Situated accomplishment of well-being in interaction: A conversation-analytic study of instructor intervention, driver reflection and displays of (dis)comfort in voluntary post-licence training

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Abstract

Private car travel constitutes an important means of transportation for senior members of society: having access to a car is often key to gaining access to various services and activities. Among the retired population, many couples have adopted practices that promote driving performed by the husband while demoting driving performed by the wife. If the husband then ceases driving, the wife may be faced with the dilemma of having a need to drive, owning a car and holding a valid driving licence – but not having the skills and confidence to drive. Post-licence training offers a solution to such situations in providing a safe, supportive environment to practice. Nevertheless, as part of any training, drivers have to deal with various settings and situations, some of which may be emotionally intense and have adverse effects on the willingness to drive. This study takes a look at one such case, where an instructor treats a trainee driver’s conduct so problematic as to stop the dual-control car at a junction. The study examines how the participants attempt to establish, maintain and update their mutual understanding of the unfolding situation, how they produce and respond to displays of emotion, (dis)comfort in particular, and how those displays contribute to the course of the training, the ultimate goal of which is independent driving. The study thus explores how participants accomplish well-being in situ in interaction with one another. The study employs ethnomethodological conversation analysis and draws on video recordings from on-road post-licence training for older women drivers.

Keywords: car driving; conversation analysis; ethnomethodology; displays of emotion; instruction; intersubjectivity; mobility; older drivers; post-licence training; social interaction

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Introduction

In providing opportunities to interact with others and to participate in activities outside the home, private car travel plays a major role in the well-being of senior members of society (see, e.g. Metz, 2000; Mollenkopf et al., 2002; Siren & Hakamies-Blomqvist, 2009; Webber, Porter, & Menec, 2010). For this reason, it is considered important to find ways of supporting seniors to continue leading mobile, independent lives – ‘mobility’ here understood as movement through physical space and ‘independency’ as possibilities of doing so on one’s own (see Schwanen & Ziegler, 2011). One way of nurturing seniors’ mobility and independence is to provide post-licence training, i.e. additional, voluntary training for drivers who have already obtained a driving licence (see, e.g. Golisz, 2014; Hatakka, Keskinen, Gregersen, Glad, & Hernekoski, 2002). In Finland, for example, outside the densest urban areas, having access to a car is often key to gaining access to various services and activities, such as healthcare, shopping and travel for leisure. For women, an additional challenge may be posed by the fact that, at least among the retired population, couples often adopt practices of driving together that position the husband behind the wheel and the wife in the passenger’s seat. However, men are more likely to die younger, have serious health problems that also affect their capacity to drive or lose their driving licence after a mandatory medical examination. Women may therefore find themselves in a situation where they have a need to travel, own a car and hold a valid driving licence – but do not have the skills and confidence to drive. For these drivers, post-licence training may offer a solution in providing opportunities to revise and practice, thus promoting their mobility and independence and, consequently, supporting their overall well-being.

One way to approach the theme of ageing and well-being in this context is to examine in close detail actual instances of social interaction and activity out of which more durable states of affairs are formed. Focus may thus be on how possibilities to participate, i.e. to carry out “actions demonstrating forms of involvement performed by parties within evolving structures of talk” (Goodwin & Goodwin, 2004, p. 222), are opened up and taken up during moments of interaction, while it is recognised that any event or experience potentially has an effect on how people are to view the world in the future. For example, older drivers participating in post-licence training have to deal with various traffic settings and situations, some of which may be emotionally very intense and have adverse effects on the willingness of the drivers to continue or take up driving again. The way in which post-licence training is carried out thus in itself contributes to the well-being of older drivers in the moment and, by possibly increasing their independent mobility, supports their well-being in the long run.

In the present study, we explore the situated accomplishment of well-being in interaction through a qualitative single-case analysis. We take a close look at video recordings of post-licence training to examine a case in which an instructor first makes an actual physical intervention by stopping the car during on-road practice and in which the instructor and driver later deal with the various aspects of the intervention. More specifically, we examine how the participants attempt to establish, maintain and update their mutual understanding of the unfolding situation, how they produce and respond to displays of emotion, (dis)comfort in particular (Summala, 2007), and how those displays contribute to the course of the training, the ultimate aim of which is to support independent mobility. The study is organised as follows: We first provide a brief description of our data and methodological approach, and we give an overview of previous research within the field of ethnomethodology and conversation analysis as regards the interface between mobility, instruction and displays of emotion. The analytic section comprises five parts, each focusing on a piece of video data and offering a detailed analysis of the activities and interactions that take place. We conclude with a discussion of our observations.

Data and Method

The data were collected in a project where automatic and manual transmission was studied in behind-the-wheel training of older people who had a valid driving licence but had not driven at all or very little for several decades (Summala et al., 2011). The purpose was to determine to what extent an automatic gearbox would help such drivers to return to independent driving. The team placed an advertisement in a major newspaper to seek for volunteers to take part in post-licence training and to be at the same time recorded for research purposes. The training aimed at providing the participants a safe, supportive environment to practice and at promoting independent driving. The great majority of those who initially expressed their interest in the project were women, and the researchers therefore decided to recruit as participants thirty women between 59–70 years of age (for further details, see Summala et al., 2011). The data consist of brief questionnaires filled in before and after training, eye recordings, car telemetry data, error logs as well as video recordings of three one-hour driving sessions in real traffic and real time for each driver. The video recordings capture talk and other conduct by participants inside the dual-control, instrumented car.

In the present study, we focus on how a driver, during two consecutive driving sessions, drives through the same junction under the guidance of an instructor. Video recordings including this particular driver amount to approximately three hours, and we are mainly concerned with two brief but significant episodes from the second and third driving session. Excerpts of the data are presented in the form of transcripts and relevant screen-capture images, which have been blurred for anonymisation. The participants speak Finnish, and the transcripts include English translations below the Finnish originals. The transcripts follow conversation-analytic notation for talk (Jefferson, 2004) and other conduct (Mondada, 2014). See Appendix 1 of Behavioural Sciences at the University of Helsinki, Finland. Following the requisites of the approval, any studies that draw on the materials adhere to the WMA Declaration of Helsinki – Ethical Principles for Medical Research Involving Human Subjects.
for a list of the conventions that we use here.

