

# **Interactional Competence: What can we tell from collaborative speaker transitions in multiparty university student meetings?**

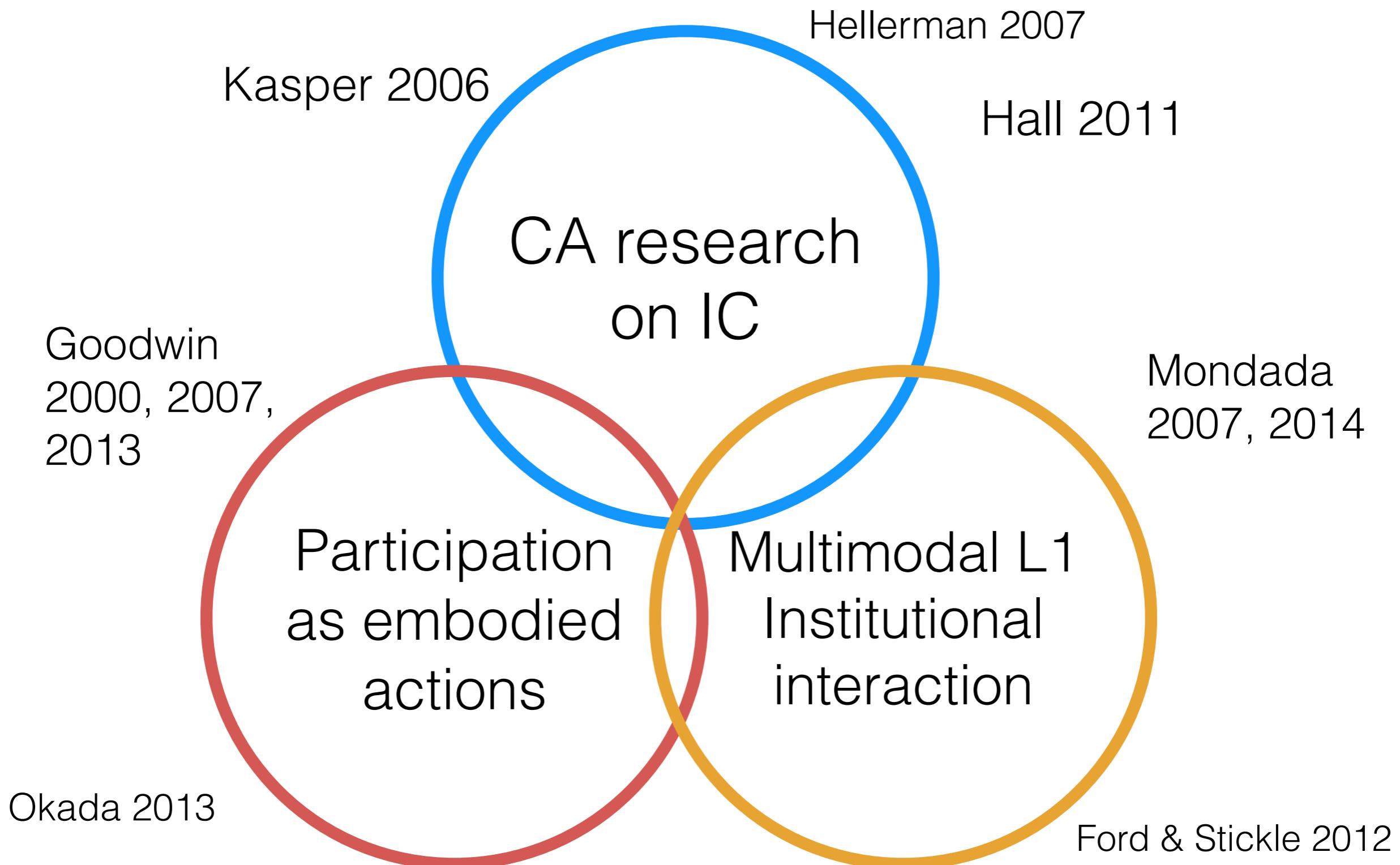


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# Background



# The Study

## *Participants*

- Undergraduate students in naval architecture working on their final year project
- 10 hrs, 8 meetings of a group of 6 students over 4 months
- Newcastle University Corpus of Academic Spoken English (NUCASE)

