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The interactional construction of ageing identities: a linguistic ethnography of older women's narratives, talk and other practices in a hair-salon

Heinrichsmeier, Rachel Mary Gosling

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The interactional construction of ageing identities: a linguistic ethnography of older women's narratives, talk and other practices in a hair-salon

Rachel Mary Gosling Heinrichsmeier

A thesis submitted to King's College London in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Language, Discourse and Communication

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Abstract

This thesis offers insights into the under-researched area of women's 'older-age' identity constructions, and examines this through focussing on their talk and practices in a hair-salon. I address this topic using a linguistic ethnographic methodology. This draws on intensive participant observation, interviews, and micro linguistic-analysis of unfolding interactions in the salon. For this micro analysis I use a toolkit of Narrative Positioning Theory (Bamberg 1997: 493), Conversation Analysis and Membership Categorization Analysis.

Firstly, I show how in their 'older-age' categorization practices participants employ a range of strategies to distance themselves from older-age; I also show how these practices map broadly to their chronological age. *Secondly*, I examine participants' appearance practices and talk. I show that these present a nuanced picture with respect to the importance to them of their appearance, marking appearance as having a *situated* importance, with this shaped, *inter alia*, by avoidance of being categorized as vain. I show how narrative stance-taking (Georgakopoulou 2013b) is a key discursive resource whereby participants manage orientations to the (un)importance to them of their appearance. *Thirdly*, I examine how participants display themselves as busy in their talk about recent and forthcoming events in their lives. I show how this practice enables participants to construct active and independent identities for themselves. As I show, however, there are constraints on the achievement of this positioning, relating to both the implicit tellability criteria in the setting and the stance taken up by the teller towards being busy. Overall, this thesis makes contributions to

studies of identities-in-interaction, by examining older women's narratives-in-interaction on the one hand, and their 'older-age' categorization practices on the other. This thesis also contributes to the body of literature adopting a linguistic ethnographic approach, applying this to the study of older identities in a site of appearance management.

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Dedication

For my husband, Martin, noch immer.

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patience and understanding when my thesis seemed to take over my (our!) lives; and offered critical feedback and encouragement on drafts of various chapters. Without him, it would have been much less fun.

Preface

In this thesis I examine how a group of nine women aged 55 to 90 construct different older identities as they negotiate¹ the social norms of ageing and age-appropriate appearance and behaviour through their talk and practices in a hair-salon.

My interest in older women's negotiation of their identities through talk and practices in a hair-salon started as an 'academic' (cf. abstract, theoretical) interest, an interest in what Goffman called 'stigmatised identities', under which heading older people were implicitly included (1990 (1963): e.g., 34, 115). During the course of my research, older people close to me unexpectedly died; other friends who had long appeared 'ageless' suddenly seemed 'old'; I witnessed the talking-down by care staff, hospital workers and officialdom to frail older relatives; I myself turned fifty and found that small aches and pains I had always had were being attributed to 'age', that I was wondering whether I could still 'get away with' wearing particular clothes. I started to colour my hair. As many ethnographers before me have attested (e.g., Degnen 2012), the academic – abstract, theoretical – interest had become personal.

My sense of personal investment in the site and topic was intensified by the need, at times, to defend my research against the charge of triviality. Research into matters to do with appearance, even if this is not the sole focus, is not always regarded as a serious topic for academic investigation, as other researchers have found (Furman 1997: 3-4; Twigg 2007: 287; Ward and Holland 2011: 290). Nor is it just fellow

¹ Cf find their way through, manoeuvre around

researchers who might look askance at those proposing to invest time in such studies. This was highlighted to me by one of my potential research participants, early on in my research, as I recorded in a field note:

Extract 0-1 Triviality (Field notes)

I met Jill by chance this morning. Conscious that Joellen had given her one of the information sheets I mentioned my research. She said she was happy to take part. As I thanked her she added, "But I don't agree with it." "Oh?" I said, "That's fine." I thought she meant that she didn't think that appearance was important to women, or something of that sort. She continued, "I think it's trivial. It might be different if you were writing a book, but for a thesis I think it's trivial." She continued in this vein for a while.

Although many people expressed interest in my research topic, Jill was not alone in describing it as 'trivial' for a PhD thesis, or wondering why I was not doing something more serious and 'worthwhile'. Countering this perception of triviality in her own research in a hair-salon, Furman (1997: 4) quotes Evans and Thornton, who argued that:

'the practices which a culture insists are meaningless or trivial, the places where ideology has succeeded in becoming invisible, are practices in need of investigation' (1991: 48).

Appearance practices and a hair-salon as a site are such normally 'trivialised' practices and places, as my experience of the reactions of others showed. As Paoletti argues, though, 'any social encounter is potentially inspectable for its documenting of identity work' (1998b: 8, my emphasis); and as Coupland emphasises, ageing is 'something that we achieve in the minutiae of our social lives, in social encounters of diverse sorts' (2009a: 851).

Thus in this thesis, I show that the minutiae of older women's social lives in a 'trivial' site like a hair-salon are indeed consequential in terms of the construction of ageing

identities. In the rest of this Preface I preview the case for a linguistic ethnographic approach to researching older identities. I then discuss the literature focussed on older women in the hair-salon. From this, I turn to my research questions and the way my findings contribute to knowledge, before closing with an outline of the structure of my thesis. First, though, I provide an overview of the wider social background against which my research was undertaken.

0.1 The ‘triviality’ of ageing identities

In a society in which ‘the ideal female body is healthy, thin, toned, shapely, wrinkle free, and young’ (Hurd Clarke et al. 2008: 1085), the *ageing* body may be particularly problematic for women. This is even more the case if, as is sometimes theorised, the locus of their *female* identity lies in their looks (J. Coupland 2003; Hurd 2000). This problematic relationship with their bodies and appearance is potentially exacerbated by today’s consumerist society that offers a picture of a malleable body, an ‘identity project’ that can be made and remade (S. Biggs 1999; J. Coupland 2009b: 956); and where powerful media images urge women to ‘dump a decade’ (J. Coupland 2009b: 962). Susan Sontag (1983[1972]) argued that women faced a ‘double standard of ageing’ compared to men, claiming that they were judged more negatively since they were evaluated for appearance, linked to youth, whereas men’s worth rested on performance. In this vein Calasanti claimed that ‘grey hair or wrinkles will mark women as “old” well before they do for men’ (2007: 351) – with all the negative connotations that the term ‘old’ carries with it. Older people generally risk being seen as trivial or as of no account, and become invisible (Bytheway et al. 2007: 31). For older women, this can be particularly the case, leading Symonds and Hollands to comment that ‘grey hair on a woman... produce[s] one of the least desirable personas in Western society – an old woman.’ (2008: 29). We might even say, along with Goffman (1990

(1963)), a 'stigmatized identity'. Managing appearance – and the site and practices of doing so – takes on added significance for older women seeking to accommodate the tensions between their changing (ageing) appearance and their sense of who they are, now, and what it is to be 'feminine', as e.g., Furman (1997) and Weitz (2005) show. As I show, these concerns about the *changes* of age are not confined solely to the *youngest* of my older female participants.

0.2 Researching older identities

Studies focussing on the experiences of older people themselves often take the form of interview-based investigations, as, for example, with the growing body of research relating to older women and appearance (see Hurd Clarke and Korotchenko (2011) for a thorough review; and see Section 4.2, p.228, for an overview). But as Laz argues, 'age...is constituted in interaction and gains its meaning in interaction and in the context of larger social forces' (2003: 506). My aim in this thesis is thus to add to our understanding of ageing by exploring the social settings and contexts in which people 'do' their age, and the resources – talk and other practices – upon which they draw. To achieve this I adopt a linguistic ethnographic approach. This methodology combines an *ethnographic* focus on older women's quotidian negotiation of their older identities in an everyday social setting, a hair-salon, with a detailed examination of the resources upon which they draw – including the minutiae of their *linguistic* resources – to achieve their construction of different age identities. Coupland (2014 (2001): 198) suggests that such an approach is well-suited to examining aspects of ageism; I suggest it is ideal for exploring more widely the lived experiences of ageing and the construction of 'older' identities from the perspectives of older people themselves.

I review the literature researching older identities in Section 1.8; for now I merely note that approaches which explore older people's identity constructions through a combination of ethnography and detailed linguistic analysis of naturally-occurring interaction are rare. Rarer still, to the point of uniqueness, is to explore these identity constructions in what is theoretically a site of the reinscription of social norms of appearance, a hairdressing salon, as I am doing.

0.3 Ageing identities in everyday social settings: the hair-salon

Greying, thinning hair is one of the first visible indicators of the ageing body. In a salon – by definition a place concerned with appearance – this sign of age can be easily reworked, helping the 'owner' to dump that decade (Synnott 1987; Weitz 2005). But a hair-salon is more than a place in which hair is styled; it is also, as many writers attest, a female place, a site in which many women experience warm and friendly relationships extending over many years. It is a site that can offer older women a bulwark against the invisibility of the youth-orientated world around them and a sense of secure sociability where they feel valued, at ease and included (Symonds and Holland 2008: 35); and it can be a place where they 'are unconditionally accepted as they are, with no need to demonstrate their worth through concrete accomplishments' (Furman 1997: 24). It is also stereotypically a site of talk, laughter, and the sharing of stories of their lives, all of which are the stuff out of which relationships are constructed, whilst appearance is being negotiated and managed (Furman 1997; McCarthy 2000; Weitz 2005: 165ff).

Despite the wealth of research centred on hairdressing (see Appendix J), and the growing body of research focussed on older women and appearance referred to above (p.30), studies combining such interests are rare. There are exceptions,

however. One study very influential for the focus of my thesis has been Furman's (1997) sensitive and nuanced ethnography of Julie's International Salon, a small salon in the USA. She highlights the contradictory accounts of their experiences of ageing offered by a very heterogeneous group of women ranging in age from 55 to 86, connecting these accounts to particular social values and circulating Discourses. The site researched is culturally different to that of my own study, being focussed on a largely Jewish clientele in the United States some twenty years ago. Furthermore, there is no linguistic dimension to Furman's study. Nevertheless, her account both sparked my interest in the *older* clients of the hair-salon, and has been a key point of comparison for aspects of my research, as will emerge in particular in Chapter Two.

More recently, an important set of studies has emerged in the UK, stemming originally from the Research on Ageing Discrimination project (RoAD) (Bytheway et al. 2007).² One small-scale sub-project involved a day's observation and interviews in a small hair-salon in South Wales, 'Sue's Salon'. The resulting papers pointed to the role of the hair-salon as a potential site not only of friendship but also of the reinscribing of Discourses of Age Appropriateness on the female clients (Symonds and Holland 2008; Ward and Holland 2011). Subsequent research, separate from but sparked by those studies, has centred on the role of practices and narratives of appearance, specifically hair management, in research into people with dementia (Ward and Campbell 2013; Ward et al. 2014).

² The report cited was based on the findings of a UK-wide participative research project undertaken by the Open University on behalf of Help the Aged.

All these studies offer valuable insights for, and points of comparison with, my own study. However, they do not show the discursive detail of how the participants negotiate their ageing identities in their regular interactions. The sole studies that employ a linguistic methodology in a *hair-salon*, are, firstly, a small-scale study in Bern as part of a wider investigation looking at communication culture (Lieverscheidt et al. 1989); and secondly, two sets of USA-based studies examining the meaning of hair to Black women (Jacobs-Huey 1998, 2006, 2007; Majors 2001, 2003, 2004, 2007).

My study thus fills a clear gap in the literature in terms of the combination of methodological approach, in this particular site of study, with a focus on older women's identity constructions.

0.4 Research questions and contribution

In this thesis, I address three inter-related research questions. Together these examine how and in what ways the discursive and other social practices of a particular hair-salon, Joellen's Hair Palace, afford and constrain different possibilities of being an 'older' woman for my older female participants; that is, what kinds of practice serve to support and nurture particular ways of being or, conversely, inhibit other ways of being.

As Hammersley and Atkinson (2007: 24ff) point out, research questions in ethnographically-orientated studies can change during the course of that research,

including through the early data analysis. My research was no exception. My three research questions as they ended up are as follows:³

1. How do participants in interaction more or less explicitly claim and attribute older identities for themselves and others and how do they take up, modify or contest such attributions?
2. How in their talk and practices do participants orientate to the importance or unimportance of managing their 'on-sight' identities (their appearance) in the hair-salon? How, if at all, are older identities made relevant for themselves and others in this appearance work?
3. How do participants story their lives as more or less active, full and busy and how do salon discursive practices afford and constrain this storytelling?

In addressing these questions, my thesis makes contributions to both studies of identities-in-interaction and to the methodological approach encompassed under the linguistic ethnographic umbrella. In terms of its contribution to studies of identities-in-interaction, my thesis adds to the literature relating to both narrative and categorization practices, but extends this literature to examine respectively older people's narratives-in-interaction on the one hand, and their 'older-age' categorization practices on the other. As I show in Section 1.8, both of these are under-developed areas in research terms. From a *methodological* perspective, my thesis adds to the body of literature adopting a linguistic ethnographic approach, applying this to the

³ See Appendix C for the research questions at three different points in the course of my research.

study of older identities in a site (a hair-salon) where the look of age may and can be managed. This approach demonstrates the value in terms of nuance and richness to be thereby gained, particularly in terms of studies of identity constructions. Linguistic ethnography allows us to see the way in which the minutiae of situated talk in the unique moments of individuals' activities are part of patterns of talk and practice that recur with minute variations in other unique moments, thus giving us, when we stand back, insights into both the singularity and regularity of lives.

0.5 Thesis structure

Chapters One and Two provide respectively the framework for my thesis and an account of the evidence on which I base my claims. In Chapter One I set out the theoretical underpinnings of the thesis with respect to identity; discuss approaches to the empirical analysis of identity, including narrative approaches; and review the literature relating to researching older identities. Chapter Two both introduces the site, Joellen's Hair Palace, and sets out the justification for my subsequent analytic claims by providing an account of my methods of data collection and analysis.

Chapters Three, Four and Five are the analytic chapters, in which I present and discuss my core findings. These chapters focus in turn on each of the research questions set out in Section 0.4 above, and take us progressively from comparatively more explicit orientations to older identities in Chapter Three, through orientations that are more indexical in Chapter Four, to orientations that are almost but not quite absent in Chapter Five. Thus in Chapter Three I present participants' explicit claims and self-categorizations as 'old' or 'older', and the attributes they associate with those categories. I show how in their 'older-age' categorization practices participants employ a range of strategies to distance themselves from 'older-age'; I also show how

these practices map broadly to their chronological age. In Chapter Four, I focus on the way participants orientate to the importance (or not) of their appearance and the kind of older identities that are made relevant. I show how participants' practices and in-salon narratives and other talk present a nuanced picture with respect to the importance to them of their appearance, which, I argue, is a *situated* importance, shaped, *inter alia*, by avoidance of being categorized as vain. I show how narrative stance-taking (Georgakopoulou 2013b, in press (2016)) is a key discursive resource to manage orientations to both the importance and unimportance to them of their appearance and related practices. Finally, in Chapter Five I discuss the identity work done in the salon through talking about recent and forthcoming happenings in participants' lives, what I call busy stories. I highlight the way in which these afford active and independent identities for tellers. As I show, however, there are constraints on the achievement of this positioning, relating to both the implicit tellability criteria in the setting and the stance taken up by the teller towards being busy.

In the final chapter I summarise my findings; highlight the contributions made to the wider literature as well as the potential practical implications of my thesis; and point to possible avenues of further research. As a whole, my thesis adds to our understanding of the ways in which older people achieve a multiplicity of identities in interaction. It contributes to both the study of narrative identities and categorization practices, examining these in the under-developed field of older women's identity constructions in naturally-occurring talk. It also contributes *methodologically*, in further demonstrating the value of linguistic ethnographic research by applying this approach to the study of older women's identity practices.

Chapter 1 Researching identities-in-interaction: Theoretical framework

1.1 Introduction

The approach to identity adopted in my thesis is one that sees it as constructed in interaction with others. This approach understands identity as an *achievement*, and one that may be done in multiple ways in talk, for example, through our explicit claims to be members of categories; more implicitly through our use of attributes associated with such categories; or through our use of discourse types and practices that become cumulatively associated with particular categories, such as the practice of 'painful self-disclosure' (N. Coupland et al. 1991c: 61), that becomes associated with older identities. Identities may also be constructed through other semiotic displays, for example, through our manner of dress and behaviour, that contribute towards our 'on-sight' identity (Paoletti 1998a). Importantly, individuals may orientate at any one point to multiple social categories, such that age-based categories may not be the most salient identity at particular points in an interaction. This, the 'co-articulation of identities' (Georgakopoulou and Charalambidou 2011: 42), points to both the interrelationship of different identities and the local accomplishment of identities for local purposes.

In this chapter, I start with a brief discussion of how the term 'practices' is used in this thesis. I then turn to consider the anti-essentialist view of identity underpinning this thesis. From this, I offer an overview of the way the term 'D(d)iscourse' is used in this thesis and discuss two dominant Discourses of Ageing. I then set out and critically examine two micro-analytic frameworks upon which I draw for analysing identity-in-interaction. Having discussed some of the debates relating to these frameworks, I

examine as an alternative, a narrative approach to analysing identities-in-interaction. This leads into a discussion of an approach that combines linguistic analysis with wider understandings of participants and settings, with such a methodology being linguistic ethnography. Finally, I review ethnographic, interactional and narrative research into older identities.

1.2 Communicative practices

In this thesis I use the term *practices* in connection with participants' narrative and other discourse⁴ as well as in connection with what they do with their hair and other aspects of their appearance. Hanks (1996) showed how social and communicative practices combine aspects of both homogeneity but also heterogeneity. He described the regularities of practice as being akin to habit, 'the routine, repeated ways of acting into which speakers are inculcated through education and daily experience' (*ibid*, p.12). Yet he saw practice, too, as strategic; that is, actions engaged in under particular circumstances with particular purposes in mind (*ibid*). Thus, practices are recurrent but also emergent forms. As Deppermann stresses, practices 'are sensitive to situational contingencies. They are organized in genres and tied to certain temporal and local occasions in a community of practice.' (2015: 369).

⁴ See next section.

In terms of *narrative*, De Fina and Georgakopoulou say that the practice-based social interactional approach to narratives that they propose⁵ ‘involves combining a focus on local interaction as a starting point for analysis with an understanding of the embedding of narratives within discursive and sociocultural contexts’ (2015: 2). They argue that narratives are rooted in the meaning-making practices of particular settings. As a result, the study of stories requires, too, examination of ‘the routines, knowledge base, and relations that participants share and negotiate within them’ (*ibid*, p.13). Essentially, the notion of ‘practice’ ‘allows for an oscillation between relatively stable, prefabricated, typified aspects of communication and emergent, in-process aspects.’ (De Fina and Georgakopoulou 2008a: 383).

Thus in this thesis, by *practices* I mean the routine, habitual and conventionalised ways in which people accomplish a range of social actions in particular settings. These ways may be via talk or through their management of range of aspects related to how they look – ways of styling their hair, for example – which are both more-or-less regularised and routinized yet are also emergent and subject to change and reinterpretation.

Practices are central to the view of identity adopted in this thesis.

⁵ See Section 1.6

1.3 Theorising and analysing identity

In this section I first outline the view of identity adopted in this thesis, namely as a phenomenon achieved in and through interaction with others. I then provide an overview of two main groups of approaches to analysing identity-in-interaction.

1.3.1 Identity as achieved in interaction

The popular view of identity is undoubtedly of an essential, relatively stable, phenomenon, whereby an 'authentic me/you' alternatively lurks behind or is the cause of ways of dressing, talking, or otherwise conducting ourselves (Benwell and Stokoe 2006: 3). Such an essentialist orientation pervades much early research on identity, including that on language and older people. This tended to treat 'age' as a fixed and essential identity that *causes* rather than is *achieved in* particular ways of interacting.

These perspectives were challenged in the face of postmodern ideas of the world and the accompanying post-structuralist theorising within academe (e.g., Bauman 1991). These ideas and theories posited the notion of certainty and predictability being replaced by 'institutionalized pluralism, variety, contingency and ambivalence' (*ibid*, p.33). In contrast to the essentialist conceptualisation, an anti-essentialist approach to identity sees it as multiple – *identities*; as fluid; and, critically, as constructed through or the product of a range of situated practices including talk, both our own and others', rather than as producing that talk and other practices (Bucholtz and Hall 2005: 588; Deppermann 2015: 370). In other words, it becomes seen as a resource to be used by individuals in interaction, something they *do*, rather than as a resource for analysts denoting something they *are* (Widdicombe 1998b). In line with this, Bucholtz and Hall argue that identity should be seen as 'intersubjectively rather than

individually produced and interactionally emergent rather than assigned in an a priori fashion' (2005: 587).

Identity is thus seen more as a process than as a pre-existing entity (De Fina and Georgakopoulou 2012: 158). This does not, however, I suggest, imply an irretrievable fragmentation: in interactions, individuals (re)construct themselves to an extent as particular kinds of people, and these learned ways of being 'congeal over time to produce the appearance of substance' (Butler 1990: 45). Furthermore, there are limits on the extent to which we can control the identities we 'give' or 'give off', to borrow Goffman's (1959: 14) terms. This is particularly the case in face-to-face interactions where identities such as age act as 'transportable identities', these being, as Zimmerman explains:

'identities that are usually visible, that is, assignable or claimable on the basis of physical or culturally based insignia which furnish the intersubjective basis for categorization.' (1998: 91)

Transportable identities, says Zimmerman 'travel with individuals across situations' (*ibid* p.90). Being based on a person's visible physical characteristics, such identities may include aspects such as, for example, their grey (or coloured) hair, which potentially allow for categorizing that person as, for example, 'female' or 'old' (Paoletti 1998a). Including this level of identities allows for (some of) a person's other semiotic identity resources to be considered in the analysis. As Zimmerman (1998: 91) goes on to emphasize, such identities may be *apprehended* by participants even if not visibly *orientated to* in interaction; nevertheless they are available as interpretive resources for all parties in an interaction.

1.3.2 Analysing identity-in-interaction

Very broadly speaking, there are two main groups of approaches to analysing identity-in-interaction: ‘the ethnomethodologically oriented ones... and the theoretically inspired ones’ (Stokoe 2012a: 352). Figure 1.1, which draws on accounts by Benwell and Stokoe (2006) and Stokoe (2012a), sets out and contrasts aspects of these two main groups of approaches to analysing identity-in-interaction.

Figure 1-1 Continuum of approaches to analysing identity-in-interaction

| | Ethnomethodologically-inspired | ↔ | ‘Theoretically-orientated’ |
|--|--|---|---|
| Examples of analytic approach | Conversation Analysis Membership Categorization Analysis Discursive Psychology | ↔ | Critical Discursive Psychology Critical Discourse Analysis Foucauldian Discourse Analysis |
| A priori theorising about identity, Discourses | No | ↔ | Yes |
| Consideration of issues of power | Dynamic and located in interaction | ↔ | Located in institutional roles and social institutions |
| Perspectives on context | Narrow | ↔ | Broad |
| Analysis | Micro-analysis of turn-by-turn interaction | ↔ | ‘Big’ orientation to macro issues |

It should be stressed that there are nuances upon nuances *within* these broadly-sketched approaches, and a considerable blurring of boundaries *between* them (Blommaert and Bulcaen 2000: 455; De Fina et al. 2006: 5-6). What these approaches share is a focus on the centrality of language in the production of identities, a view of the socially- and interactively-produced nature of identities, and a sense of the negotiability of identity. However, there are also key differences, most fundamentally, relating to the extent to which they draw on macro concerns such as wider circulating

Discourses (see next section), power, and the wider context; and how these are included in the analysis (Wooffitt 2005). I examine these points in Section 1.5.3.

Approaches at (broadly speaking) the ‘theoretically-orientated’ end of the continuum tend overtly to adopt a critique of the processes in society whereby ways of thinking, believing and acting become normalised or seen as objective ‘reality’ (Jaworski and Coupland 2006: 27). Thus critical discourse analysis (CDA), for example, has as an aim the ‘denaturalisation’ of such ways of thinking, etc, which in turn involves struggle and resistance since normalisation processes are implicated in relations of power (Fairclough 1995a: 27). Such concerns are not absent from approaches on the more ‘micro’ end of the continuum. However, there is a key difference: all approaches see power as generated and visible in language, but CDA-influenced approaches might tend to attribute power inequalities to *a priori* theorised differences in status and position (e.g., Fairclough 1989: 46; Van Dijk 2001). Approaches at the more ‘micro’ end of the continuum, by contrast, might tend to see power as more emergent through the interaction, as negotiable, and as partly constituting those differences in position (Hutchby 1996, 2006(1996)).

Before examining in more detail the frameworks for analysis of identity-in-interaction drawn upon in this thesis, I turn to a discussion of the use of the term ‘Discourse’.

1.4 Discourses in identity and ageing

The term ‘D(d)iscourse’ is the subject of considerable debate, with authors from different traditions employing the term in different ways or with different emphases (Jaworski and Coupland 2006: 1-6; Schiffrin et al. 2001: 1). In this thesis I use the term in two main senses.

Firstly, discourse (with, in this thesis, a lower-case 'd') refers to language use and practices in different interactional contexts, 'stretches of language which "hang together" so as to make sense to some community of people' in a particular setting (Gee 2008: 115)(see too Fairclough (1995b)). Thus 'discourse' can denote both kinds of utterance such as a 'busy story' (see Chapter Five), or more generally, 'talk-in-interaction'. The context of use should make clear the way in which I use the term at different points in this thesis.

However, Discourses (distinguished, in this thesis, by use of upper-case 'D', after Gee (2008: 2)), can also denote a more macro-level concept, 'an abstract vehicle for social and political processes' (Jaworski and Coupland 2006: 475). Such a macro-level concept, as Bamberg points out, may variously be called 'master narratives... master plots... culturally available narratives... dominant discourses ... or simply cultural texts' (2004a: 335), which in different ways incorporate 'normative (social) positions' (*ibid*, p.336).

In this thesis I use Discourses (upper case 'D') to denote ideologies or value systems that circulate in particular socio-cultural-historic locations, and, through a range of social practices (including discursive practices), lead some perspectives or ways of being to be seen as 'normal', whilst others are seen as 'deviant' or even almost unthinkable (J. Coupland and Gwyn 2003: 6; Fairclough 1989; Gee 2000: 183). This broad macro-level use of Discourse is also connected to the more critical approaches to analysing identities-in-interaction discussed above, such as CDA, given the interest in such analyses in uncovering the kinds of social structures and power relations underlying taken-for-granted identity categories (Wooffitt 2005). It is also, however, of interest to researchers at the 'micro' end of the continuum, who more or less explicitly invoke the notion of Discourses (or ideologies) in their identity analyses (see Section

1.5.3). It is important to note that there may be multiple potentially contradictory 'Discourses' circulating in society in relation to any particular way of being, emerging in slightly different socio-cultural-locations, gaining credence through different groups of people. This can be illustrated with respect to Discourses of Ageing.

In terms of Ageing, two prominent Discourses circulate in the Westernized world. In the first and perhaps still most prevalent of these (J. Coupland and Gwyn 2003; Hepworth 2003: 99), the *changes associated* with ageing are conceptualised as *Inevitable Decline* (Bytheway et al. 2007; Hepworth 2003; Westerhof and Tulle 2007: 236). This Discourse is sustained through negative stereotypes of older people in the mainstream media and elsewhere that conceive of 'the old' as inevitably physically incapacitated; mentally deficient; moody, lonely and depressed; complaining and ill-tempered; frail and vulnerable; unable to change; and with restricted social interactions (Bytheway 1995: 65ff; N. Coupland et al. 1991c: 35; N. Coupland 2014 (2001); Furman 1997: 94; Hummert et al. 2004; Sneed and Whitbourne 2005; Uotila et al. 2010). Despite more positive images of ageing circulating over the last thirty years (see below) the decline Discourse continues to inform lay views of ageing (e.g., Freeman 2011; Jolanki 2004: 500; Pike 2012).

This Decline Discourse both reifies 'old age' and overlooks its socio-cultural nature. This is not to take the extreme social constructionist view of ageing and deny that biological changes, both physical and mental, *do* occur as people get older; but such changes are neither inevitable nor necessarily signs of decline (Westendorp and Kirkwood 2007). The exclusionary nature of the decline Discourse can be seen in the way that alternative readings of old age, whereby it is, for example, seen as offering opportunities for personal or spiritual growth (Lynott and Lynott 1996: 758; Twigg 2004), are rarely promulgated in the western world. Not only that, but also, I suggest,

the Decline Discourse of Ageing implicitly positions aspects such as dependence and physical weakness not only as inevitable, but as necessarily negative (which itself connects to wider societal Discourses about the value of productivity and independence – at least for adults).

However, simultaneously with the Decline Discourse of Ageing, a theoretically more celebratory Discourse of Ageing circulates in western society. This is the Discourse of *Successful Ageing*, which owes its popularity to a model of successful ageing whose core principles were set out by Rowe and Kahn in 1987 (Rowe and Kahn 2015). These principles encompass reduction of disease and related disability; preservation of cognitive and physical capacities; and on-going engagement with the world (*ibid*, p.593). In line with this gerontological model, the Discourse of Successful Ageing presents 'old age' as the 'Third Age', a time of enrichment, renewal, political and social engagement, and so on, where older people can be active and healthy, both physically and mentally (Brooks 2010; M. M. Lee et al. 2007a). This Discourse particularly infuses publications specifically orientated to older people as research in both the UK and Finland has highlighted (Featherstone and Hepworth 1993; Lumme-Sandt 2011), but is also visible in mainstream media (Rozanova 2010).

This Discourse is supported or encouraged by a more consumerist culture, at least in many parts of the 'developed' world. Further, Rozanova (2010) argues it embodies neo-liberal principles of shifting responsibilities from the public to the private sphere. It understands ageing as something that can be combated or at least deferred through the use of medical advances and knowledge, with individuals taking personal responsibility for their health through remaining involved in life and active (Calasanti and Slevin 2001: 182; Hurd Clarke et al. 2008; Katz 2000; Katz and Calasanti 2015: 28; Westerhof and Tulle 2007: 238ff). This perspective, as research in both the USA

and Europe shows, is reproduced in the many advertisements and newspaper articles that treat ageing as a disease that can be 'cured', treating the appearance of ageing as a problem and not taking action as morally reprehensible (Brown and Knight 2015; Calasanti 2007; J. Coupland 2003; 2009b: 134,41; Furman 1997: 116; Rozanova 2010: 220). Further, these appearance-'curing' advertisements tend to be gendered in nature, with women still expected to focus on appearance whilst men concentrate on performance, although there are signs that this is changing (Calasanti 2007: 343f; J. Coupland 2009b).

Whilst the Discourse of Successful Ageing may counter some of the negative perceptions of ageing, it is an ageist Discourse (Andrews 1999; Liang and Luo 2012: 328), and may also morally undermine those who do not wish or are unable to continue an active life (Calasanti 2007; Featherstone and Hepworth 1993: 327, 29). Essentially, the pleasures and self-positioning of the 'third age' are perhaps limited to those with wealth and other resources (Katz and Calasanti 2015: 29; Rozanova 2010: 221; Westerhof and Tulle 2007: 240). Furthermore, the notion of decline remains, pushed back to a new 'old old' or group of 'fourth agers', defined by their relative frailty and dependence and seen as just as vulnerable, dependent and burdensome as the 'old' previously were, and potentially even more marginalised and devalued (Featherstone and Hepworth 1989, 1993; Hurd Clarke et al. 2008; Marcoen et al. 2007: 61; Westerhof and Tulle 2007).

A unifying aspect of both these Discourses is the way that ageing is pathologised (Featherstone and Hepworth 1993: 149) and seen as a potentially 'curable' disease (H. Biggs 2002: 175; Calasanti 2007). Some of these 'cures' relate to ailments associated with 'the old'; others concern technologies to overcome or disguise the physical signs of ageing (H. Biggs 2002: 168; Calasanti 2007: 337), with an emphasis

on looking young or at least younger than one's chronological age (Brooks 2010; Hepworth 2004: 19). Both Discourses rule out alternative, non-pathological, readings of ageing. Whilst alternative models of ageing – for example 'harmonious ageing' (Liang and Luo 2012), or 'model ageing' (Timonen 2016) – have been proposed, and which could generate alternative Discourses of ageing, the Successful Ageing model and Discourse still continues to be a core focus of debate and development (Katz and Calasanti 2015: 31; Rowe and Kahn 2015; Wahl et al. 2016: 1-2).

As indicated in the discussion above, the impact of any *particular* Discourse will be mitigated to the extent that other Discourses circulating in society may compete with, conflict, resist, subvert or otherwise challenge currently dominant Discourse/s in different ways (J. Coupland and Gwyn 2003: 11; van Dijk 1995). It is also important to note that whilst individuals may display awareness of general norms and stereotypes, for example, an obligation to attend to their appearance in a particular way, they may not name these as 'Discourses'; and indeed these norms and stereotypes may be variously orientated to, interpreted, modified or not made explicitly relevant – or at all – in particular interactions by individuals. In fact, Erickson (2014 (2001): 174) argued that social actors can subvert these Discourses or macro-social structures unconsciously. As Rampton et al observe, calling on Erickson's (2014 (2001)) notion of 'wobble-room', there is always

'just a little bit of space for innovation with what's otherwise experienced as the compelling weight of social expectation' (Rampton et al. 2014: 11).

As Blommaert comments, small deviations from the norm 'have the capacity to overrule the whole of norm-governed behavior' (2012: 12). The extent to which such norms are shaping individuals' identity constructions is then a matter for analysis. Whilst, as we shall see and as I commented above (p.37), there are ways other than

talk through which individuals construct their identity, talk is an important location for this work (see, e.g., chapters in Antaki and Widdicombe 1998b; Drew 2007/2005: loc2534). It is in the micro-detail of this talk that we see the subtlety and nuance of the identities achieved. I now turn to discuss two frameworks for such micro-analysis of identity as achieved in talk-in-interaction.

1.5 Empirical analysis of identity-in-interaction

In this section I outline two influential micro-interactional approaches to analysing talk-in-interaction, namely Conversation Analysis and Membership Categorization Analysis. These approaches form part of the analytic toolbox of this thesis and I discuss them in Sections 1.5.1 and 1.5.2 respectively. In Section 1.5.3, I consider the criticisms levelled at micro-analytic approaches. This prepares the way for a discussion in the next section on narrative approaches to identity that can be productively incorporated into analyses as part of addressing some of those criticisms.

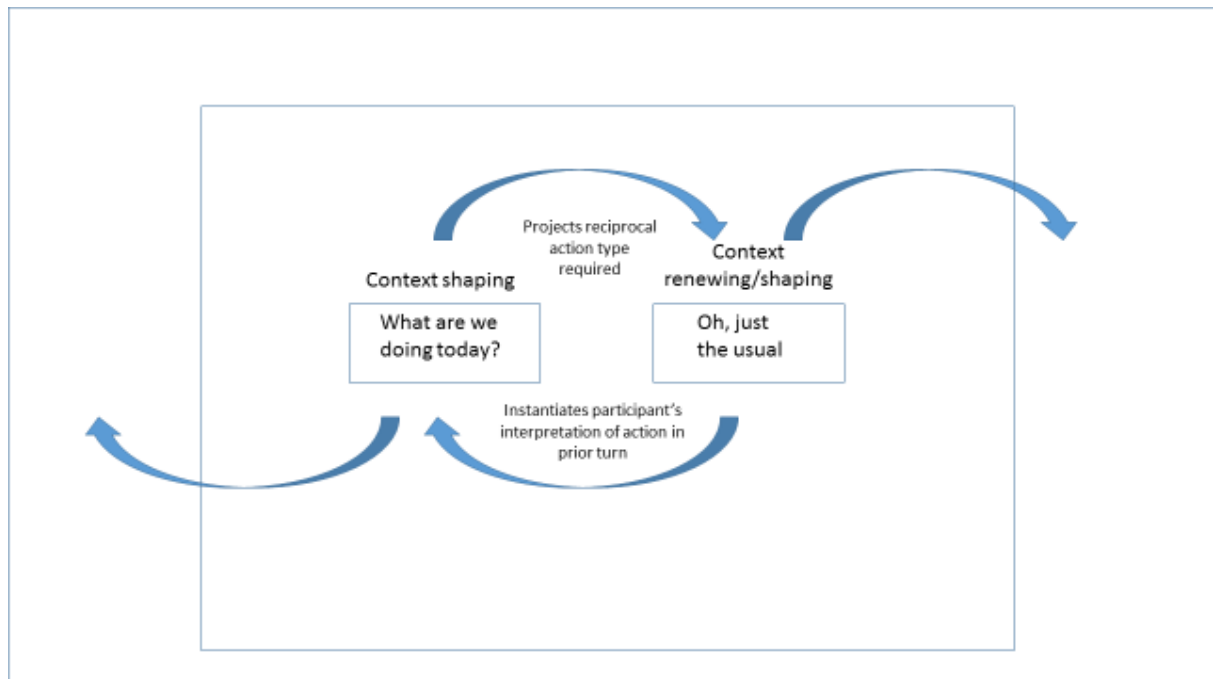
1.5.1 Conversation Analysis: key concepts

Rooted in Ethnomethodology – that is, the study of the way people themselves develop understandings and make sense of their worlds (Benwell and Stokoe 2006: 35) – and developed by Sacks and colleagues (Sacks et al. 1974; Sacks 1995), Conversation Analysis (CA) explores the way in which individuals achieve an intersubjective understanding of each other's actions in any particular encounter (Heritage 2007/2005; Hutchby and Wooffitt 2008: 4; Pomerantz and Mandelbaum 2007/2005). Underpinning this is the assumption that people's talk is 'a highly organised, socially ordered phenomenon' (Hutchby and Wooffitt 2008: 11). As part of

this tight organisation, participants in an interaction both seek to accomplish social actions themselves, including identity projections for themselves and ascriptions to others; and seek to understand (and perhaps align to, resist) the actions, projections, ascriptions, etc, made by others, in what Heritage terms the 'sequential architecture of intersubjectivity' (Heritage 2007/2005: loc4581). Methodologically, the data on which CA bases its findings are recordings of 'naturally occurring' interactions (Drew 2007/2005; Hutchby and Wooffitt 2008; Sacks 1984; Schegloff 1997b). Analytically, the focus is on 'treating some actual conversation in an unmotivated way' (Sacks 1984: 27), looking at the actions accomplished *and orientated to* in the detail of the evolving interaction (see accounts in, e.g., Benwell and Stokoe 2006; Drew and Heritage 1992; Heritage 1997; Schegloff 2007a). In essence, CA attends to how participants in the emerging sequential interaction make sense of what is going on and display their understanding of this through their utterances. As such, a key question for analysts is always: why this now? (And relatedly, of course, why not *that*?) CA provides for the detailed description and analysis of stretches of interaction, based on an interrelated apparatus which I set out in Appendix D.

A fundamental concept in CA is the notion of the 'next turn proof procedure' (Heritage 1997). That is, in their utterances, participants project the kind of next action expected from fellow participants (thus the utterance is seen as 'context shaping'). The next speaker, in their utterance, displays how they have understood the prior utterance. Their utterance is both 'context renewing' or 'shaped', but also in turn projects a relevant next action. This is illustrated in Figure 1.2 below.

Figure 1-2 Next turn proof procedure: context shaping/context renewing



A key commitment underpinning CA analysis is to withhold *a priori* assumptions or theorising about what is going on in any interaction, including any aspect of the setting or the impact on the interaction of social categories like gender or age (Fitch and Sanders 2007/2005: loc2420). Rather, the task for the analyst is to seek evidence in the data to substantiate claims that particular actions or identities are *orientated to* in the interaction by participants and, in terms of categories, made both *relevant*, 'relative to the alternative terms that are demonstrably available' (Schegloff 1992a: 108), and *consequential* for the on-going talk (*ibid*, p.110ff). This stringent requirement is one of the core aspects of the sometimes acrimonious debate between adherents of CA-inspired approaches to talk-in-interaction and those pursuing more 'critically-orientated' approaches. I discuss this further in Section 1.5.3 below.

1.5.2 Membership Categorization Analysis

In identity terms, much CA work draws on Sacks' discussions of the 'MIR membership categorization device' (Deppermann 2015: 382), in which he posited the idea of sets of categories (such as gender or age) applicable to people, or 'members' that are 'inference-rich' and 'representative' (hence MIR), and which have 'rules' of application (Pomerantz and Mandelbaum 2007/2005; Sacks 1995: Vol I, e.g. pp.40ff, 236, 52, etc; Schegloff 2007c).

As Schegloff (2007c) explains, categories, such as old or young for example, are *inference-rich*, that is, are like store-houses of knowledge about expectable conduct from their incumbents. They acquire this status through *category-bound attributes/activities (CBAs)*, 'the kinds of activities or actions or forms of conduct taken by the common-sense of vernacular culture to be specially characteristic of a category's members' (*ibid*, p.470). Furthermore, where a member of a category is not acting in an expectable manner, they are seen as an 'exception', that is, categories are '*protected against induction*'. (For example, instead of a very sprightly older person being seen as just normally fit, they might be described as 'marvellous for their age'.) Inferences can not only be made *from* categories to kinds of activities, features, etc, but also, reverse inferences can be made. For example, if someone complains of feeling tired, this may be associated by others with their older age, as in Extract 3.13, p.175.

Given the multitude of categories into which any one individual can fall (Antaki and Widdicombe 1998a: 4; Schegloff 2007c; Widdicombe 1998b: 195), participants have a selection issue in terms of categorization (Schegloff 2007c: 474). The particular choice of categories can be subtly significant, serving to include self or others in a

wider group, or, similarly, to exclude them (Benwell and Stokoe 2006: 65; De Fina et al. 2006: 3). In my data, for example, the term 'elderly' appears to serve as category to apply to others, excluding the self (see discussion of Extract 3.9, p.168). Importantly, though, this conclusion derived *from* the data rather than being assumed beforehand, in line with Schegloff's (2007c) insistence on warranting the associations with particular categories that participants make.

Summarising this approach, Antaki and Widdicombe outline five general principles to 'a conversation analytic attitude to analysing identity' (1998a: 3). In summary, they argue that people are *cast in categories* that allow a range of inferences to be drawn about features, actions, responsibilities, etc, socio-conventionally associated with the category in question (and vice versa). Projecting such categories for self or others is *indexical and locally occasioned*; that is, much of their specificity derives from the immediate sequential context.

Applying this concept of indexicality to gender, Ochs argues that

'one or more linguistic features may index social meanings (e.g. stances, social acts, social activities), which in turn helps to constitute gender meanings' (1992: 341)

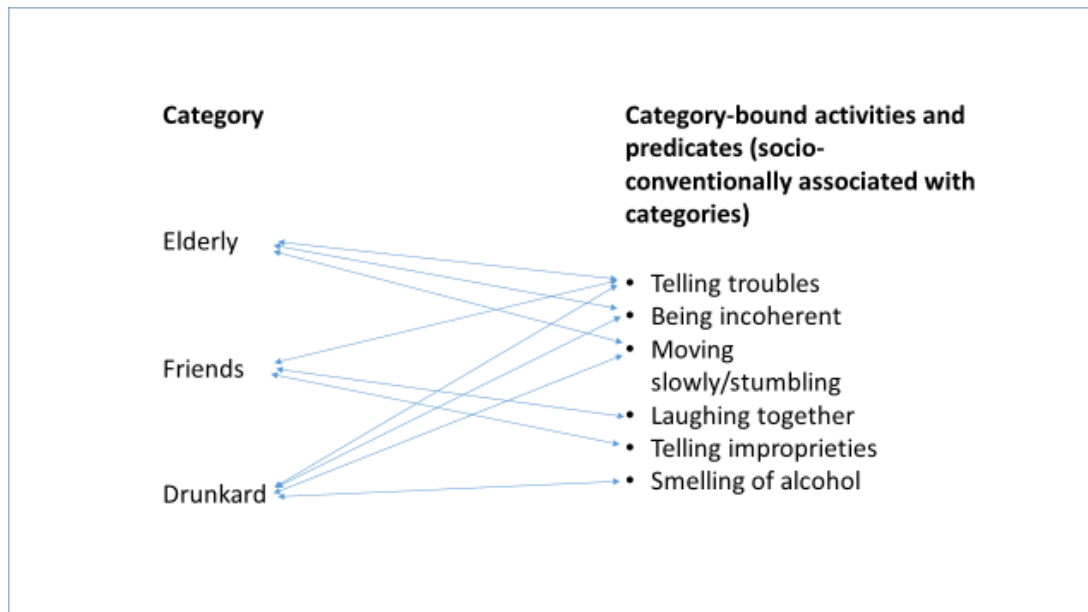
Put another way, 'speakers' identities and statuses... can be constructed and mediated by the indexical relation of language to stances, social acts, ideologies, and beliefs' (Jacobs-Huey 2006: 11). Thus more broadly, a particular linguistic phenomenon (such as a incoherence or repetition) may index, for example, a stance of uncertainty, but becomes socio-culturally associated with particular social categories, such as, for example, 'senile old person' (Paoletti 1998a). It is important to note, therefore, as Bucholtz and Hall stress, that 'In identity formation, indexicality relies heavily on ideological structures, for associations between language and

identity are rooted in cultural beliefs and values – that is ideologies – about the sorts of speakers who (can or should) produce particular sorts of language’ (2005: 593ff).

This notion of indexicality means that categories do not have to be directly mentioned, as Benwell and Stokoe (2006: 74-78) argue, discussing an analysis presented by Sacks (1995: Vol II: 318-31). However, in line with the CA commitment highlighted above (p.51), the analyst should demonstrate that any categorical ascription is warranted in the data, and that the categories are demonstrably *relevant* to participants and *consequential* to the ongoing talk (Schegloff 2007c). Finally, these identity practices are ‘visible in people’s exploitation of the structures of conversation’ (Antaki and Widdicombe 1998a: 3), such as the sequences of question/answer, for example, or choice of topic, and so on (Antaki and Widdicombe 1998a: 6; De Fina et al. 2006: 29; Johnson 2006).

As already discussed, individuals can of course be members of infinite categories with a multiplicity of CBAs. These category/feature associations are normative. However, they are also permeable, given the possibility that particular CBAs may be conventionally linked to a range of categories, and vice versa, as Figure 1.3 below illustrates. Thus the task for the analyst is to identify not just *which* categories are being orientated to by participants, but *what kind of inferences* are being drawn by the participants about features, typical activities, kinds of responsibilities, potentially and contingently linked to those categories. This gives rise to ambiguity for the analyst, but similarly, ambiguity and thus plausible deniability for participants with respect to making categorizations of self or other, (Sacks 1995: Vol.I, p.40ff).

Figure 1-3 Categories and category-bound activities and predicates (contingent and challengeable)



There are at least three bases for this ambiguity. Firstly, as Schegloff (2007c) argues, the characterisation of an action or attribute as being of a certain type is itself challengeable. In Figure 1.3 above, for example, what one participant characterises as 'being incoherent' might be characterised differently by other participants. Secondly, as Widdicombe (1998a) shows, the association of particular kinds of activity etc with a category might be disputed, that is, the underpinning 'common-sense knowledge' is challenged. For example, in Figure 1.3, participants might deny that there was any link between 'incoherence' and the category 'elderly' (or, in Paoletti's (1998a) account, 'senility'). Thirdly, participants might accept both the characterisation of their talk as incoherent, and a possible link of that attribute with the category 'elderly', but invoke a different linkage *in their case* (for example, in Figure 1.3, being drunk).

However, both challenging the characterisation of an action, and denying its association with a particular category (whether generally or for oneself), can themselves be seen as doing different kind of categorisation work that invokes

'common-sense knowledge' in different ways. Thus, denying incoherence (in one's own case) may be accepting its association with 'elderliness' but removing oneself from the category; whilst denying the link between 'incoherence' and the category 'elderly' serves to invoke a different set of 'common-sense knowledge' about the latter category. As Stokoe (2012b: 282) points out, this potential challengeability of characterisations of actions and attributes provides members with a resource for resisting category ascriptions or claims as we shall see in Chapter Three in particular. These ascriptions and modes of resistance, reformulation, denial and acceptance of categories and the various CBAs associated with them emerge in the unfolding sequences of an interaction (Antaki and Widdicombe 1998a: 2), and may be called upon as resources to achieve a complex set of goals, including managing affiliation with others (Widdicombe 1998a) or distancing oneself from a disparaged group (Jones 2006).

Research encompassing participants' categorization practices is extensive (e.g., Edwards 1998; Fitzgerald and Housley 2002; Ingridis 2014; Merino and Tileaga 2011; Stokoe 2006; Stokoe and Edwards 2007; Stokoe 2009; Widdicombe 1998a). This research shows, *inter alia*, the way categories can be used to *do* things such as create an affiliative environment in police interrogations (Stokoe 2009); to construct as unexceptional a night out with friends (Edwards 1998); or to construct self or other as 'female victim' or 'mad woman' in child custody disputes (Ingridis 2014). Studies have also shown how practices of category use are systematic. For example, Stokoe and Edwards (2007) showed that racial insults tend to follow regular patterns: either an insult word (like 'bitch', 'bastard') collocated with a racial term ('black', 'nigger', 'Paki', and even 'white'); or the racial term with the insult word omitted. Pomerantz and Mandelbaum have also drawn on the inference-rich nature of categories to show how participants orientate to complementary *relationship* categories such as friend/friend

through the kind of actions they pursue in talk. Such actions include requesting and providing updates, discussing problems, making elliptical references to shared experiences, and making improprieties, which between them mark longevity and/or intimacy of relationship (2007/2005: loc8223ff).

However, there is comparatively *little* research into participants' use of *age*-related categorization practices in general (such studies include Jones 2006; King 2013; Nikander 2000; Nikander 2009; Schegloff 2007b); and even less exploring 'older-age' categorization practices in 'naturally occurring interaction' (the key studies located being Charalambidou 2011; Paoletti 1998b).⁶ This is in line with a general under-representation of age and especially 'older age' as a sociolinguistic category (Georgakopoulou and Charalambidou 2011). Studies into the talk of adolescents and young people suggest that explicit orientation to *age* categories is a rarity (see e.g., Bucholtz 1999; Georgakopoulou 2007, 2008; Hey 1997; Spreckels 2008). By contrast, Coupland (2004: 84) argues that explicit age categorization claims are a particular feature of *older people's* talk. Coupland and colleagues (1991c) argue that such categorization claims may particularly occur in inter-generational talk, a feature that characterises most client/salon-worker dyads in my site. In such instances, argues N.Coupland (2004), the explicit orientation to age can be a claim to status or used as an accounting resource.

⁶ See Section 1.8 for a discussion of older-age related studies.

Schegloff (2007c) has criticised many authors who have developed MCA post-Sacks, accusing them of failing to warrant their links between the categories identified and the CBAs associated with those categories. He argues that too often such links are 'promiscuously' introduced into the analysis, rather than being grounded in members' orientations (p.476). This is a stringent requirement, since Schegloff argues that even if members *refer* to categories this is not necessarily sufficient warrant to assert the relevance of the category to the ongoing talk. This point is also made by Kitzinger (2007) with respect to gender. This implies connecting categorial analysis with the sequential analysis tools of CA, a practice Schegloff (2007c) claims tends to be ignored by much MCA.

Stokoe (2012a, 2012b) agrees that MCA can (and should) be profitably combined with sequential analysis and attention to the action-orientation of each turn. However, she suggests that the accusations of 'promiscuity' levelled at MCA practitioners has become something of a myth, arguing that 'categories' are no more or less ambiguous than 'any other words or phrases that comprise an action' (2012b: 352). In other words, the requirements of warranting are no more or less stringent for MCA than for CA more generally. In short, I would suggest that it is more a matter of more or less grounded analysis, than inherent issues with the direction taken by MCA.

In addition to these debates among CA practitioners, there are wider critiques made of micro-interactional approaches to analysing identity.

1.5.3 Critiques made of micro-interactional approaches

The CA (and MCA) apparatus is a powerful approach that has, argues Schegloff, 'a defensible sense of its own reality' that is 'internally grounded' and which 'we can

aspire to get at analytically' (Schegloff 1997b: 171). Its commitment to turn-by-turn analysis of the evolving sequences of an interaction encourages analysts to see how *participants* orientate to or treat the contributions of other parties (indeed, participants' orientations are the benchmark for analysis). In addition, argues Widdicombe, CA 'provides in rich technical detail *how* identities are mobilized in actual instances of interaction' (1998b: 203, emphasis added). Thus taken together, the tools of MCA and CA offer powerful means of exploring how participants orientate to identities, including, for example, age-related identities. A key advantage of a CA/MCA-motivated approach to studies of identity is that it allows for participants' orientation to particular social (and other) identities as fixed, stable, enduring and *essential* phenomena (Widdicombe 1998b: 202), and shows how these conceptualisations may work to achieve particular goals in interaction (Bucholtz and Hall 2006; Widdicombe 1998b). This is in contrast to some 'critical' approaches such as CDA which argue for the fluidity and multiplicity of people's identities without showing how this operates for those very participants (Wooffitt 2005). However, these micro approaches are not without their critics. As Wooffitt (2005) argues, these critiques tend to cluster around issues of methodology on the one hand and political engagement on the other, although the two kinds of issues are interconnected.

In terms of methodological issues, one of the 'most contested notions in relation to CA' is context (Jaworski and Coupland 2006: 18). Drew and Heritage explain the CA-interactive perspective on context as being 'locally produced and transformable at any moment' (1992: 19) and as entailing:

'the abandonment of what may be termed the "bucket" theory of context in which some pre-established social framework is viewed as "containing" the participants' actions' (*ibid*).

Schegloff (1992b, 1997b) argues that given the potential infinity of identities and descriptions of settings, any or all of which are 'correct', the best way of determining which to use to inform the analysis is by reference to those identities, settings and other contextual aspects that are demonstrably orientated to by participants, made relevant and shown to be consequential in that interaction. He further argues that some (critical) approaches display a 'theoretical imperialism' in ignoring the 'endogenous orientations of the participants' in favour of their own 'exogenous considerations' (1997b: 167). Such prior theorising, claims Schegloff (1999b, 1999a) suggests that researchers believe they already know 'how things work' (1999a: 577), and end up projecting their own biases (Blommaert and Bulcaen 2000). As Widdicombe (1998b: 202-4) argues, there is risk in such analyses of making the data fit the theory and of overlooking the way in which discourse practices of different kinds – and indeed, Discourses – may be drawn on as resources to achieve particular local goals. Schegloff (1997b: 180; 1998: 416) argues that CA is not opposed to broader theorising, but that this should not be introduced *a priori*.

Nevertheless, it does seem to be the case that CA is itself informed to some extent by *a priori* theorising, as Billig (1999a, 1999b) observed with respect to labelling of participants, a point Schegloff (1999b) concedes. Furthermore, CA does draw implicitly on wider cultural knowledge, particularly, as noted earlier, MCA, with its reliance on inference-rich categories. In fact, conversation analysts acknowledge the importance of understanding the 'culture' in which the talk being studied takes place, albeit these links should be warranted in the data (Antaki and Widdicombe 1998a; Hutchby and Wooffitt 2008: 106f).

More generally, analysts inevitably do not have the same access to interpretive resources as participants, since a focus on just relatively short stretches of talk

overlooks the longer interaction of which those stretches are part (Benwell and Stokoe 2006: 104), including the way participants themselves develop modes of interacting over the course of successive encounters (Wetherell 1998: 40). It would seem that whilst ambiguity and potential deniability is immanent in talk for participants themselves, the longer history of interaction is a resource on which they – unlike the analyst – can frequently draw. Furthermore, a narrow focus on context prevents analysts from seeing how certain self-constructions have become routines for participants or the way in which their identities are both achievements in themselves but also used repetitively to achieve certain goals (Wetherell 2007). Indeed such a narrow focus on context risks subverting that very CA concern with *participants'* orientations: not all participants engage fulsomely – or at all – in *talk*; not all topics – including important topics – are fulsomely discussed (Briggs 1998); and there is an element of serendipity in what is captured in the first place.

Perhaps the point of most concern in the debates about what exogenous data may be imported into the analysis is that Discourses and/or socially-ascribed identities might be shaping the interaction without participants overtly orientating to them (Wetherell 1998). Precisely the problem with Discourses is that they normalise states of being and thus go unnoticed. This brings me to the second 'bundle' of issues, namely the alleged disconnect of CA/MCA with 'big' issues such as inequalities and power (Billig 1999b). In contrast, as Blommaert and Bulcaen (2000) observe, theoretically-orientated approaches to identity-in-interaction do focus explicitly on political engagement and effecting social change (for example, Fairclough 1989, 1995a, 2001; Van Dijk 2001). However, 'big' issues can in fact be addressed at a micro-level, allowing CA to offer 'a distinctive perspective on issues of power and social control' (Wooffitt 2005: loc2764; see too Zimmerman 2005). For example, with respect to issues of power and control, Hutchby's (1999, 2006(1996)) analysis of talk

radio shows the micro workings of power, dynamically embedded in everyday social interaction, where CDA, for example, might see it as relatively unproblematically located in institutional or social positions (for example, Fairclough 1989; Van Dijk 2001). Similarly, Kitzinger (2005b, 2005a) and Land and Kitzinger (2005) have highlighted the way heteronormativity is implicit in interaction (what Bucholtz and Hall (2006: 372) refer to as an 'unmarked category'), thereby positioning other sexual orientations or identities as somehow 'deviant'. I would suggest that it perhaps comes down, to an extent, to the order of analysis: it is not that approaches that start with micro-level analysis have and can say nothing to broader Discourses, but that holding off from making assumptions *a priori* and *starting at this level* 'can give us what a macro-level analysis of discourses does not: a warrantable method for making claims about 'the world' and its categorial arrangements' (Stokoe 2012b: 299).

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In summary, the micro-analytic approaches discussed in this section offer a toolbox that facilitates principled approaches to the analysis of identity-in-interaction. Nevertheless, there remain undeniable challenges in connecting these micro-identity moves made in particular sequences with either the shaping effects of circulating Discourses (such as ideas about age-appropriate attire, for example) and/or wider socially-given identities or roles. Treating CA and MCA as *tools* to be used, sometimes within a wider narrative analytic framework, as part of a *linguistic ethnographic* approach goes some way to making such connections in a principled way. In the next section I consider narrative approaches and in Section 1.7, I discuss linguistic ethnographic approaches.

1.6 Narrative approaches to identity analysis

Narrative has long been considered a key locus for the construction of self. Particularly prominent in terms of narrative and identity is analysis of narratives told in research interviews, either incidentally as part of a social science interview or explicitly solicited via often very different kinds of narrative interviews (e.g., McAdams 1993; Wengraf 2011). Increasingly, however, and in line with a view of identity as emergent and negotiated in interaction, there has been a move to analyse narratives of all kinds – whether elicited in interviews or told as part of other activities – as situated practices, with the identity achieved through particular narrative tellings seen as similarly situated (De Fina and Georgakopoulou 2008a). In this section I start by examining developments in narrative analysis. I then discuss ways in which analysis of narrative identities has been approached, before closing with a discussion of frameworks for analysing identities produced in narrative-in-interaction. In this section and elsewhere in this thesis I use the terms ‘narrative’ and ‘story’ interchangeably (see, for example, Schiffrin and De Fina (2010: 1)).

1.6.1 Narrative developments: from context-free tellings to situated practice

A dominant – even canonical – approach in terms of defining, identifying and analysing narrative components in oral tellings was that proposed by Labov and Waletzky (1967; later revised in Labov 1972; Labov 1997). Based on analysis of a corpus of stories solicited in interviews, Labov and Waletzky (henceforth L&W) derived a number of components for fully-fledged narratives, namely abstract, orientation, complication, evaluation, resolution and coda (Labov and Waletzky 1967:

93ff; Labov 1972: 369).⁷ This approach attracted criticism from a number of quarters, including from proponents of CA (see in particular, Schegloff (1997a)). CA and CA-influenced research took a quite different approach to story-telling, stressing in particular the *interactional* work involved, including, among other aspects: how stories are methodically introduced to on-going talk and exited from; how they are collaboratively constructed; and the actions they are designed to perform. I consider each of these aspects in turn.

In terms of the endpoints, the CA view highlights the embeddedness of narrative in the sequentially-developing interaction (Schegloff 1997a), and the way stories of any kind are 'worked up' to both arise from and shape the surrounding talk (Jefferson 1978; Sacks 1974). An early point of interest was the impact of stories on turn-taking organisation, given that stories tend to require the speaker to hold the floor for longer than a single turn constructional unit⁸ (Sacks et al. 1974). One method identified is the story preface sequence – such as 'say, did you see anything' (Sacks 1995: Vol II, p.10) – that both signals that a story is underway (Drew 2007/2005; C. Goodwin and Heritage 1997; Sacks 1995: Vol II, 10), and enables the teller to hold the floor for

⁷ In brief, the abstract summarises the entire story and sometimes also its point. The orientation locates the story with respect to characters, time, place etc. The complication relates to the central events, whilst the resolution centres on how those events turned out. The evaluation component provides the answer to the 'so what?' question, and can be either embedded and internal to the story, or comprise external narrator comments direct to the audience. Finally, the coda rounds off the story, sometimes bringing it back to the present in some way or commenting on its effect.

⁸ See Appendix D

multiple turn constructional units (C. Goodwin 2015). Jefferson (1978) showed how prospective tellers design their stories to be locally occasioned, such that they are shown to be in some way triggered by, or somehow relate to, prior talk. Such techniques include disjunct markers such as 'oh that reminds me', repetitions of trigger words and temporal locators such as 'yesterday'. Stories do not, however, always need prefaces. Thus Ochs and Capps showed that stories could be introduced by 'slow disclosure' whereby the teller announces a 'tellable event' and once the hearer is aligned as story-recipient, allows the story to unfold (2001: 135); more straightforwardly, as Mandelbaum says, 'one way to launch a storytelling is simply to begin' (2013: 496).

Sacks argued that one of the points of the story preface was to enable recipients to know when the story was over and to respond appropriately at that point (Sacks 1974; 1995: Vol II, 10). Likewise, Jefferson (1978) argued that the means of introducing the story is consequential for the structure of the story, alignment of co-participants, and therefore both its telling and its sequential implicativeness, with tellers engaging in work to 'display a relationship between the story and subsequent talk' (p.228), which in turn justifies the telling. Research has also shown that story tellers engage in a range of work to pursue a response from recipients who do not treat the story as complete (Norrick 2008; Stivers 2008). For example, Stivers (2008: 50) shows how when tellers encounter recipients merely nodding at the end of their story, they may add components, thereby proposing that the story was not then but is now complete. Furthermore, CA researchers have argued that the preferred (see Appendix D) response to stories by recipients is a display of stance that affiliates with that of the teller (Mandelbaum 2013: 500). Such mirrored stances are not always forthcoming; for example, recipients may decline to laugh at a joke (Sacks 1974) or fail to treat the story as amusing (Mandelbaum 2010: 169). When recipients treat a story as complete

when it is not, treat it is not complete when it is, or fail to mirror the teller's stance in their reception of the story, they are then, suggests Stivers, 'vulnerable to being heard as *disaligning* or *disaffiliating* or both' (2008: 36, original emphasis).

This discussion on recipient response also signals another aspect to CA and narrative-in-interaction studies of story-telling, namely exploring and highlighting the way in which stories are interactively co-constructed between tellers and recipients; indeed, as Mandelbaum stresses, stories 'can never be monologues if recipients are present' (2003: 596). Thus for example, studies have shown that all recipients shape the tellings, whether they are silent (C. Goodwin 1984, 2007b, 2015); actively disattending through engaging in other activities (M. H. Goodwin 1997); offering continuers (Schegloff 1997a) or evaluations (Stivers 2008); or contesting, disrupting or embellishing the telling (M. H. Goodwin 1997; Mandelbaum 2010). Indeed, as M.H. Goodwin's (1990) study showed, even potential *future* hearers shape the current telling. This in turn affects the conceptualisation of teller. From the single 'teller' in L&W's account, telling in interactionally-orientated accounts of story-telling involves multiple tellership (Georgakopoulou 2007: 57; Mandelbaum 2013: 501; Norrick 2000: 57ff; Ochs and Capps 2001: 24ff). Indeed, in Goodwin's (2007a: 37, 43) account we have the notion of the *distributed* speaker, whose participation in a story is achieved through gesture and posture as well as through talk. The talk itself, says Goodwin, 'is distributed across multiple utterances produced by different actors' (*ibid*, p.43).

Finally, a key area of focus of CA approaches to narrative – and difference from L&W's approach – lies in exploring stories as forms of social action that are worked up to *do* something (Beach and Mandelbaum 2005: 361-2; Benwell and Stokoe 2006: 135; Stokoe and Edwards 2006: 57); and the implications of tellers' selection of this form over other means to undertake local action (M. H. Goodwin 1990; Schegloff 1997a;

Stokoe and Edwards 2006). Such action can have implications beyond the immediacy of the story telling; thus M.H.Goodwin (M. H. Goodwin and Goodwin 1987; M. H. Goodwin 1990) showed how the 'instigating' stories of the girls she studied were consequential for *future* action. Such studies show that among other work, stories can be used for troubles-telling (Jefferson 1988); to complain (Mandelbaum 1991/1992, 2013) or to account for an inability to do something (Drew 1984); to entertain, for example by telling a joke (Sacks 1974) or to share gossip (Blum-Kulka 2000); as part of court-room accounts (Ingrids 2014); and so on.

CA and CA-inspired studies of everyday story-telling have thus offered important insights into the interactional construction of narratives, whether in research interviews or in the quotidian settings more often studied. Overall, though, CA has tended on the whole to be less interested in stories in their own right (De Fina and Georgakopoulou 2012: 174) than on the interactional work involved in the telling. Further, CA's narrow conceptualisation of context as discussed above (Section 1.5.3), mean that both the intertextual nature of a telling and wider social issues are ignored (De Fina and Georgakopoulou 2012: 49). It has also tended to privilege a particular kind of story, one that, among other features, involves multiple turn constructional units (C. Goodwin 2015: 198).

Ochs and Capps (2001) developed the interactional and linguistic perspective further in suggesting that analysts should think of narratives as comprising 'a cluster of narrative possibilities' along several dimensions – tellership, tellability, embeddedness, linearity, and moral stance – with different configurations of these characterizing particular tellings (and indeed, particular parts of particular tellings) to a greater or lesser extent (pp.19-20). This recognises that the narrative genre is heterogeneous, a matter of more-or-less rather than all-or-nothing (Georgakopoulou

2010a: 400). Building on this, a case has been made for non-‘canonical’ or *small stories* which point towards a narrative orientation in the talk (Bamberg 2004a, 2004b).

The term small stories is proposed:

‘as an umbrella term that captures a gamut of underrepresented narrative activities, such as tellings of ongoing events, future or hypothetical events, and shared (known) events, but it also captures allusions to (previous) tellings, deferrals of tellings, and refusals to tell.’ (Bamberg and Georgakopoulou 2008: 381)

The notion of small stories recognises the diversity of story-types, but also, drawing on the insights of CA, acknowledges the ‘multiplicity, fragmentation and irreducible situatedness’ of narrative forms (De Fina and Georgakopoulou 2008b: 275); that is, there is more than one kind of narrative and it is always inevitably situated.

Georgakopoulou explains that:

‘small stories research has mainly been informed by practice-based approaches to language and identities, which view language as performing specific actions in specific environments and as being part of social practices, shaping and being shaped by them (e.g., Hanks 1996)’ (2015: 257).

In line with this, the focus is increasingly on narratives as *situated practices* within a wider set of social practices where no story may actually end up being told (Bamberg 2011a; De Fina and Georgakopoulou 2012; Georgakopoulou 2010a). As explained in Section 1.2, taking a practice-orientation involves looking at how narratives emerge in particular interactions and the micro-detail of their construction, with this set against an understanding of what counts as narrative and what kinds of telling are produced in the setting on which we are focussing. This implies combining narrative analysis

with ethnographic understandings as advocated by several authors as I discuss below (Section 1.6.3).

As CA has shown and as discussed above, narratives are produced to *do* things in talk (Bamberg and Georgakopoulou 2008: 393; De Fina and Georgakopoulou 2008a: 381; Mandelbaum 2003: 596; 2013: 503). Given that identity is constructed in talk-in-interaction, then whatever else stories are doing, they are inevitably *also* doing identity work (Benwell and Stokoe 2006: 137). In fact, De Fina and colleagues comment on ‘the widely accepted centrality of narrative as a privileged locus for the negotiation of identities’ (2006: 16). It is this connection of narrative with identity that I discuss next.

1.6.2 The centrality of narrative in identity construction

A key feature of narratives is their double chronology and, indeed, spatiality. That is, narratives offer a spatial and temporal separation between the world of the telling and the world of the told (Briggs 1996; Deppermann 2013; Young 1987). These two worlds, telling world and storyworld, are peopled by characters – potentially but not necessarily including the various teller/s and/or recipient/s of the tale – engaged in a range of activities in various settings. In their story, narrators may construct themselves (now) as being more or less ‘the same as’ or ‘different to’ both themselves and others (then/there, here/now). They thereby manage both their diachronic identity, through addressing the tension between coherent identity over time and a sense of development and change; and their synchronic identity as like others yet also sufficiently different (Bamberg 2011a). The two broad approaches to studying narrative identities are biographical studies and interactionally-orientated ones (Benwell and Stokoe 2006: 129ff; De Fina and Georgakopoulou 2012: 155ff; De Fina

2015: 351ff). The double chronology is important in both of these, but the emphases differ.

