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Foreword

The following article was originally written as a BA-thesis, handed in at the Department of Linguistics at the University of Aarhus, Denmark. It was then slightly revised and submitted to an international journal. There it received fairly positive reviews, and I was encouraged to revise and resubmit it.

Amongst the main concerns of the reviewers where: (a) that a “turn-taking system” might not be the best way to describe the phenomenon, and that it might simply be described as a sequentially organized interaction; and (b) that the three-part sequence I have described, might be better described as either a two- or a four-part one (the reviewers disagreed on this point). Furthermore, one reviewer suggested that the article be stronger situated within the existing work on instructional interaction, and its contribution to this field emphasized. Although I agree that these as well as other points the reviewers made, need to be considered, I do not have time to do this work at this point in time.

Since the reviewers and others have indicated that the present version does contain useful results, and since the revised version will have a different focus and contain different lines of argumentation, I have decided to present the current article in this forum as a work-in-progress. I hope that this version – with the above mentioned concerns and suggestions taken into consideration – will prove to be of interest to some.

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**Equalization of Participation Asymmetries:
On a Rotational Turn-Taking System
for Study Groups**

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This article describes a rotational turn-taking system for study group interaction and considers its relationship with the turn-taking system for ordinary interaction as well as with those for institutional interaction. It shows (a) that the study group turn-taking system is organized around a basic (question)/answer/approval-sequence, which is recursively applied in the interaction, resulting in a series of (question)/answer/approval-sequences, and (b) that the turn-taking system organizes the participants into three interactional identity categories, which are rotationally allocated for one (question)/answer/approval-sequence at a time, making the turn-taking system consistently and systematically “go around the table”. It suggests that this configuration of the turn-taking system creates and/or maintains overall social equality among the participants in the study group and that it is the participants’ solution to the problem of being engaged in a task that locally requires distributed or asymmetrical interactional identities, without any of the participants being the representative of a formal institution (*turn-taking, rotational identity allocation, social equality, participation asymmetry, conversation analysis*).*

1 Introduction

Turn-taking is a fundamental, omnipresent part of all human interaction. Regardless of which interactional activity a group of two or more participants are engaged in, they thus have to take turns at talking. However, depending on the activity this necessity results in different turn-taking systems (Sacks, Schegloff, & Jefferson, 1974, p. 696). In this article I will use Conversation Analysis¹ to investigate the turn-taking system for a study group. I will attempt to describe how the participants configure the study group turn-taking system so as to allow them to handle the activity they are engaged in, how the resulting turn-taking system relates to and differs from other turn-taking systems, and which social organization the participants create and orient to by configuring the turn-taking system in this way.

I will show, first, that the study group turn-taking system in most aspects is similar to the turn-taking systems for many types of institutional interaction. It consists of a basic sequence of

* I would like to thank Jakob Steensig, Mikala Jørgensen, Sofie Emmertsen, and Charles Antaki for all of their helpful comments on earlier drafts of this article.

¹ For an introduction to Conversation Analysis see ten Have (1999), Hutchby & Wooffitt (1998), or Silverman (1998).

answers to assignment questions and approvals of the answers, which is recursively applied in the study group interaction, resulting in a series of (question)/answer/approval-sequences. Furthermore, for each (question)/answer/approval-sequence it organizes the participants into three interactional identity categories by pre-allocating different participation rights and obligations to them, thereby creating a local interactional asymmetry between them. Then I will, however, show that one aspect of the study group turn-taking system establishes a social organization amongst the participants which resembles ordinary rather than most types of institutional interaction. Thus, the three interactional identity categories, which as mentioned are allocated to the participants for one (question)/answer/approval-sequence at a time, are allocated in a rotational manner, making the turn-taking system systematically and consistently “go around the table,” whereby the study group turn-taking system – over a series of (question)/answer/approval-sequences – equalizes the interactional asymmetry present in each singular (question)/answer/approval-sequence. Before all of this I will, however, give a short introduction to what a turn-taking system is and to how it is typically investigated within Conversation Analysis

2 Turn-Taking Systems and Comparative Analysis

Generally, any turn-taking system consists of two components: a turn-constructive component and a turn-allocation component. As implied in their names, the turn-constructive component deals with the internal structure of turns and with the lexical, syntactic, prosodic, pragmatic and repair-based methods participants use in the construction of turn-constructive units (TCUs; the units such as phrases, clauses, and lexical elements that can be part of a turn). The turn-allocation component deals with the distribution of turns amongst the participants of a given activity (Sacks et al., 1974, pp. 702-3).

As mentioned in the introduction, different turn-taking systems are the result of the interactional activity the participants are engaged in. Each turn-taking system is thus uniquely configured to handle the task or goal of some particular activity (Sacks et al., 1974, pp. 696, 698). Turn-taking systems may vary for instance with regard to which turn types or actions the participants treat as allowable contributions to the interaction, whether turns are pre-allocated, locally allocated or a mixture of both, their sequential organization, and their overall structural organization (Drew & Heritage, 1992, pp. 23, 25-26, 33, 37-45; Sacks et al., 1974, p. 729). Amongst the many different turn-taking systems that variations such as these can result in, the turn-taking system for ordinary interaction is, within Conversation Analysis, ordinarily considered a common point of reference. Most conversation analysts thus agree that other, often institutional and/or goal oriented turn-taking systems are modified versions of the turn-taking system for ordinary interaction, (Greatbatch, 1988, pp. 402-3; Heritage, 1984b, pp. 239-40; Sacks et al., 1974, pp. 696, 701, 729-30, note 11).

One reason why the turn-taking system for ordinary interaction is considered the most basic system of all is that it is the system that allows for the most variation.² The turn-taking system for ordinary interaction is, thus, a party-administered, local management system. This means that the participants themselves negotiate the turn-order, turn-size, turn-type, the length of the interaction etc. and that they do this on a turn-by-turn basis (Sacks et al., 1974, pp. 696, 704-6, 708-9). Other turn-taking systems such as those for courtroom interaction (Atkinson & Drew, 1979), classroom interaction (McHoul, 1978; Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975), emergency call interaction (Zimmerman, 1992), news interviews (Greatbatch, 1988), medical interaction (Silverman, 1987), and others are – in different ways – systematically, more restricted versions of the turn-taking system for ordinary interaction (Greatbatch, 1988, p. 403).

Since the turn-taking system for ordinary interaction is considered a common reference point for every other turn-taking system, comparative analysis between ordinary interaction and other types of interaction are often used when describing other turn-taking systems (Drew & Heritage, 1992, p. 19). My description of the study group turn-taking system will, thus, also be based on this approach. I will, however, not only compare the study group turn-taking system with that for ordinary interaction, but also with some of those for institutional interaction, since analysis has shown that the study group turn-taking system is showing traits resembling both types. Before we get to that, I will give a short presentation of the data upon which this article is based, though.

3 Data

A study group is basically a group of two or more students, doing their homework together. This article is based on 55 minutes and 45 seconds of video recordings of three Danish students from a teachers' training college, working on English grammar. They are going through a number of assignments from a book, they all have in front of them. Each assignment contains several sentences³ and for each sentence the students have to decide whether or not to insert a specific grammatical item, namely the definite article 'the', into one or more slots in the sentence and to argue for their decision, using the grammatical rules of English. The participants are as illustrated in figure 1 seated around three sides of a table with the video camera on the fourth side. This arrangement gives the recording perspective, illustrated in figure 2:

² Another reason is that ordinary interaction as opposed to other more institutional types of interaction, occupies a central role in children's acquisition of language, allowing the inference that it is fundamental to other types of interaction (Heritage: 1984a, pp. 238-40, Sacks, 1984, p. 22).

³ There are five assignments which contain between six and twenty-two sentences each, all in all amounting to sixty-six sentences. The insights I will be showing in this article holds true for all of them.

Fig. 1: The positions of the participants and the video camera during recording

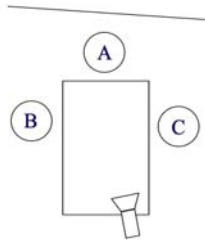


Fig. 2: The perspective of the video camera during recording



I will now proceed to investigate how the participants in these data configure the turn-taking system they use, starting with its basic organization.

4 The Basic Organization of Study Group Interaction

The basic organization of any type of interaction is among the aspects which as mentioned earlier is managed by the turn-constructural component of the operating turn-taking system. It concerns the turn types and/or actions which are relevant contributions to the interaction and their relative organization – i.e. the basic building blocks which the participants have to work with in the interaction. In what follows I will attempt to describe the basic organization of study group interaction. I will show, first, that this type of interaction is organized around a basic activity component sequence of answers to the assignment questions and approvals of the answers and, secondly, that this sequence is recursively applied, resulting in a series of (question)/answer/approval-sequences.