The present study draws on ethnomethodological conversation analysis to explore how participants carry out social actions moment by moment employing a range of recurrent verbal and embodied resources and routine interactional practices (see, e.g. Garfinkel, 1967; Heritage, 1984; Sacks, 1992). Participants’ contributions are considered with reference to the ongoing sequence so that each social action shows an understanding of the previous one and is thus made available for ratification, rejection or revision by a co-participant in their subsequent action; in other words, participants are seen to work continuously towards establishing and maintaining intersubjectivity (see, e.g. Deppermann, 2015a; 2015b; Heritage, 1984, pp. 254–260; Mondada, 2011; Schegloff, 1992; Streeck, 2008). Key to adopting an ethnomethodological and conversation-analytic view on social action and interaction is, then, to treat participants’ utterances, facial expressions, gestures, body postures and orientations as well as their position and movement in relation to their surrounds (including, for instance, other people, various objects as well as features and structures of the setting) as potentially relevant, publicly observable and mutually recognisable (see, e.g. Neville, Haddington, Heinemann, & Raumioama, 2014; Streeck, Goodwin, & LeBaron, 2011).

While conversation-analytic studies are typically based on a collection of cases that have been systematically gathered from a set of data (see, e.g. Arminen, 2005, pp. 71–79; Sidnell, 2013, pp. 88–92) and while we have also annotated data from five different drivers for, among other things, giving and receiving feedback, drivers’ stance taking as well as instructor’s interventions, we decided to devote this study to a discussion of one single case for several reasons. Firstly, the case is representative of the kind of interactional work that the driver and instructor have to carry out in order to deal with the instructor’s interventions in general. Secondly, the case makes it possible to examine closely how a particular situation in a driving session unfolds over time and what kind of meanings the participants assign to it in the process. Finally, the instructor’s interventions are not very frequent in these data and the case that we discuss here is the only one in which the participants return to deal with the intervention at some length during a subsequent driving session.

**Mobility, instruction and displays of emotion in interaction**

Training sessions in which a participant is being instructed to drive a car are similar to various other educational settings in that they are typically organised around sequences in which the instructor first delivers an instruction and the student then follows it, giving the instructor an opportunity to monitor, assess and possibly correct the student’s understanding of the task at hand (see Lindwall, Lymer, & Greiffenhagen, 2015). In such sequences, the instructions consist mainly of verbal elements, whereas the actions to be carried out are primarily practical and involve, among other things, movement of the body and manipulation of car controls (De Stefani & Gazin, 2014). The design of an instruction already reflects the instructor’s expectation of what the trainee driver may master at that point of the training: for instance, an instruction such as ‘let’s turn right at the next junction’ only makes explicit ‘the final move of a series of actions’ that the driver has to carry out in relation to the constantly evolving traffic situation and thus sets up certain expectations about indicating, braking, changing gears, etc. as well as about the driver’s orientation and sensitivity to events in the current environment (Deppermann, 2015b, p. 73). If the student’s execution of the actions does not meet those expectations to a sufficient degree, or at all, the instructor may provide further instructions: for example, if the student prepares to turn right at the next junction but does not activate the indicator, the instructor may produce a corrective instruction that directs the driver to do so (Deppermann, 2015b; see also De Stefani & Gazin, 2014). That is, through movement of the head and body and through engagement with car controls – or through the demonstrable lack of movement and engagement –, the driver displays an understanding of what the relevant action at that moment is and how it relates to the larger ongoing activity, and the instructor builds on that display in order to advance, change or even intercept the course of the driver’s actions.

Drivers and passengers in cars in general orient to the constraints that the car sets on talk and interaction not only because the car represents a particular kind of space that, for example, allows merely side-by-side and front-to-back seating arrangements, but also because the car moves through space, making particular actions relevant for relatively limited periods of time (see, e.g. Goodwin & Goodwin, 2012; Mondada, 2012; see also van der Horst, 1990). For example, drivers and passengers may treat turning at a junction as immediately relevant, possibly urgent (Haddington, 2012) or passing of a junction as a compromise to the so-far unproblematic course of the journey, which calls for adjustment of the route (Keisanen, 2012). As Haddington and Keisanen (2009) put it, mobility “provide[s] for a continuously changing set of semiotic resources that especially in the context of driving can make relevant a reorganization of a current action, or even occasion a new one” (p. 1958). This orientation to spatial and temporal contingencies is also evident in driver training, where instructors guide drivers to carry out appropriate driving actions in the right place and at the right time (see De Stefani & Gazin, 2014), in addition to carrying them out in appropriate ways and in the appropriate order (see, e.g. Lindwall & Ekström, 2012). In mobile instructional settings, then, a balance must be struck between the progressivity of the overall interactional activity, the emergence and embrace of opportunities to adopt relevant skills and the fluctuating possibilities and challenges for action that being on the move provides (cf. Koole, 2012; Waring, 2015).