Biographical studies focus on the teller and her life, and on whether she contributes to a sense of a positive and/or coherent self in her stories. Arguing that the only way of capturing our past 'lived time' was in narrative, Jerome Bruner famously wrote: 'In the end, we *become* the autobiographical narratives by which we "tell about" our lives.' (1987: 15, original emphasis). This statement encapsulates the idea that, as De Fina comments, 'the stories we tell mold [sic] us into what we are' (2015: 351). Arguably, this is the view that infuses biographical approaches, that have dominated narrative investigations of identity (De Fina and Georgakopoulou 2012: 159ff). These approaches tend to solicit stories in research or explicitly narrative interviews. Underpinning such approaches is the idea that the teller can:

'bring the coordinates of time, space and personhood into a unitary frame so that the sources "behind" these representations [of past events] can be made empirically visible for further analytical scrutiny in the form of "identity analysis."' (*ibid*)

Interactionally-orientated studies to identity in narrative, by contrast, have been strongly influenced by views of identity as constructed in interaction as discussed in Section 1.3 (De Fina 2003; De Fina et al. 2006; Georgakopoulou 2007; Maryns 2014 (2005)). These focus on the storytelling process, and within that, use micro-analytic methods to examine 'the process of identity construction itself – the strategies used by narrators, co-narrators, and their audience to achieve, contest, or reaffirm specific identities' (De Fina 2015: 352).

The use of narratives solicited in interview to analyse identities has encountered considerable critique: the privileging of a particular kind of narrative with no reference

to the interview as a context of elicitation (Atkinson and Delamont 2006); the assumption that narratives produced in interviews give more or less unproblematic entrée to people's lives (Atkinson and Delamont 2006: 166; Benwell and Stokoe 2006: 142; Stokoe and Edwards 2006); and the assumption that people's stories (life and other) are pre-existing entities, ready-made and waiting to be produced on demand (Schegloff 1997a; Stokoe and Edwards 2006). These issues are perpetuated through the analysis. For example, the role of the interviewer is omitted in the transcript and subsequent analysis; or the life story told in interview is broken up and re-ordered by the analyst, imposing on it a sense of coherence (Benwell and Stokoe 2006: 142).

Some of these issues – and the respective merits of small stories (see Section 1.6.1), and those emerging in conversation, and the 'big stories' of reflected-upon-lives recounted in interviews – were brought to prominence in a debate between Mark Freeman and Michael Bamberg. Specifically, Freeman (2006) argued that big and small stories were complementary, with the former, the 'reflected upon self', being akin to 'life on holiday'. Countering this perspective, Bamberg (2006) argued that 'big' and 'small' represent different approaches to narrative inquiry, and that whilst the latter's focus on interaction and performativity is able to enrich the former, the reverse is not the case. According to Bamberg, the focus on small stories told in everyday interaction allows exploration of how people '*construct* a sense of who they are, while big story research analyzes the stories as *representations* of world and identities within them' (Bamberg 2011b: 16; original emphasis).

Whereas in biographical orientations to narrative identity the double chronology of narratives is envisaged as facilitating the construction of reflected-upon, coherent selves, in interactional approaches the emphasis is somewhat different. As Deppermann explains it,

'the duality of the story world and the telling situation open up possibilities for identity work both at the level of narrator and characters and at the level of storytellers as interlocutors' (2015: 14)

This duality is a key aspect of approaches to narrative analysis that draw on the concept of positioning, as I discuss in the next section.

1.6.3 Narrative Positioning Theory (NPT): a framework for analysing narrative identities

In an influential paper, Davies and Harré argued that positions are:

'the discursive process whereby selves are located in conversations as observably and subjectively coherent participants in jointly produced story lines' (1990: 48),

wherein positions are seen as being both attributed (interactively) and claimed (reflexively). It has been observed that what constitutes a 'position' and how this is attributed is left unclear in this paper or is assigned a cognitive rather than discursive status (Benwell and Stokoe 2006: 141; De Fina and Georgakopoulou 2012: 162). However, Davies and Harré's notion is valuable in highlighting the *interactive* nature of identity construction and ascription (Deppermann 2013: 64).

De Fina and colleagues (2006: 7-9) explain that analyses using the concept of positioning aim to investigate the multi-layered nature of identity construction, including the relationships to wider cultural practices and circulating Discourses. They highlight the way different linguistic strategies can be used to claim and project identities for self and other. Thus, for example, Schiffrin's view of a 'position' takes a discursive orientation, it being seen as the 'indexical relationships – between agentic and epistemic selves, on the one hand, and ongoing relationships, on the other' (1996:

196), with these selves displayed through linguistic and paralinguistic means. Although analysing stories told in interview, Schiffrin shows how tellers use language to position themselves with respect to the characters in the tale, which in turn shapes their relationships in the world of the telling.

Wortham (2000, 2001) also draws on the notion of a 'position', although without overtly drawing on Davies and Harré's work. Stressing the 'enacted positionings' achieved through the inter-relationship of the representational and interactional functions of narrative tellings, he aims to show how these shape a person's self-construction through 'repeated tellings' (Wortham 2001: 6). Wortham (2000) identifies five cues whereby the narrator projects positioning for herself and her audience, namely through: categorical usages; metapragmatic verbs (such as 'was persuaded', 'claimed'); reported speech; evaluative indexicals; and epistemic modalization (which displays the relative epistemic status of the teller and recipient vis-à-vis the characters, for example as knowing or understanding about something in a way their narrated selves did not). Wortham explains evaluative indexicals as being those that 'presuppose something about characters' social positions and position the narrator with respect to those positions' (*ibid*, p.23). He gives as an example the narrator's statement that 'you were allowed to visit with your mother on Sundays only', and argues that this presents the school's authorities as a particular social type, in this case as 'cruel and blinded by archaic notions of discipline' (*ibid*).

Both these approaches draw on or seek to connect to the wider social world in different ways. For example, Schiffrin, concluding that 'social identity is locally situated' (1996: 198), nevertheless draws on her understandings of the situation, her interviewees and cultural notions of mother/daughter relations in deriving her conclusions about tellers' social identities. Wortham, in identifying in particular

evaluative indexicals, necessarily draws on and makes assumptions based on cultural knowledge.

An approach that draws explicitly on Davies and Harré's notion of positioning, and which seeks overtly to make connections between the immediacy of the story and its telling and wider social concerns, is Bamberg's (1997) Narrative Positioning Theory (henceforth NPT). Unlike Davies and Harré, however, Bamberg (2004a, 2004b) seeks to show how the narrator agentively and discursively positions herself in relation to wider available locations presented by circulating Discourses.

Bamberg's approach argues for the analysis of narratives – of any 'size' – at three levels, highlighting the multi-layered positioning of individuals referred to above and the positioning of characters in time and space. At *Level 1*, the focus is on the relationships of the characters within the story, and the agency they display 'in terms of initiative, responsibility, and knowledge' (Deppermann 2015: 374). *Level 2* analyses the relationship of the narrator interactively via the narrating with both characters and listeners. Analysis at this level also encompasses the immediate interactional moves that led to a particular telling and the triggering and significance of the story in that particular setting, answering the CA question, 'why this now?' (Bamberg and Georgakopoulou 2008: 385). Finally, at *Level 3*, the analytic focus is on the way the positionings achieved in Levels 1 and 2 interrelate to answer the question 'Who am I?' It is in doing this that narrators 'position themselves vis-à-vis cultural discourses and normative (social) positions, either by embracing them or displaying neutrality, or by distancing, critiquing, subverting, and resisting them.' (Bamberg 2004a: 336). They thereby present a self relevant beyond the immediate context of telling (Bamberg 1997, 2004a; Bamberg and Georgakopoulou 2008).

Within the two worlds of the narrative – the storyworld of Level 1 and the telling world of Level 2 – a range of micro-analytic tools can be productively employed. Thus the sequential analysis tools of CA can be used to explicate the identity claims made and resisted, with a close focus on, for example, aspects such as different telling roles, encompassing recipients as well as (main) speakers (Georgakopoulou 2007; C. Goodwin 2007a) and exploring the multiple laminations of self afforded by story-telling (Goffman 1981). Schegloff (2007c) states that a key site of use of categories is storytelling, which highlights that NPT can also be fruitfully combined with MCA in identifying the kinds of category ascriptions made. Indeed, Deppermann argues that positioning has a wider analytic scope than MCA. He shows with respect to NPT, that whereas MCA is a key tool for Level 1 analysis, the concept of positioning allows us to identify who the teller is, here-and-now, by reference to both her biographical self/selves and what he calls the ‘implicit performative claims of identity’ (2013: 62); that is, for example, the way in which tellers take up particular stances towards events or other characters, or attribute agency (*ibid*, p.67).

The link between the micro-interactive level and wider macro Discourses at Level 3 remains problematic in NPT (De Fina 2013: 45; Deppermann 2015; Georgakopoulou 2013a: 91; C. Watson 2007: 374). In fact, as Deppermann observes, ‘practices of positioning on levels 1 and 2 may to some degree index the cultural discourses needed to make sense of local action’ (2015: 383). In addition, more general criticisms of approaches such as critical discursive psychology and CDA apply to some extent here, namely, that the tendency to identify the presence of just two or three Discourses in talk is both impoverished and implies preconceptions about what is there to find (Wooffitt 2005: loc2675 (Ch8)). However, I would argue that identifying *no* shaping of wider Discourses is also impoverished and implies a view of individual interactions as autonomous and context-free. The response must surely be, as with

analysis of talk-in-interaction more generally, for the researcher to start with the micro-analysis (De Fina and Georgakopoulou 2012: 190), and only then to *interpret* by reference to wider Discourses, making her research interests overt, and open to the potential presence of other Discourses.

In addition, attention to repeated patterns of story-telling (what Georgakopoulou (2013a) calls 'iterativity') – of both individuals and related to a setting – also supports identification of wider Discourses in the fine-grained analysis of storytelling instances (De Fina 2015: 362). This analysis is further enriched by an ethnographic understanding of the site in question and its people that allows the researcher to identify the kinds of Discourses, categorial associations and so on circulating in particular settings (Barkhuizen 2010; De Fina 2013, 2015; Deppermann 2015; Georgakopoulou 2013a, 2015; C. Goodwin 2015).

There remain issues related to the item of analytic focus, particularly where small stories are concerned: if narratives and narrative practices are situationally contingent (De Fina 2008), if we 'need to be open to variability in narrative and to abandon pre-defined ideas about what narrative is' (De Fina and Georgakopoulou 2008a: 384), how as researchers do we go about analysing such discourse types in any stretch of talk? One response might be to argue that even where the 'narrativity' of a telling is so attenuated as to be almost non-existent, there remains a hint of a separation between the two worlds – of the told and the telling – and NPT can still be productively used. For example, in deferring a tale a teller not only displays their notion of the link between setting and tellability (De Fina and Georgakopoulou 2012: 112), which positions them in particular ways, but also introduces multiple layers of embedded storyworlds. In refusing to tell, a teller may similarly be undertaking complex identity work (Heinrichsmeier 2012: 396). It is then a small step to deploy the NPT framework

set out above in talk that comprises even more ‘fleeting moments of narrative orientation to the world’ (Baynham (2011: 64), citing Hymes (1996)).

This points to a focus on both the narrative *stances* taken up (and attributed) (Georgakopoulou 2013b, in press (2016)) (see Section 2.5.3), and on storytelling as a *process* that may be incomplete, rather than stories as (finished) products (De Fina and Georgakopoulou 2012: 86). Further, and importantly, the focus shifts to encompass exploration of tellers’ roles and entitlement to tell that may in turn point to wider aspects of the relationship, including the negotiation of power between parties (De Fina and Georgakopoulou 2012; Shuman 1993).

These issues further reinforce the relevance of ethnographic work to help understanding of the longer conversations, kinds of narrative and other discursive and social practices of which shorter exchanges are a part (Bucholtz and Hall 2005; De Fina and Georgakopoulou 2012; De Fina 2013; Deppermann 2013, 2015; Georgakopoulou 2013a).

1.7 A linguistic ethnographic perspective

In this section, I build on my earlier discussion of the theoretical understanding of identity, the critiques of micro-analytic approaches and the discussion in the previous section on narrative, to show why linguistic ethnography (LE), the methodology employed in my thesis, is of such value in an investigation into identities-in-interaction.

Linguistic ethnography, explains Rampton, is best thought of ‘as a site of encounter where a number of established lines of research interact’ (Rampton 2007a: 585). It owes much of its origin to Hymes’ *Ethnography of Speaking*, and his emphasis on the

inseparability of the analysis of language and social life (e.g., Hymes 1967, 1977, 1996). As such, linguistic ethnography (henceforth LE) combines a 'close analysis of situated language use' (Rampton et al. 2004: 2) with an ethnographic commitment to developing understandings of the patterns and uniqueness of particular settings (Copland and Creese 2015; Rampton et al. 2004: 16). Researchers from a broad range of disciplines have combined these two foci – on the situated language use and on the settings – in an equally broad range of contexts, encompassing *inter alia*, asylum speakers' interviews, friendship groups, general practitioner consultations, job interviews, police interviews, schools, think tanks, (see e.g., chapters in Copland and Creese 2015; Georgakopoulou 2007; Maryns 2014 (2005); Rampton 2006a; chapters in Snell et al. 2015; Swinglehurst 2014). The dual focus on the local, immediate situated language use and wider settings and structures is mirrored in the outputs, with the minutiae of written or spoken texts – such as audio- or video-recordings and the highly-detailed transcripts arising from these – balanced by

'rhetorical forms, such as vignettes and narratives (Hymes 1996: 12-13), that are designed to provide the reader with some apprehension of the fullness and irreducibility of the 'lived stuff' from which the analyst has abstracted structure' (Rampton et al. 2014: 4).

Although (as discussed in Section 1.5.3) CA practitioners have tended to eschew the use of data exogenous to that interaction, Schegloff (1992b), one of the 'founders' of CA, agrees that ethnographic data may be useful; however, he argues that these should be used, for example, to understand terms employed, and only after having analysed the interaction. This is potentially limiting, and places non-recorded and recorded (audio/video) data in an artificial hierarchy (Briggs 1998: 521, 42; Copland and Creese 2015: 228).

Using ethnographic methods such as ethnographically-orientated interviewing or observation can enrich our understanding of recorded interactional data.⁹ For example, participants' worlds often include much a longer acquaintanceship than the brief set of interactions to which the researcher is normally privy – what Briggs refers to in institutional settings as 'long chains of interaction' (1998: 540). They learn to know each other's mode of talk; and they also build on, obliquely refer to, re-interpret, etc, prior talk and their prior perceptions of each other. In fact, as Pomerantz and Mandelbaum (2007/2005) argued, oblique and allusive references can index a longer relationship between participants, i.e., precisely what the researcher often lacks. To a certain extent such understandings are observable in the data, including on occasion through the mechanism of repair (Drew 2007/2005) (see Appendix D). Nevertheless, a wider understanding of the participants' prior interactions – an understanding that those participants themselves will have – will enrich our interpretation. Furthermore, ethnographic methods enable principled connections to be made from the here-and-now of social interactions to wider 'macro' concerns (Erickson 2014 (2001); Heller 2014 (2001); Swinglehurst 2015). As de Fina points out: 'ideological presuppositions, shared knowledge, and attitudes are not always oriented to or made relevant to the current interaction by participants' (2013: 57), yet nevertheless underpin participants' interactional positioning.

Identity, as discussed in Section 1.3 above, is understood in this thesis as an achievement, accomplished in the detail of interaction, including in both the micro-

⁹ See Section 2.4 for a discussion of these methods in my thesis.

moves of talk-in-interaction and in the minutiae of social life and its diverse encounters (J. Coupland 2009a). It is thus no surprise that identity constructions and categorization processes are key foci of many LE investigations (Copland and Creese 2015: 25). There is, as Rampton (2007a: 596) observes, a tension here between the (apparent) specificities of the linguistic as opposed to the acceptance of the inevitable incompleteness of ethnography; however, this tension is a productive one. In essence, ethnography and the micro-analysis of interactions are mutually supporting (Rampton 2007b), in studies of identity as elsewhere, and together offer a means to link the micro of individual interactions to wider Discourses circulating in society (Copland and Creese 2015: 26). Relatively few studies, though, have adopted a linguistic ethnographic approach to the study of *older* identities.

1.8 Researching older identities: a review of the literature

Work exploring the construction of older identities has encompassed both ethnographic- and interactionally-orientated approaches; there has also been research focussing on narrative explorations of older identities. In this section I review empirical work adopting one or more of these approaches.

1.8.1 Ethnographic approaches

Many ethnographies of ageing, as Degnen observes (2012), have been based in institutional settings orientated to the *care* or living situations of older people, such as nursing or retirement homes or day centres (e.g., Bland 2007; Diamond 1995; Henderson and Vesperi 1995; Honrubia 2014; Lund and Engelsrud 2008). Some of these ethnographies focus primarily on the relationships between staff and residents, with the challenge to the self that results from finding oneself in a dependent position

(e.g., Diamond 1995; Honrubia 2014); others focus on relationships *between* older people, highlighting the distancing work done by participants from those who are really 'old' (e.g., Degnen 2007; Lund and Engelsrud 2008). A few ethnographies focus on the care of older people in the home (e.g., McGarry 2009).

But ethnographic studies of older people's experiences are not solely confined to care settings. One recent ethnography, indeed, encompassed a study of the daily lives of older people in an entire *village*, 'Dodworth' in the north of England. This research, by Degnen's (2012), shows how decline and loss play a real role in her participants' lives, with this sitting side-by-side with an orientation to 'success' and 'resistance' in ageing. She also identifies the concept of 'monitoring', whereby her older participants would scrutinise others for the first sign of decline as a means of assessing their own ageing well (Degnen 2012: 79ff).

A very few studies have examined older women's experiences in sites of appearance management. I discussed those located in a hair-salon in the Preface (Furman 1997; Symonds and Holland 2008). Studies exploring older women's experiences have also centred on a slimming club (Gimlin 2007) and a training college for beauty therapists (Paulson 2008). All these studies highlight the way society presents older women's bodies as uncontrollable and no longer feminine, with some participants orientating to a view that being attractive was no longer the concern of older women.

These studies show both how older people themselves negotiate dominant Discourses of Ageing and the irreducible heterogeneity of their experiences. The in-depth ethnographies in particular (such as Furman's) provide a sensitive and nuanced perspective on the experiences of older age.

1.8.2 Narrative research and older identities

Another strand of research into older people's experiences involves narratives. In terms of older age, particular kinds of narrative have sometimes been seen as discourse types associated with older identities; solicited narratives have also been seen as a means of supporting those older identities; and narrative research has been seen as a way of undertaking research amongst older people.

Stereotypically, telling stories of the past is an attribute often associated with older people, an observation supported by ethnographic research into older identities (Degnen 2012), interview-based studies (e.g., Norrick 2009; Taylor 1992) and research that takes a more discursive orientation to the construction of older identities (e.g., N. Coupland et al. 1991c: 64). In terms of biographical or life story research the focus has been on, for example, how older people construct their biographies. Thus Norrick (2009) drew on interviews with people aged 80-plus to explore the way in which older people use story-telling to do identity work. He argued that older tellers 'orient toward multiple and sometimes incompatible past identities and away from their current state' (p.914), whilst interweaving different temporalities in the course of a single story.

Other research has considered the beneficial outcomes of older people's story-telling for them in terms of both their personal well-being – building on the light-hearted idea that it is never too late to have a happy childhood (CBD Radio 2014) – and the transformation of the services and policies available. Thus, for example, Bohlmeijer and Westerhof (2011) stress the widespread use of reminiscence as an intervention for older people to develop positive identities and reinforce prior-learned coping strategies. Achievement of a coherent life-story is an objective of such interventions

(*ibid*, p.279). Building on such views, Biggs et al (2000) note that over the last two decades there has been a growth in interest in personal story-telling as a means both of supporting certain types of ageing identity and also of undertaking ageing research (see for example, Gubrium and Holstein (1998); Kenyon and Randall (1999); chapters in Kenyon et al (2011)). Indeed, as Phoenix and Sparkes (2010) observe, the growth is such that 'narrative gerontology' has acquired the status of a recognized discipline.

Narrative research has also been seen as a way of conducting ageing research. Phoenix and Sparkes (2010) identify a wide range of foci of narrative studies within ageing studies. Such studies have focussed, *inter alia*, on appearance (e.g., Dumas et al. 2005; Ward and Campbell 2013; Ward et al. 2014), widowhood and remarriage (e.g., W. K. Watson et al. 2010), and engagement in physical exercise Pike (e.g., Pike 2012). These tend to show how participants' stories challenged dominant ageist Discourses about appearance norms and the sexual behaviour of older people. Nevertheless, these studies do not apply a micro-linguistic analytic lens to the *interactional* data; we tend to see *what* is said but not *how* it is co-constructed.

Furthermore, there is very little research that examines the stories older people tell in the course of their daily lives, as opposed to in interview or therapeutic settings. With respect to small stories, Georgakopoulou suggests that these are 'associated with ... tellers presenting emergent and hybrid identities for themselves, perhaps as part of life transition' (2015: 264). In line with the possible association of small stories with life transitions, the body of research taking a small stories approach encompasses a growing number of studies focusing on *younger* tellers, both adolescents and young adults (e.g., Bamberg 2004b; Georgakopoulou 2007, 2010b, 2013a, 2014; Ryan 2008; Spreckels 2008, 2009). Yet studies focussing on life transitions at the other end

of the age continuum are extremely rare and do not tend to take a micro-analytic approach to their data.

Thus for example, Shenk and colleagues (2008) focus on the gathering of small stories told by older people as a means of enhancing the teaching of gerontology students. Phoenix and Sparkes (2009) and Griffin and Phoenix (2016) use small stories as part of their research into the impact of physical activity on older people's identity. Their studies each integrate longer tellings elicited in interview with the conversational stories that emerged in the course of participation in aspects of the older people's lives. The inclusion of these small stories highlights the way tellers construct multiple identities, with identity itself being a process, and ideas of selfhood developing even with advancing age. Furthermore, in line with Georgakopoulou's finding about small stories research more generally, there is in these a 'lack of temporal distance between the tale and the telling' (2015: 267). However, it is important, too, to note that what Phoenix and Sparkes (2009) and Griffin and Phoenix (2016) refer to as small stories were largely recorded by the interviewer in *field notes*. Thus they were not susceptible to micro-linguistic analysis and we do not see the *co-constructed* nature of participants' identity work.

There are exceptions in terms of research taking a micro-analytic lens to narrative data. For example, Jolanki (2004) adopted an interactional micro-analytic perspective to explore the way her nonagenarians, in their stories of health and older age told in interview, used a range of rhetorical devices to construct themselves as both counter-stereotypically healthy whilst using the category 'old' to legitimate ill-health and inactivity. Underwood (2011) examined the conversational story-telling of her older female dyads to show how they used a range of multi-functional discursive resources, including disclosure of chronological age, painful self-disclosure and competitive

story-topping to claim and attribute qualities valued in the mini-culture of their friendship, and thereby constructed positive identities for themselves. Another area where an interactional approach to narrative *is* increasingly being taken is in studies of people with cognitive impairment. Here, close analysis of such people's story-tellings is sometimes combined with ethnographic understandings of the setting to produce accounts of how dementia sufferers construct their identities through narrative (e.g., Hydén and Örvulv 2010) or to show how analysis of the small stories told by such older people highlights the way different interactions shape different and more positive identities (Lenchuk and Swain 2009). However, in terms of older people's use of narratives as a resource for identity work more generally, such micro-linguistic-analytic is rare.

This brings me to the third area of research focussing on older identities that I want to consider, namely interactionally-orientated (non-narrative) approaches.

1.8.3 Interactionally-orientated approaches

As I explained in Section 1.3, the theoretical underpinning of this study is a view of identity that understands it as negotiated and achieved in interactions – through both talk and other social practices. An influential linguistically-orientated study in the field of ageing studies that moves towards such an interactionally-constructed conceptualisation of identity, is that undertaken by N.Coupland and colleagues (1991c). Although their data were collected in an experimental setting, they subjected the audio-recordings to detailed micro-linguistic analysis to show how age identity is (co-)constructed between the parties in *interaction*. They showed that stereotypical expectations about older people and appropriate topics of talk may play a shaping role, such that, for example, the initiation of what they called 'painful self-disclosures'

(PSD) does not stem *from* age identity so much as constitute a way whereby participants collaboratively *do* age identity themselves or *ascribe* age identity to the other. They argued that all adults occasionally draw on the kinds of age-relevant discursive resources they identify – such as, for example, self-disclosure of chronological age, self-association with the past, and PSD. Nevertheless these are ways which, *together and cumulatively*, might conspire to the discursive production of ‘elderliness’. (See too J. Coupland et al. 1991a.) In particular, they showed the way in which such resources were drawn upon in inter-generational encounters, suggesting the greater salience of age-identity in such interactions.

In contrast to this experimental setting, Georgakopoulou and Charalambidou observe that research into age identities and language increasingly adopts a more ‘practice-based approach’ (2011: 38), that emphasises language use as a tool for achieving social action and particular goals in specific contexts and settings. This approach acknowledges the need to scrutinise and take into account the contextual variability of different encounters. This might be ‘naturally-occurring talk’ in everyday settings (Charalambidou 2011; Grainger 2002; Matsumoto 2009; Paoletti 1998b; Underwood 2011; Yläne-McEwen 1999). Alternatively, it might be talk in interview settings, provided the interview is treated as a particular *kind* of social interaction. That is, the shaping effect of the researcher, her agenda and questions, are considered and included as part of an interactionally-orientated analysis. Examples of such studies include those by Jones (2006); Matsumoto (2009); Nikander (2000, 2009); Paoletti (1998a).

Focussing in on the studies mentioned above, we see that some of them explore how age/old age is collaboratively constructed through the *structures of talk*. An example is Yläne-McEwen’s (1999) case study of an encounter between a couple in their

seventies and three younger travel-agency staff. She highlights the way age is made relevant by participants, the stereotypes that shape the way it is made salient, and the way this in turn shapes the evolving interaction. Another example is Paoletti's (1998a) study, that shows how an interviewer's practices in an interview (such as not treating as accountable apparently incoherent responses) went towards constructing the other as 'senile'.

Other studies explore particular types of *discursive resources* that might serve to index age/old age, such as the tendency to engage in accounts of possibly painful events building on the work of N.Coupland and colleagues (1991c). Thus Matsumoto's (2009) and Charalambidou's (2011: 160-205) studies highlighted the ambivalent and possibly *non-painful* status of potentially 'painful' events, showing how they could be humorously re-worked, providing older speakers with a resource to counter stereotypes about older people and ageing.

Some researchers have focussed specifically on people's *accounts* of age/old age in *interview*. Thus, for example, Nikander (2000, 2009) highlighted how people attend and orientate to the age categorisations they use in talk. In particular, she showed how they demonstrate notions of age appropriateness and age norms and attend to the felt need to account for diverging from such norms. Arguably, however, Nikander's data relate less to an 'identity of being old' than to 'age identity' more generally. Whilst the two may coincide, this is not necessarily the case. Jones' (2006) research, by contrast, which was also interview-based, explored the way in which participants orientate to an identity of 'being old' or not. Jones highlighted how people might simultaneously position themselves as '*older*', but also as '*not old*', through distancing themselves from others whom they say are 'older'.

Relatively few studies have examined the co-construction of ageing identities in naturally-occurring interactions. Six such studies were referred to above (p.86). These include Yläne-McEwen's (1999) study in a travel-agency; Grainger's (2002) exploration of verbal play between younger nursing staff and older patients on a hospital ward; Matsumoto's (2009) account of a friendship group of Japanese women; and Charalambidou's (2011) account of a friendship group of Cypriot older women. In these studies, relatively rare in the field of ageing studies, we see the micro-detail of how different identities, including of 'older age', are co-constructed in interaction. This might be through explicit invocations of age, via particular discursive forms such as painful tellings, or through different kinds of joking behaviour. The studies by Matsumoto and Charalambidou, in addition, highlight the way multiple identities are constructed and emerge in talk. Thus both authors showed how older age and female identities were orientated to, highlighting the importance of considering the co-articulation of identities in research into identity-in-interaction.

All these studies also incorporate an element of *ethnographic* data into their accounts, even if they were not designed primarily as ethnographic studies. The nuance of their findings highlights the value of such a combination of methods; and this is seen more clearly in studies that have a more overt ethnographic orientation in combination with analysis of language-in-use, as I discuss next.

1.8.4 Combining ethnography and language-focussed approaches in researching older identities

The review above has already made clear that there is relatively little interactionally-orientated research into older peoples' identity constructions; there is still less that combines ethnography with language-focussed approaches.

Paoletti (1998b) undertook one such study. Her ethnomethodologically-based investigation examined the mutual co-construction and shaping of the (older) age and gender identities of women participating in a particular Europe-wide project for older women. Her study is particularly relevant to my research in the way she explores the situationally-based orientation to 'oldness', and combines this micro-analysis of evolving interactions with data from her (ethnographic) field work. Paoletti found that her participants rarely used older-age category terms or aligned with categories such as 'old' that in that setting carried decline connotations. She also showed, though, how her participants displayed more positive orientations to 'older-age' categories when it became institutionally relevant.

J.Coupland (2013) offers a perspective on older women's view of their appearance, taking as her focus of study dance classes for older people. Unusually in ethnographies of ageing, she combines her 'embodied participation' (p.9, citing Ness (2004: 124)) as an older person herself in the class with detailed linguistic analysis of a range of texts. These encompass both written texts – those produced by the company relating to its values; her field notes; diary entries by class members – and talk in both interviews and focus groups. Drawing on detailed analysis of these texts she examined the way these older dancers construed ideologies of (un)watchability and embodied ageing. This was particularly clear in their view of the 'potentially repressive ideology of mirrored old age' (*ibid*, p.20), that is, the image of their reflected selves as something they have learned to reject. This is a perspective pertinent in a site such as a hair-salon, as I discuss in Section 2.3.3.

∞ ∞ ∞ ∞

In summary, as this review has shown, there is relatively little research that adopts an identities-in-interaction approach to examining the construction of *older* identities and investigates this through a combination of detailed analysis of narratives and other talk in everyday settings, together with ethnographic understandings of those settings. Further, I have identified no study that adopts this approach to the investigation of older identities in a site of appearance work, such as a hair-salon. My own research fills this methodological gap, building on the findings and approaches of the studies discussed above. Inspired by the work of Furman (1997) in particular, my study is located in an everyday site of appearance work, but draws too on the insights offered by Degnen's (2012) ethnography of 'Dodworth'. I compare and contrast the way my participants orientate to their older identities with those identified in previous studies, in particular ways of categorizing self and other as older in everyday talk as well as in interview (Charalambidou 2011; Jones 2006; Paoletti 1998b, 1998a, 2002). I combine this with a focus on small stories in this quotidian site to explore how (and whether) older identities are co-constructed in those tellings, and to chart some of the kinds of narrative practices in which participants engage.

1.9 Summary

This chapter has provided a discussion of both the theoretical understanding of identity underpinning this thesis and ways of analysing identity thus understood. Throughout, I have sought to relate key concepts and modes of analysis to ageing. Thus in relation to Discourses I discussed the key Discourses of ageing that circulate in society that help to render certain ways of thinking and being as normative and others as unthinkable. Importantly, however, I stressed that we should avoid assuming that the presence of these Discourses circulating in society as a whole

means they shape people's lived experiences in unequivocal and uniform ways. In terms of modes of analysis, discussing CA and MCA, I highlighted in particular the ambiguous, deniable and indexical nature of the relationship between categories (such as 'elderly') and activities or attributes (CBAs) stereotypically associated with those categories (such as 'being incoherent'). Turning to narrative, and in line with Bamberg, Georgakopoulou and DeFina amongst others (e.g., Bamberg 2004b, 2006; Bamberg 2008; De Fina and Georgakopoulou 2008a, 2008b; Georgakopoulou 2006b, 2007, 2010a) I argued for an approach to narrative analysis that includes the smallest moments of sequential narrativity; and I posited Narrative Positioning Theory (NPT) (Bamberg 1997; Bamberg and Georgakopoulou 2008) as a productive means to analyse such moments of identity construction. I argued that issues of connectivities between the micro-world of the interaction and the macro-world of broader context are not unproblematically addressed through NPT *per se*, and advocated combining a micro-linguistic analysis with an ethnographic approach. Finally, in Section 1.8, I noted the paucity of micro-analytic work in terms of older people's narratives and identity, a paucity in line with the more general relative rarity of language-focussed investigations into older people's identity constructions.

Chapter 2 The Story of the Research Project

2.1 Introduction

Where the Preface outlined the academic and personal context of my research, and Chapter One discussed its theoretical foundations, in this chapter I turn to the nitty-gritty of the process of the research itself, the 'story' of my research project.

In Section 2.2, I explain my rationale for choice of site, Joellen's Hair Palace, and my research participants. I then, in Section 2.3, introduce the reader to that site, focussing on its people, and its social and appearance-related practices. In Section 2.4, I give an account of the specific data collection methods employed within my over-arching linguistic ethnographic methodology. I close that section with a consideration of the ethical issues related to my engagement in the site, and then in the penultimate section (2.5), provide an account of my approach to analysis. In particular, I discuss the way in which I have sought to draw upon and combine the different kinds of data, recorded and non-recorded, in my analysis. In Section 2.6, I reconnect my methodology with the discussions in Chapter One relating to researching identities-in-interaction. I argue that the micro-discourse analysis of collections of phenomena relating to both individuals and to the setting, combined with insights afforded by wider ethnographic understandings of that setting, allow me to achieve a sensitive and participant-focused study of the way these women constructed older identities.

2.2 Selecting site and participants

In this section I explain my rationale for selecting Joellen's Hair Palace and the specific participants for my research. I close the section with a brief introduction to each of these participants.

2.2.1 Choice of site

I had been pointed in the direction of Joellen's by an acquaintance, having made two previous attempts to find a site: the owner of the first had refused; the second closed almost as soon as I had started access negotiations (see Section 2.4.1). This third attempt, with Joellen's, was more successful, resulting (after several phone calls) in a visit to chat about my research, and then an agreement that they would participate.

In terms of business structure and gender, Joellen's Hair Palace is broadly typical of the hairdressing sub-sector as a whole, being an owner-managed single-shop micro-business (HABIA 2011/12). As I explain further in Section 2.3.1, Joellen's also has a high proportion of older clients. Moreover, she continues to offer the kind of treatments (such as shampoo-and-set – see Section 2.3.2) that some more fashionable salons no longer foreground (or even offer). In these characteristics, Joellen's Hair Palace is similar to 'Julie's International Salon' (Furman 1997) and 'Sue's Salon' (Symonds and Holland 2008) discussed in Section 0.3, which offers some basis for comparison.

2.2.2 Participant selection

In terms of participant selection, two particular issues to be addressed related to deciding how old is old and the focus on women. It is notable that despite the recognition of the diversity of 'older' populations, chronological age or the use of age-

groups underpinned by chronological age – such as ‘young-old’/‘old-old’, or ‘very old’ vs. ‘younger old people’, or third-agers vs. fourth-agers – continue to be used implicitly or explicitly as defining categories in much research into older people (empirical and other). Age bands for the different groups tend to vary considerably. ‘Young-old’ or ‘third age’ may be anywhere between 50 and 84; the ‘old-old’ or ‘fourth agers’ may be anywhere from 75 upwards, although Tsuji argues that ‘the dividing line between the young-old and the old-old is age 80’ (2005: 22, fn8). Some of my participants were well aware of these subtle distinctions, as one of them, Violet, recounting an anecdote in interview, made clear:

Extract 2-1 Violet (Interview)

Violet: anyway in comes another lady (.) she’s stood there and then in comes a gentleman (.) with a stick (.) not old old y’know (.) elderly (.) but old

Rachel: .h he I love this old old

Violet: yeah you see there’s (.) different layers

(Simplified transcript)

This variation in age bands applies as much in research focussing on language, relationships and appearance as in social gerontology more generally (Adelman et al. 1991: 128; Calasanti and Slevin 2001; N. Coupland et al. 1991c: 7; Marcoen et al. 2007: 62; O’Hanlon and Coleman 2004: 33ff; Phillipson and Baars 2007: 73; Victor et al. 2007: 102; Westerhof and Tulle 2007). However, as Jones (2006), for example, demonstrates, references by older people themselves to chronological age do not always represent an orientation to an ‘*older*’ identity, even if that might be expectable from the chronological age stated. Use of such categories are part of an essentializing approach to age identity. On the other hand, as Nikander (2009) shows, chronological age *is* salient in people’s own lives.

In trying to reconcile these perspectives – avoiding essentializing notions of age, yet acknowledging the role chronological age may play in my participants’ own self-conceptualisations – I provided guidelines for participants, whilst avoiding actually excluding participants on the basis of chronological age. The relevant part of the information sheet thus stated: “Clients who participate are likely to be aged 50+, with

Figure 2-1 Participant recruitment



The figure is a participant recruitment information sheet. At the top left, it says "Research Project" in a bold, serif font. At the top right is the logo for King's College London, University of London, in red. In the center is a large black speech bubble containing the text: "Invitation ... to take part in a research project – the role of the hair salon in the lives of older women." Below this, there are three rows of questions on the left, each followed by a black arrow pointing to a response on the right. The first row asks "Who am I?" and the response is "My name is Rachel Heinrichsmeier. I'm doing research at King's College London". The second row asks "What am I looking for and what will it involve?" and the response is "I'm currently spending time observing in Joellen's Hair Palace to help me understand its culture and practices." The third row asks "How to find out more" and the response is "I'm also looking for clients who would be prepared for me to record 2-4 of their hair appointments and/or talk to me about their experiences." At the bottom left, there is a small reference number: "REC Reference Number: REP-H/12/13-13 V.03/201112".

Research Project

KING'S
College
LONDON
University of London

Invitation ... to take part in a research project – the role of the hair salon in the lives of older women.

Who am I? → My name is Rachel Heinrichsmeier. I'm doing research at King's College London

What am I looking for and what will it involve? → I'm currently spending time observing in Joellen's Hair Palace to help me understand its culture and practices.

→ I'm also looking for clients who would be prepared for me to record 2-4 of their hair appointments and/or talk to me about their experiences.

How to find out more → Please tell Joellen, Clare or Bethan, letting them know that you are interested. I will be in touch to talk about the project with you.

REC Reference Number: REP-H/12/13-13
V.03/201112

most in their 70s to 90s” (see Appendix F). The recruitment poster I used in the salon did not specify an age for participants, but the phrase ‘older women’ was included (see Figure 2.1 above).

The focus on women is theoretically motivated. Much previous academic research has highlighted several themes relating to the particular effects of growing older specifically for women. For example, as I observed in Section 0.1, for many women their sense of their female identity is located in their *looks* (J. Coupland 2003), and many of the media images and advertising related to managing the *look of age* are likewise still primarily aimed at women (J. Coupland 2009b). In this vein, Twigg argues that ‘fashion and dress are culturally constituted as feminised, and the discourse is predominantly embodied in the lives of women.’ (2007: 288). My focus on women is thus grounded in this prior research that comments on the particularities of the experiences of ageing of *women*.

In selecting my specific participants I considered a number of different factors. Prior reading had highlighted the distinctiveness of the shampoo-and-set (e.g., Symonds and Holland 2008; Ward and Holland 2011), whilst other authors had focussed on the significance of colouring their hair for women (e.g., Hurd Clarke and Korotchenko 2010; Weitz 2001, 2005). Observation in Joellen’s also revealed the different opportunities for talk afforded by different treatments. Further, many authors write of the long relationships that arise between stylist and client (Furman 1997; Gimlin 1996; Weitz 2005). In addition, I thought it important to achieve a spread of chronological ages, to see if any patterns emerged. Thus in selecting participants, I had regard to their different salon treatments; to the length of relationship they had with the salon-workers; and their chronological age. I also wanted to include both more and less voluble clients, having noted that some of Joellen’s older clients seemed to spend

much of the time in silence. However, several less talkative clients whom I approached declined, despite being happy to talk freely with no audio-recording. Most fundamentally, therefore, clients' participation (with recording of appointments and interviews) depended on their readiness to do so.

Having outlined the rationale for selecting sites and participants, I now provide brief introductions to my participants.

2.2.3 Cast of characters¹⁰

My research participants feature large in the text of this thesis. In this sub-section I provide a minimalistic summary of each of them to orientate the reader, listing them in order of chronological age at the time of the appointment recordings (although I had met most of them a year or more earlier). In the course of the thesis more details will emerge, and to some extent their own voices will be heard (albeit strongly mediated by my own selection and interpretation).

Salon workers

Joellen, stylist and the owner of the salon, was in her late fifties at the time of the research. Married with two sons and twelve grandchildren, she had owned the shop for around 30 years. She had not spent her entire career in the provinces, however: "After all, I did use to work in Bond Street," she said once.

¹⁰ All names, of course, are pseudonyms. Heading adopted from Furman (1997:14).

Clare was in her late forties, the mother of a teenage son. She worked on Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday, shampooing clients' hair, 'passing up' (see Section 2.3.2), preparing clients for the hood-dryers, taking payment, making appointments, and doing washing, cleaning and the running of errands.

Bethan, in her mid-twenties, was the other stylist and the youngest of my participants. She had worked at Joellen's for around eight years, starting as a Saturday girl when still at school.

Clients

Mrs Farming was ninety at the time I recorded her appointments and interview. She had been coming to Joellen's for around thirty years for a shampoo-and-set (see Section 2.3.2). Shortly before the start of the appointment-recordings her husband of sixty years died. They had no children. She herself died in February 2015.

Mrs Pace, who participated in my pilot study (see Section 2.4.1), was eighty-nine at the time of the research. She was married with three children and grandchildren, and had been having a weekly shampoo-and-set at Joellen's for some twenty years.

Lesley, single and relatively-recently moved to the area, was eighty-three at the time of the study. She too came for a weekly shampoo-and-set. Like Mrs Farming, she died in February 2015.

Mrs Farthing participated in both my pilot study and main data collection phase, and celebrated both her 80th and 81st birthdays during the course of the research. She had a cut-and-blow-dry every six weeks or so, sometimes booking an additional

appointment for a wash-and-blow-dry for special occasions and colouring her own hair at home. She was married with no children and had been coming to Joellen's for around ten years.

Violet also participated in my pilot study and was just short of seventy-six. She had been coming to Joellen every four weeks for some ten to twelve years for a cut and had her hair highlighted every four to six months. She was widowed with two children and grandchildren.

Mrs France, who like Mrs Farming had been coming to Joellen's for around thirty years, had a cut-and-blow-dry every five weeks, and coloured her hair (sporadically) at home. She was sixty-eight, and widowed with one daughter and granddaughter.

Mrs Sargent, widowed and re-married, was sixty-seven, and had been coming to Joellen's for about eight years. Like Mrs France, she had a regular cut-and-blow-dry but attended slightly more frequently, every four weeks. She also coloured her own hair.

Mrs Crayne was sixty-one, widowed, and just entering retirement towards the end of my field-work. She too had been coming to Joellen's for around seven to eight years. She had a cut-and-colour but was irregular in her attendance, with as much as six months between appointments.

Mrs Little, aged fifty-five, married with three grown-up children and two grandchildren, was the only one of my participants to be unequivocally still in paid employment at the time of the research. Like Lesley, she was a relative newcomer to the area and came every seven to eight weeks for a cut-and-colour.

Researcher

Rachel turned fifty during the course of the research and is married. She works part-time and is a part-time doctoral candidate. She started going to Joellen's as a client for a cut-and-colour upon commencing research in the site, effecting a change in her hair-salon attendance practices from every four to six months (like Mrs Crayne) to every seven to eight weeks (like Mrs Little).

Having explained the rationale for choice of site and participants, and having introduced the latter, I now offer an overview of Joellen's hair Palace itself.

2.3 Joellen's Hair Palace: the place, its people and their practices

In this section I describe the salon and discuss some of its practices that are particularly pertinent for the subsequent analytical chapters – specifically, the kinds of treatment offered, the role of the seating arrangements and the mirror, and the orientation to busyness in the salon. This section shows how aspects of the salon together afford and constrain kinds of talk, and in different ways make age relevant.

2.3.1 A village salon

Joellen's Hair Palace sits amidst a cluster of small shops, restaurants and houses at a T-junction between the busy main road and a side road up the hill to a small village (Figure 2.2 below). The shop front of the hair-salon, freshly white-painted with the salon's name in black-serif print on the fascia board, is windowed across its width, looking out on to the pavement and enabling passers-by to gaze in and view all that

goes on at the styling stations. It also allows all that passes by to be seen by those in the salon, generating gossip about births and deaths.

The salon interior is small, bright and clean: a single down-stairs room, plus upstairs a room once also used for styling, now used as a staff rest-room

and drying area for the towels and gowns. The impression, just as for Julie's International Salon described by Furman, is one of 'functionality, not glamour' (1997:

Figure 2-2 Joellen's Hair Palace...amidst a cluster of small shops



Figure 2-3 A bank of four blue-green chairs



18). The first thing that greets your eye as you push open the glass-fronted door is a bank of four blue-green chairs pushed against the wall with four hood-dryers standing behind them (Figure 2.3). Magazines – *Hello*, *Women's Own*, *Women's Weekly*, *Good Housekeeping* – are sometimes left on these chairs by clients to be tidied away later by the salon-workers.

On the opposite side, facing the right-hand wall, is a series of styling stations – five wheeled swivel-chairs each facing a mirror with a small shelf beneath (see Figure 2.4 below). Bottles of products for sale – hair-spray, shampoos, conditioners, and the like – stand displayed on a high set of shelves inside the door and on white open-ended

shelves above the styling stations.

Between the swivel chairs stand

four black, wheeled trolleys stacked with the 'tools of the trade' – different coloured rollers, brushes and combs, hair-pins, perm rods, scissors and razors. Hand-held blow-dryers, tongs, hot-brushes and electric razors hang out of the way

Figure 2-4 Five wheeled swivel-chairs each facing a mirror

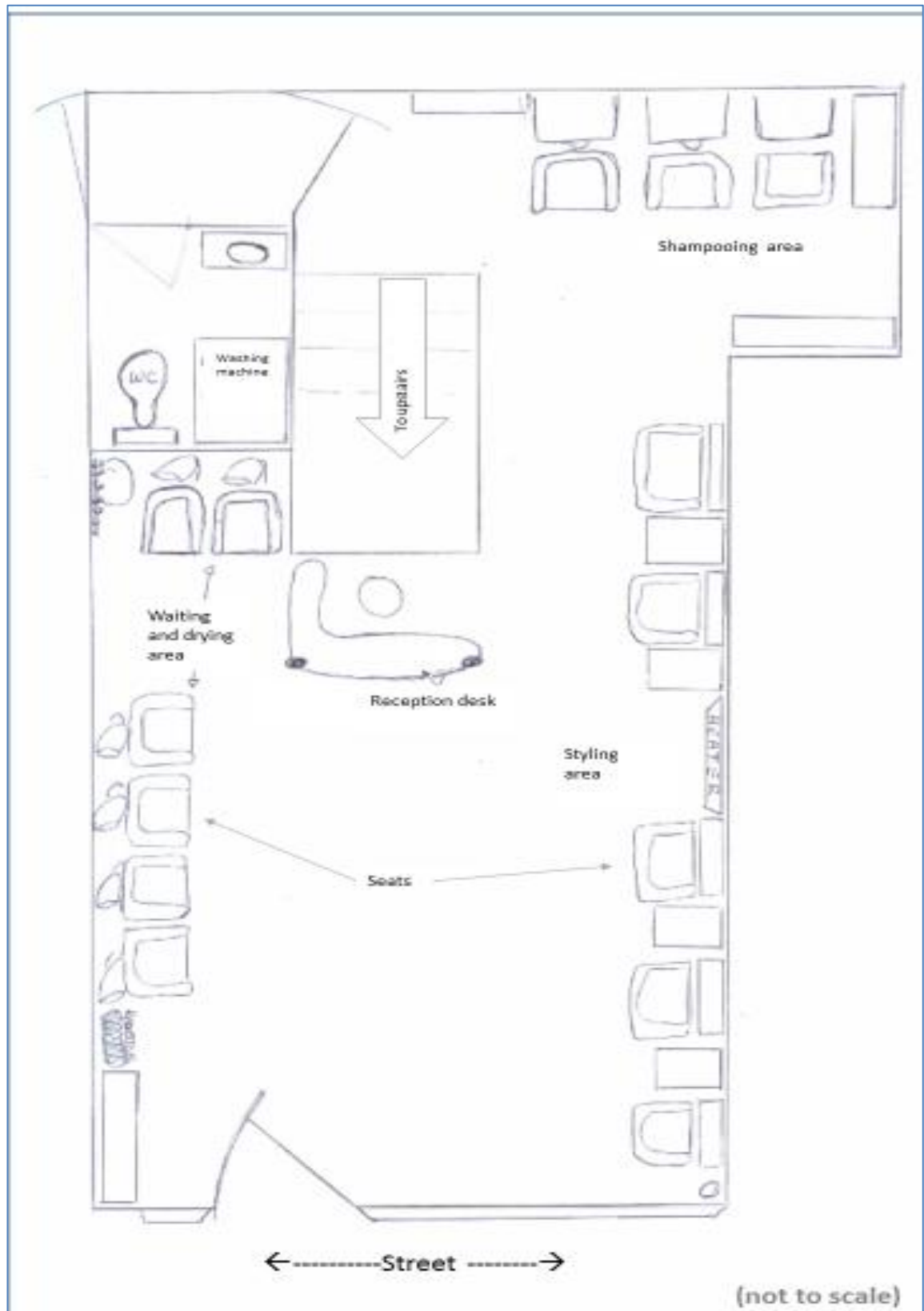


on hooks, their cables neatly looped. At the back of the shop stand two back-wash and one front-wash basin, and a small storage area for clean towels, colours, etc. (Figure 2.4, and Figure 2.5 below.) In the centre stands a curved desk with a computer to one side on which all the client bookings are kept on an Excel spreadsheet.

The community served by Joellen's is older and less racially mixed than is the case for England as a whole.¹¹ These characteristics are reflected in the salon's clientele, who are mostly older folk (both women and men), and overwhelmingly white British. An acquaintance had originally suggested the salon to me as having an 'ageing' clientele, and this characteristic of the salon's clientele is recognised by clients and salon-workers alike. Lesley commented in interview, "I should think that the majority of her customers are older", whilst Mrs Crayne guessed at an average age of about sixty-five to seventy. Observation suggested that this average could be higher.

¹¹ 24% of population aged 65+ compared to 16% nationally (England); 93.9% white British compared to 79.8% nationally (data from the 2011 Census (Office of National Statistics)).

Figure 2-5 Joellen's Hair Palace



It is also a predominantly *local* clientele. Many clients travel little more than a mile to the salon, but although some, like Mrs Farthing and Mrs Little, arrive by foot, many come by taxi, car or bus. A few do make the trip from rather further afield, like Mrs Sargent, who makes it part of her day in the town; or older clients from nearby villages that lack their own hair-salon. Two of the three salon-workers, Bethan and Clare, are also originally local, and Joellen, too, once lived in the village.

No music softened the atmosphere in the salon (the licence fees were too exorbitant, Joellen told me). This lack of music made the salon sometimes seem quiet compared with some high street salons, and combined with the smallness of the salon, meant that talk between a salon-worker and client could quite easily be overheard by anyone else in the shop (except those clients sitting under the hood-dryers). Perhaps these two factors also combined to encourage the partial- or all-salon talk that occasionally occurred, particularly when the salon was busy. Then little flurries of talk sometimes eddied out from the client and salon-worker to suddenly and briefly involve everyone in the salon. Such all-salon talk offered clients a lively environment, and it was noticeable how some clients brightened up visibly on days of bustle.

Many clients commented on the liveliness of Joellen's. One client, talking of herself and her daughter, said they, "clear the shop" when they're there – they have a good laugh and lots of fun. Bethan said, "it's why you come." My oldest participant, Mrs Farming, remarked that she enjoyed "going to the hairdressers now because it's quite fun down there it's the only time you can have a good laugh." Violet, talking in interview of the atmosphere in Joellen's, said: "because you know what it's like in Joellen's don't you I mean it's a madhouse absolutely madhouse sometimes isn't it". It was not always a 'madhouse', though, and sometimes the salon-workers applied colour,

shampooed, trimmed, and blow-dried mostly in silence, with just the odd comment or question.

Beyond convenience, an important aspect of the salon described by participants was its unintimidating atmosphere compared to some of the town salons. These, said Violet, “can be a little bit stiff and starchy.” They can also make an undue fuss. Thus Mrs France in interview with me observed that at Joellen’s she doesn’t “have to be anything other than me”. She contrasted this with salons in the town where:

Extract 2-2 Mrs France (Interview)

Mrs France: you’ve got this ((*pauses*)) dippy sort of fluffy girl ((*does a light, high-pitched voice*)) *hello how are you today ((Rachel laughs)) oh how do you want your hair ooh that would drive me nuts ((Rachel laughs)) it would I would cringe if I had this fluffy thing flapping round me.*

(Simplified transcript)

Mrs Little, when I asked her in interview “what do you think that Joellen’s offers to the people that go there?” described it as “fairly efficient with one or two homely foibles”. Joellen’s offers, in short, a brisk no-frills service to her clients, many of whom are of long standing. Repeatedly, clients both in chat in the salon and in interview, described the salon as ‘friendly’ as well as relaxed. “It’s lovely coming here,” said one client on one occasion. “They’ve always got a big friendly smile for you.”

Not all voiced unqualified approval. Some clients commented disapprovingly on the way salon-workers sometimes “talked over the client’s head” with each other or with other clients, leaving the client on whose head of hair the salon-worker was working to struggle to get heard or to just sit in silence. At times tensions arose between clients and the salon-workers over late arrivals and what the salon-workers described as

unreasonable expectations by the former to be attended to immediately. But these were by and large minority voices expressing occasional dissatisfactions. For most of Joellen's clients, the salon seemed to be a welcoming pause in their day; for some, the outing of the day; or an even rarer venture out of doors, as for one client, who announced one cold winter morning as she came in wearing wellies, and all red-cheeked, "it's the first time I've been out in two weeks!"

Many of Joellen's clients, including my client participants, had been attending for years. The salon-workers themselves had all been there eight years or more. Thus in addition to the relaxed atmosphere that even a new client senses, clients may find a comforting sense of continuity of self through and despite the changes of age. Mrs Farming said one day to Joellen, "I look forward to my weekly visits. You've watched us all getting old." "You've watched me getting older too," responded Joellen laughing. "No, you don't age," said Mrs Farming as she left. And Lesley commented to me in interview that most of Joellen's customers will be "people who have known her for quite a long time." In other words, Joellen's Hair Palace may be that rarity, 'a place in which a relatively stable social identity can be maintained' (S. Biggs et al. 2000: 653) (or maintained up to a point, as we shall see in the following chapters).

2.3.2 The 'pensioner's hairdo' and other treatments

Joellen's Hair Palace offers a range of treatments to clients: shampoos-and-sets, wet cuts (with or without a blow-dry), dry cuts, perms and different kinds of colour as well as occasional treatments for particular problems with the hair. Table 2.1 below shows the treatments taken by the nine client participants in my study.

In the course of some 225 hours of observation of nearly 500 appointments in Joellen’s Hair Palace, about two-fifths of the appointments I observed were for shampoo-and-sets. This was the most common means of styling their hair for women before the shift in fashions to more low-maintenance hairstyles initially pioneered by Vidal Sassoon and the advent of cheap hand-held blow-dryers (Cox 1999; Smith 2013). For many of the clients of Joellen’s Hair Palace, including Mrs Farming, Mrs Pace, Lesley, Mrs Farthing and Violet, this was the style of their girl-hood.

TABLE 2-1 Participants’ hair treatments in the salon and at home

| | Mrs Farming | Mrs Pace | Lesley | Mrs Farthing | Violet | Mrs France | Mrs Sargent | Mrs Crayne | Mrs Little |
|--------------------------------------|-------------|----------|--------|--------------|-----------|------------|-------------|------------|------------|
| Age at time of recordings | 90 | 89 | 83 | 79-81 | 75 | 68 | 67 | 61 | 55 |
| Kind of treatment | | | | | | | | | |
| Shampoo and set | X | X | X | | | | | | |
| Wet cut | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| Blow dry | | | | X | sometimes | X | X | | sometimes |
| Perm | X | X | X | | | | | | |
| Colour – in salon | | | | | X | | | X | X |
| Colour – self-applied at home | | | | X | | X | X | | |

The shampoo-and-set involves the freshly-washed hair being smeared in setting lotion and set tight in rollers (size distinguished by colour) (Figure 2.6a below), fastened to the hair with long hair pins. During this, one of the other salon-workers will often help by ‘passing-up’ the correct rollers and hair pins to the stylist who is working on the client’s head. The process takes barely seven minutes. The rolled hair is then covered with a protective net, after which the client ‘cooks’ under the hood-dryer for around twenty minutes.

Figure 2-6 Achieving the 'pensioner's hair-do'

Figure 2-6a: Rollers



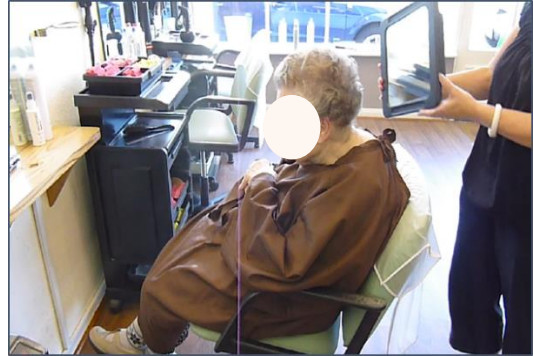
Figure 2-6b: Ready for brushing-out



Figure 2-6c: Tweaking into the desired style



Figure 2-6d: Showing the mirror



The rollers are subsequently removed (Figure 2.6b), and finally, the client's hair is teased into the desired fuller style with a brush, a four-pronged styling comb or a tail comb. Sometimes it is back-brushed or back-combed (Figure 2.6c), leaving it lightly wavy at the back and smooth and thick at the front, resulting in the 'Pensioner's Hairdo', as Symonds and Holland (2008: 26) described it. At the end, the stylist pulls out the hand mirror from a ledge under the trolley and shows the client the back of her head in the mirror (Figure 2.6d). Shampoo-and-set clients mostly attend on a weekly or fortnightly basis. They are encouraged to have a light perm every few months to give their hair more volume, and all need a trim every four to five weeks.

In addition to the shampoo-and-set, around two-fifths of the appointments I observed in Joellen's Hair Palace were for wet or dry cuts (split more-or-less evenly between the two), and about 10% of the appointments observed were for colours of some kind. Some clients opt for semi-permanent colours that gradually wash out over time and which are applied through a squeezable bottle with a sponge on the end. Others like Mrs Crayne and Mrs Little, chose permanent colours. Still others, like Violet, opted for highlights, small sections of hair coloured blonde or red or whatever colour or mix of colours the client fancies that are then wrapped in small foil or plastic envelopes and left to process. This in-salon cut and colour can take around 75 minutes or more, depending on the stylist's speed, the length of the hair, and whether the client wants her hair blow-dried, with the colour element taking around 45 minutes. It will cost her upwards of £53 a visit. A home-colour, such as Mrs Farthing, Mrs France and Mrs Sargent did, is cheaper, but is more difficult to manage. It can also take as long, but at least the client may not be faced with her own image in the mirror, that some clients claimed not to enjoy viewing.

2.3.3 Mirror reflections

Exploring older dancers' relationship with the mirror, Coupland draws on Woodward's (1991) argument that 'old age is construed as 'unwatchable'' (J. Coupland 2013: 5). A hair-salon, like a dance-studio, is also a place of mirrors. Upon entering Joellen's the client is faced by mirrors on the walls. During her treatment she sits with her back to the room facing the mirror, potentially looking at herself or watching the stylist at work. This placement of the client in a chair facing a mirror set on the wall seems to be the practice in many UK salons. However, as other studies show, other seating arrangements are possible. For example, the client can be placed with her back to the mirror facing into the room, as in a salon described by Majors (2001). Alternatively,

the banks of styling stations can be placed facing each other in the middle of the room, enabling clients to view at least two opposite clients diagonally through the gaps in the mirrors, as in Julie's International Salon described by Furman (1997). How the client is placed has three effects: her ability to control what is being done to her hair; her ability to participate in all-salon talk; and the focus on her own face thereby presented. I discuss these aspects in turn.

When facing the mirror the stylist can discuss the client's requirements with her, and the client is able to monitor, if she wants, what the stylist is doing. That some clients *were* monitoring was revealed from time to time, as they broke off their talk – or emerged from silence – to remark on an aspect of what the stylist was doing with her hair (see e.g., Appendix H.XII, ll.16-22). Many clients, including most of my cut-and-colour participants engaged in this monitoring talk at some point in their appointment. Similarly, the stylist sometimes used the mirror to indicate the length of hair to be removed at the sides, the placement of a parting, etc. Such talk in turn positions the stylist and client as engaged in a *collaborative* effort to achieve the desired hair-style.

The mirror also facilitates talk between the client and stylist as each are normally visible to the other and can address each other *through* the mirror. I often saw the salon-workers gesturing or smiling or otherwise indicating attentiveness to their client through this means, as well as speaking to them. However, when the stylist (and other assistant) moves to the side, she may move out of the client's line of sight in the mirror. Thus the mirror offers only intermittent visual contact. Furthermore, sitting with their back to the rest of the salon, it is also much harder – as I sometimes experienced myself – for clients to participate as *speakers* in any talk that spreads beyond their current stylist, whether this is talk with another client or salon-worker, or all salon-talk. This contrasts with the arrangements described by Furman (1997), mentioned above.

An arrangement such as that described by Furman also gives clients an alternative focus for their attention than their own face in the mirror. As clients sit facing the mirror, their face is made salient throughout their time in the chair, with the harsh lighting of the salon emphasizing every wrinkle, every under-eye shadow, every sun-spot. The role of the mirror surfaced one day at the end of one of Violet's hair appointments:

Extract 2-3 Facing the mirror (Field notes)

Violet nodded at herself in the mirror and made a fairly neutral approving comment. Joellen took out the mirror and showed the back. "Oh yes," said Violet enthusiastically. "Much better." "Clients just look at the front and nod, and then get enthusiastic when I show them the back," laughed Joellen..

Later, I discussed this with Joellen:

Extract 2-4 A chance to be appreciative (Field notes)

She commented that the 'older ones' perhaps didn't like looking at their faces in the mirror as they don't like what they see, so they don't look properly at what she's doing. When she shows them the back of their head, however, they don't have to look at their face and can be appreciative.

In this, Joellen was implicitly attributing to her clients Woodward's (1991) thesis of the 'unwatchability' of older faces referred to above. But that some clients do *not* enjoy having to focus on their face for the duration of the treatment was also highlighted by Mrs France's complaint one day to Joellen as the latter washed her hair:

Extract 2-5 Mrs France (Appt3)

Mrs France: well I hate your mirrors anyway so ((*Joellen laughs*)) I think they're awful

Joellen: it's not the mirrors it's the lights

Mrs France: no it's they make they just make me it makes me look awful so
I I hate your mirrors

Joellen: it's the lights you're supposed to look lovely when you go out of here
((laughs))

(Simplified transcript)

In this exchange, Mrs France expresses a sentiment voiced too by the older dancers in Coupland's (2013) research. No other participant volunteers a similar view; indeed, as I discuss in Section 3.3.2, participants make few explicit connections between ageing and unwelcome changes to their appearance. Nevertheless, the constant reminder of their 'on-sight' identity (Paoletti 1998a) may make (older) age relevant in this site.

I turn now to the workflow of the salon.

2.3.4 Hustle, bustle and speed

The work in Joellen's went in fits and starts: sometimes there was a rush of clients coming in one after the other or even simultaneously for shampoos-and-sets, perms, colours, dry cuts or cut-and-blow-dries. When the salon was busy, clients were continually being juggled, with times marked and calculated to facilitate this. This immediate management of the hustle-and-bustle of salon activities was marked by the habit of that regular quick glance at the clock on the salon wall as the visor of the hood-dryer was pulled down over the client's head or as the salon-worker, having finished applying a tint, went off to wash out the bowl.

But the salon was not always busy. At times, long periods of inactivity – perhaps an entire morning or afternoon – might ensue from either a 'no-show', a late cancellation or more simply from a lack of bookings. In those periods the stylists would busy

themselves with a range of chores. But such chores take up only so much time, and often the salon workers hung around chatting, leafing through the magazines, discussing the passers-by, or popping over to the shop for chocolate and crisps. “I’m bored today,” said Joellen to me one day when I arrived to find her sitting at the computer playing patience. “I’ve only got one client this afternoon.”

The varying levels of busyness notwithstanding, the speed of clients’ treatments in Joellen’s was relatively unvarying, as I noted upon examining the appointment recordings of my shampoo-and-set participants. This speed was facilitated by a range of salon practices. One such practice was the time allocated to shampoo-and-set clients, who were booked in at fifteen minute intervals. The time from such clients’ arrival to finishing the shampooing of their hair rarely took more than seven minutes, with a further seven minutes being all that was required for Joellen in particular to rapidly set their hair and see them seated under the hood-dryer. This speed was in turn facilitated by the practice of ‘passing-up’ (see Section 2.3.2 above). This practice, as brief observations in another salon for older people showed (see Section 2.4.1 below), is not always used in salons. As well as facilitating speed, it also facilitates chat between salon-workers to the exclusion of the client.

Although some clients appreciated the speed of Joellen’s, not all did, as the following extract from my field notes illustrates:

Extract 2-6 My treat to me (Field notes)

Joellen spent perhaps 20 minutes on the client’s hair. Towards the end Joellen went away to do something else for about five minutes. The client commented that Joellen is very fast. When Joellen is on holiday, she said,

she might have her hair done by one of the other stylists, who can take twice as long. “And sometimes it’s nicer, because you feel you’re getting a lot more attention, but when it’s your business you need to get people in and out as quick as possible and I can understand that. You don’t get the experience, the pampering. Hairdressing isn’t cheap, and when you’re a pensioner you have to think about it it’s my treat to me.”

I return to this orientation to speed, when discussing ‘doing being busy’ and clients’ busy stories in Chapter Five.

∞ ∞ ∞ ∞

In summary, Joellen’s Hair Palace is a village salon whose clients and salon-workers have grown old *together*. This offers a sense of belonging. However, attendance at a hair-salon whose demographics are known to be ‘older’ and whose furnishings include that mark of old-fashioned hair-styling, the hood-dryer, may make (older) age more relevant as an explanatory resource in talk than in many other settings. Similarly, the kind of treatment offered and the mirrors on the walls potentially support the salience of age in talk in the salon. Added to that, the orientation to speed in the salon results in both short and sometimes disjointed interactions, even whilst the busyness that the speed represents is enlivening.

Having introduced the site, its people and its practices I now turn to my methods of data collection.

2.4 Data collection methods and ethical issues

I start this section with an overview of my methods of data collection and the timing thereof. I then discuss in turn each of these data collection methods and the data arising. These methods were: participant observation, audio-recordings of naturally-occurring talk (appointment recordings), and interviews.

Rampton and colleagues comment on the 'ineradicable role' that 'the researcher's personal subjectivity plays throughout the research process' in ethnography (2014: 3). The unveiling of this personal subjectivity is often referred to as 'reflexivity'. This concept emphasises the shaping effect on the research of the researcher's own positionality (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007: 14ff), and is described by Heath and Street as being 'a process by which ethnographers reveal their self-perceptions, methodological setbacks, and mental states' (2008: 123). In each of the sections discussing the methods detailed above, I seek to highlight aspects of that shaping in my own research.

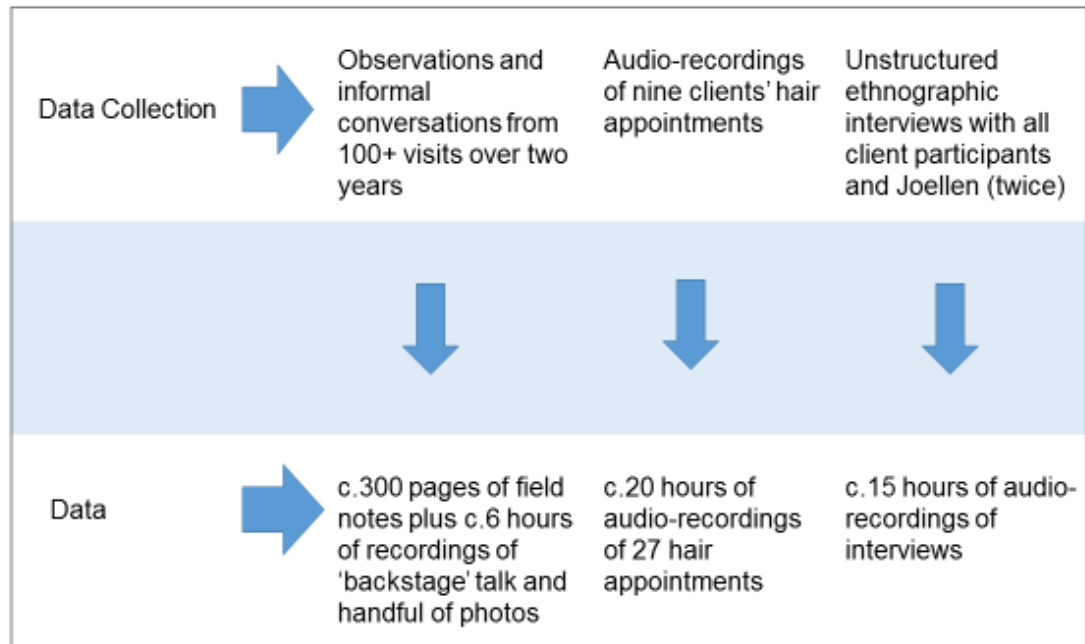
2.4.1 Overview of data collection

As discussed in Section 1.7, linguistic ethnography combines a 'close analysis of situated language use' (Rampton et al. 2004: 2) with an ethnographic commitment to developing understandings of the patterns and uniqueness of particular settings (Rampton et al. 2004: 16). The 'situated language use' can include audio- or video-recordings, transcripts of those recordings and other kinds of documentation; whilst the ethnographic data can include, for example, field notes from participant observation, interviews, and images (Copland and Creese 2015: 175). My methods of data collection and resulting data are summarised in Figure 2.7 below.