4.1 The (Question)/Answer/Approval-Sequence Format

In ordinary interaction the turn-taking system doesn't pre-specify which actions the participants can perform. This is something the participants negotiate locally on a turn-by-turn basis as the interaction progresses. That, of course, doesn't mean that there are no restrictions whatsoever on what the participants can do. The sequential nature of interaction thus constraints what is relevant at any given position (Sacks et al., 1974, p. 710). There is, however, no pre-specified subset of actions or activities which the participants treat as the only relevant contributions to the interaction. In many types of institutional interaction the turn-taking system, by contrast, restricts the number of activities the participants can do (Drew & Heritage, 1992, pp. 22-24).

Like the turn-taking systems for these types of institutional interaction the turn-taking system for study group interaction restricts the number of activities the participants can perform. Specifically, it limits what is treated as relevant contributions to the interaction, to two sequentially organized activity components: answering the questions posed by the assignment,

and approving the answer. The following extract is a basic example of this overall (question)/answer/approval-sequence⁴ format:

Ex. 1: [LSJ/St.Grp/TL/1:4]⁵

1 A: ~It was the secon' time,~
2 (.)
3 A: ~she had said no:~,
4 (0.9)
5 A: D*et igen fordi det ↓^o(*ornsd-)^o.
I*t again because it ↓^o(*ord'nal_nu-/w*ednesd-)^o.
Again that's because it's (ordinal nu-/wednesd-)
6 (.)
7 A: Ordenstal,
Ordinal_number,
Ordinal number
8 (2.4)
9 B: iJa, ((nods once))
iYes,
Yes

In this extract A reads a sentence from the English grammar assignment aloud in lines 1 and 3, revealing that she has inserted the definite article 'the' into it. Thereby she proposes that the solution to the first part of the assignment question for this sentence is to use the definite article, i.e. that it is necessary to insert a 'the' in order to make the current sentence grammatically correct. After a pause of 0.9 seconds in line 4 in which none of her co-participants verbally objects to her proposal or visually displays disagreement with it, A continues her answer in line 5 with an explanation of her decision to insert the definite article into the sentence in which she uses the occurrence of an ordinal number (*second*) in the sentence as an argument (lines 5 and 7). Thereby she seems to invoke a grammatical rule of English, saying that ordinal numbers always should be preceded by the definite article. After a 2.4 second pause⁶ in line 8 B starts to nod her head downwards, visually displaying agreement with A in line 9. At the same time she produces a verbal agreement marker, *ja* (*yes*), approving A's answer, i.e. her 'solution proposal' (lines 1-3) and her 'explanation proposal' (lines 5-7). In this extract we thus have A answering the assignment questions in lines 1-7 and B approving the answer in line 9.

⁴ Although the assignment questions, which the study group participants are answering, are relevant for the study group interaction, they aren't articulated in the interaction. I will therefore represent them in parenthesis.

⁵ The data have been transcribed according to the conventions, developed by Gail Jefferson (Atkinson & Heritage, 1984, pp. ix-xvi), but for a few additions. Since the data consists of Danish students working on English grammar an enclosing ~word~ has thus been used to mark areas in the interaction which – in the original data – is spoken in English. Furthermore, a *word;* has been used to mark intonation that is falling, though not to low.

⁶ That silences between the answer and the approval aren't gaps, but pauses belonging to a specific participant (Sacks et al., 1974, pp. 714-15) will become clear in a subsequent section.

By means of the following five extracts I will show that this (question)/answer/approval-sequence is actually oriented to by the study group participants. That the study group participants treat answering the assignment questions and approving the answer as the relevant activities to perform in the interaction, can thus be observed in cases where they are not immediately provided (Schegloff, 1992b, pp. 107-10). In the following extract an explanation proposal thus isn't immediately forthcoming after the solution proposal has been produced. The participants still demonstrably orient to the relevance of a full answer in terms of both a solution proposal and an explanation proposal, though:

Ex. 2: [LSJ/St.Grp/TL/1:5]

1 B: e:hm ~He lives in::;~
u:hm ~He lives in::;~
uhm He lives in

2 (.)

3 B: ~the state of texas~

4 (.)

5 B: ~in ju es ↑ai::~ ((USA))

6 (0.6)

7 B: °.mt°
°.mt°
.mt

8 (0.9)

9 B: ehm
uhm
uhm

10 (1.1)

11 B: Der >står godt nok det der med<;
It >stånds PRT that there with<;
It does say that thing about

In this extract B proposes a solution to the assignment for a sentence by reading the sentence aloud in lines 1, 3, and 5. After this an explanation for the solution proposal is relevant. Still, an 0.6 second pause follows in line 6. The participants still show an orientation to the relevance of an explanation, though. A and C, thus, do so in that they refrain from self-selecting as speakers during this pause, and B does so in that she after the 0.6 second pause produces an ingressive bilabial click⁷ in line 7 which can function as a pre-speech marker and thereby signal that she is going to continue her turn (Steensig, 2001, pp. 213-22). After B's pre-speech marker another pause follows in line 8. Again, A and C passively display their orientation to B's turn as not complete in that they continue to withhold any kind of response. After 0.9 seconds B too displays her orientation to this again in that she produces a hesitation marker in line 9, signalling that she is working on producing a continuation of her turn. After another pause in line 10 B in line 11 then actually initiates an explanation attempt. In this extract we thus have all of the participants continuously displaying their orientation to the relevance of an answer in terms of both a solution

⁷ A lip smacking sound, like parting one's lips.

proposal and an explanation proposal when the latter isn't immediately produced. B is displaying this by means of pre-beginning elements signalling that she is working on producing the explanation; A and C by withholding any kind of response until the full answer has been produced.

Likewise, the participants' orientation to approving the answer as a relevant activity to perform can be observed in cases where the approval isn't immediately forthcoming. In the following extract an approval doesn't follow when the answer has reached a possible completion point. Again, the participants orient to the relevance of an approval:

Ex. 3: [LSJ/St.Grp/TL/1:19]

1 A: fo'di de*:t
because i*:t
because it's

2 (0.6)

3 A: ~one~
~one~
one

4 (0.9)

5 A: °foran ~one~;°
°in_front_of ~one~;°
in front of one

6 (5.2)

7 A: eller er du ikk' enig ((looks up & at B))
or are you not in_agreement
or don't you agree

8 B: jo: ((gaze in her own book))
yes:
yes

9 (.)

10 B: jeg sad og kigged' på noget andet undskyld
I sat and looked at something other sorry
I was looking at something else sorry

In this extract A reaches a first possible completion point of her answer after her explanation proposal in lines 1 and 3 which makes an approval of the answer relevant. Yet, in line 4 an 0.9 second pause follows without any of the other participants approving the answer. In line 5 A then shows that she still orients to the relevance of an approval. She thus specifies a part of her explanation from *one (one)* (line 3) to *foran one (in front of one)* (line 5). Thereby she creates a new possible completion point and hence re-establishes the approval relevance in the interaction (Sacks et al., 1974, p. 718; Schegloff, 1996, pp. 90-91). In spite of this another pause follows in line 6. After 5.2 seconds A then shows her orientation to the relevance of an approval again, in that she in line 7 asks B a question that overtly addresses B's opinion on the correctness of the answer, thereby creating a conditional relevance for B to approve the answer. B then also shows her orientation to the relevance of an approval of the answer. After a *jo (yes)*, claiming agreement with A's answer in line 8, she thus produces an account and an apology for not having approved the answer (line 10) (Heritage, 1984b, pp. 269-73). In this extract we thus see the participants showing an orientation to the relevance of an approval of the answer; A through a post-possible

completion specification (line 5) and a question (line 7) which re-occasion the approval, and B through an account and an apology for the prior absence of a display of approval (line 10).

Even though the study group turn-taking system restricts the number of activities that are relevant to perform to answering the assignment questions and approving the answers, the study group participants can of course perform other actions such as challenging, questioning, accepting, suggesting, disagreeing etc. within each of these activity components. When they choose to do so, they still demonstrably make their actions relevant to the overall activity of the concerned component, though – i.e. to answering the assignment questions or approving the answer. This is observable in the following extract where one of the participants not answering the assignment questions for the current sentence, takes the turn before the answer has reached a possible completion point:

Ex. 4: [LSJ/St.Grp/TL/1:6]

* 1 C: Og de:*::t;
And i:*::t;
And *that*

2 (0.9)

3 A: khhh hh [hh fJ(h)a ((looks up and points at C))
khhh hh hh fY(h)es
khhh hh hh Y(h)es

4 C: [hngh hngh

5 A: [hvorför er d't så [li:g'f,]=
why is it then ju:stf,
why is that then

6 C: [hngh (°hng°) [.thhh]=

7 (.)

