Gesture and coparticipation in the activity of searching for a word

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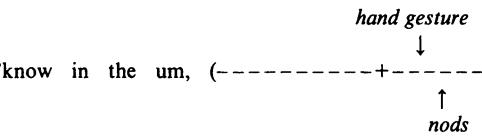
In this paper gesture will be studied by analyzing in some detail its organization within a particular activity, searching for a word. Such an approach is quite different from others that often study such phenomena by isolating gesture from the local, interactive circumstances of its production (see, for example, Morris et al. 1979). However, by investigating gesture within particular events, it is possible to begin to study in some detail not only how participants find it to be meaningful, but also how they use that meaningfulness as a constitutive feature of the social organization of the activities they are engaged in. Data for this analysis consist of videotapes of conversations recorded in a range of natural settings (for a more complete description of these data see C. Goodwin [1981: 33–46]).

We will begin by raising the issue of how participants find gesture to be a meaningful event. In the following, a speaker produces a small gesture, a wave of her hand, and immediately after this happens, the recipient nods toward her. Thus two parties are clearly working in concert; an action is performed by one and answered by another. However, how these participants interpret each other's actions, and even what they are doing together, remains inaccessible unless the activity they are involved in, and the types of coparticipation that activity makes possible, are investigated in detail. Talk is transcribed using a simplified version of the Jefferson transcription system (Sacks et al. 1974: 731–733). Dashes within parentheses mark tenths of seconds with a silence; a full second is marked by a plus sign (Example 1).[1]

Example 1. (G.126.788)



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By virtue of its sequential placement right after the gesture, the nod appears to constitute a response to the gesture. If this is correct, the recipient has in some particular way understood the gesture and responded to it. This raises the question of what the recipient understood the gesture to be. Unlike some gestures, such as those examined by Morris et al. (1979), this is not a stereotypic hand movement that encodes a clearly recognized meaning. Moreover, unlike many hand movements which obtain a clearly visible sense because of the talk which accompanies them, this hand gesture occurs in the midst of a silence. How then, was the recipient able to understand this gesture?

In this paper we will argue that such a gesture obtains its meaning by virtue of its placement within an activity which is clearly recognizable to the participants — a word search. In order to show this, we will examine the interactive structure of word searches in some detail. We discover first, that as activities, word searches provide organization for a wide range of vocal and nonvocal phenomena, including both stereotypic and nonstereotypic gestures, and second, that participants attend to such phenomena because they are part of the currency through which appropriate coparticipation in the activity is displayed and negotiated.

Evidence that participants recognize an activity that can be loosely glossed as searching for a word, is provided by the following. After *A* pauses in mid-sentence, *B* (who also attended the wedding *A* is describing) provides a word that could complete that sentence (Example 2).

Example 2. (G.126:712)

A: Her dress was white,
(0.7)
B: Eye let.
[
A: Uh Eyelet. (0.8) Embroidered eyelet.

The fact that *B*, someone other than the original speaker, produces what might be the sought-for word, demonstrates that searching for a word is not simply a cognitive process which occurs inside a speaker's head but rather is a visible activity that others can not only recognize but can indeed participate in.[2]

The nature of that participation and its appropriateness is, however, something to be worked out by the participants through a process of interaction with each other. For example, in these data, though *B* in fact produces the same word that *A* uses eventually, *A* does not acknowledge her contribution. Before *B* even finishes, *A*, without attending to *B* in any way, provides her own outcome to the search.

What happens in these data contrasts with what is found in Example 3 (examined in more detail later in this paper). In lines (7) and (9), *A*, the party who initiated the search, explicitly acknowledges the correctness of *B*'s offered outcome. *B*'s participation in the sequence is ratified by subsequent moves tied to her talk, which establish her as the party who provided the outcome to the search.

Example 3. (G.50:4:00) A *has been looking for the name of a restaurant.*

1. *A:* °What was th'name'v the // place tch!
2. *B:* Ho: yeaum.
3. *A:* I can't thi//nk.
4. *B:* Sir: uh no.
5. *A:* I know it w//as-
6. *B:* Steak'n A:le.
   (0.2)
7. *A:* Yeah r:right.
8. *B:* In Mount Pleasant.
9. *A:* r:Right. (0.2) I knew it wz someplace out on Fifty One. = But anyway
10. thet he had a rilly good article on that.

In both of these examples someone other than searcher provides an outcome to the search. This contribution is, however, treated quite differently in each case. In Example 2 it is not acknowledged, and the speaker goes on to produce a second outcome of her own. Schegloff et al. (1977) have argued that, in the organization of repair, there is preference for a self-over-other outcome; what happens here may be consistent with such a preference. By not allowing *A* to produce the word on her own, *B* may show that she does not consider *A* to be capable of finding it. Moreover, it may be that though *B*'s outcome is correct in the sense that it accurately describes the dress material, it does not capture precisely what *A* was searching for. Note that shortly after saying 'eyelet', *A* elaborates this as 'embroidered eyelet'. However, while providing the outcome to someone else's word search may indeed be undesired in some cases, Example 3 demonstrates that on other occasions it might be strongly appreciated. This raises the possibility that rather than operating simply on the basis of a fairly general preference, participants might be able to negotiate within the activity itself the type of coparticipation it is to receive.

A first aspect of this process that can be investigated are the ways in which recipients might demonstrate that they are attending to the word search, while still allowing the speaker to produce the word being sought. When visual records of word searches in face-to-face conversation are examined, it is found that during word searches recipients characteristi-

cally gaze toward the speaker. In Examples 4 and 5, the gaze of the recipient is marked below the utterance. A line indicates that the recipient is gazing toward the speaker, while the absence of a line would indicate that the recipient is gazing elsewhere.