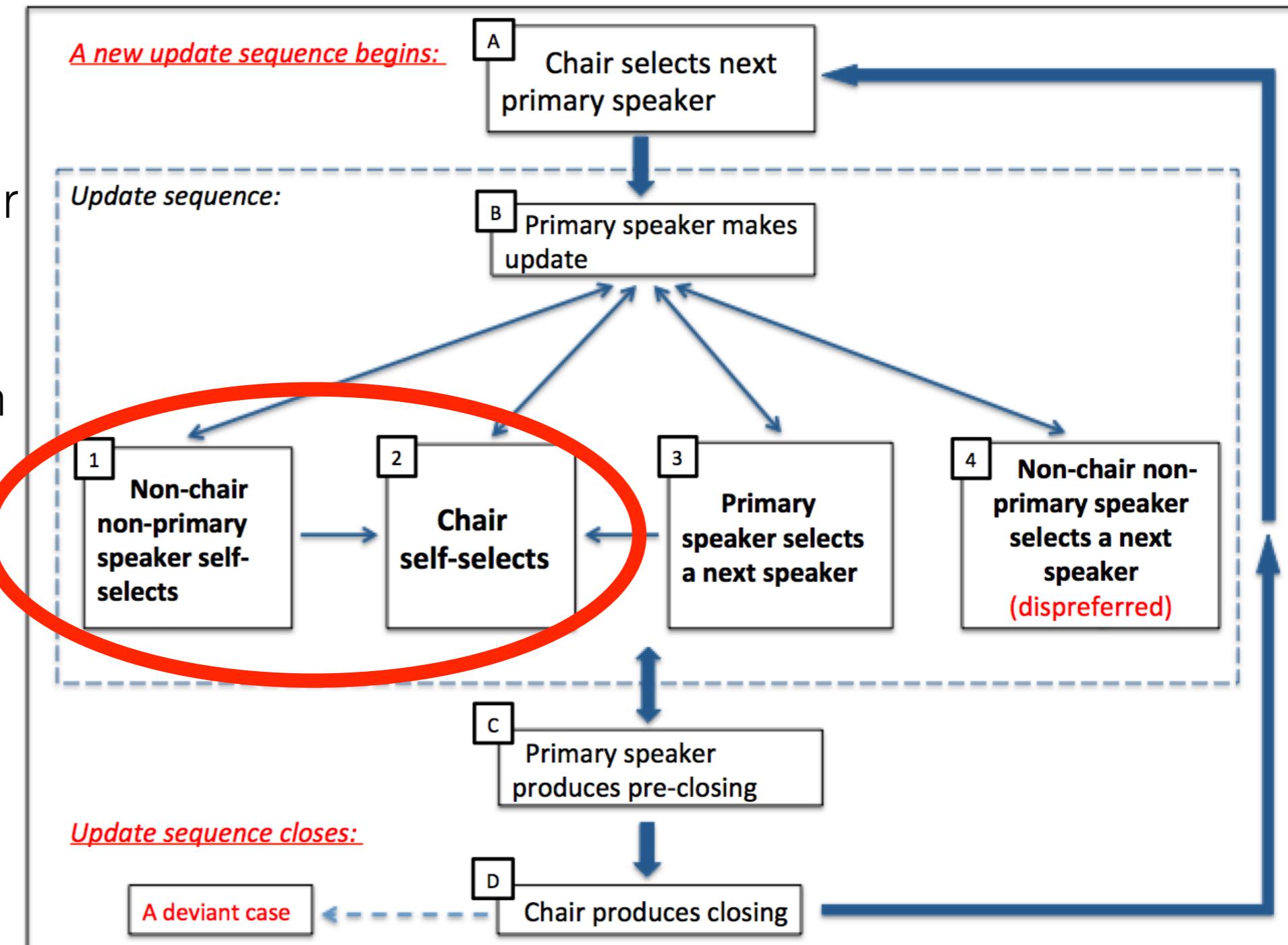
## *The institutional setting*

- A simulation of real-life business meetings
- An educational goal-orientation



# The focal phenomenon: speaker transitions during roundtable update sequence

- An appointed chair
- A round-table update discussion organised by the meeting chair
- A chair-appointed primary speaker