8 (A): =↑.hhh

9 C: E:hm::,
U:hm::,
Uhm

10 (3.4)

11 C: Jam' det fordi alle ved-
Yesb' it because everybody knows-
Yes but that's because everybody knows

Prior to this extract C has proposed a solution to the sentence by reading it aloud. In line 1 she then seems to continue into an explanation in that she produces *og det* (*and that*), which could initiate an explanation. However, she prolongs the *det* (*that*) and produces it with a falling intonation and a slightly creaky voice. Thereby she intuitively seems to signal that she has trouble explaining her solution proposal and in line 2 a pause thus also follows. Although C hasn't completed her answer to the assignment questions yet in that she hasn't produced an explanation, A then takes the turn after 0.9 seconds with a strong audible laughter-like out-breath (Jefferson, 1979, p. 89) followed by *ja hvorfor er det så lige* (*yes why is that then*) in lines 3 and 5. Although A by taking the turn in this position “speaks out of order,” she still shows an orientation to the relevance of an explanation through her choice of producing a why-initiated question. By asking such a question she creates a conditional relevance for an answer in the shape of an explanation, i.e. she re-establishes the relevance of the explanation in the interaction. After a short pause in line 7 C then produces a hesitation marker in line 9 which signals that she is working on an

explanation, and after another 3.4 seconds in line 10 she actually does initiate an explanation in line 11. In this extract we thus see that A continues to orient to the relevance of an answer even though she takes the turn before a full answer has been produced, in that the action she produces is relevant to the overall activity of answering the assignment questions.

Also in the approval activity component the participants orient to any action they perform, as having to be relevant to the overall approval activity. As can be observed in the following extract the actions they perform thus normally modify some part of the answer in order to allow for a future approval of it:

Ex. 5: [LSJ/St.Grp/TL/1:2]

1 B: >tror faktisk' det noget< khrnhh=og gøre
>think actually it something< khrnhh=and do
actually think it has got something khrnhh to do

2 B: me'=at det en bestemt alder;
with=that it a (definite/specific) age;
with it being a (definite/specific) age

3 (.)

4 C: M;
M;
M

5 (.)

6 A: M;, ((nods twice))
M;
M

7 (1.4)

8 A: <°tro[r jeg (ogs')°°>
<°think I (too)°°>
I think so too

9 C: [>JA=DEt EN AFGRæ]ns<ning ((looks up & at B))
>YES=It A DELimita<tion
YES IT'S A DELimitation

10 C: bestem(me)lse ikk' og',
determi(na)tion not also,
determination right

11 B: ja,=
yes,=
yes

* 12 C: ='a;
='es;
yes

In this extract (lines 1-2) B proposes an explanation for her decision to insert the definite article into the sentence the study group is currently working on. After a micro-pause in line 3 C then produces an *m* in line 4, acknowledging and displaying minimal acceptance of B's explanation. This is followed by A, who after a micro-pause in line 5 produces another acknowledging *m* in line 6 and at the same time visually displays agreement with B's explanation through a double nod. Since there is now both an answer to the assignment questions and an approval of this answer, the sequence is possibly complete at this point. Still, after a 1.4 second pause in line 7 A takes the turn and re-completes the sequence by upgrading her prior minimal agreement (line 6) to a more explicit *tror jeg også* (*I think so too*) in line 8. C, however, takes the turn almost

simultaneously⁸ in line 9 and – after an initial agreement marker, *ja (yes)* – produces a candidate explanation in which she specifies B's explanation proposal from lines 1-2 by formulating it in more technical and grammatical terms. Although this candidate explanation makes either a confirmation or a disconfirmation relevant and thereby postpones the completion of the sequence, C still demonstrably orients to the relevance of an ensuing approval to the answer, though. In that the candidate explanation is concerned with and proposes a specification of a part of the answer, it is namely relevant for this approval. After her candidate explanation has been confirmed in line 11, C thus also produces an approving *ja (yes)* in line 12 which completes the current (question)/answer/approval-sequence. So, although C in this extract performs an action which isn't simply an approval of the answer to the assignment questions, we see that she still orients to the relevance of an approval in that the action she does perform, is relevant for the ensuing approval.

Should a participant choose to perform an action that isn't relevant to the overall activity of the ongoing component and thereby depart from the basic (question)/answer/approval-sequence format, the other participants will continue to demonstrate an orientation to the relevance of performing the activity of this component and hence towards the departure as a turn-taking violation (Schegloff, 1972 [1968], pp. 380-82, 1992a, pp. 107-10). This is observable in the following extract:

Ex. 6: [LSJ/St.Grp/TL/1:3]

1 A: -hh hh hh hnh [hnh
 2 B: [Hihh hh
 3 (A): [D(hh)e:(hh)t >sgu da< en
 I(hh):(hh)t >bloody PRT< a
 That's a bloody
 4 (B): [hh hnh hh hh hnh
 5 (A): [u(hh)nde(hh)rliɡ sæ(hh)tning]=
 st(hh)ra(hh)nɡe sē(hh)ntence=
 strange sentence
 6 (B): [hih hih hih hih hih]=
 7 (B): =jah [.hhh
 =yeah .hhh
 yeah .hhh
 8 C: [MEN [AL'SÅ DER] ALtid: øh
 BUT REALLY THERE ALways: uh
 BUT REALLY THERE'S ALways uh
 9 (A): [hih hih]
 * 10 C: ~THE~ foran ~>following<~.
 ~THE~ in_front_of ~>following<~.
 THE in front of following

Prior to this extract C has proposed a solution to the assignment for a given sentence, by reading aloud the sentence, including her decision to insert the definite article into it. After this the next relevant thing for her to do is to explain her decision. In line 1 A, however, starts to laugh which B joins in on and thus aligns with in line 3 (Jefferson, Sacks, & Schegloff, 1987, pp. 158-59). It is then probably A who in lines 3 and 5 goes on to comment on the wording of the sentence and B

⁸ I will return to consider this overlap in greater detail in a subsequent section.

who in line 7 agrees with a laughing *jah* (*yeah*). This laughter-sequence isn't relevant for the overall activity of answering the assignment questions though, which C thus also orients to. C thus doesn't align with the others in that she neither joins in on the laughter nor agrees with A's comment. On the contrary, she actively declines to laugh in that she – just after B has produced her agreement marker, but while both B and A are still laughing (lines 7 and 9) – takes the turn in overlap and produces a disjunctive *men* (*but*) and a back-to-task refocusing *altså* (*really*) (Jefferson, 1979, pp. 83-84, 93; Thornborrow, 2003, pp. 14, 19) with an increased volume in line 8. Thereby she shows that she not only treats the previous laughter-sequence as being out of order, but also that she considers answering the assignment questions to be the appropriate activity to perform at this point in the interaction. In the following turn she thus also continues to give an explanation for her solution proposal (lines 8 and 10). In this extract we thus see that C – when A and B treat the current sentence as laughable – continues to display an orientation to the relevance of answering the assignment questions and that she – through her almost competitive incoming in line 8 (French & Local, 1983) – at the same time demonstrates that the other participants', A's and B's, laughter-sequence was out of order.

As this section has shown, the study group turn-taking system consists of a basic activity component sequence of answers to assignment questions and approvals of these answer, which the participants demonstrably orient to. I will now continue to briefly consider the consequences which the study group turn-taking system's restriction on which actions the participants can perform, has beyond the singular (question)/answer/approval-sequence.

4.2 A Series of (Question)/Answer/Approval-Sequences

Since the turn-taking system for ordinary interaction as mentioned earlier doesn't pre-specify which actions the participants can perform other than what is constrained by the sequential organization of the interaction, the participants in ordinary interaction can move on to other activities once a given sequence is completed. Because the turn-taking systems for most types of institutional interaction restrict the number of activities that are relevant to perform, the participants in such types of interaction don't necessarily have this possibility, though. Instead, they might only have the option of elaborating on a current activity or of "recycling" the sequence of activities, pre-specified by the operating turn-taking system (Drew & Heritage, 1992, pp. 25-27).

Since the turn-taking system for study group interaction as mentioned above – similar to the turn-taking systems for other types of institutional interaction – restricts the number of activities that are relevant to perform, to answering the assignment questions and approving the answers, the study group participants have to do this as well. Once an approval and thereby a (question)/answer/approval-sequence is possibly complete, they thus only have the option of either re-opening and elaborating on the current sequence in order to for instance modify the answer, or of initiating a new answer and thereby the next (question)/answer/approval-sequence. The following extract exemplifies this:

Ex. 7: [LSJ/St.Grp/TL/1:3-1:4]
 1 A: ja*r, ((B nods three times))
 ye*r,
 yer
 * 2 (1.8)
 3 A: ~It was the secon' time,~

In this extract a pause⁹ follows in line 2 after A in line 1 has approved an answer with an accepting *jar* (*yer*) and thereby possibly completed the (question)/answer/approval-sequence. In this pause it is possible for the participants to re-open the sequence and modify or comment on some part of it. This doesn't happen, though, and after 1.8 seconds A then initiates a new (question)/answer/approval-sequence in that she continues to read the next sentence in the assignment aloud (line 3).