Example 4. (G.50:7:45)

A: Came right out'v, (- -) where'd she go to. Magnus E:rwin.
B: _____

Example 5. (G.50:8:30)

A: B't, a-another one that wentuh school with me wa:s a girl na:med uh, (- - - - - - -)
B: _____
A: W't th'hell wz'er name. = Karen. Right. Karen.er name wz Karen something or other.
B: _____

Support for the possibility that the recipient's gaze toward the speaker is not simply an accidental type of alignment but something that participants systematically work to achieve is provided by examples in which recipient is not initially gazing at speaker. Typically in such a situation when the word search begins nongazing recipients start to move their gaze toward the speaker (for an analysis of this process see Goodwin [1981: 65–68]). In Example 6 the movement bringing the gaze to the speaker is indicated with a series of dots. Here, just after the word search begins, the recipient starts to move her gaze to the speaker, and, in fact, is looking toward her by the time the search is brought to completion.

Example 6. (G.50:3:45)

A: He pu:t uhm, (- - - - - - -) tch! Put crabmeat on th'bo::dum.
B: ..... _____

The recipient's gaze toward a speaker is, of course, not restricted to word searches. Indeed this is one of the principal ways in which hearership is displayed within face-to-face conversation. This does not mean, however, that gaze given during a word search is without meaning. First, it demonstrates the recipient's continued orientation to, and coparticipation in, the talk in progress. Moreover, such orientation is given, even though that talk has run into such difficulty that the party acting as speaker is now silent. There are a range of activities that speakers can perform during talk that call for diminished coparticipation, but word searches are not one of them. Indeed word searches are one of the activities that can be used to obtain heightened attention from a recipient, for example, to obtain a gaze which has not previously been

given. Second, by gazing toward a speaker who is searching for a word, the recipient visibly displays waiting for the outcome of the search. A gaze toward a speaker who is involved in a word search thus enables recipients to show attention to that activity while still allowing the speaker to produce the word being sought.

The data examined so far provide some evidence that participants do, in fact, attend to word searches as a distinct activity. This raises the question of how they are able to recognize that a word search is in progress. It might be thought that such recognition is clear and straightforward; the speaker simply shows in some fashion that a word relevant to the talk in progress is not available to her. However, data indicate that on many occasions, speakers show that they lack a word without proposing a search for it. Consider again Example 5, in which someone's name is at issue. At the end of the search, the speaker finds the party's first name but she also indicates that she does not have the second name, yet does not propose that a search be pursued (Example 5a). Though a name is explicitly marked as unavailable, the search is treated as closed and the talk moves forward to other matters. Thus, showing that one is not able to find a word does not in itself indicate that a search for that word is necessary. Indeed, showing that an unavailable word will not be pursued is one of the characteristic ways that unsuccessful word searches are ended.

Example 5a. (G.50:8:30)

A: B't, a-another one that wentuh school with me wa:s a girl na:med uh, (- - - - - - -) W't th'hell wz'er name. = Karen. Right. Karen. er name wz Karen something or other. (0.4) A:nd uh, sh:e, (0.7) uh, wentuh khigh school with Ro:n.

How, then, do participants recognize not simply that a word is unavailable but that a search for it is in progress? Sacks et al. have noted that one property of the basic units used to produce talk within conversation — what they call turn-constructional units — is that such units 'allow a projection of the unit-type under way, and what, roughly, it will take for an instance of that unit-type to be completed' (1974: 702). Characteristically in a word search such a unit is interrupted after it has begun but before it has reached a point of possible completion.[3] Note for example the pause in Example 6. The point of interruption is frequently marked by a variety of nonlexical speech perturbations, such as sound stretches and 'uh's' which signal the initiation of self repair (on this issue see Schegloff et al. [1977: 367]). By virtue of what it does to the conversation of the moment, such an interruption makes visible not just the unavailability of a word, but a *relevant* unavailability — one that

impedes the ongoing development of the talk in progress, and which is no longer moving toward its projected completion.

When a word search interrupts a unit of talk that has begun but has not been recognizably completed, there are a number of consequences. First, achieving an outcome to the search emerges not only as a distinct task, but also as one that is relevant to the talk already in progress, since it is precisely some type of outcome that will permit the interrupted talk to move to word completion once again. Second, while the term 'word search' is a useful gloss for the phenomena being investigated, it clearly does not describe what is being sought with adequate accuracy. However, within specific instances of the activity itself, the initial talk provides participants with information about what is being sought on this particular occasion, while establishing parameters for what will constitute an appropriate outcome to the search.

By virtue of the talk initially produced, participants are able to see, not the precise phenomena being sought (in which case there would be no reason for the search), but enough about such phenomena to judge whether some particular piece of talk may or may not constitute a possible outcome to the search. Consider again Example 5: shortly after the search is entered the speaker produces a wh-question. However, since the talk already produced has specified that the item being sought in the search is a name, the wh-question is clearly not being offered as a possible outcome to the search. Related to the phenomena just noted (in that participants are able to distinguish between outcome and nonoutcome once a search has been opened, it becomes possible to produce not just an outcome, but a range of other types of talk as well, which will nonetheless be seen as relevant to the search. With such additional talk, participants can perform a range of actions from commenting on their involvement in the search to providing further information about the phenomena being sought. Moreover the placement of these actions within the scope of the search provides resources for their comprehension. In a different sequential environment, such as a police interrogation, a wh-question like the one found in Example 5 would constitute a very different type of action — a demand for a name, rather than a comment about one's inability to find it. Thus, the recognizably incomplete unit that a word search makes visible, on the one hand establishes the relevance of an outcome being reached if the activity in progress is to move toward completion. On the other hand, it opens up the possibility of incorporating other types of phenomena into the activity, while distinguishing them from outcome and providing a framework for their interpretability.[4]

The activity of searching for a word is also visible in nonvocal phenomena. First, during a word search speakers frequently gaze away

from their recipients; indeed, if they have been looking toward the recipient they will actively withdraw their gaze as the search begins (see Examples 5b, 6a, and 4a).