Dealing with spatial and temporal contingencies while driving a car, such as facing the consequences of having missed a turn, may also give rise to displays of emotion (Keisanen, 2012, p. 214; Laurier et al., 2012). These, too, are ultimately interactional, jointly constructed takes on what is going on, rather than participants’ individual internal states or attitudes (see, e.g. Goodwin & Goodwin, 2000; Goodwin, Cekaite, & Goodwin, 2012; Ruusuvuori, 2013; Sorjonen & Peräkylä, 2012). Displays of emotion, whether forming a
part of a social action or constituting one, are occasioned and elicited in and through interaction (see Heath, vom Lehn, Cleverly, & Luff, 2012) and make relevant responses that somehow address those aspects of the action (see Kupetz, 2014). For instance, when members of a family fail to find the most convenient way to their destination, it is in the details of their talk, facial expressions, gestures and body postures that the significance of the problem can be seen to escalate and displays of emotion to accumulate to increased distress and upset, before the same resources are drawn upon again to calm down and recover (Laurier et al., 2012). Laurier et al. (2012) remark how drastically different the journey that they examine would be were the driver, for example, to take up the passenger’s directive oh just go home, which is accompanied with a frustrated wave of a hand, a look out the side window away from the driver and a leaning back on the seat, rather than, as the driver in effect does, provide a solution to their navigational problem in the form of a suggestion for an alternative route and, with the traffic situation allowing, turn to look at the passenger (pp. 129–131). McIlvenny (2015), in turn, examines how cyclists construct the joy of riding together – and especially the thrill of speed – by producing positive assessments, laughter and vocalisers that express excitement and by in this way eliciting similar displays of emotion from others. McIlvenny (2015) further shows that a participant may pursue mutual displays of enjoyment, for example, through repeating a positive assessment, but a recipient may similarly continue not to take them up and thus to treat such displays of emotion as somehow inappropriate in that particular setting and situation (pp. 68–71).

Indeed, participants may modulate, regulate and negotiate when, where and what kind of emotion displays are suitable and appropriate (see, e.g. Jenkins, 2015; Jenkins & Hepburn, 2015). In the context of instruction, the reciprocality of emotion displays may be avoided for pedagogical purposes: for example, in dealing with a pupil’s incorrect answer to a question, a teacher may respond to the pupil’s agitated exclamation of disappointment, not by reciprocating the display, but by acknowledging it and further guiding the pupil into solving the problem in a matter-of-fact way (Tainio & Laine, 2015, pp. 78–83). In this way, the teacher is able to communicate that incorrect answers are normal, appropriate contributions in the classroom, without undermining the significance of the emotion work that is involved (Tainio & Laine, 2015; see also Cekaite, 2012, on how displays of emotion may be treated as indexing unwillingness to learn and thus inappropriate pupil conduct). In the present study, we are likewise interested in how displays of emotion are occasioned by the unfolding of a mobile instructional situation and how they become treated as part of that situation. We consider participants’ displays of emotion, (dis)comfort in particular, and possible responses to those displays as accomplishing well-being in situ and as constituting moments of interaction and instruction that may be particularly significant for how the participants view driving in the future.

It is worth noting that the training was set up so that in the second session the instructor was to provide directions, instructions and feedback and in the third session only to give directions for the route (Summala et al. 2011, p. 4). That is, in principle, the amount of instruction diminished as the driver gained experience of different traffic settings and situations and adopted better driving routines (see Groeger & Glegg, 2007).

### Analysis

In what follows, we examine pieces of data from two consecutive driving sessions involving the same instructor and trainee driver. During the first session, which we shall not discuss in any more detail, the instructor drives a particular leg of the journey, after having told the trainee driver that it forms a part of the route that she will be instructed to follow on later sessions and that may therefore be useful for her to pay attention to. During the second and third sessions, which are our focus here, the trainee driver sits behind the wheel and, among other things, steers the car through a Y-junction (see Figure 1).*

**Figure 1.**

A Y-junction and the route marked with arrows. (Orthophoto © Real Estate Department, Helsinki)

The driver's first pass through the junction turns out problematic and the instructor ends up making an intervention: he presses the extra brake pedal in the legroom in front of him to stop the car. Here, we are interested in how the intervention emerges and how the participants deal with it, immediately and a moment after the event. Especially, we look at the evident challenges that the participants have in establishing mutual understanding as well as at the verbal and embodied displays of emotion that the driver produces and that the instructor does not respond to. The driver's second pass through the junction is in itself less problematic, but it is anticipated and treated by the driver as potentially problematic, as a subsequent pass after a prior failure. Here, we are interested in how the driver's displays of emotion prepare the ground for a more extensive sequence of reflection, during which the driver and the instructor go through the details of the intervention again and finally reach a joint interpretation of it.

### Second session: Instructor intervention

**Attempts at mutual understanding and the promotion of self-discovery.** In the first excerpt, the car approaches the junction, and there are indications throughout of the driver and the instructor having trouble establishing a
mutual understanding of the situation and relevant actions therein. To begin with, upon verbally prompting guidance from the instructor ('and now', line 1), the driver brings her left hand from the steering wheel to the indicator and activates it. The instructor treats the driver's verbal prompt as a request for a “navigational instruction” (De Stefani & Gazin, 2014) by providing one, ‘let's turn to the right’ (line 2), but continues to acknowledge the driver’s embodied driving-related action (i.e. activation of the indicator) as having been appropriate (line 3). ‘You remembered quite correctly’ (line 3) refers to the fact that the participants have followed parts of the route during the previous session and, although not required, the driver may occasionally rely on her knowledge of the route. In this way, the instructor displays an updated understanding of the driver’s embodied action, but he does not revise his understanding of the driver’s verbal prompt, as possibly having addressed something else than a navigational concern. When no revised display of understanding is forthcoming (note the 1.7-second gap in talk at the beginning of line 4)*, the driver prompts another instruction (line 4).

1) TRU 2010061721-2 (00:39:15)