That the number of activities participants can do in study group interaction, in this way is limited to answering the assignment questions and approving the answers, thus facilitates a recursive application of the (question)/answer/approval-sequence. As illustrated in figure 3 this results in a series of (question)/answer/approval-sequences:

Fig. 3: The Recursive Application of the (Question)/Answer/Approval-Sequence

(question)/answer/approval (question)/answer/approval
 (question)/answer/approval ...

As shown in this section the basic organization of the study group turn-taking system consists of a single sequence of answers to assignment questions and approvals of these answers which is recursively applied in the interaction. By restricting the activities which the study group participants can perform in this way, the study group turn-taking system resembles those for most types of institutional interaction rather than the one for ordinary interaction. In the following section – where I will turn to the social organization of the study group turn-taking system – we shall, however, see a trait resembling the turn-taking system for ordinary interaction rather than any of those for institutional interaction.

5 The Social Organization of the Study Group

The social organization of any group of interactional participants is, at least in part, managed by the turn-allocation component of the current turn-taking system. In that the turn-allocation component, as mentioned earlier, manages the distribution of turns amongst the participants in a given interactional activity, it thus defines the participants' relative participation rights and obligations in this activity (Sacks et al., 1974, p. 696). Not only may such a distribution of participation rights and obligations organize the participants into different interactional identity categories (Antaki & Widdicombe, 1998; Zimmerman, 1998); it also allows for – and may even

⁹ Again (cf. note 6), that silences between two (question)/answer/approval-sequences are pauses and not gaps, will become clear in a subsequent section.

contribute to create – either interactional equality or asymmetry (Drew, 1991, pp. 21-22; Linell, 1990).

In what follows I will attempt to describe the social organization of the study group. First, I will show that the turn-allocation component of the study group turn-taking system – by pre-allocating different participation rights and obligations to them and thereby organizing them into three interactional identity categories – creates an interactional asymmetry between the participants. Secondly, I will show that the turn-allocation component – by distributing these interactional identities in a rotational manner that makes the turn-taking system systematically and consistently “go around the table” – equalizes the participation asymmetry present in each single (question)/answer/approval-sequence.

5.1 The Interactional Identity Categories in Study Group Interaction: Creation of a Local Participation Asymmetry

In ordinary interaction the turn-taking system doesn't pre-specify who gets to and/or should speak when, i.e. it doesn't pre-allocate particular participation rights and/or obligations to each participant. Instead, this is something the participants negotiate locally on a turn-by-turn basis by means of a set of prioritized turn-allocation rules (Sacks et al., 1974, pp. 696, 704-5, 711). In this way the turn-taking system for ordinary interaction allows for both interactional equality and interactional asymmetry and it leaves it to the participants to – on an ongoing basis – negotiate and re-negotiate one or the other (Drew, 1991, pp. 21-22; Linell, 1990, pp. 168, 172-73; Zimmerman, 1998, pp. 91-92). In many types of institutional interaction, on the other hand, the turn-taking systems distribute different participation rights and obligations to the participants, organizing them into different interactional identity categories (Drew, 1991, p. 22). Thereby such institutional turn-taking systems both create and maintain an interactional asymmetry between the participants.

In study group interaction the turn-taking system – like in many other types of institutional interaction – organizes the participants into different interactional identity categories by distributing different participation rights and obligations to them. Specifically, the study group turn-taking system organizes the participants into three interactional identity categories which I have chosen to name: answerer, 'approver', and skipped participant. The answerer is the participant to whom the study group turn-taking system has pre-allocated the right and obligation to provide an answer to the assignment questions for a given sentence, i.e. a solution proposal and an explanation proposal. The following extract gives a basic, unproblematic example of this:

Ex. 8: [LSJ/St.Grp/TL/1:12]

1	C:	e::h ~she is the daughter of (the/a)
2	C:	rich father~
3		(.)
4	C:	fordi det al'så det den der ~of~ funktion because it PRT it that there ~of~ function <i>because it's well it's that of function</i>

In this extract C answers the assignment questions for the current sentence in that she in lines 1-2 reads the sentence including her choice to insert the definite article into it aloud, and in that she in line 4 explains this choice by reference to a grammatical rule.

That the study group participants orient to answering the assignment questions as being the right and obligation of only one of them, can be observed in cases where the answer isn't produced in such an unproblematic manner. In the following extract, which has been presented earlier, the participant who produces the solution proposal, thus doesn't immediately provide an explanation proposal. The other non-answering participants still orient to it as being her right to provide the explanation proposal, though:

Ex. 2a: [LSJ/St.Grp/TL/1:5]

1 B: e:hm ~He lives in::;~
u:hm ~He lives in::;~
uhm He lives in

2 (.)

3 B: ~the state of texas~

4 (.)

5 B: ~in ju es ↑ai::~ ((USA))

6 (0.6)

7 B: °.mt°
°.mt°
.mt

8 (0.9)

9 B: ehm
uhm
uhm

10 (1.1)

11 B: Der >står godt nok det der med<;
It >stands PRT that there with<;
It does say that thing about

When the two non-answerers, A and C, in lines 6, 8, and 10 as shown earlier withhold any kind of response after the answerer, B, has produced a solution proposal (lines 1, 3, and 5), they thus not only show their orientation to the answer as not complete until also an explanation proposal has been produced. By not attempting to provide an explanation themselves, they also show an orientation to it as being B's right as the answerer to produce that.

Similarly, that the participants orient to it as being not only the right, but also the obligation of one of them to answer the assignment questions, can be observed in cases where the answer isn't immediately produced:

Ex. 9: [LSJ/St.Grp/TL/3:2]

1 (2.4) ((all three looking in books))

2 A: .hn h*e h*e fjeg vil ikk' ha' den ((looks at B))
| .hn h*e h*e fI will not have the
| I don't wan't the

3 A: næst'f he he hn=.hhHH
nextf he he hn=.hhHH
next one

4 (2.6)
 * 5 B: >ska' jeg ta' den<
 >shall I take it<
 should I take it

Just prior to this extract the participants have completed a (question)/answer/approval-sequence and it is now relevant for A¹⁰ to initiate an answer to the assignment questions for the next sentence. In line 1 a pause follows in which all of the participants are looking down at the assignment in their books, however, and not until after 2.4 seconds does A take the turn. She doesn't give an answer though. Instead she starts to laugh and states that she doesn't 'want' the next sentence while she looks at B (lines 2-3). In that A in this way explicitly refuses to provide the answer instead of just waiting for someone else to take the turn and provide an answer, she shows that she orients to it as being her obligation to answer the assignment questions for the current sentence. In addition to this it should be noted that B after a 2.6 second pause in line 4 takes the turn in line 5 and offers to answer the assignment questions to the current sentence for her, i.e. for A. In that B offers this – as opposed to simply assuming that she would have to provide the answer after A's refusal to do so – she too shows an orientation to it as being A's obligation to provide the answer.

Although it would seem that the nature of the right and obligation associated with the answerer identity category, would limit the participants' orientation to this identity category to being observable only in the answer activity component, it is actually possible to observe this orientation in the approval activity component as well. In cases where a modification of the answerer's original answer is necessary for the participants to approve the answer in the approval activity component (cf. extract 5), the participants thus demonstrably orient to the modification – being essentially a part of the answer – as something that ought to have been produced by the answerer. This is observable in the latter part of extract 5 which has been reproduced here:

Ex. 5a: [LSJ/St.Grp/TL/1:2]
 7 (1.4)
 8 A: <°tro[r jeg (ogs')°°>
 <°think I (too)°°>
 I think so too
 9 C: [>JA=DET EN AFGRæ]ns<ning ((looks up & at B))
 >YES=It A DELImita<tion
 YES IT'S A DELImitation
 10 C: bestem(me)lse ikk' og',
 determi(na)tion not also,
 determination right
 * 11 B: ja,=
 yes,=
 yes

When the non-answerer, C, in lines 9-10 in this extract produces a candidate explanation which as previously mentioned contains a specification of the answerer B's original explanation, she thus

¹⁰ I will return to the question of which participant should initiate the next answer after a given (question)/answer/approval-sequence has been completed in the following section.

occurrence of an ordinal number in the sentence as an argument. An ordinal number which she in line 3 specifies as *first*.¹¹ After this a pause follows in line 4 in which neither the approver, B, nor the other non-answerer, C, responds to the answer. 3.5 seconds thus elapses before B in line 5 finally produces an *mhm* and nods her head once, thereby approving A's answer. As soon as B has done this, the skipped participant, C – although she for 3.5 seconds hasn't done or even attempted to do anything – also produces an approval of A's answer. In line 6 she thus produces a change-of-state marker, *nå* (*oh*), followed by an agreement marker, *ja* (*right*), displaying that she has understood A's explanation, that it has given her some new insight, and that she based on this insight agrees with A (Heritage, 1984a). That C waits for more than 3.5 seconds to respond to A's answer, but then responds immediately after B has done so, indicates that she until then withheld her response in order to allow B to be the one to approve A's answer first. She thereby shows an orientation to it as not being her, but B's right, as the approver, to approve the answer.