Example 5b. (G.50:8:30)

A: B't, a-another one that wentuh school with me wa:s a girl na:med uh, (- - - - - - -)
W't th'hell wz'er name. = Karen. Right. Karen. er name wz Karen something or other.

Example 6a. (G.50:3:45)

A: He pu:t uhm, (- - - - - - -) tch! Put crabmeat on th'bo::dum.

Example 4a. (G.50:7:45)

A: Came right out'v, (- -) where'd she go to. Magnus E:rwin.

Not all gaze withdrawal, however, indicates that a word search is happening; many other types of involvement can be indicated by gaze aversion — for example, gestural appreciation of the talk in progress (M. H. Goodwin 1980) or preparation for disengagement (C. Goodwin 1981: Ch. 3). The issue therefore arises as to how a recipient finds those gaze withdrawals that are part of a word search. First, as already indicated, such gaze withdrawals usually occur near perturbations in the talk displaying initiation of a word search. In addition, examination of data indicates that speakers involved in word search produce a characteristic 'thinking face' as they withdraw their gaze (Examples 5c, 6b, and 4b). This gesture is not only quite stereotypic, and recognizable in many different situations (see, for example, Argyle and Cook 1976: 122; Bales 1970: 67; Scheflen 1974: 70), but it has, in fact, been found in other cultures (Worth and Adair 1980: 26). Indeed, psychologists have been able to show that one turns one's head in different directions, depending on the type of material — for example, verbal as opposed to mathematical — being searched for (see Argyle and Cook 1976: 21–23; Gur 1975; and Kinsbourne 1972).

Example 5c. (G.50:3:45)

A: B't, a-another one that wentuh school with me wa:s a girl na:med uh,(- - - - - - -)

thinking face

A: W't th'hell wz'er name. = Karen. Right. Karen. er name wz Karen something or other.

Example 6b. (G.50:3:45)

thinking face

A: He pu:t uhm, (- - - - - - -) tch! Put crabmeat on th' bo:dum.

Example 4b. (G.50:7:45)

thinking face

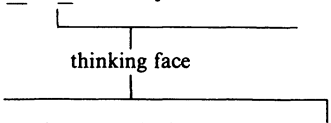
A: Came right out'v, (- -) where'd she go to. Magnus E:rwin.

However, the very fact that the gesture is so stereotypic, and so intimately connected to other phenomena implicated in the activity of searching for a word, raises the question of whether it is in fact communicative. It is at least theoretically possible that the gaze withdrawal and thinking face, rather than providing social displays to other participants, are simply adjustments to the cognitive demands that a word search imposes (for example, ways of eliminating distracting visual information). Some demonstration that recipients in fact attend to the thinking face and find it capable of giving them information not already available vocally, is provided by the following. In Example 7, *A* is able to find from visual evidence alone that *B* is engaged in a word search. The first part of *A*'s turn, 'Who was it', asks *B* for a name. As this request is being spoken (and note that with the 'Who' in turn-initial position, the fact that *B* is being asked for a name, probably the name of the person she has just talked about, is available right from the very beginning of *A*'s turn), *B* performs a thinking face. Without leaving room for a reply at the end of this question (the equal sign after it indicates that the next piece of talk is spoken without any gap whatsoever), *A* provides a second sentence which talks specifically about *B* being engaged in a word search (Example 7). In these data *B* produces no vocal signals whatsoever that indicate entry into the word search. *A* is able to find that she is engaged in such an activity from visual evidence alone. Moreover seeing this is consequential for *A*'s own actions. After finding that *B* is engaged in a word search, *A* modifies her own action to adapt to what she has seen by producing new talk at the end of her wh-question, a place where the floor would ordinarily be transferred to the addressee of the question. This new talk does several things. First it avoids the gap that would arise if *A* were

not able to provide an answer to the question. Second, it nonetheless deals with the absent answer by offering a seeable reason for why *B* would not be able to produce such an answer. Third, by raising the possibility that *B* might not be able to provide the answer requested, *A* provides resources for leaving the search (an activity she may have responsibility for initiating) without achieving a successful outcome to it. Rather than indicating that she definitely expects an answer and is awaiting it, *A* shows *B* that she recognizes that the item asked for might be unavailable, and indeed *B* quickly abandons the search, offering as her reason that she cannot now remember the name. In brief, these data enable one party to find, from visual phenomena alone, that another is engaged in a word search. Moreover, making such a finding is relevant and consequential for the observer; she changes her own behavior because of what she has seen and is thus able to adapt her actions to those of her coparticipant.

Example 7. (G50:8:40)

B: Yeah there wz en: older girl = a girl older than myself thet wz from Sewickley. Very much'v a jo:ck.
(0.4)
A: Who was it. = Dju r'member? =

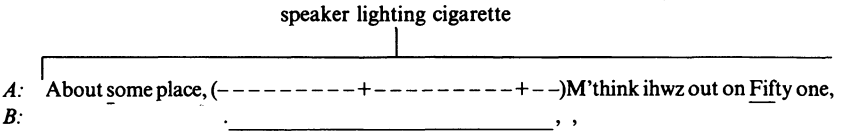


B: = Uh::, can't think'v er name now. Nob'ddy I- h'v ever seen since. I've seen Candy- I saw Candy McCrady in Pappagallo one day.