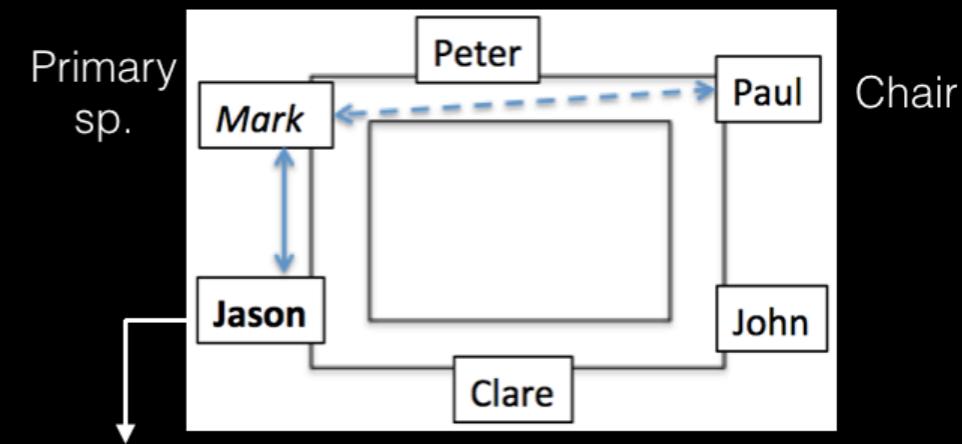


# What is Interactional Competence?

Participants are socialised members of the local community, who (re)shapes and (re)establishes the local ecology and activity through their talk-and-bodies-in-interaction:

- orientation toward locally emerging roles
- orientation toward local distribution of ‘rights to speak’
- mobilisation of multimodal resources to shift participation framework

## Case 1: non-chair non-primary speaker self-selection



Non-chair non-primary  
self-selecting sp.





Nod, gaze front →

Gaze shift to Mark →

Mutual gaze with Mark →

Disestablish mutual gaze →

Nod, lean toward Mark, gaze at →

Mark, upper body repositioning

1 MAR: (.) cos [we DID] ≈  
 2 PAU: | mhm |  
 3 MAR: ≈ At the STAR:T we talked about, (0.3) logistics didn't  
 4 we- we talked about, (0.4) we'd start to plan,  
 5 (0.7) if you're gonna to buil it- say on the north coast what  
 6 (. ) likely ports would you use, what kind of distances,  
 7 (0.5)  
 8 MAR: [ so ] looking at,  
 9 PAU: [yeah] →  
 10 PAU: (.) talk about how the: ports [ or uh ] ≈  
 11 MAR: [ IMPLICATIONS of ] ≈  
 12 JAS: [ ((clears throat)) ]  
 13 PAU: ≈ [expanding and stuff] yeah ≈  
 14 MAR: ≈ [ whe:re you would ]  
 15 JAS: ≈ °go into de[tails] °≈  
 16 PAU: [°yeah°] ≈  
 17 MAR: ≈ &yeah  
 18 (1.0)  
 19 MAR: but YEAH I would &keep it basic at the start, °so° when I move  
 20 on from toda:y  
 21 (0.9)

## ***Jason's 1st attempt of self-selection:***

Sequential position	Verbal/embodied conduct	Emerging roles
Pre-turn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Closely monitors ongoing talk between Paul and Mark (L10/13 - gaze shifts, nodding)</li> <li>Vocalisation at overlap, possible display of incipient speakership (L12 - throat clearing) during overlap)</li> </ul>	attentive recipient → incipient speaker → possible next speaker
1st TCU	Establishes mutual gaze with Mark by end of TCU	current speaker
After 1st TCU	Withdrawal of mutual gaze, continue to display attentive recipiency (L19 - nodding, upper body repositioning, gaze shifts)	attentive recipient



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Shift gaze toward Paul, nod →

Lean back, touch nose →

Lean forward toward Mark, shift →  
gaze toward Mark

22 MAR: basically try and look at a- a total Gantt char:t» (0.3)  
 23 business wi:se»≈  
 24 PAU: ≈yeah»≈  
 25 MAR: ≈what who: Δwould applyΔ for funding» (.) where» (0.7) and  
 26 then» as we get into more details I can apply:»  
 27 (0.9)  
 28 MAR: °apply those»°≈  
 29 PAU: ≈yea:h» Δare you gonna be talkingΔ abou:t» like» the supply:  
 30 chai:n [ °as well° ]  
 31 MAR: [ΔThat's what I'm] THINKING ofΔ YEAH cos you you've got  
 32 to allow Δfor that I think»Δ  
 33 PAU: (0.3) yeah»≈  
 34 MAR: ≈ that's a &huge (.) °part of the cost yeah»≈  
 35 JAS: ≈ °uh°  
 36 (0.7)  
 37 PAU: °um that'll be good»≈