Likewise in the next extract where both of the two non-answerers again approve the answer. Therein the one of them who by the turn-taking system has been pre-allocated the right to approve the answer, can be shown to orient to it as being her right – and not the right of the other non-answerer – to do so. She thus demonstrably orients to being the one who gives the final and most explicit approval of the answer – i.e. towards being the one who 'on record' approves the answer:

Ex. 5b: [LSJ/St.Grp/TL/1:2]

1	B:	>tror faktis' det noget< khrnhh=og gøre >think actually it something< khrnhh=and do actually think it has got something khrnhh to do
2	B:	me'=at det en bestemt alder; with=that it a (definite/specific) age; with it being a (definite/specific) age
3		(.)
4	C:	<u>M</u> ; <u>M</u> ; <u>M</u>
5		(.)
6	A:	<u>M</u> ., ((nods twice)) <u>M</u> ., <u>M</u>
7		(1.4)

¹¹ Even as A is still specifying her explanation in line 3, C starts to nod her head slightly. Thereby she may visually be displaying either understanding of A's explanation specification or agreement with her answer to the assignment questions. The sequential positioning of the nod, simultaneously with the specification, does, however, suggest that it's function first and foremost is to display understanding of this specification and not to accept the answer as such. An interpretation which is supported by C's subsequent interactional behaviour (see the analysis).

- 8 A: <°tro[r jeg (ogs')°°>
<°think I (too)°°>
I think so too
- 9 C: [>JA=DEt EN AFGRæ]ns<ning ((looks up & at B))
>YES=It A DELImita<tion
YES IT'S A DELImitation
- 10 C: bestem(me)lse ikk' og',
determi(na)tion not also,
determination right
- 11 B: ja,=
yes,=
yes
- * 12 C: ='a;
'es;
yes

As already shown in the analysis of extract 5, the (question)/answer/approval-sequence in this extract reaches a possible completion point after the approver, C, and the other non-answerer, A, in lines 4 and 6 has acknowledged and minimally accepted the answer given by the answerer, B (lines 1-2). After a 1.4 second pause in line 7 A and C almost simultaneously take the turn, though. A re-completes the sequence in that she upgrades her previous acceptance of B's answer to *tror jeg også* (*I think so too*) in line 8, whereas C in lines 9-10 produces a candidate explanation that specifies B's original explanation proposal. Although A and C as mentioned initiate their turns almost simultaneously there is a slight difference in their onsets. When C initiates her turn A has thus already produced the first sounds of her *tror* (*think*). That C in spite of this initiates a turn, might seem to only be the result of latency, i.e. that C at her onset doesn't orient to A's turn (Jefferson, 1986, p. 164). However, since C from the start produces her turn with an increased volume and thus competes for the turn, she reveals that she actually does orient to it (French & Local, 1983). The question then is why C in this way would choose to initiate a turn in competition with A – which problem does she thereby solve (Schegloff, 1992a, p. xviii; Schegloff & Sacks, [1973] 1984, p. 76)?

At this point only the first sounds of the verb *tror* (*think*) has been produced. Yet, since B in her explanation used the exact same verb (line 1), even these few sounds indicate that A's turn most likely will be a response to B's answer. Also, they show that A is going to agree with B. Thus, a disagreeing response would have been prefaced by for instance hesitation markers and markers of token agreement (Pomerantz, 1984, pp. 64-65, 70-77). And finally, they project that more is to follow, i.e. that the response is going to be more elaborate than A's previous acceptance from line 6. All in all aspects that reveal that A's turn is about to become the hitherto most explicit approval of B's answer. However, when C in lines 9-10 as mentioned produces a turn which by far surpasses the first possible completion point of A's turn, she in a sense sequentially deletes it. The preference for contiguity in interaction thus means that the last relevance has greater priority than the first and that it should be addressed first (Sacks, 1987, pp.

58-60).¹² Furthermore, in that C doesn't produce just any turn, but a candidate explanation which B can either confirm or disconfirm, she at the same time makes a receipt of B's response relevant; a receipt which she – in that there is a bias for the prior speaker to become next in interaction (Sacks et al., 1974, p. 708) – ought to give herself, thereby allowing her to be the one to give the final approval of B's answer. Something which thus also happens in line 12. In this extract we thus have the approver, C, showing her orientation to it as being her right to approve the answer given by the answerer, B, in that she – when the other non-answerer, A, has initiated a turn that by projection would become a more explicit approval of the answer – overlaps and sequentially deletes this contribution in a way that allows her to become the final approver herself.

That the participants orient to it as being not only the right, but also the obligation of one of them to approve the answer to the assignment questions, can be observed in cases where the approval isn't immediately forthcoming. In the following, previously presented extract the participant who has been pre-allocated the right and obligation to approve the answer, thus doesn't produce an approval after the answer has reached a possible completion point. The participants demonstrably orient to it as being the approver's obligation to do so, though:

Ex. 3a: [LSJ/St.Grp/TL/1:19]

5 A: °foran ~one~;°
°in_front_of ~one~;°
in front of one

6 (5.2)

7 A: eller er du ikk' enig ((looks up & at B))
or are you not in_agreement
or don't you agree

8 B: jøi ((gaze in her own book))
yes
yes

9 (.)

10 B: jeg sad og kigged' på noget andet undskyld
I sat and looked at something other sorry
I was looking at something else sorry

When the answerer, A – as mentioned after having reached a first possible completion point of her answer and after having re-occasioned an approval from the approver, B, once (line 5) – in line 7 in this extract asks a question that overtly addresses B's opinion on the adequacy of her answer, she thus doesn't just show an orientation to an approval as relevant (cf. extract 3). In that she selects B as the next-speaker by using the personal pronoun, *du* (*you*), in the second person singular form and by looking at her, A also shows that she orients to it as being specifically B's obligation to provide this approval – as opposed to it being the obligation of either B or the other non-answerer, C, alike. Likewise, when B in line 10 responds to the question by accounting and apologizing for not having approved A's answer, she doesn't just show an orientation to an

¹² It should also be noted that C at the same time indirectly performs a visual exclusion of A when she – as mentioned in the analysis of extract 5a earlier in this section – selects B as the next speaker by looking at her.

approval as relevant (cf. extract 3). In that she doesn't challenge the orientation to it as being her obligation to provide the approval, which A shows by selecting her as the next-speaker, but implicitly accepts it by accounting and apologizing for the absence of such an approval, B thus also shows that she too orients to it being specifically her obligation to approve the answer. That B orients to this too, is also – and perhaps particularly – salient from the observation that B responds the way she does in line 10, in spite of the fact that she is looking in her book and thus (most likely) doesn't see A's visual selection of her as the next-speaker – i.e. she shows her orientation to it as being her obligation to approve the answer independently of A's selection of her as next speaker.

Although the approver identity category's right and obligation to approve the answer to the assignment questions primarily concerns the approval activity component, the approver actually seems to have an obligation in the answer activity component as well. The approver thus assumes responsibility for the answerer producing an approvable answer. This is observable in the following extract where the answerer has difficulties explaining her solution proposal:

Ex. 12: [LSJ/St.Grp/TL/1:9]

1 C: ~(he's dead/his death) in one year. year

2 C: one year~ °°undskyld°°
one year~ °°sorry°°
one year sorry

3 (0.4)

4 C: øhm::
uhm::
uhm

... ((11.2 seconds of interaction omitted))

13 (1.9)

14 C: det ~year~ som fbeg[rebf] ((A points in C's book))
it ~year~ as fconceptf
its year as a concept

15 (A): [j(h)]a ha ha
y(h)es he he
yes he he

16 (1.7)

17 A: °den der°
°that there°
that one

18 (1.7)

19 A: tror du ikk' ba[re det fordi der står ~one~]
think you not just it because there stands ~one~
don't you think it's just because it says one

20 C: [JA DER HAR JEG DET IKK']
YES THERE HAVE I IT NOT
YES THERE I HAVEN'T GOT IT

21 A: 'a
'es
yes

22 (.)