Insofar as gestures associated with word-search are attended to by recipients, it becomes relevant to investigate in more detail what information such visual phenomena might provide them. It may be noted first, that the thinking-face gesture makes visible a speaker's continuing involvement in a word search during moments when she is not actually speaking. For example, in 6, when the recipient's gaze reaches the speaker, she is neither speaking nor looking toward the recipient. However, by virtue of the thinking-face gesture, the recipient is able to find that the speaker is still involved in speech production and continues to treat her as a speaker by gazing toward her with rapt attention, even though talk has not yet resumed. On the face of it this seems quite unremarkable and indeed it might be argued that the speaker's prior talk alone is sufficient to make visible her involvement in the word search. However, consider what happens in the following. Here the speaker stops talking in mid-turn-constructional unit. In these data, whether a word search is in progress is not as clearly evident as it had been in much of the

other data examined, since there are no sound stretches or perturbations in the talk immediately preceding the speaker's silence. Nevertheless, the recipient, who had previously withdrawn her gaze from the speaker, immediately starts to return it. However, when her eyes reach the speaker, she finds not a thinking face, but that the speaker is involved in lighting a cigarette. The recipient continues to look for a while, but once again withdraws her gaze before the speaker resumes talking:

Example 3a. (G.50:4:00)



In these data a recipient who moves her gaze to a speaker after the beginning of a pause, finds that the silence is occupied with an activity unrelated to the talk in progress, and withdraws her gaze before speaker resumes talking.[5] By way of contrast, the recipient who found a thinking face in Example 6, maintained rapt attentiveness while the word search was brought to completion. This would suggest that, insofar as the thinking-face gesture is a visible indication of continued engagement in the word search and is a reason to wait for talk, even though the speaker is silent, such visual phenomena are consequential for recipients, even in cases where entry into the word search is signalled vocally. In essence such visual phenomena make available not simply what happened in the past, but what is happening at the moment; the speaker remains involved in the word search and thus it is relevant for the recipient to continue to attend her.

The displays of continuing involvement in the word search provided by visual phenomena are also important in other ways. For example, with them, the search is made visible as a discrete activity separate from other activities occurring before and after it. By framing the activity in this fashion such visual displays perform some of the same functions that vocal phenomena which delimit the search do. For example, they help make it possible to see a range of rather heterogeneous events — such as wh-questions, self-admonishments, and pauses — as intrinsic and congruent parts of a single activity. However, as a framing device visual displays do not simply duplicate information provided vocally. Reconsider Example 5c. In this example, gaze withdrawal and the beginning of the thinking face occur well before the place where the talk in progress is actually interrupted by the search, and even before the first perturbation in the talk, the sound stretch in 'wa:s', that might be an early signal of the search. Such early visibility of the search about to be initiated is relevant

to a range of interesting questions about the production of talk within conversation which are, however, beyond the scope of the present paper (for discussion of some of them see Schegloff [1984]).

For the sake of convenience, the speaker's thinking face has so far been treated as a rather static gesture. However, one of the great strengths of visual phenomena is that that they can make apparent the speaker's changing progress in the search, even at moments when no talk is in progress. In Example 8 the speaker reveals several distinct stages in her search for the word. Over the first 'um' she withdraws her eyes from the recipient and begins her thinking face. Then, at the end of the first pause, she visibly changes this face by lowering her eyelids. Right after this she produces a second 'uh'. As she finishes this sound she purses her lips on one side of her mouth. Then, after holding this expression briefly, she allows the pursed lips to slacken. Just after this happens, the recipient offers a possible solution to the search. Though what can be recognized as a thinking face is maintained throughout this process, the details of that face change in ways which seem to reveal a succession of attempts to recover the sought-for material. A first attempt appears to end just before the second 'uh', which, in turn, seems to mark a pursuit of the search into a new stage, and a last attempt might be found in the pursing and then slackening of the lips. Thus when the recipient comes in with his possible solution to the search he may have been able to see that the speaker has already abandoned several unsuccessful efforts to recover the sought-for material. If this is correct, then these data might still show an orientation to a preference for self-correction, even though it is the recipient who first offers a solution to the search. Not only is the recipient's proposed solution modulated with rising intonation[6], but he has provided the party who initiated the search with several distinct opportunities to provide an outcome to it herself which she has visibly been unable to utilize. From such a perspective, the recipient's contribution is helpful rather than intrusive, and indeed, the speaker not only acknowledges it but accepts it as essentially correct.