01 DRI: ±(0.5) entäs nyt hh.t
and now hh

02 INS: .mth käännytään oikealle, .mth let's turn to the right

03 INS: ä: muistittekkin ihan oikein.
uh: you remembered quite correctly

04 DRI: (1.7) piti väistää kaikkia hh. (0.6)
one had to give way to everyone hh

05 INS: 0:.....: n’ sa-
eh:.....: well th-
se selviää tässä risteyksessä.
that’ll become clear at the junction

06 INS: (0.3) ±(0.7) meillä on kolo. (1.0)
we have a give-way sign

07 DRI: ±(0.5) entäs nyt hh.t
and now hh

DRI: ±(0.5) entäs nyt hh.t

08 INS: .hh does one have to stop here now
+LOOKS LEFT------------------------

fig #2

09 INS: ±(0.5) meitä nää nähät # että
if one does not quite see if

DRI ->+LOOKS AHEAD+
+LOOKS LEFT+
+LOOKS AHEAD-->
+LOOKS LEFT

fig #3

10 INS: (tu*leekko siel’tä<
anyone is coming from there

11 DRI: [hmph.

INS --->[LOOKS DOWN----*LOOKS LEFT-->

---‡

INS *BRACKES-->>

fig #7 #8 #9

The kind of guidance the driver is after becomes evident as she offers an interpretation of the current traffic rules or, more specifically, the obligation to give way to other road users: ‘one had to give way to everyone’ (line 4, the past tense here being tied to the present but possibly also invoking an earlier passing of the same or a similar junction). Referring to other road users as ‘everyone’ is an “extreme case formulation” (Edwards, 2000; Pomerantz, 1986) and, as such, takes a stance on the state of affairs that is being depicted (see also Laurier et al., 2012, p. 130). That is, having to give way to ‘everyone’ is an exaggerated interpretation of a traffic rule, which does not in effect hold true in any setting, and the instructor would have good grounds for resisting and correcting such an interpretation. Rather than doing so, however, the instructor withholds his uptake on the matter of who is to give way to whom, simply arguing that ‘that’ll become clear at the junction’ (line 5). The instructor thus “promotes self-discovery” (Waring, 2015) by the trainee driver, providing an opportunity for the driver herself to infer what constitutes appropriate driving conduct at the upcoming junction and, despite the driver’s referring to a potential problem through an extreme case formulation, not offering an immediate solution. Moreover, the instructor can here be seen to build on how the driver through her embodied conduct “demonstrates” to understand the situation, by proceeding to drive, rather than on how she verbally “claims” to understand it, by offering an interpretation that she has to give way to all other road users (Mondada, 2011, pp. 543–545; based on Sacks, 1992). At this point, the driver does not prompt any further instructions but in effect continues to drive on in silence, looking ahead and turning the wheel to the right.

The instructor’s following observation, ‘we have a give-way sign’ (line 6), flags a current state of affairs as relevant and highlights it as problematic. The observation specifies for the driver what kind of a junction they are about to enter and, by doing so, implies a contrast between what the driver may currently be doing and what she should be doing. Nevertheless, although the observation calls for remedial action from the driver, it stills leaves room for the driver herself to conclude what that remedial action might be. Instead of taking up the instructional implications of the observation, however, the driver now prompts more specific instructions and, continuing to drive ahead, asks whether she should stop the car or not (line 7). Whereas the driver’s question is formulated as a straightforward yes/no interrogative, ‘does one have to stop here now’ (line 7), the instructor's response is an elaborate ‘well one would better if one doesn’t quite see if anyone is coming’ (lines 8–10).†

* In addition to pauses within turns, silences between turns have here been marked on the same line as talk that precedes or follows. This has been done simply to save space and facilitate the alignment of transcribed lines of talk, descriptions of gaze and other embodied conduct and references to relevant figures. Therefore, the composition of the transcripts cannot in itself be used as a basis for making any analytic claims.

† It is worth noting that in neither the driver’s question nor the instructor’s response is there an overt subject in the Finnish original, which is why the generic pronoun ‘one’ is used in the English translation. The lack of an overt subject opens up the position of the subject for a wider array of possible participants, i.e. both the speaker and the recipient, to adopt than personal pronouns would (see Laitinen, 2006).
Again, the instructor refrains from providing a clear-cut solution (i.e. a simple ‘yes’ or ‘no’) and, instead, promotes self-discovery by giving time and space for the driver to make the decision.

In promoting self-discovery, the instructor provides continuous and extended opportunities for the driver to practice, not only the hands-on controlling of the car, but also the decision-making that appropriate driving conduct in this traffic setting and situation involves. Because this is a junction where this particular car has to give way if relevant, whether to stop or not has to be decided on the basis of the current traffic situation, i.e. whether there is any oncoming traffic and what the anticipated velocities and trajectories of other road users are. Making such decisions, in turn, rests on the road users’ being able to glean enough relevant information about the situation, primarily by looking in relevant directions. Proceeding into a junction even ‘if one does not quite see if anyone is coming’ may constitute a serious, even fatal, error in traffic (and one that may be treated as typical to older drivers and actively contested by them; see Rauniomaa, Laurier, & Summala, 2014). As the driver prompts for instructions and the instructor provides his response (lines 7–10), they can both be seen to shift their gaze from side to side, to monitor the situation (Figures 2–5). The emerging problem may therefore lie, not in looking, but in seeing and in making appropriate interpretations of the situation on the basis of such visual evidence (see, e.g. Goodwin, 1994; Koschmann, LeBaron, Goodwin, & Feltovich, 2011). The instructor is verbally putting pressure on the driver to decide on and carry out the relevant next driving action, with the time in which this is possible becoming more limited every moment. In terms of his embodied conduct, however, the instructor can be seen to prepare for taking control of the vehicle if necessary: towards the end of his utterance, the instructor turns his gaze from the left side down to the legroom in front of him and brings his left foot to the extra brake pedal that is located there (Figure 6).

*Figures 2–3. Session 2: Approaching a junction with a give-way sign.*

*Figures 4–5. Session 2: Proceeding to drive into the junction.*
Figures 6–7. Session 2: Preparing to brake.

Having glanced to the left twice, the driver keeps her gaze ahead, turns the wheel to the right and continues to drive into the junction (Figures 4–6). She also lets out an emphatic snort, *hmph* (line 11), and a moment later an interjection, *voi ‘oh dear’* (line 12), that can both be heard as “response cries” (Goffman, 1978), displaying increasing frustration and discomfort, and constituting attempts to regain control over the situation. Around the same time, the instructor returns his gaze from down in front of him to the left again and pushes the extra brake pedal down with some force (Figure 7). While the car comes to an abrupt halt, the instructor straightens and tenses his body against his seat and the driver jolts forward and backward in hers (Figures 8–9). The driver’s second *voi ‘oh dear’* (line 12) is louder and produced as she jolts forward by the force of the instructor’s braking: here, the response cry may thus be relevant also in terms of displaying physical discomfort (see Jenkins & Hepburn, 2015, on children’s “pain cries”).