23 C: ja=okay ~one~; jø; >det go' være<
yes=okay ~one~; yes; >it good be<
yes okay one yes that could be

In this extract the answerer, C, proposes a solution to the first of the assignment questions by reading a sentence aloud in lines 1-2. After that she struggles for quite a long period of time to explain her choice not to insert the definite article into the sentence (lines 3-13). In line 14 she then gives a joke explanation¹³ which might indicate that she has given up finding an actual one. When she does this, the approver, A, reaches over and points to a specific passage in C's grammar book, directing C's gaze to it. C looks at the passage, but doesn't respond and after a pause of 1.7 seconds A then furthermore produces a *den der (that one)* in line 17, verbally explicating that she was pointing at the grammatical rule that explains the sentence. Again a pause of 1.7 second pause follows in line 18, though, and in line 19 A then articulates the rule by incorporating it into a question to C, *tror du ikke bare det er fordi der står one (don't you think it's just because it says one)*. C overlaps this question with a turn of her own in line 20. Nevertheless, in line 23 she responds to the question and agrees with A's suggestion as to why the definite article shouldn't be inserted into the current assignment sentence. In this extract we thus see how A as the approver of the upcoming answer assumes responsibility for the answerer, C, reaching an approvable answer by means of, *inter alia*, a pointing gesture and even an articulation of the problematic part of the answer.

Finally, the skipped participant is the one who hasn't been pre-allocated any right or obligation by the turn-taking system at all. Since the only relevant activities in study group interaction as shown earlier is to answer the assignment questions and to approve the answers, and since the study group turn-taking system as we have just seen, pre-allocates the right and obligation to answer the assignment questions to one participant and the right and obligation to approve this answer to another, it can thus easily be inferred that the turn-taking system doesn't pre-allocate any kind of rights or obligations to the remaining non-answerer. The study group turn-taking system thus doesn't require a third participant to operate.¹⁴ The following extract provides a basic example of how the third participant in a (question)/answer/approval-sequence doesn't have to participate in neither the production nor approval of an answer to the assignment questions for a given sentence:

Ex. 1a: [LSJ/St.Grp/TL/1:4]

1 A: ~It was the secon' time,~
 2 (.)

3 A: ~she had said no:~,
 4 (0.9)

5 A: D*et igen fordi det ↓(*ornsd-)*.
 I*t again because it ↓(*ord'nal_nu-/w*ednesd-)*.
 Again that's because it's (ordinal nu-/wednesd-)
 6 (.)

¹³ That line 14 is a joke is clear from the preceding interaction. At some point the participants thus note that the explanations to the sentences very frequently are that the definite article precedes a concept, after which they treat every occurrence of sentences with a concept as laughable. C seems to play on that in this extract in that she suggests that the concept-explanation is so common that it must be the right one also in this case.

¹⁴ Nor – in larger groups – a fourth or a fifth for that matter.

7 A: Ordenstal,
Ordinal_number,
Ordinal number

8 (2.4)

9 B: iJa, ((nods once))
iYes,
Yes

In this extract we, as previously mentioned (cf. extract 1), have A answering the assignment questions in lines 1-7 and B approving the answer in line 9, whereas the third, skipped participant, C, doesn't perform any kind of action – neither verbally nor visually.

That the third participant isn't pre-allocated any rights or obligations by the study group turn-taking system, doesn't preclude her from participating in the interaction, though. One of the most fundamental insights about interaction is, thus, that it is normatively oriented to by its participants (Heritage, 1984b, pp. 242-44, 1988, p. 128). This means that although the skipped participant doesn't have to do anything, she can.¹⁵ However, if she does choose to do so, then she demonstrably orients to it as being neither her right, nor obligation to do so.¹⁶ She thus typically constructs her contribution in a way that displays this orientation. This can be observed in the following extract:

Ex. 13: [LSJ/St.Grp/TL/1:5]

1 B: texas;
texas;
texas

2 (0.7)

3 C: Hm:. ((small upwards nod with head))
Hm:.
Hm

4 (.)

5 A: m:,
m:,
m

6 (0.4)

7 A: °ja, °
yes,
yes

8 (0.5)

¹⁵ Not only can the skipped participant participate in the interaction – she might indeed have to. This is due to the task-oriented nature of study group interaction where the participants work together to solve a number of assignments on English grammar (Szymanski, 1999, p. 1). This thus means that the skipped participant has an interest in participating if the two participants, to whom the turn-taking system has pre-allocated participation rights and obligations, i.e. the answerer and the approver, don't seem to arrive at an acceptable solution to the assignment for a given sentence.

¹⁶ As do the other participants. Thus, when an approver such as C in extract 5b above displays an orientation to it as being her right to approve the assignment questions, she consequently also displays an orientation to it as not being the right of the other non-answerer, i.e. of the skipped participant, who – in the case of extract 5b – is A.

9 A: Jeg >(sidder/sad) og tænk' på<
I >(sit/sat) and (think/thought) about<
(I'm/I was) thinking about whether

10 A: om det ogs'=e- Om det den de:r
if it also=i- If it that the:re
whether it also i- Whether it's that

11 (.)

12 A: regel me' det der me' når det følges
rule with that there with when it followed_is
rule about that thing with when it's followed

13 A: af et ~Of~, om de:t den der gør det;
by an ~Of~, if i:t it that does it;
by an Of if that's what does it

14 (0.9)

15 A: at det så skal hedde,
that it then shall be_called,
that it then should be

16 (.)

* 17 B: a::h,
a::h,
a::h

18 (.)

* 19 B: ~the state of~;

In this extract B finishes an attempt to explain her solution proposal in line 1 which the approver, C, and the skipped participant, A, approve by means of minimal acknowledgement and agreement tokens in lines 3, 5, and 7. Even though there is now both an answer to the assignment questions and an approval of this answer so that the current (question)/answer/approval-sequence is possibly complete, A takes the turn again in line 9 and suggests an alternative explanation to B's original solution proposal (lines 9-10 and 12-13). Through the construction of her turn she demonstrably orients to this act of her suggesting an alternative explanation, as not being ratified by the turn-taking system, though. First of all, she initiates her suggestion with a description of how she came to think that there might be an alternative explanation. With *jeg (sidder/sad) og (tænker/tænkte) på* ((I'm/I was) thinking about) in line 9 she describes it as something that just happened to pop into her head – as by coincidence and even though it wasn't supposed to – and which she thus isn't responsible for and cannot be blamed for. Secondly, she continues with an *om (if)* in line 10 whereby she projects uncertainty about the accuracy of her alternative explanation. Thirdly, she uses an *også (also)* in line 10 to signal that her suggestion isn't a challenge or in opposition to B's original explanation proposal, but rather an addition to it. And fourthly, she uses the two expressions *den der* (line 10) and *det der* (line 12) (both: *that there*) which intuitively seem to make her suggestion more tentative and somehow detach herself from it – as if to display that she isn't fully committed to either the correctness of her proposal or to her even posing it. When A in line 13 reaches a possible completion point neither the answerer, B, nor the approver, C, responds, however. After an 0,9 second gap in line 14 A then takes the turn again (line 15) and produces a TCU that lacks a complement, thereby setting the stage for one of the other participants to finish it and thus officially be the one to produce the correct answer to the assignment questions for the current sentence (Lerner, 1995, p. 119). In lines 17 and 19 the answerer, B, then actually responds

by producing a change-of-state marker, followed by a completion of A's utterance. In this extract we thus have the skipped participant, A, showing her orientation to herself as having no right to contribute to the current (question)/answer/approval-sequence, through her use of mitigating resources and methods in the construction of the answer modification proposal, she nonetheless produces.

This organization of the participants into different identity categories through pre-allocation of different participation rights and obligations, creates – in a given (question)/answer/approval-sequence – a trifold interactional asymmetry between the participants. Both the answerer and the approver thus have greater participation rights than the skipped participant who has none. Furthermore, each of them have different rights in different positions, differentiating them as well. As we shall see in the following section, however, the turn-taking system for study group interaction systematically and consistently equalizes this local participation asymmetry over a series of three or more (question)/answer/approval-sequences.

5.2 Rotational Allocation of the Interactional Identity Categories: Equalization of the Local Participation Asymmetries

As mentioned in the previous section the turn-taking system for ordinary interaction doesn't pre-allocate particular participation rights to certain participants, but allows the participants to negotiate and re-negotiate their interactional identities locally on a turn-by-turn basis. During an interactional encounter the participants in ordinary interaction can therefore take on several different interactional identities. Conversely, since the turn-taking systems for most types of institutional interaction – as also mentioned earlier – organizes the participants into a specific set of interactional identity categories,¹⁷ the participants in such institutional interactions maintain the same interactional identities throughout the interactional encounters (Zimmerman, 1998, pp. 90-95).¹⁸

In this respect the turn-taking system for study group interaction seems to combine traits of both the turn-taking system for ordinary interaction and those for institutional interaction. On the one hand the study group turn-taking system – like the turn-taking systems for many types of institutional interaction – organizes the participants into specific interactional identity categories by distributing different participation rights and obligations to them (see the previous section). On the other hand it only pre-allocates these interactional identities for one (question)/answer/approval-sequence at a time, thereby – like the turn-taking system for ordinary interaction – allowing each participant's participation rights to change during an interaction.