Example 8. (G.99:S20)

```
                                                          purses
                               withdraws          lowers   lips      slackens
                                 eyes              lids                lips
                                   ↓                 ↓       ↓           ↓
A:  Because apparently heroin was um, (----------+) uh, (---------+--)
B:  Used for opiate?
A:  Yeah.
B:  Y eah.
     [
A:    (for opium.)
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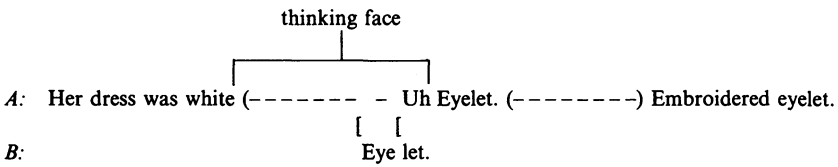
One way to explore such possibilities further would be to compare what happens in these data with what happens in Example 2a. There, the speaker did not even acknowledge the outcome to a search the recipient offered even though she produced the exact outcome a moment later. When the visible behavior of the participants in this sequence is examined, it is found that the recipient acts while the speaker continues to hold her initial thinking face. Here the recipient produces her outcome before the speaker displays that even her initial attempt at finding the word has been unsuccessful. Thus the recipient does not allow the speaker even a first opportunity to provide the outcome (opportunities being measured not in clock time but in visible cycles of the activity), something that might well be seen as intrusive, which is in fact the way speaker treats it.

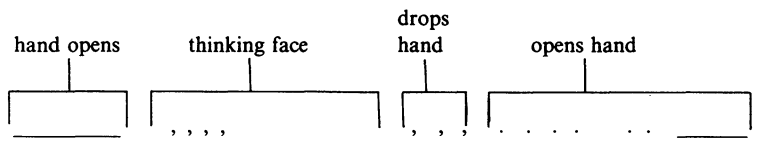
Example 2a. (G.126:712)



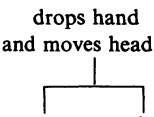
In the data so far considered, the speaker has kept her gaze averted from the recipient while engaged in the word search. However, if the activity can in fact contain a succession of stages, other possibilities arise. For example, after the initial failure(s) to recover the sought-for material, instead of waiting for the recipient to offer a possible outcome, the speaker might actively solicit the recipient's aid in the search (Example 9). For clarity, a transcript of the entire sequence will be presented first and then the stages will be examined in more detail. As the speaker enters the word search in line 2 he withdraws gaze from his recipient and assumes a thinking face.[7] He then shows his recipient that his initial attempt(s) to find the word are unsuccessful.[8] First he produces a self-admonishment 'Hmph!', which by virtue of its placement at this juncture in the activity can be seen as a comment about his failure to provide the word he is visibly searching for. At the same time, he lets a hand which has been held tensely throughout the search, go slack. Thus in a variety of ways, the recipient is able to see not only that the speaker remains unsuccessful in his search, but also that a noticeable change in the activity has occurred; a particular stage in it has ended.

Example 9. (G.79:452)

1. *A:* Y'know, when we were jumpin in um, (0.5)
2. When I first started a jump I jumped out'a these



3. one ninet-? (----------+----) Hmph! What the heck was it.
4. It looks like an old flying box car. (0.3) Whadda they call that.
   (0.8)
5. I don't // recall.



6. Looks like it- I think it's a (----------+----------+-----)
7. °I think it's a one nineteen.
8. *B:* Prop job.
9. *A:* Yeah,
10. *B:* Mm hm.

At this point, the speaker starts to produce a very different type of talk, a wh-question and as he does so, he returns his gaze to the recipient. Wh-questions are quite common in word searches (see Examples 4 and 5). However, a wh-question with gaze toward the recipient allows the speaker to propose to the recipient a very different type of coparticipation in the search than what has so far been examined. Instead of pursuing the search alone, the speaker is addressing the recipient actively and thus asking the recipient to help him find the word being sought. Moreover, in that the speaker is now asking the recipient to do something, and is in a position to see him, he is able to respond to what the recipient does. Thus in these data when the recipient does not provide an answer after the initial wh-question, the speaker makes available further information (line 4) — 'It looks like an old flying box car' — about the plane whose name is being sought. The speaker then leaves a visible place for the recipient to reply, the 0.3-second pause, and when no answer is forthcoming, he produces a second wh-question which at last receives a reply from the recipient. In essence, the activity has moved from a solitary search (to which particular types of hearership are nontheless relevant) to a multi-party one in which the recipient is being asked to actively help the speaker search for the word.

Shortly after the recipient indicates that he is unable to provide the sought-for word, the speaker (line 6) again withdraws gaze from him,

enters a new search, marks that as unsuccessful with both a change in head position and another hand drop, and then produces, with lowered volume, an outcome to the search that is specifically marked as uncertain through the preface, 'I think it's a'.

In these data one finds a range of different stages within the search which are separated from each other by visible changes in the speaker's gaze and gesture, as well as differences in the types of talk which occur in different stages. These stages are not, however, simply recycles of the original search. As he moves between different stages, the speaker changes the coparticipation status of the search, at first pursuing it as a solitary activity, then soliciting aid from his recipient, and then, when this is unsuccessful, pursuing it once again alone, and finally producing an outcome that he indicates he has less-than-complete confidence in. Crucial to the delineation of separate stages and the proposals about participation status within them, are the visual phenomena the speaker makes accessible to the recipient through the way in which he organizes gaze and gesture.

The following provides the opportunity to investigate in more detail some of the ways in which the participation of the speaker in a word search might be displayed and negotiated as the search unfolds through a series of distinct stages. For clarity, an audio transcript of the entire sequence (Example 3a) will be provided and then stages involved in it will be examined in more detail.

Example 3a. (G.50:4:00)

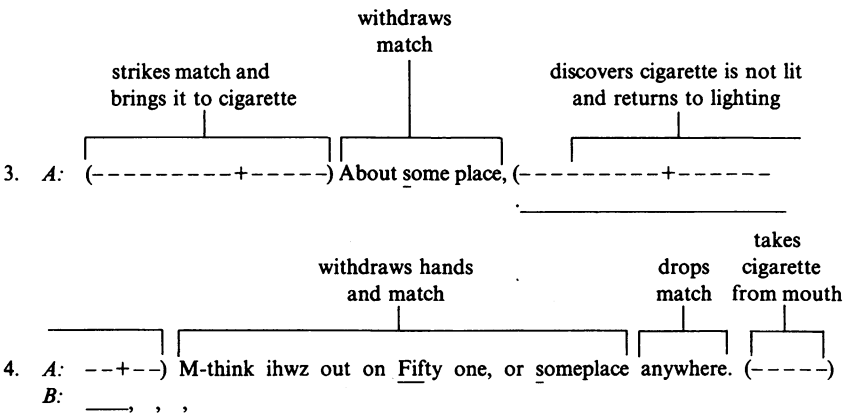
1. *A:* Ye-nd uh, (0.4) Muddy Ritz wz saying thet 'e had a rilly good
2. article- ur en article in the paper the other night.
(1.5)
3. *A:* About some place,
(2.0)
4. *A:* M-think ihwz out on Fifty one, or someplace anywhere.
(0.5)
5. thet wz like a steak place? (1.2) What was th'name'v the
6. place tch° I can't th ink.
[[
7. *B:* Ho:yeaum. Sir: uh no.
(0.5)
8. *A:* I know it w as-
[
9. *B:* Steak'n A:le.
(0.2)
10. *A:* Yah r:right.
11. *B:* in Mount Pleasant.
12. *A:* r:Right.
(0.2)
13. *A:* I knew it wz someplace on Fifty One. But anyway theh he'd hadda rilly
14. good article 'n