## ***Jason's 2nd attempt of self-selection - pre-turn position:***

Sequential position	Verbal/embodied conduct	Emerging roles
Pre-turn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Closely monitors ongoing talk (L29/33 - nodding, gaze shifts, upper body repositioning)</li> <li>• Display attentive reciprocity toward Mark (L34 - lean forward, gaze shifts)</li> <li>• Vocalisation 'uh' at TRP showing willingness to talk (L35)</li> </ul>	attentive recipient → incipient speaker → possible next speaker



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## Turn-beginning & 1st TCU



35 JAS: ≈ °uh°  
 36 (0.7)  
 37 PAU: °um that'll be good°≈  
 38 JAS: ≈o- OBVIOUSly to do the cost\ benefit analysis you need more  
 39 details: as we said\  
 40 MAR: (.) ye[ah\ ]  
 41 JAS: [to ]wards\ uh: hh (0.4) wha- HOW long\  
 42 what time you nee:d\ ·hh (.)  
 43 for us to give you the Vfinal detailed\ desi:gn\▽  
 44 (.)Δso you canΔ do: the wor:k\ before\  
 45 (.) Δdue time\Δ  
 46 MAR: (.)uh- ↑WHAT I'd like to do it set it all up\  
 47 (0.6)

Mark withdraw gaze

Jason dual-orientation

1st increment

2nd increment

3rd increment

## ***Jason's 2nd attempt of self-selection - 1st TCU and beyond:***

Sequential position	Verbal/embodied conduct	Emerging roles
Turn-beginning & 1st TCU	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Restarts, to gain speakership</li> <li>• Mark responds with gaze after turn beginning</li> <li>• After mutual gaze established, lean backward</li> <li>• Sustains mutual gaze with Mark</li> <li>• By end of TCU, shifts gaze toward co-participants (dual-orientation)</li> </ul>	Current speaker (non-chair, non-primary)
Turn extensions (3 increments)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1st: Mark's brief verbal response &amp; gaze withdrawal, Jason uses verbal floor-holding devices, re-directs to co-participants (dual-orientation)</li> <li>• 2nd: sustained reciprocity from Mark, Jason displays dual-orientation</li> <li>• 3rd: Mark starts to withdraw reciprocity, Jason sustains gaze toward Mark, brief gaze to co-participants at the end</li> </ul>	Current speaker (non-chair, non-primary)