In line with the linguistic ethnographic approach adopted for this thesis, I spent nearly two years 'hanging out' in Joellen's Hair Palace for one or two days a week as I discuss below (Section 2.4.2). In addition to observations of different kinds, informal conversations with the range of people who frequented the site, and audio-recordings of 'backstage' talk (Goffman 1959), I audio-recorded twenty-seven hair appointments with nine client participants. I also conducted in-depth unstructured ethnographic

interviews (Spradley 1979). In addition to these data I had five minutes of video-recordings and a handful of photographs of the site. I discuss in Section 2.5 the use I made of these data.

Figure 2-7 Data collection methods and data within an overarching linguistic ethnographic methodology



I collected audio-recorded data (appointments and interviews) in two phases. The first, 'pilot' phase, helped me test out in miniature the process of recruitment, audio-recording of appointments and interviews. As a result of this, and in consultation with Joellen, I changed some aspects of my research implementation (for example, I started taking on a more participative role in the salon). The second phase was the main audio-recording phase, as Table 2.2 below shows. My time spent immersed in salon life extended from mid-February 2012 to November 2013, with more intermittent visits subsequently.

example, all three salons were small rooms making overhearing easy, and all had staff who had been there for many years. On the other hand, not all salons used 'passing up' (see Section 2.3.2) for the shampoo-and-set; and the time allowed for particular treatments, such as the shampoo-and-set, was much longer in one of the other salons than in Joellen's.

The purpose of these multiple data types was not for 'triangulation'. This, with its origins in surveying, suggests that a single point of 'reality' can be identified (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007: 184). Rather, it was for comparison, added perspectives and sense- (and sometimes accuracy)-checking. As a whole, I hope that these different methods of data collection and range of resulting data have supported the ecological validity of the claims I make, that is, the 'viability and authenticity' of my claims (Cicourel 2007: 735).

I now discuss each of the forms of data collection in turn.

2.4.2 Participant observation

My purpose in including participant observation as one of the research methods was two-fold. Firstly, although I had gained access to the setting, gaining access to participants, as Heath and colleagues explain (2012) with respect to using video, is a different matter. They recommend fieldwork in the setting prior to embarking upon recording in order to discuss the research with potential participants (*ibid*, p.16), or, in my case, to identify and recruit participants. Secondly, I undertook participant observation as part of the ethnographic commitment to developing understandings of the patterns and uniqueness of particular settings referred to above (Rampton et al. 2004: 16), to try to get a handle on 'the apparently messy and complex activities that

make up social action, not to reduce their complexity but to describe and explain it' (Blommaert and Jie 2010: 12).

In entering the site, I sought to get inside the embodied experience (Madden 2010: 19) of both stylist and older client, to try to understand the site from these two different perspectives. Thus as the stylists and clients gradually became used to me, I started to take on the role of quasi 'apprentice' in the site, undertaking a range of tasks. On a couple of occasions where timings went awry through a mis-booking, I was called upon to do more to help cope with the flow. I also used the opportunity offered by any 'down time' to chat to the salon workers, about their work, its problems and pleasures, and their lives (and mine). At the same time, in order to try to understand the *clients'* worlds, I became a client in the site, having cuts and colour treatments there and even on one occasion having a shampoo-and-set, experiencing the strange sense of detached presence of sitting under the hood-dryer, seeing but unable to hear. Where possible, I also chatted to clients, both about their hair practices and also more generally about their lives and interests, trying to understand their 'worlds'. Much time was also spent simply observing and listening. As such I also undertook more structured observations to try, for example, to get a handle on the management of time and client flow in the salon to understand, *inter alia*, how much time different clients had for talk with the stylist.

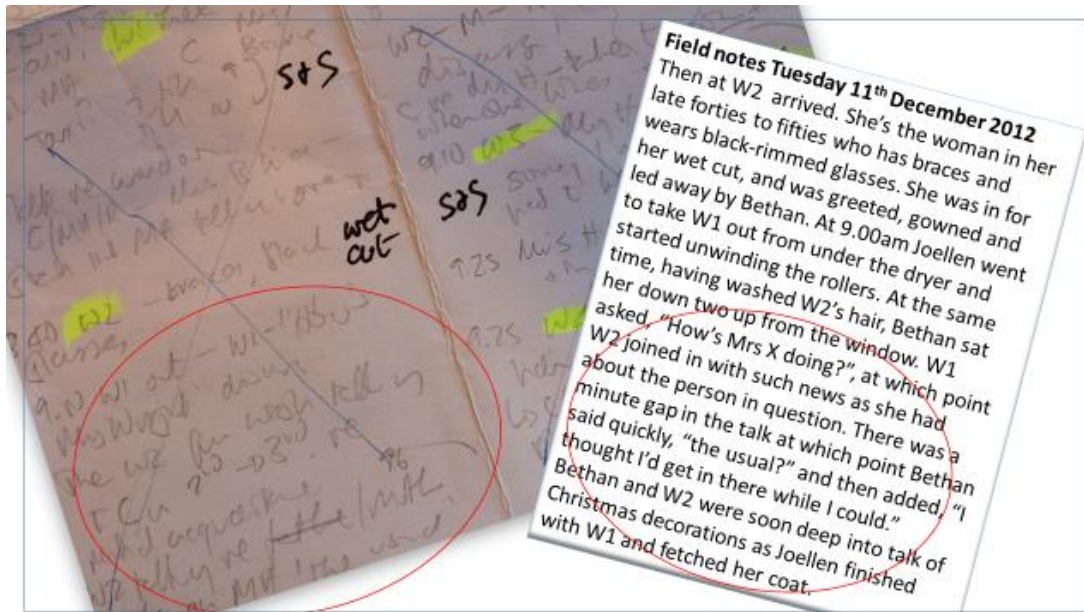
Hammersley and Atkinson (2007: 82-86) caution against treating roles in a setting as completely fixed. In a similar vein, Fraser discusses the ambiguity and lack of clarity in the researcher's role (in Cameron et al. 1992). The shifting nature of the roles I adopted in the site accorded with these findings as the roles adopted varied throughout any particular visit. The challenge for the researcher is to reflexively

consider the impact of these multiple positionings of the self. Field notes, as Copland and Creese (2015: 38) comment, play a central role here.

'Field notes' can denote a range of kinds of text (*ibid*, p.40), and as Hammersley and Atkinson (2007: 142) comment, there are decisions to be made about what, how and when to write things down. I used three different methods of recording my observations in the field and responses to them. *Firstly*, in the setting I made contemporaneous scratch notes on a piece of A4 paper folded into eight to allow it to fit into the palm of my hand. The content of these notes ranged from extensive records of exact words, short exchanges or descriptions of activities or dress to much 'scratchier' notes on days when my role was more participative (*qua* salon worker). I aimed to make notes of both regularities (for example timings, greetings, consultations, work-flow, etc) and exceptions to those regularities (mis-bookings, lack of comment on finished style, etc). I also made small diagrams of where people were and what they were doing at particular points, and, in the early days, made sketches of the site itself.

Secondly, I wrote up these scratch notes every evening after a visit straight onto the computer, following Lareau's (1996: 219) advice to write up field notes within twenty-four hours. This also meant that the process of writing often prompted recall, as Hammersley and Atkinson (2007: 143) suggest, in a way that would have been less likely if more time had elapsed. Figure 2.8 below shows the transformation of one portion of scratch-notes into fuller field notes.

Figure 2-8 Scratch notes and field notes



I usually adopted a narrative or temporally-ordered approach (Wolfinger 2002) as in Figure 2.8 above, that charted observed happenings (and descriptions, talk, etc) from my arrival to departure. Occasionally, I grouped observed patterns together, as on one occasion where salon-workers' reactions to late-arriving clients had seemed particularly salient. And very occasionally some event occurred that stood out so much that I started my written-up field notes on that topic, as on one occasion when a death was announced.

Field notes may carry through all sorts of mis-hearings and transmission errors. They are also, of course, far from being a neutral representation of a field. As Emerson et al (1995: 4ff, 66ff) stress, writing field notes should be seen as an act of interpretation and selectivity. Thus my research interests and own tacit knowledge shaped both what I observed and how I described this (Wolfinger 2002). I aimed to acknowledge this by avoiding what Van Maanen calls a 'realist' approach, that uses a

'dispassionate, third-person voice' and seems to make claims to the 'authenticity' of the text (2011: 45).

My field notes also incorporated brief comments or reflections on events and actions. Reflections, though, were also part of my *third* set of writings, namely my research diary. These were hand-written notes on further reflections from the field, thoughts about further avenues to pursue and ideas on connections between different data types and my current reading.

Most of my client participants as well as clients more generally made some reference to my research-presence in the salon at some point. In fact, my very presence in the site changed the participation framework whether I remained merely part of the overhearing audience or became a 'ratified participant' (Goffman 1981: 132) as clients or salon-workers included me more or less explicitly in the talk. Nor did I hide the fact that I was taking notes, although I tried not to be too obtrusive in this. Thus my research-role in the site was overt. I have tried to take this into account in the analysis throughout (and see further Section 2.5.2 below).

2.4.3 Audio-recordings of hair-appointments

As noted above (Section 2.4.1), I recorded 27 hair-appointments of nine focal clients. I recruited these participants following conversations with them in the salon; on the recommendation of Joellen; or upon the client approaching me in response to my small recruitment poster (see p.95 above). The purpose of undertaking these recordings was to collect the talk *in situ* between the stylists and their clients, in line with the aim of my research questions at the time and as they evolved (see Appendix C). Following the pilot phase I amended my research design to record a minimum of

two hair-appointments per participant. This was to enable me to build up small collections of each participant's talk and thus, in line with much practice in linguistic ethnography and narrative-orientated research (e.g., De Fina 2013, 2015; Deppermann 2013, 2015; Georgakopoulou 2013a; Rampton 2006b), to facilitate the identification of patterns of discursive practices and breaks in those patterns relating to both individuals and the site.

I had hoped to video-record the appointments. However, none of the salon-workers and few of the clients consented to video-recordings. The comments on the process of my so doing during one client's appointment (Lesley), and the difficulty of avoiding capturing the salon-workers on film, were such that I decided against attempting this again. Table 2.3 summarises the appointment audio-recorded data for each client participant.

TABLE 2-3 Appointment recordings per client-participant

| | Number of appointments recorded | Total minutes of audio-recordings | Notes |
|--------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Mrs Farming | 4 | 165 | |
| Mrs Pace | 1 | 27 | Pilot phase only |
| Lesley | 4 | 107 | Also 5 minutes of video |
| Mrs Farthing | 4 | 175 | Both pilot and main phase |
| Violet | 2 | 52 | Pilot phase only |
| Mrs France | 4 | 152 | |
| Mrs Sargent | 2 | 75 | |
| Mrs Crayne | 2 | 170 | |
| Mrs Little | 4 | 262 | |
| Total | 27 | 1185 (19 ¾ hours) | |

I was always present at the recordings as the salon-workers were unwilling to be distracted from their work by undertaking this. One result of this, is that my presence shaped those recordings just as my presence shaped interactions more generally in the salon as described above (see, for example, Extract 3.7, p.163). I dealt with this issue in the analysis, by not according a privileged status to my own contributions. The benefit of being there was that I was able to make notes about what was happening at certain points in the appointments and relate these to the talk, which compensated to a small degree for the lack of video-recording.

Recording of the hair-appointments (and later the interviews, see Section 2.4.4) was done using a small digital hand-held recorder. I placed this either on the shelf beneath the mirror or above the wash-basins (depending on the stage in the treatment). The recorder was thus visible to participants. The recorder was sometimes summoned up in talk. Some such summoning-up was explicit. On other occasions, it is only wider ethnographic knowledge that points to an inferable but unspoken orientation to the digital recorder (see Heinrichsmeier (2015) for a full discussion). These explicit and implicit orientations to the digital recorder can point, for example, to different identity work being done (*ibid*, p.7f). The implication of such orientations is that participants may orientate to aspects of the research project whether or not the researcher is present. The possibility of such orientations is thus a factor to be taken into account in the analysis. This issue also occurred in the interviews.

2.4.4 Ethnographic interviews

My purpose in conducting the interviews was to follow up aspects that emerged in the audio-recordings specific to each participant; and to pursue participants' views on themes relating to their hair and general appearance practices, ageing and sociability.

This last point was shaped by my preconceptions of older people's loneliness, which were further reinforced by some of the academic literature. For example, a number of studies argue that in general, networks tend to decline with age given increasing losses via death and divorce (Askham et al. 2007: 197; Felmlee and Muraco 2009; Moremen 2008; Phillipson 1997; Rawlins 2004: 280; Van Den Hoonaard 1997). This – I theorized – could potentially affect the social role of the salon for participants.

Conversation analytic studies have shown how interviews – whether structured survey interviews or qualitative research interviews (Maynard and Schaeffer 2006; Wooffitt and Widdicombe 2006) – should be treated as social interactions in which the researcher plays a key shaping role. (See, too, discussion in Section 1.6.2 on narrative interviews.) The approach I tried to adopt for the interviews was that of an 'ethnographic conversation' along the lines outlined by Spradley (1979). For these interviews I developed a sheet of topics and related prompts derived variously from the research questions as they stood at the time, the research literature, and themes that were emerging from the data to date (see Appendix G). I sought to follow the flow of conversation and topics initiated by my participants, rather than trying to adhere to any strict order or format of questions (Blommaert and Jie 2010: 44ff). I also wanted to ensure that participants felt they could ask me questions, thereby redressing to an extent the researcher/researched imbalance. Whilst this approach did not, of course, make the interviews any more 'authentic' as interactions than a more formal approach, it did, I believe, result in some participants possibly speaking in more depth about certain issues. It also, I hope, helped make the interview more fun and comfortable for them.

I undoubtedly felt more relaxed with some participants than with others, sometimes responding to them with my own anecdotes or allowing myself to be diverted into chat

on completely unrelated topics. One result of the more relaxed approach of some interviews, as Table 2.4 below shows, was that these were considerably longer than others. Despite this length I did not always manage to cover all the topics in my broad guide (particularly with Mrs Farming).

TABLE 2-4 Interview location and duration

| | | Duration of recorded interview (minutes)* |
|---|--------------|---|
| House interviews | Mrs Farming | 156 |
| | Lesley | 164 |
| | Mrs Farthing | 70 |
| | Mrs France | 124 |
| | TOTAL | 514 |
| | <i>Mean</i> | <i>128.5</i> |
| Café interviews | Violet | 90 |
| | Mrs Sargent | 67 |
| | Mrs Crayne | 112 |
| | Mrs Little | 43 |
| | TOTAL | 312 |
| | <i>Mean</i> | <i>78</i> |
| *i.e., excluding other chat at start and end, which for Mrs Farthing in particular extended a further 30 minutes. | | |

As Table 2.4 shows, the interviews took place in either the participant's house or in a café, depending on participants' preference. The interview with Mrs Pace was different. She was my first pilot phase participant and appeared to be in a hurry. I allowed myself to be pressured into holding the interview immediately after audio-recording her hair-appointment, sitting in her car. With the exception of my pilot phase participants (Mrs Pace and Violet) I offered all my client participants either chocolates or wine upon conducting the interview in recognition of the gift they made me of their time.

I recorded the interviews using the digital recorder, with this placed between us on a table (or on my lap, in Mrs Pace's interview). The flashing light of this recorder did

remind of its presence, and occasionally participants (including me) referred to it; occasionally, too, participants inferably adjusted their talk because of its presence (see Heinrichsmeier (2015)). I have tried to take this into account in the analysis; and as I explain below, for the purpose of analysis I treated the interviews as socially-situated interactions, incorporating my own questions and comments into that analysis alongside those of my participants.

2.4.5 Ethical considerations

Both the initial data collection phase (the 'pilot') and the main data collection phase were approved by the Arts and Humanities Research Ethics Panel of King's College London (REP-H/11/12-10; REP-H/12/13-13) (see Appendix F for an example form). However, as Cameron et al (1993) argue, such approvals are merely the *form* of ethics within research. The main issues of *substance* I have encountered encompass issues of consenting, those of anonymization, and those relating to representation of participants.

In some respects, consenting was straightforward, with consent obtained from the salon-worker and focal client-participants prior to the audio-recording of appointments. There were, though, three issues related to consenting. *Firstly*, as many researchers stress, consenting is a continuous process (Copland and Creese 2015: 65; Kayser-Jones and Koenig 1994: 19, 20; Madden 2010: 81). Conscious of this I worked hard at building relationships with my participants, constantly (re)checking that they were still comfortable to participate. On different occasions this (re)checking led to one participant withdrawing from the project; to my withdrawal of another participant who seemed to me to be displaying considerable discomfort with

the process; and to a delay of several weeks after consenting a third before I finally started with the audio-recordings.

Secondly, there were issues related to my observing non-participant clients in the salon. It might be argued that a hair-salon is a public space where anyone might enter. According to Kayser-Jones and Koenig:

‘it might actually be more burdensome for the researcher and informants constantly to interrupt ongoing social interaction in order to get permission from each individual in a room’ (1994: 19)

This would certainly have been the case in Joellen’s Hair Palace. However, I tried to go beyond this. As far as possible I sought to ensure that clients knew I was there doing research, for example by both having a recruitment poster visible (see Figure 2.1, p.95, above) and making sure I introduced myself as a researcher to anyone with whom I conversed. The *third* and biggest issue arose around those clients whose *talk* was unintentionally recorded in this small salon during the recording of participants’ appointments, an issue reported by other researchers (e.g., Copland and Creese 2015: 65). Discarding such audio files would have entailed either considerable loss of data or elongation of the research process to the discomfort and detriment of both the salon-workers and client-participants. I thus dealt with such occurrences by excluding the utterances of such clients from the transcript and subsequent detailed analysis, and by treating any utterances that triggered participants’ talk as if they were my own field note records.

There were only two clients whom I treated differently, given the salience of their talk in the recording. For these, in a manner reminiscent of the approach employed by D’Arcy and Young (2012), albeit face-to-face rather than online, I sought explicit post-hoc permission from both to use their data. I explained to them face-to-face what I

was looking for, but asked Joellen to do the consenting on my behalf when I was not present to make a refusal less face-threatening for them. Both gave their consent.

Running through the above are concerns with anonymization. This is an issue that has long been recognised in ethnography. It is partially addressed by withholding and changing enough of participants' details to avoid them being identified as far as possible. Many authors argue, however, that the promise of anonymity standardly given to the sites and individuals involved in ethnographic research is a hard one to keep: if too little change is effected, the individuals/sites may be identifiable; if too many of any particular participant's details are changed – her age, mobility, marital status, occupation – the analytic point being made may be undermined (e.g., Saunders et al. 2014b; Thomson et al. 2005; Walford 2002, 2005).

The promise of anonymity is not merely about protecting participants' identity from the wider world, e.g., of academe, but ideally, from each other (Walford 2005: 87f). This can be a challenge, particularly with research conducted in a small location such as a hair-dresser's shop. Indeed, my information and consent sheets recognised this issue, promising participants only that they would not be identifiable 'by people unconnected with the salon' (see Appendix F). Not only is there a limit to the personal details that can be withheld; importantly, too, details of methodology, which are usually central for any paper, may also give indications of the identity of participants, or help in the narrowing down of their identification. In an increasingly online world where research articles and theses may be published as open-access documents that would be quickly turned up by a Google search of the researcher's name, the problems of anonymity are amplified. (See too Saunders et al (2014b, 2014a) and Tilley and Woodthorpe (2011), among others, for discussions of the issues of managing anonymity in an internet and social-mediatised world.)

Overall, it is debateable whether participants are really giving *informed* consent. They might not (for whatever reason) have fully understood the research project; might not appreciate the limits to anonymization; and may not be in a position to conceptualise the kind of use and inferences made from the data they provide. Indeed, as Cameron et al point out with regard to the writing up of their research,

‘the interpretations a researcher makes in doing this must inevitably draw on information beyond what was explicitly made available or agreed to by informants’ (1993: 90)

In response to these issues I have taken steps such as excluding and treating as off-the-record certain extracts, particularly aspects of the interviews and most of the ‘backstage’ conversations with the salon workers. I have also changed participants’ pseudonyms and details in different outputs to help avoid a participant-trail (an approach also taken by Saunders et al (2014b), though they sometimes went further, changing pseudonyms within a single output if the combination might serve to identify the speaker).

Cameron and colleagues (1993) posit three frameworks in terms of power in research: ethics, advocacy and empowerment. The latter involves considering participants as co-researchers. In in some ways that requires planning-for up-front. It may also be, as I found, that attempts to involve participants in even minor ways (for example, through seeking feedback on transcripts) founder because of lack of (their) time. This said, other minor routes to a more even distribution of power can be offered, as Cameron et al suggest, through making it clear, for example, that the researched are also entitled to ask questions of and seek information from the researcher (as I made clear in my interviews as well as whilst observing). More importantly, though, as they stress, it is in matters of representation where the researcher holds the balance of power; it is here that the issues of anonymization are most closely bound up, and

where the on-going selection issues delineate researcher from researched. This is a matter that carries on beyond the period of data collection and infuses the writing up not only in theses, but in all future published oral and written texts that come even marginally into the public domain. In short, ethical considerations continue long after the data collection has finished and the thesis is complete.

Hammersley and Atkinson are helpful here. They stress that 'the ethical problems surrounding ethnographic research are, in fact, very similar to those that are relevant to other human activities' (2007: 228). Essentially, participants in research are, like our own friends and relatives, individuals whom we should care about and for (Copland and Creese 2015: 96); and as Madden stresses:

'no single bit of ethnographic data or single ethnographic point is worth more to ... an ethnographer than the comfort participants have with the research processes' (2010: 91).



In this reflexive account of my methods of data collection and the ethical issues arising I have tried to show both the processes through which the data were collected; the way in which I and the research process shaped the data and its collection; and how I sought to compensate for that shaping effect. A key stage in that compensation, and also a continuing locus of ethical considerations, was the process of analysis itself, and it is this I discuss next.

2.5 Analytic framework

As discussed in Chapter One, in this thesis I draw on the apparatus of Conversation Analysis (CA) and Membership Categorization Analysis (MCA) within an overarching Linguistic Ethnographic framework. I also draw on Narrative Positioning Theory

(NPT), using the CA and MCA apparatus to support the analysis of stories, whether these are the merest orientations to a story-telling stance or more fully-fledged close-to-canonical stories (see discussion, Section 1.6). In Chapter One I provided an overview of this methodological framework, including a discussion of each of CA, MCA and NPT (see too Appendix D for an account of the CA apparatus). In this section, and following Copland and Creese's injunction not to 'hide' accounts of the analysis in the appendices (2015: 211), I aim to explain how I moved through progressively more focussed analysis using these tools, shifting in and out of head-down immersion in the data, continued reading and standing back to try to see patterns and connections. Throughout, I kept in mind Rampton et al's description of ethnographic analysis whereby 'the dialectic between theory, interpretation and data is sustained throughout' (2014: 3).

In this section, I start by discussing how I brought together the analysis of my different data-types to inform a multi-layered analysis of both the linguistic and non-linguistic practices that bear on my research questions. I then, in Section 2.5.2, discuss my approach to transcription. Finally, in Section 2.5.3 I discuss the analytic issue of identifying small stories in my data. As part of this discussion I also outline the notion of narrative stance-taking (Georgakopoulou 2013b), illustrating this with data from my research-site.

2.5.1 Approach to analysis

As the account of my data collection methods in Section 2.4 shows, I had the following main types of data:

- Scratch notes, field notes, research diary

- Audio-recordings of appointments
- Audio-recordings of interviews

I also had a handful of photographs, a short strip of video-recording and some audio-recordings of 'backstage' talk (Goffman 1959). Broadly, the analysis of these data involved three main stages, namely data preparation; getting a bird's-eye view; and focussed (chapter-orientated) analysis

2.5.1.1 Stage one: data preparation

This stage started as soon as I first began gathering data, and involved preparing those data for analysis. As explained above, I wrote up fuller field notes from my scratch notes within twenty-four hours of being in the salon. I then re-read and coded these using NVivo, which helped me work systematically and in detail through those notes to identify patterns. For example, I started to note how frequently the utterance 'the usual' as a consultation question occurred, how the appreciation sequence normally ran off and how occasionally it differed (see discussions in Sections 4.4 and 4.6). Similarly, I noted the way clients seemed often to be in a hurry, talking about needing to rush off to their next appointment. (It was comments like this by Mrs Pace that resulted in the hurried, unprepared-for interview in her car referred to in Section 2.4.4.)

The first stage of the data preparation for the audio-recordings of the appointment-recordings and interviews was repeated listenings and initial (very broad) transcriptions. In line with Hutchby and Wooffitt's (2008: 69) account, I saw doing these transcriptions (both at this initial stage and when I moved to fine-tuned transcriptions in Stage Three) as a central part of the analysis. It allowed me, as Hutchby and Wooffitt say, 'to gain an intimate acquaintance with the recording at the

necessary level of detail' (*ibid*, p.71). The kinds of observations noted above shaped my initial analysis of the audio-recordings, inasmuch as I started to look out for certain interactional phenomena (e.g., at a gross level, how the consultation and appreciation sequences ran off in these; how participants spoke about time or being busy). However, I also made notes of other phenomena. For example, I started to note sequences where 'older-age' category labels occurred.

At this stage I also produced a number of summarising documents. *Firstly*, I wrote different kinds of memos. These served as a way of connecting ideas emerging from my immersion in the field. Figure 2.9 below is an example of such an early memo. *Secondly*, during the intensive phase of the data collection, I wrote what I called conceptual memos. These comprised one to two pages in which I pulled together the ideas emerging from all the data collection of the week – observation, ideas from my research diary, audio-recordings, interviews. This was based on and adapted from Lareau's (1996: 223) account on being required by Michael Burawoy to add a couple of paragraphs of analysis to the end of each set of field notes. These two kinds of summarising documents bridged the data-collection and analysis; they also supported my identification of potential topics on which to focus in my analytic chapters, as, for example, 'doing being busy', the subject of Chapter Five.

Figure 2-9 Example memo – bridging field notes and analysis

Memo: I don't have time (55)

Date 20th August 2012

Going through the transcript of Mrs Farthing's appointment I noted how she talked of being too busy to have her colour done:

S1 you haven't had your colour have you (.) for your busy week
C no he he he
(5)
C too busy he he
S1 too busy

This reminded me of the comment by another client, talking of how she doesn't know how teenage girls have the time to do their hair every day (see FN050412). It's noticeable that Mrs Pace consistently stresses how busy she is; she talks fast, as if busy. Then Violet in interview spoke about not having time for things, how busy her diary gets, a point made to me by Mrs Farthing when I met her recently. And it's noticeable that this sense of rush and busyness by clients seems quite pervasive.

But at the same 'time'

- Mrs Pace and other shampoo-and-sets have time for a 45-minute hair appointment every week
- Violet has time for an appointment every 4 weeks for cut, and perhaps every 3-4 months for colour
- Mrs Farthing has time for her appointment every 5-6 weeks, sometimes fitting in an extra one, and then takes time to colour her own hair regularly

Their time seems to be taken up with social things. It's as if they are filling time with doing things in order not to have time to do other things (or with the result that). And Joellen talked about how stressed some of her older ladies can be. In other words, a factor among Joellen's older clients may be that on the one hand they are very 'busy', they have no 'time' to fit things in – or self-present that way – but on the other hand they do have time for regular appointments – which I wouldn't have had when I was working. I wonder if presenting themselves as being busy is a way of doing age resistivity, of doing 'successful ageing'? How do other clients present themselves?

The *third* kind of summarising document I produced was participant summaries. In these I successively collected all my data relating to each participant. Initially, these were done to support my interviews. However, they became an invaluable resource to help me keep in mind both the uniqueness of each participant and her situation within the overall patterns of the site. They also enabled me to build case studies to exemplify particular points (see, for example, Sections 4.5.2, 4.6.3, 5.6.1).

2.5.1.2 Stage two: stepping back and getting a bird's-eye view

Linguistic ethnography generates a complex mass of data of different sorts (Rampton 2010); and this can seem overwhelming. As Copland comments:

‘The real problems with data analysis come when you sit at your desk surrounded by your data and wonder what you are to do with them all and how you are going to make sense of them’ (in Copland and Creese 2015: 101)

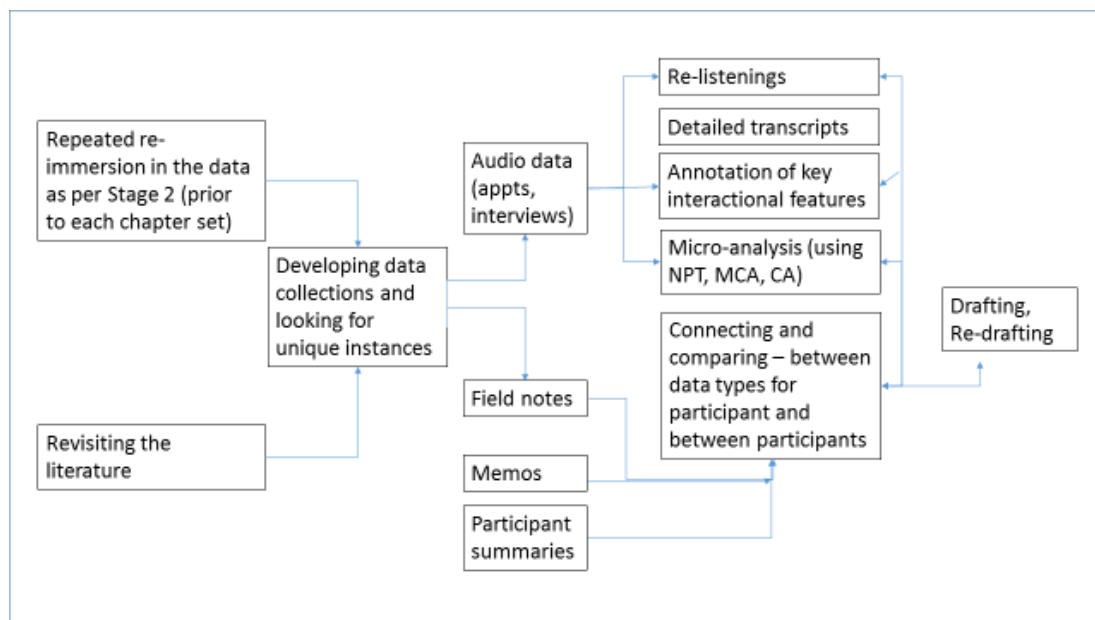
I certainly experienced this sense of bemusement facing the volume of data collected, despite trying to keep up-to-date with data preparation. Thus at this point, towards the end of my data-collection phase, I decided to re-engage with the entirety of my data-set; that is, both the raw data (audio-recordings and field notes) and the summarising documents. This involved me re-listening to and re-reading all the data collected. This allowed me to step back from the immersion in the here-and-now of the still-on-going data collection and data preparation, and start to see wider patterns or repeated phenomena (such as, for example, the repeated stories told by participants of recent and forthcoming events, which I came to call ‘busy stories’ and which became the focus of Chapter Five); but also singular instances that stood out (such as, for example, Mrs Crayne’s initiation of an appreciation sequence discussed in Section 4.6.3). By the end of this short stage I had identified a short-list of foci for my analytic chapters.

2.5.1.3 Stage three: focussing in and building collections

A schematic of my approach to analysis in this stage is set out as Figure 2.10 below. Central to this stage was the building up of collections in a separate Word document, very much in line with CA principles of building collections of conversational

phenomena (Hutchby and Wooffitt 2008: 88; Mandelbaum 2010: 162) but extended to encompass my observations of participants' and the salon practices.

Figure 2-10 Stage Three analysis: building collections



For example, for Chapter Four, which relates to participants' 'on-sight' identity (Paoletti 1998a), I collected all references from the audio-recordings of appointments and interviews and those made in the field notes relating to or about participants' own or others' appearance or aspects of managing this, whether these comprised clients' or salon-workers' talk or my own descriptions. From this, I built sub-collections, for example all instances of the talk (or lack of it) related to clients' own hair at the start and at the end of their appointments (respectively, consultations and appreciations). At this point I made much more detailed transcripts of all the audio-recorded data in the sub-collection, and subjected these to micro-linguistic analysis drawing on the analytic tools of CA, MCA and NPT. Here the aim was to try to identify the design features of the phenomenon, e.g., how it was fitted into the sequential context, elements of turn design (Hutchby and Wooffitt 2008: 90). This revealed, for example, as I discuss in Section 4.4.1, that appreciations (at the end of the treatment) were

normally initiated non-verbally by the stylist taking out the hand-mirror; and that she also signalled the sequence closure upon replacing the hand-mirror. Developing such patterns also allowed me to identify the deviant cases in my data (see Section 4.6.3), breaks in the patterns of both individual and salon practices, and to consider how (if at all) these shed light on my research questions. At every point in the analysis, one of the biggest challenges was to identify the patterns and similarities without losing sight of the uniqueness of each instance – and of each participant. The participant summaries referred to above helped keep the latter in focus.

Finally, as commented in Section 2.4.1, I also had photographs and five minutes of video-recording. I used these more to sense-check the process of the shampoo-and-set (video) and refresh my memory of small details of the salon (photos) rather than subjecting them to formal analysis. Occasional very short extracts from the appointment recordings also benefited from detailed discussion at group micro-discourse data analysis (MDA) sessions at King's College London, where small groups of researchers subjected brief audio-recordings to intensive scrutiny and debated possible interpretations. Dialogue with both others (such as at these sessions, in supervisions and with colleagues) and with myself (revisiting data and analysis after a gap) was an important means of checking and correcting – at least to an extent – my own biases.

In this account of my approach to analysis I have referred to micro-analysis of the audio-recordings. Such a discussion would be incomplete without a comment on the approach I took to transcribing my recordings.

2.5.2 The role of transcription in analysis

As I commented above, I viewed transcription as a first stage in the analysis of the audio-recorded data. That transcriptions are far from transparent and neutral representations of speakers' utterances has long been recognised (Blommaert and Jie 2010: 68; De Fina and Georgakopoulou 2008a: 385). Ochs (1979) highlighted the selectivity exercised by researchers in transcription, whether relating to the spatial layout, the detail included, whether phonetic representation of the talk should be included, and so on. Bucholtz (2000), in similar vein, stressed that interpretive decisions related to transcription involve deciding both what and how utterances and other sounds and, indeed, non-verbal communication, are transcribed. As she comments, though, 'transcribers are not necessarily conscious of every interpretive choice and its representational consequences' (2000: 1446). This is as true for me as for other transcribers. What I have attempted to do below, however, is set out my approach to both making and using transcripts and comment on some of the decisions I consciously made.

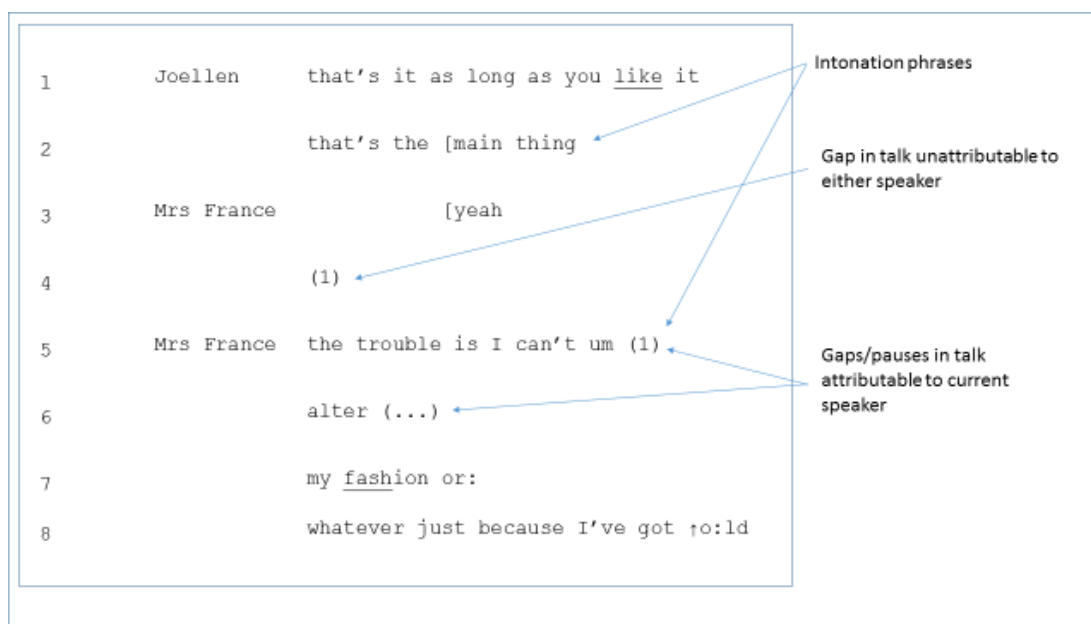
The initial stage in all my transcriptions, both of appointments and interviews, was multiple listenings to the audio-recordings, which fostered considerable familiarity with the content of each audio file. Depending on the volume of other data to be managed at the time, I made very broad transcripts with a greater or lesser degree of detail of all recordings within, on the whole, a couple of weeks of the recording taking place, usually sooner. For all interview recordings I also made a précis of the kinds of perspectives that seemed to be emerging. In all transcripts I treated the encounter – whether in the salon with the salon-worker or in interview with me – as an interaction. That is, I transcribed (and later, if necessary, analysed) my own questions, comments and continuers as much as those of my participants.

This does not imply, though, that the transcripts are 'true' representations of what occurred any more than the audio-recordings were (Duranti 2006a: 308). They were tools to help me investigate some of what originally occurred, and to that end, the detail of the transcript presented in this thesis depends on the analytic point being made. Where, for example, the point is merely to show participants' awareness of a stereotype, leaving analysis of the positioning being achieved to one side, I use a simplified transcript. Where detailed analysis is the aim, then a detailed transcript is used. For these I have drawn on Jefferson's (2004) transcription conventions (see Appendix B). Whilst the simplified transcripts incorporate the speakers' hesitations and repetitions, they make no attempt to convey overlap, the location of laughter, volume or speed, and so on. The detailed transcripts, by contrast, *do* attempt to convey these aspects, which are of analytic importance in examining how the talk was produced and identities negotiated. Three specific decisions taken here were the following:

1. I have attempted to commence each new intonation phrase on a new line. Szczepiek Reed describes these as the 'short chunks of speech that participants use as building blocks for their turns and TCUs' (2011: 44). Whilst these are not always easy to locate, there are, as Szczepiek Reed goes on to explain, a number of markers that help identify them, such as pauses before and after, lengthening of the final syllable, and so on. Nevertheless, such identification is to an extent subjective. This was not a decision taken at the start, but setting out the talk in this way helped me view the patterns (and sometimes the poetry) in the talk, in line with Hymes' (1996) ethnopoetic approach.
2. I have attributed pauses and gaps in talk of any length to a current speaker if it seems to be attributable to her, based on the grammatical or intonational contour of her prior talk. Where such attribution is not relevant I have placed the pause/gap on a line of its own.

These two points are illustrated in Figure 2.11 below.

Figure 2-11 Intonation phrases and attribution of gaps and pauses



3. I have made no attempt at phonetic representation of participants' talk as I have not considered such pronunciations in the analysis. However, I have attempted what Ochs refers to as a 'modified orthography' that 'captures roughly the way in which a lexical item is pronounced versus the way in which it is written' (1979: 61). This particularly affects my rendering of '(I) don't know' vs. 'dunno'. I decided to take this approach on the assumption that these ways of speaking are speaker choices and thus potentially significant in the talk.

I returned to the audio transcripts repeatedly, sometimes enlisting the input of (lay) others to help make sense of and refine the transcripts (even if this does not overcome the inevitable subjectivity attendant upon making the transcript in the first place (Bucholtz 2000: 1446)).

I mentioned in the discussion of Stage Three of the analysis above (Section 2.5.1.3) that this included identifying the design features of particular phenomena. One of these design features was the storied-form in or through which certain actions were accomplished. Identifying turns of talk as small stories was an analytic challenge that I discuss in the next section.

2.5.3 Analytic challenges: story identification and narrative stance-taking

Stories recur in the talk in Joellen's Hair Palace. Some of these look close to Labov and Waletzky's (1967) account of narratives of personal experience; many if not most, however, are small stories (see Section 1.6.1). These take many forms in my data. Some are abbreviated accounts of recent events, sometimes close to what I call '*chronicles*', borrowing from Linde (1993) and De Fina (2003: 98) in regarding these as a temporally-ordered list of more than two events, but in my data stripped of much evaluative point. Other stories are brief '*projections*' (Georgakopoulou 2007) and '*future hypothetical stories*' (C. Goodwin 2015: 207), that tell respectively stories of future happenings and potential happenings, both past and future; '*habitual stories*' (Riessman 1990) set in either the present or past; and what Baynham (2011) refers to as '*generic/iterative narratives*' and '*exemplum narratives*'. Baynham defines the first of these as those that concern 'what happens typically or repeatedly' (*ibid*, p.66). In my data I use the term 'generic narrative' to refer to habitual stories told with generic 'you' or 'they'. The second of these Baynham describes as those 'told to illustrate a point' (*ibid*, p.67).

Georgakopoulou comments on the need to adopt a 'middle way' in identification of stories between an 'anything goes' position on the one hand, and adherence to 'strict, etic (analytical) criteria' on the other. She proposes that 'this middle way is about avoiding prescriptions and instead embracing flexibility and relativity in the definitions' (2015: 256). I was particularly conscious of the dangers of the 'anything goes' position and sought to hold off from classifying something as a small story until I was confident that there was a case for so classifying a turn of talk, and further, that such a classification added something to the analysis (*ibid*, p.260).

Thus in identifying the stories, I have followed Georgakopoulou (2007: 37-9; 2015: 260) in paying attention to both ‘etic’ or analysts’ criteria and ‘emic’ or participants’ criteria. Etic criteria encompass, as a minimum, a reference, however fleeting, to the temporal unfolding of events or change of state, and a semantic and/or prosodic display of stance taken towards the event/s or state. It is important to note, though, that this temporal unfolding can be produced in the present or future as well as past. Emic criteria, as signalled by Goodwin (1984: 243), involve an indication of the participants’ own orientation to the utterance as a narrative telling of some kind. This may be overt. On one occasion Violet makes an announcement with ‘I tell you what’ that leads into a projection (Georgakopoulou 2007) about Bethan’s future (see Extract 3.17, p.184). Participants’ orientation to utterances as tellings, on the other hand, may be more embedded and be as much in the recipient’s response, for example, by displaying an orientation to a longer utterance by the speaker (e.g., by refraining from talk – see Mandelbaum (2013: 496)) or by co-plotting the story, as Joellen does in the extract below. But as Georgakopoulou (2015: 260) observes, emic criteria are also identifiable from the ethnographic work we undertake and the charting of patterns of practices in the site. At times there is the barest hint of an orientation to story-telling, as in more gnomic utterances that seem to act as coda to prior action and/or utterances. I illustrate these points through a discussion of the identification of a small story in one of the appointment recordings. This extract comes from one of the recordings of Mrs France’s appointments and I analyse it further in Section 3.5.1.

Extract 2-7 Mrs France (Appt4)

27:28

- | | | |
|----|------------|--|
| 1. | Mrs France | >£I’ll have to <u>get</u> af< er |
| 2. | | <u>as</u> I get <u>older</u> I’ll have to get a nail |
| 3. | | [f i l e [longer and |
| 4. | Joellen | [yeh [you’ll have to get |
| 5. | Mrs France | lon [ger on a £↑stick£ |
| 6. | Joellen | [no you’ll have to |

7. get one of tho:se (.)
 8. um (.) ts
 9. metal files that they use for um (.)
 10. metal .he he
 11. meta[l files
 12. Mrs France [↑fəh I've got a horse shoef
- 00:27:39

In terms of the 'etic criteria', this has a fleeting reference to a change of state, in this case the progression towards 'being older'. Thus here Mrs France uses a 'get+older' formulation, which, with 'as', signals progression towards a state not yet reached. It also embeds a display of stance towards this change of state, with that display borrowed from the sequential context. Here Mrs France's initial utterance in l.1 is done through smiles, but her stance is thereafter more embedded, lying in the hyperbolic picture she conjures up of her ageing Level 1 self (see Section 1.6.3), filing her toenails with the nail-file attached to a long stick. In terms of the 'emic criteria' for classing this as a small story, this is evident here in Joellen's response, as she picks up Mrs France's image and seeks to develop it further. Furthermore, in this site the formulation used by Mrs France in l.2 recurs with small variations on a number of occasions. In all cases, the temporal starting point is the present, and the state is characterised in some way as mildly negative; the utterance signals a process of change that takes the character either from past to present or present to future. Considering this as a story, as I show further in Section 3.5.1, allows us to explicate the way in which the teller introduces subtle distancing from the category 'older' through the temporal distance between her narrating and narrated selves (see Section 1.6.2).

One kind of conventionalised orientation to story-telling in Joellen's Hair Palace relates to both the merest references to activities and to troubles-tellings. With respect to the latter, Jefferson has shown how the announcement of the trouble itself, and features such as downgraded responses to 'how-are-you?' enquiries, can act as

precursors to a full troubles-telling (Jefferson 1980, 1988). In this setting though, as we shall see in Section 5.6.2 in particular, such utterances also display an orientation to that utterance as a story, even where no story is told. Useful here is Georgakopoulou's (2013b, in press (2016)) notion of narrative stance-taking. This draws on the broader sociolinguistic notion of stance, defined by Du Bois as the use of 'overt communicative means' by participants whereby they

'simultaneously evaluate objects, position subjects (themselves and others), and align with other subjects, with respect to any salient dimension of value in the sociocultural field' (2007: 169)

Stance in this conceptualisation is inevitable in all interactions, given that even neutrality is a stance (Jaffe 2009: 3); it also highlights the inevitability of positioning work done by parties in interaction (see Section 1.6.3), hinting too at the way in which positioning of self simultaneously positions others. Building on this with respect to narratives, Georgakopoulou defines narrative stance-taking as:

'A moment of position taking where a teller more or less reflexively mobilizes more or less conventionalized communicative means to signal that the activity to follow, the activity underway or the activity that is indexed, alluded to, deferred, silenced, is a story' (in press (2016): 15)

This definition encompasses the more conventional types of story prefaces and means of occasioning (see Section 1.6.1), but allows for the activity of story-telling to remain unrealised. The focus on 'more or less conventional' allows for discourse types and the related moment of narrative orientation that are peculiar to particular settings, for example, what I discuss as 'busy stories' in the hair-salon in Chapter Five. To illustrate this I consider an example which we revisit in Section 5.6.1. Joellen has just started washing Lesley's hair.

Extract 2-8 Lesley (Appt1)

02:55

1. Joellen so have you had a good ↑wee:k,
 2. Lesley ↑ye:s ↓not too bad
 3. (I've) been busy
 4. Joellen been ↑busy,
 5. what've you been up to ↓this week [then
 6. Lesley [well I've been
 7. ((*story continues*))
- 03:02

Here a candidate stance towards the object, the week, is proposed by Joellen in I.1 and aligned with but without total convergence by Lesley in I.2: instead of 'good', she takes a stance more towards the negative end of the affective continuum with 'not too bad'. With this conventional downgraded agreement to Joellen's 'how are you' enquiry, Lesley signals the 'possibility of complainability' (Schegloff 2005: 455), that is, signals a potential story-telling (i.e., the complainable), and thereby positions herself as a potential story-teller. This positioning is enhanced in I.3 with her claim to have been 'busy' (since to have 'been busy' implies activities or happenings in her life, and these are one of the foci of stories in the salon). In taking up a narrative stance, Lesley, like Georgakopoulou's participants, 'may be bidding for the audience's show of interest' (in press (2016): 20), and this she wins as Joellen aligns with Lesley's narrative stance-taking move, explicitly soliciting the story of Lesley's 'busyness' in I.5. In I.6 Lesley embarks on her telling, consolidating her positioning as story-teller. As we shall see in Section 5.6.1, the way in which this story came to be told, including Lesley's narrative stance-taking and Joellen's alignment to this stance, has implications for how it comes to be evaluated.

Lesley's story was told. Importantly, though, when examining participants' narrative stance-taking, the fact that no telling sometimes occurs is accorded the same analytic status as when a story follows, in terms of what is revealed about 'what a story does,

what the expectations are about what stories to tell, who tells them, where and how' (Georgakopoulou in press (2016): 18).

2.6 Summary

In this chapter I have described both my participants and the site of my research – Joellen's Hair Palace – highlighting features of the salon that help make age relevant as a resource in talk. In discussing the detail of my methods of data collection and analysis I have aimed to make these aspects of the research process as clear and transparent as possible. This transparency, I hope, helps support judgements about the robustness of my research in terms of its *validity* and *reliability* (Johnstone 2000: 61): that the evidence provided supports the inferences made (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007; Peräkylä 2011: 177); and that there is sufficient information to track how that evidence was secured and worked on in the first place.

In summary, I have combined three methods of data collection in my over-arching linguistic ethnographic methodology, namely participant observation, audio-recordings of appointments and interviews. Rampton explains that ethnography – which in my data encompasses the participant observation and interviews – provides:

'a sense of the stability, status and resonance that linguistic forms, rhetorical strategies and semiotic materials have in different social networks beyond the encounter-on-hand; an idea of how and where an encounter fits into longer and broader biographies, institutions and histories; and a sense of the cultural and personal perspectives/experiences that participants bring to interactions, and take from them.' (2010: 237)

The audio-recordings of the situated interactions in the hair-salon, on the other hand, and the detailed micro-discourse analysis to which these were subjected, bring specificity to those wider perspectives; they provide detail of the interactional 'how' of

participants' practices – such as ways of producing 'older-age' categorizations discussed in the next Chapter – and not merely the 'what'. The combination of methods employed in my thesis was designed to allow me to build up collections of participants' practices – narrative and other talk as well as certain appearance practices – over a period of time. These collections of individuals' practices are located within an understanding of both individuals' own longer biographies (helped by the participant summaries) and the practices and social relationships of Joellen's Hair Palace. Together, I believe, these data and approaches to analysis have allowed me to achieve a sensitive and participant-focused study of the way these women construct older identities. I now turn to examine the evidence in detail, starting with participants' 'older-age' categorization practices'.

Chapter 3 Distancing the self from being old: participants' 'older-age' categorization practices

3.1 Introduction

One morning I made a note of the following encounter between Mrs Farming (aged 89 at the time) and a client in her late seventies whom I will refer to as Denise. Denise, sitting under the hood-dryers, had greeted Mrs Farming as the latter came in and made a comment about needing a lot of clothes against the cold, as Clare helped her off with her coat.

Extract 3-1 You're just a youngster! (Field notes)

"I don't wear a lot of clothes anymore," said Clare. Mrs Farming responded, "You will when you get to my age." Denise exclaimed, "You're just a youngster!" "I wouldn't want to be a youngster," Mrs Farming replied, and upon Denise agreeing that being a teenager would perhaps not be so good, suggested, "maybe 40 or 50, again," with which Denise again agreed. [...] Joellen said, "Everything went downhill after I hit 50." As Mrs Farming sat down at the wash basins she remarked, "The best time of my life was between 60 and 80."

Nikander (2009: 30) shows how chronological age is salient in people's lives. This may occur in a cluster with other age-related categories as in the exchange above. In this exchange, not only age but 'older age' is made salient in the talk, for example, through Mrs Farming's comments that display her considerably older age status in comparison with Clare – 'when you get to my age' – and her ability to look *back* on a period between 60 and 80 as 'the best time of [her] life'. This is the kind of talk that, instinctively, we might expect to find in a salon with an 'ageing' clientele, and indeed, Coupland argues that such age categorizations characterise older people's talk (2004: 84). However, talk of older ages and age-bands was far from permeating every conversation in the salon. Overall, in the course of the 20 hours of audio-recordings

of 27 hair appointments, I identified 78 'older-age' categorizations spread across 37 separate episodes.

As I indicated in Section 1.1, there are many ways in which identity can be achieved in talk and other semiotic displays. However, examining 'older-age' categorization practices provides a useful starting-point for investigating the way older age is conceptualised and orientated to by my participants. Baker argues that 'categories and categorization work lock [D]iscourses into place' (2000: 99). In a similar vein, de Fina argues that categories and their associated category-bound activities and attributes (CBAs), 'are both reflective and constitutive of social processes of ascription, perception and struggle over categorization itself.' (2003: 141). Essentially, as Stokoe claims with respect to gender, 'categories are central to issues of social control' (2006: 488), as the bundle of CBAs associated with particular categories of people – such as 'older women' – shapes how those people are perceived; and shapes, too, the kind of expectations others may have of their capabilities. Thus a detailed examination of my participants' 'older-age' categorization practices both helps further our understanding of how participants use 'older-age' categorizations; and deepens our insights into the kinds of wider socially-relevant associated meanings they seek to jointly negotiate, align with and contest.

In this chapter I had intended to examine participants' *explicit* 'older-age' categorizations. My first research question, as it stood at the end of my field work,¹² ran:

- How are explicit orientations to ageing and older identities made by participants in interaction and what interactive work are these orientations doing?

¹² See Appendix C.

However, as I started to examine the data I realised that this was less straightforward than I had originally thought, as English grammar allows for many ways of rendering the apparently explicit *inexplicit*. As I show in this chapter, participants' practices of categorizing self and other as 'older' range from fully explicit claims or attributions of oldness – for example, “because she's so old”, uttered by Joellen of her Mother – through to considerably more nuanced practices that are *inexplicit* as to either the 'oldness', who is thereby categorized, or both. As a result of this *inexplicitness*, which I discuss further in Section 3.2.5, my first research question, addressed in this chapter, became:

- How do participants in interaction more or less explicitly claim and attribute older identities for themselves and others and how do they take up, modify or contest such attributions?

In this chapter, I thus present both the explicit but also less explicit ways in which participants design 'older-age' categorizations of self and other.

The analysis for this chapter is primarily Membership Categorization Analysis (MCA)-centred, drawing on the tools of Conversation Analysis (CA) for the sequential analysis (see Sections 1.5.1 and 1.5.2, and Appendix D). I also use Narrative Positioning Theory (NPT) (see Section 1.6.3) in the analysis of the small stories used by participants in their work of claiming, attributing or resisting 'older-age' categorizations (see Bamberg (2004b); Georgakopoulou (2007) and discussion in Section 1.6.1). Although my focus here is on the 'older-age' categorizations made by participants in their *salon*-talk, I also draw on analysis of my ethnographic data in my interpretations.

In the following section, I discuss the three broad approaches to 'older-age' categorization used by participants in their *salon*-talk, and show how *less explicit*

formulations are used disproportionately often for categorizations of self or present-others. In Section 3.3, I focus on the kinds of attributes participants associate with 'older age', whilst in Section 3.4, I show how the presence of laughter mitigates the severity of those attributes in particular and more generally, accomplishes subtle identity work with respect to the 'older-age' categorization made. In Section 3.5 I show how participants use small stories (Bamberg 2004b; Georgakopoulou 2007) to discursively defer and resist 'older-age' categorizations. Finally, in Section 3.6, I present my findings. I show that almost all participants orientated to older age as negative. I argue that this negative orientation is shown, firstly, by the way they associate older age with decline attributes and construct it in talk as generally unwelcome. Secondly, they show this orientation to the negativity of older age in the way they employ a range of discursive means – including both inexplicit formulations and small stories – to distance themselves and others present from the 'older-age' categorizations made. I also show that distinct differences in their 'older-age' categorization practice are observable between participants that do finely-tuned identity work in terms of kind of older age – an 'arrived-at' state of oldness, an age-identity of 'not yet old', and an age-identity of 'no longer young'.

3.2 Categorizing self and other as 'older' in Joellen's Hair Palace

In this section, I first present the distribution of the 'older-age' categorizations made by participants. I then discuss in turn the three ways whereby participants produce their 'older-age' categorizations. These are use of chronological age (CHRA); age-related 'category labels' (see N. Coupland et al. 1991c: 60) and expressions (e.g., 'we're an old lot', 'at my age'); and making contrasts between themselves and a younger self or other. I highlight the way use of CHRA and 'older-age' categorization by contrasting are (quantitatively) preferred by salon-workers and clients respectively,

and also start to point to differences in the detail of formulations that map broadly and non-deterministically to participants' ages. Finally, I close by discussing the way in which participants render their 'older-age' categorizations inexplicit with respect to the degree of oldness, person or people categorized, or both. I show how this lack of explicitness primarily applies to categorizations that implicate self or other present.

3.2.1 Frequency and distribution of 'older-age' categorizations

As stated in the introduction, I identified 78 individual 'older-age' categorizations across the 20 hours of audio-recordings of hair appointments. To set this in context, it is worth noting that there is a total of 220 age-related category terms used in my data. Thus 'older-age' categorizations comprise over one-third (35%) of these. Furthermore, a wide range of other explicit categorization terms of self and others is used in talk in the salon, encompassing *inter alia* those related to appearance (e.g., 'I like being blonde, they have more fun'); character (e.g. 'totally uncontrollable aren't you?'); capability (e.g., 'we're not up to technology'); occupation (e.g., 'is he already a trained butcher?'); and so on. In fact, of the nearly 550 categorizations in my data of appointment recordings some 14% relate to 'older age'. These other categorizations exclude kinship terms such as husbands, boyfriends, children, grandchildren, etc, many though not all of which are doing *referring* rather than *categorizing* (Schegloff 2007b). Thus whilst talk in the salon is not saturated with 'older-age' categorizations – there are fewer, for example, than the 90 (excluding chronological age) found in the 18 hours of Charalambidou's (2011) audio-recordings – such terms are nevertheless moderately salient. However, it is still the case that in seven of the 27 recorded appointments *no* participant injects an 'older-age' category

into the talk.¹³ The distribution of the ‘older-age’ categorizations, in terms of those directed at self, other present or non-present other, as well as those which are less clear-cut, is set out in Table 3.1 below.

TABLE 3-1 ‘Older-age’ categorizations by object of categorization

| Column | A | B | C | D | E | F |
|--|-------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------------|---|-------|
| ‘Older-age’ categorizations of: | Self (incl. ‘we’) | Other present (singular only) | Non-present other | ‘Generic you’ (includes self) | ‘Generic you’ and formulations excluding self | TOTAL |
| Total: | 30 | 8 | 24 | 13 | 3 | 78 |
| Percentage of total ‘older-age’ categorization mentions: | 38% | 10% | 31% | 17% | 4% | 100% |

As this shows, the dominant practice in this setting are *self*-categorizations as older (column A). These account for over three-eighths (30) of the total ‘older-age’ categorizations. When the ‘generic you’ ‘older-age’ categorizations that have been analysed as including the speaker are added to this (column D), we see that more than half (43 or 55%) of all ‘older-age’ categorizations are *self*-categorizations in this

¹³ These seven are two appointments each of Mrs Farming, Lesley and Mrs Farthing, and Mrs Crayne’s first appointment.

setting. In fact, my three oldest participants *only* produce self-categorizations as ‘older’.

Just 24 ‘older-age’ categorizations have as their object a non-present other (column C), whilst the minority practice is ‘older-age’ categorizations of others present. These amount to just eleven of the total ‘older-age’ categorizations (including the less explicit formulations in column E that have been analysed as categorizing present-other). This apparent (quantitative) preference to *self*-categorize as older should not lead us to think that participants were unequivocally accepting older age. In fact, participants use a range of features to distance themselves from older age, as I show in the rest of this Chapter.

As noted above (p.152), I identified three broad ways of doing ‘older-age’ categorization by my participants. The frequency of use of each of these, along with examples of each, is presented in Table 3.2. I discuss each in more detail in the following sub-sections.

TABLE 3-2 ‘Older-age’ categorizations by type and speaker role

| Type of categorization | Mentions | Examples | Speaker | |
|---|----------|--|---------|---------|
| | | | Client | Stylist |
| Chronological age | 20 | “at ninety years of age you you’re entitled to have a little bit of en- of (lack) of energy” | 7 | 13 |
| Older-age category labels and expressions | 44 | “we’re an old lot aren’t we” | 25 | 19 |
| Contrasting | 14 | “you’re too young to not be able to remember” | 11 | 3 |
| Totals | 78 | | 43 | 35 |

These 78 individual 'older-age' categorizations were spread across a total of 37 separate *episodes*, mostly in clusters of one or two category mentions. Sometimes 'older-age' categorizations are repeated by the initial speaker or the recipient, for example as a repair following overlap, or when the recipient's repeat signals surprise; occasionally they are part of longer age-related talk, for example trying to work out another's current age or talking about age-related changes to appearance, and so on.

As mentioned in Section 3.1, participants' 'older-age' categorizations are often inexplicit in their design. Given the inexplicitness of some of these 'older-age' categorizations, I started the analysis with the clearest cases, examining the CBAs associated with them. From these I moved to the less explicit cases, using the kinds of CBAs associated with the categorization to class particular utterances as 'older-age' categorizations, and drawing on close scrutiny of the sequential context to both support this classification and identify who was thereby categorized as 'older'. For ease of presentation I defer discussion of the CBAs associated with older age to the next section, although that analysis underpins the findings presented in the remainder of this section.

I now discuss each of the ways in which participants produce 'older-age' categorizations.

3.2.2 Chronological age: a primarily salon-workers' usage

Chronological age (CHRA) is used as both a stand-alone category and as part of the achieving 'older-age' categorization by doing contrasting. In the latter, a very young CHRA may be used (e.g. sixteen or twenty). In this sub-section I consider only the older CHRAs. As discussed in Section 2.2.2, an older CHRA does not necessarily denote the category 'older'. However, a qualitative analysis of the data indicated that participants themselves orientated to 50, or years in that decade, as the start of 'young

old age' and associated 'decline', as illustrated by Joellen's remark in Extract 3.1: "Everything went downhill after I hit 50." (See too Appendix H.VIII.) This accords with the practice reflected in the academic literature. As noted in Section 2.2.2, 'young old' may be considered to start anywhere from age 50 upwards. Thus for the purposes of analysis, 'older' CHRAs were taken to be those ≥ 50 . This does not mean that in such uses participants are necessarily doing an 'older-age' categorization of the referent, however.

As Table 3.2 above shows, CHRA comprises under one-quarter of total 'older-age' categorizations. However, there is a clear difference in use between salon-workers and clients, with the former using CHRAs nearly twice as frequently as clients. Closer scrutiny shows that it is Joellen who is the prime user (10 instances). Six of her uses refer to a current client, with five of these involving confirmation of, or speculation about, the client's current age. I suggest that such an interest lies at least in part in her role as the owner of a hair-salon most of whose clients are older (see Section 2.3.1). Certainly, occasional conversations with her in the salon showed she was conscious of the potential impact on her business of this clientele. As she said one day, talking about having so many older clients, "They die".

As the extracts below show, CHRAs are used to categorize absent others (Extract 3.2), one's past (or future) self (Extract 3.3), and, very occasionally, one's current self (Extract 3.4).

Extract 3-2 Mrs Crayne (Appt2)

- 00:02:20
1. Mrs Crayne [MIND YOU .h
 2. WATCHed an eighty year old man
 3. dig the trench for us
 4. without feeling guilty
 5. Joellen an <eighty year old>=
 6. Mrs Crayne =eighty I know
 7. he's: fit as a fiddle unlike °me°

8. Clare mm
00:02:27

Extract 3-3 Violet (Appt1)

00:10:24
1. Joellen fifty one I was (.)
2. I didn't like
3. Violet no c-he he he
4. becau(h)se you're he(h)ading towards
5. si(h)xy then [aren't you
6. Joellen [yeah
00:10:29

Extract 3-4 Mrs Farming (Appt2)

00:12:23
1. Mrs Farming you know
2. and at ninety
3. it's not quite the place to be
4. in that situation [is it
5. Joellen [no it isn't
00:12:27

None of these uses of CHRA explicitly categorizes the referent as *older*. That categorization work is done through the associated attributes and the sequential environment in which the CHRA is used. In Extract 3.2 the oldness is engendered by the association of the CHRA '80' with a counter-stereotypical activity for people of that age; in Extract 3.3, the notion of 'oldness' encompassed by the mentions of the CHRAs of fifty-one and sixty emerge from the longer sequential context in which age was discussed and the parties orientated to the unwelcomeness of 'heading towards sixty'; and in Extract 3.4, the sense of 'oldness' arises from the role the mention of being ninety plays in the longer sequence. I will return to Extracts 3.2 and 3.3 in the next and subsequent sections as I discuss the attributes associated with older-age categories. At this point, though, of particular note is the fact that Extract 3.4 represents the sole instance in the audio-recordings of the appointments of self-disclosure by a participant of her *current* CHRA.

This extract comes at the end of a long troubles-telling.¹⁴ After some work to position Joellen as a troubles-telling recipient, Mrs Farming had eventually achieved this successfully. The trouble-telling story that ensued was not, as I argue in Section 5.6.2, the main trouble projected. *That* related to lacking energy, a theme that recurs in this appointment (see Extract 3.27, p.210 below). Instead, what gets told is related to problems with her solicitor following her husband's recent death and her fears of having to move home. She comes to a close on that story, with Joellen having agreed with her assessment, and then, immediately prior to this extract, a three-second gap ensues.

In this closing evaluation, that acts as a coda to her troubles telling,¹⁵ there are some markers of uncertainty. The 'you know' with which she resumes in l.1 acts as a marker of uncertainty 'about the message or about the interlocutor's acceptance of the message content' (O'Connor 2000: 99). This uncertainty is echoed in the closing tag question (l.4) that, when occurring in first assessments, serves to downgrade the speaker's epistemic authority, as Raymond and Heritage show (2006: 687). I suggest these markers of uncertainty derive from the longer sequential context and the work Mrs Farming had to do to position Joellen as a troubles-telling recipient. Mrs Farming's reference to her own age of ninety (l.2) here acts as a form of 'extreme case formulation' (Pomerantz 1986). This works both to heighten the pathos of her prior story with its image of her losing her home, and to reinforce its point. It also positions her as deserving of the sympathy she had worked so hard to achieve.

¹⁴ See Extract 5.14, p.347 for analysis of the start of this story, and Appendix H.I for the full story.

¹⁵ See Section 1.6.1.

My field notes show that there are occasional other instances of telling of own age in the salon. These sometimes occurred in association with a recent or forthcoming birthday. Alternatively, they might be occasioned by other kinds of talk, as in Extract 3.5 below, when a more implicit telling of chronological age occurred following talk about the recent death of a client. That client was 86, but her age had not yet been mentioned when the following took place:

Extract 3-5 I have a couple of years yet (Field notes)

"I'll keep going a bit longer," replied Mrs Forster. "My sister went on to 96 so I have a couple of years yet. I'm perfectly fit." Then she added, "You can't help feeling it, sometimes."

Interactionally, self-disclosure of CHRA – like, indeed, other means of ‘older-age’ categorization – does a range of both rhetorical and identity-positioning work. For example, N.Coupland (N. Coupland 2004) suggests that one use of such self-disclosures is to claim status, a point supported by Underwood’s (2011) research. Mrs Farming’s reference to her own chronological age, as suggested above, acts as an ‘extreme case formulation’. In the case of Mrs Forster’s self-disclosure in Extract 3.5, it is, of course, more problematic to apply any interactional analysis as this extract presents merely my notes of what Mrs Forster said. However, what do we see here is an indirect claim by Mrs Forster to be 94, or thereabouts (‘a couple of years’ is an approximate formulation). We see her using both her sister’s longevity and her own fitness as a basis for claiming that she will not die just yet. The claim to have just a couple of years left positions her as old, but special (because both long-lived and ‘fit’ at 94). With her acknowledgement that she *sometimes* ‘feels it’, we also see her positioning herself as resilient and stoical. Thus this utterance does the rhetorical work of allowing Mrs Forster to be a special kind of older person.

I suggest that one reason *self*-disclosures of current CHRA such as those in Extracts 3.4 and 3.5 are comparatively rare in the hair-salon lies partly in this rhetorical work, whereby overuse would dilute the rhetorical effect. Another reason, though, is that CHRAs above a certain but indeterminate age may be interpreted as 'old' by participants without that interpretation being made explicit. This leaves a person whose CHRA has been stated with the difficult task of addressing and potentially contesting unspoken and unknown assumptions held by the other about people of that CHRA. Indeed, on the two occasions where a participant's current CHRA is stated in the appointment-recordings, the participants display resistance to the possible association of their CHRA with particular attributes stereotypically associated with 'older-age' (see Appendix H.II and Extract 3.27, p.210 below).

3.2.3 'Older-age' category labels and expressions: a universal usage

Some 56% of the 'older-age' categorizations are done through what I have called for brevity 'older-age' expressions. As Table 3.2 above shows, whereas the salon-workers (Joellen in particular) were the greatest users of CHRAs, with these 'older-age' expressions the balance of use is tilted more towards the clients.

In English, the most common way of categorising a person or people as 'older' is simply by using 'old' or 'older'. Unsurprisingly, therefore, these are also the most frequently used 'older-age' category terms in the audio-recordings of the appointments as Table 3.3 below shows.