The sequence given in Example 3a is not only long but somewhat complex, and it will be useful to provide a brief overview of what will be examined in it before we move on to a more detailed analysis. First, it will be found that during lines 3–4, the participants have difficulty establishing an appropriate alignment to the search in progress. The recipient actively disattends it — an action that may be responsive to the speaker's concurrent involvement in another activity at this point. A second, quite different phase of the search is entered in line 5, when the search becomes visible as the activity in progress claims speaker's exclusive attention. Here the recipient returns her attention to the search without providing the type of active coparticipation in it that the speaker's actions propose are relevant. The activity moves to a third stage, once again quite different from those that preceded it, when the speaker deals with the recipient's lack of active response by turning away from the recipient while escalating her own involvement in the search. At this point, the recipient does begin to actively pursue the search, and indeed, eventually provides its outcome in line 9. The different types of coparticipation found during the search are achieved through the participants' careful monitoring of both the activity in progress and each other. They are organized through an ongoing process of interaction in which visual phenomena, including gestures, play a central part.

Analysis of this process begins by investigating what happens during lines 3 and 4, when the participants fail to achieve a shared orientation to the search in progress. One aspect of what happens here has already been looked at briefly. We noted earlier that when the recipient moved her gaze to the speaker during the pause after line 3, she found that the speaker was involved in lighting a cigarette, and she withdrew her gaze. The cigarette-lighting, in fact, causes the participants a number of problems here, and in order to make clear what is happening, it will be useful to briefly describe it. The speaker brings a match to her cigarette during the pause after line 2, and then resumes talk when she thinks the cigarette is lit. This talk attracts the recipient's gaze. However, during an initial puff after the pause, the speaker discovers that the cigarette did not get lit. Thus, at the point where she expected to be able to return her full attention to the talk — the place where recipient's gaze arrives — she discovers that she must relight the cigarette. This is the activity from which the recipient eventually withdraws (Example 3b). Immediately after the recipient's gaze leaves, at the beginning of line 4, the speaker produces further talk — an action that might well counter the recipient's disaffiliation by showing that, despite her problems with the cigarette, the speaker is still involved in the talk in progress. However, the recipient does not return the gaze, and indeed, the speaker is still engaged in the final stages

of the lighting, getting rid of the match. Thus in these data, the speaker is unable to show that her exclusive, or even primary, alignment is to the talk in progress, and the recipient refuses to continue to display hearership.

Example 3b. (G.50:4:00)



Let us now examine the talk produced here. It would be convenient to simply describe it as the beginning of the speaker's word search — indeed, some phenomena in it are quite consistent with such an analysis. For example a turn-constructional unit is interrupted in mid-course, and the speaker's talk in line 4 makes available further information about the 'place' noted before the pause (the name of which eventually becomes the information sought in the word search), in a way that reflects speaker's uncertainty about both the place and her current information about it. However, in other ways the status of this talk as a word search is less clear-cut than that of other examples we have examined. For example, there are no sound stretches or other perturbations before the speaker enters the pause at the end of line 3, the speaker does not visually show involvement in a search, and, in ways that cannot adequately be described here, her intonation in line 4 does not have quite the same quality found in similar phenomena in other searches. The recipient's lack of orientation during this talk may in fact be responsive to its somewhat problematic character.

That disaffiliation is not without consequences for the talk. If a search is indeed in progress it is being done without the gaze of a hearer, something that word searches characteristically get. Even if a search is not yet clearly in progress the talk here is receiving diminished coparticipation from its recipient. At the end of the first turn-constructional unit in line 4,

the speaker adds a phrase 'or someplace anywhere' that marks the talk just provided as no longer relevant, possibly incorrect, and no longer important. Thus the talk produced while the recipient was disattending is marked as not worth pursuing further.

In the data examined earlier in this paper, the participants were able to find, without difficulty, that a word search was in progress, and to align themselves to it in an appropriate fashion. Here, though the participants in fact monitor each other quite closely and respond in detail to what they see happening, mutual orientation toward the activity in progress is not established and indeed what precisely that activity is remains somewhat in doubt.

In line 5 the search becomes a very different kind of activity. The speaker, who has finally finished lighting her cigarette, turns to the recipient and produces a new unit of talk which ends with a rising intonation (Example 3c). It was seen in Example 9 that a gaze toward a recipient within a word search can solicit not just attentiveness, but active aid in attempting to find the word. Here, the power of this action is heightened by the rising intonation. As in line 4, the speaker provides the recipient with some of the information she has about the word(s) being sought, but now does this in such a way as to show the recipient that she is expected not only to listen to this information, but to use it to help find what is being searched for. As soon as the speaker looks toward the recipient, the recipient returns her gaze to the speaker. By moving as she does, the recipient shows that she recognizes that a different type of coparticipation is now being sought. Indeed, it may be that the word search, which now has the exclusive involvement of the speaker for the first time, emerges definitely as the activity which is in progress only at this point.

Example 3c. (G.50:4:00)

A: . . . . _____ , , , ,
5. Thet wz like a steak place? (= = = = = = = = = = + = =)
B: . . . . _____

However, though the recipient attends the search, she does not show the speaker that she too, is actively looking for the word. What the speaker does next shows that she is able to see this and indeed react to it. One characteristic place where response to a unit of talk can be found is just after the unit. At the end of this utterance, the speaker looks toward the recipient for a while. However, when no response from the recipient beyond simple attentiveness is forthcoming, the speaker withdraws her gaze from her. Thus when the speaker finds that the recipient is not about

to provide a response, she organizes her own actions in such a way as to show that she is no longer expecting one.

One possible way in which the recipient could have shown involvement in the search is with a thinking-face gesture. Indeed, this is one of the ways that she *does* show involvement several moments later. This raises the following possibility: if the thinking-face gesture can be observed to have visible sequential placement in the activity of searching for a word, for example, right after a request for help in the search, participants might then be able to see not only the presence of such a gesture, but also its absence.