Figures 8–9. Session 2: Braking.

Opportunities for reflection provided and passed.

From the camera view available to us, it is clear that the instructor hits the brakes, which causes the car to stop and the in-car participants to shift in their seats. However, from the perspective of the driver, who has been looking ahead and driving the car forward, it may be unclear how the car has come to such an abrupt halt. In promoting self-discovery and providing the driver an extended opportunity to figure out and carry out the appropriate driving action herself (i.e. to stop at the junction), the instructor has not produced any verbal forewarning of possibly taking over control of the car (cf. Melander & Sahlström, 2009, p. 157, on aviation training, where the transfer of responsibility between pilots is carried out explicitly, in a more protocol-like manner). Instead, the instructor apologises and accounts for the braking after the event:

2) TRU 2010061721-2 (00:39:36)

13 INS: anteeka. pitää pysähtyä<
    sorry  one has to stop
14 mä pysäytin auton koska,
    I stopped the car because
15 meidän vasemmalta tuli auto,  (0.7)
    a car was coming from our left
16 INS: ja meillä oli kolmio [tossa ä@sken. 
    and we had a give-way sign just there
17 DRI:                      [nyt mä en selviä
    now I won’t make it
    enää hhhhh.
    anymore hhhh
    # PULLS HAND BRAKE-->
18 INS: .mt # 6: mää painoin jarrun.
    .mt eh: I hit the brakes
    DRI: --#t
    fig    #10
19 INS: (0.3) .mt koska, nii mehän,
    .mt because I mean we
20 (0.3) meinattin menna tohon autotie<
    were about to go on that road
21 m- m- poikkeavalle tielle,
    m- m- intersecting road
22 ihan [katsoma@tta vasemmalle.
    completely without looking to the left
23 DRI: [Hhhh
    fig    #11
24 INS: (0.6) .mt no,
The instructor produces an apology, *anteeks* ‘sorry’ (line 13), immediately after the driver has jolted forward and backward. The apology can therefore be heard to address, first and foremost, the possible physical discomfort that the braking has caused for the driver and that the driver has displayed through the response *oh dear*. Retrospectively, as the instructor continues his verbal turn, the apology can also be heard to address the violation on the driver’s agency, as the one sitting behind the wheel and having control of the vehicle, that the intervention entails. The instructor namely begins to account for having hit the brakes by referring to relevant traffic rules in a way that resonates with the driver’s original prompt for instruction; that is, he now responds to the driver’s ‘does one have to stop here now’ (Excerpt 1, line 7) with ‘one has to stop’ (Excerpt 2, line 13). However, the instructor soon suspends this line of talk to explicate what has just happened (‘I stopped the car’, line 14), treating the driver’s looking around at the car controls at this point as an indication of her not understanding what has happened (see Mondada, 2011). The instructor then continues to elaborate on the grounds of his actions (‘because a car was coming from our left and we had a give-way sign just there’, lines 14–16). In this way, the instructor points out the reasoning process that the driver was to follow herself: in this particular traffic situation, a give-way sign should appropriately be interpreted as having to give way to cars from the left, if there are any at a relevant distance.

The instructor’s account provides an opportunity for the driver to reflect on the event (e.g. to account for her failure to stop or to challenge the instructor’s view), but the driver simply gives in by saying ‘now I won’t make it anymore’ and letting out a long sigh that “does resignation” (line 17; Hoey, 2014). What is more, while the instructor accounts for the intervention (lines 14–16), the driver continues to look around and brings her right hand to the handbrake to pull it (Figure 10). The instructor treats the driver’s conduct as indicating that she still has not understood what has happened by repeating that it was he who hit the brakes (line 18). To establish mutual understanding, the instructor goes on to specify what was problematic about the driver’s actions prior to the intervention and, this time, argues that the driver was about to enter the road ‘completely without looking to the left’ (line 22; Figure 11). That is, the instructor reframes the problem to be about the driver’s not having looked at all, rather than about her not having made the correct interpretation of the situation on the basis of having looked. The driver again passes the opportunity to reflect on the event and lets out another long sigh that signals discomfort and resignation (line 23). The instructor then instructs the driver to make relevant preparations for driving through the junction (line 24 onward, data not shown).

**Figures 10–11.** Session 2: Dealing with the braking.

### Problem identified and discarded.

Once the driver has started the engine and released the handbrake, the instructor focuses on the correct timing of driving into the junction and the correct positioning of the car on the road that they are about to enter (lines 26–31).

3) **TRU 2010061721-2 (00:40:18)**

26 INS: sitte, mennään vasta ku vasemmalta ei then let’s go only when no one comes tule ketään. from the left

27 DRI: (0.8) MMHhh

28 INS: .mt ja koska käännytään oikeelle, and because we are turning to the right

29 DRI: .nf[

30 INS: (0.3) niin, then

31 DRI: .nf[f

32 INS: (1.1) [mennään oikeaan kaistalle, let’s take the right lane

33 DRI: (2.0) vaikka nää keskiviivat although the middle lines

34 INS: (1.5) onki kulunu pois are worn off

35 DRI: [HHHH

36 INS: (1.1) mut # tää on nyt taas tämä mäki#startti. but here’s again this hill start

37 DRI: (#12 #13

38 INS: (1.5) mutta onneks meidän takana ei ole but luckily there’s no one

39 DRI: ke[tään. behind us

40 INS: ni valumisella ei ole merkitystä. so sliding doesn’t matter
It is relevant to note here that by referring to the correct timing of driving into the junction (‘let’s go only when no one comes from the left’, line 26), the instructor may imply that a relevant moment may soon be at hand. In any case, the instructor first focuses on instructing the driver in what she apparently failed to do before the intervention, i.e. giving way to other road users coming from the left, and then directs the driver’s attention to features of the setting that are about to become relevant when they enter the intersecting road. The driver does not provide any verbal receipt of the instructions but lets out loud sighs that again serve as displays of discomfort and resignation (lines 27 and 32). The driver then glances at the centre console and out of the car at the junction (Figures 12–13) and points out another feature of the traffic setting: mut täs on nyt taas tämä mäkitartti ‘but here’s again this hill start’ (line 33). The initial mut ‘but’ signals contrast and projects an additional or alternative viewpoint on the situation, and both nyt taas ‘(now) again’ and tämä mäkitartti ‘this hill start’ highlight it as a recurrent problem but the instructor, but.