Although the study group turn-taking system – similar to the turn-taking system for ordinary interaction – allows the participants' interactional identities to change during the

¹⁷ Such as doctor-patient in medical interactions, teacher-student in classroom interaction, interviewer-interviewee in news interviews etc.

¹⁸ The participants do not have to maintain these pre-allocated interactional identities, but if they don't the interactional encounter will cease to be the given type of institutional interaction and become something else – such as a confrontation (Schegloff, 1988/89).

interaction, it doesn't allow them to be locally negotiated and re-negotiated for each (question)/answer/approval-sequence. Instead, the study group turn-taking system pre-allocates the different participation rights and obligations that organizes the participants into the three mentioned identity categories, to the participants in a rotational manner. Over a series of (question)/answer/approval-sequences this rotational pre-allocation of the participants' interactional identities makes the study group turn-taking system systematically and consistently "go around the table." This can be observed in the following extract:

```

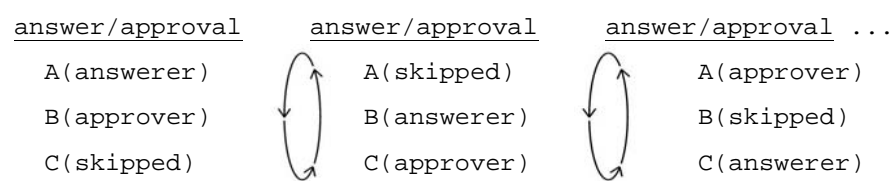
Ex. 14: [LSJ/St.Grp/TL/1:3-1:5]
* 1 C: ~THE~ foran ~>following<~. |
      ~THE~ in_front_of ~>following<~. |
      The in front of following } 1. Sequence
* 2 A: ja*r, ((B nods three times)) |
      ye*r, |
      yer |
      (1.8) |
      4 A: ~It was the secon' time,~ |
      ... |
      11 A: Ordenstal, |
           Ordinal_number, |
           Ordinal number } 2. Sequence
      12 (2.4) |
      13 B: iJa, ((nods once)) |
           iYes, |
           Yes |
      14 (1.1) |
      15 B: e:hm ~He lives in::i~ |
           u:hm ~He lives in::i~ |
           uhm He lives in } 3. Sequence

```

In this extract C reaches a possible completion point of an answer when she in line 1 finishes an explanation proposal. A then completes the ongoing (question)/answer/approval-sequence by approving the answer with a *jar* (*yer*) in line 2. In this first sequence C is, thus, the answerer, A the approver, and B the skipped participant. In line 4 A then initiates a new answer and hence a second (question)/answer/approval-sequence in which she is the answerer, by reading the next sentence in the assignment aloud. After A has reached a possible completion point for her answer with the production of *ordenstal* (*ordinal number*) in line 11, B approves the answer with a *ja* (*yes*) in line 13. In this second sequence A who in the prior, first sequence was the approver, is now the answerer, B who in the first sequence was the skipped participant, is the approver, and C who was the answerer, consequently, is the skipped participant. In line 15 B then initiates a third sequence by reading the next sentence aloud, whereby she becomes the answerer. In this extract we thus see the study group turn-taking system's pre-allocation of the interactional identity categories answerer, approver, and skipped participant rotate systematically and consistently around the table.

This rotational pre-allocation of the interactional identity categories to the study group participants which over a series of (question)/answer/approval-sequences results in the turn-taking system “going around the table”, is illustrated in the following figure:

Fig. 4: The Rotational Identity Allocation



As this figure illustrates, once a given (question)/answer/approval-sequence is possibly complete, the participant who in this sequence is the approver, will be the one to continue the interaction into the serially next sequence by reading the next sentence in the assignment aloud and hence initiate the next answer, i.e. this participant will become the new answerer.¹⁹ Also, the participant who in a given (question)/answer/approval-sequence, is the skipped participant, will in the next sequence become the new approver, whereas the participant who in a given sequence is the answerer, will become the skipped participant, and so forth for each new (question)/answer/approval-sequence.

Over a series of three or more (question)/answer/approval-sequences this rotation of the study group turn-taking system creates and/or maintains overall social equality amongst the participants. Since the interactional identity categories are rotationally allocated, the turn-taking system thus systematically and consistently compensates for the participation asymmetry which these identity categories – in each local (question)/answer/approval-sequence – create between the participants (see the previous section). This rotational aspect of the study group turn-taking system seems to be the participants' solution to being engaged in a task that locally requires distributed and asymmetrical interactional identities, without any of them being a representative of a formal institution. Thus, in most types of institutional interaction one of the participants will typically be a representative of a formal institution and/or have a specific task to perform and/or goal to achieve (Drew & Heritage, 1992, p. 22).²⁰ In study group interaction the participants do have a specific task to perform – namely solving a number of assignments on English grammar – which as shown throughout this paper is reflected in the organization of their turn-taking system, in most aspects being similar to those for institutional interaction. None of them are, however, a representative of a formal institution. By allowing the identity allocation to rotate, the participation asymmetries consequential of the institutional traits of/in the study group turn-taking system, are however dissolved on an overall scale.

¹⁹ It is worth noticing that the fact that it is the participant who in a given (question)/answer/approval-sequence is the approver, rather than the participant who is the skipped participant therein, who initiates the serially next sequence, may be a way of managing the decision of when one (question)/answer/approval-sequence is complete and thus of when the next can be initiated, without making it an overt topic in the interaction. Since the approver has the right and obligation to approve the answer to the assignment questions for a given sentence, she thus determines when a current (question)/answer/approval-sequence is possibly complete and therefore when the next answer can be initiated.

²⁰ I.e. the doctor in medical interaction, the teacher in classroom interaction etc.

Before proceeding to the concluding remarks, one further aspect of the rotational turn-taking system for study groups should be mentioned, namely the rotation direction of the turn-taking system's identity allocation. In all of the examples presented so far the rotational direction has been from A to B to C, i.e. counter clockwise (cf. figure 1). That the identity allocation is rotating in this direction and not in the opposite, clockwise A C B-direction, seems to be something the participants negotiate when they enter the study group turn-taking system – i.e. in their transition from ordinary to study group interaction. Therein the participants thus negotiate their interactional identities for the first (question)/answer/approval-sequence and thus also which way around the table the identity allocation should rotate.²¹ This can be observed in the following extract:

```

Ex. 15: [LSJ/St.Grp/TL/-1:1]
      1  A:  .tlk=oka(y);
          .tlk=Ok(a)y;
          .tlk Okay
      2      (0.8)
*     3  A:  >ska' jeg start'<,
          >Shall I start<,
          Should I start
      4      (1.0)
      5  B:  Ja,=
          Yes,=
          Yes
      6  C:  =M,
          =M,
          M
      7      (0.7)
      8  A:  ~It was >the first< tim:e=Hhh

```

Previous to this extract the participants have been joking around and laughing. In line 1 A, however, produces an *okay* (*okay*) which seems to suggest a shift in activity from joking around to something potentially more serious (Thornborrow, 2003, p. 11). In line 2 a gap of 0.8 seconds follows. The other participants' silence – as opposed to for instance a continued joking around – can be taken as a passive acceptance of the suggested change of activity, though. A also treats it as such in that she in line 3 proposes that she 'goes first' – that is, in that she self-selects as the one to go through the first sentence in the assignment. In line 4 a gap with a duration of 1.0 second then follows. In line 5 B, however, accepts A's self-selection with the agreement token *ja* (*yes*) and in line 6 C does the same with a latched *m* (*m*). After an 0.7 second pause in line 7 A

²¹ As mentioned earlier (cf. note 19) it is always the participant who in a given (question)/answer/approval-sequence is the approver and not the participant who is the skipped participant therein, who initiates the serially next sequence. By negotiating who has which identity in the first (question)/answer/approval-sequence in the study group interaction, the study group participants thus simultaneously negotiate which way around the table the turn-taking system's identity allocation should rotate.

then starts to read the first sentence in the assignment aloud in line 8, thereby entering the study group interaction.²²

Besides accepting that A becomes the first answerer, B and C – by means of their lines 5 and 6 – furthermore seems to be negotiating who of them becomes the approver and who becomes the skipped participant in the first (question)/answer/approval-sequence and thereby also which way around the table the turn-taking system's identity allocation should rotate. That C waits for 1.0 second to accept A's self-selection but then responds immediately after B has done so, thus indicates that C withheld her response until B had responded. By doing that she seems to be orienting to B as the approver and hence towards herself as the skipped participant (cf. extract 11). This is supported by the observation that C responds with a *m* (*m*) which is a less explicit acceptance than B's *ja* (*yes*). Thereby she thus leaves it to B to be the one to accept A's self-selection 'on record' (cf. extract 5b). The order in which B and C accept A's self-selection thus seems to be constitutive of their interactional identities as approver and skipped participant, respectively, in the first (question)/answer/approval-sequence. In this extract we thus see that the participants – as they negotiate the transition from ordinary to study group interaction – also negotiate their interactional identities for the first (question)/answer/approval-sequence and hence the initial rotation direction of the study group turn-taking system's identity allocation.