When faced with a recipient who fails to provide appropriate coparticipation in a search, searchers have a variety of options for producing an appropriate next action. In the following, *A*, a recent nonsmoker, has been discussing having 'flashes' where he wants a cigarette. After the search is initiated, *A* brings his gaze to his wife, the other party included within the scope of his 'we' and thus a party who also has access to the material being sought. However, when his gaze arrives, he finds that instead of attending him she is involved in other activities (Example 10). The speaker might have chosen to pursue the search (see Goodwin [1981: Ch. 2] for an analysis of ways in which speakers can solicit the gaze of nongazing recipients). Here, however, he brings it to an immediate close by using an expression, 'of whatever', which completes the interrupted turn-constructional unit while showing recipients that finding whatever was being sought is no longer necessary for understanding the events in progress, and then moving his talk forward to new phenomena. In these data, a speaker who finds that he does not have the appropriate coparticipation from a recipient immediately closes the search.

Example 10. (G.26:12:45)

A: Like las'night we were watching some video tape.
(0.5)
brings gaze
to *B*
of what uh, (---------+-----) uh, (0.2) of whatever, en I noticed
B eats and
passes food
at one point thet my ha:nd jus' reached f'my pocket.

Returning now to the 'steak place' sequence, it is found that there the searcher makes a quite different response to the recipient's failure to

coparticipate in the search in a way in which the speaker proposes that that party should coparticipate. Though speaker turns away from the recipient, she makes that withdrawal part of a thinking-face gesture, a recognizable action that includes gaze aversion as one of its intrinsic components. At the same time she shows vocally that she is engaged in the search by saying with lowered voice, 'What was th'name'v the place' (Example 3d). Making the gaze withdrawal part of the thinking-face gesture has a number of consequences. First, the activity embodied by the gesture provides an observable account for why the speaker is turning away from the recipient. In that gaze, withdrawal is an appropriate component of this new activity, an activity that can legitimately claim the speaker's involvement at this point; it does not display disaffiliation from the recipient, as turning away without offering any reason might. Second, by entering the thinking face, the speaker shows that despite her lack of success in the word search so far, and her failure to engage the recipient's active help, she is not abandoning the search. Indeed, with the way in which she does the face — with a particularly 'aggravated' look, the description of which is beyond the scope of this paper — the speaker shows that she is not only pursuing the search, but actually escalating her involvement in it. Thus, unlike the speaker in Example 10 who abandoned the search, the speaker uses the thinking-face gesture to withdraw from the recipient while simultaneously intensifying her involvement in the search.

Example 3d. (G.50:4:00)

thinking face

5. *A:* Thet wz like a steak place? (---------+--) °What was th'name'v the
   B: . . . .

thinking face

6. *A:* place tch! I can't thi nk.
   Ho: yeaum Sir: uh no. (-----)

What the speaker does here is clearly visible to the recipient and might indeed be relevant to her in a number of ways. First, though the recipient has not actively helped in the search, she is attending it. Although the speaker has not obtained the type of coparticipation from the recipient

that she requested, this search has, nonetheless, an interactive status that the abandoned one in the last example did not have. By continuing to pursue the search, the speaker validates the ongoing attentiveness that the recipient gives it while showing that she is no longer awaiting a response from the recipient. The actions she performs are thus sensitive in fine detail to the particulars of what the recipient has done and is doing. Second, in these data, unlike the gaze withdrawals into thinking faces examined earlier, the recipient has already been invited to actively coparticipate in the search. The speaker's entry into the thinking face thus need not exclude the possibility of aid from the recipient. Rather the gesture demonstrates that, insofar as speaker continues to be engaged in this activity, it remains relevant for the recipient to be so too. Moreover, if the search continues to be pursued the recipient still has an opportunity to provide pertinent information if she has any.

At this point the recipient does, in fact, begin to display active involvement in the search. With the words 'Ho: yeaum' in line 7 she shows that she now realizes that she does have some recognition of what is being looked for.[9] Then, having accounted for entry into the search at this point, she withdraws her gaze from the speaker and begins to search for the word herself. Indeed, she is the one who finds it (line 9).

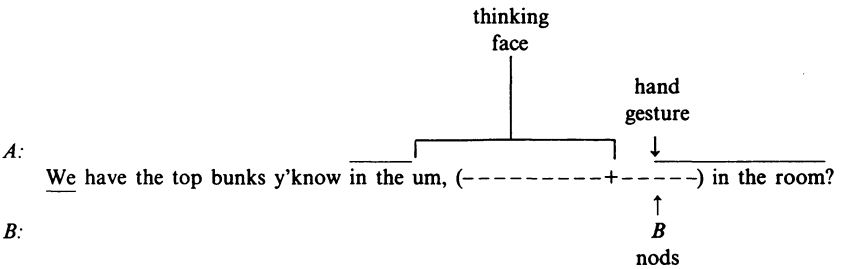
This sequence has provided the opportunity to investigate in some detail first, how a single word search might encompass a range of different types of participation, and second, how the pattern of coparticipation found at a particular point might be achieved and negotiated as the search unfolds through a systematic process of interaction between searcher and recipient.

Example 1 at the beginning of this paper raised the question of how a small hand gesture, produced during a strip of silence, could be interpreted as a recognizable action such that a recipient was able to answer it with a nod. What has been learned about how participants organize coparticipation within word searches provides us with resources that can now be used to try to answer that question.

First, it can be noted that the gesture occurs after a particular kind of event in the talk, the self-interruption of a turn-constructional unit. As has been seen, such an action is one of the characteristic ways in which a word search is initiated. The silence surrounding the gesture is thus occupied with meaningful activity. Second, as the speaker enters the silence she drops her gaze and performs a thinking face (Example 1a). Recipients are thus able to see, not only that the speaker has entered a word search, but also her ongoing involvement with it. Third, after holding the thinking face for a period of time, the speaker returns her gaze to the recipient. As we have seen, such an action has a number of

consequences. In itself the visible change in the thinking-face gesture shows recipients that the speaker has abandoned at least her initial pursuit for the word being sought. However, because this change also includes a movement of gaze toward a recipient, a change in participation status is also made visible. While it might have been inappropriate for the recipient to intrude into the search earlier (when the speaker was still engaged in her initial pursuit), the recipient's active coparticipation in the search is now not only appropriate, but sought by the speaker.