TABLE 3-3 'Older-age' category labels and expressions

| Row | 'Older-age' category label or expression | Example | Clients | Salon-workers | Totals |
|--------|--|---|---------|---------------|--------|
| A | Old (standalone) | "we're an old lot aren't we" | 6 | 5 | 11 |
| B | Old (as part of a phrase) | "too old in the tooth" | 5 | 0 | 5 |
| C | Old age | "dunno: (.) old age" | 0 | 2 | 2 |
| D | Older | "they get worse as you get older" | 7 | 4 | 11 |
| E | Age phrases (certain age, (at) my age, your age, it's his age) | "when she gets to m(h)y a(h)g(h)e" | 6 | 5 | 11 |
| F | Other (elderly, senile, senior citizen), old age pensioner) | "su(h)rely you're not (.) an old age pensioner" | 1 | 3 | 4 |
| Totals | | | 25 | 19 | 44 |

Unlike CHRAs, use of 'old' or 'older' might seem on the face of it to be an explicit way of doing 'older-age' categorizations. For example, when Joellen in I.4 of Extract 3.6 below describes her Mother as being 'so old', this disallowing her from having a rescued dog, the categorization of her Mother as old is quite unequivocal: both the referent and the oldness attributed to that referent are explicit.

Extract 3-6 Mrs Sargent (Appt2)

00:14:14

1. Mrs Sargent so's she going to a rescue [(is she)
2. Joellen [yeh she'll
3. go to a rescue
4. but because she's so old
5. they won't (.)
6. let 'em (1)
7. have it

00:14:20

Given the apparent explicitness of 'old' and 'older', it is perhaps surprising that the most frequent users of 'older-age' expressions incorporating 'old' or 'older' (the top four rows in Table 3.3) are the clients, with 18 uses to 11 by the salon-workers, who are younger. This is in contrast to Paoletti's (1998b: 19) finding that 'old' as a category

tended to be used more by younger participants. However, as the examples given in Table 3.3 show, whilst some uses of 'old' and 'older' do indeed explicitly categorize the referent as 'old', this is far from always being the case. I illustrate this through discussion of an exchange that occurred at the end of one of Lesley's appointments.

Immediately prior to this, Lesley had been talking about the weight of her shopping, which shapes her decision to have a range of deliveries via the milk-man despite the higher prices. This prompts me in ll.1-2 to suggest she try online shopping.

Extract 3-7 Lesley (Appt1)

00:44:04

1. Rachel do online shopping
2. and get it all delivered every week
3. (.)
4. Joellen ts Lesley doesn't do online
5. Rachel you don't do online
6. Lesley no (.)
7. no dear (.)
8. I'm old-fashioned (.)
9. I haven't got those so(h)rt of
10. thi(h)ngs he [he
11. Rachel [.h he he
12. Joellen [he
13. Lesley [he he he my FRIEND (.)
14. Joellen [he he
15. Lesley yes (.) she's a whi:::↑zz at it (.)
16. but (.) not me (0.5)
17. too old in the tooth dear
18. Joellen he [he he
19. Rachel [he he he
20. Lesley [that's the £trouble£ too old in the tooth
21. Rachel um this is a (.) blank copy ((*proceeds to talk about aspects relating to research process*))

00:44:28

In l.17 Lesley claims to be 'too old in the tooth' to 'do online'. In considering this utterance, we have to ask, 'why this now?' I suggest that in this sequence Lesley's primary project is responding to Joellen's statement in l.4 (repeated by me in l.5) that she 'doesn't do online', which in turn responds to my presumption in ll.1-2 that she *could* do online. Her first response (ll.7-10) carries a hint of dismissiveness of the internet. Her initial claim to be old-fashioned (l.8) categorizes her as a certain kind of

person (of conservative (small 'c') leanings) but not *old* (although her use of the term-of-address 'dear' here (I.7), helps give her 'old-fashioned' self-categorization an older flavour). Her old-fashionedness lies in her lack of internet-usage and similar technologies. These are shrugged off, with laughter particles, as 'those sort of things' (I.9-10). Both Joellen and I accept Lesley's invitation to laugh (II.11-12) (Jefferson 1979), thereby aligning and also displaying affiliation with her.

Instead of closing off the sequence at this point, Lesley continues. This time she compares herself with her much-younger friend, categorizing the latter as 'a whiz' at the internet (II.15-16). Despite Lesley's exaggerated production of 'whizz', with its elongated vowel and high pitch-shift, there is no further audible laughter. Lesley's comparison with her friend is self-deprecating, and Pomerantz (1984a: 83ff) argues that the preferred response to such utterances is denial by the recipient. Indeed, when another participant (Mrs Sargent) makes a similar claim to be 'not up to technology' Joellen responds with an implicit denial of the 'not up to' claim by arguing that 'they're easy to use'.¹⁶ In response to Lesley's self-deprecation, though, no such denial is made – as, indeed, it was Joellen herself who had claimed that Lesley 'doesn't do online'. Instead, a short gap ensues (end of I.16). It is at this point that Lesley produces her 'older-age' categorization, 'too old in the tooth' (I.17). This is greeted with laughter, and Lesley proceeds to repeat it (I.20) with audible smiling, after which I effect a complete change of topic (I.21).

So why does Lesley produce this kind of formulation? Indeed, why does she produce any kind of 'older-age' categorization at this point? I suggest that the appreciative

¹⁶ See Appendix H.III

reception of her first account for not 'doing online' encouraged Lesley to continue her account. The lack of denial of any kind that greeted her self-deprecation, though, made available the inference that Lesley not just *does* not but *can* not 'do online'. Because of the possibility of doing reverse inferences from attributes to categories discussed in Section 1.5.2, this in turn makes the category 'old' available, given the stereotypical associations between low internet usage/ability and older-age. That Lesley hears this inference is indicated, I suggest, by her use of an 'older-age' categorization at this point, with another use of 'dear' and the description of this status as a 'trouble' (l.20). That is, she accepts the implication; but in accepting it she also exerts agency over the inferred categorization. She does not select a highly *explicit* self-categorization (for example, she does not say: "I'm too old"). Instead, she both omits the personal pronoun and produces her 'older-age' categorization in a colourful phrase which is a variant of the idiom 'too long in the tooth'. This unusual phrase – it only occurs here across all my appointment- and interview-recordings – is greeted appreciatively. Further, she smiles during the production of 'trouble', which renders that description of her non-internet usage equivocal. These features together help to distance Lesley somewhat both from the full import of a more explicit 'older-age' categorization, casting into doubt her categorization; and from any negativity associated with 'not doing online'. Nevertheless, her 'older-age' self-categorization is not contested or mitigated by either of her recipients, which thereby undermines to an extent the distancing work done by the inexplicitness of Lesley's formulation. Such acceptance of participants' self-categorizations as 'older' – albeit with laughter and/or

appropriating the 'older-age' category or its attributes to themselves – is a recurring feature of 'older-age' categorizations in Joellen's.¹⁷

Phrases with old in them like this one of Lesley's tend to be similarly colourful or hyperbolic in terms of the 'oldness' indexed, both of which distance the speaker from the 'older-age' categorization (see Extract 3.20, p.190 for another example). Thus where 'old' as standalone leaves no room for creative distancing from the degree of oldness, 'old' as part of a phrase allows for just this sort of innovation.

The way participants use the term 'older' in 'older-age' categorizations can likewise be done in a way that distances the referent from old age. For example, in the following extract, Mrs France is talking about the difficulty of reaching her toe-nails to cut them.

Extract 3-8 Mrs France (Appt4)

00:27:28

1. Mrs France >fI'll have to get af< er
2. as I get older I'll have to get a nail
3. [f i l e [l o n g e r and l o n [g e r
4. on a f↑stickf

00:27:32

I return to this extract for a detailed discussion in Section 3.5.1. Here I just note that with the formulation 'as I get older' (l.2) Mrs France makes no claims to being old *now*. Rather, that is a state that, as signalled by the use of 'I'll', lies at some point in future.

¹⁷ Contests do occasionally occur, as for example Extract 3.11, p.172, below. Denise's rejection of Mrs Farming's 'older-age' categorization in Extract 3.1, p.149, above is my only example of an explicit contestation of an 'older-age' categorization made by one of the older clients.

Phrases using 'age', other than 'old age', are also frequently used by both clients and salon workers. Eleven of these formulations, that involve 'my/your/his/certain age', occur in my data (row E of Table 3.3 above). This is another way of achieving less explicitness in 'older-age' categorizations. All six *client* uses are of 'my age', which points to their current chronological age without explicitly stating it. The *salon-workers*, by contrast, either point to the chronological age of another (as when Joellen, referring to her father, states 'it's his age' to explain his 'falling down a lot'); or use a vaguer formulation (as in Clare's 'a certain age', Extract 3.12, p.174 below). It is noticeable that the clients who use this 'my age' formulation are four of the older clients, namely Mrs Farming, Mrs Pace, Violet and Mrs France. That these are 'older-age' categorizations can be inferred from their use in conjunction with the mild decline attributes I discuss in Section 3.3. Nevertheless, they do not of themselves position the referent unequivocally as *old*, even whilst they make 'older-age' relevant (see, for example, discussion of Extracts 3.17, p.184 and 3.24, p.204).

The final usage in Table 3.3, row F, bundles together four terms, each of which occurs just once in the audio-recordings of appointments. 'Se-(nior citizen)' and 'old age pensioner' were used by Clare in play-acting talk to Mrs Pace, and were done both denying that category and infused with laughter particles.¹⁸ As I discuss in Section 3.4, such laughter renders uncertain the category-attribution being made or denied. 'Senile' was uttered by another client and appropriated by Joellen, again, infused by laughter particles (see Appendix H.V).

¹⁸ See Appendix H.VI

Finally, 'elderly' was uttered by a client, Anne,¹⁹ during one of Lesley's appointments as she sought to identify a person described by Joellen. This is also an example of how an 'older-age' categorization initially directed at a non-present other emerges in the sequence as potentially implicating the speaker or someone present in that categorization. This occurred whilst Lesley was having her hair trimmed and Joellen was talking to her and Anne about an event she recently attended. Prior to this extract she had referred to a person whom she thinks Anne might know. This triggers Anne's enquiry in l.1.

Extract 3-9 Lesley (Appt2)

00:18:16
 1. Anne was she elderly
 2. Joellen ↑um (1)
 3. well she'd only just [reti:red
 4. Anne [careful
 5. Joellen 'bout yo(h)ur a(h)ge he [he he
 6. Anne [ha ha ha
 7. Lesley [he he he
 8. Joellen .h will th(h)at su(h)ffice
 00:18:28

In trying to identify the referent of Joellen's talk, Anne suggests that that person might have been 'elderly' (l.1). However, Joellen's response in ll.2-3, with its hedging, pauses and use of 'well', displays the signs of a dispreferred SPP (Pomerantz 1984a). This points to a problem in agreeing with Anne's categorization of the absent other. The problem, further signalled in Anne's warning to Joellen to be careful (l.4), and emerging in Joellen's subsequent utterance, is that such a categorization would categorize Anne, too, as 'elderly', given that, as Joellen says (l.5), she shares with the

¹⁹ See Section 2.4.5 for a discussion of how I managed the ethical issues relating to these third party data.

referent the same CHRA. This points, too, to the way CHRA can be an attribute of 'older-age' as well as itself a category (Schegloff 2007c: 480).

Another client, Violet, in interview talked of 'elderly' as a term that she would not welcome; and some previous research on category uses has found that the label 'elderly' tends to be associated with notions of care, vulnerability and disability, with 'the elderly' frequently cast as passive and/or as victims (Mautner 2007). That is, 'elderly' may be taken as denoting extremes of 'old age'. It is noticeable that all parties produce laughter as they register Anne's recognition of the implications *for her* of the referent being categorized as 'elderly'. I discuss such laughter in Section 3.4.

Both CHRA and generic terms are used by participants when they produce 'older-age' categorizations through contrast/comparison.

3.2.4 Doing contrasting: 'older-age' categorizations as 'no longer young'

Participants may make older categorizations (even) more implicitly by contrasting themselves with a real or imagined younger self or other. There are fourteen such 'older-age' categorizations in my data. When the speaker contrasts her current with her younger *self*, the categorization is inexplicit as to the extent of 'oldness' but clearly does *self*-categorization work; when she contrasts herself with a younger *other*, the categorization is inexplicit on both counts. Participants never use contrasts to do 'older-age' categorizations of *others*. As I show below, all but one of the 'older-age' categorizations done this way achieve positions for the speaker of 'no longer young'; and most of them (nine) accomplish this using small stories.

This way of doing 'older-age' categorizations is used considerably more frequently by clients than by salon-workers (11 and 3 times respectively – see Table 3.2, p.155 above). It is also the *only* way of doing 'older-age' categorization used by two of the

youngest three client participants, Mrs Sargent and Mrs Little. I thus illustrate its use with an example from one of Mrs Little's appointments, in a conversation that takes place as Joellen applies colour. (See also Extracts 3.15, p.182, and 3.18, p.186)

Prior to this exchange, Mrs Little has been telling Joellen how she hurt her back during Zumba.

Extract 3-10 Mrs Little (Appt2)

00:08:01

1. Mrs Little I wasn't sort of
2. Joellen no he he
3. Mrs Little I wasn't he he be(h)ing
4. being completely stupid
5. and thinking right oh you know (.)
6. I'm twenty again .h

00:08:05

The key point at this juncture (I return to this Extract in Section 3.5.2) is Mrs Little's use of a prior chronological age, twenty (l.6). What Mrs Little produces is a small story in which she implicitly contrasts her current with her twenty-year-old self, and describes what she, as character in her story about her Zumba injury, did *not* do.

Drawing on Narrative Positioning Theory (NPT) (Bamberg 1997; Bamberg and Georgakopoulou 2008), we see Mrs Little interactionally (at Level 2) doing considerable distancing work, with the repeated negation (ll.1 and 3), hedging ('sort of', l.1), and laughter in l.3, that responds to Joellen's laughter of l.2 and invites her to treat what is coming as in some way not entirely serious.

In terms of Mrs Little's Level 1 positioning, we have two Mrs Littles as characters: Mrs Little-in-the-Zumba class and Mrs Little's twenty-year-old self. The action of Mrs Little-in-the-Zumba class is evaluated in ll.3-4 as not being completely stupid; and the 'completely stupid' action that Mrs Little at Level 1 did *not* do was act on a false belief, namely, that she was twenty again (l.6). This twenty-year-old Mrs Little, as signalled

by the determined 'right' of I.5, would have put much more effort into the Zumba. In this telling Mrs Little both closes the temporal and moral gap between her Level 2 interactional and Level 1-in-the-Zumba-class selves and widens it between those selves and her shadowy storied twenty-year-old self. Whereas for the latter, greater effort would not have been at all stupid, for the former, a twenty-year-old's intensity of effort would have been 'completely stupid', and they know it. It would be 'completely stupid' because the twenty-year-old Mrs Little is so temporally-removed from Mrs Little-now, which in turn categorizes both Mrs Little-in-the-interaction and Mrs Little-in-the-Zumba class as 'no longer young'. That it may, though, *also* be classed as a categorization as 'older' (albeit of a 'no longer young' kind) lies in the implicit association of physical limitations and advancing age signalled in the story. I discuss these associations in Section 3.3.1.

All but one of the ways of doing 'older-age' categorizations via contrasting achieve a 'no longer young' positioning, even when the *object* of the categorization is inexplicit (see, for example, Extract 3.18, p.186, below). The exception points to what makes this contrasting way of doing 'older-age' categorizations contribute to a 'no longer young' positioning: like all the others, the contrast is with a younger self/other; unlike the other instances, though, the other with whom the speaker contrasts herself has previously positioned herself as *old*.

This categorization occurs in talk between Clare and Mrs Farming, as set out in Extract 3.11 below. This takes place seconds after Mrs Farming's arrival and achieves an 'extreme-old-age' positioning for the speaker, Mrs Farming. Clare has been complaining about the pain in her heels.

Extract 3-11 Mrs Farming (Appt3)

00:00:59

1. Mrs Farming what is it then
2. Clare dunno: (.)
3. old age,
4. Joellen old age (.)
5. [fset in fastf
6. Mrs Farming [he
7. Mrs Farming well if it's old age with you dear
8. I I shouldn't really be here at all (.)
9. ha ha ha ha ha

00:01:07

Clare's claim in I.3 that the cause of the pain is 'old age' is treated sceptically by both recipients. Joellen's response in II.4-5, effectively, that 'old age' has come early, hints at loose associations between the Membership Categorization Device (MCD) category CHRA and the 'older-age' category expression, 'old age'. Here Joellen is casting doubt on the claim that a member of the MCD age category CHRA/48 (Clare's age at this point) can simultaneously be a member of the MCD age category 'reached old age'.

Mrs Farming, though, takes a different tack, as in II. 7-9 she contrasts *Clare's* version of 'old age' with her own in a small story in which she compares herself with a younger other, Clare. This story takes a hypothetical form. Interactionally, at NPT level 2, her turn-initial hedging discourse marker 'well' here signals possible forthcoming disagreement with Clare's claim (Pomerantz 1984a), and the emphasis on 'you' in I.7 signals an explicit contrast between Clare and herself. Her use here of 'dear' may also serve further to emphasise the contrast between herself and Clare, as she never uses this with more-or-less coeval clients. Then in I.8 with 'really' she marks the contrast as also being one between the way things appear to be and the way they actually are.

The appearance/reality distinction is embedded in the contrast at NPT Level 1 between the two characters of Mrs Farming's hypothetical story, namely, Clare and Mrs Farming herself. Clare in the story has reached 'old age', with the attribute of

'achy heels'. Mrs Farming in the story, though, is dead (she 'shouldn't really be here at all', 1.8), with the implicit contrasting CBAs of even more pain (and perhaps also, picking up on Joellen's implicit association, a far more advanced CHRA).

Mrs Farming's story is clearly *not* the reality: she *is* there. Thus the cause of Clare's achy heels cannot be 'old age', with 'reached old age' instead being implicitly claimed by Mrs Farming. That is, she positions herself as extremely old rather than as 'no longer young' through doing contrasting. This in turn points to a hierarchy of ageing, where 'old age' is an extreme state of oldness that is followed, not by 'even older age', but by death.

3.2.5 Inexplicitness in 'older-age' categorizations: a distancing device

The discussion in the preceding three sub-sections has highlighted the point I made in the introduction, namely, that participants can design their 'older-age' categorizations to be more or less explicit. Choice of category label or expression – 'getting older' as opposed to 'old', for example, or using a contrast with a younger self such as 'I wasn't thinking I'm twenty again' – make 'older-age' relevant, but the current oldness of the referent is left inexplicit. Touched upon, but not so far discussed, though, is the way in which *who has been categorized* by an 'older-age' categorization can also be made more or less explicit.

Close examination of the 'older-age' categorizations shows that nearly two-thirds of these are straightforward in terms of who has been categorized. Thus for example, Joellen's reference to her Mother (Extract 3.6, p.162), Mrs Crayne's reference to the 80-year-old man (Extract 3.2, p.157) and Mrs France's reference to herself (Extract 3.8, p.166) all have explicit referents of the categorization, even if the 'oldness' of that categorization is less explicit. However, one-third of the cases are less explicit in this respect. This referential inexplicitness has four sources in my data: use of the 'generic

you'; lack of any specified referent; the implicit inclusion of self when referring to others; and the fact that the referent of an age categorization is not always identical to the object of the 'older-age' categorization (which occurs when a contrast with a younger other is made).

Starting with 'generic you', this can serve several purposes (see Appendix E1). For example, it can distance the speaker from the experience (O'Connor 2000: 105), involve and possibly include the addressee as co-referent (O'Connor 2000: 75-117; Tannen 1983, 1986), or express a general or universal truth (De Fina 2003: 53; Schegloff 1996; Scheibman 2007: 133). These purposes are not mutually-exclusive. Across my data there are fifteen uses of 'generic you' in 'older-age' categorizations.²⁰ Analysis of the sequential context shows that some of these uses of 'generic you' do primarily implicit self-categorization work as 'older', even whilst expressing a universal truth (see for example Extract 3.17, p.184). Other uses of 'generic you' not only accomplish the blend of *self*-categorizations as older with a universalising-of-experience function; they also appear to include the *addressee*, as in the following extract. Here, Clare has asked Mrs Little about her recent Zumba injury (see Extract 3.10, p.170), and then spoken of her own sport-related pains.

Extract 3-12 Mrs Little (Appt2)

00:54:33

1. Clare I used to do a lot of sport
2. and they have said that
3. if you do a lot of sport (..)
4. it doesn't always help

²⁰ See columns D and E of Table 3.1 p.154. One of the three items in column E is a categorization without any specified object; the other two use 'generic you'.

5. I start thinking ((continues into small story))
00:11:42

In ll.1-2 Joellen seeks to further explain Mrs France's tiredness, in addition to the fact that she is 'put upon', by adducing getting 'a bit older'. The format, present simple + 'you', is of a general truth, but Joellen's 'older' utterance seeks to explain *Mrs France's* condition, not her own, as signalled by the 'and' (l.1) that marks a continuation with the theme of Mrs France's tiredness. This suggests that the 'generic you' here is including Mrs France, but quite possibly not including Joellen herself. That Mrs France hears it as including her, at least, and as not solely a general truth, is indicated by the personal 'small story' that follows. This, in proposing a counter-explanation for her tiredness, categorizes her differently (as a working person, and if 'older', at least not on account of being tired). I discuss these stories of resistance to actual and inferred 'older-age' categorizations in Section 3.5.2.

The second and third ways in which the person categorized as 'older' can be made inexplicit occur only once each in my data. One of these related to the lack of *clear referent* of an 'older-age' categorization, when Joellen, responding to Mrs Farming's "we're an old lot" says "getting old". Analysis of the sequence suggests that she is excluding herself here. The other minority instance is when the 'older-age' categorization is not *restricted* to the referent. This is when Mrs France comments: "I look at other (.) older women's skin", and proceeds to describe these as 'wrinkly'. The referent and obvious object of the 'older-age' categorization is an anonymous group of women; but with 'other', Mrs France implicitly also *self-categorizes* in the same group. Indeed, the micro-pause suggests that she has realised that what she is about to say will include her in the categorization.

The fourth way in which the *referent* of an ‘older-age’ categorization is rendered inexplicit is when this referent is *not identical* to the *object* of the ‘older-age’ categorization, because of the way the categorization is done. For example, Mrs Sargent at one point *refers* to Clare in stating “you’re too young to (.)>not be able to re(h)m[e(h)mber”. She also categorizes Clare as ‘too young’. But in so doing, and through this contrast, she implicitly *self-categorizes* as *not* ‘too young to not be able to remember’. I discuss this extract further in Section 3.3.2; for now, I note that it makes Mrs Sargent the implicit *object* of a self-categorization as ‘older’ of which she is not the referent.

Given that participants can choose to produce their ‘older-age’ categorizations more or less explicitly, we have to ask ‘why this now’ (and conversely, ‘why not that’) about the way participants design their ‘older-age’ categorizations (see Section 1.5.1). A comparison of the ‘older-age’ categorizations of self and present-others with non-present others is instructive. What we see, in summary, is that *less explicit* formulations occur disproportionately often in ‘older-age’ categorizations of present parties than in those of non-present others. Table 3.4 summarises the comparative data for the use of ‘older-age’ categories and labels.

TABLE 3-4 Expected and actual distribution of 'older-age' category labels and expressions

| | | Categorizations of self or other present | Categorizations of non-present others | | |
|--|---|--|---------------------------------------|--|--|
| Expected distribution of 'older-age' category labels or expressions based on proportional distribution of self and other 'older age' categorizations | | 69% | 31% | | |
| Row | 'Older-age' category label or expression | Categorizations of self or other present | Categorizations of non-present others | Comments | |
| A | Old (standalone) (N=11) | 45% (5) | 55% (6) | Disproportionally weighted in favour of categorizations of non-present others | |
| B | Old (as part of a phrase) (N=5) | 100% (5) | 0% | Disproportionally weighted in favour of categorizations of self and others present | |
| C | Old age (N=2) | 100% (2) | 0% | | |
| D | Older (N=11) | 55% (6) | 45% (5) | Disproportionally weighted in favour of categorizations of non-present others | |
| E | Age phrases (certain age, (at) my age, your age, it's his age) (N=11) | 91% (10) | 9% (1) | Disproportionally weighted in favour of categorizations of self and others present | |

As this table shows, 'old' as a standalone term is used disproportionately often in categorising *non-present others*. Detailed examination shows it is so used six out of 11 times, or 55% of the total standalone uses. This is more than we would expect, given that just 31% of the total 'older-age' categorizations are of non-present others. On the other hand, 'old' as part of a phrase (row B), and 'old age' (row C) are *only* used in categorizations of self or present-other (one of which involves 'generic you'). 'Older' is predominantly used in categorizations of self or present-other (six out of 11 instances). However, this means that five or 45% of the uses of 'older' are for categorizing non-present others, a use disproportionately weighted in favour of categorizing such referents. It is also important to note that all the uses of 'older' that categorize self or present-other are part of the formulation 'get + older', which, as I argued in Section 3.2.3, puts 'oldness' sometime in the future. Furthermore, five of these uses employ the 'generic you', which, as argued above, itself may introduce some distance between the referent and the categorization. Finally, the use of 'age'

formulations (Row E in the above table) is also very disproportionately skewed towards uses that categorize self or present-other.

In addition, I should point out that the way of doing 'older-age' categorization by contrasting is by its nature – that is, contrasting the self with a younger self/other – only done for self-categorizations. As I pointed out in Section 3.2.4, this way of doing 'older-age' categorization is the least explicit with respect to state of oldness, and those that compare the speaker with a younger *other*, are also inexplicit as to referent.

The use of less explicit ways of designing 'older-age' categorizations for self/present-others as opposed to non-present others suggests that these more inexplicit designs are a resource to allow the speaker to distance herself somewhat from the category 'old', even if 'older-age' is made relevant. Introducing such distance in this way for 'older-age' categorizations of self/present-others but not for those of non-present others in turn constructs 'older-age' as both unwelcome and as something of a taboo.

∞ ∞ ∞ ∞ ∞ ∞

In this section I have shown that participants, broadly speaking, produce their 'older-age' categorizations by using CHRA; by using 'older-age' category labels and expressions; and by contrasting themselves with a younger self or other. I have shown that they produce their 'older-age' categorizations with more or less explicitness, and have argued that given alternative ways of making 'older-age' categorizations, the use of more or less explicit formulations must be understood as a participant choice. Given that *less explicit* formulations occur disproportionately often in 'older-age' categorizations of present parties, this implies that 'older age' is constructed as sensitive and unwelcome, with those less explicit formulations used as a distancing device. Such inexplicitness does not prevent participants from resisting implied – or

inferred – ‘older-age’ categorizations of themselves, as I noted in my discussion of Mrs France’s response to Joellen’s categorization (Extract 3.13 above). Nor, however, does it seem to facilitate contest by recipients of the speaker’s self-categorization as ‘older’, such categorizations being overwhelmingly accepted without modification, as I observed in my discussion of Lesley’s self-categorization in Extract 3.7.

I have also started to draw attention to some broad differences in clients’ ‘older-age’ categorization practices that map very roughly to chronological age.

3.3 An orientation to mild decline in ‘older-age’ categorizations

In this section I show how participants primarily associate their ‘older-age’ categorizations with decline CBAs, with these encompassing a range of physical limitations, different kinds of cognitive decline and unwelcome changes to appearance, as well as an orientation to the general negativity of ageing. I show how physical limitations appear to be the more acceptable face of older age with 30 such associations made across 15 episodes. This compares to just 11 mentions of cognitive decline across eight episodes, and 12 associations of ageing with aspects of appearance made across five episodes. I show how whilst both Joellen and Clare²² make associations of physical decline with advancing age, their association of ageing with cognitive or appearance-related CBAs is minimum, and on both occasions produced reactively, which constructs these as client associations. On the other hand,

²² Bethan made no older-age categorizations in the audio-recordings of appointments.

it is Joellen and Clare who primarily orientate to the *negativity* of older age, with the only such client orientations being produced reactively.

3.3.1 Physical decline: the acceptable face of older age

One of the few age-related questions that I asked consistently across six of the nine client-participant interviews was: “do you ever think about getting older?” This question positions the recipient as someone for whom ‘thinking about getting older’ is potentially relevant; and it might be received as positioning the recipient as *themselves* old. However, what it does *not* do is make any assumptions about what might make a person think this. It is thus notable that in the *interviews*, all six participants who were asked this question referred to diminished *activity* and increasing physical limitations in some way and at some point in their responses; and all six also discursively minimised these effects.²³ As noted in the introduction to this section, this association of ageing with mild physical decline is also the most frequent kind of association made in talk in the *salon*.

For example, in the following extract Mrs France associates ‘getting older’ (l.2) with reduced flexibility, given the projected need for some sort of extendable nail-file (ll.2-3) for her toe-nails.

Extract 3-14 Mrs France (Appt4)

00:27:28

1. Mrs France >fI’ll have to get af< er
2. as I get older I’ll have to get a nail
3. [f i l e [l o n g e r and l o n [g e r
4. on a fstickf

00:27:32

²³ See for example Mrs Farthing’s response, Appendix H.XV

In the next extract, Violet implicitly contrasts her full-of-energy sixteen-year-old self (l.10, l.13) who went up to the Queen's coronation, with her current self, who did not go up to London for the Queen's Diamond Jubilee celebrations (l.2). By implication, therefore, her current self is not full of energy, which thereby associates ageing with diminished energy for this kind of outing. It also, incidentally, and in line with most of the contrastive 'older-age' categorizations, positions Violet at this point as 'no longer young' rather than as unequivocally 'old'.

Extract 3-15 Violet (Appt1)

00:04:34

1. Joellen did you go up there
2. Violet I would have liked to
3. I was just saying I was up there for the (.)
4. when she (.)
5. for the c- (y' [know)
6. Joellen [for the co[ronation] (.)
7. Violet [coronation]
8. Joellen was yo[u
9. Violet [yeah:
10. I was only (..) £sixteen then£
11. Joellen ye[ah:
12. Violet [s(h)o he he
13. and so I was full of energy he he

00:04:45

These extracts show that loss of flexibility and diminished energy are implicitly associated by participants with ageing. Similarly, physical stiffness, aches and pains, declining health, getting more easily tired from certain household chores and so on are also associated in this setting with older age. (For other examples see Extracts 3.10, p.170; 3.11, p.172; 3.12, p.174 and 3.13, p.175.) Indeed, so strong are the associations between physical decline and older age that the association persists even in the face of a counter example, as in the following exchange between Mrs Crayne and Joellen.

Extract 3-16 Mrs Crayne (Appt2)

00:02:20

1. Mrs Crayne [MIND YOU .h
2. WATCHed an eighty year old man

3. dig the trench for us
 4. without feeling guilty
 5. Joellen an <eighty year old>=
 6. Mrs Crayne =eighty I know
 7. he's: fit as a fiddle unlike °me°
 00:02:27

In this very compressed small story, Mrs Crayne claims lack of guilt as she describes how she and an unspecified other watched a man dig a trench. Mrs Crayne has a 'bad back', referred to in immediately prior talk; also, in Western culture, heavy work such as ditch-digging would generally be considered a CBA of the category 'men'. There would thus be no clear cause for Mrs Crayne to have felt 'guilty' – other than the fact that the man was eighty (l.2). It is this that makes her *not* 'feeling guilty' tellable, namely, that someone of this (advanced) age, contrary to stereotypical associations of older age and physical weakness, was *able* to engage in heavy physical work whilst she (much younger) just watched. Joellen's reception of this story in l.5 omits 'man' from the categorial phrase. This displays both her orientation to the key tellable of Mrs Crayne's small story and that she shares Mrs Crayne's perspective that the 'normal' attributes associated with 80-year-olds do not include the activity 'digging trenches'. This highlights how some CBA/category associations are so strong that they are 'protected against induction', as discussed in Section 1.5.2 (see too Schegloff (2007c)). In short, where a member of a category (in this case, 80-year-olds) is not acting in an expectable manner (in this case, for example, displaying physical weakness) they are seen as an 'exception' (and thus here Mrs Crayne's story is tellable).

Noticeably, none of Joellen's physically-related associations are done in connection with a *self*-categorization as 'older'. Further, most of Clare's and all of Mrs Little's physical limitations associations relate to a greater likelihood of injury upon doing sport or similar activity (these two, the youngest of my participants, were the only ones to make such associations); and Mrs Sargent makes no such categorial associations.

Those made by the other, *older*, participants, on the other hand, relate to aches, pains, stiffness, tiredness and lack of energy. Thus in this setting talk of being tired or lacking energy may be more likely to index an *older* age than talk of muscular aches or strains, even without an 'older-age' categorization being made. Furthermore, claims of such CBAs may also be *explained* by the recipient as being due to age, as we saw in the exchange between Joellen and Mrs France in Extract 3.13 (p.175).

The focus on the physical aspects of ageing enables participants to construct themselves as the same as they always were, but just within an ageing frame: that is, it enables them to manage the change/continuity problem of identity through time. Furthermore, the physically-related CBAs are distributed broadly across the classes of object of 'older-age' categorizations, i.e., self-, other-present- and absent-other-directed. This adds further weight to my suggestion that these represent the acceptable face of older age. Whilst both client and salon-worker participants made associations between some sort of increasing physical limitations and advancing years, when it comes to attributes related to cognitive decline or changes to appearance, these are constituted as primarily client-associations in my data.

3.3.2 Cognitive decline and unwelcome changes to appearance: client-only associations

There are eight episodes in which attributes related to some sort of cognitive decline are associated with older age, as in the next exchange involving Violet, Bethan and Rachel.

Extract 3-17 Violet (Appt1)

15:02

1. Violet £I tell you what£
2. if she ge-
3. when she gets to my £I say if£
4. when she gets to m(h)y a(h)g(h)e(h)
5. sh(h)e'll be even £worse£
6. 'cos you do you get worse as you [get older
7. [y' know

8. Bethan [he he
 9. [he
 10. Rachel [he he he he he he
 11. Bethan I'll be co(h)mple(h)tely insa(h)ne
 12. Violet you [go you go back to your (.)
 13. Bethan [.h he he he he he
 14. Violet ɛyourɛchi(h)ldho(h)od[d
 15:14

In l.6, Violet makes an association between getting 'older' and getting 'worse'; in ll.12-14 this is elaborated as 'going back to your childhood'. The context provides more texture to this association: following a discussion between Violet and Joellen of the former's forthcoming theatre trip to see *Birds of a Feather*, Bethan had, in uninhibited fashion, given a musical rendering of the original theme tune, reporting that her father had called her a 'strange child'. Joellen immediately, laughing, had said Bethan hadn't changed, and Violet had played along, producing the small story 'projection' (Georgakopoulou 2007) in ll.1-5 above. Thus to get 'worse' in this sequential context is to be more uninhibited, stranger, childish, and, says Violet a few seconds later, to 'do silly things'. The explicit reference to 'childhood' combined with what is construed as 'silly' or 'childlike' behaviour, helps invoke the stereotype of the inverted-U model of older age. According to this model, older people are conceived of as akin to children, with the lower levels of behavioural restraint that mark some kinds of cognitive decline (Bytheway 1995: 20; N. Coupland et al. 1991c: 12; N. Coupland 2014 (2001): 200).

Violet here uses a 'generic you' in the second part of her utterance (l.6). This is designed as the expression of a general truth that justifies her assertion, in the first part of her utterance, that Bethan, already called by her father a 'strange child' will be 'even worse', because this is simply what happens. That this is heard as a general truth is shown by the fact that both Bethan and Joellen immediately apply the 'getting worse' to themselves. As a general truth, this need not, of course, categorize Violet

as 'older'. But in I.4 she has talked of when Bethan "gets to m(h)y a(h)g(h)e(h)". She has thus made relevant her own current age, revealed just ten minutes earlier in the appointment to be nearly 76. This in turn positions her as, at least, old enough to have some authority to make the claim.

In my second example, the categorization is less obviously 'older age'. Nevertheless the association of cognitive decline with advancing years is very clear. This example occurs in one of Mrs Sargent's contrastive uses. Here Clare has just returned from the shop and has been trying out loud for several seconds to remember the name of a man she met there. Joellen has started using the hot brush on Mrs Sargent's hair.

Extract 3-18 Mrs Sargent (Appt1)

30:18

1. Clare °oh:: ↓God°
 2. Mrs Sargent HE HE he he he he he .h
 3. Clare y'see I know him but don't know his name
 4. (..)
 5. Mrs Sargent £she's t- (.)
 6. you're too young to (.)
 7. >not be able to£< re(h)m[e(h)mber he he he he
 8. Joellen [do you mean Derek
- 30:26

With her formulation in II.6-7 Mrs Sargent implies an age-category, namely Clare's current CHRA, before which 'not being able to remember' is not an allowable attribute. Logically, therefore, declining memory is an attribute of ageing. Moreover, Mrs Sargent very implicitly *self*-categorizes here, contrasting herself to Clare. In line with all but one of the uses of contrasting to do 'older-age' categorizations, however, rather than as 'older', she self-categorizes as 'no longer young': she, by implication, is *not* 'too young to not be able to remember'.

Overall, the decline in cognitive abilities associated with 'older-age' includes lack of or reduced ability to learn or do new things, whether technological or more generally, forgetfulness and greater confusion and inability to get jokes. As indicated above,

though, it is only clients who *initiate* such associations of any kind of cognitive decline with 'older-age' categories, these clients being Mrs Farming, Lesley, Mrs Farthing, Violet and Mrs Sargent (i.e., five of the nine).

In interview, the four youngest client participants – Mrs France, Mrs Sargent, Mrs Crayne and Mrs Little – all orientated to cognitive decline as one of the more feared aspects of ageing. For example, Mrs Little referred to her Mother's dementia, describing it as "one of the most terrifying things"; and Mrs France, following a long digression after her initial response to my 'getting older' question (see p.181), concluded:

Extract 3-19 Mrs France (Interview)

Mrs France: yeah I do think about getting older (.) (Rachel: mm) I do think erm (.) I don't mind getting older as long as I've got my marbles.

(Simplified transcript)

There are several possible reasons for the fact that only the younger client-participants expressed this fear – for example, having more years to develop dementia; having greater awareness of dementia and similar diseases; having grown up in a society in which knowledge-working was increasingly important – but I have insufficient data to support such theories. Whatever the reason, this expressed fear is in line with other studies of older people that suggest that it is this kind of decline that is seen by many – older and younger – as 'real old age' (Degnen 2007, 2012). As Degnen points out, small slips in memory, momentary confusion and the like are increasingly monitored by others and attributed to advancing age (2012: 92-94). Perhaps central to participants' fear, though, is not cognitive decline being 'real old age', so much as the *stigma* that is associated with medicalised forms of such decline,

such as 'mild cognitive impairment', dementia and Alzheimer's (see e.g., Beard and Neary 2013; Dhedhi et al. 2014)

On the only occasion that a salon-worker – Joellen – comes close to making an association between 'older-age' categories and CBAs related to cognitive decline, she does this by appropriating a prior connection made by a *client* (see Appendix H.V). However, although in the 'front region' (Goffman 1959: 109) no salon-worker initiated such associations between 'older-age' categories and cognitive decline, 'back stage' (*ibid*, p.114) with no clients present, monitoring talk about their older clients' mental faculties occurred from time to time. Battiness, inability to change, and sudden deterioration all featured in such observations. Thus arguably, 'front stage', the salon-workers orientated to their institutional roles of salon-workers seeking not to offend those who stand to them in a client relationship; 'back stage', however, they displayed an orientation to wider circulating stereotypes of older people as mentally deficient (see Section 1.4), and associated aspects of cognitive decline with 'real old age',

As with cognitively-related attributes, so with those linked to changing looks or appearance salon-workers were reticent about making connections with older age. In fact, the only time a salon-worker, Clare, made an association between appearance and older-age it was (a) teasingly responsive to Mrs Pace's initial association; and (b) complimentary (albeit edgy) (see Appendix H.VI). Even 'back-stage', such associations were only made (during my time observing) in response to prior questions or a search for an explanation from *me* (see e.g., Extract 2.4, p.111). In this reticence the salon-workers again, displayed an orientation to their institutional roles and the main business of the salon. The fact that appearance-related changes occur offers the salon-workers, of course, the chance to provide a particular service to older women. This service is centred around using appearance work to make clients feel

good through feeling younger, as Joellen claimed on several occasions. Initiating an attribution of unwelcome appearance changes to 'older' age would risk undermining the feel-good that they seek to offer.

A few clients do, though, associate appearance with their 'older-age' categorizations. In these categorizations, spread over just five episodes, participants make, broadly-speaking, two kinds of connections between 'older-age' and appearance. One set relates to social norms of appearance and appropriateness, and I discuss such linkages in Chapter Four.

The other set of connections relate to the association between ageing and unwelcome changes to, or negative comments by the client on, her appearance. In hair-salon talk these connections are made *only* by Mrs France.²⁴ Furthermore, all but one of these connections were made in a single long sequence. As I discuss in Section 4.3, other participants *did* occasionally allude to their own appearance and make implicit connections with ageing, for example, by expressing satisfaction that they were not yet completely grey.²⁵ The lack of explicit connections made by participants between ageing and the very evident – and sometimes unwelcome – changes to appearance marks this as something of a taboo topic. It also in line with the relative lack of *talk* about appearance in Joellen's Hair Palace in general. I discuss this and participants' practices in Chapter Four. For now I merely note that age-related changes to participants' appearance may indeed be unwelcome, but in Joellen's the focus is primarily on *managing* those changes. Mrs France's utterances throw into relief this

²⁴ Mrs Sargent launches her interview by making similar connections: see Extract 4.1, p.225.

²⁵ See for example Violet, Appendix H.VII.

reticence by other clients about their appearance; they also show just how unwelcome some clients construct those changes as being.

Extract 3.20 below comes from near the start of the long sequence referred to above. It shows the way Mrs France expresses to Joellen the same kind of dislike about her older appearance as Mrs Sargent expresses in interview to me (see Extract 4.1, p.225), as she talks of the shock she feels upon not recognising as herself, the “white haired bent over old *dear*” (l.5-6) she catches sight of in a shop-window.

Extract 3-20 Mrs France (Appt3)

07:32

1. Mrs France it's bad enough catching sight of yerself
2. in the mirror anyway
3. or the *shop* window [or something
4. Joellen [he he he he .h
5. Mrs France but when you see this white haired bent
6. over old *de* (.)
7. Joellen [he [he
8. Mrs France [and then y- you think
9. <↑oh my God> [that's *de*]
10. Joellen [is th(h)at re(h)]ally m(h)e
11. he he [he .he

07:44

The unpleasantness of Mrs France's changed appearance is conveyed through the contrast between normal perspectives on this ('anyway' l.2; 'bad enough' l.1) and the worse shock of seeing herself looking 'old'. The shock is conveyed both lexically ('oh my God', l.9) and prosodically through the pitch shift and elongated articulation of that utterance. Not only is white hair associated with looking *old*; it is also associated with looking *vulnerably* old: the reflection is stooped, she is an 'old dear'. To be in a position to evaluate it, Mrs France must be claiming it also as *her* experience; that is, she is included in the 'generic you' here. Separation is created between the Level 1 character in her story and her Level 2 interactional self through a range of moves, but particularly via the use of this 'generic you' and the objectification of her Level 1 self – the 'old dear' – whose reflection she observes and does not recognise. These serve

to distance herself – not from ageing *per se*, but from this dissonance-creating aspect of ageing (her ‘white’ hair) that undermines her sense of who she is: ‘that’s me (I.9)’ (where, it is implied, she feels, ‘that’s not me’).

In short, in this small story Mrs France associates ageing with changes to appearance, such as changing hair colour and posture, and these are highly negative. A couple of minutes later, saying “the trouble is the inside of you doesn’t (.) f:eel any more than forty”, Mrs France makes the dissonance explicit with an utterance that invokes the Mask of Ageing motif (Featherstone and Hepworth 1989, 1993), whereby people view their ageing bodies as ‘masking’ some sense of the inner ‘real’ self.

Whereas physically-related CBAs are associated with ‘older-age’ categorizations regardless of the person categorised, the case is quite different for the cognitive-related CBAs and those related to unwelcome changes to appearance. Of the former, 91% (10 out of 11) are *self*-categorizations (including those employing ‘generic you’); whilst of the latter 67% (8 out of 12) are *self*-categorizations. Based on the distribution of self- and other-directed ‘older-age categorizations – see Table 3.1 (p.154) – we would expect just 55% of each kind of CBA to be applied to self-categorizations. This suggests that there is a sensitivity about applying such CBAs to others, particularly those cognitively-related, in line with the discussion in this section.

Participants also orientate to ageing as negative without explicitly associating it with any CBAs.

3.3.3 ‘Older age’ as a negative state

Whilst in both interviews and appointment recordings participants occasionally made positive associations with *retirement*, almost none volunteered any explicitly positive

associations with '*older age*' in either interview or talk in appointments. One rare exception was Mrs Crayne, who made such a positive association in interview. The interview had officially finished but the recorder was still running, and she and I had been discussing modes of travel. A comment by me that I didn't like flying sparked a story from Mrs Crayne about her planned trip to Spain the previous Christmas, which fell through when she arrived too late at the airport. Concluding this story, Mrs Crayne reflected as follows:

Extract 3-21 Mrs Crayne (Interview)

Mrs Crayne: but if it had happened (.) twenty years ago I'd a been weeping and wailing (.) now I just sat (Rachel: yeah) there and thought

Rachel: oh well

(1)

Mrs Crayne: it's gone

Rachel: c'est la vie

Mrs Crayne: yeh it's it was it was go- it was meant to happen

(Simplified transcript)

Developing this theme Mrs Crayne then commented further on the perspective that comes with age.

In the appointment talk, participants principally associated '*older age*' either with an attribute in one of the broad groups discussed above or with vulnerability (for example, Mrs France in Extract 3.20 or Mrs Farming in Extract 3.4); or constructed it as unspecifically negative.

Getting older is constructed as negative without any other CBAs in eleven out of the 37 episodes in which '*older-age*' categorizations are made: it is cast as bad in itself, as the next extract illustrates.

Extract 3-22 Violet (Appt1)

00:10:24

1. Joellen fifty one I was (.)
2. I didn't like
3. Violet no c-he he he
4. becau(h)se you're he(h)ading towards si(h)xty
5. then [aren't you he he
6. Joellen [yeah

00:10:30

Here, the fact that Violet uses getting closer to being sixty (l.4) to explain Joellen's dislike of her fifty-first birthday, constructs being sixty, that is, a lot older than fifty-one, as negative. It is noticeable, though, that she injects laughter into her articulation of the 'older' category, 'sixty'. I discuss the work done by this laughter in Section 3.4.

It is primarily the salon-workers who construct older age as negative in an unspecified way, with both Violet's such orientations coming in response to priors of Joellen's. Long back-stage conversations with the salon-workers suggests that their negative orientations to ageing may stem partly from their life situations, with reminders of ageing – including their own ageing – all around them both at work and at home with ageing parents. Not all these reminders are positive. That said, Joellen in particular also displays a more resistant, *laissez-faire* attitude to aspects of ageing as we shall see in Chapter Four (see, e.g., Section 4.3.2). Thus to an extent, their orientation to the negativity of ageing is an invocation of a stereotypical societal attitude rather than necessarily a reflection of deep-seated dread.

∞ ∞ ∞ ∞ ∞ ∞ ∞

In summary, participants associate with their 'older-age' categorizations a mix of CBAs related to physical limitations, cognitive decline, unwelcome changes to appearance, vulnerability and general negativity. Further, there are fine-grained distinctions in the use of attributes in terms of age and whether an 'older-age'

categorization is directed at self/present-other or absent-other. A further feature whose use differs according to the person categorized is laughter.

3.4 Laughter as a decline-mitigation resource

In this section I discuss the distribution of laughter in the ‘older-age’ categorizations and the effect it has. First, looking at the level of the *episodes*, I show that laughter occurs more frequently in episodes of ‘older-age’ categorizations where an association of cognitive decline or unwelcome appearance changes has been made. I suggest that laughter enables participants to cast into doubt the severity of any attributes associated with ‘older-age’, whilst both positioning them as phlegmatic with respect to the effects of ageing; and mitigating possible unwelcome identities – for example, as vain or as a ‘complainer’ (Clift 2013: loc.6041) (see discussion, Appendix E2). Secondly, at the level of individual ‘older-age’ categorizations, I show, more generally, how laughter is primarily associated with those that implicate present parties, and argue that this laughter helps manage the sensitivity of this work.

3.4.1 Doing troubles-resistant identities by constructing ‘older-age’ attributes as non-serious

In the previous section, seven extracts of audio-recordings of appointment talk were presented in the discussion of the CBAs associated by participants with ‘older-age’ categorizations. All but one of these were characterized by laughter or smiling. Prior research has shown that the presence of laughter is a common discursive resource used by participants to signal that the current or previous turn is being treated non-seriously (Holt 2013). By ‘non-seriously’ I mean here that the turn/s is/are designed in such a way as to render ambiguous *qua* seriousness something in the turn, for example, casting doubt upon the degree to which the speaker is invested in or committed to her utterance (or that of another), mitigating the identity summoned up

by that utterance, and so on. Furthermore, Jefferson (1979: 82-3) showed that when one participant in an interaction invites laughter either by laughing themselves or by designing their talk to indicate that laughter is an appropriate response, recipients generally accept those invitations to laugh. Overall, in my data, looking at the 37 episodes of ‘older-age’ categorizations, in 57% (21) of these, the speaker of an *initial* ‘older-age’ categorization in an episode produces it with laughter either immediately prior to, during or after the categorization or associated CBA (if present) (see Table 3.5). But in 86% of *these* episodes, those initial ‘older-age’ categorizations produced with laughter are likewise receipted with laughter by one or more of the recipients.

TABLE 3-5 Frequency of broad class of CBA with older-age category and laughter

| Broad class of CBA | Episodes in which older age is associated with: | Episodes characterised by laughter by speaker of initial older-age categorization in episode | Episodes in which recipient/s of older-age categorization receipts it with laughter | Percentage of episodes characterised by laughter/ (of which % receipted with laughter) |
|---|---|--|---|--|
| Physical limitations | 15 | 9 | 8 | 60% (89%) |
| Cognitive decline | 8 | 8 | 6 | 100% (75%) |
| Unwelcome changes to appearance | 5 | 3 | 3 | 60% (100%) |
| Sub-total: | 28 | 20 | 17 | 71% (85%) |
| Other (including both general negativity and no particular CBA, and excluding episodes in which another CBA also associated with older age) | 9 | 1 | 1 | 11% (100%) |
| OVERALL TOTAL: | 37 | 21 | 18 | 57% (86%) |

As Table 3.5 shows, closer examination of the episodes in which laughter or other orientation to non-seriousness occurs reveals some interesting patterns related to the associated attributes. In brief, where a *specific* attribute in one of the broad classes of CBAs discussed in the previous section is associated with the ‘older-age’ category – that is, broadly relating to physical or cognitive decline or unwelcome changes to

Violet, can be seen as 'losing one's mind'; in fact, Bethan predicts that she will be "co(h)mple(h)tely insa(h)ne" (l.11). As discussed in Section 3.3.2, some participants in interview construed this as the most-feared aspect of ageing. Thus the attributes listed by Violet might be seen as extreme decline CBAs. But the *participants* do not orientate to them as such. Here, Violet effectively uses her initial and continuing laughter (ll.4-5, 14) to propose that she is treating these cognitive decline CBAs lightly. This 'making light' is supported by the laughing appropriation of these CBAs for their future selves – and indeed, upgrading of them – by both Bethan, who laughs through her categorization of her future self as 'completely insane' (l.11); and Joellen, who a little later laughingly declares 'no hope for me then'.

A similar 'making light' of these attributes can be seen in the other associations of aspects of cognitive decline with the 'older-age' categorization. Effectively, the speaker is both nodding to and acknowledging the stereotypical association of kinds of cognitive decline with older-age, but rendering that association and her attitude to it ambiguous in *her* case through the laughter. Where the recipients likewise laugh, they are collaborating in the non-seriousness of the identity made relevant through the categorial association. Further, the very ability of the speaker to make apposite reference to such stereotypical associations and engender laughter among her addressees further undermines some aspects of the cognitive decline CBAs, as this positions the speaker as at least to some extent 'all there' enough to make such associations in the first place and have them received as witty by her interlocutors. This is not unlike Norrick's (2009: 915) observation that his interviewees would joke about having a senior moment if they happened to display forgetfulness. Mandelbaum (2003) similarly comments that older people in her research tended to joke about memory problems, thereby highlighting the relevance of such issues for older people.

Participants also thereby display both ‘troubles-resistance’ (Jefferson 1984: 351) and good cognitive functioning as far as wit goes.

Although this last aspect does not apply to physical and appearance-related CBAs, similar work to make light through laughter is also at play. Thus in Extract 3.14 (p.181), when Mrs France associates loss of flexibility with age, or in Extract 3.10 (p.172), when Mrs Little associates greater likelihood of injury with no longer being twenty, they mitigate the seriousness of their complaint with laughter. Similarly, in Extract 3.20 (p.190), as she utters the ‘older-age’ categorizations, Mrs France’s smiles (and, indeed, her dramatic telling) cast doubt on the seriousness with which her expressed shock is to be taken, with laughter particles also infusing Joellen’s response.

There are, as we can infer from Table 3.5 above, 16 episodes where the ‘older-age’ categorization and its associated CBA is produced *without* laughter. In cases related to *appearance*, the two laughter-less episodes both involve strictures relating to age-appropriateness of appearance or presentation of others. In terms of physically-related CBAs, some episodes where the ‘older-age’ categorization and CBA are produced without initial laughter construct the CBA as in fact *non-mild* and to be taken seriously, as with Clare in Extract 3.11 above (although her ‘older-age’ categorization is *receipted* with laughter, undermining the serious positioning of her complaint).

The only two ‘older-age’ categorizations associated with the vulnerability of older age that are done *without* any mitigating laughter are both produced by Mrs Farming (see, e.g., Extract 3.4, p.158). Although she was only one year older than Mrs Pace, her health was considerably worse and her recently widowed state added burdensome worries to her life. Her use of ‘older-age’ categorizations that invoked images of vulnerability worked to enhance the pathos of her stories on both occasions, with the result that she received perhaps more sympathy than would otherwise have been the

case. She is also, connectedly I suggest, the participant who most clearly orientates to her own age as '*old age*'.

In short, where a CBA related to physical or cognitive decline is associated with the '*older-age*' categorization, or where unwelcome changes to appearance are thus connected with *older-age*, the speaker often produces this '*older-age*' categorization and/or the CBA with laughter. Such laughter in these attributions also mitigates a possible identity positioning as '*complainer about older age*', and helps position speakers instead as buoyantly accepting the inevitable. It also helps the speaker distance herself not so much from *old-age per se*, as from aspects of old age that are in different ways particularly unwelcome: that can be seen as constituting '*real*' old age (e.g. cognitive decline); that create particular dissonance (e.g. changes to appearance); and which, in general, undermine her sense of who she is. In the majority of cases, where such categorizations are produced with laughter the recipients accept the invitation to laugh. This is unlike the situations described by Jefferson (1984), who shows that when troubles-tellers laugh in the course of a troubles-telling, the recipient normally refrains from laughing and displays herself as taking the teller's trouble seriously. I suggest that in the case of '*older-age*' categorizations and the associated CBAs, reciprocal laughter from the recipient helps construct these as *non-troubles-tellings* and as a making light of the inevitability of ageing and its effects. Recipient laughter thereby collaborates with the work being done by the initial speaker of rendering that initial categorization and the respective older identity as somewhat ambiguous, uncertain and as less negative.

Laughter is salient in *episodes* in which '*older-age*' categorizations are made; more generally, it is also salient in terms of *individual* '*older-age*' categorizations, regardless of their position in an episode. I discuss this briefly next.

3.4.2 Laughter as a tool to manage the implication of present parties in 'older-age' categorizations

Across my data, the speaker of an 'older-age' categorization allows laughter particles to infuse her talk either during, or immediately before or after this in 56% of the instances (44).

Table 3.1 (p.154) above showed that 24 of the 78 'older-age' categorizations were directed at absent others, real or imaginary. Close examination, though, shows that three of these inferably implicate a present party. In Extract 3.9 (p.168), for example, Joellen realises almost immediately that her response to Anne's question 'was she elderly' might implicate Anne, too, as 'elderly'. As a result, just 21 of the 78 individual 'older-age' categorizations inferably implicate *no* present party. Close analysis of all 'older-age' categorizations shows a very noticeable difference in the incidence of laughter: those 'older-age' categorizations that inferably implicate a present party are significantly²⁶ more likely to be infused with laughter (72% of all such 'older-age' categorizations) than those where no present party is implicated (just 14% of such 'older-age' categorizations being infused with laughter). Table 3.6 displays these differences.

²⁶ Statistically significantly, in fact, at $p < 0.01$ (Chi-squared= 20.738)

TABLE 3-6 Comparison of frequency of laughter in 'older-age' categorizations implicating present parties vs. those that do not

| | Self or other present potentially implicated in older-age categorization | Only absent others (real or imaginary) implicated in older-age categorization | Total |
|--|--|---|-----------|
| Older age categorization produced in environs of laughter (immediately prior, during or after) | 41 (72%) | 3 (14%) | 44 (56%) |
| No laughter in environs of older-age categorization | 16 (28%) | 18 (86%) | 34 (44%) |
| TOTALS | 57 (100%) | 21 (100%) | 78 (100%) |

Part of the reason for this higher incidence of laughter where the speaker or another present is potentially implicated relates to the distribution of CBAs. As I showed in Section 3.3.2, attributes related to cognitive decline and unwelcome changes to appearance are most often done as *self*-categorizations as 'older'; and as I showed in Section 3.4.1, episodes in which such attributes are associated with 'older age' are most likely to be produced in an environment of both initial speaker *and* recipient laughter.

But what the presence of laughter also suggests, as in the 'elderly' exchange with Anne (Extract 3.9, p.168), is that there is some sensitivity or delicacy attached to categorizing another as 'older' that the laughter is produced to manage. This use of laughter then also *constructs* such categorizations and the associated CBAs as sensitive. This in turn signals the general negativity of older-age orientated to by participants in this setting, and already seen in the salon-workers' more explicit articulations.

In summary therefore, my data show that a sequential environment of laughter is associated with both certain kinds of attributes associated with 'older-age' categorizations and, partly relatedly, with those categorizations that implicate present parties. This serves at least two functions. Firstly, laughter enables the speaker to manage the interactional delicacy of making such categorizations of self or other-present by marking them as not wholly serious, which in turn is a way of treating them lightly. Secondly, laughter offers the potential to orientate implicitly to positive 'older' identities through subverting the more negative stereotypical associations of 'older' age.

A further discursive resource upon which participants draw to mitigate the effect of their 'older-age' categorizations is small stories.

3.5 Using small stories to discursively defer and resist 'older-age' categorizations

In this section I show how participants further manage to render inexplicit the 'older-age' categorizations made and the CBAs associated with those categorizations. A key resource they use in this work, beyond those already discussed, are small stories. We have already seen the use of small stories by participants contrasting themselves with their younger selves, as in Extract 3.10 (p.170). A total of nine small stories used for doing 'older-age' categorizations in the contrasting way are found in my data. In this section I discuss two further locations in which small stories occur in 'older-age' categorizations.

In Section 3.5.1, I focus on a collection of small stories which, like those found in the doing of contrasts, are all used as part of *producing* an 'older-age' categorization. In Section 3.5.2, I discuss another location in which participants use small stories, namely when an actual or inferred categorization of themselves by others as 'older' has been made.

3.5.1 Constructing identities of 'not yet old'

In Extract 3.6, p.162, Joellen says of her Mother "because she's so old"; in Extract 3.17, p.184, Violet says, "you get worse as you get older". Joellen's and Violet's statements are not equivalent 'older-age' categorizations. Whereas Joellen's statement categorizes her Mother as already 'old', an arrived-at state, Violet's formulation signals a process of still becoming old, of movement towards the state of being old, with arrival at some unspecified time in the future. In my data I identified twelve such formulations. Nine of these are similar to 'projections' (Georgakopoulou 2007) in indexing a future state, but as I show, the character is positioned as doing the travelling towards that state *now*, in the present. Sometimes these stories are standalone; at other times they are part of a longer story-telling sequence, as in the example I discuss below (see Extract 3.25).

The storied form affords the teller complex distancing work between the telling self (NPT Level 2) and the characters in the telling (Level 1). Unlike nine of these twelve small stories in which the referent is 'generic you', Mrs France's story in Extract 3.25 is constructed as a personal one with the repeated 'I': the focal utterance is: "as I get older I'll have to get a nail file" (ll.2-3 in Extract 3.25 below). Nevertheless, constructing this as a story, and indeed, as something that is nearly a 'projection', affords her temporal distance between herself-now, interactionally (Level 2), and her self as a character in the story (Level 1).

Before considering Mrs France's near-projection in Extract 3.25, I first discuss the way she had made age relevant in the preceding turns. A few seconds earlier, responding to Joellen's complaint that she no longer has time to have a pedicure, Mrs France had exclaimed:

Extract 3-24 Mrs France (Appt4)

00:26:52
1. Mrs France oh (.)
2. when you get to my age
3. £you've got a hard job to reach `em£(.)
4. ha ha ha
00:26:55

Her 'you' in l.2 is a 'generic you', and her exclamation is designed as the expression of a general truth about the constraints of flexibility with age, as marked by the use of the present tense in l.3, specifically, Mrs France's current age. Although Joellen does not know Mrs France's exact age, she would be able to make a fair guess at it given Mrs France's longevity as a client (see Section 2.2.3), her knowledge of the family and so on. In this utterance Mrs France has made age relevant; furthermore, though, because of both parties' more-or-less exact knowledge of her chronological age, indirectly specified in l.2, and the association Mrs France makes with physical limitations (see Section 3.3.1), she has made *older* age relevant, even if she has not self-categorized as *old*. Less than a minute later she launches the 'small story' referred to above:

Extract 3-25 Mrs France (Appt4)

27:28
1. Mrs France >£I'll have to get af£< er
2. as I get older I'll have to get a nail
3. [f i l e [longer and
4. Joellen [yeh [you'll have to get
5. Mrs France lon [ger on a £↑stick£
6. Joellen [no you'll have to
7. get one of tho:se (.)
8. um (.) ts

9. metal files that they use for um (.)
 10. metal .he he
 11. meta[l files
 12. Mrs France [↑fəh I've got a horse shoef
 00:27:39

Mrs France starts her utterance with a projection, “I’ll have to get a”, before producing a small hesitation at the end of l.1 and repairing to her near-projection, “as I get older I’ll have to get a”. This makes the category ‘older’ immediately relevant, which her pre-repaired projection in l.1 had not. However, as I have shown, she had already made the category ‘older’ relevant a few seconds earlier, and thus in this sequential context her initial “I’ll have to get” risked being heard by Joellen *not* as a distant-future projection, but as having more immediate implications. That in turn would close the gap between Mrs France-the-character (Level 1) needing an aid for her nail-filing, and Mrs France-in-the-interaction (Level 2). Essentially, it risked positioning Mrs France as old *now* in terms of the inferential links between CBAs and categories discussed in Section 1.5.2. By repairing to a deferred projection Mrs France positions her *Level 1* self as *not* yet having reached being old, but as merely being on the way towards it. But Mrs France at Level 2 is not even (quite) at the temporal position of her Level 1 self: she is not yet using the long-handled toe-nail file that her Level 1 self will have to use. So she is even further behind on the journey towards being old. With her plot-line contributions in ll.4 and 6-11, Joellen affiliates with this stance by marking the separation between Mrs France now and Mrs France in her story. Firstly, her contributions echo the future temporal positioning of Mrs France’s story. Secondly, and as importantly, their exaggerated nature treats as non-serious the possibility of Mrs France reaching such a state of extreme decrepitude.

Nine of these twelve small stories use the progressive ‘getting/heading + old/older/CHRA’. As with Mrs France’s small story above, these stories work to

lexically defer older age by placing it as a stage in the future towards which they are still travelling. As such, the referent is positioned as 'not yet old'.

Three of the stories work slightly differently. These, all uttered by Clare, use the structure 'when you get to + certain age/CHRA'. As such, they position the referent as being at the *start* of the journey to being old rather than as already *on* that journey. They thus serve to position the referent as closer to 'no longer young' than as 'not yet old'. (See example, Appendix H.VIII).

In each instance, the 'older-age' categorization that is produced through a small story occurs in a sequential context in which 'older-age' has inferably been made relevant in some way, whether verbally, such as complaining of being tired (for example Extract 3.13, p.175) or talking of injuries (Appendix H.VIII); or non-verbally, such as groaning. More precisely, in making her small-storied 'older-age' categorization, the speaker demonstrates that *she* has inferred the 'older-age' relevance of the prior utterance, action or event.

As I commented above, the Level 1 character of nine of these twelve 'stories' is a 'generic you'; that is, these are told as 'generic stories' (see Baynham (2011) and Section 2.5.3). This achieves two key outcomes. Firstly, 'you' *formally* refers to those present (see Appendix E1). This helps involve the recipients, positioning them, too, as characters rather than just recipients and appealing to their general life experience. Secondly, this 'generic you' positions the tellers' small stories as *universal* stories of what ageing is like; and what it is like in each case is mild decline or negativity. The small stories to which I turn next are quite different.

3.5.2 Storying resistance to 'older-age' and its attributes

Close analysis of sequences in which 'older-age' categorizations are made shows that participants make inferences about possible associations being made by others with respect to 'older-age' categorizations; and that they sometimes use small stories to resist the implications of those associations. There are seven such stories of resistance in the 37 episodes in which 'older-age' categorizations are made. Unlike the stories discussed above, all of these seven use the first person, marking them as *personal* stories which particularise the tellers' experiences of ageing.

In five of these cases a CBA stereotypically associated with older age *and* an 'older-age' categorization precedes the small story, and there is no further reference to age in the ensuing story of resistance. These were told by Mrs Farming, Mrs Pace, Violet, Mrs France and Joellen. In two of the cases only a CBA stereotypically associated with older age precedes the small story. In both these cases, 'older age' is made relevant as part of the story of resistance. These were told by Mrs Little and Clare. All of these stories undermine the 'older-age' categorization without necessarily denying it, by associating the CBA with another category *in their case*. I start with the story told by Mrs Little, the close of which we have already seen as Extract 3.10 (p.170).

Prior to this, Joellen had asked whether the current Zumba class is harder than it used to be. Mrs Little had disclaimed this, and having talked about a woman in front of her, then said, as in l.1 below, that she was trying to put in more effort.

Extract 3-26 Mrs Little (Appt2)

00:07:42

1. Mrs Little I was trying to put a bit more (.) [effort
2. Joellen [effort
3. into it [so you actually put in (.)
4. Mrs Little [yeh
5. Joellen probably too much
6. Mrs Little yeh (.) exact[ly

7. Joellen [yea[h
8. Mrs Little [it was as
9. it was as simple as that
10. we'd just done the warm up (.)
11. .h and I thought ↑good (.)
12. she's getting a bit more going than I was
13. so I'll (..)
14. perhaps that's what I should be doing
15. and (...)
16. and that was it really
17. and goodness
18. and and she wasn't (.) much younger than
19. I wa[s
20. Joellen [no[::
21. Mrs Little [I wasn't sort of
22. Joellen no he he
23. Mrs Little I wasn't he he be(h)ing
24. being completely stupid
25. and thinking right oh you know (.)
26. I'm twenty again .h
00:08:05

Mrs Little's initial story-line in l.1 positions her as not shirking, but Joellen's observation in ll.2-3 proposes an alternative story-line whereby Mrs Little, the character at Level 1, did not know where to stop. This does not obviously invoke age; nevertheless, as I showed in Section 3.3.1, physical limitations are one of the aspects that participants seem most readily to associate with ageing. That Mrs Little understands Joellen's observation as making an age-related comment – putting in too much effort *for your age* – can be seen in Mrs Little's subsequent turns.

Interactionally, at Level 2, she down-plays what occurred, for example, with her evaluative comment in l.8-9, 'it was as simple as that', and presents the injury as more-or-less coming out of the blue (l.16). Her Level 1 self, in the Zumba class of the story, is positioned as energetic, as in her first story-line of l.1, and as a little competitive, as signalled in her constructed thought (Tannen 1983, 1986) about the woman in front of her (l.12). Immediately after implicitly referring to the occurrence of her injury (l.16), Mrs Little makes a first age-categorization (l.18), comparing her Level 1 self with the other woman whose energetic movements she had been imitating. The

woman is categorized as 'not much younger than I was'. This of course categorizes Mrs Little – in both the story and interactionally – as 'older' than the woman; but not so much older, as signalled by the stress on 'younger', as to make putting in this woman's intensity of effort inadvisable. With her 'no' in I.20 Joellen both ratifies (agrees with) Mrs Little's stance and also, through its drawn-out production, and repetition in I.22 marks it as affiliative (Jefferson 2002: 1375).

In invoking the woman's age-category and in comparing it to her own Mrs Little displays awareness of wider circulating associations between 'older age' and greater likelihood of injury with intense physical activity. This also shows that she has interpreted Joellen's observation of II.3-5 as an age-related comment. But she introduces and accepts this stereotypical association only to discount it as a reason in *her* case. Her argument is based on comparison and contrast with two characters: a (just) younger other and a (much) younger self. If the woman in front of her was able to be intensely energetic, so, contends Mrs Little, should she have been, given her more-or-less coequality with the intensely energetic woman; and as argued in the discussion of Extract 3.10, she was not being ('stupidly') energetic, i.e., in the manner of her twenty-year-old self. In short, Mrs Little accepts the general link between such injuries and ageing. What she does, though, is to imply that she was not, on this occasion, putting in too much effort *for her age*. That is, in *her* case a different, though unspecified, categorial linkage was at work than that of 'older person'.