Turn-beginning & 1st TCU



1st increment



2nd increment



3rd increment



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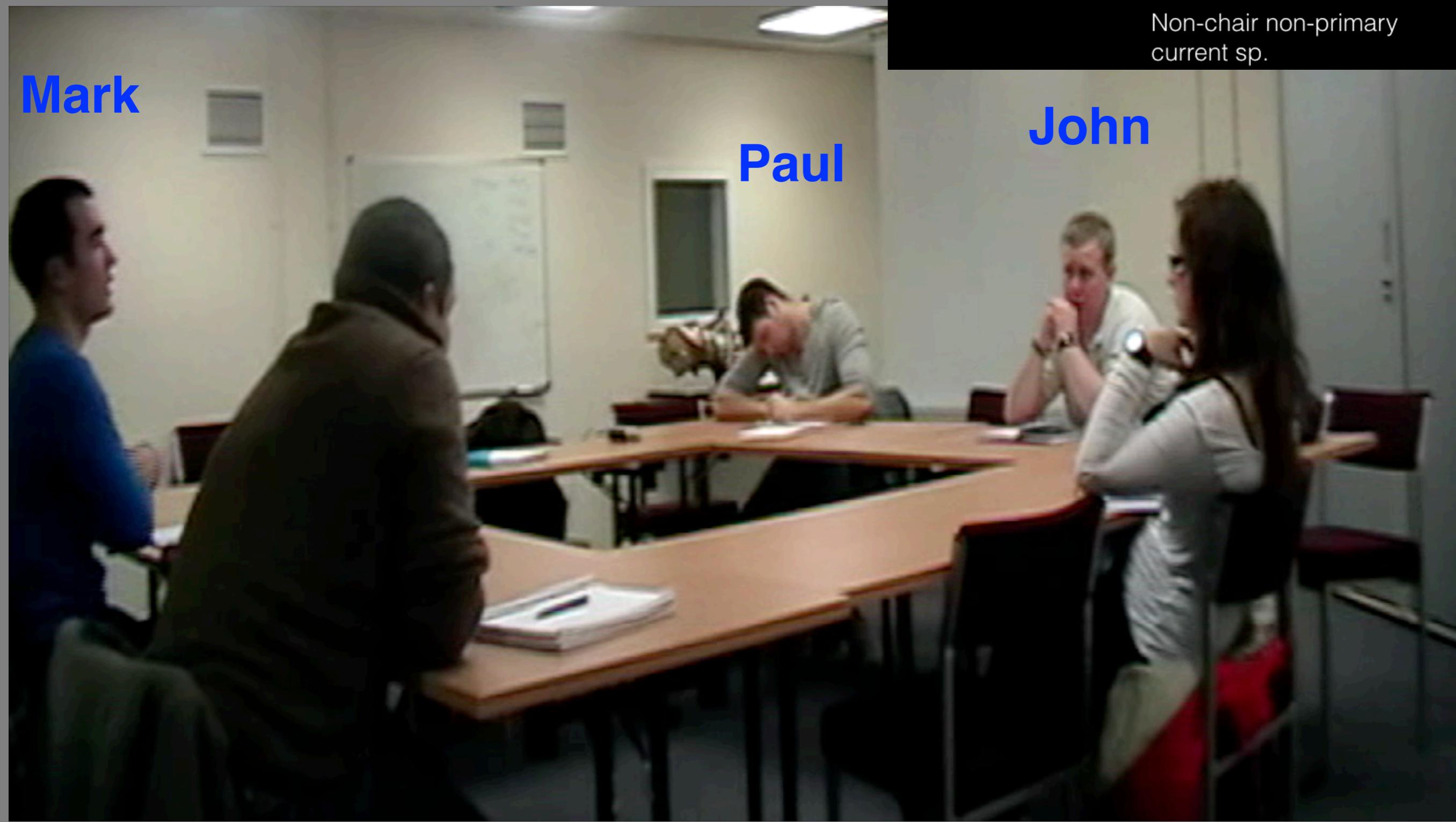
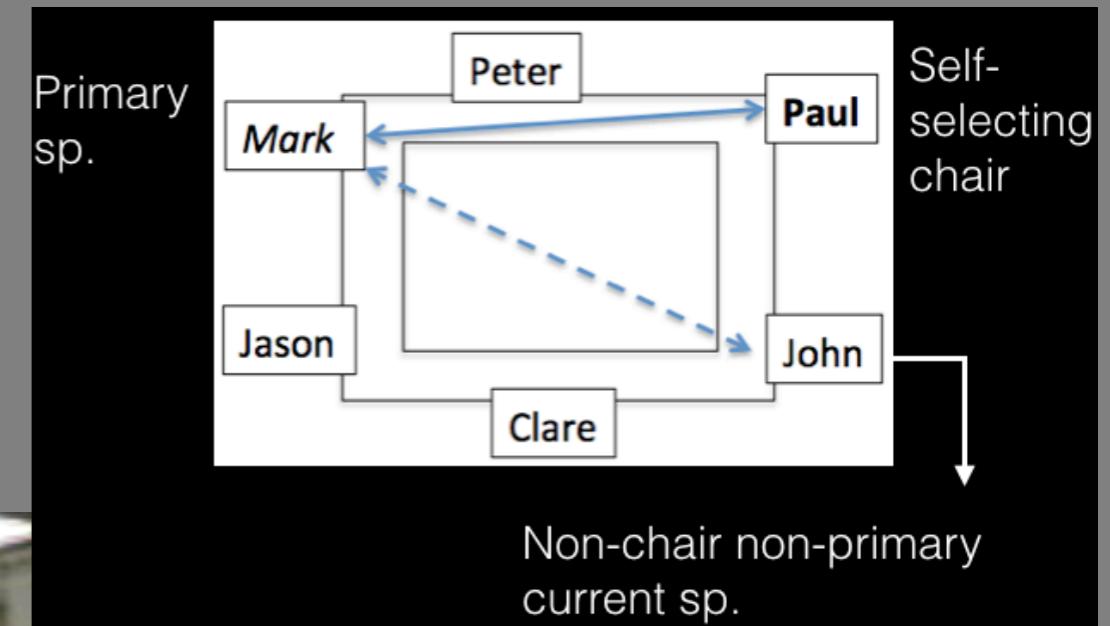
# Discussion on findings