Although the participants seems to negotiate the initial rotational direction of the study group turn-taking system as they enter the study group interaction, this direction isn't final, but can be re-negotiated during the interaction. The participants can thus negotiate a rotation reversal. This can be observed in the following extract which is an extended version of an already presented sequence:

Ex. 9a: [LSJ/St.Grp/TL/3:2]

1 (2.4) ((all three looking in books))

2 A: .hn h*e h*e fjeg vil ikk' ha' den ((looks at B))
 .hn h*e h*e fI will not have the
I don't want the

3 A: næst'f he he hn=.hhHH
 nextf he he hn=.hhHH
next one

4 (2.6)

5 B: >ska' jeg ta' den<
 >shall I take it<
should I take it

6 (0.3) ((A nods and looks down in her book))

7 A: hnh heh he fja gør lig' detf
 >shall I take it<
should I take it

8 (0.3)

²² Although the participants have been negotiating the initiation of the study group interaction since line 3, it is not until A in line 8 starts to answer the assignments questions for the first sentence by reading this sentence aloud, that the study group turn-taking system is actually operating (Greatbatch, 1988, p. 415).

9 B: °okay°
°okay°
okay

10 (0.4)

* 11 B: jeg har bare skreven=øh ~>the dinner<~
I have simply written=uh ~>the dinner<~
I've simply written the dinner

Just prior to this extract the participants have as mentioned earlier, completed a (question)/answer/approval-sequence. Since C in that sequence was the answerer, A the approver, and B the skipped participant, it is now relevant for A to take on the interactional identity as answerer by reading the next sentence in the assignment aloud, and thereby rotate the turn-taking system one step in the counter clockwise A B C-direction. This doesn't happen, however. On the contrary, after a pause of 2.4 seconds in line 1 A states that she doesn't 'want' the next sentence (line 2) – i.e. she overtly refuses to answer the assignment questions for it. After a 2.6 second pause in line 4 B then offers to answer the assignment questions for her (line 5). Since C was the answerer in the previous (question)/answer/approval-sequence, B thereby essentially offers to reverse the rotation direction of the turn-taking systems identity allocation from the counter clockwise A B C-direction to the clockwise A C B-direction.²³ In lines 6-7 A accepts the offer both visually and verbally and after an acknowledging *okay* (*okay*) in line 9, B then starts to answer the assignment questions for the next current sentence in line 11, thereby effectively bringing the re-negotiated clockwise rotation direction of the turn-taking system into operation. In this extract we thus see the participants negotiate a reversal of the rotation direction in which the study group turn-taking system pre-allocates the three interactional identity categories, from the counter clockwise A B C-direction to the clockwise A C B-direction.

Such a rotational reversal doesn't seem to be without consequences, though. Afterwards the question of who is to be the next answerer, thus seems to become a recurring problem and even an overt topic in the interaction. This is visible in the following extract which occurs after the rotational reversal, demonstrated in extract 9a above:

Ex. 16: [LSJ/St.Grp/TL/4:6]

1 (4.4)

2 C: m:: >ER DET MIG<
uhm:: >IS IT ME<
uhm IS IT MY TURN

3 (0.5)

²³ At this point in the interaction it is also possible that B could simply be offering to skip A in the current round without reversing the rotation direction. From the following interaction it is, however, clear that a regular rotational reversal occurs. This holds true for the one other similar instance in the data upon which this article is based.

4 (B): °°m- [↓m.°°
°°n- ↓n.°°
(no)
5 C: [nej °d[e:t°]
no °i:t°
no it's
* 6 A: [.hh]h ~breakfast: <wasn't>~

Just prior to this extract the participants have completed a (question)/answer/approval-sequence in which B was the answerer, A the approver, and C the skipped participant. Since the current rotational direction of the turn-taking system's identity allocation is the clockwise A C B-direction, it is now relevant for A to answer the assignment questions for the next sentence. This doesn't happen, though – at least not immediately. Instead, after a 4.4 second pause in line 1 C takes the turn in line 2. While looking in her book she produces a pre-speech hesitation marker, *m* (*uhm*), which seems to signal that she's about to initiate an answer to the assignment questions. Instead of doing that, however, she asks – with a marked change in volume and pronunciation pace – if it is 'her turn', i.e. if she is supposed to provide the next answer. After an 0.5 second gap (line 3) the prior answerer, B, denies this in line 4 and in line 5 C also produces a short, almost inaudible turn expressing a realization of it being someone else's obligation to do so. In line 6 this someone else, namely A, thus also initiates the next answer. In this extract we thus see the question of who should initiate the next (question)/answer/approval-sequence, which prior to the rotational reversal was managed smoothly and without incident, becoming an overtly topicalized problem in the interaction.

6 Concluding Remarks

This article has shown that the study group turn-taking system consists of a basic (question)/answer/approval-sequence which is recursively applied in the interaction, resulting in a series of (question)/answer/approval-sequences, and that the study group turn-taking system organizes the participants into three interactional identity categories by pre-allocating specific participation rights, obligations, and responsibilities to them, thereby creating an interactional asymmetry between them. It has, however, also shown that the study group turn-taking system over a series of (question)/answer/approval-sequences compensates for this asymmetry in that the interactional identities creating it, are allocated to the participants for only one sequence at a time and in a rotational manner which on an overall scale systematically and consistently equalizes the local participation asymmetries. With respect to the restrictions on the activities which the participants can perform in the interaction and with respect to the pre-allocation of participation rights and obligations to the participants, this configuration of the study group turn-taking system resembles that of the turn-taking systems for most types of institutional interaction. In that the rotational aspect of the identity allocation achieves a social equality between the participants, it, however, gives the study group turn-taking system a trait which rather resembles that of ordinary interaction. However, whereas ordinary interaction allows for, but doesn't necessarily lead to social equality, the study group turn-taking system creates and maintains such equality systematically and consistently – i.e. the achievement of social equality through the rotational identity allocation is part of the institutional character of the study group turn-taking system. As I have argued throughout this article, this rotational identity allocation seems to be the participants'

way of managing being engaged in a task which locally requires institutional turn-taking traits such as distributed interactional identities and the consequential participation asymmetry, without any of them being a representative of a formal institution, but rather all being equal participants in the task. Last, but not least, this article has gained technical insights on several aspects, such as how the participants manage the transition from ordinary into study group interaction, how the rotational direction of the identity allocation is initially negotiated, and how it can be re-negotiated during the interaction.

Every insight shown in this article holds true for all of the sixty-six (question)/answer/approval-sequences in the data upon which this article is based (cf. note 3). Since the article is based solely on video recordings of a three-party study group, the generalizability of the insights gained here is, however, less certain. For instance, it isn't possible to say for certain how the turn-taking system would be configured for a differently sized study group. Some predictions can be made, though. First of all, it can be predicted that there wouldn't be a skipped participant in a two party group, whereas there would probably be two or more in a group of four or more parties. This is due to the basic organization of the study group turn-taking system. Because answering the assignment questions and approving the answers are the two only activities relevant in this type of study group interaction, only an answerer and an approver is required. Thus, no additional categorization of any additional participants is necessary. Secondly, although the described turn-taking system doesn't put an upper limit to the possible number of participants in the interaction, it can be predicted that there may in practise be one because too many participants may otherwise have to agree on each answer, which could both lead to schisming (Sacks et al., 1974, p. 713) and make the question of 'who goes next' an overt topic in the interaction for each (question)/answer/approval-sequence. Thirdly, it can be predicted that the rotational direction of study group turn-taking system wouldn't be negotiated during the participants' transition from ordinary to study group interaction in a two-party group, since the interactional identity categories of answerer and approver would simply alternate between the participants for each (question)/answer/reception-sequence. In a group of four or more the negotiation of the turn-taking system's initial rotation direction would, however – in ways I dare not predict here – most likely become even more complex than shown in this article.

As a final point it should be mentioned that the term 'study group turn-taking system' which I throughout this article have used to refer to the described kind of rotational turn-taking system, probably isn't an entirely accurate and/or adequate designation. Thus, the configuration of the rotational turn-taking system probably isn't unique to study groups. More likely it can be observed in other interactions between some group of participants who are engaged in an activity that requires one task to be performed recurrently. Furthermore, it seems conceivable that a different study group or indeed the same study group at a different time might be engaged in an activity – such as discussing literature – which doesn't require a recurrent performance of the same task and where the rotational turn-taking system described here, thus wouldn't be employed. Whether these two alternative scenarios can be observed empirically and whether a better name for this kind of rotational turn-taking system should therefore be found, will, however – along with the predictions above – be a task for future research to uncover.

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