What this example also highlights is the way in which, as discussed in Section 1.5.2, categories may be inferred from prior mentions of stereotypically associated attributes. The small story format allows Mrs Little to implicitly acknowledge her own ageing with a 'no longer young' positioning, whilst denying that that status was the cause of her injury. The story format also allows Mrs Little to counter an implicit 'older-

age' categorization equally implicitly, through the actions and constructed thoughts of her characters (herself and others at NPT Level 1) and interactional observations on those actions (at Level 2). In so doing she displays an orientation to wider stereotypical Discourses of (or stereotypes about) ageing (level 3).

The second small story of resistance I discuss is told by Mrs Farming and occurs following an 'older-age' categorization made of her by Joellen (l.7 of Extract 3.27 below). Her story does not explicitly contest either that categorization or the stereotypical association of the attribute with the category. Rather, it associates the attribute to a different cause *in her case*. This is a long extract, but it is useful in showing the work participants sometimes put in to reworking 'older-age' categorizations, their attributes, or both.

Extract 3-27 Mrs Farming (Appt2)

00:44:48

1. Mrs Farming but it's my (.)
2. lack of energy that is appalli[ng
3. Joellen [mm
4. Mrs Farming really
5. (2)
6. Joellen well Adele (.)
7. at <90 years of age> (.)
8. .h ↑you (.)you're entitled to [have >a
9. Mrs Farming [I kno::w
10. Joellen little bit< of [en- of (lack) of [energy
11. Mrs Farming [I kno::w [but you
12. Joellen .h he [he he
13. Mrs Farming [you do (.) you you
14. I get annoyed with mysel[f
15. Joellen I know
16. Mrs Farming I get so (.)
17. irritated (..)
18. .h like last week
19. we did all the net curtains
20. and that in the bedroom (.) [the girl did
21. Joellen [mm
22. Mrs Farming them (.) for me (.) which:
23. she's made a good job of [it (.)
24. [((Joellen
starts spraying Mrs Farming's hair))
25. and: she said I won't be here to (.)
26. pull that wire across to put the net back

27. can you manage (.)
28. oh yes I said that's easy
29. I'll get the stool and I'll stand on it
30. Joellen ↑oh my go(h)od[ne(h)ss he he he he he]
31. Mrs Farming [(go-) no the stool] is fine
32. Joellen oh [that's all right
33. Mrs Farming [it's th- it's the steps I can't do
34. (.)
35. Mrs Farming [you know the three ste[ps
36. Joellen [right [yeh
37. Mrs Farming [and she said are you sure
38. because I'd rather
39. [(Joellen finishes spraying, places the
canister on the trolley)
40. you [leave them and I'll come round
41. and do them
42. [(Joellen pulls out the mirror to show
Mrs Farming the back of her head)
43. Joellen mm
44. Mrs Farming that's lovely Joellen I don't know how you
45. ma(h)na(h)ge it he he [he ha ha ha ha
46. Joellen [he he he
47. Joellen .h
48. Mrs Farming and:: I said [↑oh: no: I can do that (.)
49. [(Joellen replaces the
mirror under the trolley)
50. Mrs Farming could I (.)
51. [no I couldn't=
52. Joellen [no
53. Joellen =ts=
54. Mrs Farming =I hadn't got enough energy[y to pull that
55. Joellen [no (.) to pull
56. i t]
57. Mrs Farming wire] along
58. Joellen no they they are (.)
59. Mrs Farming yes [they're strong aren't they] yes
60. Joellen [tough as well aren't they]
61. Mrs Farming an' I thought (.)
62. °oh gawd (.)
63. can't even put the net up no[w°
64. Joellen [he
65. he
66. Mrs Farming so it went up (.)
67. one side (.) was [up
68. Joellen [bu(h)t
69. no(t) the oth(h)er ha [ha ha
70. Mrs Farming [but not the other
71. yeh (.)
72. so it hung from the [middle bit you know=
73. Joellen [>°°there you go°°<
74. Joellen =yeah
75. Mrs Farming he he he
00:46:00

The longer interactional history of this exchange, which occurs at the end of one of Mrs Farming's appointments, is pertinent in considering what ensues. Briefly, these earlier exchanges in this appointment were marked by Mrs Farming talking about being tired, lacking energy and hinting at medical problems on the one hand; and Joellen displaying resistance to positioning herself as troubles-recipient (Jefferson 1988: 422) about that *medical* trouble, at least, on the other.²⁷

As we know from the discussion in Section 3.3.1 of physical limitations being attributes of 'older age', Mrs Farming's attribution to herself of a lack of energy (ll.1-2) is inferable as making an older-age category relevant. With "at 90 years of age" (l.7) Joellen chooses to make this link. However, Joellen's response also displays her as resisting being positioned as 'troubles-recipient'. She achieves this through the use of Mrs Farming's name in l.6 that particularizes her response to her recipient. Further, her turn-initial 'well' displays her privileging of *her own* understanding of the cause of Mrs Farming's lack of energy over Mrs Farming's (Heritage 2015), and this understanding is given in the explicit mention of Mrs Farming's advanced CHRA. This troubles-recipient resistance is particularly evident in the advice-shape of her utterance, which, as Jefferson and Lee (1992) show, results in a misalignment of categories, positioning participants as *advice-recipient/advice-giver* instead of *troubles-teller/troubles-recipient* respectively. These features suggest she is positioning herself as presenting a clinching argument whereby she can close off talk of Mrs Farming's 'appalling lack of energy' (l.2) by normalising it – it is only to be expected at her age. Prior research has shown that disclosures of CHRA are frequently used to legitimize ill-health (e.g., J. Coupland et al. 1991b: 92; N. Coupland et al. 1991c; J. Coupland et al. 1992: 224;

²⁷ See Extract 5.14, p.347, which occurs at the start of this appointment.

Jolanki 2004: 71). However, Mrs Farming's agreement with Joellen's association of less energy with advanced years is muted: her 'I know' comes in overlap in I.9, before she knows what Joellen is about to say she is 'entitled' to on the basis of age; and her subsequent contributions, with 'but' in I.11, show signs of disagreement. It is thus quite plausible to suggest, particularly given the longer interactional context, that Mrs Farming is here resisting Joellen's association of 'lack of energy' with 'being 90' as opposed to 'being ill' in some way.

What is certain, is that having reiterated her self-condemnation about lacking energy (II.14, 17) which supports her statement of I.2 and positions her interactionally (at Level 2) as resistant, she then plunges into a quite lengthy small story. This is introduced with 'like' (I.18), presaging an example. In this story, peopled at Level 1 initially by Mrs Farming and 'the girl', and then just by Mrs Farming, she is positioned as engaging in ordinary but relatively strenuous household tasks alongside her helper ('the girl'). The girl is positioned as the main worker, with Mrs Farming as overseeing (as indicated in Mrs Farming's repair from 'we' in I.19 to 'the girl did them' in II.20, 23). The girl is also positioned as solicitous, checking that Mrs Farming will be able to re-hang the curtains by herself (II.25-7, 37-41). This further enhances Mrs Farming's resistant positioning: instead of just letting this solicitous younger women do the work, she positions herself as character in the story as confident of her own abilities (I.28-29, 48) in terms of both strength and agility or balance (I.31). It also positions her as not considering her advanced years as a problem. The 'complication' (see Section 1.6.1) arises when Mrs Farming experiences a change of state from this confidence to a realisation that she has not, after all, got the strength (II.50-57). Her character's self-disgust is given in constructed thought (II.61-63), paralleling the disgust with her energy levels ('appalling', I.2) that she expressed interactionally at the start of the story (level 2). The story then closes with a comic picture of the lop-sided curtain-

hanging that Mrs Farming eventually achieved, with the punch-line provided with appreciative laughter by Joellen (II.68-9).

Indeed, once Mrs Farming has started her story, Joellen positions herself as a receptive audience – in fact, active co-constructor of the story: she displays laughing/mock horror (I.30) that displays her as solicitous for Mrs Farming's well-being; she demonstrates attentive listening, that is, alignment to Mrs Farming's project of story-telling (Stivers 2008); and, in demonstrating understanding of the point of Mrs Farming's story (I.52, 55-6, 60, 68-9), displays affiliation with the stance Mrs Farming herself is taking (*ibid*). Embedded in all this talk are the hair-styling tasks of the salon, a point to which I return in Section 5.4.4.

Effectively, Mrs Farming's Level 1 and Level 2 positioning combine to position her as special, vis-à-vis circulating Discourses at Level 3 of the weakness of older people, because in *her* case the weakness is not due to 'being 90' but to her unspecified illness. She achieves the discounting of 'being 90' as a cause of her lack of energy by displaying her *prior* expectations as having been 'business as usual' regarding what she could do, despite being 90. She also infuses her story with laughter and paints a comic picture at the end, constructing an amusing story that is received as such by Joellen. This further positions Mrs Farming interactionally, at Level 2, as 'making light' of her afflictions, which in turn counters a wider stereotype of grumpy older people.

Overall, these stories that resist an actual or inferred 'older-age' categorization are told as personal stories, which *individualise* the teller's experience of ageing. Tellers use their stories to undermine the connection – in *their* case – between a particular CBA and ageing, without explicitly either accepting or denying the inferred or actual 'older-age' categorization. This inexplicitness allows tellers plausibly to deny either

that they inferred such 'older-age' categorizations being made about them by the *other*, or that they are making such categorizations themselves.

∞ ∞ ∞ ∞

In the 37 episodes in which the 78 'older-age' categorizations are done, 21 of those categorizations are produced as small stories. I have previously noted that nine of the 'older-age' categorizations that were designed as contrasts between the speaker and her younger self or other are designed as small stories (Section 3.2.4). In this section I showed that small stories are also used in 'older-age' categorizations that position the referent as on the way – or at the start of the journey – to 'older age'. Twelve such small stories occur in my data. Most of these stories use the 'generic you', which, *inter alia*, universalises the experiences of ageing. I have also shown how participants use stories to resist an actual or inferred 'older-age' categorization. All of these, of which there are seven in my data, are first-person stories that particularise their experience of ageing.

3.6 Discussion and conclusions

In this chapter I have shown in detail how my participants design categorizations of self and other as 'older'. In doing this, I have drawn primarily on detailed analyses of their appointment recordings, using interview talk and field notes to supplement and compare with that 'naturally-occurring' talk. This chapter has generated two overarching findings. Firstly, it has shown that participants orientate overwhelmingly to 'older-age' as a negative state. They do this partly through the attributes they associate with 'older-age'. They also, as shown by detailed analysis of the 'older-age' categorizations, achieve this through the discursive work they put in to distance themselves from 'older-age' categorizations that implicate themselves or present

parties. The second finding relates to the way participants' 'older-age' categorization practices combine to produce finely-tuned 'older-age' identities. Together, these findings contribute to prior research on categorizations, and in particular, to the under-researched area of *older* people's categorization practices. I now discuss these findings in turn.

Participants most obviously construct 'older-age' as negative through the CBAs they associate with that category. As I showed in Section 3.3, such CBAs are primarily decline attributes – physical ailments, stiffness, aches and pains; cognitive decline; and unwelcome changes to appearance. In line with prior discursively-orientated studies of the use of 'older-age' categories and the construction of 'older' identities, participants at times used these associated CBAs to engage in what Coupland and colleagues describe as self-handicapping and self-stereotyping (J. Coupland et al. 1991b; N. Coupland et al. 1991c); or relatedly used age to justify certain limitations (Paoletti 1998b).

Participants also construct 'older-age' as negative through the work they put in to distance themselves or present parties from the 'older-age' categorization. They achieve this distancing in two main ways. Firstly, as I showed in Section 3.2, and particularly Section 3.2.5, they tend to use less explicit formulations in designing 'older-age' categorizations of self or present-others than they do for categorizing absent-others. The kinds of discursive means they use encompassed, for example, use of 'generic you'; formulations such as 'at my age/a certain age'; or through making contrasts with a younger self or other. As I argued, given that more explicit means of doing 'older-age' categorizations exist – and, indeed, tend to be used for 'older-age' categorizations of absent-others – we have to see the use of *less* explicit means as a participant choice. I argued that these less explicit means were being used by

participants as a distancing resource. As I showed in Section 3.4, participants also make their 'older-age' categorizations less explicit through their use of laughter.

In line with the wider literature on categorizations more generally, I have shown how my participants produce their 'older-age' categorizations in a highly nuanced manner, with categories sometimes left vague and attributes often only very implicitly associated with those categories (e.g., Edwards 1998; Hester 1998; Schegloff 2007c; Stokoe and Edwards 2007; Widdicombe 1998a; Zimmerman 1998). I have also shown, though, how that inexplicitness is achieved, an area not previously considered with respect to 'older-age' categorizations in naturally-occurring interactions in English. As I observed in Section 3.2.3, participants' self-categorizations as 'older' were overwhelmingly accepted without modification by recipients. This contrasts with Georgakopoulou's (2010b) finding that identity claims in the conversations of the teenage girls she studied were routinely negotiated and modified. The inexplicitness of the 'older-age' categorizations may be a factor here; however, the lack of such contest by recipients also displays them as implicitly orientating to the older (if not old) status of the producer of the self-categorization.

The second discursive resource used by participants to distance themselves from the 'older-age' categorization involves using small stories. One use to which small stories were put in my data was, as I commented in Section 3.5, as part of the design of the 'older-age' categorization themselves. Out of the 78 'older-age' categorizations a total of 21 of them use small stories in their design. These, as Table 3.7 below shows, did the work of positioning the referent at different points on the journey towards oldness, thereby, on the whole, distancing them from being old *now*.

TABLE 3-7 Small stories as a resource to distance participants from being old now

| Format | Number of stories (N=21) | Older-age identity achieved |
|--|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Compare self to other who has self-categorised as 'old' | 1 | <i>Older old</i> |
| Comparing self to younger self or other | 8 | No longer young |
| '(as) + you/I + get/getting + old/older' 'heading towards' + CHRA | 9 | Not yet old |
| 'when you get + CHRA/certain age' | 3 | No longer young |

As I commented in Section 3.5.1, the small stories with a *get/getting+old/older* design arose in a sequential context in which an attribute stereotypically associated with older age had been mentioned or made relevant; in producing her future-orientated small story the speaker displayed her understanding of the older-age relevance of that prior mention. The comparison/contrast stories that position the speaker as 'no longer young' are similarly locally occasioned.

To some extent, the use of 'get/getting + old/older' is not dissimilar to what Nikander (2009) called a 'provisional continuity device' (PCD). This presents the self as open to (and perhaps accepting as inevitable) the potential – or inevitability – of change in the *future*, but as being unchanged in the present day. Yet Nikander's participants, all in their fifties, orientated to change as an inevitable *future* state. Those of my participants who use small stories to do what I have called lexically deferring 'older-age', on the other hand, tended to orientate to their ageing as an *already-experienced* process of change. It was the end-state – being *old* – that still lay in the future. This

points to the way the temporal, spatial and moral separation between the world of the story and that of the interactional encounter in which those events are recounted offers speakers powerful discursive resources in their identity work. This is particularly the case when they are engaging in what might be seen as a delicate activity, namely, 'older-age' categorizations of present parties, and enables them to introduce distance between their narrating and narrated selves.

The other main use to which small stories were put in my data was in the service of resisting an actual or inferred 'older-age' categorization. There were seven such stories in my data, told by all participants except Lesley, Mrs Farthing, Mrs Sargent and Mrs Crayne. All these stories position the teller as special kinds of older people, in that despite accepting the stereotypical associations between a particular CBA and 'older age', they associate the CBA with a different cause in *their* case.

Of particular note is the fact that the small stories told as part of doing 'older-age' categorizations are frequently designed as general through use of the 'generic you'. Those that resist an actual or inferred 'older-age' categorization, though, are always designed as personal. This highlights the complex work to which different story-types are put, in acknowledging, on the one hand, participants' sharing of the universality of experience, whilst, on the other, underlining their own individuality.

The distancing from and reworking of the CBAs stereotypically associated with older age indicates, as many authors have argued, that what older women seek to deny is not necessarily their older age *per se*, but the negative stereotypes associated with older age (see, for example, Andrews 1999; Arber and Ginn 1991; Furman 1997; Jones 2006). Stokoe argues that 'categories are central to issues of social control' (2006: 488). The use of categories robs people of their self-definition, either *imposing* unwelcome CBAs or, potentially worse because harder to combat, *implying* them.

This then explains participants' (quantitative) preference for self-categorization as 'older'. Essentially, self-categorizations as older not only 'transfer age from the implicit to the explicit agenda, thereby defusing the threat imposed by uncertainty' (N. Coupland et al. 1991c: 72); they also enable the speaker to take (some/more) agency over the 'older' identity that might be assigned to her, enabling participants to subtly resist the social control referred to by Stokoe. They can select the kind of attribute to be associated with *their* ageing, subverting popular stereotypes and mitigating their force through laughter. Thus despite associating 'older-age' with decline in line with popular stereotypes, and quite possibly their lived experiences, as Degnen (2012) noted with her own participants, my participants construct that decline as mostly light; they laugh in the face of age and so avoid the stereotype of the grumpy older person.

I turn now briefly to the second main finding of this Chapter, namely the way participants' 'older-age' categorization practices combine to produce different age identities, with participants' 'older-age' categorization practices broadly mapping to their chronological age, as set out in Table 3.8 below. Rozario and Derienzis (2009), in an interview-based study of the construction of older identities, invited participants to respond to a question relating to their age identity. Respondents came up with three categories of age – definitely old, definitely not old and ambivalent. Where that research involved self-categorization by participants, my findings by contrast show how in producing their 'older-age' self-categorizations participants co-construct different age categories.

TABLE 3-8 Associations of 'older-age' self-categorization practices and kinds of 'older-age' category²⁸

| Typical self-categorization practices | Fine-tuned 'older-age' category: | Applies to (clients only): |
|---|----------------------------------|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compare self to other, previously self-categorized as 'old' Only do self-categorizations as 'older' Least inexplicit formulations (never inexplicit as to referent) No use of 'generic you' Associate own 'older age' with particular kinds of physical limitation (e.g., lacking energy, being tired, stiff) | 'Older' older person | Mrs Farming (90) Mrs Pace (89) Lesley (83) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> High use of 'generic you' Use of '(as) get/getting + old/older' or 'heading toward' + CHRA small stories' | 'Not yet old' older person | Mrs Farthing (79 – 81) (also only does self-categorizations) Violet (75) (also associates older age with lack of energy) Mrs France (68) (also associates older age with stiffness) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comparing self with younger self/other to do 'older-age' categorizations (including storied forms) Associate 'older age' with greater likelihood of physical limitations resulting from activity (e.g. sport injuries) | 'No longer young' older person | Mrs Sargent (67) Mrs Little (55) |

These differences are visible in the storied forms specifically and in the design of 'older-age' categorizations more generally. With respect to the former, there are some differences in the way participants design their storied 'older-age' categorizations, with indications in my data that these differences are loosely related to participants' chronological age. That is, based on these data they appear to an extent to story themselves differently depending on where they are in the ageing process. Thus in terms of the client-participants it was only the three in the middle age band of the group – Mrs Farthing, Violet and Mrs France – who used the get/getting/heading + age/CHRA formulation. This, I argued, positioned the referent as 'not yet old'. It is

²⁸ Mrs Crayne does not appear in this table because she only produced categorizations of non-present others (see Extract 3.16, p.182).

thus particularly interesting that none of the three oldest client-participants used such stories in their 'older-age' categorizations. However, it is also the case that none of my youngest client-participants used such formulations.

There are also more general differences in the design of 'older-age' categorizations as set out in Table 3.8 above. There are of course also both overlaps and exceptions in these uses. For example, Mrs Little, aged 55, only does *self*-categorizations but also only uses contrasting to achieve her 'older-age' categorizations and associates 'older age' with sport-related injuries. Nevertheless, certain practices of doing 'older-age' categorizations seem, in my data, to be more likely to be associated with certain chronologically-similar groups of participants than others. This highlights, to echo Coupland et al's (1991c) finding about the use of 'painful self-disclosure', that these are among the ways which, *together and cumulatively*, might conspire to the discursive production of stages of 'elderliness'.

Coupland (2004: 84) contends that 'older-age' categorizations are a feature of 'older' people's talk. There is little quantitative data with which to compare my findings. Charalambidou (2011) reported 90 'older-age' categorizations (excluding chronological age) in the 18 hours of her audio-recordings; Paoletti, on the other hand, reported that 'older-age' category labels and expressions like 'old', etc, were 'seldom used' (1998b: 15). I suggest that whilst 'older-age' categorizations did not pervade all conversations in the salon, 'older-age' as a category is still salient. This salience is evidenced in the way, for example, participants sometimes tell small stories to resist the actual or inferred 'older-age' categorization by another; or in the way 'older-age' is drawn on as a resource for sympathy (as by Mrs Farming, Extract 3.4, p.158). It is certainly the case, as I discussed in Section 2.3, that certain aspects of Joellen's – the hood-dryers along the walls, the salon's reputation as a salon *for* older people,

the sight of other older-looking clients and the mirrors that reflect clients' own ageing visage – help to make 'older-age' potentially more visible in this setting. The inter-generational nature of many of the interactions further intensifies the relevance of 'older-age' categories and related claims (N. Coupland et al. 1991c). Therefore in Joellen's Hair Palace the category 'older' becomes a constant background resource upon which people can draw and/or may be inferred to be drawing on in their interpretations of each other's discursive and other actions. This local setting then meshes with a wider social environment in which age is made salient in all sorts of media (Bytheway 1995). Indeed, N.Coupland suggests 'that age-identity is often nearer to the surface of talk and text than other dimensions of social identification' (2014 (2001): 202). Essentially, I suggest that in this setting the MCD category 'older' age becomes potentially an 'omni relevant category' (Sacks 1995: Vol1, p.590ff). It is also – as indicated by the delicacy with which participants manage 'older-age' categorizations that might implicate present parties – something of a *taboo* 'omni relevant category'.

One feature that brings age-identity to the surface is the way the *appearance* of 'older age' makes it a 'transportable' identity (cf Zimmerman (1998) and Section 1.3.1). Managing this is a delicate matter for older women, as I discuss in the next chapter.

Chapter 4 Managing stances towards appearance in salon-talk and story-telling

4.1 Introduction

In Chapter Three I focussed on the way in which participants orientated to different age identities through making more or less explicit 'older-age' categorizations. In this chapter I turn to the ways they manage their 'on-sight' identities (Paoletti 1998a) – their appearance – and position themselves as more or less invested in managing this. As I observed in Section 3.3.2, participants made very few explicit connections between ageing and their appearance. This does not mean such connections are absent; but participants' orientations to 'older-age' identities through their appearance talk and practices is considerably less explicit than the way they achieve such orientations through the categorization practices discussed in the previous chapter.

As I discussed in the Preface, their ageing body may be particularly problematic for women. Women's appearance is theorised as being central to their 'social currency and the successful doing of femininity' (Hurd Clarke 2011: 31); it is seen as the locus of their *female* identity (J. Coupland 2003; Hurd 2000). For many women, therefore, the appearance-related changes they experience as they grow older are one of the most distressing aspects of ageing. This was strikingly expressed in interview by Mrs Sargent. I had just explained to her that the interview would centre on: "themes to do with appearance um and thinking of going to Joellen's but also (.) getting older ((Mrs Sargent laughs)) thinking about that". Barely had I finished speaking, when Mrs Sargent cut in as follows:

Mrs Sargent: oh right (.) I think it's awful

Rachel: getting older

Mrs Sargent: yeah ((*laughs*))

Rachel: go on

Mrs Sargent: oh yeh I think it's dreadful (Rachel: why?) well (.) I think it's the appearance (Rachel: right) you know I think everything else is all right (.) except the odd twinges of course (Rachel: yes) but I mean we don't let anything hold us back and we have you know good good times it's just you look in the mirror and you think ooh gawd ((*laughs*))

Rachel: ((*laughs*))

(Simplified transcript)

Mrs Sargent's response, in which she names appearance as the 'awful' and 'dreadful' thing about getting older, resonates with some prior research that highlights older women's increasing dissatisfaction with aspects of how they look as they age (e.g., Furman 1997; Hurd Clarke et al. 2008; Montemurro and Gillen 2012). Nevertheless, despite older women's claimed dissatisfaction with their appearance, there is little appearance-related talk in Joellen's Hair Palace. In fact, out of 20 hours of appointment recordings of talk between clients and salon workers, 'appearance talk' accounts for 1¼ hours. Here, 'appearance talk' was taken broadly to encompass: talk related to the client's or another's hair, current or next treatment, or other aspect of her appearance. In addition, in terms of relating appearance with *ageing*, as I noted in my discussion in Section 3.3, participants made just 12 such associations across five episodes. Furthermore, the only client to make associations in salon-talk between ageing and *unwelcome changes* to her appearance was Mrs France. Mrs Sargent, despite her expression of dismay in *interview*, made no such connections in *salon-talk*. Indeed, appearance-related talk constituted the smallest proportion (1%) of her salon-talk of all participants.

The relative paucity of appearance talk in this site of appearance work surprised me. My own prior experiences in hair-salons had left me with an impression that salon-talk often involved long discussions about style, hair quality, and products to improve this. This, combined with prior reading of the literature that had suggested older women's appearance was so problematic, had led me to expect long sequences in which appearance in general, and age-related appearance in particular, would be the focal topics of discussion. But the relative lack of *talk* about appearance in Joellen's Hair Palace is balanced by participants' focus on appearance through their *practices* of self-presentation. In this chapter I consider the ways in which participants position themselves as both invested and relatively uninvested in their appearance, and the way older age is made relevant in these positioning moves. I do this by examining participants' *talk about appearance* in the hair-salon and in interviews; their appearance practices; and their *talk-during-appearance work* in the hair-salon. I show how my participants display a subtle and highly-nuanced discursive and embodied orientation to the importance of managing their on-sight identities, and how this management simultaneously positions them as older women.

In doing this, I address my second research question, namely:

- How in their talk and practices do participants orientate to the importance or unimportance of managing their 'on-sight' identities (their appearance) in the hair-salon? How, if at all, are older identities made relevant for themselves and others in this appearance work?

In the analysis for this chapter I draw on MCA in the analysis of participants' appearance practices; and use Narrative Positioning Theory (NPT) for the analysis of participants' stories. I also draw on the notion of narrative stance-taking ((Georgakopoulou 2013b, (in press (2016)) and see Section 2.5.3) in much of the

discussion of discursive orientations to the (un)importance of appearance. Throughout the chapter I draw extensively on my ethnographic observations of participants' routines and practices in the salon, drawing on these data to point to patterns, and to highlight contrasts between participants.

In Section 4.2, I discuss the literature relating to older women's appearance, which largely shows that whilst important, it assumes a lower priority with age. In Section 4.3, I examine my participants' *appearance practices* and their *talk about* theirs and others' appearance practices before moving in Section 4.4 to examine participants' *in-salon hair-talk* related to their current treatment. Here I focus principally on two salon-stereotypical sequences, the consultation and the appreciation sequences. In Section 4.5, I then examine breaks in the salon patterns of these sequences. Section 4.6 considers the *interviews*, to show how participants constructed as problematic, moves by me that made relevant for them the attribute of being invested in their appearance. Finally, in Section 4.7, I draw together the threads of the discussion. I show, *firstly*, that participants displayed themselves variously as more or less interested and invested in their appearance in different settings and through different means – narrative, other talk and their appearance practices. I argue that analysis of participants' practices reveals that the 'importance' to participants of their appearance has to be understood as a shifting rather than static concept.

Secondly, the chapter shows that both older identities and *kinds* of older identity are made relevant for participants through the way they manage their appearance, with those ways of managing their appearance being CBAs of kinds of older women. *Thirdly*, the chapter shows the importance of narrative practices in managing participants' stances towards their appearance. Their story-telling is important in terms of both the positioning achieved through the telling itself and through the way

that taking up – or abdicating – a narrative stance at particular points constructs hair-business as either the subsidiary or the main activity underway.

4.2 The importance of appearance to older women: prior research

Hurd Clarke and Korotchenko (2011) observe that *empirical* research into body image and appearance, from its initial focus on young and middle-aged women, now increasingly encompasses both men and older women. One strand of this research, that is primarily qualitative in orientation, seeks to understand the *importance* of their appearance to older women. On the whole, this research tends to show that aspects of appearance, especially weight, continue to be important for older women (for example, Hurd 1999, 2000; Hurd Clarke et al. 2008; Montemurro and Gillen 2012). However, different priorities come into play, with function or other factors such as health assuming a greater importance (Jankowski et al. 2014; Liechty 2012; Tiggemann 2004). Different cultural (Kinnunen 2010), social class (Dumas et al. 2005; Tunaley et al. 1999) and ethnic locations (Reboussin et al. 2000; Wray 2007) are also noted as potentially shaping older women's expressed beliefs, as is the impact of both participants' earlier careers and changing social norms of bodily appearance (Dumas et al. 2005). Some of this research highlights the multifarious meanings of both appearance and appearance work. For example, Liechty (2012) shows how for most of her participants, their appearance remained *important* to them, but their *satisfaction* with their body image depended on the meanings appearance had for them.

In undertaking their various appearance practices older women face a range of tensions. The Discourse of Successful Ageing discussed in Section 1.4 locates ageing in the *look* of age (J. Coupland 2009b), and older people, particularly women, are urged by a range of media messages to *look younger*. Managing their appearance

appropriately is a task filled with pitfalls for older women. Furman shows that one dichotomy faced by older women, and one that is echoed in later research (Fairhurst 1998: 258; Hurd Clarke and Griffin 2007, 2008; Hurd Clarke et al. 2009; Jankowski et al. 2014; Symonds and Holland 2008; Ward and Holland 2011) is that of managing to 'grow old gracefully' as opposed to being either 'mutton dressed as lamb' – appearing *too young* – or 'letting themselves go' (Furman 1997: 116). This Discourse of Age Appropriateness 'dictates' suitable modes of self-presentation for people of different ages. The conundrum for older women is that, on the one hand, if they have the means at their disposal to look younger, then looking 'old' may result in disapprobation (Brooks 2010; J. Coupland 2009b). On the other hand, women who seem to devote undue time to their looks or try to look *unduly* young may be castigated as vain (Furman 1997; Hurd Clarke 2002).

Some of the research into the importance to older women of their appearance is quantitative; the qualitative research draws to a great extent on interviews. Little of that research draws on observations of women's *practices* (two main exceptions are Furman 1997; Ward et al. 2014). Furthermore, although some of this research seems to adopt a non-essentialist view of identity (e.g., Hurd Clarke et al. 2008; Hurd Clarke and Griffin 2008), none takes a micro-analytic look at the details of the socially-situated interactions in which talk about appearance occurs – whether interviews or sites of appearance activities –, and explores how their participants' orientations might be shaped by that particular on-going interaction. These points stand in contrast to my own study, as I show in this chapter, starting with an examination of participants' appearance practices and talk about these practices.

4.3 Appearance practices and CBAs of the category ‘older woman’

Widdicombe (1998a) reports how she identified potential participants in her study of sub-cultures based on their *appearance*. Although she also shows how these participants proceeded to employ a range of strategies to resist being so categorized, they had nevertheless displayed themselves in a manner that had led to that initial categorization. Hall (1997) shows how one of the semiotic resources used by Hijras is their style of dress; and Bucholtz (1999) shows how aspects of self-presentation, including dress, were among the identity practices employed by the ‘cool girls’ and ‘nerd girls’ in her study. In short, dress and other aspects of appearance are important categorization resources for both self and others, even though, as Bucholtz reminds us, not all individuals in a particular category will engage in such practices (*ibid* p.213).

In this section I examine participants’ appearance *practices* in the hair-salon,²⁹ focussing on their treatments, attire and talk about these practices. I show that certain practices and related talk can be seen as CBAs of categories of *older* women. Furthermore, I argue that the care most participants exhibit in their self-presentation is one way of displaying themselves as invested in their appearance.

4.3.1 Hair-styling choices and CBAs of kinds of older women

Through the style they adopted, participants were categorizable more or less clearly as *kinds* of older women. Here I focus on the shampoo-and-set. This is associated in

²⁹ See Section 1.2 for a discussion of the use of ‘practices’ in this thesis.

prior research with the category 'older woman' (Symonds and Holland 2008; Ward and Holland 2011), but also, such associations were made by participants.

My three oldest participants – Mrs Farming (90), Mrs Pace (89) and Lesley (83) – all had a shampoo-and-set. Mrs Farthing (79-81) and Violet (75) were both of the shampoo-and-set era (see Section 2.3.2) but did not have this style. With this in mind I asked each of them in interview whether they actually ever used to have a shampoo-and-set themselves. Both said they did; both then qualified their response as I illustrate with Violet's answer below.

Extract 4-2 Violet (Interview)

00:16:43
1. Violet .h I think that's why a lot of (.)
2. °older people° now do the same thing
3. don't they
4. Rachel like they have the same
5. Violet they have their shampoo-and-set (.)
6. um or they have it (.) a proper perm
7. don't they
8. Rachel they [do
9. Violet [they do don't they
10. Rachel do you think why why d'you think that
11. Violet because that's [what we all did then
12. Rachel [because (???)
13. Rachel so it's [just (.) keeping the custom [going
14. Violet [(???)
15. [it's what
16. what you do
17. Rachel right
18. Violet you don't change you know
19. you see I'm not I'm not like tha(h)t
20. Rachel .h he he h
21. Violet I try an(h)ythi(h)ng tha(h)t's going [he he he he
00:17:08

Immediately prior to this story (not shown) Violet has explained that everyone used to have shampoos-and-sets because that was the only option available, and how they all thought they looked beautiful. From that story of past habitual experience she shifts into a story of current habitual experience (Il.1-18). Drawing on NPT we see that in

the prior story of *past* habitual experience, briefly referred to again in I.11, the characters at NPT Level 1 – Violet and other women – had been grouped *together* having a shampoo-and-set (we’, I.11). But as her story continues into the present (from I.1 in this extract), Violet implicitly excludes herself from the story. She thereby achieves a temporal separation between herself *then*, in the past story-line, who also had a shampoo-and-set because everyone did, and her self *now* in the interaction who does not. That is, unlike the characters in the present story-line, she has changed. These characters are ‘a lot of older people’ (I.1), implicitly, older *women*. Associated with these characters is the attribute of *not* changing (I.2, I.18). Being stuck in their ways, as I commented in Section 1.4, is a stereotypical attribute of older people in general, akin to the inability to learn new things that emerged as an ‘older-age’ attribute in this setting in Section 3.3.2. Here Violet uses that CBA as a reason why ‘a lot of’ (I.1) older women still have the same hairdo, framing this as a general truth using a generic you (I.18). In short, Violet invokes wider socio-cultural stereotypes (at Level 3) about older people to create a relationship between ‘(still) having a shampoo-and-set’ and ‘unable to change’, whereby the former is both explained by and, implicitly, *a sign of*, the latter. These CBAs are both implicitly associated with an unspecified category of older women of which Violet is not a member.

Interactionally (at Level 2) Violet has already done a lot of work to distance herself from this category. She now makes this distancing explicit as, with a self-characterization (I.19), she marks herself as an *exception* to the general truth that older people ‘don’t change’ (I.18). She is an exception because, as she asserts, she will “try an(h)ythi(h)ng tha(h)t’s going” (I.21). The laughter with which she infuses this utterance helps her manage this delicate interactional moment of claiming a positive attribute in contradistinction to those stereotypically *unchanging* shampoo-and-set-wearing older women.

Mrs Farthing produced a very similar account of changing from shampoo-and-set to her cut-and-blow-dry. Like Violet, she associates inability to change with those who continue with this style. Of herself she says:

Extract 4-3 Mrs Farthing (Interview)

Mrs Farthing: I think I'm always doing something a bit different ((*laughs*))
(Rachel: laughs) I'm still mad enough to do that ((*laughs*))

(Simplified transcript)

As with Violet, Mrs Farthing's self-characterisation that marks her as a different kind of older person – that is, one who *is* able to change – is infused with laughter.

Mrs Farthing and Violet were not the only participants to make associations between inability to change and having a shampoo-and-set. Some other participants who never had this treatment also made such associations (e.g. Joellen herself and Mrs Crayne). Because the shampoo-and-set is a style of a long-gone era, it becomes a CBA of *older* older women, and by association, inability to change likewise becomes a CBA of that category of *older* older women.

Turning briefly to my six participants who coloured their hair – Mrs Farthing, Violet, Mrs France, Mrs Sargent, Mrs Crayne and Mrs Little – the CBA 'colouring hair' can be associated with both older *and younger* women. Indeed, all my participants except Lesley had, as much younger women, experimented with different colours, for example playing with henna and bright red (Mrs Crayne), red (Mrs Farthing, Violet), auburn (Mrs Sargent), blonde and pink (Mrs Farming). But generally, when an *older* woman colours her hair, the reason for her doing so will be assumed by others to be the desire to colour the grey/white, and thereby, to look younger. Certainly

conversations in the salon suggested that *Joellen* believed this. But the rationale for colouring hair was seldom articulated by participants; and on the whole, connections between colouring and the desire to conceal their grey/white hair were rarely made in salon-talk. There are just five such episodes in the 27 recordings of appointments, only one of which makes an explicit connection between white hair and looking old (see Mrs France, Extract 3.20, p.190). In other episodes, speakers talk of colouring their hair because their 'blonde' hair does not suit them,³⁰ or they refer to hair colouring as a way of managing 'what we all go through'.³¹ The relative *lack* of talk about a regular practice constructs that practice as unremarkable and routine. It also, though, leaves unspoken the *reasons* for engaging in this colouring practice. I suggest that what is going on here is that participants are aware that age-related inferences may be drawn about their motivation for colouring their hair; but these inferences may be unwelcome. They may be at least partly unwelcome because having an age-related motivation for colouring their hair makes available for them the category *vain (older) woman*, a point to which I return in Section 4.6.

Some of this ambivalence about having age-concealing motivations for colouring their hair emerged in *interview*. In that setting, all six cut-and-colour participants told me they coloured their hair to conceal the grey or white, but it was again only Mrs France who made any explicit connections between this practice and (avoiding) looking old. Mrs Sargent and Violet both gave the way white or grey hair did not suit them as their motivation for colouring their hair; Mrs Little and Mrs Crayne expressed their dislike

³⁰ See example, Mrs France, Appendix H.IX

³¹ See example Mrs Little, Appendix H.X

more vaguely and both stated that at some unspecified time in the future they would leave off colouring it.

4.3.2 Age-appropriate attire: a CBA of older women

I turn now to attire and talk about attire and the way these can be CBAs of older women. As a point of entry into discussing this, I examine in detail a conversation between Mrs France and Joellen as the latter was washing the former's hair.

In this story-telling sequence, Mrs France first tells a small habitual and personal story (ll.2-14) that expounds a particular problem, namely, the dissonance created by seeing her (older) face atop the (younger) clothes she feels are 'just me'. From lines 20-26, with Joellen's collaboration, she tells a small generic story (Baynham 2011: 66) that problematizes the upshot of the first story and in which the two women agree that liking is more important than any adherence to what is appropriate for her age. Finally in lines 28-31, Mrs France produces a coda (see Section 1.6.1) that connects the two stories and shows why the problem is insoluble: alignment to social norms of age appropriateness is incompatible with her more enduring identity.

Extract 4-4 Mrs France (Appt3)

00:10:19
1. Mrs France it's like you go into £the shop£
2. I love erm (.) White Stuff in [Town-Name
3. Joellen [y e a [h
4. Mrs France [I
5. love that shop (.)
6. and I go in there
7. and I think
8. oh:: I do like that (.)
9. that looks nice
10. oh that's that's <↑just me:>
11. and I try it on
12. and I think (.)

13. .h ↓oh: nice shi:rt (.)
14. sha(h)me about the fa(h)[ce (.) ha
15. Joellen [h he he [oh::h.
16. Mrs France [so:
17. (..)
18. Mrs France °you know° (.)
19. >still anyway< (..)
20. if if if you (.)
21. treat yourself >to a< shirt or something
22. and an' it looks all right
23. (.)
24. Joellen that's it as long as you like it
25. that's the [main thing
26. Mrs France [yeah
27. (1)
28. Mrs France the trouble is I can't um (1)
29. alter (...)
30. my fashion or:
31. whatever just because I've got ↑o:ld
32. (.)
33. Joellen n[o
34. Mrs France [I'm still a check shirt and ↑jeans person
00:10:58

Immediately prior to this extract Mrs France has said to Joellen “I hate your mirrors” and accounted for this with “they just make me it makes me look awful” (see Extract 2.5, p.112). With ‘like’ in l.1, Mrs France positions her story as an ‘exemplum’ (Baynham 2011: 67) of the point she has just made, and then in l.2 she repairs what seemed to be starting as a generic story into a personal habitual story set in White Stuff (ll.2-14). The place of the story is significant. White Stuff is a chain of clothes and accessories shops whose primary target female demographic, judging from the photographs in catalogues and online, are quirky thirty-somethings.³² Thus in locating her story in White Stuff, Mrs France, aged 68, positions herself as character (NPT Level 1) in her story as loving to buy the kind of *younger*-looking clothing offered by this chain. That is, her preferred style of attire is stereotypically associated with – and

³² See <http://www.whitestuff.com/womens/> [last accessed 13th November 2015)

thus a CBA of – *younger* women. Thus her location in this place, her activities of trying on, and her eagerness in so doing (conveyed structurally and prosodically) are all associated with possible transgressions of social norms of age-appropriate appearance. As a character she is positioned in ll.13-14 as acknowledging the mismatch between her desired attire and her age ('shame about the face', l.14); and this indicates awareness of those social norms. However, that expression of awareness is infused with laughter particles (NPT Level 2). This merging of her narrated- and narrating-selves positions her as not fully committed to any idea of rejecting the 'nice shirt', even if wearing it flouts norms of age-appropriateness – with this ambivalence positioned as an *habitual* occurrence.

This problematizing stance is continued in the second small story, from lines 20-26. After three attempts (ll.16, 18, 10) to make her story 'sequentially implicative' (Jefferson 1978), Mrs France continues with a *generic* story from l.20. This small story seems to back-track on the more robust position with which her first small story closed. In particular, in place of the laughter and energy of the first story we have the much more muted 'looks all right' (l.22). This also does not fully address the problem of age-appropriateness, since it was precisely doubt about 'looking all right' with which the first story closed.

Interactionally, further uncertainty and lack of decisiveness is created through the way Mrs France structures her story as the first part of a conditional clause (l.20-23) whose main clause is left unstated. Her narrated and narrating selves thus merge in terms of displaying personal uncertainty with regard to the social norms of age appropriateness even as with 'you' she universalises the experience and seems to be moving towards a dismissal of those norms. Unlike personal stories of non-shared events, a story of a universal experience is one to whose plot *others* can legitimately

contribute. This is what Joellen does, in ll.24-5, and by l.26 she and Mrs France have agreed that the look of the shirt and liking it trump norms of age-appropriate attire.

In l.28 Mrs France resumes and re-personalises the problem, casting what is to follow as a 'trouble' both lexically and prosodically. The trouble she comes out with is that her age, for her, is insufficient reason for her to change how she dresses; more than that, she is not *able* to ('can't', l.28). The self-categorization that follows in l.34 – she is “a check shirt and ↑jeans person” – is the reason that the 'trouble', as far as social norms of age-appropriateness go, is insoluble. Such norms conflict with what she presents as a central and more enduring part of her identity ('still', l.34); and this identity connects back to her first small story with the recurrent (because an habitual story) selection of a shirt that flouts those social norms. Ethnographic data in the shape of my interview with her suggests that the target of this utterance in ll.28-34 was Mrs France's daughter, who, Mrs France told me, is the author of negative evaluations of older women wearing jeans and check shirts and thus the upholder of local understandings of age-appropriate attire.

Mrs France's narrated and narrating selves in this story-telling sequence combine to position her as both aware of and *troubled* by social norms of age-appropriate attire. Nevertheless, Mrs France's more enduring identity as a 'check shirt and jeans person' – a person who will, trouble or not, flout unwritten (local) understandings of age-appropriate attire – was produced in embodied form in her dress when attending the salon, as, for example, in Extract 4.5 below:

Extract 4-5 Mrs France's attire (Field notes)

She was wearing flat shoes and loose denim trousers, and a white, green and blue checked blouse with the sleeves rolled up and buttoned up just above her elbows with a tongue of cloth of the same material.

There are two wider points that can be drawn from Mrs France's story in Extract 4.4. These points relate firstly, to the kind of attire women wear – or do not wear – and the category older woman; and secondly, talking about/problematising that attire

To start with the *first* of these points, Mrs France constructs a particular mode of attire from a particular kind of shop (one primarily orientated to younger women) as inappropriate for women of her age (68). She was not the only participant – or, indeed, client of Joellen's – to make such connections. That clients themselves orientated to a notion of age-appropriate self-presentation for older women was made clear in the occasional conversation, as, for example, the following, which occurred prior to the speaker's appointment:

Extract 4-6 I used to wear mini-skirts (Field notes)

"When I was back in the sixties," reflected the client, "I used to wear mini-skirts and things but I wouldn't now." She commented how disapproving she felt if she saw a woman ahead of her in her fifties or sixties but dressing like a teenager or twenty-year-old. It didn't matter how trim they look, she added.

Here the client implicitly associates both figure-revealing attire (mini-skirts) and the latest trend in fashion (which mini-skirts were in her younger days) with youth; dressing age-appropriately for older women – here defined as fifties or sixties – involves not revealing too much flesh, not trying to follow these trends. In the recordings of their hair-appointments, participants told a total of 14 stories (of which Mrs France's above was one) whose focus was on what the *recipient* should do to age well (as far as looks were concerned); what the *speaker* had done to age well; or to problematize aspects of social norms of appearance management and age-appropriate appearance for older women in general and themselves in particular. Similar observations about age-appropriate dress and appearance were made by most participants in interview, with animadversions against other women deemed to

be dressing too young (for example, wearing pedal pushers in their sixties or seventies (Mrs Farming)), and expressions of concern that they themselves were not dressing 'mutton dressed as lamb' (Mrs Farthing).

Interestingly, what participants orientated to in talk was principally age-*inappropriate* dress; just what constituted age-*appropriate* attire was less clear – at least in talk. In many countries, older women, particularly widows – as were four of my participants (see Section 2.2.3) – adopt a muted style of dress (Tsuji 2005: 11) that constitutes a kind of dress code, a socially-expected mode of attire for this group. In Joellen's Hair Palace, there was, of course, no *formal* dress code for older women. Indeed, there was considerable variety in my participants' manner of dress and self-presentation. Nevertheless, observation of nearly 200 individual women over two years suggested a number of unspoken norms to which the majority of them adhered. During this period, my field notes became full of brief descriptions of how clients were dressed. Most of my participants, in common with other clients, tended towards a smart or even elegant style. They arrived at the salon with their hair brushed or combed, their nails clean and sometimes polished, and most wore make-up. They wore flowing skirts or tailored trousers, coordinated in terms of style and colour with blouses and/or cardigans or jerseys, and finished off the look with jewellery around neck, wrist and ears. Just a few clients – and just one of my participants, Mrs Crayne – sometimes turned up to their appointment looking considerably less carefully put together. I discuss her case in Section 4.6.3.

From observation of these practices of attire of many of Joellen's clients I derived an implicit 'dress code' for older women in this setting. This 'dress code' showed itself mainly in *style*. Thus, for example, it was rare to see older women in Joellen's wearing high-heeled shoes; and loose clothing seemed to be preferred to figure-hugging, short

and figure-revealing – especially cleavage-revealing – clothes (in line with the norms identified by Hurd Clarke and colleagues (2009)). As Bethan said to me one day, “older women don’t usually show any skin.” It is important to note that participants are likely to favour these styles of dress for multiple reasons. For example, they may in part, be seeking *comfort* in looser apparel and lower heels, much as was claimed by participants in Hurd Clarke et al’s (2009: 716ff) research. At the same time, though, aspects of this implicit ‘dress code’ that I derived included care for hair, use of make-up and attention to nails. These cannot be put down to comfort, and displayed a tacit orientation by most of Joellen’s clients to social norms of age-appropriate dress and manner of appearance for older women. Adhering to these broad ‘rules’ becomes, in Joellen’s, a CBA of older women. Further, in generally looking as if they had invested care in their appearance they also displayed themselves as to that extent interested in how they looked; that is, they looked as if their appearance had some importance for them.

The *second* point to be drawn from Mrs France’s story-telling episode as well as from other instances of talk about age-relevant norms of appearance is this: when participants worry about or problematize the appropriate attire for themselves in the manner of Mrs France, they demonstrate an awareness of the possible applicability of social norms of age-appropriate appearance to themselves. In so doing, they orientate to themselves as older. Mrs France explicitly made older age relevant; but arguably, in this setting and regardless of participants’ actual attire or other mode of self-presentation, the very activity of problematizing appropriate attire for *themselves* is a CBA of older women.

∞ ∞ ∞ ∞ ∞

In this section I have shown that in their *practices* of appearance participants display themselves on the whole as invested in their appearance; and as both aware of the implications for themselves of unwritten norms of what constitutes (in)appropriate appearance for women of their age, and broadly speaking, aligning with those norms. I argued that their hair-practices; their alignment to social norms of age-appropriate appearance as evidenced in both talk and their practices of attire; and problematizing those norms for themselves, constitute CBAs of 'older women'. Indeed, I suggested that the shampoo-and-set is a CBA of a particular sub-category of older women – *older* older women. I turn now to participants' *talk in the salon* about their current treatment.

4.4 Orientating to the relative unimportance of hair: sequence design, brevity and story-telling

There are a number of ways in which, in their talk during the appointment, participants orientate to aspects of their appearance as relatively *unimportant*. For example, they explain lapses in their normal patterns of salon attendance by reference to being too busy for hair; they account for not attending to aspects of their appearance because it is not – at that point – worth the time and effort. In this section, though, I focus on two sequences common to all appointments (in theory, if not, as we shall see, in practice) that involve talk related to the current appointment. I show how in these two sequences – the consultation and appreciation sequences – participants overwhelmingly construct their appearance and the work that goes into it as both side-business and as routine. There are three ways in which participants achieve this: lexically, particularly through their use of 'the usual' or 'the same' in the consultation sequence; through the *brevity* of both these sequences; and through taking up a narrative stance towards the activity in which they are engaged, particularly in the appreciation sequence.

I start by explaining the nature of the two sequences to be subsequently discussed and present the quantitative data related to those sequences.

4.4.1 The consultation and appreciation sequences

The consultation sequence is where the stylist discusses or confirms with the client the style she wants. Such a discussion can relate holistically to the client's overall purpose in coming to the salon that day, or focus more specifically on particular elements of the desired treatment. In Joellen's, such discussions could occur both at the start of the appointment and prior to specific elements of the treatment such as the application of colour or the cutting.

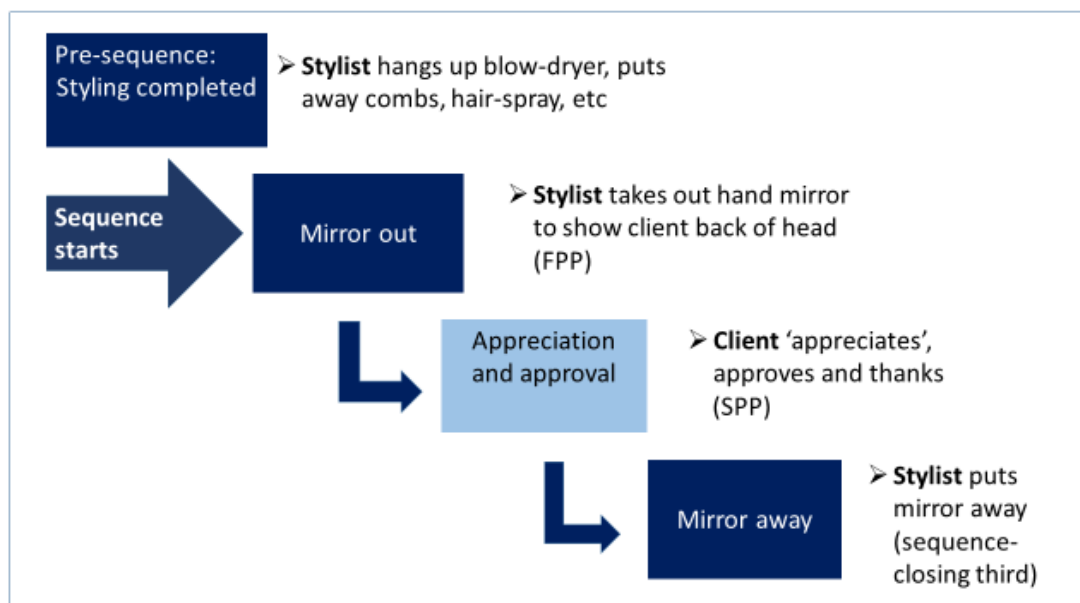
As Table 4.1 below shows, the 27 audio-recordings of appointments offered the potential for 33 consultations, that is, places where a consultation could in theory occur (at the start of the treatment component) and where I as researcher was present and recording at that point. In fact, though, as the table shows, I recorded just 24 consultations. Table 4.1 also shows why: there was not a single consultation for the shampoo-and-set. Further, indeed, only one of the two possible cut consultations for shampoo-and-set clients occurred (Lesley). This corresponds with my wider observations in the salon.

TABLE 4-1 Possible and actual consultations

| Styling component | Participants involved (and number of such styling components for participant) | Total possible consultations (the point prior to the styling component recorded) | Total actual consultations recorded |
|-------------------|--|--|-------------------------------------|
| Shampoo-and-set | Mrs Farming (4) Mrs Pace (1) Lesley (3)(start of one appointment missed because of late time change) | 8 | 0 |
| Cuts | Mrs Farming (1) Lesley (1) Mrs Farthing (4) Violet (1) Mrs France (4) Mrs Sargent (2) Mrs Crayne (2) Mrs Little (4) | 19 | 18 |
| Colours | Violet (1) Mrs Crayne (1)(consenting occurred <i>after</i> first colour consultation) Mrs Little (4) | 6 | 6 |
| Totals | | 33 | 24 |

Turning to the appreciations, these were three-part sequences that normally started after the stylist had completed all her work on the client's hair, as illustrated in Figure 4.1 below.

Figure 4-1 The appreciation and approval sequence



The start of this sequence was normally signalled by the stylist taking out a hand-mirror and showing the client the back of her head in the mirror. The stylist rarely, at this point, said anything. Just as other studies have shown that SPPs can be produced non-verbally, in embodied form (Arminen et al. 2014), so here this taking-out of the mirror effectively comprised the FPP of an adjacency pair (see Appendix D) inviting the client to approve and appreciate the stylist's work. The client's SPP was normally produced verbally, but on occasion by silently nodding. The last part of the sequence was the replacing of the mirror by the stylist. A pictorial representation of this sequence is given in Figure 4.2 below.

Figure 4-2 Pictorial representation of the appreciation sequence



I recorded to the end of 26 out of the 27 recorded appointments.³³ Analysis showed that in four appointments there was no *verbal* appreciation. In the overwhelming

³³ I did not record to the end of Violet's second appointment as she had asked me to turn off the recorder following the application of colour.

majority of cases (96% or 25 out of the 26 appreciations recorded) it was the stylist who initiated this sequence by taking out the mirror.

In the next two sub-sections I examine in detail the way in which participants orientated to their hair-management as both routine and as side business to the main activity of story-telling and other talk.

4.4.2 Orientations to the routine: sequence design and brevity

One module within the Level 2 National Vocational Qualification in Hairdressing (Palmer and Perkins 2009) involves consulting with clients to identify the treatment and style they want. Talk with Joellen indicated that she, too, saw this aspect as central. However, observation suggested that there was generally little talk with clients about their desired style. This was confirmed in the recordings of appointments. As shown above, indeed, there are no consultations for any component of shampoo-and-set clients' treatment. The regular weekly/fortnightly nature of their treatment makes such repeated consultation unnecessary; the lack of consultation, of course, also constructs their treatment as *routine*.

However, even consultations prior to a *cut* were rare for shampoo-and-set clients. Table 4.1 (p.244) above shows that both Mrs Farming and Lesley had a cut during the recording of one of her appointments. For Mrs Farming there was no consultation; Lesley's consultation for this consisted of the following:

Extract 4-7 Lesley (Appt2)

07:12

1. Joellen right

2. we're going to have a little trim off aren't we

3. Lesley yes dear (.)
4. y-you said so
07:16

Here, the consultation, such as it is, occurs in I.2. With ‘little trim’ Joellen gives the nod to the style content of a consultation; but the stress on ‘trim’ and her tag question, ‘aren’t we’, strongly prefer the answer ‘yes’. She thereby designs this primarily as a *confirmation* of a previously-agreed action (as it was, having been suggested by Joellen the previous week). Lesley not only provides the preferred response but goes a step further in I.4. With ‘you said so’, particularly with the stress on ‘said’, she orientates to Joellen as the expert; she casts herself as putting herself unquestioningly into those expert hands. What is primarily at issue is the *timing* of the trim for today, rather than any particular *style*. In this Joellen and Lesley implicitly orientate to an established routine for Lesley’s hair. They also, though, orientate to an assumption that Lesley will not *want* – and perhaps even is unable – to change her style.

According to my observations, there was almost a complete absence of discussion about style for these shampoo-and-set clients even when they had a cut. Thus the case with Lesley is not a single instance, but part of a pattern of assumptions in Joellen’s Hair Palace that shampoo-and-set clients will not want or indeed be unable to change their style. Inability to change, as I observed in Section 4.3.1, is a stereotypical CBA of *older* older people; and as I showed in that section, the shampoo-and-set, a style of a long-gone era, is likewise a CBA of *older* older women. Thus in the virtual absence of proper consultations with these clients, salon-workers are implicitly and indexically categorising them as *older* older women.

However, in the other clients’ consultations there is also in my data a lexical orientation to the routine nature of the appointment. This is principally achieved through the use of ‘the usual’ or ‘the same’. In the extract below, Mrs Sargent has just

sat down in the styling station having had her hair washed. She and Joellen are continuing a discussion about internet fraud that had started between Mrs Sargent and Clare.

Extract 4-8 Mrs Sargent (Appt1)

07:35

1. Mrs Sargent oh yes but um but (.)
2. [they're obvious-
3. Joellen [°are we doing the usual°
4. Mrs Sargent °yes plea-°
5. obviously somebody's trying to um ((*continues with story*))

07:40

With 'the usual' in I.3 Joellen makes an explicit lexical orientation to the routine nature of Mrs Sargent's appointment which Mrs Sargent confirms. With Lesley, above, Joellen's question focussed on confirming that a cut was *expected* that day; with Mrs Sargent, Joellen's consultation question in I.3 is primarily orientated towards confirming the style to be achieved with that cut. Without the tag question – aren't we – that Joellen used to Lesley, the preference for a 'yes' response, and the corresponding expectation of lack of change, is less strong, although still generally expected and produced in this setting.

Orientations to the routine are also achieved through designing the consultation question as a declarative incorporating a candidate response, as in Extract 4.9 below.

Extract 4-9 Mrs Farthing (Appt 3)

08:08

1. Joellen good tidy ↑up
2. Mrs Farthing yup good tidy ↓up
3. (2)
4. Mrs Farthing I think the sides could be a
5. little bit shor[ter
6. Joellen [bit shorter

7. Mrs Farthing yep
08:16

Here, Joellen's consultation question in I.1, which follows six seconds of silence as she combs through Mrs Farthing's just-washed hair, provides in its design an expected response, namely 'good tidy up'. Mrs Farthing in I.2 incorporates that response into her confirmation, before in I.4 going on to add a small amendment, signalling some but minimal change ('little bit', I.5).

Across my data, the stylist initiates the consultation on 21 occasions, or 88% of the total 24 consultations recorded. As Table 4.2 below shows, in 14 (67%) of *those* instances her design of the FPP of the consultation sequence embeds a presumption of lack of change, most often either through use of 'the/your usual', 'same' (Rows A, B and C). That this presumption is correct is confirmed by the clients' responses: in all but one of these 14 instances the client agrees with the stylist, as in Extracts 4.8 and 4.9 above (albeit, as in Extract 4.9, she might supplement that confirmation with a further piece of clarification).³⁴

³⁴ See Section 4.5.2 for a discussion of the exception.

TABLE 4-2 Design of consultation FPPs

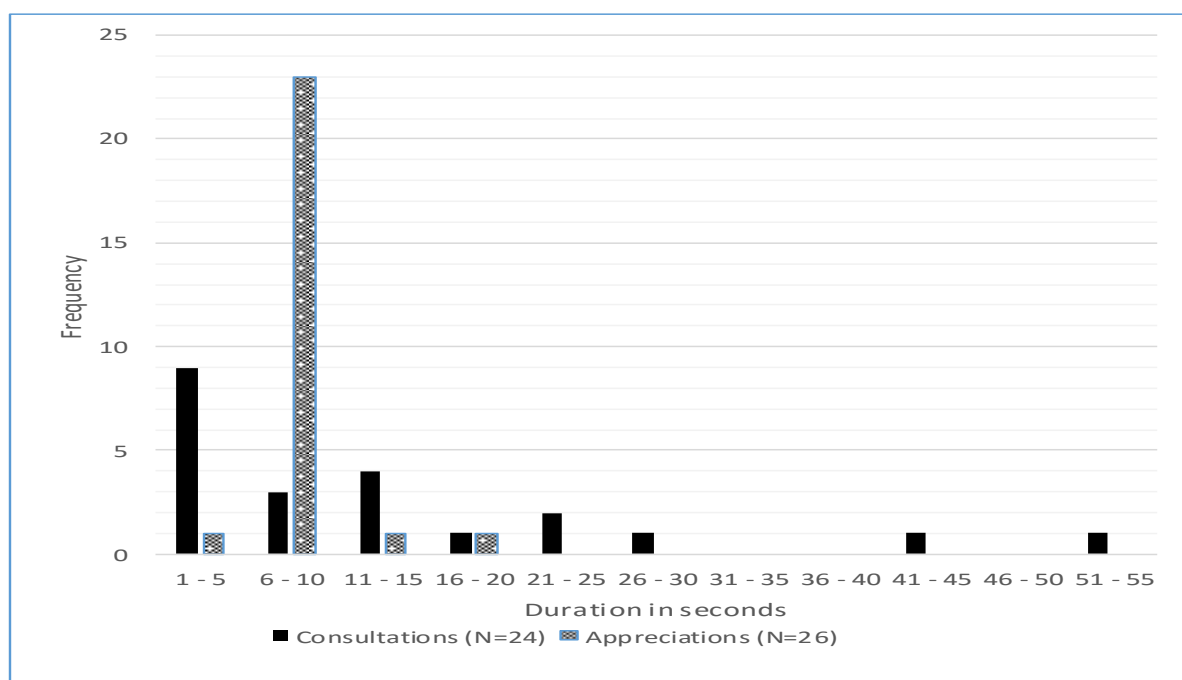
| Consultation sequences initiated by stylist | | Consultation sequences initiated by client | Total | |
|---|--|--|-----------|--|
| 21 (88%) | | 3 (12%) | 24 (100%) | |

| Row | Stylist's FPP of consultation produced as: | Example | No. | % of stylist initiated |
|-----|--|--|-----------|------------------------|
| A | Polar (yes/no) question with tag question expecting answer yes | we're going to have a little trim off aren't we | 1 | 5% |
| B | Polar (yes/no) question incorporating 'usual' or 'the same' | are we doing the usual | 10 | 48% |
| C | Polar (yes/no) question incorporating candidate response | good tidy up | 3 | 14% |
| D | Wh- questions | what are we doing today | 3 | 14% |
| E | Stylist prompt | okay (followed by client SPP) | 3 | 14% |
| F | Other | I was gonna have a conversation with you about your hair today | 1 | 5% |
| G | Total stylist-initiated consultations | | 21 | 100% |

One or more of these routine-implicative consultation sequences occurred in the appointments of all participants who had a cut and/or colour. Consultation sequences that display less orientation to the routine nature of the hair appointment (Rows D, E and F of Table 4.2 above) occurred occasionally across all six cut-and-colour participants' appointments (i.e., excluding Lesley's cut appointment). In these, participants displayed greater investment in their hair as I discuss further in Section 4.5.

None of the consultations discussed in the extracts above exceeds 8 seconds in length. Overall, as Figure 4.3 below shows, there was a tendency towards brevity, with nine (38%) being five seconds or shorter, and only two being markedly longer than the others. The same can be said for the appreciation sequences. As Figure 4.3 shows, the majority (23 or 88%) had a duration of between six and ten seconds, with only two exceeding this.

Figure 4-3 Durations of consultation and appreciation sequences



This lack of extensive talk by these women about their hair at either the start or end of the appointment helps to constitute their hair business as routine. Brevity often co-occurs with a lexical orientation to the routine; and both features also co-occur with an orientation to hair-business as side-business, as I discuss next.

4.4.3 Taking up a narrative stance in the consultation and appreciation sequences

A striking feature of some of the consultations and many of the appreciations is the way in which participants construct talk about hair as *side-business*; the main business underway is constructed as being a story-telling event. This occurs in over half of these sequences, and is part of what Georgakopoulou (2013b, in press (2016)) calls taking up a narrative stance, namely:

'A moment of position taking where a teller more or less reflexively mobilizes more or less conventionalized communicative means to signal that the activity to follow, the activity underway or the activity that is indexed, alluded to, deferred, silenced, is a story' (in press (2016): 15)

I illustrate this taking up of a narrative stance initially with Mrs Sargent's consultation sequence Extract 4.8, repeated below as Extract 4.10 for convenience. I start with one of Mrs Sargent's consultations as she was the participant who in interview displayed greatest concern about the age-related changes to her appearance (see Extract 4.1, p.225). We might thus expect lengthy appearance-related talk from her, but as we shall see, that is not the case.

Extract 4-10 Mrs Sargent (Appt1)

07:35

1. Mrs Sargent oh yes but um but (.)
2. [they're obvious-
3. Joellen [°are we doing the usual°
4. Mrs Sargent °yes plea-°
5. obviously somebody's trying to um ((*continues with story*))

07:40

Here, two features in particular show that participants are orientating to the main activity underway as a storytelling rather than hair business. Firstly, this orientation is displayed through the *sotto voce* production by Joellen of her question in I.3 and Mrs Sargent of her response in I.4 (see Mandelbaum (2010: 165) for a similar achievement of subordination of task to story-telling at a family meal). The orientation to story-telling is further reinforced through the recycling by Mrs Sargent of 'obviously' from I.1 as she continues her story, explicitly marking it as a continuation.

A similar orientation to the activity underway as a storytelling is even more evident in the appreciation sequences. Prior to the following extract, for example, Mrs France and Joellen, both dog-owners, have been exchanging stories that illustrate their

reasons for preferring bitches to (male) dogs; here, they produce affiliative codas to those stories in which they affirm their preference for bitches despite past ownership of (male) dogs, and their general desire to own a dog.

Extract 4-11 Mrs France (Appt3)

35:31
 1. Mrs France I've had them in the [pa:st but
 2. [(Joellen finishes spraying and replaces the canister on the trolley))
 3. (1)
 4. Joellen no
 5. Mrs France no= (.)
 6. Joellen =no I'm a bit funny like that
 7. (2) ((during this gap, Joellen takes the mirror out from under the black trolley and shows Mrs France the back of her head))
 8. Mrs France but I don't think I could e- (.)
 9. °lovely°
 10. .h I don't think I could ever be
 11. without a dog
 12. Joellen no (.)
 13. [no I don't think I would no:w
 14. [(Joellen replaces mirror))
 35:44

Joellen starts taking out the mirror during the gap in l.7. As commented above (Section 4.4.1), Joellen rarely says anything at this point. Mrs France, though, does not immediately respond to the unspoken FPP, instead moving to a different impact of the story. Then, in a manner very similar to Mrs Sargent's consultation above, she breaks off what she was saying in l.8, produces a single-word *sotto voce* appreciation in l.9, and then in l.10, recycles both the lexis and prosody of her utterance of l.8. Joellen collaborates in this, producing in l.13 a near-echo of Mrs France's utterance. In this way, the two women jointly construct story-telling as the main activity underway, with hair-business done very much in passing.

We see this 'in passing' nature of some appreciation sequences still more clearly in the four in which no verbal appreciation is made, as in the following with Mrs Farming. We pick up with Mrs Farming in mid-flow, telling the story of the situation of her new cleaner (ll.1-8).

Extract 4-12 (Mrs Farming, Appt1)

00:43:28

1. Mrs Farming so she's getting no money (.)
 2. for the (.) children
 3. (3)
 4. Mrs Farming so she's working herself to stand[still
 5. Joellen [I think
 6. I'd be in touch with the CSA
 7. Mrs Farming mm
 8. Joellen h. huh [huh
 9. [((sound of mirror being taken out))
 10. Mrs Farming it doesn't seem right to me tha[t
 11. Joellen [no I don't
 12. think it's right
 13. Mrs Farming no I don't think so but of course (.)
 14. she doesn't have a choice with soli[citors
 15. [((sound of mirror being put away again))
 16. you see she just has to have le[gal aid
 17. Joellen [yeah legal aid
 18. Mrs Farming [yeh
 19. Joellen [well legal aid's normally ((talk continues))
- 00:43:52

In l.9 Joellen pulls out the mirror. As is obvious from the above extract, however, Mrs Farming on this occasion makes no verbal response to this unspoken FPP invitation, responding instead, in l.13, to Joellen's confirmatory second assessment in l.11-12. This entire appreciation sequence lasts just six seconds (from mirror out to mirror away). In taking up a narrative stance to the extent of not even breaking off to offer a word of appreciation and thanks, Mrs Farming, even more than Mrs France above, constructs what is going on as a story-telling event, with this being more important than her hair-business. Again, Joellen, through her responses, collaborates in that

narrative stance-taking. These moves also construct the clients' hair-business as less important *at this point* than the story-telling being started, underway or being concluded.³⁵

Across the 24 consultation sequences and 26 appreciation sequences there were a total of 25 instances (half of the total) produced in a narrative environment, as set out in Table 4.3 below (Row V, Column F).

