Parental Behavior and Adolescent Self-esteem. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 48, 37-46.

Goodwin C (1979) The interactive construction of a sentence in natural conversation. In Psathas G (Ed.), *Everyday Language: Studies in ethnomethodology* (pp. 97-121). New York: Irvington.

Goodwin MH (1980) Processes of mutual monitoring implicated in the production of description sequences. *Sociological Inquiry*, 50, 303-317.

Goodwin C (1981) *Conversational Organization: Interaction between Speakers and Hearers*. New York: Academic Press.

Goodwin C (1984) Notes on story structure and the organization of participation. In Atkinson JM and Heritage J (eds) *Structures of social action* (pp. 225-246). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Goodwin C (1986) Between and within: Alternative treatments of continuers and assessments. *Human Studies*, 9, 205-217.

Haddington P, Keisanen T, Mondada L, et al. (eds) (2014) *Multiactivity in Social Interaction: Beyond Multitasking*. Amsterdam, The Netherlands: Benjamins.

Hayashi M (2013). Turn allocation and turn sharing. In Sidnell J and Stivers T (eds) *The Handbook of Conversation Analysis* (pp. 167-190). Boston: Wiley-Blackwell.

Heath C (1984) Talk and reciprocity: sequential organization in speech and body movement. In

Atkinson JM & Heritage J (eds) *Structures of social action: Studies in conversation analysis* (pp. 247–265). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Heritage J (1984b) A change-of-state token and aspects of its sequential placement. In

Atkinson MJ and Heritage J (eds) *Structures of social action*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 299-345.

Houtkoop-Steenstra H and Mazeland H (1985) Beurten en grotere gesprekseenheden [Turns and larger conversational units]. *Tijdschrift voor Taal- en Tekstwetenschap* 2: 105-35.

Jefferson G (2004) Glossary of transcript symbols with an introduction. In Lerner GH (ed) *Conversation Analysis: Studies from the first generation* (pp.13-31). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Jefferson G (1984) Notes on a systematic deployment of the acknowledgement tokens ‘yeah’ and ‘mm hm’. *Papers in Linguistics* 17 (2): 197–216.

Juffer F (2010) *Beslissen over jeugdigen in problematische opvoedingssituaties: inzichten uit gehechtheidsonderzoek* [Judgements about youth in problematic family situations: insights from attachment research]. Raad voor de rechtspraak: Research Memoranda, 6, 6.

Leloux-Opmeer H, Kuiper C, Swaab H, et al. (2016) Characteristics of children in foster care, family-style group care, and residential care: A scoping review. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, 25, 2357-2371. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s10826-016-0418-5>

Lerner G (1991) On the syntax of sentences-in-progress. *Language in Society*, 20, 441-458.

Lerner G (1996) On the ‘semi-permeable’ character of grammatical units in conversation:

- Thompson (eds), *Interaction and Grammar* (pp. 238-276). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Mondada L (2007) Multimodal resources for turn-taking: pointing and the emergence of possible next speakers. *Discourse Studies* 9 (2), 195–226.
- Mondada, L (2009) The methodical organization of talking and eating: Assessments in dinner conversations. *Food quality and preference*, 20 (8), 558-571.
- Mondada L (2011) Understanding as an embodied, situated and sequential achievement in interaction. *J. Pragmatics* 43 (2), 542--552.
- Ochs E, Smith R and Taylor C (1989) Detective stories at dinnertime: Problem-solving through co-narration. *Cultural Dynamics*, 2(2), 238-257.
- Raymond G and Lerner G (2014) A body and its involvements: adjusting action for dual involvements. In P. Haddington, T. Keisanen, L. Mondada & M. Nevile (eds). *Multiactivity in Social Interaction. Beyond multitasking* (pp. 227-243). Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
- Repetti RL, Taylor SE and Seeman TE (2002) Risky families: Family social environments and the mental and physical health of offspring. *Psychological Bulletin*, 128(2), 330-366. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.128.2.330>
- Rossano F (2013) Gaze in Conversation. In J. Sidnell & T. Stivers (eds) *The Handbook of Conversation Analysis*. Boston, MA: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Sacks H, Schegloff EA and Jefferson G (1974) A Simplest Systematics for the Organization of Turn-taking for Conversation. *Language*, 50(4), 696-735.
- Sacks H (1992) *Lectures on conversation, Vol. 1*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Sarti A and Neijboer D (2011) *Dat voelt als een thuis voor mij. De Gezinshuizen met de*

- Kwaliteitsstandaarden Jeugdzorg Q4C getoetst* [That feels like a home for me. The family homes tested with the quality standards Youth Care Q4C]. Amsterdam: Stichting Alexander.
- Schegloff EA (1998) Body torque. *Social Research*, 65(3), 535-593.
- Schegloff EA (1982) Discourse as interactional achievement: some uses of 'uh huh' and other things that come between sentences. In Tannen D (Ed.). *Analyzing Discourse, Text and Talk* (pp. 71-93). Washington DC: Georgetown University Press.
- Schep E, Koole T and Noordegraaf M (2016) Getting, receiving and holding attention: How adolescents' telling initiations work out in interaction with Professional Parents in family homes. *International Journal of Child and Family Welfare*, 17, 10-26.
- Sidnell J, & Stivers T (eds) *The Handbook of Conversation Analysis*. Oxford: Wiley Blackwell.
- Stivers T (2008) Stance, Alignment, and Affiliation during Storytelling: When nodding is a token of Affiliation. *Research on Language and Social Interaction*, 41 (1), 31-57
- Streeck J, Goodwin C and LeBaron C (2011) *Embodied Interaction: Language and Body in the Material World*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ten Have P (1999) *Doing Conversation Analysis: A Practical Guide*. London: Sage.
- Van IJzendoorn MH (2010) Gehecht aan pleegouders [Attached to foster parents]. In Van den Bergh PM and Weterings AM (eds) *Pleegzorg in Perspectief* [Foster care in perspective] (pp. 13-23). Assen: Van Gorcum.
- Van Manen M (1991) *The tact of teaching: the meaning of pedagogical thoughtfulness*, New York: State University of New York Press.
- Van Ooijen S (2010) *Resultaat van pleegzorgplaatsingen: een onderzoek naar breakdown en de ontwikkeling van adolescente pleegkinderen bij langdurige pleegzorgplaatsingen*

[Result of fostercare placements: a research on breakdown and the development of adolescent foster children in case of longterm foster care placements]. Dissertatie [Dissertation], Rijksuniversiteit Groningen.