Example 1a. (G.126:788)



As she turns, the speaker also begins to produce the hand gesture. This action is not placed in an empty silence but rather at a precise point in the midst of an ongoing activity that participants not only recognize but act upon in detail. The gesture occurs at the moment where a change in coparticipation status is occurring and the recipient's aid in the search is being requested. By virtue of its sequential placement, the gesture can be seen to heighten the solicit made by the speaker's gaze toward the recipient, an interpretation entirely consistent with the nod that follows.

This leaves the question of what precisely the nod is doing. While the nod might be simply a display of heightened attentiveness, it seems much more likely that the nod is in fact an answer to the solicit, i.e., an assertion by the recipient that she has some sort of adequate comprehension of what the speaker is trying to say. But if the word search has not yet been completed, how is this possible? It has been seen that recipients do in fact attempt to find the material being sought in word searches. One of the resources they have is that part of the talk which was produced before the search was entered. The speaker's talk here not only projects something about what is being searched for (for example a place that 'bunks' could be 'in') but with the words 'you know', it also proposes that the recipient has some comprehension of what is being described. With such resources it does not appear at all unlikely that the recipient could be in a position to claim adequate comprehension, even though an outcome to the search has not yet been provided.

Quite frequently in the study of human behavior, the phenomenon of analytic interest is divorced from the local interactive circumstances of its production. Here, however, gesture has been analyzed by investigating, in some detail, its organization within specific instances of a particular activity, searching for a word. By taking such an approach we have been able to uncover some features of the organization of gesture that would not be accessible if gesture were isolated from the activities within which it emerges. Thus the hand gesture in Example 1 becomes meaningful because of its placement within a larger activity that includes many phenomena that initially appear to be quite unrelated to gesture. To understand it appropriately, participants must attend to a range of phenomena, including both vocal events, such as the interruption in mid-course of a turn-constructional unit, and visual ones, including other gestures and gaze. However, while the activity can provide the sense of the gesture, that relationship is reflexive; the gesture can provide detailed information about the current organization of the activity. Moreover this information is relevant to its recipient since visible changes in what is happening can call for different kinds of participation on his part. By attending to such phenomena, the analyst, instead of being content with a verbal gloss of what the gesture seems to mean, can begin to investigate in detail how the participants themselves not only find such meaning but how they use it as a social fact, an event that has seeable consequences for the organization of the activity they are engaged in.

Such an approach is relevant to other issues as well. For example, one very powerful current in anthropology, sociology, and linguistics has argued that a primary job of the analyst of human behavior is to discover what phenomena participants in social events attend to as significant, and how they use such meaningfulness in the organization of their activities.[10] Thus Goodenough (1970: 105) has described the ideal ethnography as a kind of how-to-do-it book, a description of what one would have to know and do in order to act in ways in which competent members of the culture being studied would find appropriate. However, all too often, ethnographers return from the field with a catalogue of meanings found in the culture without an analysis of how participants achieve such meaningfulness in the details of their interactions, or how they use it as a constitutive feature of the organization of their activities. By locating a phenomenon such as gesture in specific activities, we are able to discover, not only what resources participants use to find its sense, but also how such meaning is consequential for the events they are engaged in. We are thus able to begin to uncover some of the detailed interactive work through which participants weave phenomenal events in the social world into the recognizable entities they come to be as a product of that work.

Notes

1. See Goodwin (1981). Citations at the beginning of each example identify the data fragment on a particular tape.
2. For other analyses of how recipients might engage in searches for words that speakers show to be missing see Jefferson (1974), Gaskill (1980), and Schwartz (1980).
3. There are, of course, systematic exceptions to this generalization. For example, if someone else initiates the search, say by asking for a name, the speaker may enter it without producing any initial talk. Note Example 7.
4. For other analyses of ways in which a projection about later talk can organize a range of phenomena before that talk is actually reached, see Sacks (1974) and Schegloff (1980).
5. Ekman (1979: 185–186) notes that both the vocal and the visual signals used to show engagement in a word search might function socially to show recipients that even though a speaker is silent, they should not try to take the floor. This is certainly one aspect of the way in which these signals function interactively. However, the present data show that in addition to issues of turn-taking, i.e., who is to speak at the moment, such displays also function to organize coparticipation *within* the turn. In Example 3, though no interruption occurs, the speaker loses the recipient's orientation. Indeed, a major weakness of many attempts to investigate what hearers do in conversation is that they have focused primarily on issues of turn-taking, rather than on the organization of activities within the turn. The detailed description of brow behavior that Ekman provides must certainly be taken into account in future research on the visual organization of word searches.
6. For a further analysis of the issue of modulating other-outcome in repair, see Schegloff et al. (1977: 378–379).
7. Line 1, which may contain an even earlier entry into the search, will not be examined here.
8. The face, in fact, makes several distinct movements, withdrawing farther and farther from the recipient.
9. For analysis of how the term 'oh' might operate interactively to display recognition of changes in states of knowledge, see Heritage (1984).
10. For example, Sacks (1972: 332) argues that the student of social behavior 'ought to seek to build ... an apparatus which will provide for how it is that any activities, which members do in such a way as to be recognizable as such to members, are done, and done recognizable'. See also Garfinkel (1967). For a relevant statement from the perspectives of linguistics, see Pike's (1947) analysis of the distinction between etic and emic phenomena.

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