*Jason self-selects as a non-chair non-primary speaker:*

1. Locally emerging roles at various sequential environments (active recipient - incipient speaker - possible next speaker - non-chair non-primary current speaker);
2. Mobilisation of multimodal resources at these sequential environments to progressively gain, maintain and negotiate speakership;
3. Exploit interactional resources made available by the physical space/seating arrangements (i.e., dual-orientation)

## Case 2: chair self-selection



## **Chair's self-selection - pre-turn:**



Sequential position	Verbal/embodied conduct	Multi-tasking as the chair
pre-turn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Leaning on the desk, taking meeting notes</li><li>• Switches tasks: puts pen-cap back, adjust upper body and gaze shifts, monitoring on-going talk between John/Mark</li><li>• Gaze down on meeting notes</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Keep meeting notes</li><li>• Monitor proceeding of meeting agenda</li><li>• Monitor the direction of on-going talk</li></ul>

## Turn-beginning & 1st TCU



## Beyond 1st TCU



51 JOH: (.) to do this and attach it to wind farmer≈  
 52 MAR: ≈ye[ah↓]  
 53 JOH: [than] it is just to do it[°it's  
 54 PAU: [WELL↑ what is° ]  
 55 whole point [of the] project≈ that's the]  
 56 MAR: [yeah↓]  
 57 PAU: ≈ [Δisn't itΔ WE↑ want] actuall:y↗  
 58 MAR: [ cos we've- yeah↓ ]  
 59 (0.3)  
 60 CLA: ((clears throat))  
 61 PAU: (.)it doesn- it doesn't matter if-it's cheaper or more  
 62 expensive it's [ just ] the fact that we're proving↗  
 63 JOH: [yeah↓]  
 64 PAU: (0.7) [ what price ] it is yeah≈  
 65 JOH: [°it can be done°]  
 66 JOH: ≈ yeah↓ (.) ↑no that's fine↓

## ***Chair's self-selection - turn beginning and beyond:***

Sequential position	Verbal/embodied conduct	Shifts of Participation Framework
turn-beginning & 1st TCU	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Puts pen-cap back, lean backward, readiness to talk (L51)</li> <li>Early entry of verbal turn, overlapping John's TCU-final (L54)</li> <li>Continue 1st TCU, overlapping Mark's turn (L55)</li> <li>Upper body repositioning &amp; gaze at Mark, leading to Mark's verbal drop-put (L57)</li> <li>Gain John's gaze by end of TCU</li> <li>Prefaces upcoming talk</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Progressively diverting current participation framework:           <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Early entry to John's turn (Chair - All )</li> <li>Block Mark's emerging participation framework, gain his recipiency (Chair - Mark)</li> <li>Gain John's recipiency</li> </ol> </li> </ul>
Beyond 1st TCU	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Progressive re-direction to John: abandon current verbal turn (L57), initiate new verbal turn &amp; shift gaze toward John (L61)</li> <li>Mutual orientation with John (L63-66)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Progressive establishment of new participation framework (Chair - John)</li> </ul>



Turn-beginning & 1st TCU



Beyond 1st TCU

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# Discussion on findings



Paul's self-selection as a meeting chair:

- Orientation toward the role as meeting chair, switch in-between multi-tasks & executes the chair's 'rights to speak';
- Progressive shifts of participation framework (chair vs. all, chair vs. current speaker, chair vs. target recipient), esp. using gaze direction as a crucial resource

# So what?

- *How multimodal resources can be mobilised by competent participants to:*
  1. Contextualise turn-taking practices & accomplish speaker transition;
  2. Shape and shaped by the local ecology of the meeting activity (roundtable update sequence);
  3. Act according to different participant roles;
- *Future study on IC:*
  - A. Longitudinal data collection: how the group dynamics develop over time;
  - B. Diversity of multimodal resources made available by different physical space/seating;
  - C. Academic/professional practice: can we train people to develop IC?