TABLE 4-3 Narrative orientations in consultation and appreciation sequences

| | A | B | C | D | E | F | G |
|-----|----------------------|---------------------|---|--|--|----------------------------------|--------------------|
| | Sequence | Number of sequences | No verbal part to sequence: storytelling continues uninterrupted through sequence | Sequence produced 'in passing' as parties take up a narrative stance | Sequence produced in temporarily suspended narrative environment | Total with narrative orientation | % of sequence type |
| I | Colour consultations | 6 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 4 | 67% |
| II | Cut consultations | 18 | 0 | 4 | 2 | 6 | 33% |
| III | All consultations | 24 | 0 | 8 | 2 | 10 | 42% |
| IV | Appreciations | 26 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 15 | 58% |
| V | All sequences | 50 | 4 | 13 | 8 | 25 | 50% |

If we look at Row V of this Table, we can see that in 17 instances (Columns C + D) the storytelling proceeded with either no verbal orientation to the hair-business sequence, or with only an 'in passing' verbal orientation. Furthermore, as Column E

³⁵ For a further example of such a narrative stance being taken up at this point see Appendix H.XI with Mrs Sargent.

of Row V shows, in an additional eight instances the participants' hair talk was effectively sandwiched between story-telling. Narrative orientations are most pronounced for *appreciations*. Not only are nine produced 'in passing' (Row IV, Columns C + D), but in a further six instances (Column E), either the story continues after the mirror has been taken out and the appreciation is delivered only upon the story coming to a close; or a prior story is resumed or a new story started as the mirror is put away. This means that in terms of appreciations, in 58% (15) of the cases participants orientate to the activity at hand as story-telling (Row IV, Columns G and F). On all these occasions the appreciation is also brief (see Figure 4.3, p.251 above).

At this point, we should note that whereas most participants produced *some* appreciations in a condensed mid-story fashion that I have described as taking up a narrative stance, borrowing Georgakopoulou's (2013b) term, Mrs France and Mrs Sargent between them produced four of the five appreciations that I described as 'in-passing' (Mrs Farming produced the fifth). Yet they were the two women who in their salon talk (Extract 3.20, p.190, Mrs France) or in interview with me (Extract 4.1, p.225, Mrs Sargent) most explicitly orientated to the unwelcomeness of the age-related changes to their appearance. This highlights the *situated nature* of participants' orientation to the importance to them of their appearance, hinging to an extent on different settings, circumstances, and interactional and sequential contexts. I develop this idea further in the next section.

∞ ∞ ∞ ∞ ∞ ∞ ∞

In this section, through focussing the analysis on two sequences typical in Joellen's as well as in other hair-salons, I have shown how the manner of designing the consultation can cast the client into the category of either an *older* older woman,

unable and unwilling to change, or a *younger* older woman for whom the possibility of change is still available. I have also shown how participants orientate to the routine nature and relative unimportance of their appearance in salon talk related to their current treatment. Three features contribute to this, namely design of the consultation FPP, brevity and taking up a narrative stance towards the activity at hand.

4.5 Orientating to the situated and more-enduring importance of managing hair: breaks in patterns of talk and practice

Breaks by participants in the patterns described in the previous section make visible stances of greater investment in their hair. Such pattern-breaking relates both to breaks in an *individual's* usual practices of talk, and differences between an individual's practices and the salon practices as a whole. All the clients except Mrs Farming and Lesley broke either their individual or the salon patterns of talk and practices at some point during my time observing and audio-recording appointments. What these pattern-breaks show, I argue in this section, are ways in which participants orientate on the one hand to the situated importance of their hair-management; and on the other, to its more enduring importance. I illustrate the former by focussing on Mrs Farthing and Violet, who, aged respectively 79-81 and 75 at the time of the research, had both changed from a shampoo-and-set to a cut-and-blow dry; both had positioned themselves as adventurous and able to change (see Section 4.3.1). I illustrate the latter by focussing on Mrs Little. At 55 she was the youngest of my participants and still unequivocally in paid employment.

4.5.1 Constructing hair as momentarily important

As Figure 4.3 (p.251) above showed, two of the 24 consultation sequences (those for colours and those for cuts) are considerably longer than the remaining consultations. One of these, with Violet, was inserted into narrative talk.³⁶ This sequence constructs hair as *temporarily* important, as other talk is suspended. Immediately prior to this extract, Joellen, Violet and Bethan have been telling stories about the drinks favoured by the Queen and the late Queen Mother. These stories had in turn emerged from Joellen's story of the drinks *she* had prepared for the Diamond Jubilee celebration party she had held. With 'anyway' in l.1 of the extract below Joellen signals a cessation of story-telling – what we might call a 'narrative stance-abdicating move' – and a resumption of the business at hand, namely Violet's hair:

Extract 4-13 Violet (Appt1)

- 06:15
1. Joellen anyway (.) your [fhair madamf
 2. Bethan [he ha he he
 3. Joellen what are we do(h)ing to(h)day he he he he
 4. Violet right that was good the fringe
 5. Joellen yeh
 6. Violet that was good (.) [it felt
 7. Joellen [so we had the fringe (.)
 8. forward=
 9. Violet =coming quite
 10. Joellen ohh [forward
 11. Violet [going back a little bit (.)
 12. yeh 'cos I have had a little
 13. ((sketches a scissor snipping movement with her fingers along the fringe line; talk

³⁶ The other was with Mrs Little.

continues on a tangent about ladies cutting their fringes before resuming the consultation for a further 33 seconds))

06:27

Violet's response from I.4 is in part shaped to be longer thanks to Joellen's question in I.3, an open one, in contrast with the closed questions of Extracts 4.8 (p.248) and 4.9 (p.248). However, Joellen puts this same question to other clients with quite different results, as in Extract 4.14 below:

Extract 4-14 Mrs Farthing (Appt1)

08:23

1. Joellen ↑okay (.) and what're we doing today
2. Mrs Farthing cutting
3. (0.5)
4. Joellen usual=
5. Mrs Farthing =usual ((*clears throat*))

08:28

As this extract shows, Joellen's question in I.1 of Extract 4.14 to Mrs Farthing is very similar to her question to Violet in I.3 of Extract 4.13, minus the laughter. Here, though, Mrs Farthing's response is very brief, and following a gap, Joellen and she in II.3 and 4 orientate lexically to the routine nature of her appointment ('usual'). By contrast, Violet in Extract 4.13 embarks on a lengthy exposition of her needs, with her turn-initial 'right' in I.4 signalling her re-orientation to the current main business in response to Joellen's question. Furthermore, Joellen's question of II.1 and 3 carries over the laughter of the previous sequence, and part of this light-hearted atmosphere is conveyed in her jokingly-formal form of address to this client in I.1 (which echoes Violet's address to *her* a few minutes earlier). Violet, however, does not accept this continued invitation to laugh (Jefferson 1979: 82), instead orientating to her hair business as a non-laughable matter. Joellen in I.5 aligns with this orientation as she clarifies with Violet what the latter wants, with both using gesture in the mirror to aid mutual understanding. Thus Violet, via both her treatment of the business in hand as

serious and the expansiveness of her response (her consultation has a duration of 45 seconds, excluding a tangent), orientates to her current hair work as, *at this point*, important; and Joellen aligns with this stance. Nevertheless, as soon as the consultation is completed, Joellen resumes talk on a topic related to that of the Diamond Jubilee that also picks up and continues a prior theme, namely what Violet had done during the celebrations. Here, therefore, Joellen and Violet orientate to the temporary importance and *non-routine* nature of her hair-business. However, through the narrative stance-taking within which this consultation is located, and through the continuity of topic, they construct that importance as *situated*, tightly linked to the local action of this stage of the hair-appointment.

A similar orientation to the situated importance of their hair is achieved in the monitoring talk that occasionally occurs, when participants break off from story-telling to comment on what the stylist is doing or add further instructions.³⁷ This orientation to the situated importance of hair is also evident when participants account for a change in their usual hair-appointment routines that marks an *additional focus* on their hair. Whilst five of my nine participants made such changes, these were only captured on the audio-recordings in the appointments of three of them, namely Mrs Pace, Mrs Farthing and Violet. Mrs Farthing made such changes in each of her four recorded appointments, and thus I focus on one of her accounts.

³⁷ See example Appendix H.XII

The following extract occurs after five seconds of silence. This silence in turn followed on from the brief consultation that *Mrs Farthing herself* had initiated, that is, it was one of the three client-initiated consultations (see Table 4.2, p.250). In what follows, Mrs Farthing now explains her need for an extra hair appointment because of her social commitments.

Extract 4-15 Mrs Farthing (Appt2)

00:08:42
 1. Mrs Farthing I'm coming in again
 2. (1)
 3. Joellen yah is it the twe[nty first?
 4. Mrs Farthing [y-
 5. twenty firs[t
 6. Joellen [yeh (.)
 7. I thought I saw you in there .h he
 8. (1)
 9. Mrs Farthing the end of next week in [fact °but°
 10. Joellen [yeh
 11. (1)
 12. Joellen are you going out somewhere that [day
 13. Mrs Farthing [we-
 14. well we're going away on holiday [so
 15. Joellen [↑oh
 16. right yeh
 17. where are you off to
 18. Mrs Farthing um: Weymouth
 00:08:58

Mrs Farthing's statement in l.1 is an announcement of a *change* to her usual appointment routine. This announcement, itself arguably a 'projection' (Georgakopoulou 2007), positions her as both character and interactionally as having full agency over her hair: she initiates the talk; she is coming in of her own volition. That it is heard as being about change is demonstrated by the following exchanges (ll.3-10), which confirm the break in her usual 5-6-weekly routine. With this confirmed, Joellen then in l.12 orientates to a connection between such breaks in the normal pattern and doing something special (such as 'going out somewhere'). That her inference is correct is demonstrated by Mrs Farthing's response in ll.13-14. Here, with

her reference to a holiday in I.14, she inferably takes up a narrative stance towards what is going on. It is the precursor to a story, which Joellen then explicitly solicits with her further enquiry in I.17.

During my time observing in the salon I noted several other participants altering the pattern of their hair appointments to look their best for special events. The fact that Joellen was able correctly to make the connection in I.12 of Extract 4.15 above, and in fact does so successfully on other occasions in my data, points to a conventionalised association in this setting between a break in clients' usual appointment patterns and an upcoming social event. This association in turn displays an orientation to the importance of looking (particularly) good for special events. Such breaks in clients' usual patterns of attendance, like the occasional longer consultation or monitoring talk, further point to a way in which their appearance may be 'important' to older women, namely, as already indicated at the close of Section 4.4.3 above, that it is a *situated* importance, contingent upon other factors, including other things going on in their lives.

4.5.2 A shared hair project: the case of Mrs Little and the more enduring importance of appearance management

Participants occasionally orientate to the more enduring importance to them of their hair and other aspects of their appearance. This is made visible through the differences between *their* appointment-related talk and that of salon clients more generally. As I showed in Section 4.4, consultations (both for cut and colour) are normally brief; mostly they are initiated by the stylist; and generally there is an orientation to the routine in the design of the FPP of the adjacency pair by the stylist that is then confirmed in the client's SPP, albeit sometimes with clarifications.

Furthermore, as I also showed, appreciations are also normally brief, and tend to be subordinated to story-telling. All six cut-and-colour participants' consultations sometimes differed from those patterns. Mrs Little's talk, though, differed most in that she:

- Initiates two of her consultations following a stylist prompt ('okay', see Table 4.2, row E, p.250);
- Initiates one of her eight consultations without a verbal prompt;
- Does not orientate to the routine in response to one of Joellen's FPPs that use 'usual' (and is the only participant to do this);
- Is the client with the longest colour consultation; and
- Is the client with three of the four longest cut consultations.

She is also the client who produces the two longest appreciations (see Figure 4.3, p.251).

In what follows I argue that Mrs Little, in this *spread* of pattern-breaking, rather than in merely one or two such instances, constructs her hair-management as having a more enduring importance to her. I start with the consultation sequence in which she does not orientate to the routine nature of the appointment. This, at a total length of 28 seconds, was also one of the longer consultation sequences recorded. Mrs Little has just arrived for her regular colour appointment.

Extract 4-16 Mrs Little (Appt4)

```
00:05:02
1.      Joellen      are you having your usual
2.      Mrs Little   .h well
3.      I think so unless we have any other (.)
4.      better suggestions
5.      (.)
6.      I seem to be getting (1)
7.      .h °blonder° (.)
8.      [°tryin-°
9.      Joellen     [...h
```


10. Joellen n-it's been quite sunny this year
11. hasn't it ((*storying continues*))
00:05:13

Whilst there are many features of interest in this short sequence, the key point I want to discuss here is Mrs Little's initial subversion of the orientation to the routine nature of her hair appointment. Joellen in I.1 poses the FPP of the consultation sequence, personalising it as so often with the pronoun: '*your usual*'. Uniquely in my collection of 14 polar (yes/no) consultation FPPs, though, Mrs Little does not immediately agree. Instead, with 'well' (I.2) she projects a dispreferred SPP (Pomerantz 1984a). From this, she launches in I.3 what is analysable as the FPP of a 'pre-second insert expansion' (Schegloff 2007a: 106ff). This further projects the potentially dispreferred nature of her yet-to-be uttered SPP with the introduction of a caveat, 'unless' (I.3). Further, with 'better suggestions' in I.4 she implicitly positions herself as less than one-hundred percent content with her current 'usual' colour. There is no take up by Joellen at this point (I.5), and Mrs Little continues in II. 6-7 in a way shown by prior research to often accompany a dispreferred response: she produces a condensed account (Schegloff 2007a: 65). The account she produces – that she seems to be getting 'blonder' – is an account that in this sequential context constructs her hair colour as unwelcome (it is to counter this blondness that she wants 'better suggestions'). With 'seem to be getting' she positions herself as noticing this change occurring over some time. Furthermore, though, 'blonde' in this setting tends to be used as a euphemism for 'white', one of the colours of ageing. With the long pause (I.6) and slightly dropped volume with which Mrs Little makes the word 'blonde' literally less hearable, she is arguably orientating in this way to blonde-as-white; and if that is so, the 'better suggestions' she is looking for are ways to avoid looking *older*.

In the exchange that follows³⁸ Joellen collaboratively with Mrs Little constructs a small story of Mrs Little's activities that serves to argue that the blonding of her hair is down to the sun, and this factor is more-or-less over for the year. At this point Mrs Little finally offers her SPP to Joellen's consultation FPP of I.1, saying: "well in that case then we'll do (.) what we normally do then really thank you". Although in the end Mrs Little goes along with 'what we normally do', the lengthy sequence displays her as having more than a situated interest in this aspect of her appearance. She has noticed the unwelcome ageing colour her hair has acquired, and has sought to remedy that; she is open to change. It took Joellen's storied argument to persuade her to stay with her 'usual'.

This was the fourth of Mrs Little's audio-recorded appointments. In the previous three, she went along with the 'usual' for her colour consultation. However, with this and other breaks in both her own pattern and that of the salon she displays herself as open to possible change and as having a more enduring interest in her hair. This is further supported by her orientation to her hair as a shared project upon which she and Joellen are jointly working. This is partly marked by her use of 'we' in the consultation above (e.g., I.3), but also in the way she delivers two of her appreciations, as in the following extract.

This exchange occurred at the end of the appointment begun with the colour-consultation above, and Joellen has just finished giving Mrs Little's hair a rough blow-

³⁸ See Appendix H.XIII for the full sequence.

dry. The appreciation is one of the two longest in my collection, extending for 14 seconds from l.3, when Joellen takes out the mirror, to l.19 when she replaces it. The just-prior talk is focussed on a detailed scrutiny of the layers at the side which Mrs Little has been growing out (l.13).

Extract 4-17 Mrs Little (Appt4)

01:14:46
 1. Joellen °right° (.) just show you the †back=
 2. Mrs Little =hm mm thank you
 3. ((*Joellen pulls out the mirror to show Mrs Little the back of her head*))
 4. Mrs Little oh yeah we've got quite a good line there now
 5. [haven't we
 6. Joellen [yeah
 7. Mrs Little ye[s
 8. Joellen [the line's sort of really coming in now
 9. [and that's] [that's to say] (.) it's †just
 10. Mrs Little [yes it is] [isn't it yes]
 11. (2)
 12. Mrs Little yah
 13. Joellen see tha[t and that [layer (there)
 14. Mrs Little [yes [yeh
 15. Mrs Little oh: well (.)
 16. w- we're getting there aren't we
 17. Joellen yeh
 18. Mrs Little yeh no that's lovely (.) [thank [you
 19. [((*Joellen replaces the mirror*))
 20. Joellen [you're
 21. welcome
 01:15:04 ((10 seconds without talk follows))

In her comments on what Joellen has done, Mrs Little constructs her style as a project of change ('now', l.4, 'getting there', l.16). This project is jointly-managed between herself and Joellen ('we', ll.4, 5, 16). Joellen collaborates in this orientation to Mrs Little's hair as a joint project of change as she points out the line and the layers that are 'coming in now' (l.8, 13). In orientating to Mrs Little's style as a project of *change*, Joellen and Mrs Little both display their understanding of Mrs Little as someone who has an interest in her hair-style that extends beyond the here-and-now of her current appointment. This understanding of Mrs Little as having a more enduring interest in

her hair, as having the potential to change, is further made relevant through the way Joellen designs her consultation FPPs to Mrs Little, with two of the four cut-consultations being a very open 'okay', and one being a non-verbal FPP (if at all) as Mrs Little initiates the sequence.

Longer consultations and appreciations almost by definition display participants as being more interested and thus potentially invested in their hair *at that point*, even if other projects are simultaneously being effected. What we see with Mrs Little is a cumulative pattern of longer consultations and appreciations and a lexical orientation by both her and Joellen to the non-routine, alongside a project-change orientation. It is also the case that with more than 8% of her recorded appointment time being taken up by talk related to her or others' appearance Mrs Little is among those who display themselves as most interested in such matters. In interview, too, Mrs Little presented her appearance as a managed project, talking of her desire to achieve a consistency and continuity of appearance. Overall, she orientates to a desire to achieve change, without it being too noticeable.

At 55, Mrs Little was the youngest of my client-participants as well as being one of two who were still working. I suggest that what we see in her consultation/appreciation sequences is the mediation of her talk about appearance by her orientation to these other identities – being a *younger* older woman and being a *working* woman. On the one hand, her focus on achieving a well-groomed, unremarkable appearance is a CBA of both *older* women and *working* women in many environments; her management of the ageing 'blonde' look of her hair is also a CBA of *older* women. On the other hand, her display in the salon of openness to change, with which Joellen collaborates, is a CBA that is at least *inconsistent* with being an '*older older*' woman (see discussion Section 4.4.2). The cumulative effect of these activities and

orientations over the course of her appointments and in her interview is to cast Mrs Little in the category of a 'no longer young but not yet old' older woman, who as such, and as a working woman, has a legitimate interest in her appearance.

∞ ∞ ∞ ∞ ∞ ∞

Breaks in both the discursive patterns of consultation and appreciation sequences, and in participants' patterns of appointment-making, occurred in the appointments of most participants. In such breaks in the usual patterns, participants orientate variously to the *situated* importance for them of their hair, or to its *more enduring* importance.

Thus what we have seen so far in this chapter is participants displaying themselves and being cast by others as more or less interested in their appearance in different sequential contexts; and through different semiotic modes – narrative and other discursive practices and their attire. One explanation for this variability is the *situated nature* of the importance of their appearance; further insights are offered by the interviews.

4.6 Constructing investment in appearance as problematic

In this section I show how signs of trouble by participants in response to many of my appearance-related questions in interview construct as unwelcome a possible implication by me that they are investing undue time and effort in their appearance. Connecting this with explicit statements made by participants in interview, I suggest that such trouble in interviews may be attributable to participants' desire to avoid being categorized as vain. Avoidance of such an identity ascription, I argue, may also partly

shape participants' in-salon talk. I close by using a case study of Mrs Crayne to show how participants manage to negotiate a little bit of 'wobble-room' (Erickson 2014 (2001)) for themselves to manage this particular identity as 'vain'.

4.6.1 Being invested in appearance: an unwelcome categorization

Upon first listening to the interview recordings I gained the impression that my participants – contrary to the expectations engendered by the attire and regular routines of attendance at Joellen's of many of them – were largely uninterested in their appearance. Closer attention to the interviews revealed that this impression was conveyed by the kinds of claims made by participants relating to their appearance and appearance practices. For example, they claimed in different ways to have other priorities for their time and money. In talking of their daily appearance practices they made these out to be fast routines for minimum effort. Some made explicit self-categorizations relating to what they were 'naturally' like, with this being 'scruffy' (Mrs Crayne) or people who 'can't be bothered messing about' (Violet).

Alongside these different claims, though, they also stated in various ways that they wanted to achieve a minimum standard. Micro-analysis of the interviews showed that even these mild statements of interest in their appearance were played down. However, this was done with attendant signs of trouble, as in the following extract taken from Violet's interview.

Here Violet first deploys a range of resources that allow her to delay responding to my question (ll.6-17). Having given an initial response (ll.18-30), itself displaying further signs of trouble, she then almost immediately repositions that first response (ll.32-46). Finally, she tells a small story (ll.48ff) that supports that repositioning.

Extract 4-18 Violet (Interview)

00:36:36

1. Rachel what's it (.) >kinda like< (.)
 2. what sort of importance does it have in
 3. your life going to the: (.)
 4. hair salon (.) if any
 5. (.)
 6. Violet >sorry<
 7. Rachel what kind of importance does it have
 8. (2)
 9. meaning for you does it have
 10. going to the hair salon
 11. (.)
 12. going to
 13. (1)
 14. Rachel [I mean not Joellen's specifically [but
 15. Violet [er::: [no
 16. Rachel but to the salon in general
 17. (4)
 18. Violet I think it's just nice
 19. (1)
 20. I don't know really
 21. (..)
 22. um
 23. (4)
 24. think it's just the fact that you >you know<
 25. you've got someone do:ing
 26. (2)
 27. you know when you come out
 28. you're going to look
 29. (0.5)
 30. nice
 31. Rachel right
 32. Violet that's what I think it is
 33. (.)
 34. um th-the fact that you do get to (.)
 35. >you know< get someone to cha-
 36. and generally hairdressers are quite (.)
 37. good at
 38. (.)
 39. Rachel [mm
 40. Violet [having a chat (.) and (.)
 41. whatever aren't they
 42. I mean they that's what their job is a/
 43. >basically< apart from doing your hair
 44. they do tend to (.)
 45. keep you (.)
 46. chatting
 47. Rachel ya:[h
 48. Violet [>ah had a< male hairdresser [once
 49. Rachel [>oh right<
 50. Violet £oo he was °go:rgeous°£=
 51. Rachel =.h.. he o(h)h wa(h)s he [he
 52. Violet [£I loved going
 53. there£ (.) he [he
 54. Rachel [he ha ha ha [ha
 55. Violet [well (.) he used
 56. t' somehow: (..)

It is at this point that Violet engages in work to make an alternative category relevant. In l.32 she seems to be starting to confirm her prior response, marking it thus with her recycling in l.34 of 'the fact that you' from l.24. This time, though, the 'someone' referred to is someone to chat with rather than someone making her look nice. So barely has Violet mentioned 'looking nice' as the 'importance' or 'meaning' for her of going to the salon than she shifts the focus onto a non-appearance-related 'meaning for her', namely 'having a chat' (l.40), with this element foregrounded as the stylist's job (ll.42-3).

Violet now launches a small story of personal past experience. Sequentially occasioned, as it is, by the generalisation about the stylist's job being 'keeping you chatting' (ll.45-6) this story is constructed as an *example* of that aspect of the stylist's job. Violet peoples her small story with a stereotypical salon figure, the flattering male stylist (Robinson et al. 2011: 43) (she goes on to explicitly suggest he was gay, *not shown*), and herself, unashamedly 'loving' (l.52) the encounter with this 'gorgeous' (l.50) man whom she later describes as a 'hunk' (not shown). She is thereby positioned at NPT Level 1 as someone more interested in the flirtatious encounter than in the work being done to her appearance.

This is supported by her Level 2 positioning. She uses emphasis and vowel elongation to infuse her evaluations of that stylist and the visits to his salon with an enthusiasm (ll.50, 52) that is in stark contrast to the muted 'just nice' (l.18) and 'quite good' (ll.36-7) of her initial and reworked responses. Moreover, smiles (l.50) and laughter (l.52-3) infiltrate her evaluations in a display of light-heartedness to which I respond (l.51,54), and which further contrasts with the serious tone achieved in Violet's initial responses. Through these *contrasts* with her initial and reworked responses of ll.18-37, and through the *parallels* between her narrated and narrating selves in her small story,

Violet distances herself from her initial response and points to her more enduring biographical self as being one who is primarily interested in the light-hearted chit-chat aspects of the salon visit, with appearance-related concerns being secondary.

In summary, the signs of trouble in Violet's initial response to my question indicate that my implicit categorization of her, made relevant by that question, as someone interested to an extent in her appearance, is unwelcome to her. Her initial response to my question, though, aligns with my implicit categorization. With her reworked response and small story, she succeeds in displaying herself in a different category, namely a woman for whom the *appearance-aspect* of the salon is relatively *unimportant*.

Analysis of the interviews shows that the kind of trouble displayed in Violet's response to my question above was not an isolated occurrence. In Violet's interview alone, for example, such troubled responses occurred in seven of the eight appearance-related questions I put to her. Close examination of my appearance-related questions showed that when I as interviewer embedded a presumption in those questions that participants were in fact *interested* in their appearance – implying, for example, that they spend 'a lot' of time on their hair, or that the visit to the hair-salon might be 'important' – signs of trouble occurred in their responses in which they display themselves as *not* interested. To take the case of Violet again, the sole trouble-free response Violet gave to one of my appearance-related questions was one in which I had *not* embedded in the question a prior assumption about the importance to her of her appearance.

Comparing Violet's data with Mrs Crayne's is instructive. As Table 4.4 below shows, I asked Violet and Mrs Crayne respectively eight and nine appearance-related

questions. Less than one-quarter of Mrs Crayne’s responses displayed the ‘trouble’ features discussed above, compared to 88% of Violet’s responses. However, as Table 4.4 also shows, a much larger proportion of my questions to Violet embedded a presumption that her appearance might be important to her (88%) than was the case with Mrs Crayne (33%). It is notable that Mrs Crayne was the participant who in her attire and routines (or lack thereof) most displayed herself as uninterested in her appearance.³⁹ That is, my own preconceptions doubtless shaped the way I formulated the appearance-related questions for each participant.

TABLE 4-4 Participants’ responses to interviewer’s appearance-related questions: Violet and Mrs Crayne compared

| Participant | Violet | Mrs Crayne |
|--|--------|------------|
| Appearance related questions: | | |
| Total put by Rachel | 8 | 9 |
| Total embedding presumption by Rachel of importance of appearance | 7 | 3 |
| Total in which ‘trouble’ features occur | 7 | 2 |
| Percentage of total appearance-related questions in which ‘trouble’ features occur | 88% | 22% |

³⁹ See discussion, Section 4.6.3

The signs of trouble participants display in response to these presumption-embedding questions of mine imply that being categorized as invested in their appearance is problematic. This prompts the question, 'why?', to which I now turn.

4.6.2 'Avoiding being vain' as an explanatory hypothesis

An interest in appearance in Western culture may be deemed frivolous, trivial or even 'vain' as a number of authors observe (for example, Furman 1997; Twigg 2007); and an interest in their appearance by older women may be deemed particularly vain. Some of my participants, in explicitly using the terms 'vain' and 'vanity' in interview in relation to their appearance work, showed that they, at least, were conscious of this as a potential charge in relation to their appearance practices. Here, for example, is Mrs Pace, mulling over the possibility of her interest in her appearance being vain. A minute earlier I had asked: "why do you have it done?" This had prompted a whistle-stop-tour through parts of Mrs Pace's life and then, after about a minute, the following self-categorization:

Extract 4-19 Mrs Pace (Interview)

Mrs Pace: so hair's always been a little bit I've always liked my hair to be decent (.) you know (Rachel: mm) it's one of those things but er (.) you know it's just a bit of vanity I suppose (.) being vain.

(Simplified transcript)

In mentioning vanity, Mrs Pace also displays her awareness of this as a possible charge to be levelled at someone – particularly an older woman – who has their hair done regularly. Given the participants' broad similarity in terms of being white, British-born older women, it is not unreasonable to suppose that many if not all of them, too, had absorbed what Furman calls the 'discourse of vanity' (1997: 53).

Some qualitative research *does* observe that participants overtly orientate to the possibility of being thought vain, just as did Mrs Pace and others (e.g., Hurd Clarke 2002). What I am suggesting is that the potential of being categorized as vain is a key shaping factor in *all* my participants' – and perhaps most older women's – talk about their appearance and their appearance-related practices in an interview with a younger interlocutor. Furthermore, in interviews, participants were going 'on record' with their views. As much research has shown, interviewees in a range of ways attend to the social situation of the interview and the possible challenges to their identity made by the interviewer (see, e.g., papers in Drew et al. 2006). A categorization of 'being vain' is one such challenge; and some of my own questions displayed my own (possible) orientation to this as a category, for example, seeming to imply that the participant might be spending 'a lot of time' or 'ages', on their appearance; or in more overtly making a link between 'importance' and an appearance-related activity such as visiting the hair-dresser.

Participants' salon discursive practices that orientate to the *unimportance* of their hair likewise display them as not vain, at the very point they are spending time on appearance. On the rare occasions that participants do make explicit links between ageing and unwelcome changes to their appearance (as Mrs France in Extract 3.20, p.190, and Mrs Sargent in 4.1, p.225) their talk is marked by mitigating signs – laughter particles, drama and exaggeration. Thus whilst participants might in their appearance *practices* display themselves as interested in their appearance, in much of their salon-talk and in *interview*, they put in considerable work to show that they do not care too much. This work was nuanced and subtle as I showed in Section 4.4; and it was done even by the participant who most overtly displayed herself in her appearance practices as uncaring, i.e., Mrs Crayne.

4.6.3 Micro-positioning moves to manage macro social norms: the case of Mrs Crayne

In most of her talk in the salon as well as in her practices Mrs Crayne displayed herself overtly as uninvested in her appearance. Nevertheless, she did attend the salon, however erratically, to have her grey roots coloured. I use her break in the pattern of appreciation sequences as a point of entry into examining how she manages the tension between displaying both investment and lack of interest in her appearance.

As I showed in Section 4.4.1, typically, in appreciation sequences in Joellen's Hair Palace, the client's SPP (appreciation) occurs *after* the stylist's FPP (taking-out of the mirror). Both of Mrs Crayne's appreciations are brief (six and seven seconds); but in addition, she delivers the only *pre-mirror* appreciation of the appointment recordings; that is, she initiates the appreciation sequence. In the following extract, Bethan has just finished drying Mrs Crayne's hair.

Extract 4-20 Mrs Crayne (Appt1)

```
01:28:33
1. Mrs Crayne      >yep lovely fine<
2. Bethan          okay [show you the back he he he
3.                  [((Bethan takes out the mirror.))
4.                  (2)
5. Mrs Crayne      yup
6. Bethan          yeh (.) done (.) he he
01:28:40
```

Here, in I.1, as the Bethan is still hanging up the hair-dryer, and before she has even taken out the mirror to show Mrs Crayne the back of her head, Mrs Crayne delivers her approval and appreciation. Furthermore, the accelerated manner of production here 'metaphorically implies reduced importance' of what is being said (Schiffrin 2002: 328). Bethan's laughter in II.2 and 6 displays her orientation to something unusual in

Mrs Crayne's behaviour here. Mrs Crayne's 'post-mirror appreciation' when it comes ('yup',l.5), is cursory, although it occurs after a further two seconds of silence, which signals some scrutiny and thus minimal interest. Mrs Crayne's pre-emptive appreciation displays a lack of interest in what Bethan has done to the hair at the back of her head. This in turn displays her as un-invested in her appearance in a way I rarely saw in Joellen's.

This display of herself as un-invested in her appearance was consistent with Mrs Crayne's more enduring constructions of herself as a woman for whom her appearance was unimportant. Her routine of attendance at the salon – every five-six months – was so loose as to barely merit the description 'routine'; and she did not always dress up to go out of the house, as Extract 4.21 below shows.

Extract 4-21 Mrs Crayne's attire (Field notes)

She was wearing somewhat baggy clothes - jersey and trousers. Her nails were not short, but not painted, and with a hint of deep-ingrained grime. As she said, "archaeologist's nails". She wore no make-up and no jewellery. Her hair, shoulder length and wavy, was rather windswept and straggly-looking.

Furthermore, like some other participants Mrs Crayne used busyness to explain lapses in her routine, constructing appearance as relatively unimportant, as in the following extract.

Extract 4-22 Mrs Crayne (Appt2)

00:01:59

1. Mrs Crayne .h it's (.) I've just been doing (1)
2. .h h. something that requi:res
3. cancelling things the whole time
4. so >in the end I've< (.)
5. not done anything >so I can do what I want to do<

00:02:09

Interactionally (at NPT Level 2), this story arose from Joellen's comment that it had been a long time since Mrs Crayne's visit. Mrs Crayne had laughingly agreed, saying "you can see it from about the three inches of grey". The story is thus most obviously designed to do accounting work for not having come to the salon, but also to account for having 'let herself go', to the extent of having so much of her grey roots showing. At NPT Level 1, Mrs Crayne's story here positions her as character at the extremes of busyness: she has had, repeatedly, to cancel things ('the whole time', l.3). This cancelling, though, is done to allow her to focus on what she wants to do (l.5).

Mrs Crayne initially mitigates her agency through citing obligation (she was 'required' to cancel things, with this emphasised through the elongated vowel (l.2)) (Duranti 2006b: 465ff). But this is then balanced by citing personal preference ('want', l.5), with this also emphasised. Her story thus manages two interactional projects. On the one hand, citing obligation manages the relational aspect of her long absence from the salon (which, after all, has an impact on Joellen's business). But given the way this story was occasioned, hair appointments come under the heading of the 'anything' (l.4) that she has not done; and by implication, these, and managing her appearance, is not something she *wants* to do. That is, despite the fact that her narrating self is sitting in the salon attending to her appearance, her narrated self is positioned as relatively uninterested in this. Her appearance is less important to her than another interest, which turns out to be her archaeology – which retrospectively locates the place of her story in an environment of mud and mess, contrasting with the cleanness and attention to style and tidiness of the narrating setting.

Like my other participants, in interview Mrs Crayne made claims to having other priorities for her time and money, having a 'fast routine', being 'naturally scruffy', and

so on. At the same time, she said she wanted her hair to look 'half decent', giving this as her reason for attending the salon. That is, she claims there is a minimum standard she wants to achieve, even if it is a much less demanding standard than that of my other participants. Thus Mrs Crayne orientates to her more enduring self – at least in talk in interview and through her talk and practices in the hair-salon – as a woman who is relatively uninterested in her appearance.

This brings me back to that break in the pattern with her pre-mirror appreciation. It is precisely at the point where a display of interest in her appearance might be expected, when she has to express appreciation and approval of what Bethan has done, that she makes a small move that displays her as uninterested in what Bethan has done to the back of her head. This supports her wider identity as something of a rebel in terms of caring about the importance of her appearance. Despite her presence in the salon having her grey roots coloured, despite this apparent investment in her appearance, she is 'really' uninterested in the outcome. This also has the effect of undermining a possible categorization as vain. Essentially, in her break in the usual appreciation pattern, Mrs Crayne has made for herself – potentially acting out of habit and less than fully consciously (Bucholtz and Hall 2005: 606) – 'a kind of 'wiggle room' within which hegemonic reproduction can be partially interrupted, or slid around' Erickson (2014 (2001): 174).

∞ ∞ ∞ ∞

In summary, putting a micro-analytic lens to the interview data reveals trouble in participants' responses to questions of mine which imply undue investment on their part in their appearance. This in turn points to a possible unwelcome category ascription associated with owing to such investment. The interviews also help us

understand the nature of this category ascription, namely being vain. This in turn leads us to revisit the other data, and as I showed with the case of Mrs Crayne, small and insignificant-seeming moves – breaks in the pattern of an appreciation; orientating to hair as side-business – which between them can construct appearance business as relatively *unimportant*, can be a way of avoiding a vain categorization.

4.7 Discussion and conclusions

In this chapter I have both shown how my participants display themselves as more or less invested in their appearance, and highlighted the older identities made relevant in this work. In doing this, I have drawn on detailed analyses of their narrative and other discursive and appearance practices in both interview and hair-salon.

The chapter has produced three over-arching findings. *Firstly*, this chapter has shown that participants display themselves variously as more or less interested and invested in their appearance in different interactional contexts. This variability of stance points to the *importance* of participants' appearance being a shifting concept, shaped, *inter alia*, by avoiding being categorized as 'vain'. The *second* main finding relates to the way that both older identities and *kinds* of older identity are made relevant for participants through the way they manage their appearance. *Thirdly*, this chapter has shown that narrative practices are an important resource for participants' management of their stances towards their appearance. Together, these findings contribute to prior research into older women's attitudes to their appearance; and build on the contribution made in Chapter Three to the under-researched area of older people's categorization and narrative practices. I now consider these findings in turn.

As discussed in Section 4.2, much prior research – both quantitatively-orientated self-complete questionnaires and in-depth interview-based studies – has argued that as women age, other aspects of their lives, such as health, assume a higher priority than their appearance (L. Baker and Gringart 2009; Hurd Clarke et al. 2008; Krekula 2007; Liechty 2012). Nevertheless, all studies highlight the continued investment of time in appearance practices. Through the micro-analytic approach adopted in this study and through analysis of participants’ appearance practices, my research is able to add nuance to these earlier studies in two ways. *Firstly*, as I showed, participants orientate variously to their appearance as routine, as having a *situated importance*, as having a situated *unimportance*, and as having a more enduring importance. They achieve these different stances *inter alia* through the detail of the design and duration of the hair-related sequences (consultation and appreciation); through the stories they tell to account for lapses or explain changes in their routine; and through taking up – or abdicating – a narrative stance, as I discuss below. The features I discussed with respect to the hair-related sequence are set out in Table 4.5.

TABLE 4-5 Features of consultation and appreciation sequences that display stance towards appearance

| Feature of Sequence | Consultation Sequence (N=24) | Appreciation Sequence (N=26) |
|--|--|---|
| Initiation | 88% (21) stylist-initiated | 96% (25) stylist-initiated |
| Design | 67% (14) of stylist-initiated sequences embed presumption of lack of change; client SPP accepts this in 13 instances (sometimes with minor clarifications) | 15% (4) have no (or non-verbal) client SPP |
| Narrativity | 42% (10) produced in narrative environment | 58% (15) produced in narrative environment |
| Duration, allowing more or less discussion | Mode 1-5 seconds (9 or 38%). 16 (67%) extend for 15 seconds or less | Mode 6-10 seconds (23 or 88%). 25 (96%) extend for 15 seconds or less |

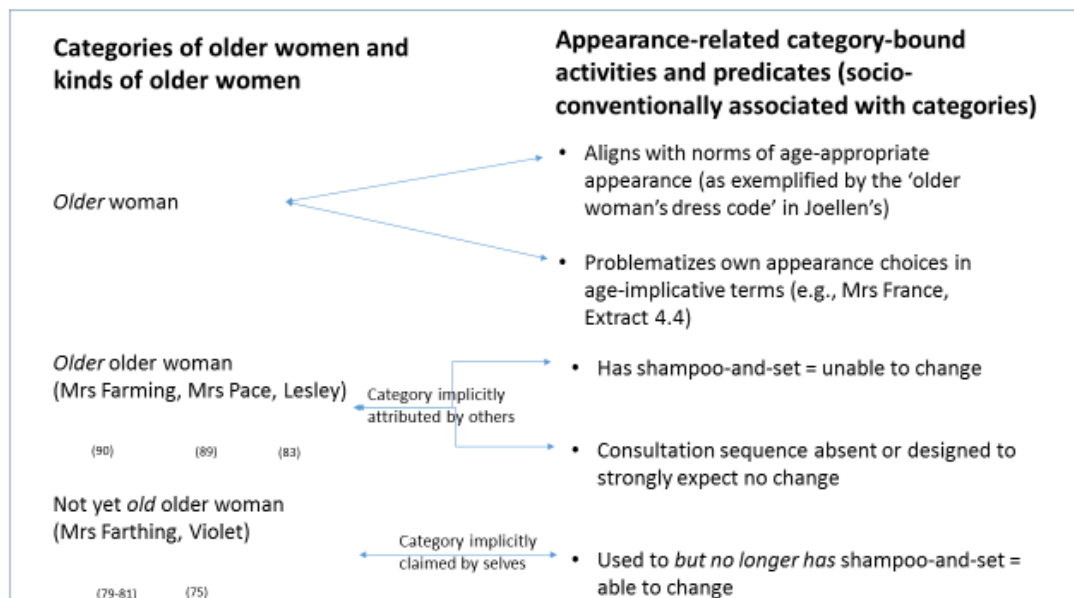
It is important to note that participants shifted their stance of interest/lack of interest towards the hair-work going on during the course of a single appointment. For example, they might engage in a consultation that orientates towards change, displaying interest in their hair, yet barely pause in their story-telling to deliver the appreciation SPP at the close of that same appointment. Taking these points together, what we see is the *situated nature* of participants' interest in and orientation to the importance to them of their appearance. Rather than being a static orientation it is a dynamically-changing and situationally contingent one, shaped by both other events going on in their lives and the immediacy of the sequential context and emerging interaction.

The second way in which my research adds nuance to earlier studies of the importance to older women of their appearance is through showing the way the desire to avoid the category 'vain' is a factor in the emerging interaction. I showed this through detailed analysis of participants' claims made in interview, demonstrating how my questions made relevant for participants the category 'vain', and the work done by participants to cast themselves in an alternative category.

The *second* finding of this chapter relates to the way certain kinds of talk and appearance practices can be seen to become, in this setting, CBAs of older women. For example, I suggested that dressing in a particular way or even problematizing the appropriateness of certain modes of attire for themselves, are CBAs of the category *older woman*, at least in this setting. These activities connect to the socio-cultural norms in westernized culture discussed in Section 4.2, whereby older women should avoid looking like 'mutton dressed as lamb' (Brooks 2010; J. Coupland 2009b; Fairhurst 1998: 258; Furman 1997: 116; Hurd Clarke and Griffin 2007, 2008; Hurd Clarke et al. 2009; Symonds and Holland 2008; Ward and Holland 2011).

Furthermore, participants' *hair-practices* may be treated as CBAs of *kinds* of older women. This is particularly the case for those having a shampoo-and-set. Other authors have shown that continuing to have this style may be seen as an attribute of older women (e.g., Symonds and Holland 2008). What I showed in Section 4.3.1 is the way in which that style, in denoting inability to change, may be seen as a CBA of a *particular kind* of older woman, that is, an *older* older woman. This category was further made relevant in the consultation sequences with clients who had shampoos-and-sets – or more accurately, the *rarity* of consultations with such clients. In not initiating such a sequence – or, as I showed in the case of Lesley, in designing the FPP of the sequence to *expect* no change – the stylist implicitly categorizes these clients as unlikely to change their style. In acquiescing in this lack of consultation those older clients accept this categorization. These two sets of associations are set out in Figure 4.4 below.

Figure 4-4 Categories of *kinds* of older women and associated appearance-related CBAs



Finally, I come to my *third finding* of this chapter, namely that a key resource used by participants to display their stances towards their appearance and its importance was story-telling. Participants used this in three main ways. *Firstly*, in interview in response to questions of mine (for example Violet, in Extract 4.2) or in the salon in talk with Joellen (for example Mrs France, in Extract 4.4) participants told stories relating to particular modes of self-presentation, style or attire that more-or-less explicitly positioned them in particular ways, for example, as still able to change (Violet), or as a ‘check shirt and jeans person’, somewhat uneasily adhering to a style that is a CBA of a younger women and thus possibly not quite consonant with respectable older womanhood (Mrs France). In these cases the focus of the stories was on appearance, and tellers were generally positioned as kinds of *older* people. *Secondly*, participants told stories whose focus was not appearance but which had their sequential occasioning in appearance talk as they served to account for or explain some lapse from or change to their appearance practices. *Thirdly*, participants told stories which had neither a focus on appearance nor were occasioned by appearance-related work in any obvious way. In these, where participants did what Georgakopoulou (2013b, in press (2016)) calls taking up a narrative stance towards the activity underway, their stories served mostly to position them powerfully as relatively uninterested in their appearance at the very point at which appearance might be thought to be the main focus – during the consultation or, more usually, the appreciation sequence. Conversely, occasionally – for example in some longer consultation sequences – participants did what I called abdicating their narrative stance; that is, *breaking off from* story-telling for a short period to focus on their appearance.

Of particular interest here is, *firstly*, that in contrast to the small stories identified in Chapter Three, in most of the small stories told during their doing of appearance work in the salon, older identities are not made relevant in any obvious way. In their story-

telling, participants construct for themselves *inter alia*: *female* identities – of women who want to look good for particular events; *non-vain* identities – of women who have other things than appearance work going on in their lives in general, and who are more interested in story-telling *now* than in their hair; and identities of busy *and active* individuals – as I discuss further in the next Chapter – who do not have time for their hair.

The *second* point of interest is in terms of interactional, *practice-based*, studies of narrative more broadly: through the detailed analysis of the taking up of a narrative stance, we see just how participants systematically in this setting create a context of story-telling rather than hair-work through that narrative stance-taking (De Fina and Georgakopoulou 2015: 3). My data show that it is not just *telling* a story but this context-creating of the ongoing activity as a story-telling that can be consequential for participants' identity positioning.

This chapter thus builds on the findings of Chapter Three in contributing to the under-researched area of older-people's quotidian story-telling. Unlike in participants' stories told as part of doing 'older-age' categorizations, in their stories told whilst engaged in doing appearance work, 'older-age' is often not made relevant, despite the theorised importance to older women of their appearance. 'Older-age' as a category is even less visible in the stories participants tell of recent and forthcoming events in their lives, as I discuss next.

Chapter 5 Doing being busy: ageing well in stories of daily life

5.1 Introduction

Retirement and older age are sometimes conceptualised as periods of emptiness and slowing down (Phoenix and Sparkes 2009: 231). To counter this perceived emptiness, being busy and active is evaluated in much gerontological academic writing as a positive thing for older people; it is seen as being conducive to their physical and mental well-being (see e.g., Bernard and Phillipson 2004; S. Biggs 2001; Ekerdt 1986; Katz 2000). Such theory informs government policy, and trickles down into media and popular discourse. Indeed, much research shows that many older people align to this positive view in their own talk of their daily lives (e.g., Jolanki 2004; Nosraty et al. 2015; Underwood 2011).

In this chapter I turn to the way my client-participants did 'being busy' in their talk in Joellen's Hair Palace; in particular, I examine the affordances and constraints offered to them by a particular discursive practice stereotypical of hair-salons (see Section 5.3.3). This discursive practice, the telling of what I call busy stories – accounts of recent and forthcoming events in the teller's life – is the stuff of not only salon talk but also more generally of both small talk between acquaintances and much catching-up talk between family and friends (Drew and Chilton 2000: 154-7). As will be seen, such stories rarely fit the canon of narratives of personal past experience but rather, fit the definition of small stories (Bamberg and Georgakopoulou 2008: 381) discussed in Section 1.6. In this Chapter I draw on a corpus of 167 episodes of busy story-telling from the 20 hours of audio-recordings of the hair-appointments to show how participants 'do being busy' through their in-salon busy stories. I draw on Narrative

Positioning Theory (NPT) (Bamberg 1997; Bamberg and Georgakopoulou 2008) to analyse these stories.

As a whole in this chapter I address what became – after analysis of my data, as I discuss in Section 5.3.3 – my third and final research question, namely:

- How do participants story their lives as more or less active, full and busy and how do salon discursive practices afford and constrain this storying?

In the next section, I discuss the literature on ‘being busy’ and show how my participants *in interview* orientated to the relationship between being busy and ageing well. In Section 5.3, I introduce the busy stories and argue for their quantitative and qualitative salience in Joellen’s Hair Palace. From this, in Section 5.4, I present the narrative and interactional features of busy stories. In Sections 5.5 and 5.6, I discuss, respectively, the way in which telling busy stories enables tellers to achieve active older identities; and the way in which discursive practices in the salon act as constraints for some tellers. Concluding in Section 5.7, I argue, firstly, that whereas in interview participants embraced ‘being busy’ as a means of ageing well, some participants in their salon-talk displayed more problematizing orientations to being busy. Secondly, I show the way in which participants are able to achieve identities of active and engaged older people through their busy stories regardless of the material circumstances of lives. Finally, I argue that a detailed examination of the narrative and interactional features of busy stories highlights two kinds of discursive constraints on the telling of busy stories and the kinds of identities achievable.

5.2 The importance of being busy

Academic research, government policy and popular thinking generally present a view of the importance of being busy and active as a means of ageing well. In this section I discuss these perspectives and then show how my participants in interview orientated to these social norms.

5.2.1 Successful ageing and the ‘busy ethic’: research perspectives

Work as a positive moral value has a long history in Western society. From the Calvinistic or Puritan orientation to ‘diligence, initiative, temperance, industriousness, competitiveness, self-reliance, and the capacity for deferred gratification’ (Ekerdt 1986: 239), work – and more generally, being active and productive – has been seen as ‘a wellspring of virtue’ (*ibid*). Indeed, Tsuji comments on how ‘keeping busy’ avoids the “sin” of wasting time’ (2005: 5). This *work* ethic may have dominated the lives of many older people (Bernard and Phillipson 2004: 367).

In a seminal paper, Ekerdt (1986) argues that the way in which people talk about keeping busy and its importance in retirement is a ‘*busy ethic*’ that acts as a parallel to this long-standing ‘work ethic’ and which ‘legitimate[s] the leisure of retirement’ (*ibid*: 241), as well as demonstrating older people’s continued productivity and worthwhileness. The morality of work or ‘being busy’ and the value of remaining active are both visible in the Discourse of successful ageing discussed in Section 1.4. This, as Calasanti and Slevin observe, ‘has at its central premise the necessity of staying *active*’ in older age (2001: 182, original emphasis). ‘Being busy’ is also, however, as Katz points out, a ‘disciplinary strategy’ (2000: 148); and it becomes a moral imperative to celebrate ‘an active body in old age’ as a route to well-being and

an antidote to decline and dependency (Andrews 1999). Activity in retirement and older age is thus presented as a way of countering depression, disengagement and loneliness for older people. It is also a way of managing time. Through participation in a range of activities time is both productively and pleasurably filled and structured (Tsuji 2005).

Just what constitutes this active, busy life is debateable. Ekerdt (1986) suggested that an orientation to the 'busy ethic' may range from blanket assertions of busyness (p.240) through to a precise specification of a range of activities, whether

'maintenance activities... involvement with children and grandchildren...part-time jobs, volunteering, or major life projects... [l]ess serious leisure pursuits (hobbies, pastimes, socializing)... as long as such pursuits are characterized as involving and time consuming' (1986: 240-41).

Minkler and Holstein (2008) suggested that the kinds of activity valued are those that contribute to either the economy or to civic life in some manner; whereas Nosraty and colleagues (2015) argued that their nonagenarian participants included both outward-looking activities, such as maintaining a social life with all the roles and networks this involves, and activities orientated to independent daily living, as among the key components of being busy and active. As Katz (2000) argued, precisely what 'counts' as activity, whether physical, civic engagement, social participation, learning – and how 'active' or 'passive' such activities are – are culturally-laden notions. Whatever it is, research studies show that participants tend to orientate to the positive value of being busy. For example, Jolanki found that her nonagenarians provided justifications if they were unable to claim to be active and busy (2004: 499); and Underwood showed how her older participants sought to position themselves competitively in conversation as busier than the other, thereby displaying the value of activity-filled days in the mini-culture of their friendship (2011: 2231).

This 'busy ethic' aspect of the Discourse of successful ageing translates in popular terms into, *inter alia*, government policies to encourage activity (see e.g., Bernard and Phillipson 2004; S. Biggs 2001; Department for Work & Pensions May 2015; Department of Health 2001); and a focus by the media – particularly those targeting the 50+ market – on fit, active and engaged older people. Thus Featherstone and Hepworth (1993) showed how as far back as the 1970s, 'retirement' for older people was being presented, in a magazine aimed at this group, as a time of activity and continued renewal. More recently, Lumme-Sandt in her study of a magazine aimed at the 50-plus age group found that older age is presented as a time for continued personal growth and development, with physical and mental activity commended, and with 'idleness and stagnation ... represented as characteristics of unsuccessful life, even in old age' (2011: 50). As Minkler and Holstein (2008) point out, though, older people unable or unwilling to engage in culturally-valued activities risk being stigmatized as unproductive and as 'burdens' (see too, e.g., Bernard and Phillipson 2004; S. Biggs 2001; Phillipson et al. 2008; Segal 2013).

In discussions *in interview*, my participants displayed a conformity to this cultural orientation, as they talked about the kind of social and community activities in which they were involved and how they were – or were trying to be – 'busy'.

5.2.2 Participants' interview positioning: ageing well through keeping busy

Upon starting my research I had imagined that participants' lives might be lonely, in line with some of the stereotypes outlined in Section 1.4; later, as I explain further in Section 5.3.3, I noted how many of Joellen's clients seemed to be in a rush. With this in mind, in the course of the fifteen hours of interviews with participants, I tried to develop the topics of participants' daily lives and routines, their social and other

activities, and their contacts with family and friends. In the accounts they offered of their day-to-day lives, all but Mrs Farming presented themselves on the whole as having diaries full of engagements, as having little time or, more generally, as being (or trying to be) very busy.⁴⁰ Mrs Sargent, for example, offered a detailed chronicle (see Section 2.4.3) of her weekly engagements; Mrs Crayne talked about taking up archaeology again after her husband died in order to meet people (thereby also avoiding a lonely positioning); and Mrs France spoke of her membership of an 'Active Retirement Club' before immediately dissociating herself from membership of that club on the basis of not having time.

Being active and busy was presented positively by participants. Violet, indeed, explicitly stated that being busy is good. Having recounted a tale of trying to fix a meeting with an old friend, and the difficulty of coordinating diaries to accommodate her friend's bowling club and her own 'club and all these other things', she concluded: "it's good that you're busy enough to (..) to not (..) rely on that". With 'all these other things', Violet constructs her life as full; with 'good' she orientates unequivocally to this full life as positive. Furthermore, with her use of the generic 'you' she casts the positivity of 'being busy' as a general truth.

This orientation to the wider social norms of the positivity of being busy in older age is shown clearly in the following story from Lesley, one of my participants who is

⁴⁰ Mrs Farming was not only the oldest of my participants but had also recently experienced a significant change in her circumstances as her husband of sixty years had died six weeks earlier. She claimed that there was not such a thing as time for her any more, a claim doubtless shaped by both the interview setting and those changed circumstances of her life.

unable to be as busy as she used to be. Her storytelling was triggered by an earlier question of mine, seeking to identify the role the hair-salon visit played in Lesley's life:

"what what is that outing for you (.) >I mean what is what is<
(..)oh >what am I trying to sa(h)y(h)< (.) .h have you always
(.) g:one to the (.) hairdressers once a week"

My characterization of the visit to the hair-salon as an *outing* can be heard as positioning the referent of the activity as a particular kind of older person: she is so immobile, so comparatively withdrawn from the world, that even such a mundane engagement constitutes an 'outing'. Lesley's subsequent response demonstrates that she hears my question this way, as she manages the balance between distancing herself from that positioning whilst simultaneously aligning to the wider norm of keeping active, social and busy.

Sacks (1973/1987) argues that participants normally display a preference for contiguity, whereby in responses they tend to first address the last part of a multiple turn. In line with this, Lesley first addresses the second part of my question by explaining that prior to moving to this town she used to have a mobile stylist come to her. Then, with a strongly articulated contrastive 'but', she provides an account to address the first part of my question.

Extract 5-1 Lesley (Interview)

01:08:04

1. Lesley er (.) BUT er (.)
2. I feel that er (.)
3. .h it's a a good thing for me to go (.)
4. out^side the door
5. Rachel right
6. (1)

7. Lesley and meet people and er (.)
 8. .h um (.) you know have a (.)
 9. erm (2)
 10. well a social ↑life real[ly
 11. Rachel [yeh [yeh yeh
 12. Lesley [you see
 13. Rachel yeh
 14. Lesley and of course I go out to:: (.)
 15. Eve's: people
 16. Rachel y[eh
 17. Lesley [their childr- her children[n
 18. Rachel [yup
 19. Lesley .h and so er (.)
 20. YES I HAVE A (.)
 21. I do have a social [life but (.)
 22. Rachel [°sure°
 23. Lesley .h not as (.) busy as I used to have
 24. Rachel right
 25. Lesley because er (.)
 26. well it er er you are limited (.)
 27. Rachel [yes
 28. Lesley [in what you can do
 29. Rachel yea[h
 30. Lesley [.h and I'm: (...)
 31. I'm er really working hard to (.)
 32. keep my self going
 33. Rachel yeah::
 01:08:52

That Lesley hears my question as positioning her as a withdrawn-from-the-world older person is indicated initially in her response in ll.1-10. On the one hand, in characterising getting out to the hairdresser's as 'a good thing', she orientates to the circulating social norms implicit in my use of the word 'outing' whereby getting out – 'being socially busy' – is a kind of activity that is 'good' for older people. On the other hand, her response is marked with signs of trouble: hesitations, repetitions, signs of reduced epistemic authority with 'I feel' (l.2) and appeals to her interlocutor, me, with 'you know', 'you see' (ll.8, 12). All these point to the work she is doing to distance herself from the positioning of withdrawn older person implied by my characterization of this mundane salon visit as an *outing* and which her assessment in ll.3-4 endorses. At this point, in ll.14-23, Lesley embarks upon a habitual story.

There are (at least) two factors that contribute to this storytelling. Firstly, and more distantly, Schiffrin (1997: 133) has argued that *wh*-questions in interviews, such as mine above, particularly in conjunction with longer reformulated questions (again, such as mine), are more likely to generate stories in response. In particular, she noted, such stories occur at points of conflict. Although, by the time Lesley starts her story we have travelled some distance from my *wh*-question, that question did generate some mild conflict, as shown by the trouble noted above. Secondly, my repeated 'yeh' in ll.11 and 13 displays my stance that Lesley has already made her point that getting out is a good thing (see Stivers (2004) for an account of the role played by multiple repeats of a unit of talk within a single turn by the same speaker). In so doing, it resurrects and reinforces that initial positioning of her as 'withdrawn older person'. Lesley's habitual story is designed to address the positioning implied in both my question and this most recent response.

In this story she is presented, as a character (NPT Level 1) as enjoying socialising with friends rather than only institutional acquaintances. But this Level 1 positioning is undermined at Level 2, interactionally, by the continued hesitations and repairs (ll.14, 17), indicating an awareness of the thinness of her story of sociability compared to many other people. Her story summary in ll.20-21, with its greater volume and stress on 'do', positions her as contesting the unspoken challenge about her life implicit in my question, namely that she needed to go to the hair-salon to get any kind of social life at all. This stress on having a social life also continues her positioning of sociability as positive, in line with circulating Discourses of 'ageing well'. It is immediately followed by a qualification of that social life: 'not as busy' (l.23). The explanation is given in a 'generic story' (ll.26-28) (Baynham 2011) that universalises the experiences of ageing and infirmity, and which is itself immediately followed (ll.30-32) by what is close to a personal 'habitual story' (Riessman 1990). Where the generic

story points explicitly to limitations, the personal story points to Lesley's personal agentic fight-back against those limitations. This retrospectively positions the mundane visit to the hair-salon as part of Lesley's 'work' (l.31) to assert control over her own ageing through keeping active and social in whatever way she can, even if her social life is 'not as busy' as she used to have. In short, any kind of activity, social life and getting out of the house are positive as part of keeping going – and ageing well – into older age.

In many of the accounts offered by participants there was no explicit connection with ageing; and indeed, in the interviews, I never explicitly associated topics such as participants' activities with ageing.⁴¹ However, the entire interview frame was one in which ageing was made more salient than in many settings due to my research orientations as well as the generational differences between many of my participants and me.⁴² It is thus not surprising that ageing was topicalised in the course of the conversation. What is more surprising is the way in which six of my nine client-participants made explicit associations between ageing and being *busy and active*.⁴³ Furthermore, all but Mrs Pace (whose interview was hurried, unprepared-for, and conducted in her car) made more *implicit* associations between being active and ageing well. Overall in their talk, participants presented the remedy for ageing as keeping active, involved and engaged. They did this through their personal stories of

⁴¹ See example interview guide, Appendix G.

⁴² See discussion 1.5.2, 1.8.3

⁴³ Lesley, Mrs Farthing, Mrs France, Mrs Sargent, Mrs Crayne, Mrs Little

ageing but also through telling stories of others who were ageing well, or, conversely, not ageing well.

These stories of others, of which there were twelve in the interviews, emerged in various ways. Sometimes they were related to my own age-related talk in pursuit of my research agenda, but at other times arrived disconnected from such overt reference to ageing. What these stories have in common is a focus on being busy or active in different ways as an approach to positive – and successful – ageing; that is, ageing that is contrary to stereotypes of withdrawn-from-the-world disengaged older people. This can be exemplified in the following extract which comes at the close of a story by Mrs Farthing of an acquaintance of hers, Catherine. This in turn was prompted by my question to her: “do you ever think about getting older yourself?”

In the story that precedes this extract Mrs Farthing has positioned the main character, Catherine, as not only looking lovely but also as mentally acute and independent.⁴⁴

Extract 5-2 Mrs Farthing (Interview)

00:43:37

1. Mrs Farthing .h £and ↑I thought£
2. well there the(h)re's ↑spi(h)rit for you
3. you know but (.)
4. she's very smart sh-
5. features are are beautiful you know
6. Rachel [mm
7. Mrs Farthing [>very< white hair
8. Rachel ri::gh[t
9. Mrs Farthing [(all ???)
10. (2)
11. Mrs Farthing so you see people like that you know [and
12. Rachel [mm

⁴⁴ See Appendix H.XV for the full story

13. Mrs Farthing you think (.)
 14. †oh well there's li(h)fe after
 15. ei(h)ghty ha ha [ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha
 16. ha ha
 17. Rachel [h... h...h...h...
 00:43:54

Mrs Farthing's alignment to the norm of remaining active and independent as a means of ageing well is expressed twice by both Mrs Farthing as a character in her story (at NPT Level 1) in Il.1-2 and through a generic story (Il.11-15) (Baynham 2011) that also does interactional work in acting as coda.⁴⁵ These two expressions of alignment to the norm of remaining active as a means of ageing well in Il.1-2 and 11-15 are connected through their parallel structures: I thought/you think; well there's/well there's; spirit/life. In this story, Catherine's positioning as a character (NPT Level 1) and that of Mrs Farthing at both Level 1 and Level 2 connect to wider social norms (at NPT Level 3) of 'ageing well', that, as discussed in Section 5.2.1, present remaining active and independent into old age as strongly positive. At the same time, in telling this story, Mrs Farthing positions her more enduring self as a person who tries to age well in this manner.

These attributes of continued independence and activity form part, too, of the stories of others told by other participants in interview. Furthermore, in all but one of these stories, the teller shifts at the end of her telling to a generic story with the use of either the 'generic you' as in Mrs Farthing's story above (Il.11-14) or a generalised 'they' to refer to 'older people'. Scheibman argues that 'because generalizations often make reference to societal norms, they are involved in the reproduction of belief systems' (2007: 126). These stories of others told by participants in interview show those

⁴⁵ See Section 1.6.1

participants' alignment to the societal norm of ageing well through remaining active. They also show participants evaluating that norm positively. They achieve this positive evaluation through both the story of the character – whether that character is positioned as someone to emulate (like Catherine) or to pity (as in some of the other stories) – and in the generic story that acts as a coda at the close of the main story.

∞ ∞ ∞ ∞ ∞ ∞

In the interactional context of the interview participants position themselves as *conforming* to the wider social norm of remaining busy and active in order to age well. They do this both implicitly, in talking of their own busy lives; and more explicitly, in telling stories of self and others that make connections between being active and ageing well. In the recordings of their hair-appointments, in contrast to the interview setting, participants made *no* explicit associations between being busy and active on the one hand, and ageing well on the other.

5.3 Busy stories in Joellen's Hair Palace

I identified 167 episodes of busy story-tellings by *client*-participants during the 20 hours of appointment recordings. In this section I introduce the types of busy stories in the salon before presenting the quantitative data on the distribution and frequency of these stories. I then show that although the duration of 'busy' tellings across these episodes accounts for just 7% of total recorded salon talk, these busy stories are nonetheless salient discourse forms in the salon.

5.3.1 Types of stories

I have called busy stories those episodes in which clients talk about their own recent or forthcoming activities. These are primarily 'catch-ups' and 'projections' (the latter term borrowed from Georgakopoulou (2007: 39)). Interwoven with these are also habitual stories of regular events, stories of ongoing activities and hypothetical stories.⁴⁶ I introduce the different types of busy stories with a brief discussion of each of the following three extracts.⁴⁷ I refer back to aspects of each of these busy stories in subsequent sections.

5.3.1.1 Catch-up (Mrs Pace)

Immediately prior to the following extract, Mrs Pace, Joellen, and Clare have been sharing stories about the Mother's Day cards they have or have not received. This story is initiated by Mrs Pace with a plot-line related to that prior topic.

Extract 5-3 Mrs Pace (Appt1)

13:55
1. Mrs Pace o:h oh yeh did I get the oth-
2. >I got the ↑other two all right<
3. [we went we WENT TO and we went to 41
4. Clare [°I already got mine°
5. Joellen oh right
6. Mrs Pace and it was <very very nic[e]>
7. Joellen [oh ↓good
8. Mrs Pace [oh::
9. Joellen [so have they changed hands a↑g[ain
14:07

⁴⁶ See discussion in Section 2.5.3 on these small story types.

⁴⁷ For further examples see Appendix H.XVI

Mrs Pace's utterance in Il.1-2 responds to Joellen's previous plotline about what her daughter-in-law said about having posted her card late. Mrs Pace then in Il.3-6 launches a related story, a 'catch-up', about where they went for lunch on Sunday. She does this in competition for the floor with Clare who makes a *sotto voce* plotline contribution to the previous 'Mother's Day cards storying' (l.4). The action of Mrs Pace's story is encompassed in a single turn, with the evaluation following in l.6. Joellen takes on an evaluator role in both signalling interest in the action (l.5) and satisfaction in the outcome (l.7). She then launches a related topic, about the ownership of '41', and talk continues on that theme, incorporating references to previous tellings of busy stories, for a further forty-two seconds.

5.3.1.2 Projection (Mrs Sargent)

Mrs Sargent's projection, in the next extract, follows on talk about the salon's opening hours over Christmas, which had fallen on a Wednesday that year. The salon-workers had been remarking on how this gave them a disjointed week. Like Mrs Pace in Extract 5.3, Mrs Sargent self-initiates her small story in Il.2-3, marking it as related to prior talk with the stress on 'I' in l.2, that positions her story as a 'second story' (Sacks 1995: Vol II,p.3) to Joellen's first.

Extract 5-4 Mrs Sargent (Appt2)

08:16

- | | | |
|-----|-------------|---|
| 1. | | (1) |
| 2. | Mrs Sargent | well <u>I</u> shall be back in my <u>charity</u> shop |
| 3. | | on <u>Friday</u> on the Fri[day |
| 4. | Joellen | [oh: |
| 5. | | so there you [are then] |
| 6. | Mrs Sargent | [HE HE HE] |
| 7. | Joellen | he he he he [he .h |
| 8. | Mrs Sargent | [but then I |
| 9. | Joellen | .h he |
| 10. | Mrs Sargent | I only <u>work</u> there once a week so |

11. Joellen he he he
 12. Mrs Sargent it's not that bad
 13. Joellen [no
 14. Clare [you know I might join a cycle club
 15. if I have the time ((*talk continues on this new theme*))
- 08:30

In this small story, Mrs Sargent gives her own working schedule over Christmas that demonstrates that like the salon-workers, she too will only have two days off. Following Joellen's news receipt ('oh', l.4) and evaluation (l.5), Mrs Sargent continues with a further, linked, busy story, this time an habitual one, in ll.8-12, that does the work of qualifying an aspect of her projection. On this occasion Clare, immediately after Mrs Sargent's utterance, launches a completely unrelated busy story, a hypothetical story, prompted by the sight through the large window of a troop of cyclists speeding by on the main road.

My final example is a mix of 'catch-up' and 'projection'. Unlike in the previous examples, here the client, Lesley, does not self-initiate her busy story.

5.3.1.3 Catch-up and projection (Lesley)

Here in l.8, after the preliminaries in ll.1-4 that constitute the 'how are you' sequence that is a frequent precursor to talk between salon-worker and client in Joellen's, Joellen explicitly elicits a busy story from Lesley, whose suggested plot-line focusses broadly on Lesley's activities of the past week.