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**Summary of second session.** Excerpts 1–3 have shown the driver’s first pass through the junction. While approaching the junction, the driver repeatedly prompts for further or more specific instructions from the instructor, but the instructor refrains from providing immediate solutions and, instead, invites the driver herself to infer, based on relevant signage, what the appropriate next driving action is (i.e. promotes self-discovery, Waring, 2015). Although the instructor can be heard subtly to guide the driver to do the opposite, the driver begins to proceed into the junction and not bring the car to a halt at the give-way sign. The instructor treats this as problematic and makes an intervention by pointing out that in the current traffic situation it does not matter if the car slides backward (lines 34 and 36). It takes a moment before the driver even attempts to make a hill start and, before they make it into the junction, the driver and the instructor have to deal with a vehicle behind them first sounding its horn and then passing them and with the engine of the car stalling and having to be turned on again (data not shown). Altogether, it takes 2 minutes and 18 seconds for the driver to get through the junction, i.e. between the activation of the indicator in Excerpt 1 and the deactivation of the indicator some time after Excerpt 3.

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**Third session: Driver reflection**

**Evoking and downplaying displays of emotion.** Excerpt 4 comes from the third training session where the driver approaches the same junction again. The excerpt begins by the instructor providing a navigational instruction (‘and over there to the right and to the right’, line 1) and the driver activating the indicator (line 2).

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4) TRU 2010061731-2 (00:26:05)

01 INS: ja tuolta oikealle ja oikealle. and over there to the right and right
02 ±(1.7)+ (1.0) DRI ✈FLICKS ON INDICATOR✈
03 DRI: ja sitte tuo kauhistus tuossa hh. and then that horror there hh
04 INS: (3.6) noil, täss on vaan (0.5) well there are just
05 ±(1.7)+ (1.0) DRI 🚗TO WHISPER LGBTI+</1.0>
05 kaks [risteyst osi lähekkäin, two junctions very close here
06 DRI: [mihin kohta< mihin kohtaan. to where to where
07 INS: eli ensin väistetään tää k evyttiliarenne, so first (we) give way to pedestrians
08 DRI ✈TURNS WHEEL RIGHT✈
09 DRI: ja sitte jonkäs tämän. and then to somewhere here
10 ±(1.7)+ (1.0) DRI +LOOKS LEFT-----+
11 INS: ja sitte väistetään k evyttiliarenne+ again
12 ±(1.7)+ (1.0) DRI +LOOKS LEFT--------+
As they approach the junction in which the instructor previously stopped the car, the driver anticipates and characterises it as ‘and then that horror there’ (line 3). In this way, the driver not only displays recognition of the junction, but also presents her previous experience of it in a particular light (see Kupetz, 2014, on affect-laden tellings of personal experiences). The instructor does not at first take the matter up at all but lets a 3.6-second gap in talk develop (line 4) and, when he eventually does, he responds by beginning to detail the particular features of the traffic setting (‘well there are just two junctions very close here’), lines 4–5). Rather than taking up the emotional aspects of the driver’s observation, the instructor focuses on why, in physical and technical terms, the upcoming traffic setting might be considered as problematic (see Tainio & Laine, 2015; see also Beach & Mandelbaum, 2005, on how healthcare providers tend to focus on patients’ biomedical and physical, rather than psychosocial, concerns). Moreover, the particles no ‘well’ and vaan ‘just’ work to minimise the problem and frame it as a minor concern only.

In partial overlap with the instructor’s depiction of the setting, the driver begins to ask for directions in a way that indicates urgency as well as growing anxiety: the abruptly ended ‘to where’ is quickly repeated (line 6) so as to compete with the instructor’s ongoing turn and to indicate that the correct positioning of the car is an immediate concern to the driver. The instructor’s detailing of the steps involved in driving through the two junctions that are so close together (lines 7 and 9) is also intercepted by the driver’s request for confirmation about the correct positioning of the car (line 8), which the instructor confirms (line 10). As they are getting closer to the junction, the driver takes several glances to the left and signals the approach to be problematic with a cry for ‘help’ and another prompt for instruction ‘and now eh’, which both end in hearable outbreaths, if not quite sighs (line 11; Figure 14). To this prompt, the instructor responds by instructing the driver to give way, or be prepared to give way, one more time (line 12). It is worth noting that none of the instructor’s responses specify a location through its spatial and physical properties but focus on the most relevant action, giving way to specific groups of road users, to be carried out at each (see Broth & Lundström, 2013). Furthermore, the instructor guides the driver through each possible location where they have to give way to others, without making any reference to signage or inviting the driver herself to infer what the next relevant driving action is. At the same time, the driver proceeds through those locations without having to stop, and by the time the instructor produces the instruction on line 12, they have come so close to the junction that the driver in effect deactivates the indicator (Figure 15).


The driver prompts yet one more instruction, beginning with the first syllable of ‘dare’ (in Finnish, uskaltaa) but cutting off and instead producing voinko mä mennä ‘can I go’ (line 14). The driver thus repairs the focus of her request for confirmation from one that would highlight the emotional aspects of the situation to one that concerns details of the traffic situation, albeit still maintaining her specific point of view, as occupying a particular position in the junction. The driver is already turning the wheel and driving into the junction (Figure 17) when the instructor replies ‘of course when no one is coming’ (line 15). Again, the instructor provides a straightforward answer without putting
any pressure on the driver to make the decision herself; nevertheless, the initial ‘of course’ serves to point out that the answer is self-evident, based on the driver’s and instructor’s assumed shared interpretation of the traffic situation. Once through the junction, the driver produces a breathy response cry, *hHuuhh* (line 16), indicating anxiety and relief at the same time.