Extract 5-5 Lesley (Appt2)

- 02:17
1. Joellen so you had a good ↑week
 2. (.)
 3. Lesley ↑YES (.)
 4. yes

5. (1.5)
 6. ((*Lesley clears throat*))
 7. (0.5)
 8. Joellen >whater you been up to<
 9. (1)
 10. Lesley well ((*clears throat*))
 11. I've done the washing (.)
 12. er it's dry
 13. I've got the ironing to do (.)
 14. and er ((*clears throat*))
 15. cooked dinners (.)
 16. I er
 17. (..)

18. Joellen not much the[n
 19. Lesley [not much really
 20. just just the ba(h)sic things ha ha
 21. (6)
 22. and then there of course there's tomorrow
 23. the (???)
 24. and er ((*clears throat, then continues*))
 02:52

What Lesley produces in response to Joellen's elicitation is a mix of catch-up of the activities she has done (washing, l.11, cooking dinners, l.15) and projection (ironing to do, l.13). She produces it as an unadorned list of activities. Joellen's sole contribution is to evaluate her account ('not much then', l.18), an evaluation with which Lesley agrees and then normalises ('just the basic things', l.20). Unlike with Mrs Pace, the story generates no further talk. After a six-second gap Lesley produces a continuation (with 'and') and launches a further busy story, a projection, relating to the next day's activities.

I refer back to these three stories in more detail as I discuss the plot components and, particularly, the narrative and interactional features of busy stories, but first I present the distribution and frequency of these busy stories as a whole.

5.3.2 Distribution and quantitative salience of busy stories

Table 5.1 below shows the distribution and frequency of the 167 episodes of 'busy storytelling' across each client-participant's recorded hair-appointments.

TABLE 5-1 Duration and frequency of busy stories by client-participants

| A | B | C | D | E | F | G |
|--------------|----------------------------------|-------------------|---|---------------------------------------|-------------------|--|
| | Client age at time of recordings | Total 'busy' talk | Clients' 'busy stories' episodes as % of appointment time | Total episodes of 'busy storytelling' | Episodes per appt | Range of duration of 'busy stories' episodes |
| Mrs Farming | 90 | 00:08:12 | 5% | 21 | 5.25 | 2s - 1m07 |
| Mrs Pace | 89 | 00:04:25 | 16% | 8 | 8 | 10s - 1m02 |
| Lesley | 83 | 00:03:29 | 3% | 6 | 1.5 | 9s - 1m33 |
| Mrs Farthing | 79-81 | 00:10:33 | 6% | 30 | 7.5 | 1s - 3m19 |
| Violet | 75 | 00:08:28 | 16% | 20 | 10 | 2s - 1m54 |
| Mrs France | 68 | 00:14:34 | 10% | 23 | 5.75 | 4s - 1m24 |
| Mrs Sargent | 67 | 00:05:19 | 7% | 14 | 7 | 9s - 1m02 |
| Mrs Crayne | 62 | 00:17:01 | 10% | 29 | 14.5 | 5s - 3m43 |
| Mrs Little | 55 | 00:06:44 | 3% | 16 | 4 | 10s - 0m36 |
| TOTAL | | 01:18:45 | 7% | 167 | | |

Column C highlights the duration of busy story episodes in each client's recorded appointments, with column D presenting this as a percentage of the total recorded appointment time. Columns E and F offer the data in terms of number of episodes, with column G showing the variation in duration of busy stories.⁴⁸

⁴⁸ See Appendix H.XVI for an explanation of how I calculated durations.

What immediately leaps out here is the lack of any obvious pattern in terms of relationships between participants' chronological age on the one hand, and number or frequency of busy stories on the other. For example, one of my oldest participants, Lesley, and the youngest, Mrs Little, tell the smallest number of busy stories – just 1.5 and 4 per appointment respectively. These episodes also constitute the smallest proportion of the recorded appointment time of each of these clients (3%). This lack of age-related patterning here contrasts with the patterns that emerged with respect to 'older-age' categorizations we saw in Chapter Three, and to a lesser extent with some of participants' appearance practices discussed in Chapter Four.

Also noticeable is the variety in length of the busy stories, ranging from the merest mention of one-second's duration in one of Mrs Farthing's appointments to a lengthy fully-fledged canonical story⁴⁹ of 3¾ minutes in one of Mrs Crayne's. I return to these points in Section 5.4.4 below.

A third point to stand out from Table 5.1 is that, as Column D shows, busy stories encompassed just 7% of the total recorded appointment time. This casts doubt on their salience. However, there are both quantitative reasons to support the salience; and ethnographic reasons that point to the salience of 'being busy' for *participants* (which I discuss in Section 5.3.3 below).

In terms of the quantitative reasons, firstly, in discussing busy stories I have included only stories told about the client's *own* activities. Thus I have omitted stories told about

⁴⁹ See discussion in Section 1.6.1.

the activities of, for example, friends and relations; I have also omitted the busy stories told by stylists. These latter, in fact, occurred considerably less frequently than clients' stories, with only some 50 such episodes across the data.

Secondly, as I show below (Section 5.4.5), half of all busy stories did indeed lead into further topically-coherent talk. This compares, for example, with only 16% of clients' own appearance-related talk generating further talk, and when it did, nearly half of *that* further talk concerned precisely the client's busyness. That is, busy stories are salient in terms of their sequential implicativeness.

Thirdly, and importantly, the telling of busy stories was one of the few discourse types that occurred in the appointment-talk of all nine client-participants; and, judging from my *wider ethnographic data*, appeared to have considerable importance for participants, as I discuss next.

5.3.3 Participants' orientations to the salience of busyness

During the appointment of Joyce, a shampoo-and-set client and active woman in her seventies, she and Joellen discussed Joyce's proposed gift of a hairdryer to a great-niece. They agreed that the girl, aged sixteen, would "definitely be doing her hair every day", upon which Joyce remarked: "don't know how they have the time." In this remark, not only did Joyce orientate to the normativity of *teenage* girls spending time on their appearance; she also positioned herself, by contrast, as *not* having time, at least, for her hair. In the course of their hair-appointments, participants at times explicitly orientated to being busy; that is, they used the term 'busy' and/or claimed not to have time to do things, including matters related to their appearance but also other non-specified activities.

Overall, across 20 hours of appointment data, five client-participants (Mrs Farming, Lesley, Mrs Farthing, Mrs France and Mrs Crayne) explicitly claimed busyness and/or lack of time for themselves 17 times. In addition, the salon-workers attributed busyness and/or lack of time to the client-addressee seven times. This *lexical* salience (that is, via explicit mentions of being busy/not having time) is shaped primarily by Mrs Farthing's uses, which account for nine of the total mentions of being busy. However, it resonated with my early impressions of busyness in the salon.

Early on in my research I had noted the way many clients in Joellen's gave the impression of being very short of time. In my field notes I described clients as 'bustling in', as moving 'briskly'. I heard them talk of their plans for the day and forthcoming week, and wonder aloud, as they perused their diaries, whether they could fit in particular activities, including extra hair-appointments. All this ran counter to stereotypes of lonely, withdrawn and, in particular, *inactive* older people. The impression of busyness was further consolidated in an early interview with Joellen when she spoke of the impatience of her older female clients in particular. A few months later, I drafted the memo that featured in Section 2.5.1.1 (see Figure 2.9), in which I mused on being busy as a theme. The salience of being busy for my participants was further confirmed by the way they made connections to being active and ageing well in their interviews, as discussed in Section 5.2.2.

Being busy is also related to stereotypical salon talk as promoted in the occupational publications of hairdressers. For example, Hairdressers Journal International (HJi)

advises nervous novice hairdressers on the art of engaging clients in small talk.⁵⁰ They highlight ‘the top five hairdressing small talk questions’ on which stylists can always rely, which include enquiries about holidays (past or future), forthcoming plans and seasonally related enquiries (for example, readiness for Christmas) (Sophieh 2007). These and similar kinds of question would probably be recognised by most women as the stock phrases of the stereotypical hairdressers’ ‘script’ (McCarthy 2000: 91). In fact, that they *are* recognised as such emerged in interview with Mrs Little. Responding to my question: “I wonder if that’s what Joellen does does she try to find out about you?” Mrs Little claimed:

Extract 5-6 Mrs Little (Interview)

Mrs Little: no actually I don’t think she has I think almost that’s one of the nice things about her the standard questions (0.5) she hasn’t sort of asked me have you been on holiday

Rachel:((*smiling*)) has she never asked you that

Mrs Little: no (.) she hasn’t

(Simplified transcript)

Although Joellen *has* in fact asked Mrs Little about her holidays on at least a couple of occasions (see e.g., Appendix H.XVI.d), the key here is Mrs Little’s recognition of what she calls the ‘standard’ nature of such questions.

⁵⁰ HJi is a subscription-based magazine for professional hairdressers launched at the end of the 19th century. It has a monthly circulation figure of over 13,000 per issue (2010/2011 figures, see <http://www.abc.org.uk/Certificates/17435550.pdf> [accessed 17th March 2015]), and organises the annual British Hairdressing Awards.

Summing up, busy stories are salient in the salon from a quantitative perspective, but also from a participant perspective, as revealed through observations, analysis of participants' explicit claims to be busy/not have time, and participants' orientations in interview. Finally, talking of past and future events is a stereotypical hair-salon discursive practice, in Joellen's as elsewhere, and recognised as such by at least some clients.

5.4 The narrative and interactional features of busy stories

Tellers' ability to 'do being busy' in talk – in terms of achieving affiliative responses from their recipients – is shaped by a range of interactional features of the busy stories in the salon. In this section, I start by examining the plot components of busy stories and what constitutes being busy. I then discuss their interactional features (following Georgakopoulou 2007: 40ff), drawing on the concepts discussed in Section 1.6.1 (p.67). Here I focus on the way busy stories are occasioned; the teller roles adopted, the tellability of the busy stories and salon-workers' response; the embeddedness of the stories; and their sequential implicativeness.

As I show, the majority of client-participants' busy stories are teller-initiated (80%). The minority practice is salon-worker elicited stories. In their responses to clients' busy stories, whether as plot-contributors or evaluators, salon-workers are overwhelmingly affiliative (on average, 77% of their responses are affiliative). There are, though, differences between clients, which I discuss in subsequent sections. However, I note now that, as with frequency, number, etc, of busy stories, these interactional differences do not either appear to correspond to age differences.

5.4.1 Plot components

Georgakopoulou (2007: 74ff, 92) argues that plot-line encompasses not only the events and activities of a story (including the ‘complication’), but also elements of what Labov called the ‘orientation’, the time and place of the story.⁵¹ She also suggests it encompasses interactional components – what characters said or thought, what Tannen (1986) calls ‘constructed dialogue’. Constructed dialogue does occur in participants’ busy stories, although relatively infrequently; similarly, different temporal orientations are visible across the corpus, with multiple temporalities sometimes occurring within a single telling (see, e.g., Lesley, Extract 5.5, p.302). However, it is notable that when responding to explicit elicitations, participants themselves focus first on activities and, sometimes more implicitly, characters and locations (see for example Extracts 5-11-A and B, p.335). In practical terms it is also difficult to summarise and compare elements of constructed dialogue and temporalities between participants in any but the blandest of terms. For these two reasons I focus in this subsection on comparing the characters, activities/events of the stories and the places in which they are located.

As Extracts 5.3 to 5.5 above and those in Appendix H.XVI show, activities encompassed in the busy stories are many and various. Appendix I displays the plot components for each participant – the characters who feature, the places in which the stories are located, and the activities and events recounted. In summary, tellers’ busy

⁵¹ See Section 1.6.1 for these terms.

stories include lunches with family or friends as in Mrs Pace's story in Extract 5.3 (p.300) and Mrs Sargent's in Appendix H.XVI.b; they can consist of solo visits to places of interest (Mrs Little's story in Appendix H.XVI.a) or organised trips to the theatre (Violet's story in Appendix H.XVI.c). They might simply be about the daily household chores and activities in the house and garden, as in Lesley's story in Extract 5.5 (p.302) and Mrs France's in Appendix H.XVI.f and g. Being busy also includes work, whether paid-work or, as in Mrs Sargent's story (Extract 5.4, p.301), volunteering; and going on holiday (for example Mrs Little and Mrs Sargent in Appendix H.XVI.d and e).

The plot components – characters, places, activities/events – of the busy stories told by some participants are less varied than those told by others. This is particularly the case for Lesley. In terms of places, her busy stories have a very restricted (set of) location(s): they are restricted to inside the home, whereas *all* other participants move both outside and away from the home in some their stories, even if infrequently. All but Lesley, Mrs Farming and Mrs Crayne include family members in their cast of characters. In terms of activities, all but Lesley and the two working women, Mrs Crayne and Mrs Little, include stories of sociability – of meeting people for meals of some kind whether in their own house or elsewhere. In short, overall, the plot components of Lesley's stories in particular are relatively limited compared with those of other participants. This lack of variety reflects the relatively restricted circumstances of her life as both observed and recounted to me in interview. Nevertheless, she, like the other participants, is still able to manipulate these plot components to 'do being busy' in talk. This suggests that what may be important, in terms of doing an identity as an active and engaged person, is not being busy in any objective sense of the word (whatever that might mean), so much as 'doing being busy' in talk, much as Ekerdt (1986) suggested (see Section 5.2.1). I develop this idea further in Section 5.5.

From the examples of busy stories in Section 5.3.1 we can extract some interactional features that are common to the busy stories in my corpus.

5.4.2 Local occasioning

Firstly, in terms of *occasioning*, one-fifth (20%) of the busy story episodes are initiated by the salon-workers eliciting a story. In all of these elicitations the salon-worker is initiating a new topic. This would seem to run counter to Jefferson's finding that 'stories emerge from turn-by-turn talk, that is, are *locally occasioned* by it' (1978: 220, original emphasis). However, I suggest that the local occasioning in evidence here stems from the prevailing stereotype of hair-salons exemplified by Mrs Little's comment in Extract 5.6 (p.308) above, wherein stylists are imagined as the *main* elicitors of stories about clients' recent and forthcoming activities. That is, such stories are locally occasioned by the expectations in the salon-setting of this particular narrative genre. Such elicitations generate, at least initially, 'catch-ups' about either the client's week, as with Lesley as in Extract 5.5 (p.302) above, or about activities the client is known or suspected to be involved in (for example, five of the eleven elicitations to Mrs Little relate to her Zumba); or projections about the client's plans for the day (see Extract 5.11-B, p.335) or holidays (see Appendix H.XVI.d and e).

Where the client self-initiates, and in line with Jefferson's findings, she generally makes her story coherent with local action in some way. She might construct it as a related topic (as in Extracts 5.3, p.300, and 5.4, p.301), possibly by producing it as a 'second story' (Sacks 1995: VolIII,p.3) (as in Extract 5.4). She might relate it to local activity (as Mrs Little does with her reference to a recent visit, talk about which she constructs as stimulated by her perusal of *Hello Magazine*, Appendix H.XVI.a). She

might occasionally, though, as with Violet in Appendix H.XVI.c, simply launch her busy story as a new story unrelated to prior talk.

Mandelbaum (2003: 611) observes that some utterances can be heard as 'brief announcements in their own right', but may also become tellings through recipient elicitation or initial speaker elaboration. Further, I argued in the discussion in Section 2.5.3 that utterances that signal the 'possibility of complainability' (Schegloff 2005: 455) can indicate that the speaker is adopting a narrative stance towards the possible complainable. In similar vein, Jefferson (1980, 1988) comments that downgraded responses to conventional 'how are you' enquiries, may signal possible a troubles-telling, a kind of story. Georgakopoulou's (in press (2016)) concept of narrative stance-taking is especially helpful here precisely because, in combination with an ethnographic understanding of local discursive practices, it helps us identify instances where the teller is analysably making an indirect bid to tell a story, even if no such story transpires (see discussion and example Section 2.5.3, p.145ff). As discussed in Section 2.5.3, this narrative stance-taking is where a teller signals:

'that the activity to follow, the activity underway or the activity that is indexed, alluded to, deferred, silenced, is a story' (Georgakopoulou in press (2016): 15)

Such ethnographic understanding reveals that claims to be busy (see Section 2.5.3) and complaints about being tired and too busy are both among the means in this setting of taking up a narrative stance; and as I show in Section 5.6.2, salon-workers sometimes *constrain* story-telling by refraining from eliciting a story when a client has analysably taken up a narrative stance in one of these ways.

As Table 5.2 below shows, more than half (17 or 52%) of all elicited busy stories are told by Lesley and Mrs Little. These clients are also unusual in that elicitation by a

TABLE 5-2 Modes of occasioning of clients' busy stories

| | Salon-worker elicited 'busy story' episodes | | Client self-initiated 'busy story' episodes | | TOTAL 'BUSY STORIES' |
|---------------------|---|--------------|---|--------------|----------------------|
| Mrs Farming | 2 | (9.5%) | 19 | (90.5%) | 21 |
| Mrs Pace | 1 | (12.5%) | 7 | (87.5%) | 8 |
| Lesley | 6 | (100%) | 0 | (0%) | 6 |
| Mrs Farthing | 3 | (10%) | 27 | (90%) | 30 |
| Violet | 2 | (10%) | 18 | (90%) | 20 |
| Mrs France | 1 | (4%) | 22 | (96%) | 23 |
| Mrs Sargent | 4 | (29%) | 10 | (71%) | 14 |
| Mrs Crayne | 3 | (10%) | 26 | (90%) | 29 |
| Mrs Little | 11 | (69%) | 5 | (31%) | 16 |
| TOTAL | 33 | (20%) | 134 | (80%) | 167 |

salon-worker constitutes the *main* (or in Lesley's case, the *only*) way in which their busy story-telling gets initiated. It is the case that both Lesley and Mrs Little were relatively new clients, having attended Joellen's for only 2½ years and 18 months respectively at the start of the appointment recordings. The other participants had been clients of Joellen's for more than eight years, with the clients of longest-standing, Mrs Farming, Mrs Pace and Mrs France, having attended for 20 to 30 years. Longevity of acquaintance might thus play a role here. This is in line with the suggestion of Jaworski (2000: 129) that small talk of this kind may most commonly be needed between mere acquaintances on the one hand and comparative strangers on the other. However, other, more personal, factors are also likely to play a role.

As far as Lesley is concerned, Joellen told me that Lesley liked to watch what goes on in the salon; and Lesley both in interview and in the salon confirmed this. This was demonstrated by her approach to the hood-dryer, when, unlike most other clients, she would gaze about her rather than bury her head in a magazine. Evidence of her

observation was offered by her detailed account to me in interview of the difference between Joellen's and Bethan's techniques.

Turning to Mrs Little, she informed me in interview that she was happy that the salon-workers chatted to each other so readily. She continued:

Extract 5-7 Mrs Little (Interview)

Mrs Little: I have been in places where you're supposed to be the centre of attention (Rachel: oh really) and everything yes revolves around around you (Rachel: right) and actually after a while that can be slightly (Rachel: ((laughs))) disconcerting ((laughs)) so the fact that if I'm not being very entertaining they can chat amongst themselves (Rachel: ((laughs))) I think is quite a good relief really ((laughs))

(Simplified transcript)

Furthermore, as discussed in Section 4.5.2, Mrs Little mostly orientated to her hair-appointment as a shared project related to her *hair*. This contrasts with the orientations to the hair appointments displayed by most of my other participants as an opportunity to *talk and tell stories*, as discussed in Section 4.4.3.

Overall, what is clear, as already indicated above, is that there are no correlations between manner of occasioning and age; that is, the patterns observed in Chapter Three and to a lesser extent in Chapter Four, of certain discursive practices being loosely associated with chronological age, are not in evidence here.

The different modes of occasioning shaped to some extent the *teller roles* adopted by participants and the tellability criteria of the stories. This brings me to the second set of interactional features I want to discuss.

5.4.3 Teller roles, tellability and salon-worker responses

As discussed in Section 1.6.1, teller roles have long been recognised as being more complex than a binary of story-teller/story-recipient. As I showed in that section, all participants – whether silent or actively contributing – shape the telling; that is, all tellings are co-constructed. As I explained, this means that story-telling involves multiple – or even distributed – tellership (Georgakopoulou 2007: 57; C. Goodwin 2007a: 37, 43; Mandelbaum 2013: 501; Norrick 2000: 57ff; Ochs and Capps 2001: 24ff).

Two important teller roles are making plot-contributions and evaluations (or assessments). As noted in Section 5.4.1 above, plot-contributions encompass *inter alia* the characters, time and place, events and activities of the story (Georgakopoulou 2007: 92), whilst evaluations display both tellers' and recipients' stance towards what is happening at that point in the story and to the point of the story as a whole (Mandelbaum 2013: 493; Stivers 2008). In this section I use the terms evaluation and assessment interchangeably since my primary focus is on whether salon-workers display positive or negative affective stances towards the telling as it emerges.

Story-teller roles can be performed to affiliate with the speaker (or the stance they have adopted) or to disaffiliate with them. Affiliation, encompasses, for example, ratification of the plot-line, offering an evaluation of the story that aligns with that of the speaker. Disaffiliation, conversely, includes, for example, delegitimation of the teller's plot-line or producing evaluations at odds with those of the speaker (Georgakopoulou 2007: 57, 94). In practice the two roles of plot-contributor and evaluator can merge, as a speaker may, for example, produce an *evaluation* via a second 'small story' that offers either a related or different *plot-line* (Stivers 2008: 50).

The key focus in this chapter is on the way in which the discursive practices of the salon afford or constrain different possibilities of 'doing being busy' through clients' busy stories. Whether salon-workers produce affiliative or disaffiliative contributions is of principal importance. Thus in Table 5.3 below, which presents the salon-workers' responses to participants' busy stories, plot-contributions and evaluations have been combined.

TABLE 5-3 Salon-workers' affiliative and disaffiliative responses in plot-contributor and evaluation roles

| Participant | Total 'busy stories' | Total affiliative salon-worker responses (plot and evaluation) | | Total dis-affiliative salon-worker responses (plot and evaluation) | | Total salon-worker responses |
|---------------------|----------------------|--|-----|--|-----|------------------------------|
| | | | % | | % | |
| Mrs Farming | 21 | 21 | 70% | 9 | 30% | 30 |
| Mrs Pace | 8 | 14 | 88% | 2 | 12% | 16 |
| Lesley | 6 | 8 | 67% | 4 | 33% | 12 |
| Mrs Farthing | 30 | 29 | 67% | 14 | 33% | 43 |
| Violet | 20 | 32 | 91% | 3 | 9% | 35 |
| Mrs France | 23 | 50 | 86% | 8 | 14% | 58 |
| Mrs Sargent | 14 | 21 | 88% | 3 | 12% | 24 |
| Mrs Crayne | 29 | 30 | 68% | 14 | 32% | 44 |
| Mrs Little | 16 | 31 | 97% | 1 | 3% | 32 |
| Totals | 167 | 236 | 77% | 58 | 23% | 294 |

As this Table shows, salon-workers overwhelmingly produce affiliative responses, with these occurring on average more than three-quarters of the time (77%). There are, though, distinct differences between participants, with a larger proportion of disaffiliative moves occurring in the busy stories of Mrs Farming, Lesley, Mrs Farthing and Mrs Crayne than occur with the other participants (approximately one-third of salon-workers' responses to each of these tellers' stories).

Disaffiliation may occur for a range of different reasons, including salon-worker distraction and mood. However, in Lesley's busy stories there are distinct disaffiliative

moves around the tellability of her stories; whereas with Mrs Farming and Mrs Farthing, disaffiliative moves centre primarily on the stances both these women adopt that problematizes aspects of being busy. These problematizing stances are taken up, too, by Mrs France, but constitute a smaller proportion of her total busy storytelling, resulting in a smaller proportion of disaffiliative moves.⁵²

The case of Mrs Crayne is different. Examination of the salon-workers' disaffiliative moves in her busy stories shows that these occur primarily in argumentative sequential contexts, for example, where Mrs Crayne and the salon-workers are telling hypothetical busy stories about places to which they might travel. In these sequences, Mrs Crayne, too, produces disaffiliative plot-contributions and evaluations. The salon-workers all spoke of how Mrs Crayne talks a lot, 'has a lot to say', such that they cannot 'get a word in edgeways'. Whilst neither observation nor the audio-recordings support this latter contention, I suggest that Mrs Crayne's forceful, forthright manner is such as potentially to engender a higher proportion of disaffiliative moves from salon-workers than is the case with many of the other clients.

There are relationships between the way stories are occasioned in salon-talk and the kinds of teller roles adopted. Thus in self-initiating a story the client simultaneously contributes to the plot at least initially. Salon-workers' *plot-contributions* to busy stories initiated by clients tend to be confined to asking prompting questions (as in I.4 of Appendix H.XVI.b with Mrs Sargent), or inserting minimal second stories that,

⁵² See Section 5.5 and 5.6.1 for a discussion of Lesley's case and Section 5.6.2 for Mrs Farthing and Mrs Farming.

through affiliating or disaffiliating with the client's first story, also perform evaluative work (see e.g., Mrs Little, Appendix H.XVI.a, ll.8-9).

In elicited busy stories, on the other hand, the salon-workers' plot-contribution role is more overt. In eliciting they tend to shape all three of topic, temporality and duration (at least initially). For example, in Extract 5.5 (p.302) with Lesley, Joellen's question focuses on *what* Lesley has been doing, *when* (in the past) and *over what time period* (the preceding week). Salon-workers also contribute to the plot through prompt-questions or reciprocal story-telling. Salon-workers' *evaluations*, in both client-initiated and salon-worker elicited busy stories, generally affirm the tellability of the story or something about that story (as in Extracts 5.3, p.300, and 5.4, p.301 above). That is, as already shown in Table 5.3 (p.317) above, they are *affiliative*. Joellen's non-affiliative response to Lesley in Extract 5.5 is unusual in the audio-recordings, though less so in terms of my observation.

There are also relationships between the occasioning and tellability of busy stories. What we rarely see in Joellen's are any extended 'story prefaces' of the kind discussed in Section 1.6.1. Instead, the teller simply launches her 'small story' with minimal announcement – as did Mrs Pace and Mrs Sargent in Extracts 5.3 (p.300) and 5.4 (p.301); and see too the examples in Appendix H.XVI. The purpose of a story preface is both to enable the teller to hold the floor for several turns by aligning the potential recipient as *story* recipient; and to encapsulate the point or 'tellability' of her story (e.g., Sacks 1995: VolIII: 222ff). In Joellen's, this lack of pre-alignment means there is sometimes competition for the floor from either others present or other tasks. On such occasions, as Mrs Pace did with her repetitions and raised volume in Extract 5.3 (l.3, p.300), clients have to make an effort to get heard. However, in simply launching her busy story the client-teller sets up no criteria for its tellability.

When, though, the salon-worker *elicits* a story from the client, she positions her as a teller; in taking up a narrative stance to what is going, the client displays acceptance of this positioning. Implicit in such a positioning is a claim to the tellability of any subsequent story. This is even more the case if, as we shall see, a prior indirect bid to tell a story – for example, a prior claim to have been ‘busy’ – has been made. In such cases tellers may engage in work to distance themselves from the implicitly claimed tellability of their stories in such elicited tellings.⁵³

5.4.4 Embeddedness

The third interactional feature of the busy stories concerns their *embeddedness*. This embeddedness takes three forms. Firstly, busy stories are sequentially embedded in the surrounding talk. They are generally very brief. The most *frequent* story length (the mode) is just 6-10 seconds, and two-thirds of the stories (110) are 35 seconds or shorter. These facts highlight quantitatively what a close look at the data shows qualitatively, namely that busy stories on the whole are done almost as asides that emerge from and elide into further talk. I take Extract 5.3, Mrs Pace’s story, as an example, reproduced below for convenience:

Extract 5-8 Mrs Pace (Appt1)

- 13:55
1. Mrs Pace o:h oh yeh did I get the oth-
2. >I got the other two all right<
13:59
3. [we went we WENT TO and we went to 41

⁵³ See Section 5.6.1

4. Clare [°I already got mine°
 5. Joellen oh right
 6. Mrs Pace and it was <very very nic[e>
 7. Joellen [oh ↓good
 14:05
 8. Mrs Pace [oh::
 9. Joellen [so have they changed hands a↑g[ain
 14:07

Prior to Mrs Pace's story launch in I.3, talk had centred on who had or had not received Mother's Day cards from which relative. Clare is still pursuing that topic (I.4) as Mrs Pace initiates her story, marking it with 'and' (I.3) as a continuation of the prior overarching theme. As Extract 5.8 shows, the story itself is just six seconds long, as Joellen then picks up on Mrs Pace's positive assessment to start a related topic (in I.9) which participants follow for some time, with further positive evaluations of the meal and a reference to a prior busy story. In essence, Mrs Pace's very brief busy story acts as a link in a chain between the two topics on each side as part of a longer sequence on 'Mother's Day'.⁵⁴

The reference to a prior busy story also points to the second kind of embeddedness of busy stories, namely the way each individual story-telling is embedded in the participants' longer interactional histories. Not only are there references to prior tellings; also, each busy story is both dialogically shaped by prior tellings and shapes future tellings. This shaping can relate to content, where prior tellings can be built on in a current telling. In addition, though, patterns of ways of telling and responding are

⁵⁴ It is worth noting that this 'bridging' role of busy stories is a feature of a number of them; they also – in line with the action-orientation of stories discussed in Section 1.6.1 – achieve a range of other functions including supporting an argument, complaining, entertaining, etc. At the same time – highlighting the multi-functionality of stories – they serve to construct the teller as active and engaged.

established that are only occasionally broken. I develop this aspect further in Section 5.6.1 below.

Thirdly, busy stories all occur in what Goodwin (1984: 227) calls 'multi-activity settings'. That is, they are also all tightly integrated into and embedded in the task-based activities of the salon – shampooing hair; affixing rollers and pins, perm rods or foils; cutting, styling and so on. It was rare, in fact, to see Joellen pause from her styling/cutting work during talk in the salon. Mrs Farming's tale of hanging curtains is a clear example (see Extract 3.27, p.210). There she tells her story in between Joellen's hair-spraying and the showing of the mirror. (See too, for example, ll.11,13,19 of Mrs France's story in Appendix H.XVI.f, and Extract 5.10, p.327, below.) Furthermore, as shown by Mrs Farming's busy story in Extract 3.27 and the 'in-passing' consultations and appreciations discussed in Sections 4.4.3, salon work is also often embedded in, and constituted as side-business to, the telling of busy stories; that is, the two activities of task and story-telling are closely interwoven. This means, firstly, that the salon-worker recipient's responses are sometimes delayed; and secondly, that client-teller and salon-worker recipient cannot always see each other (as, for example, in Extract 5.10 below, when Lesley is bending forward over the front-wash basin).

Not all busy stories seem as sequentially embedded as those told by Mrs Pace above. For example, four of the six longest stories, all initiated by clients, are told more clearly as stand-alone stories.⁵⁵ Even these, though, include references to prior tellings and

⁵⁵ See example, Violet's tale of her visit to Bromely, Appendix H.XVI.c.

shared histories. Salon-worker elicited stories might seem to be the least embedded. Certainly, being explicitly elicited by salon-workers, they stand out more obviously from the surrounding talk as 'stories', as with Lesley's in Extract 5.5 (p.302) above. Nevertheless, these stories, too, 'present an inter-relationship with the participants' shared interactional history, with previously experienced events, previous stories' (Georgakopoulou 2007: 58).⁵⁶

5.4.5 Sequential implicativeness

The fourth interactional feature of the busy stories in Joellen's Hair Palace is the way they shape, more or less, the ongoing talk. Jefferson argues that: 'upon their completion, stories re-engage turn-by-turn talk, that is, are *sequentially implicative* for it' (1978: 220, original emphasis). In Extract 5.8 (p.321) Mrs Pace's story generates a related discussion about the ownership of the restaurant; Mrs Little's story of Purley Manor in Appendix H.XVI.a leads into a discussion of the flowers at that time of year; and so on. Overall, though, just 50% of the busy stories lead turn-by-turn into talk that participants construct as coherently linked with the prior story.

There are a number of reasons to account for the *lack* of sequential implicativeness in the remainder of participants' busy stories. Sometimes, as with Mrs Sargent in Extract 5.4 (p.301) above, another participant launches a completely unrelated topic. At other times the end of the story coincides with the end of that stage of the treatment and the salon-worker extracts herself from the talk to turn to other business and clients (as in Extract 3.27, p.210, with Mrs Farming). There is some evidence that in such

⁵⁶ See Lesley's case, Section 5.6.1.

cases the client *does* nevertheless still sometimes try to ensure continued talk, relevant to the story; that is, that she tries to make it sequentially implicative as Jefferson claims.⁵⁷ In yet other cases, the client's story comes to an end with no take-up by the salon-worker or *implicativeness* for further talk, even though *no* other participant has interjected with a different topic and the treatment stage has *not* yet ended. On occasion, the client then lapses into silence. Alternatively, she herself pursues talk, as with Lesley in Extract 5.5 (reproduced below as Extract 5.9 for convenience), which again shows tellers' efforts to make their stories sequentially implicative.

Extract 5-9 Lesley (Appt2)

02:17
 1. Joellen so you had a good ↑week
 2. (.)
 3. Lesley ↑YES (.)
 4. Yes
 5. (1.5)
 6. ((*Lesley clears throat*))
 7. (0.5)
 8. Joellen >whater you been up to<
 9. (1)
 10. Lesley well ((*clears throat*))
 11. I've done the washing (.)
 12. er it's dry
 13. I've got the ironing to do (.)
 14. and er ((*clears throat*))
 15. cooked dinners (.)
 16. I er
 17. (..)
 18. Joellen not much the[n
 19. Lesley [not much really
 20. just just the ba(h)sic things ha ha

⁵⁷ See discussion of end of Mrs Farming's story of Extract 3.27, Appendix H.XVI.j

21. (6)
 22. and then there of course there's tomorrow
 23. the (???)
 24. and er ((*clears throat, then continues*))
 02:52

Here, Joellen's evaluation in l.18 prompts agreement from Lesley, whose laughter in l.20 manages this potentially face-threatening moment. Joellen does not then build on the topic or initiate a related topic. After a gap of six seconds, Lesley continues her story-telling. Schiffrin (1987: 142ff) shows how 'and' can be used by speakers to mark what they are saying as a continuation of, and progression from, their prior talk. Here Lesley uses such a turn-initial 'and', combining it with 'then' to mark *temporal* as well as *thematic* progression of her prior story. She thereby retrospectively constructs that prior story as not yet complete.

∞ ∞ ∞ ∞ ∞

This section has discussed the interactional features of busy stories. Extracts 5.3 to 5.5 (pp.300 – 302) above and those in Appendix H.XVI, along with Appendix I, have shown how mundane the activities encompassed by busy stories can be. As I suggested, though, and as I discuss in the next section, the more restricted plot components of some participants' busy stories do not prevent their stories from generating affiliative responses from salon-workers and ratification of their active and engaged identity positionings.

5.5 Ageing well: a case study

As Table 5.3 (p.317) above showed, salon-workers overwhelmingly offer affiliative responses to clients' busy stories. In adopting these affiliative teller roles, salon-

workers support clients' work of constructing positive identities as people who are active and engaged in life. I show this through consideration of the case of Lesley.

As already noted, the restricted places and activities of Lesley's busy stories reflect the fact that the circumstances of her life were also the most constrained of all my client participants. In particular, observation showed that she was one of the least mobile of them all; and, as I learned from both her and her friend/carer, as she was relatively new to the area, she had only a small local network of family and friends. Nevertheless, focussing on Lesley is instructive in showing that such material circumstances do not inhibit the construction of active and engaged identities through the telling of busy stories in Joellen's Hair Palace. This story-telling sequence also shows how an *older* identity is implicitly made relevant in the structures of talk. I start by presenting the sequence. In the second sub-section I discuss the way Lesley achieves ratification and sequential implicativeness for her story; in the third, I show how older identities are made relevant.

5.5.1 Lesley's story: supporting a claim to have been busy

The extract below presents the second and third busy stories of a longer busy storytelling sequence. At the start of Extract 5.10 below, Joellen is washing Lesley's hair at the front-wash basin (see Figure 2.5, p.103) and prior to this Lesley had produced a short 'chronicle' (see Section 2.5.3) about her prior week (the *first* story of the sequence, which I discuss in Section 2.6.1 below). Joellen had elicited this in response to Lesley's claim to have 'been busy', saying: "been ↑busy, what've

you been up to this week then".⁵⁸ Following Lesley's chronicle, a silence had ensued. After a gap of four seconds (l.1 below), Lesley resumes with a second story (ll.2-15) and then a third (ll.17-58).

Extract 5-10 Lesley (Appt 1)

03:15
 1. (4)
 2. Lesley well I don't know where the wee-
 3. th- the er <da:ys go> (.)
 4. but the morning seems to have FLASHed past
 5. as if it (.)
 6. as if (it's) on <all whe↓els>
 7. (3)
 8. Joellen does cert- it does (.) <fly by>
 9. doesn't i[t
 10. Lesley [oh: I should say so
 11. [((Sound of running water re-starts
 as Joellen rinses Lesley's hair))
 12. (1)
 13. ever so (quick)
 14. (1)
 15. (<really quick>)
 16. (1)
 17. 'n I suddenly woke up this morning an
 18. thought (.)
 19. .ho↑h (..)
 20. I don't know
 21. I've got a <nasty suspicion>
 22. it's my friend's birthday (.)
 23. and [my other friend's birthday
 24. [((Sound of running water stops as
 Joellen shampoos Lesley's hair))
 25. and I said (.)
 26. oh I (must see there's (.) one (??? ???))
 27. on the twenty seventh
 28. and the other's on the thirtieth (.)
 29. so: (..)
 30. I had to go up to the (.)

⁵⁸ See Extract 5.11-A, p.335 below. I am indebted to the participants of the Micro Discourse Analysis (MDA) data session of 15th October 2015 for their comments on this extract and Extract 5.11-A below.

31. address book
 32. and ye:s sure enough (.)
 33. Joellen [tcha
 34. Lesley [I was right (.)
 35. so I had to get <cards out>
 36. and (1)
 37. then the water (.) p- people (.)
 38. Southern Water wanting (.) money
 39. (1)
 40. `n then there's the
 41. £milk people£ wa(h)nting
 42. mo(h)NEY
 43. I [thought (.) I DON'T
 44. Joellen [↑oh £everyone wants money£
 45. Lesley ye(h)s(h): he he
 46. I thought we(h)ll I do(h)n't go ou(h)t
 47. but I se(h)em to SPE(h)ND MO(h)NEY VERY
 48. RA(h)PIDLY [he he he he he
 49. Joellen [he he
 50. Joellen oh £yeah you don't have to go out to
 51. spend£ it do yo(h)u [he he he .h
 52. Lesley [NO:
 53. (...)
 54. Lesley £you just stay in[doors
 55. Joellen [ye^ah
 56. Lesley and that'll spend your money£
 57. (.)
 58. Lesley quicker than anything
 04:35

As I will show, by the close of the second story of this long sequence (II.2-15) Lesley has achieved some positive self-positioning for herself, but only weak ratification of her 'busy' claim and no sequential implicativeness for her story. By the close of the third story (II.17-58), she has both consolidated that positive self-positioning and achieved sequential implicativeness for her story.

5.5.2 Achieving an active and engaged identity positioning and story sequential implicativeness

In terms of the local occasioning of this story, Lesley's turn-initial 'well' (I.2), combined with her expressed puzzlement as to where time goes, constructs her new start *both* as a retrospective comment on the insufficiency of her first story (her chronicle) that

she gave in response to Joellen's original elicitation question, *and* as a continuation of that first storytelling in the form of a *second* story. Having previously given a bare list of activities to substantiate her claim to have been busy, she now, in I.2, shifts from busyness to call on a common stereotype of rapidly passing time. Where Joellen's initial plot initiation, produced through her elicitation question "what've you been up to this week then?" had focussed on 'this *week*', Lesley now moves through progressively smaller units of time from week to days through to this morning (II.2-4). In terms of the characters (at Level 1), it is time, in the shape of days and particularly the morning, that takes centre stage. Lesley is only by implication a character seeing the morning 'flashing by' and finding (by implication) that she has done so little.

Interactionally (at NPT Level 2) Lesley's delivery is animated, through both prosody (changes of speed, volume, and emphasis, e.g., I.3, <da:ys> ; I.4, FLASHed), and use of simile (of the morning as a road-bound vehicle of some sort). This story is no longer a bare list of activities but a verbal picture of a common experience, which Lesley positions herself as familiar with. That is, she positions herself as quite other than a withdrawn-from-the-world person.

After a gap, a short assessment sequence ensues. Joellen produces, in I.8, an assessment that moves from the particularity of Lesley's morning to the generality of time flying by. Lesley picks up in overlap and produces three further assessments. Lesley's turn is complete at the end of each of II.10, 13, and 15, but Joellen makes no further contribution. Simultaneous with this, Joellen is shampooing Lesley's hair, and as she produces her agreement in I.8, she starts to rinse out that shampoo. Thus although the gaps in the talk are long, part of that length may be attributable to the coordination of task and talk. However, observation suggests that Joellen was usually able to talk whilst continuing her hair-work (and see, for example, Extract 5.11-B,

p.335, below and Extract 3.27, p.210). Whatever the reason, Lesley's story looks like coming to a close at this point. She has achieved some positive self-positioning, but no further story-related talk.

In I.17, Lesley embarks upon the *third* busy story of this long story-telling sequence. She marks it as a continuation of her prior telling both with the turn-initial "n" and with 'suddenly', that indicates the onset of a complicating action to the former story of time flashing by. In line with this temporal orientation, this story is located that very day – the 'morning that flashed by' of I.4. Where in the second story the character of the telling was units of 'time', which were positioned as moving so fast as to be unseeable, in this story the central character is Lesley. Here, from I.17 she herself is positioned as fast: the move from sleeping to waking that morning is 'sudden' (I.17); she was fully alert and thinking (I.18). As the story emerges we see her developing a new positioning of herself as other characters enter. She has a network of contacts, friends to whom she likes to send cards (II.22-23); and she is alert and efficient – she has a means of checking dates and has cards available to send (II.27-28, 30-31, 35). Then yet more characters enter the story – the water and the milk people seeking money (II.37-42), positioning Lesley as dealing with the juggling of finances just as most people do.

In I.44, Joellen comes in with a generalisation on this theme that ratifies Lesley's latest plot-line, and, with her audible smiling, affiliates with the laughter already audible in Lesley's talk. In I.46ff Lesley recycles the punch-line started in I.43, still laughing. Although here she positions herself *qua* character as largely house-bound (I don't go out, I.46), she has also positioned herself as amusing (this is what she thought *then* (I.46)), as well as being financially alert to add to her speed (from sleeping to waking), efficiency, and friendship-links.

Deppermann (2013) has demonstrated how Level 1 positioning shows the participants' claims to wider biographical identities when they are themselves characters in the story. Here, as Lesley is bent forward over the basin, her Level 1 positioning makes a claim to an active self that goes beyond the current immobility of her narrating-self. Furthermore, in terms of the Level 2 positioning, through her lively telling with its use of descriptive adjectives, the reported thought and speech that together engender more involvement (Tannen 1983, 1986), and through the laughter, Lesley achieves a positioning for herself in this interaction as alert, lively and competent.

This is a positioning that Joellen now endorses, as in II.49 she joins in fully with Lesley's laughter, laughing with Lesley rather than at her (Glenn 2003: loc1322; 2013: loc7073). She further ratifies Lesley's plot-line, acknowledging (II.50-51) that her larger identity as a predominantly house-bound woman does not preclude her from knowing about and experiencing everyday concerns. From this point, the talk develops into a more general discussion of water-usage and a possible hosepipe ban. In summary, Lesley has achieved ratification of her third story-plot, and positive evaluation of, and sequential consequentiality for, her story.

Compared to the plot components of other tellers discussed in Section 5.4.1, what Lesley recounts does not appear particularly exciting or obviously tellable. In this sequential context, though, Lesley constructs a tellable busy story, and Joellen's laughter and subsequent plot contributions display her as receiving it as such. The important factor is the way Lesley has constructed these rather mundane activities into a story that positions her as a person who is independent, connected to the world, mentally-alert and witty (a positioning confirmed by Joellen's reciprocal laughter). She

has thus (implicitly) also positioned herself as ageing well. But what of orientations to Lesley as *older*?

5.5.3 Orientations to older identities

In this sequence, in common with the majority of the busy stories, there is no explicit reference to 'older-age' identities. However, occasionally an orientation to older identities is visible in the structures of talk. In my busy story data, this orientation centres primarily on contests around rights to claim particular kinds of busyness. I suggest that in Extract 5.10, it is an orientation to older identities that shapes the assessment sequence in ll.8-10, which, I argue below, is *competitive*.

Pomerantz observed, 'with an assessment, a speaker claims *knowledge* of that which he or she is assessing' (1984a: 57, my emphasis). At stake in this sequence, I suggest, is just who can claim knowledge of being so busy that the passing of time seems accelerated. A close examination of the sequence shows that Joellen's assessment in ll.8-9 comes effectively as a second assessment to the first assessment with which Lesley closed her second story and in which she laid claims to knowing about accelerated time passing (ll.4-6). Joellen produces this second assessment with a number of features that mark its upgraded claim to epistemic authority. Firstly, she expands the referent from that morning of Lesley's assessment (l.4) to 'it', which with 'fly by' we infer relates to time in general; she thereby makes a *wider* claim to knowing about time flying by than does Lesley. Secondly, whereas Lesley's assessment related to a single instance, namely 'the morning', Joellen's, with her use of the habitual present, *enlarges the temporal scope* of her experience. Thirdly, she imports *emphasis* to her assessment with her repeated 'does' and 'certainly'. Finally, she then closes with a *negative interrogative*, a feature which

Raymond and Heritage show asserts 'the strongest claim to epistemic priority' (2006: 694) when found in second assessments. The tag question effectively constitutes a new FPP that makes a yes/no SPP relevant, and this weakens the 'secondness' of the assessment. Furthermore, with her change in referent, Joellen's assessment offers only attenuated ratification of Lesley's claim to have been busy, with which the long sequence began (see Extract 5.11-A, p.335, below).

That Lesley orientates to Joellen's assessment as less than full ratification of her 'busy claim' can be seen in her own response. She effectively ignores the firstness that Joellen's assessment has sought to establish. Instead of producing a 'yes' agreement as expected, she in turn produces an upgraded assessment that re-asserts her *own* claim to epistemic priority about 'time flying by'. She does this through both her 'oh' preface, that indexes the independence of her assessment (Raymond and Heritage 2006: 692); and through her declarative with its stress on 'I'. As commented above, three one-second gaps in talk interspersed with two further repeats of this assessment by Lesley follow, with no uptake by Joellen. Joellen does not make any further move to assert her own prior knowledge of what constitutes 'time flying by', and thus, implicitly, being busy. However, she does not ratify Lesley's repeated claims to knowledge of this; and thus she implicitly orientates to Lesley as not being someone who can make such assessments. That is, I suggest, Joellen orientates to her as an older retired person. This assessment sequence contrasts with that of II.50-52, where the parties produce aligning assessments regarding the ease with which money can be spent.

In summary, I suggest that what is at stake in this sequence is primacy over rights to know what constitutes the 'time-flying-by' nature of being busy; and that this primacy relates to this kind of 'being busy' being a stereotypical CBA of *working* people (like

Joellen) rather than older retired people (like Lesley). One implication of this is that at the close of this sequence Lesley has not achieved ratification of her claim to be *busy*.

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The discussion of Lesley's story-telling shows that material resources are not a necessary condition for achieving a positive identity positioning through the telling of busy stories. It further shows how older identities may sometimes be made relevant and the work that tellers occasionally have to put in to achieving the uptake and ratification of their busy stories. I discuss these latter points further in the next section.

5.6 Discursive constraints on the telling of busy stories

As Table 5.3 showed, the salon-workers sometimes offer disaffiliative responses (including no response) to clients' busy stories. These can result in the client lapsing into silence or struggling to tell her tale. Furthermore, the salon-workers sometimes display reluctance to reciprocate narrative stance-taking moves made by clients. That is, they either do not adopt the role of story elicitor or are slow to do so. In this section I discuss these interactional responses and suggest that they point to two main discursive constraints on the identities achievable via the telling of busy stories by clients in Joellen's Hair Palace. These constraints relate to, firstly, the implicit criteria for the tellability of busy stories in the salon; and secondly, the way salon-workers distance themselves from busy stories that project a problematizing narrative stance towards busyness.

5.6.1 Tellability criteria of busy stories

In this section I compare a busy story told by Lesley with one told by Mrs Little. I compare their busy stories because, firstly, elicitation by the salon-workers was the main way (or only way, in Lesley's case) in which each of these two tellers told their busy stories (see Table 5.2, p.314 above); and secondly, because there are some superficial similarities in their tellings, but quite different consequences in terms of recipient responses and teller identity positionings.

In Lesley's story, which immediately precedes Extract 5.10 discussed above, she herself makes a *claim* to be busy which is not ratified by Joellen, her recipient. She then has to work hard to achieve the sequential implicativeness of her story, which, as we saw above, she eventually accomplishes. In Mrs Little's story no such claim to be busy is made. Mrs Little's story is positively evaluated and swiftly achieves sequential implicativeness. I suggest that key here are three interactional features of busy stories: what constitutes their tellability; relatedly, the mode of the story's occasioning; and the embeddedness of the story in participants' longer interactional history. I start with a brief comparison of the two stories.

Extract 5-11-A: Lesley (Appt1); Extract 5-11-B: Mrs Little (Appt1)

| | | | | | |
|---|---------|-------------------------|---|------------|-----------------------|
| A:Lesley <i>((Joellen has helped Lesley to the shampooing area and settled her at the front-wash basin, a 3-second gap follows a brief exchange about her position. Sound of water running.))</i> | | | B: Mrs Little <i>((Joellen is trimming Mrs Little's hair. Prior talk about the growing out of the layers of Mrs Little's hair was followed by 5 seconds without talk.))</i> | | |
| 02:55 | | | 01:01:31 | | |
| 1. | Joellen | so have you <u>had</u> | 1. | Joellen | s:o what else have |
| 2. | | a good ↑wee:k? | 2. | | you <u>got</u> (.) |
| 3. | Lesley | ↑ye:s ↓not too | 3. | | going on <u>today</u> |
| 4. | | bad | 4. | | apart from |
| 5. | | (I've) been <u>busy</u> | 5. | | ↑hai:r, |
| 6. | Joellen | been ↑busy, | 6. | Mrs Little | um (.) well (.) |

| | | | | | |
|-------|---------|-------------------------|----------|------------|--------------------|
| 7. | | what've you been | 7. | | it's hair: (.) |
| 8. | | up to ↓this week | 8. | | dog walk (.) |
| 9. | | [then | 9. | | and um: |
| 10 | Lesley | [well >I've been | 10. | | go to(. |
| 11 | | I< did the | 11. | | Harfeld common(. |
| 12 | | washing I did | 12. | | then a: (.) |
| 13 | | earlier this week | 13. | | trip trip round er |
| 14 | | (..) | 14. | | (..) |
| 15 | | and er (.) | 15. | | do some |
| 16 | | did the ironing | 16. | | shopping(. |
| 17 | Joellen | uh huh | 17. | Joellen | °yeh° |
| 18 | Lesley | and: er (.) <u>made</u> | 18. | Mrs Little | and then it'll be |
| 19 | | some cakes | 19. | | time probably for |
| 20 | | (.) | 20. | | another dog walk |
| 21 | Joellen | o:h ni:ce | 21. | Joellen | ye(h)h he he he he |
| 22 | Lesley | and er | 22. | | he .h |
| 23 | | (4) | 23. | | £that's the |
| 03:19 | | | 24. | | tro(h)uble with |
| | | | 25. | | these dogs£ |
| | | | 26. | Mrs Little | YE[H |
| | | | 27. | Joellen | [£dog walking£ |
| | | | 28. | | [he he he h. |
| | | | 29. | Mrs Little | [er yeh th- |
| | | | 30. | | that's right |
| | | | 01:01:55 | | |

There are a number of similarities in the story elicitation (see emboldened text) and responses. Joellen's first question to Lesley in ll.1-2 is a closed one, but in ll.7-9, and likewise in ll.1-5 to Mrs Little, she asks an open question that appears to allow a range of responses. In each instance the client then takes the floor for several seconds, with just a brief continuer from Joellen. Each story is produced as a list-like chronicle (see Section 2.5.3) focusing on mundane events in the teller's life. In neither case, in producing their chronicle-list, do participants appear to orientate to the three-part nature of such lists that is usual in much ordinary conversation (Jefferson 1990). Although in each case Joellen produces an utterance after the teller's third point (an evaluation on the cakes in Lesley's story, l.21, and a soft continuer in Mrs Little's,⁵⁹)

⁵⁹ I interpret Mrs Little's 'go to (.) Harfeld common' in ll.10-11 as elaborating the second item on her list, namely 'dog walk', rather than constituting a new item.

she does not treat the list as complete. Selting (2007) has shown how three-part lists themselves tend to be produced as the middle of three components – namely a projecting component that signals that a multi-unit turn will follow; the list itself; and what she calls the ‘post-detailing component’ (*ibid* p.496), which often links back to the projecting component. She argues list-recipients tend to refrain from speaking until the list-producer has given this last component, prompting *for* it when it is absent (*ibid* p.499). It might be thought, therefore, that it was the responsibility of Lesley and Mrs Little to bring their chronicles to a close. It is also the case that each teller produces her third item with a continuing intonation contour (with a slight rise at the end). Thus both intonationally and through the addition of a further ‘and’ (Lesley, l.22, Mrs Little l.18) we see that the tellers project their lists as incomplete. There is a sense here therefore in which participants are not orientating to usual conversational constraints with respect to lists but to some other constraints.

These constraints are indicated in the way Joellen, in each instance, introduced the new line of talk (l.1 in each extract). She used a ‘so’, that, as Bolden (2006) suggests, signals other-attentiveness. Here Joellen is orientating to the relational part of her job in making small talk in the salon, a part expected not only by her but by some of her clients. For example, Mrs Pace once told Joellen and me a story of going to a German hairdresser in another town, who never talked, and of whom she said:

Extract 5-12 Exhausted (Field notes)

“We all came back exhausted because we hadn’t talked.” We all laughed. Then she added, “That doesn’t apply here. It doesn’t apply here.”

So in initiating the talk here with these relatively new clients, Lesley and Mrs Little, Joellen is orientating in part to her ‘situated identity’ of ‘stylist’, positioning them in the reciprocal identity of ‘client’ (Zimmerman 1998). As part of this, she hands the floor

to them until they have completed their story sufficiently to enable her to contribute; they in turn continue their chronicles until she demonstrates through her contribution that their story has been received as tellable. As I discuss below, the criteria for tellability have been established in the manner in which the stories were occasioned. First, though, I compare the positioning tellers achieve at Levels 1 and 2.

If we consider the positioning of the characters in each story at NPT Level 1, in some respects Lesley is positioned as a character in her story as having more agency than Mrs Little in *her* story. This is achieved through placing her clearly as the ‘doer’ of her actions, which compares with the use of noun-phrases and impersonal formulations in Mrs Little’s story. In other respects, the stories are quite similar. We see that both tellers position themselves as being active and independent, but this activity relates to a range of mundane chores rather than a full diary of social engagements. Mrs Little’s chores take her *out* of the house – hair at Joellen’s, dog-walking on Harfeld Common and shopping; whilst Lesley’s confine her *to* the house – washing, ironing and baking. With ‘baking’, though, there is a suggestion that Lesley may have been doing some entertaining.⁶⁰ These household chores are also traditionally very *female* activities, particularly Lesley’s, highlighting the way participants’ talk is mediated by a number of identities.

⁶⁰ As a participant at the MDA data session of 15th October 2015 perceptively remarked: “Do you make cakes for just yourself?” One might do so, of course, but it seems unlikely.

Interactionally (NPT Level 2), Joellen's elicitation in each case positions the other as a teller, with implicit expectations of something tellable. Furthermore, Thompson and colleagues (2015: loc1815ff) argue that 'Telling Questions', such as those posed by Joellen, which are identifiable as those using a *wh*-start and a request for non-specific information, tend to be orientated to by participants as requiring a longer account. That is, in these two extracts there is a constraint of the expectation of a longer response signalled by the *wh*-question; and there is a constraint of being set up as a teller and thus having to fulfil tellability criteria. Interestingly, each participant introduces her story with 'well' (or 'um well' in Mrs Little's case). There is a considerable amount of work that discusses such 'turn-initial' use of 'well'. For example, Schiffrin (1987: 102-3) suggests that 'well' tends to project a potential lack of coherence with *prior* talk by the speaker of a *forthcoming* utterance. Schegloff and Lerner (2009) show how a turn-initial 'well' in response to a *wh*-question as here may not index misalignment so much as some sort of complication in the response. Heritage argues that most fundamentally, turn-initial well signals 'that the talk to follow will privilege its speakers' perspectives, interests or projects in the ensuing talk' (2015: 89). I suggest that what we see here is a projection of potential lack of coherence in their responses, which each speaker constructs as non-straightforward as far as the terms of Joellen's elicitation are concerned. In starting their stories in this way, each teller responds to the dual constraints noted above, i.e., signalling uncertainty precisely about the tellability in their stories whilst adhering to the constraint inherent in the *wh*-question for longer telling. The design of the response constructs it as done *on their terms*.

These signals of uncertainty are carried forward by both tellers, as they produce their busy stories with hesitations (three *ers* in Lesley's story, two *ums* and an *er* in Mrs Little's), pauses and repairs (Lesley II.10-11, Mrs Little II.13-15). Interactionally,

therefore, the speakers distance themselves from any claim to the tellability of their stories. This uncertain positioning yields the role of evaluating the stories' tellability to the recipient, Joellen. As I suggested above, this tellability is connected to the manner of their stories' occasioning, which turns out to be consequential for the ratification each teller receives from Joellen and the identities subsequently achieved.

In the case of Mrs Little, Joellen's elicitation follows a cut-consultation (see Section 4.4.1) and lengthy discussion of the layers Mrs Little is growing out. Following a gap of five seconds, Joellen produces this stereotypical hair-dresser's talk. Joellen is here 'initiator' (in these discussions I draw on the teller-role labels employed by Georgakopoulou (2007: 94)). She is also a major plot contributor, and in focussing on Mrs Little's forthcoming activities, she proposes both topic and temporality (future). There is nothing in this to indicate what will suffice in terms of response; effectively, whatever Mrs Little produces, will do. After Mrs Little moves into the fourth point of her list in I.18, Joellen provides an evaluation of the activity of dog-walking. Picking up on Mrs Little's stress on 'another' in I.20 that constructed dog-walking as a chore, Joellen, herself a dog-owner, affiliates by laughing and naming this a 'trouble' (I.24). Mrs Little's emphatic agreement (I.26) indicates that Joellen's affiliation move has hit the mark, and from here talk moves out of the busy story to a more general discussion of the respective merits of their dogs. That is, it achieves sequential implicativeness. In terms of identity-construction, from this last part of her story (from I.18) Mrs Little and Joellen – more-or-less coeval – have co-constructed identities for each other as committed dog-owning, active, wryly-humorous women, a far cry from identities of withdrawn older women.

Georgakopoulou, discussing Facebook Status Updates, observed that in those participants' stories,

the more routine and mundane the event reported was in the teller's life, the less sustained and verbal feedback it received (in press (2016): 20).

There is something of this, too, in Lesley's and Mrs Little's tales here, as also in other busy stories told in the salon. But as Table 5.3, p.317, above shows, overwhelmingly busy stories generated affiliative responses from the salon-worker recipients, even if brief; and as the discussion of Mrs Little's story shows, *her* mundane tale achieved positive evaluation after just a few turns.

Let us now consider Lesley's story. Although she appears to have produced a tale at a similar level of mundaneness to that of Mrs Little and with similar markers of hesitation and uncertainty, she has to work much harder, as we saw in Section 5.5, to achieve the sequential implicativeness that Mrs Little has achieved by the end of Extract 5.11-B. To try to understand how these differences arise we need to consider two key points. Firstly, although Lesley's story was also elicited by Joellen, it had a different genesis which set different criteria for the tellability of her story. Secondly, the story is embedded in the parties' weekly interactional histories and routines which shape at least initial expectations.

I start with the first of these points. As I argued in using this extract in Section 2.5.3 to illustrate narrative stance-taking, Lesley's claim to have been 'busy' in 1.5 signals that she is taking up a narrative stance towards what is going on (see Section 5.4.2 above). In eliciting Lesley's tale in 11.6-9, Joellen aligns with Lesley's narrative stance-taking move, explicitly positioning her as story-teller. However, with her claim to have been 'busy', Lesley has also signalled what will 'count' as the tellability of her tale, namely, a demonstration of busyness. For Lesley, the activities she recounts – dealing with the washing, ironing, baking cakes – doubtless constitute 'busyness', in terms of taking up much of her time. In interview she told me that thanks to her arthritis it takes

her 2½ hours to get up in the morning. She then slowly and painfully undertakes the chores of daily living – particularly preparing, eating and clearing up meals – interspersed with rests. For a much younger and, importantly, arthritis-free woman like Joellen, such chores are the work of a couple of hours in the morning. For *her*, ‘being busy’ – as she recounted her routine to me one day – is whizzing round the house with a vacuum-cleaner before driving forty minutes to the village to arrive at the salon shortly after 8.00am; being rushed off her feet all day with clients; going shopping on the way home with an older relative; cooking and clearing up a meal in the evening. For both women ‘being busy’ is about moving from one task to the next with no or few pauses; the difference lies in the amount achieved in the same time-span.

Essentially, Joellen’s criteria for being ‘busy’ are those of a healthy working woman; as such, this is not an attribute readily associated in this setting with an older retired woman, particularly one who is, like Lesley, relatively immobile. According to Joellen’s criteria, therefore, Lesley has not ‘been busy’, as she claimed, and thus her story’s tellability has still to be achieved by the close of Extract 5.11-A.

The work Lesley had to put into her story to achieve eventual ratification (Extract 5.10) was not an isolated incident. More generally, she struggled to have the tellability of her stories positively evaluated even if she made no explicit claims to have been busy. This brings me to the second point, namely, the embeddedness of Lesley’s busy stories in the participants’ longer interactional history.

In the following week an almost identical sequence ensued, at the end of which Joellen evaluated Lesley’s account with “not much then” (see Extract 5.5, p.302, above) whilst in Lesley’s third recorded appointment Joellen presented a candidate

response of “not a lot” before Lesley even had an opportunity to respond to Joellen’s question. During Lesley’s second recorded appointment, whilst she was under the dryer and thus unable to hear surrounding talk, I overheard Joellen laughingly make the following comment to Lesley’s friend, who had attended to have her own hair cut:

Extract 5-13 "I did the washing, did the ironing" (Field notes)

‘It makes me laugh, every week I ask “what have you done this week then?” and she says, “well I did the washing, did the ironing”.’

Indeed, during the first recorded appointment, given here as Extract 5.11-A, I recorded in my field notes that Joellen glanced across to where I was standing and laughed upon Lesley’s uttering ‘I’ve been busy’. This laugh was not audible on the recording and thus probably not either to Lesley. It points to an accommodation by Joellen to the other audience in the salon, me; and it points, too, to what Joellen construes as a laughable element in the interaction, namely the *unchangingness* of Lesley’s weekly story. Inability to change, it must be remembered, is the attribute summoned up by both the shampoo-and-set as a style, and the virtual lack of consultations with these clients (see Sections 4.3.1 and 4.4.2); it is an attribute, I suggested, associated with *older* older women. I suggest that what Joellen construes as Lesley’s unchanging weekly busy story is embedded in, and mutually shapes and is shaped by, those webs of categorial associations.

Her disaffiliative response also stems from the *learned pattern* of story elicitation and telling in which Lesley’s story of Extract 5.11-A is also embedded. This pattern, developed over 2½ years, at the start of which period Lesley was already relatively immobile (and, it must be said, also already *looked* old), generates an expectation on both sides of a certain kind of story, and in particular creates *expectations* of low

tellability for the salon-worker elicitor, Joellen. Her expectations are of unchangingness and mundaneness; and this in turn perpetuates a view of Lesley in this setting as an inactive house-bound old woman, which connects to wider societal narratives of 'older-age' as decline, withdrawal, and so on (see Section 1.4). The result of these expectations is that clients like Lesley have a further hurdle to surmount to achieve affiliative responses and ratification of their stories as tellable. In the manner discussed in Section 1.3.1, these repeated tellings and their muted reception then contribute over time to a congealed (Butler 1990: 45) identity positioning of Lesley, and clients like her, as inactive and not doing much, which then takes work for them on each individual occasion to contest.

Mrs Farming, at 90 the oldest of my client participants, was as immobile as Lesley. However, her interactional history with Joellen stretched back 30 years, which generated different expectations. With this longevity of acquaintance, the story-telling practices established between parties when both were active continued to shape the way busy stories were heard long after one of the tellers had become less active. Furthermore, Mrs Farming's busy stories had different patterns of story-occasioning with a high proportion of self-initiated busy stories (90.5% compared to Lesley's 0%), as Table 5.2 showed.

Summarizing the above, a number of interactional features turn out to be consequential for any particular busy story's reception, namely: the manner of its occasioning; the claims – explicit or implicit – made for its tellability in that occasioning; and the expectations of tellability that derive from the longer interactional history in which this particular busy story is embedded. These aspects shape both the affiliative nature of the responses by the salon-worker of the story, and the story's sequential implicativeness. The implicit criteria for the 'busyness' of tellable story of activity in the

salon are not adjusted for tellers whose life circumstances, like Lesley's, are more restricted than those of other participants. As a result, some older tellers have either to put in more work to achieve affiliative responses for their busy stories and positive identities for themselves; or, as I often observed in the salon, lapse into silence. Such lapses into silence then further help construct the individual as a withdrawn '*older older*' person.

The implicit tellability criteria for busy stories in the salon along with the embeddedness of these stories in participants' interactional histories can thus act as discursive constraints on the identities to be achieved by tellers in their busy stories. Another discursive constraint relates to the stance taken by clients to 'being busy'.

5.6.2 Problematizing narrative stances to 'being busy' and the struggle to become a teller

Generally in their appointment talk, participants construct the busyness of their busy stories positively, as did Lesley in Extract 5.11-A (p.335): the activities in which they are engaged are presented either as fun, interesting, entertaining, worthwhile ways of spending their time, or as ways of keeping their minds off other things.⁶¹ These positive connotations of busyness, which accord with participants' constructions of busyness in interview, align with the social norm of 'being busy' for ageing well discussed in Section 5.2.

⁶¹ See for example Mrs France, Appendix H.XVI.f.

At times, however, participants adopt a more problematizing stance towards busyness in their busy stories. In such stories, either the kind of busyness they are experiencing or being busy *per se*, is constructed as negative, rather than as a means of ageing well. In the audio-recordings of appointments this stance is principally taken up by Mrs Farming, Mrs Farthing and Mrs France, with one example from Mrs Crayne. In such instances the client-participant takes up a narrative stance towards her utterance – producing what Mandelbaum (2013: 505) describes as ‘pregnant turns’ – but this is either not reciprocated by the salon-worker, that is, no story elicitation is made; or is reciprocated only after displays of reluctance. As a result, either the client-teller has to struggle to tell her story or the story is silenced. I show this with examples from the appointment recordings of Mrs Farming, the oldest of my participants, and Mrs Farthing, the participant who made the most (explicit) claims to be ‘busy’ in the appointment recordings

As I commented in Section 5.4.2 above, in Joellen’s Hair Palace, explicit announcements of tiredness, or of *lack* of energy or physical capacity to be active on the one hand; or lack of time, being *too busy*, or being tired due to having been *very active* on the other hand, all serve to indicate that the speaker is taking up a narrative stance towards her utterance. That is, there is a possible story to be told to explain why she lacks energy, has been so busy, and so on. I identified sixteen instances in my data where such a problematizing narrative stance was taken up by the speaker. On only one occasion, with Mrs Farming below, did the salon-worker position herself reciprocally as story-recipient, and this with signs of reluctance.

This exchange, the coda to which we saw as Extract 3.4 (p.158), takes place shortly after Mrs Farming has been seated in the styling station for Joellen to start setting her

hair. Whilst Joellen is setting Mrs Farming's hair, Clare is passing up, but is turned slightly away, chatting with a man waiting for a dry cut at the next-door seat.

Extract 5-14 Mrs Farming (Appt2)

09:47

1. Mrs Farming I tell you what (.)
2. I wish (you had) some energy pills
3. cos I could certainly do with some
4. Joellen ah::
5. (1)
6. Joellen I don't think this weather's
7. helping very much
8. Mrs Farming no
9. Joellen everybody you talk to says that
10. they're [tired
11. Mrs Farming [yes
12. it's ↑terrible
13. (12) ((male client audibly talking with
Clare))
14. Mrs Farming you know I thought yesterday (1)
15. something I want to do
16. and thought oh I'll just sit down first
17. and I thought this is ridiculous
18. Joellen [mm
19. Mrs Farming [so (???) I must get down to the doctors
20. because they haven't got the results
21. from (.)
22. what they did
23. I have from the surgeon
24. but not from the surgery he's al-
25. our doctor's already sent two letters
26. Joellen [oh
27. Mrs Farming [I've igno:red them ha h[e
28. Joellen [ts
29. Mrs Farming £I said to Lucy yesterday£
30. the next thing on the agenda when we get
31. all this s::ettled (.)
32. is er the doctors
33. (.)
34. Joellen °you're getting it all sorted now°
35. (1.5)
36. Mrs Farming well we're still not hearing a bloody word
37. from the:[:
38. Joellen [↑reall[y
39. Mrs Farming [no from the er (1)
40. bloke in Blenheim
41. Joellen °oh:° ((Mrs Farming continues with her
story))

10:51

Immediately prior to this, and just as she had sat down herself, the male client had groaned whilst sitting down and Mrs Farming had laughed, saying, “we’re an old lot aren’t we we sit down and groan”. Mrs Farming builds on this theme of aches as she orientates in l.1 to a possible story with ‘I tell you what’. This narrative stance-taking is then supplemented by a trouble-premonitory reference to her need for ‘energy pills’. Joellen is aware of some possible troubles in Mrs Farming’s life: barely six weeks earlier Mrs Farming’s husband of sixty years had died; furthermore, Mrs Farming had had a number of quite serious medical issues recently. As we can see, in fact, Joellen’s response is not unsympathetic, with her elongated ‘ah’ in l.4. Nevertheless, instead of positioning herself as story-recipient, for example, producing an elicitation about the possible cause of Mrs Farming’s lack of energy, Joellen first allows a gap to ensue and then, in ll.6-7 attributes Mrs Farming’s lack of energy partly to a general phenomenon, the weather. Further, she generalises the problem – tiredness affects “everybody” (l.9) – rather than focussing on Mrs Farming’s particular case.