**Settling on a joint interpretation.** When driving straight ahead again, the driver lets out a loud, lengthy sigh, closes her eyes and rolls her head (line 17, Figures 18–19), framing the pass through the junction as an emotionally charged experience, perhaps a straining effort that she needs to recover from. It is here that the instructor finally takes up the event at hand as, indeed, a subsequent pass after a prior failure and returns to account for the intervention that he made previously (lines 18–20).

5) TRU 2010061731-2 (00:26:36)

17 DRI: HHHhm#h[h
18 INS: *niin viime#kshän mä jarrutin* right last time I hit the brakes
fig #18 #19
19 n: *auton pysähdyksiin tosta koska:* to stop the car there because
20 vasemmalta oli tulos[a #yks alnoo# auto. there was a single car coming from the left
21 DRI: *mh, mmhm, joo-o, mh mmhm yes* 
fig #20 #21
22 mä kuvittelin etä nyt jos mä

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*I thought that now perhaps I’ll "siitä kerkeen".* make it
23 "millon kuvittelin". (0.6)
24 "I then thought"
25 INS: "mutta tää on tällainen but this is such a
fast MAJOR ROAD
26 DRI: "mMhm, yes"
27 joo, yes
28 INS: *niin* . (1.4)
right
29 INS: "en ois laskenu sen I wouldn’t have counted on
v[araan etta siitä kerkeäis.
making it
29 INS: en ois laskenu sen
I wouldn’t have counted on
v[araan etta siitä kerkeäis.
making it
30 DRI: "mh, sai sitä alitajuisesti
mhm perhaps one is subconsciously
31 pelkää niltä mäki[stetteja.
afraid of those hill starts
32 INS: (0.3) *joo," tosiaan.
right yes indeed
33 ((driver and instructor continue in silence))

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**Figures 16–17. Session 3: Proceeding to drive into the junction.**

**Figures 18–19. Session 3: Reflecting on the previous driving session.**
In the instructor’s account niin vimeksähän mä jarrutin auton pysähdyksin tossa koska ‘right last time I hit the brakes to stop the car there because’, the initial particle niin ‘right’ signals that what is to follow ties back to a past event and/or prior talk, and the clitic -hään in vimeksähän ‘last time’ treats what is being said as known information that is shared by both participants (line 18). Indeed, as the instructor continues the account, the driver produces several nods and verbal tokens of agreement, the positioning of which, in overlap with the instructor’s ongoing turn, signals that providing such details of the event is not necessary (line 21; Figures 20–21). Having in this way gained the floor, the driver provides an account of her own actions before the intervention took place, constructing for the purposes of the present moment a representation of her interpretation of a past traffic situation: ‘I thought that now perhaps I’ll make it’ (line 22). The driver then frames the interpretation as being specifically tied to that past situation, ‘I then thought’ (line 23), in contrast to how the situation eventually unfolded or, perhaps, to how she would interpret such a situation at this moment (see Haakana, 2007).

Figures 20–21. Session 3: Continuing to reflect on the previous driving session.

The instructor then produces evidence about why the driver’s prior interpretation of the past situation remains problematic (line 25). He sets up the argument so that, if the driver is to claim any knowledge or competence in driving, she should regard her own prior interpretation as flawed and take all blame of the event on herself (see Antaki, 2013). The driver acknowledges the problem but does not continue to reflect on it (lines 26–27). When the instructor then further delves into the problems of the driver’s prior interpretation, by contrasting it with his own, the driver cuts in by arguing that ‘perhaps one is subconsciously afraid of those hill starts’ (lines 30–31). There is an interesting contrast between the emotion verb ‘be afraid’ and the third-person reference (the verb being inflected for third-person singular in the Finnish original, and the generic pronoun ‘one’ being added to the English translation): while evidently referring to the grounds of her having made a particular kind of interpretation of a certain traffic situation – in favour of avoiding a hill start over stopping the car at the junction –, the driver makes a more general point about the possible factors that feature in making decisions about next driving actions in real traffic and real time. It is worth noting that hill starts may not have been the sole or even the main problem for the driver on the specific occasion that she now reflects on, nor in general on other occasions, but they come to be constructed as such in the course of the participants’ interaction. At the end of the excerpt, the instructor displays realisation, acknowledgement and agreement with the driver about hill starts indeed being one possible factor: ‘right, yes. indeed.’ (line 32).

Summary of third session. In Excerpts 4 and 5, the driver passes through the junction the second time, displaying an emotional take on the particular traffic setting. On this occasion, too, the driver continuously prompts for instructions, but this time the instructor provides straightforward solutions, rather than creating and extending opportunities for the driver to infer them herself. That is, whereas on the first pass through the junction the instructor provides instructions that leave appropriate actions for the driver to infer, on the second pass he produces instructions that more clearly guide the driver to carry out specific actions (i.e. give way to possible other road users). What is relevant to note here is that while the driver produces several displays of discomfort on both occasions, e.g. response cries, an extreme case formulation, sighs and prompts for instruction, it is the second pass through the junction that she constructs as ‘that horror there’ and marks as occasioning her displays of emotion. It is possible, then, to consider the instructor as, certainly not reciprocating, but taking the driver’s displays of emotion into account more empathically on the second pass. It should be noted, however, that on the second pass there are not any evident major problems in the driver’s driving and, thus, the prompts for instruction and the subsequent instructions seem to address the driver’s displays of emotion and be intended to calm her down. Once the driver has successfully driven through the junction, the instructor returns to account for the intervention that he made on the previous driving session. In response, the driver claims to have made well-grounded, albeit not necessarily ideal, decisions about her next driving actions. Even though these are claims that she makes in retrospect, not demonstrations that she produces on the spot, this decision actually reflects multiple and often competing motives and goals in car driving (Niitätäinen & Summala, 1976). Thus, to avoid a probable failure of carrying out a hill start, which she evidently considers frustrating and terrifying, the driver tends to prefer moving on despite being uncertain of prioritised traffic. Negotiating the grounds for making decisions about when to proceed into a junction, the driver
and the instructor gradually reach mutual understanding about the intervention and the events that led to it. The intervention and its aftermath, including the driver’s multiple displays of discomfort, can therefore be seen to encourage both participants to see practices and processes of driving, such as making decisions about next driving actions, in new light.

Conclusion

In this study, we have adopted a micro perspective on how well-being may be accomplished by participants in situ. While we recognise that the sequences of practice and sessions of training under examination in effect extend over longer stretches of social interaction and activity, we also believe that any such occasion unfolds moment-by-moment, action-by-action, and that the significance of those occasions lies in their very details. We have therefore focused on relatively brief excerpts of video data showing a driver pass through the same junction during two consecutive sessions, with the instructor making an intervention on the first pass and the driver and instructor constructing the second pass as a subsequent one after a prior failure.

We have attempted to locate well-being in how the instructor provides the driver with repeated and extended opportunities to practice driving, with reference to both the hands-on controlling of the car and the decision-making that appropriate driving conduct in various traffic settings and situations involves, as well as in the increasing displays of discomfort that the driver produces in the form of response cries, sighs, prompts for instruction, an extreme case formulation and the affect-laden characterisation of the junction as ‘that horror there’. That is, we have considered how the instructor pushes the driver out of her comfort zone, creating discomfort in the present moment but ultimately aiming at promoting the independent mobility and, relatedly, well-being of the driver in the long run. We offer this as an initial exploration of how the concept of well-being may be applied to the study of social interaction and activity.

Let us also briefly view the case that we have presented here in light of the interview material available from the driver in question. It should be noted that the training took place in June, and the idea was to provide the drivers ample opportunity to drive on their own during the summer months, when driving conditions in Finland are at their best in terms of light, temperature and road surfaces. In an interview immediately after the training, the driver reported that one of her main challenges – and at the same time an aspect of driving where she had learnt the most – was driving through junctions. The driver furthermore reported that she had felt anxious and scared but, at the end, considered to have surpassed herself and that in the future she planned to drive wherever she would have the courage to do so. However, when asked four months after the training whether she had followed through her plan, the driver responded not to have driven a car at all.

In many ways, our observations about this case attest to the potential benefits of post-licence training in general. For example, in a systematic review of studies on post-licence training, Golisz (2014, p. 667) argues that among the most promising means of training are ones that promote self-awareness and self-regulation, such as a driver recognising that they have difficulties in driving in the dark and adjusting their driving behaviour accordingly, as well as training that includes coaching and personalised feedback on actual performance, such as focusing on how a driver in effect approaches a particular kind of junction and how they would best do it. In the case that we have discussed here, the driver shows her awareness of having difficulties at junctions and the instructor responds to this, on the first pass, by providing the driver with opportunities to make appropriate driving decisions independently (i.e. by promoting self-discovery; Waring, 2015) and, on the second pass, by issuing more straightforward instructions. Furthermore, the instructor provides feedback on the driver’s performance both while the driver is still carrying out a particular driving task and retrospectively after the task has, successfully or unsuccessfully, been completed, and there are also opportunities for the driver to reflect on the situation herself. Based on the driver’s report four months after the training, it is also possible to argue that emotionally intense experiences that create discomfort, such as being stopped by the instructor in a busy junction, may have long-standing effects on a driver’s self-confidence, and that confidence in driving can in effect only be gained, and re-gained, through repeated practice. Indeed, the best indicator for the drivers to take up independent driving again after the training was their self-assessed confidence in the training being successful (Summala et al., 2011).

Nevertheless, we hope that our observations also stir interest in the practical execution of post-licence training for older drivers as well as in the role that well-being, as a situated accomplishment between participants in interaction, may play in such instructional settings. For instance, in the case that we have examined there is at times a seeming discrepancy between how the driver verbally “claims” to understand the situation and how she through her embodied conduct “demonstrates” to understand it (Mondada, 2011, pp. 543–545) and, throughout the excerpts, the participants have evident challenges in establishing mutual understanding of the unfolding situation – what has happened, what is happening and what is relevantly about to happen. That is, the participants are constantly faced with the challenge of managing the progressivity of the interactional, instructional activity, the emergence of opportunities for the driver to practice relevant skills and, in general, the fluctuating possibilities and challenges for action that driving in traffic entails. Moreover, interaction, instruction and mobility may all occasion displays of emotion, which are treated in certain ways: the instructor may acknowledge them but does not reciprocate them, nor should he let the driver be overcome by them. These aspects of well-being, to us, deserve further exploration.

A note on the authors’ contributions

MR is responsible for identifying the case, analysing the video recordings and preparing the manuscript. EL and HS contributed to defining the focus of the study and complemented analyses of the video recordings with observations from additional research data. HS led the
research team that collected the data and prepared them for analysis.

References


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Annex 1

Transcription conventions (based on Jefferson, 2004, and Mondada, 2014)

DRI: speaker label at the start of a line
word onset of overlapping talk
(0.8) pause in tenths of a second
(.) micropause, less than 0.2 seconds
wor- truncated word
wor< word ended abruptly but not truncated
hh outbreath
.hh inbreath
.nf sniff at inbreath
.mt smack of the lips at inbreath
"word" talk softer than surrounding talk
word. lengthening of a sound
word, downward intonation
word? upward intonation
word, continuing intonation
(word) uncertain hearing

{ word } grammatical element not in original but added to translation for clarity

DRI: participant label at the start of a line (when same as speaker, not marked)
+ symbol delimiting description of driver’s gaze behaviour
± symbol delimiting description of driver’s other embodied conduct
* symbol delimiting description of instructor’s gaze behaviour
¤ symbol delimiting description of instructor’s other embodied conduct
-- described conduct continues until delimiting symbol is reached on the same line
--> described conduct continues until delimiting symbol is reached on a later line
---> described conduct continues until the end of transcript