Mrs Farming’s next indirect bid to tell a story in fact itself takes the form of a small story (ll.14-17) about the recent effects of her lack of energy (‘yesterday’, l.11). She positions herself in the story as both trying to keep active, failing, and thus as frustrated. In ll.19-27 she produces what she constructs (with ‘so’, l.19) as an expansion of that small story. In this she medicalises her tiredness with the introduction of ‘doctors’, ‘results’, ‘surgeon’, which are incorporated into a fleeting projection of future activity (l.19), and a reference to another past story (some medical examination – ‘what they did’, l.22). Joellen displays that she is attending (l.18) and offers some minimal evaluations (‘oh’, l.26, ts, l.28), but this is the furthest she goes towards positioning herself as story-recipient.

Finally, in II.29-32, Mrs Farming produces a second small story in which she both reiterates her fleeting projection from I.19 of 'getting down to the doctors', and makes an even more fleeting allusion to an ongoing busy story, signalled by "when we get all this settled" (II.30-31). This is both suggestive of trouble and, in its elliptical nature, indexes a longer relationship (Pomerantz and Mandelbaum 2007/2005). At this point, Joellen positions herself as story-recipient, as she produces a story elicitation, thereby also orientating to the longer relationship indexed (I.34). However, she resists adopting a narrative stance to Mrs Farming's *medical* problems – her inability to be active – which, through her repeated references (I.2, II.14-17, II.19-25), Mrs Farming has constructed as the main story. Instead, Joellen takes up a narrative stance towards the other, legal, trouble that consumes Mrs Farming's time. Even here, she has designed her elicitation to expect the answer 'yes', which in turn would curtail any story-telling. Thus any lengthy story-telling will have to be produced as a dispreferred response. In this instance, this is what happens, as after a pause and with a turn-initial 'well' Mrs Farming launches into her story of the time-consuming and stressful affairs with the solicitor ('the bloke in Blenheim').

In referring repeatedly to her lack of energy, Mrs Farming is lamenting her inability to be active (see II.16-17). In a sense, it is a 'failure-to-be-busy story'.⁶² What this extract illustrates, is the way in which participants may display a particular *kind* of narrative stance towards their utterance, namely, a problematizing stance towards the kind of

⁶² This extract occurred towards the start of the same appointment in which Mrs Farming told her 'curtains' story, Extract 3.27, p.210. It adds further context to Mrs Farming's resistance in that later story to Joellen's attribution of her tiredness to her age.

activities that are keeping them busy, or, as here, that project an *inability* to be busy. The extract also shows how, where such a problematizing narrative stance is projected by participants, salon-workers do not align with the story-telling project thereby signalled.

In the extract above Mrs Farthing positions herself as both *unable* to be active and as also busy with unwelcome calls on her time. In the next extract, Mrs Farthing positions herself as *too* busy, thereby problematizing the notion that being busy is an unequivocal good. In this case Mrs Farthing ends up self-initiating her busy story. This is also a story in which we can see the implicit orientation by participants to wider identities, in this case working vs. retired person, in the contests over claims to be busy, as we did in the discussion of Extract 5.10 (p.327).

Mrs Farthing has just been enquiring about bookings for Christmas, and Joellen has stated that they are already busy at that time. After a gap of nine seconds, Mrs Farthing makes a claim to be busy herself, ll.1-4.

Extract 5-15 Mrs Farthing (Appt4)

09:12

1. Mrs Farthing (seem to get) so busy these days doing
2. >not< ↑you I me I (.)
3. seem to get so busy doing °all sorts of
4. things°
5. (1)
6. Joellen I think everyone's the ↑sa:me aren't
7. they.
8. (1)
9. Mrs Farthing I don't know: (.) why it is but (1)
10. I seem to get busier and busier
11. Joellen mm:
12. (2)
13. Mrs Farthing thought I'd re↑tired
14. Joellen he he he .h fthey say that don't theyf
15. Mrs Farthing ye(h)h he
16. (.)

as discussed by Heritage and Raymond (2005; 2006). This softens her resistance to positioning herself as story-recipient. However, she also allows gaps to develop (I.5, 12) and produces just a continuer after Mrs Farthing's second 'bid' (I.11). In addition, she generalises both Mrs Farthing's 'getting so busy' ('everyone's the same', I.6) and her expression of unfulfilled expectations, thereby delegitimizing the *particularity* of Mrs Farthing's incipient plot-line and implicitly contesting Mrs Farthing's appropriation of the CBA 'busy as too much to do'. Furthermore, she allows laughter to infuse her third piece of resistance (II.14), which implicitly positions her as taking Mrs Farthing's complaint about busyness in retirement to be non-serious. Eventually, in I.19, Mrs Farthing self-initiates a busy story. It is one which, being about selling, is designed expressly to position herself as still quasi-working (in retirement) in opposition to the inferred unspoken second half of Joellen's aphorism of I.17. This self-positioning further justifies her right to claim for herself the CBA 'busy as too much to do', despite her retired status and, indeed, her present situation of spending time having her hair done.

Summing up, clients sometimes project a problematizing narrative stance towards being busy. This problematizing stance might relate to aspects of their lives that *prevent* them from being busy, as in Mrs Farming's initial story in Extract 5.14. Alternatively, it might relate to problematizing the nature of the busyness itself, constructing it as a trouble, rather than as central to 'ageing well'. Thus in Extract 5.15 Mrs Farthing constructed the busyness of 'doing all sorts of things' as problematic, particularly where these things are similar to *work*, when she is *retired*. As I commented at the start of this section, there are sixteen instances in which clients take up such a problematizing narrative stance towards being busy or not having time, with this stance signalled by explicit references to being busy/not having time, or by claiming lack of energy, tiredness, or similar. Salon-workers only once adopt a story-

elicitor role, and that with displays of reluctance. In other instances it takes the client-teller work to achieve this as a troubles-telling (Jefferson and Lee 1992) – or else the story is not told at all. The implications of this is that opportunities to tell and thus one means of doing particular kinds of identity – as troubles resistant, for example – are closed down to clients, as too, of course, are opportunities to receive sympathy for their busy lives and admiration for their coping. Furthermore, opportunities for older clients to problematize the value of being busy in the way they were able to problematize the social norms of appearance are curtailed.⁶³

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In summary, two key discursive constraints operate in Joellen's Hair Palace in terms of the identities achievable from telling busy stories. One of these relates to the criteria for tellability, such that no concessions are made to the circumstances of a client's life in their busy stories. The second relates to the restricted opportunities to tell busy stories that adopt a problematizing stances towards busyness itself.

5.7 Discussion and conclusions

This chapter has generated three main sets of findings from the close examination of the way participants talk about being busy and active in interview and produce busy stories in their hair appointments. Firstly, it has highlighted the different kinds of perspectives expressed in the interview setting as opposed to talk in everyday

⁶³ See Section 4.3.2

conversational settings. Secondly, this chapter has shown the way in which *talking about activity* – that is, ‘doing being busy’ in talk – for example in a hair-salon or similar setting, can offer opportunities for older people to position themselves as active and engaged in the world. Analysis of the detail of participants’ stories showed that they can achieve positive identities even with minimal variety in their plot components, which, in turn, reflects their potentially restricted life circumstances. Notably, however, older identities are rarely orientated to in these stories. Thirdly, this chapter has shown that in Joellen’s Hair Palace there are two sorts of discursive constraint on the doing of these positive identities which result in some tellers having to work harder to have their story ratified, or even to get it told in the first place.

I consider these findings in turn, starting with the contrast between participants’ orientations to being busy in interview and those displayed in their salon-talk.

In the interviews, as I suggested in Section 5.2.2, participants aligned with the social norm of keeping busy in order to age well. They achieved such alignment through both the *content* of the stories of self and other that they told, and through the *telling itself* and the resulting positive evaluations of those stories. This orientation to keeping busy, getting out of the house, remaining active and so on as being a good thing in terms of ageing well resonates with the research discussed in Section 5.2.1. In those studies, activity in retirement and older age is presented as a way of countering the negative stereotype of the depressed, disengaged and lonely older person. Coupland suggests that ‘in the economic framing of human worth that developed within capitalism, it has been occupational activity and ‘productivity’ that has come to define a boundary between the core and periphery of society’ (2014 (2001): 192). Orientations to the positivity of keeping busy, active and engaged in the world help

position participants as worthwhile individuals who are not abandoned to the 'periphery of society'.

In salon talk, unlike in interview talk, participants never in the audio-recordings explicitly connected being busy with positive outcomes for *ageing*.⁶⁴ Nevertheless, their frequent references to the recent, ongoing and forthcoming happenings of their lives in their busy stories, suggest a tacit orientation by all participants to the 'busy ethic' (Ekerdt 1986), similar to that identified by Underwood (2011) in her study of the conversations of three older women. However, as I showed in Section 5.6.2 and discuss further below, in their salon-talk, in contrast to their interview talk, 'busyness' is not embraced unequivocally as a positive feature of their lives by all participants.

In summary, in the interviews, my participants produced accounts in line with socially-expected circulating Discourses, and delivered these to a largely non-challenging affiliative recipient – or a recipient who swiftly corrected disaffiliative moves (as I did with Lesley in Extract 5.1, p.293). In the hair-salon, the institutional roles and interactional positionings of the parties worked to produce different kinds of talk, with more problematizing stances adopted. This highlights very clearly the way in which interviews produce different *kinds of accounts* from those produced in everyday talk. This finding is in line with prior interactionally-orientated research (see, e.g., papers in Drew et al. 2006). However, the linguistic ethnographic methodology employed in this thesis has enabled me to show these different kinds of account through

⁶⁴ Joellen made one such connection with respect to bereavement: see Appendix H.XVI.i.

examination of the *same participants'* talk. This demonstrates particularly clearly the contrast between the kinds of talk generated by the same people in different settings.

My second finding relates to the kind of identity achieved through talking about activity in a setting like a hair-salon. The kinds of activity encompassed in tellers' stories were broad and various, ranging from social outings and holidays to household chores, from physical exercise to more sedentary pursuits; and the places of those activities for most tellers went beyond the confines of house and garden, sometimes taking their narrated selves out of the UK to continental Europe and beyond. That is, the kinds of activity encompassed in those stories were as multifarious as those identified in previous research (see for example, Ekerdt 1986: 240-41; Katz 2000; Minkler and Holstein 2008; Nosraty et al. 2015). Overwhelmingly, as I showed in Section 5.4.3, salon-workers produce affiliative responses to clients' busy stories, whether by way of plot-contributions or evaluations.

As I showed by focussing on the case of Lesley in Section 5.5, the plot components of some busy stories are restricted in terms of people, places and activities; and this reflects the reduced material circumstances of some clients' lives. The reduced material resources of the lives of Lesley and clients similarly placed can, as Coupland and colleagues observe, 'constrain topic repertoires' (1991c: 47). Furthermore, it takes work for them to achieve tellable stories that generate affiliative responses from the salon-workers. Nevertheless, as the case of Lesley shows, they, too, can win affiliative responses for some of their busy stories. That Lesley is able to do so on occasion highlights that the material resources of people's lives are not a *necessary* factor for 'doing being busy' interactionally. Those material circumstances are thus also not a necessary condition for achieving identities of engaged, active older people.

As commented above, participants in Joellen's Hair Palace never explicitly connect ageing and being busy. However, as already noted, they *do* orientate to this connection in interviews, and it is the case that in constructing identities as active, social, connected and engaged women through the telling of busy stories, they simultaneously *rule out* the possible attribution to them of identities of withdrawn-from-the-world older women. Furthermore, as I showed in examining the cases of Lesley (Section 5.5) and Mrs Farthing (Section 5.6.2), contests over claims to be busy reveal orientations by participants to older – or at least retired – identities, whereby the younger working woman, Joellen, produces attenuated and generalised assessments in response to the particularised busy claims of each of the older retired women. This brings me to my third finding.

The manner of each story's occasioning, the criteria for tellability set up and the longer interactional histories of the participants can, together, result in lack of ratification by the salon-worker of the older client's story, as I argued in the case of Lesley in Section 5.6.1. This in turn acts as a discursive constraint on the kinds of older identity tellers like Lesley can achieve. Yet although in some circumstances story elicitation acts as discursive constraints in setting up the client as teller, they do at least allow a story to be told. As I showed in Section 5.6.2, however, where client-tellers take up a problematizing narrative stance, constructing their utterance as in some ways a troubles-telling, the salon-workers rarely adopt the role of story-elicitor. When they do so, it is with displays of reluctance, as between Joellen and Mrs Farming in Extract 5.14 (p.347). As a result, problematizing busy stories, if told at all, end up being recounted to an addressee who has already positioned herself, disaffiliatively, as unwilling story-recipient.

Thus for certain clients in certain circumstances, both story elicitation and lack of elicitation can serve as discursive constraints. With story elicitation, *insufficient* accommodation to the restricted circumstances of an older person's life through the application of unadjusted criteria for tellability, may result in reinforcing an identity of *older* older woman. When stories, though, are *not* elicited, opportunities to tell troubles and thereby win sympathy and/or admiration are foregone, as are possibilities for tellers to construct different and more nuanced understandings of the importance of being busy in later life.

Joellen's Hair Palace, as shown in Section 2.3.4, is often hectic, full of hustle and bustle. This busyness in the salon offers clients a lively environment, and all but Mrs Farthing, Mrs Crayne and Mrs Little commented positively on this in interview. Furthermore, in telling stories of recent and forthcoming events in their lives – a stereotypical salon practice not peculiar to Joellen's – participants engage in a narrative practice in which they have doubtless engaged over the course of a lifetime attending a hair-salon. In these stories, older age is only incidentally made relevant. Instead, participants have opportunities to construct other identities – including of busy, active people – which connect with their selves beyond the confines of the salon chair. On the other hand, as we also saw in Section 2.3.4, the salon-workers tend to orientate to speed in their work, regardless of the number of clients. This potentially limits the time available to clients to 'do being busy' in talk. This and the other constraints discussed in this Chapter, act as slight correctives to the view in the literature of the hair-salon. Much of that literature argues that the hair-salon can be a safe, community, space within which older clients can construct positive identities (e.g., Furman 1997; Symonds and Holland 2008; Weitz 2005: 176). Although this is certainly the case, that safe space is not one that is available on equal terms to all clients.

Chapter 6 Reflections

6.1 Introduction: confounded expectations

I entered the site, Joellen's Hair Palace, with preconceptions informed by a range of stereotypes. These derived variously from my prior reading about ageing and my own experience around older people. I anticipated frequent references to age (N. Coupland 2004: 84), especially in the presence of younger people (N. Coupland et al. 1991c). I assumed that many of the female clients, in a hair-salon catering primarily for older people, would look like 'little old ladies', all having the same tightly-set curls, the 'pensioners' hairdo' (Symonds and Holland 2008: 26). I expected that many of these clients would lead lonely lives and that their talk would be full of reminiscence about the past (e.g., N. Coupland et al. 1991c: 64; Degnen 2012; Norrick 2009; e.g., Taylor 1992). I also assumed I would observe the kind of ageist treatment that I (felt I) had seen being meted out occasionally to my own older relatives.

These expectations were in many respects confounded. As we have seen in this thesis, the stereotypes listed above have only a loose relationship with the lived reality of my participants' lives in the hair-salon. Whilst they did make 'older-age' categorizations, such talk was not all-pervasive in the salon. Although many of Joellen's older female clients have a shampoo-and-set they do not all thereby conform to my prior imagined 'little old ladies'. And although there were indeed occasional discussions of past days, this was far from being the most salient discourse in the salon. Nor, indeed, was ageist treatment much in evidence.

In this thesis I have shown how this group of older women – my participants – constructed different older identities for themselves as they negotiated the social norms of ageing and age-appropriate appearance and behaviour through their talk and practices in a hair-salon. These constructions of older identities ranged from relatively explicit to barely-in-evidence; and the three analytical chapters have followed this progression. Thus at the most explicit, these older identities were constructed through ‘older-age’ categorizations that used ‘older-age’ terms and expressions, as I showed in Chapter Three. In their management of their ‘on-sight’ identities, which I discussed in Chapter Four, the category ‘older woman’ was on the whole made relevant more implicitly – for example, in the styles adopted; in both aligning with and problematizing social norms of age-appropriate appearance in their talk and attire; in the detail of salon-stereotypical sequences that positioned them as less or more likely to change, and through which they positioned themselves as less or more interested in their appearance. In terms of the typical hair-salon narrative practice of telling stories of recent and forthcoming events in their lives – busy stories, the focus of Chapter Five – ‘older-age’ as a category was rarely orientated to or made relevant at all. However, some struggles for ratification of busy stories, and the contests around who can claim certain kinds of being busy, suggest that it was at least an *apprehended* identity (Zimmerman 1998: 91).

This brings me, though, to an important point. I have treated as *separate foci* these three broad ways through which ‘older-age’ identities may be constructed. However, these ways of achieving ‘older-age’ identities are mutually reinforcing. Thus for example, as I showed briefly in my discussion of the work Lesley had to put in to achieve ratification of her busy stories, practices of producing self-categorizations as ‘older; hair styles adopted and the discursive practices related to those styles; and the

expectations around the tellability of busy stories, work together, and cumulatively, and over time, to produce particular kinds of 'older-age' identities. In summary, therefore, I have shown that the minutiae of these women's lives are consequential in terms of the way they construct 'older' identities; these constructions are achieved through a range of narrative and other communicative practices that are mutually shaping over time; but identities as '*older* women' are not necessarily always the most salient identities in play. I have shown this by structuring the analytical chapters around three research questions; and have set out in detail both the theoretical framework underpinning the argument and the evidence on which I base the claims I have made.

The research questions I have addressed are as follows:

1. How do participants in interaction more or less explicitly claim and attribute older identities for themselves and others and how do they take up, modify or contest such attributions?
2. How in their talk and practices do participants orientate to the importance or unimportance of managing their 'on-sight' identities (their appearance) in the hair-salon? How, if at all, are older identities made relevant for themselves and others in this appearance work?
3. How do participants story their lives as more or less active, full and busy and how do salon discursive practices afford and constrain this storytelling?

Each of these research questions emerged in its current form from the data and data analysis. As described in Section 3.1, analysis of participants' 'older-age' categorizations quickly showed me that looking only for 'explicit' categorizations would produce a very limited collection of instances, skewed towards those directed at non-present others. With respect to my second research question, this stemmed from the wider academic literature but also from the contrast I noted during my field work between what participants *said* – for example in interview – about appearance and its importance to them – and what they *did*. Finally, as discussed in Section 5.3.3, my third research question emerged from observing participants' orientations to busyness in their bustle and talk in the salon, and from the emphasis placed by participants in interviews on keeping busy.

In the next section of this chapter I set out my findings. In the subsequent two sections I discuss respectively what I believe are the key contributions of my thesis (Section 6.3) and its practical implications (Section 6.4). The penultimate section (Section 6.5) encompasses a discussion on some possible avenues of future research. I conclude in Section 6.6 with a brief reflection on researching 'older-age'.

6.2 Addressing the research questions: summary of findings

In this section I summarise the broad findings with respect to each of the research questions set out above.

6.2.1 'Older-age' categorization practices

Chapter Three produced two overarching findings. Firstly, I showed how most participants orientate to the negativity of older age. Secondly, I showed how, based on my data, there seems to be a broad correspondence between the range of ways in which participants produced 'older-age' categorizations and their chronological age.

Orientation to the negativity of 'older-age'

I showed that participants orientated to the negativity of 'older-age' in two ways. The first of these ways was overt: the CBAs that they associated with 'older-age' were almost exclusively decline attributes, for example, stiffness and aches, tiredness, losing behavioural restraint, memory lapses, and cognitive decline more generally. The second way in which participants orientated to the negativity of 'older-age' was more subtle, and related to the range of ways in which they discursively distanced themselves from 'older-age' categorizations that implicated themselves or other present parties. I discussed two main discursive means that were salient in achieving this distancing for my participants, namely, use of inexplicitness in their 'older-age' categorizations and small stories.

Firstly, and starting with participants' use of inexplicitness in their 'older-age' categorizations, I showed how such categorizations could be designed to be more or less explicit as to the person categorized, the state of oldness reached, or both. For example, 'because she's so old' is explicit as to person categorized and state of oldness reached; by contrast, 'you're too young to (.) >not be able to f< re(h)me(h)mber he he he he' is less explicit on both counts. This latter

formulation, which implicitly contrasts the speaker with a younger other, is inexplicit as to *who* is categorized as *older* and the state of oldness *now* of that person. I argued that given that both explicit and inexplicit possibilities for doing 'older-age' categorizations exist, the use of one as opposed to another must be considered a participant *choice*. I argued that the less explicit forms were used by participants to introduce some distance between the categorized person and the category 'older', with this marking 'older-age' as an unwelcome (and taboo) category. The fact that these less explicit forms were used disproportionately often in 'older-age' categorizations that implicated present parties adds weight to this suggestion. This inexplicitness and, indeed, distancing, was supported by the laughter that permeated participants' 'older-age' categorizations.

Secondly, I showed that participants introduced distance to their 'older-age' categorizations through the use of small stories. Some of these were used in the design of 'older-age' categorizations themselves (21 of the 78 'older-age' categorizations were produced in a 'small story' format). For example, there were twelve small stories that use the formulation 'get/getting/heading + older/old/CHRA'⁶⁵, such as when Mrs France says: "as I get older I'll have to get a nail file". I showed that these put the referent as somewhere on the journey towards older age but not yet there. There were also nine small stories that introduced a

⁶⁵ Chronological age

contrast between the speaker and a younger self or other. These small stories not only introduce distance; they also help render the 'older-age' categorization less explicit. Most of these small stories use the generic 'you' that serves to universalise the experience of ageing.

Participants also on seven occasions used small stories to resist an actual or inferred 'older-age' categorization by another of themselves. Analysis of this group of stories showed how participants used them to associate a previously-mentioned attribute/activity not with older age (whether this category had been merely inferred or explicitly stated) but with some other cause *in their case*. This practice enabled them to avoid explicitly denying being *older*, whilst effectively claiming that the attribute or activity in question is not *evidence* of that older status. In contrast to the small stories discussed above, these all use 'I', thereby personalising the teller's status as special older person.

These distancing devices together, along with the association of primarily decline CBAs with 'older age', display participants' orientation to 'older age' as negative. Self-categorization claims as 'older' might thus be seen as self-deprecations. In line with Pomerantz's (1984a) work on assessments, we might thus expect to see such self-categorizations as 'older' met with denials in some form. Yet with few exceptions, the self-categorizations as 'older' were accepted by recipients without contest. This lack of contest, which contrasts with Georgakopoulou's (2010b) findings with respect to the identity claims made in conversation by her teenage female participants, displays those recipients as orientating to the producer of the 'older-age' self-categorization as indeed 'older'.

'Older-age' categorizations and chronological age

The second finding of this chapter was the way in which differences in participants' 'older-age' categorization practices seem to map broadly to their chronological ages. These 'older-age' categorization practices in turn contribute – cumulatively and together – to producing finely-tuned 'older identities'. I suggested in Section 3.6 that although – contrary to my expectations – 'older-age' categorizations are far from pervading all talk in Joellen's Hair Palace, age is nevertheless a background resource upon which participants draw or infer others to be drawing in interaction. This is evidenced in the way in which 'older-age' categorizations tend to be occasioned by actions such as groaning when sitting down, talk of forgetting, or reference to having a confused day, all of which might be seen as attributes of 'older-age', even though any or all of them are also attributes of other categories. This is broadly in line with Coupland's suggestion 'that age-identity is often nearer to the surface of talk and text than other dimensions of social identification' (2014 (2001): 202). As I showed in Chapter Three, though, these 'older-age' categorizations positioned speakers at subtly different stages on the ageing process – no longer young, not yet old, *older* older person. Different categories of older age emerged in Rozario et al's (2009) research, but the co-construction of that emergence is not shown. Prior interactionally-orientated research has also revealed a range of distancing devices used by older people from the category 'old' (e.g., Jones 2006; Nikander 2000, 2009), but the fine-grained categories in my research, which seem to broadly correspond to chronological age, are not in evidence in that literature. This is partly, of course, a result of the paucity of literature exploring older people's categorization practices in general. This finding surprised me: even though their own knowledge of their CHRA might lead participants to feel more or less 'old', it is interesting that this knowledge

seems to find expression in the design of their 'older-age' categorizations. It would be useful to compare my participants' practices with a wider data-set.

6.2.2 The importance of appearance and older identities

In Chapter Four I considered my participants' management of their 'on-sight' identity (Paoletti 1998a). This chapter produced three main findings. Firstly, it highlighted the variability of stance which participants adopt towards their appearance. I suggested that this indicates that the importance of their appearance to participants is a dynamically shifting rather than static phenomenon, shaped *inter alia* by avoidance of a categorization as 'vain'. Secondly, I showed how participants construct different kinds of older identities in their appearance talk and practices. Thirdly, I showed the role played by narrative practices in participants' displays of stances of interest or uninterest in their appearance.

Importance of appearance: a shifting orientation

Firstly, much prior research has argued that as women age, other aspects of their lives, such as health, assume a higher priority than their appearance (L. Baker and Gringart 2009; Hurd Clarke et al. 2008; Krekula 2007; Liechty 2012), even though they continue to investment time in appearance practices. This prior research, though – much of it done in interviews – has not shown how participants' responses are co-constructed in that interview interaction. This approach is in stark contrast to the approach adopted in my own research. As I showed in Chapter Four, 'the importance of their appearance' itself is a shifting, multifaceted concept for my participants. The micro-discourse analysis of participants' talk whilst doing hair-work, in particular,

showed that participants orientated to this aspect of their appearance variously as routine; as having a situated importance; as being unimportant at a particular point compared to an alternative competing activity; and as having a more enduring importance. These stances were conveyed through the *consultation and appreciation* sequences; through *stories* told by clients to account for past lapses in, or explain future changes to, their usual routines; and through *monitoring talk* mid-treatment when they interrupted current talk (or silence) to comment or check on what the stylist was doing to her hair.

The stances taken up by participants towards their hair shifted not only from appointment to appointment but also *within* appointments. As I argued, therefore, we cannot straightforwardly talk about the importance or unimportance to older women of their appearance, since for my older female participants at least this was not a static orientation. Rather, it was a dynamically-changing and situationally contingent one, shaped by both other events going on in their lives and the immediacy of the emerging sequential context. As I further showed, participants' talk about and during their appearance work – in the salon as well as in interviews – is inferably at least partly mediated by an identity to be avoided, that of being *vain*..

Appearance practices and talk as CBAs of older women

The second main finding of Chapter Four related to the way that older identities are made relevant through the way participants manage their appearance. Both appearance practices such as modes of attire or ways of styling hair (such as having a shampoo-and-set); and certain kinds of talk (such as problematizing norms of

appearance or orientating to lack of change in the consultation sequence) can be seen to become, in this setting, CBAs of older women, indeed, kinds of older women.

Prior research has shown that the shampoo-and-set may be seen as an attribute of older women (e.g., Symonds and Holland 2008); what I have shown is the additional 'unable to change' identity implications that it carries; i.e., it may be seen as a CBA of a *particular kind* of older woman. Further, prior research has argued that older women orientate to the social norms of age-appropriate appearance for older women (Brooks 2010; J. Coupland 2009b; Fairhurst 1998: 258; Furman 1997: 116; Hurd Clarke and Griffin 2007, 2008; Hurd Clarke et al. 2009; Symonds and Holland 2008; Ward and Holland 2011). What I have tried to do is approach this from the other direction, to look at what identity work is done by particular orientations to those norms. That is, it is not so much that older women automatically orientate to these social norms *because* they are older women, but adhering to or worrying about these norms is one way of 'doing older womanhood'.

The centrality of story-telling

The third finding of this chapter related to the importance of story-telling in participants' stance-taking towards appearance. One group of stories I discussed were those told by participants in interview to me and in the salon to Joellen relating to particular modes of self-presentation, style or attire. All the stories told in the hair-salon that focussed on appearance also made older age relevant either explicitly (through the use of an 'older-age' category expression or label), or more commonly, implicitly, through orientating to social norms of age-appropriate appearance and appearance practices for older women and for themselves.

Stories were also used by participants to account for or explain lapses in or changes to their usual practices. Here the stories were occasioned by appearance talk but they neither related to appearance nor made older identities relevant. Finally, participants took up a narrative stance (Georgakopoulou 2013b, in press (2016)) during the consultation sequence and, more commonly, the appreciation sequence. In this stance-taking, neither appearance *nor older identities* were made relevant; indeed, in taking up a narrative stance at these points participants constructed the main activity as being not about *appearance* – their hair – so much as about *story-telling*.

I return to the storying in Section 6.3.1, when I discuss the contribution of my thesis.

6.2.3 'Doing being busy' and the constraints and affordances of salon discursive practices

Chapter Five generated three main sets of findings. Firstly, it showed very clearly how participants talk about issues in different ways in interview as opposed to naturally-occurring talk. Secondly, it showed how the practice of talking about recent and forthcoming doings in people's lives – what I called the telling of busy stories – allows tellers to construct active and independent identities for themselves, positioning themselves as busy; and if 'busy', then ageing well. Thirdly, this chapter showed that two sorts of discursive constraints operate in Joellen's Hair Palace with respect to the telling of busy stories. The effect of these is that some clients have to work harder to achieve ratification of their busy stories; others may not manage to get their story told at all. Importantly, more than any other chapter, this chapter highlighted that whilst 'older age' may be potentially an 'omni relevant category' (Sacks 1995: Vol1, p.590ff), it is by far from being orientated to by participants in all their interactions. As I stressed

in Section 5.7, orientations to older identities were rarely visible in participants' talk of the recent and forthcoming activities in their lives. This was not only surprising to me but builds on the findings of Chapter Four to add a further corrective to some of the more essentializing research into older people, particularly with respect to narratives, as I discuss in Section 6.3.1 below.

Contrasts between interview and appointment talk

To start with the interview/appointment-talk contrast: Whereas in *salon talk* some participants – namely Mrs Farming, Mrs Farthing and Mrs France – projected at times a more ambivalent view of being busy, that ambivalence was not in evidence in *interview*. In that setting, orientating to their 'discourse identities' of advice-givers and 'situated identities' of 'experts-in-ageing' with which that discourse identity articulated (Zimmerman 1998), participants without exception constructed 'being busy' as a positive means of ageing well. This is in line with other studies discussed in Section 5.2.1 where keeping busy and active – the 'busy ethic', as Ekerdt (1986) called it – is seen as the key to ageing well.

Construction of active identities

Secondly, as I showed in Section 5.3.3, a stereotypical hair-salon discourse is the practice of talking about participants' recent and forthcoming plans, particularly those of the clients. Thus the hair-salon is potentially a site in which older people have many opportunities to construct identities of active, independent and involved individuals; that is, to 'do being busy' in talk. This chapter showed that in the majority of instances the telling of busy stories does indeed facilitate the construction of such identities for

tellers. As tellers sit wrapped in a cape and immobile in the salon chair they position themselves as having wider, more active and busy identities beyond those confines. Through their overwhelmingly affiliative responses, the salon-workers position the teller as having worthwhile experiences to recount. In constructing identities for themselves as active and engaged people, participants rule out the attribution of more negative 'older-age' identities – of grumpy, withdrawn and cognitively impaired older people. Coupland and colleagues suggest that the circumstances of older people's lives, including a lack of change, *constrain* their talk (1991c: 41). They conclude by suggesting that 'life circumstances can constrain topic repertoires' (*ibid*, p.47). As I showed in Section 5.5, though, through considering the case of Lesley, the participant whose life circumstances were the most restricted, such restricted life circumstances do not necessarily prevent the construction of active and engaged identities through the telling of busy stories. However, there *were* constraints in such tellings, which brings me to my third finding.

Discursive constraints on positive identities

This third finding related to two discursive constraints to achieving such positive identities in Joellen's through the telling of busy stories. One of these constraints relates to what constitutes a tellable busy story in Joellen's; this in turn is related to the manner of each story's occasioning and its embedding in the longer interactional histories of the participants. As I showed through comparing the case of Lesley with that of Mrs Little in Section 5.6.1, these features together can result in lack of ratification by the salon-worker of the older client's story, with an impact on the kinds of older identity tellers like Lesley can achieve. The other constraint relates to the kind of stance the client takes up towards her busy story. When potential client-tellers

project a particular kind of busy story, namely one of trouble, then stylist-recipients tend to resist the reciprocal positioning implied of 'troubles-recipient', rarely adopting the role of story-elicitor. As a result, the 'troubled busy story' may not get told. Such 'troubled busy stories', as analysis of those that *are* told indicate, problematize and reject the kind of busyness participants experience, or, indeed, counter being busy at all as a worthwhile thing. In failing to take up a narrative stance in those instances, stylists either closed off troubles-telling by clients or made clients work harder to achieve that troubles-telling and the re-working of the dominant Discourse of the 'busy ethic'.

For the most part, as I observed above, orientations to 'older-age' in my participants' busy stories were absent. They were, though, in evidence, very indexically, where certain kinds of claims to being busy were made. As I showed in my discussions of Lesley's reworked story in Section 5.5 and Mrs Farthing's story in Section 5.6.2, orientations to 'older-age' in participants' busy stories centred on contests around what constitutes 'being busy' or who is entitled to complain about it, when such busyness relates to 'time flying by' or having 'too much to do'. As I suggested, such CBAs, inferable as being associated with the category *worker*, were resisted by Joellen in each case. Orientations to 'older-age' were also in evidence in the display by salon-workers of expectations of lack of change in some tellers' busy stories, as I showed in Section 5.6.1. This also showed how *individual instances* of narrative or other talk are deeply embedded in, and shaped by, the web of participants' longer interactional histories and range of discursive and non-discursive categorization practices.

6.3 Contribution to knowledge

Overall my thesis contributes to knowledge in two main areas. In terms of research into *identities-in-interaction*, the findings contribute to the under-developed field of older women's identity constructions in naturally-occurring talk, particularly in terms of their narrative and 'older-age' categorization practices. *Methodologically*, it further demonstrates the value of research using a linguistic ethnographic approach.

6.3.1 Adding to small stories: a new perspective on older women's quotidian narrative practices

In terms of narrative practices specifically, as I discussed in Section 1.8.2, there has been an increase in interest over the last twenty years in personal story-telling to support ageing identities and as a means of undertaking ageing research (S. Biggs et al. 2000). However, this is primarily orientated to the elicitation of biographical or other narratives in interview. What we tend to see in those approaches is an essentializing of the older tellers' older identity: they are seen as telling stories in particular ways *because they are old* (e.g., chapters in Kenyon et al. 2011). With some exceptions, though (e.g., Hydén and Örvulv 2010; Underwood 2011), very little research captures the fleeting stories told by older tellers in naturally-occurring interactions and subjects them to detailed micro-linguistic analysis.

In showing how different kinds of small stories are a central resource of my older female participants I have built on the work of Bamberg (2004b, 2006), Georgakopoulou (2006a, 2006b, 2007) and others who have developed the concept of small stories. Researchers have used this approach for the analysis of the identity

work of a variety of people in a range of settings, including, for example, teachers and students (e.g., Barkhuizen 2010; Ryan 2008; C. Watson 2007); the workplace (e.g., Clifton 2014); and participants in research interview settings (e.g., Oostendorp and Jones 2015; Ryan 2008; Sprain and Hughes 2015). One consistent finding that emerges is the way small stories reveal the multiplicity, contradictory and emergent nature of identity construction. My research contributes to this prior work in terms of: insight into the kinds of narrative genre to be found in the naturally-occurring small stories told in this particular site by these tellers; the identity work done by their stories; and their temporal orientations.

In terms of *narrative genres*, I have started to identify a range of story types used by my participants. These encompass:

- Fleeting generic projections (Georgakopoulou 2007), including deferred projections, and comparison stories used to do 'older-age' self-categorizations;
- Personal stories of recent past experience used to resist inferred or actual categorizations as 'older' by another;
- Habitual stories (Riessman 1990) that orientate to social norms of appearance;
- Catch-ups, projections, habitual stories as ways of producing busy stories – stories of recent past and proximate future activities and events in their lives.

Turning to *identity*, participants use these small stories to discursively defer 'older age', to resist 'older-age' category ascriptions or to subvert the associated attributes; to problematize the appropriate dress for older women; to display themselves as uninterested in their appearance (and thus not vain), or, contrariwise, to orientate to the situated importance of their appearance; and to position themselves as leading full, active lives through their busy stories, as well as other projects not considered in

this thesis. Importantly, the small stories research in this setting has allowed us to see the situated nature of tellers' emerging identities.

Prior research – whether looking at biographical stories or more fleeting small stories – has highlighted the multiplicity of identities constructed by tellers. Thus Norrick (2009), using research interviews, highlighted that in their stories of the past, his older tellers constructed multiple but fixed identities for themselves. Phoenix and Sparkes' (2009) study, focussing on the small stories told by 'Fred' both in interview and recorded in field notes, likewise highlighted his construction of multiple identities. Building on this, Griffin and Phoenix (2016), combining stories told in interviews by older female runners with small stories (again collected primarily in *field notes*), showed how identity should be seen as a process. They argued that their analysis revealed 'the complexities and contradictions that are embedded within the experiences of growing older' (*ibid*, p.13). Furthermore, Lenchuk and Swain (2009) showed that analysis of the small stories told by an older woman with cognitive impairment demonstrated how the interaction with the researcher shaped her construction of a more positive identity, instead of an identity of incompetent that surfaced in interactions with staff. Building on these studies and using the micro-discourse analytic toolbox of CA, MCA and NPT, I have shown *how* my older tellers construct those multiple and contradictory identities for themselves in their stories, and that these show them still to be 'selves-in-the-making' (Georgakopoulou 2015: 267). This applied even to my oldest participant, Mrs Farming, who most orientated to being old-now and unchanging. My research thereby further confirms the power of small stories as an analytic tool for researching the emergent nature of identities, particularly in contexts of change (e.g., Georgakopoulou 2015: 264; Oostendorp and Jones 2015: 44).

My analysis of participants' stories has also shown – unlike the reminiscence-focussed biographical research discussed in Section 1.8.2 – that participants construct identities in the most fleeting instances of narrativity; and further, that despite the advanced chronological age of many of them, 'older-age' is far from being the only or even necessarily always most salient identity constructed in those tellings.

Finally, in terms of *temporality*, Georgakopoulou notes that a common feature emerging in small stories research is 'the lack of temporal distance between the tale and the telling' (2015: 267). This is a feature of the small stories told by my participants in Joellen's, as their present narrating selves are brought into a temporal fusion with their very recent past, habitual present and proximate future (sometimes multiple) narrated selves. Again, this presents a stark contrast with much in the field of social gerontology and narrative gerontology, where biographical and narrative research interviews focussed on the past have dominated. This in turn, and in line with other practice-based approaches to narrative, further challenges the idea that meaning-making and identity in narrative can only be achieved through retrospection and reflection (De Fina and Georgakopoulou 2015: 7).

In summary, I have made a contribution to practice-based understandings of the kinds of stories and ways of telling in a specific everyday site, and the identity work thereby achieved by an under-researched group, namely older female tellers.

6.3.2 Insights into older women's categorization practices as 'older'

In terms of categorization practices, my study highlights and confirms with respect to the domain of 'older age' what others, for example, Baker (2000), Stokoe (2012a,

2012b) and De Fina (2003), have argued in other domains about the power of categorization practices and the packages of stereotypes they carry around with them. Much of the identity work done by my participants in their use of 'older-age' categories centred around distancing themselves from these categories and negative or decline attributes in order to construct for themselves positive older identities, in line with the findings of others (e.g., Degnen 2007, 2012; Hurd 1999; Paoletti 1998b). As I showed, just as in Charalambidou's (2011) study, mild-decline attributes such as minor physical limitations appear to be the acceptable face of 'older-age'. But this shows too that what older people are distancing themselves from is not 'older-age' *per se*, but from the invisible stereotypes that others have of their 'older-age' and which might be used to shape their treatment.

More specifically, my research contributes to an understanding of the under-researched field of older people's categorization practices in terms of: how they are produced, the implications of this production for fine-tuned older identities, and the kinds of interactional occasioning and reception of such identity work.

There are three particular contributions to which I want to draw attention. *Firstly*, I showed that 'older-age' categorizations of self or other can be produced using age-related terms and expressions (such as chronological age, terms like 'older', 'at my age'); through using attributes stereotypically associated with 'older-age' (such as being tired, not remembering things); through engaging in a range of embodied practices stereotypically associated with 'older-age' (such as continuing to have a shampoo-and-set, avoiding particular kinds of attire); and through other discursive activities that invoke wider social norms relevant for particular groups of older people (such as problematizing the appropriateness of kinds of attire).

As I showed though – and this is in line with the discussion in Section 1.5.2 – these ways of producing ‘older-age’ categorizations can be very inexplicit. Indeed, as I showed in Chapter Three, and rehearsed in Section 6.2.1 above, even the ‘older-age’ categorizations that use ‘older-age’ category terms and expressions are designed such that they are very inexplicit unless only absent parties are implicated. Both Paoletti (1998b: 16) and Charalambidou (2011: 98) found that their participants were readier to apply ‘older-age’ categorizations – whether chronological age or category terms and expressions – to absent others than to present parties. My data, by contrast, showed a contrary preference by participants, with over half of all ‘older-age’ categorizations being of self. Interestingly, however, the inexplicitness of the ‘older-age’ categorizations that implicate present parties achieves a similar outcome – distancing the self from ‘older-age’ – as achieved by Charalambidou’s and Paoletti’s participants, but just through different means. What this indicates is that stances toward ‘older-age’ appear to be similar across different national boundaries – Italy, Cyprus, England – but practices of ‘older-age’ categorization need to be examined in local settings.

Secondly, I showed how there is virtually no contestation of participants’ ‘older-age’ identity claims; similarly, though, there is little contestation of participants’ appearance-related identity claims either. For example, Mrs France claims to be both a ‘white haired bent over old dear’ (Extract 3.20, p.190) and a ‘a check shirt and jeans person’ (Extract 4.4, p.235). Joellen, her interlocutor on both occasions, makes no move to contest, thereby allowing Mrs France’s self-categorizations to stand. Whilst the first of these two claims is hard to contest without interrupting the flow of the story (see Beach and Mandelbaum (2005) for a similar

phenomenon, in that case an allusion to a story that is not followed up), the second instance – and other similar cases – present no such difficulty. On the other hand, as I showed in Chapter Five, claims to be busy *were* sometimes contested, albeit implicitly, as with Lesley and Mrs Farthing. What this suggests is that contestation of identity claims in ordinary talk is a situated activity, tightly linked not only to the sequential location of the claim but also to the kind of claim being made.

Thirdly, my research contributes to an understanding of how the details of individuals' 'older-age' categorization practices; their appearance talk and practices; their narrative practices and other salient talk, in particular settings, together and cumulatively position them not only as 'older', but in particular *sub*-categories of older people – as no longer young, as not yet old, as well as *older* old, with these mapping broadly and non-deterministically to their chronological age. This contribution was enabled through the LE methodology adopted.

6.3.3 Methodological: the interpretative power of a linguistic ethnographic approach

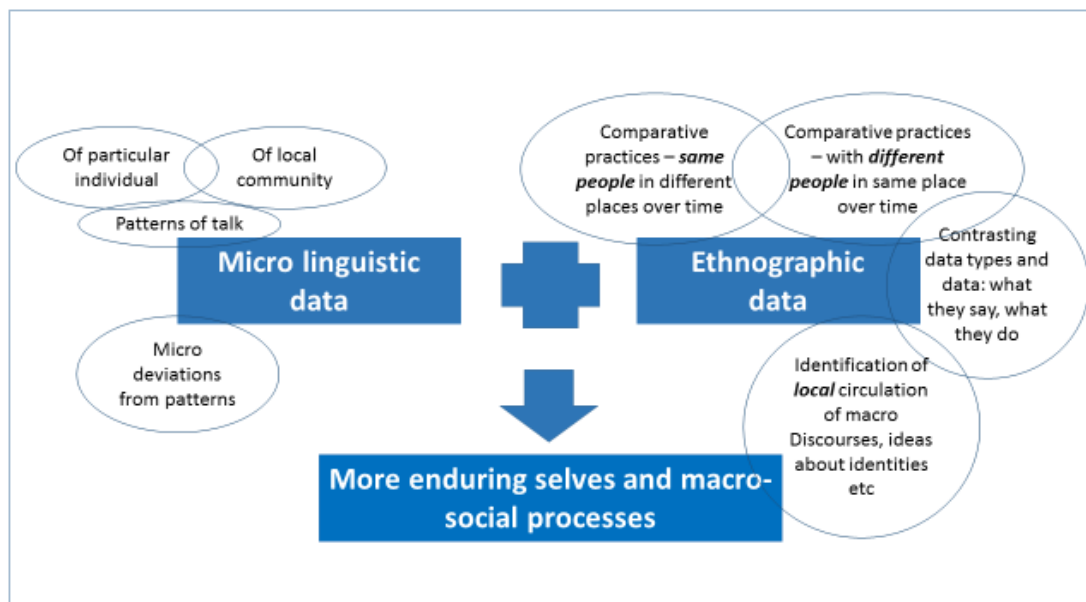
I argued in Section 1.7 that a linguistic ethnographic approach is particularly important in the study of identities. Where Rampton (2006a, 2007b), for example, turned this methodology to good effect in examining class and ethnic identities; and Georgakopoulou (2007) applied it to a nuanced account of age and gender identities in her study of Greek adolescent girls as well as her study of pupil's new media uses in a UK school (2013a); I have applied it to the study of *older women's* construction of identity. I have thereby further demonstrated how fruitful such methodological combinations can be for identity studies.

This methodology, and the manner in which I implemented it, prompted the building of collections of narrative and other discursive phenomena, much in the manner advocated by Conversation Analysis (e.g., Hutchby and Wooffitt 2008: 88; Mandelbaum 2010: 162; Sidnell 2013: 78). Importantly, though, these collections, being of both individuals over time and of the setting's community as a whole, allowed me to track patterns and breaks in those patterns specific to individuals and to this setting, in the manner exemplified by researchers working within the LE 'umbrella' (e.g., Georgakopoulou 2013a; Rampton 2006a, 2007b; chapters in Snell et al. 2015; Swinglehurst 2014). In addition, the observations in the salon not only added rich contextual background; they also enabled me to develop collections of embodied practices, both those peculiar to individuals and those common in the site. Again, this allowed me not only to identify patterns and breaks in these patterns specific to an individual or to the setting, but to consider those embodied practices alongside participants' narrative and other discursive practices, as Swinglehurst (2015) did in her study of the role of the electronic patient record. Finally, adding the data from the interviews into the mix allowed me to identify participants' awareness and local understandings of, and orientation to, larger social issues.

This connects with an issue highlighted in Section 1.5.3 with respect to micro-analytic approaches and in Section 1.6.3 in terms of NPT, namely the challenge of making links between singular instances of talk and wider social processes, from the telling of individual stories to Level 3 Discourses. Building on recent work by Georgakopoulou (2013a), de Fina (2013, 2015) and Deppermann (2013, 2015) among others, I have contributed to an increasing focus on following trajectories of telling and of talk across time and – in my data - largely the same space. This enabled me to show links between the in-the-moment negotiated narrative – and other

discursively-constructed – identities and wider and more enduring biographical selves, as well as supporting the connection-making with Level 3 Discourses. My discussions of Mrs Little, Mrs Crayne and Lesley in, respectively, Sections 4.5.2, 4.6.3 and 5.6.1 are examples of how productive this pattern-building and comparison work can be. I have modelled this approach in Figure 6.1 below.

Figure 6-1 From micro-data to macro-social processes with LE



6.4 Practical implications

Biggs and colleagues cite Phillipson and Biggs (1998) as saying that ‘a core challenge to contemporary ageing identities [is] the possibility of finding a place in which a relatively stable social identity can be maintained’ (2000: 653). Furthermore, some theories of ageing argue that the ability of older adults to assimilate the changes of age in a manner that facilitates continuity of self is associated with greater self-esteem in older age (Sneed and Whitbourne 2005). If this theory is correct, then Joellen’s Hair

Palace and similar sites, with their stable staffing and orientation to older clients, would seem to be important for older people's self-esteem.

Such sites may be important in other ways for older people's well-being. Participants' visits not only allowed them to manage their 'on-sight' identity (Paoletti 1998a: 171), but also allowed them to construct identities for themselves as busy, active, social and involved women, with the hair-salon visit itself forming part of that busy life. Yet as the description of the site in Section 2.3.4 showed, in Joellen's, the salon-workers orientated overwhelmingly to speed, hurrying through appointments – with shampoo-and-set clients scheduled in at fifteen minute intervals – regardless of the busyness of the salon. This points to limitations to 'doing being busy' available in Joellen's, beyond the discursive constraints discussed in Section 6.2.3. In short, the salon-workers' orientation to busyness as well as the practice of 'talking over the client's head' (see Sections 2.3.1 and 2.3.4) curtailed the time participants might have to engage in any talk that enabled them to construct for themselves positive older identities.

This is not to cast blame on the salon-workers. On the whole they listened with extraordinary patience and caring to occasionally repetitive and sometimes depressing tales as well as to more lively narratives. However, many services – and not merely those officially designed as 'caring' services – may, particularly for less mobile older people, undermine both discursively and socially that individual's need to construct identities for themselves as active; and this may be the case even if (contrary to what is often reported as occurring) the official 'time allowed' is *not* curtailed. Thus my research points to a need to recognise the way in which quotidian talk and the *orientation* to speed and busyness of such services may constrain

aspects of older people's identity work. What it also suggests is that the potential for constructing a positive active and engaged identity in such mundane activities as the visit to the hair-salon (or chiropodist, doctor's surgery, etc) should not be underplayed.

6.5 Future avenues of exploration

My research focussed on a single hair-salon, albeit one typical of the sector in its micro-business owner-manager status, and involved just nine older female clients and three salon-workers as participants. Thus I can make no claims for the statistical generalisability of the findings of my thesis. I hope I have shown, however, that the intensive linguistic and ethnographic focus on the social and discursive practices of the site and its people which I have presented not only speaks to theory but also has the potential to generate theory that can be tested in sites that are in some way similar to Joellen's Hair Palace (Blommaert and Jie 2010: 12-13; Hammersley and Atkinson 2007: 233ff). I have done this particularly with regard to the suggestion that there are non-deterministic associations between participants' chronological age and the way in which they design their 'older-age' categorizations; and through adding nuance to our understanding of older women's investment in appearance practices.

That said, there are clearly many other older people's stories left untold in my research and unexplored aspects of the site and its practices. Briefly, there is scope, *inter alia*, firstly, to build on the findings in this thesis related to narrative practices in order to explore the role of *place* in participants' stories: this is a neglected dimension of narrative (De Fina and Georgakopoulou 2015: 9), but for older tellers sitting immobile and virtually immobilised in the hair-salon, invocation of a wide range of places (only

briefly referred to in this thesis, for example Section 4.3.2, Section 5.4.1) could accomplish significant identity and other work.

Secondly, as Georgakopoulou and Charalambidou among others have observed:

‘speakers communicate not just as members of one particular social category but as members of multiple categories’ (2011: 42)

This, as Georgakopoulou and Charalambidou go on to explain, is labelled the ‘co-articulation of identities’; and as they say,

‘acknowledging this co-articulation forces the analysts to explore how identities interrelate and are mediated by one another as opposed to singling out one’ (*ibid*).

There has not been space in this thesis, sadly, to engage in much discussion of the way participants’ orientation to ‘older-age’ identities intersects with their orientation to other identities. By the same token, although I have tried to bring out the distinctiveness of each participant – particularly through the use of case studies in some instances – there is a danger that their individual differences have been obscured in the interests of finding patterns in my data. Yet – it goes without saying – my participants were a heterogeneous group of women with distinct biographies despite some surface similarities (these being, most obviously, their chronological age as over 50 and thus, in this study, ‘older’; and being women). Their experiences of being ‘older’ is undoubtedly shaped by those biographies. Thus, for example, I have barely referred to the way that Mrs Farming’s and Lesley’s self-construction of identities as *sufferers of chronic illness* intersects with and mediates their ‘older-age’ constructions (see discussion of Extracts 5.14 and 3.27, pp.347 and 210 respectively

and Section 5.6.1). Also referred to only in passing is the way some participants' orientation to their identities as *Mothers* intersects with and shapes their 'older-age' identities (for example with Mrs France, Section 4.3.2). And only just touched on is the way that participants' self-constructions as (*still really*) *working* intersects with, but may be constructed by their interlocutors as at odds with, their identities as 'older' (see, for example, the discussion about Mrs Farthing, Section 5.6.2). Perhaps the clearest area in which participants' identities co-articulate with other identities is with identities as *female* – even to an extent with Mrs Crayne, as the discussion in Section 4.6.3 showed. Here, participants' hair-treatments, their expressions of concern about age-appropriate appearance, even the kinds of activities that sometimes surface in their busy stories as I showed in Section 5.6.1, show how participants orientate in their talk to their identity as female. Further research would usefully focus explicitly on such co-articulation of identities.

Thirdly, there is scope to adopt a linguistic ethnographic methodology and the kind of fine-grained linguistic and narrative analysis adopted here to studies of other groups, including, for example, focussing on men, who, as Hurd Clarke and Korotchenko (2011: 504) observe, have been the subject of little research on body image or the importance to them of their appearance. Consideration of their perspective would offer valuable points of comparison and contrast with my research.

6.6 Last words

Over the course of my research, one thing has become increasingly clear, and that is that ageing is a special case in research terms – not just related to identity. As many researchers, approaching the issue from different disciplinary perspectives, have

commented: unlike so many of the groups we research, 'the old' are a group we shall all one day join, unless we die first (e.g., Bytheway (1995: 10); Calasanti (2007: 337); Furman (1997: 184)). The distinctiveness of researching ageing, compared with the focus of many other ethnographies and linguistically-orientated research, is that the mantra 'there but for fortune' (Vesperi 1995: loc134) is just a temporal deferral of an almost inevitable reality. Thus understanding ageing and the multiplicity of ways of being older and not older that can emerge in a single person becomes a self-interested project.

Appendices

Appendix A: Abbreviations

| Abbreviation | Meaning |
|--------------|--------------------------------------|
| CA | Conversation analysis |
| CBA | Category-bound attributes/activities |
| CDA | Critical discourse analysis |
| CHRA | Chronological age |
| FPP | First pair part |
| L&W | Labov and Waletzky |
| LE | Linguistic ethnography |
| MCA | Membership categorization analysis |
| MCD | Membership categorization device |
| NPT | Narrative positioning theory |
| PSD | Painful self-disclosure |
| SPP | Second pair part |
| TCU | Turn constructional unit |
| TRP | Transition relevance place |

Mrs Farming we're an old lot

↓↑

Marks pitch step up or step down in the following syllable:

Mrs Pace we↑:l1 one likes to be (thought)

,

Phrase-final pitch rise:

Clare dunno: (.) old age,

Volume and speed

WORD

Loud sounds relative to surrounding talk:

Mrs Pace DON'T (.) get away with it I want the reduction

°word°

Utterance softer/much softer than the surrounding talk:

°°word°°

Violet and the atmosphere (.) yeah (.) °I couldn't° (.) I'd

< >

Utterance slower than the surrounding talk:

Joellen well Adele (.) at <90 years of age>

> <

Utterance faster than the surrounding talk:

Violet >a little while to go yet<

Sound and syllable production

wo:rd Syllable stretched out. More :: represents more stretching:

Mrs Farming we sit down and gro:an

hell^o Syllables pronounced as separate words

Lesley .h it's a a good thing for me to go (.)
out^side the door

- A cut-off:

Clare but you're not a se-

.h In breath:

Joellen .h I can't retire till

£word£ 'Smile voice' the word between the £ symbols uttered through a smile:

Violet £I tell you what£

wo(h)rd 'Plosiveness' in the word. In this transcript this is exclusively laughter:

Bethan I'll be co(h)mple(h)tely insa(h)ne

Other transcription conventions

(???) Transcriber unable to determine what was said:

Joellen yeah (????) have lots of tattoos

(word) Transcriber's best guess at unclear word or phrase

Mrs Pace weɪ:l one likes to be (thought)

((word)) Transcriber's descriptions:

((Joellen turns on the hair dryer))

Appendix C: Three stages in the ethnographically and analytically-driven emergence of research questions

Research Questions (April 2011 – post proposal and prior to start of doctoral research)

This research aims to investigate the extent to which, and the means whereby, hairdressers do emotional labour in the turn-by-turn interactions with clients. As a general aim, it asks: do the turns at talk and especially narrative practices in which stylists in a hairdressing salon engage with clients provide us with evidence of their doing emotional labour? More specifically, the research seeks to address the following inter-related research questions that underpin this overarching aim, namely:

1. What kinds of talk (e.g. transactional, relational (see e.g. papers in J. Coupland 2000)) do participants engage in? In particular, what kind of narrative practices do they engage in, with what kinds of stories and types of teller/listener roles (see e.g. Georgakopoulou 2007), and with what kinds of function/s?
2. How do hairstylists and their clients draw on these various linguistic resources to orientate to 'the work', the 'institutionality' (Drew and Heritage 1992: 3) of the context and their respective identities vis-à-vis the work and that context?
3. What *sort of* institutional contexts and identities do hairdressers and clients in a hair-salon construct?
4. How do participants in the interaction use the different narrative types to position themselves and attempt to position others (see e.g. Bamberg 1997) with respect to this work and context ?

Research Questions (January 2012 – just prior to commencement of field work)

1. How if at all are **narrative practices** and other talk used by clients and stylists to negotiate and achieve the appearance, sociability and other goals that each has for the hair appointment? How does the use by each party of these narrative practices contribute to the construction of selves?
2. Given that age (like all identities) is relational and situational rather than a fixed chronologically-based attribute (see e.g. Calasanti and Slevin 2001), how if at all is age done and made relevant in the **narrative practices** and **appearance talk** between stylists and their clients in the hair-salon?

Research Questions (February 2014 – towards end of field work)

The focus on identities, relationships and appearance in the salon, and my primary interest in older women, leads to the following over-arching research question:

- How (if at all) do the narrative, discourses and other social practices of the hair-salon contribute to shaping specific socially defined identities and relationships for stylists and their older female clients? (shaped by (Paoletti 1998b))

This over-arching research question can be carried forward and addressed through focussing on the following three sub-questions:

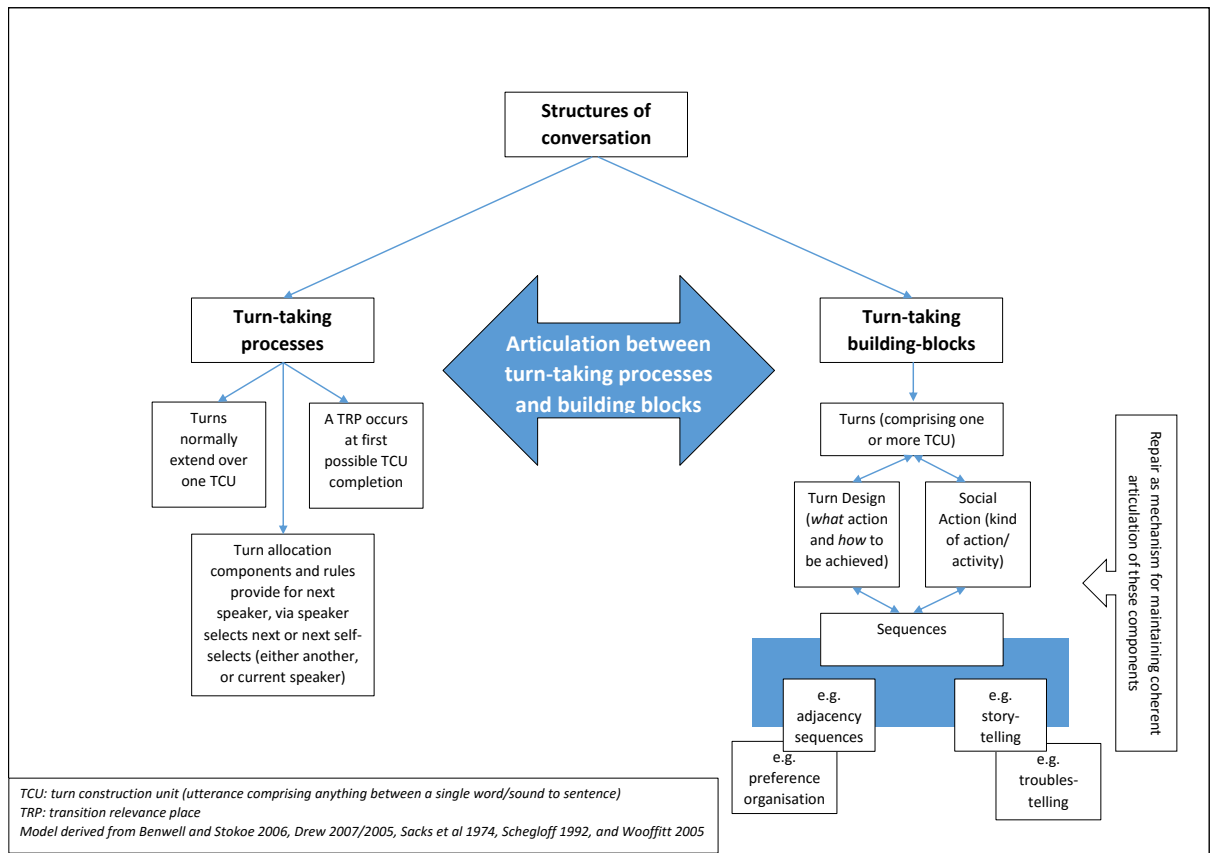
1. How are explicit orientations to ageing and older identities made by participants in interaction and what interactive work are these orientations doing?
2. How are claims about appearance and its importance made by participants and with what identity implications for both salon-workers and their older female clients?
3. What are the salient discourse and social practices of the salon? What age identities do these practices afford and constrain?

Appendix D: Key analytic tools of the Conversation Analytic apparatus

In Section 1.5.1, I provided an overview of Conversation analysis (CA). This appendix is intended to provide an overview of the key components in this apparatus. The whole apparatus is illustrated in Figure D.1 below.

One set of components are descriptive rules for turn-taking processes in talk, set out by Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson (1974). These account for observed phenomena in talk, such as that normally only one person talks at a time, or that gaps in talk tend to be minimal. The other set of components are the building blocks of turn-taking. The first of these is turns, built out of successive 'turn constructional units' (TCUs). These can be as various as complete sentences or individual words or sounds that are recognisably complete in themselves (Clayman 2013), but the key in terms of turn-taking is that a 'transition relevance place' (TRP) – that is, a place where a new speaker may, but need not, take a turn – occurs at the close of a TCU (*ibid*). The remaining building blocks encompass turn design; the social action to be achieved through the TCU; and sequence organisation (Drew 2007/2005: loc2946). Sequences, 'turns ... connected with one another in systematically organized patterns or sequences of turns' (*ibid*, loc3556) are described by Heritage as 'the "engine room" of interaction' (2007/2005: loc5660). Much CA-inspired work emphasises the importance of including sequential analysis in any consideration of identity work (e.g., Paoletti 1998a; Stokoe 2012b). Two fundamental sequences are the adjacency pair and story-telling (Jefferson 1978; Sacks 1974; 1995: Vol2, 3-17; 222-41; 521-75; Schegloff 1992b, 2007a). The way in which participants deploy these components displays their stance towards the ongoing interaction and other participants.

Figure D.1 Interactional structures of talk



Story-telling is covered extensively in Sections 1.6 and 2.5.3.

Adjacency pairs are characterised as sequences of two consecutive or adjacent turns by different speakers (Schegloff 2007a: 13). These pairs of turns are ordered, with ‘first pair parts’ (FPPs) comprising actions such as assessing, requesting, etc, and ‘second pair parts’ (SPPs) comprising appropriate utterances that are ‘responsive to the action of a prior turn’ (*ibid*), such as agreeing, acceding (or refusing), etc.

Related to discussion of sequence organisation is consideration of *preference organisation*, in terms of both preferred response to FPPs (where the preference is for assessments to be agreed with, invitations to be accepted, etc) (Pomerantz 1984a), and in terms of the organisation of those FPPs in the first place to stand the

best chance of receiving a preferred response (Schegloff 2007a). Pomerantz (1984a) showed how, typically, dispreferred responses to FPPs were marked by the use of discursive resources such as delays in responding, hedges, minimisers, accounts, etc (see too, Davidson 1984; Drew 1984; Pomerantz 1984b; Schegloff 2007a). Indeed, no explicit negative need ever be given, a fact drawn upon by Kitzinger and Frith (1999) in their discussion of the inefficacy of the ‘just say no’ rape-avoidance training offered to young women. Figure D.2 below illustrates some of these features of preferred and dispreferred responses.

Figure D.2 Preferred and dispreferred SPP responses FPPs

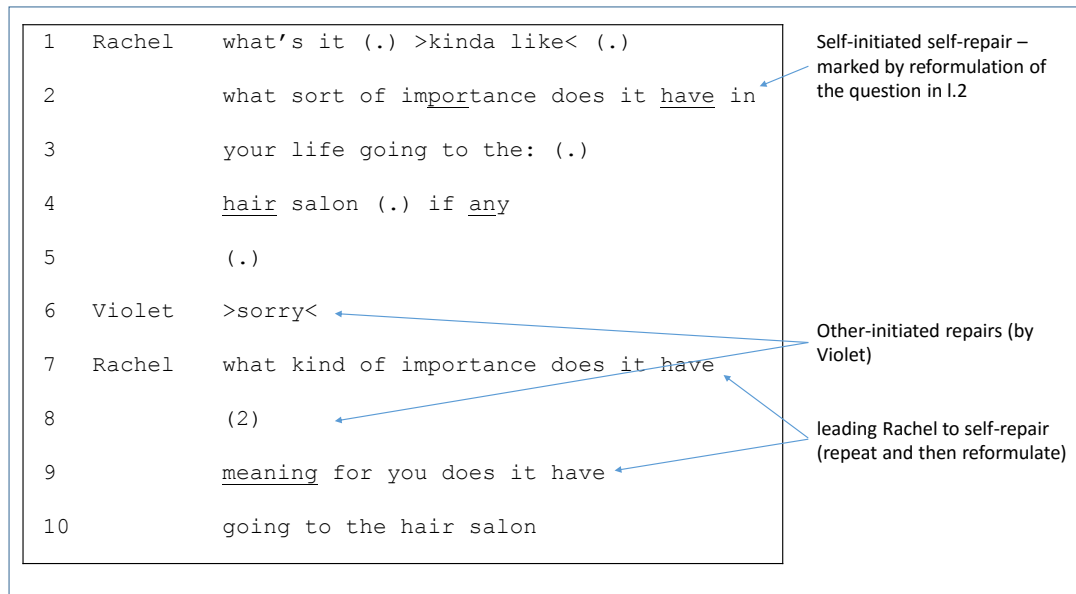
| | | | |
|---|------------|---|---|
| 1 | Mrs Little | and then it'll be time probably for | |
| 2 | | another dog walk | |
| 3 | Joellen | ye(h)h he he he he | |
| 4 | | he .h | |
| 5 | | fthat's the trod(h)uble with <u>these</u> dogsf | Assessment of dogs, prefers agreement |
| 6 | Mrs Little | YE[H | Agreement produced without gap and emphatically |
| 7 | Joellen | [fdog walkingf | |

| | | | |
|---|-------------|--|---|
| 1 | Joellen | °you're <u>getting</u> it all <u>sorted</u> <u>now</u> ° | Assessment of state of play of Mrs Farming's trouble, prefers agreement (yes) |
| 2 | | (1.5) | |
| 3 | Mrs Farming | well we're still not <u>hearing</u> a bloody word | Dispreferred response prefigured by gap, hedge (well), and account (but no explicit disagreement) |
| 4 | | from the:[: | |
| 5 | Joellen | [↑reall[y | |
| 6 | Mrs Farming | [no from the er (1) | |
| 7 | | bloke in <u>Blenheim</u> | |

Another key concept is the notion of *repair*, ‘the mechanism for repairing problems or hitches as they arise’ (Drew 2007/2005: loc3970). This is about ensuring the maintenance of mutual understanding and the achievement of particular social actions. Repair can be initiated and undertaken by either participant, with what is termed other-initiated other-repair closest to the lay notion of correction (and least

preferred (Schegloff et al. 1977)). Two kinds of repair are illustrated in Figure D.3 below.

Figure D.3 Kinds of repair



This figure also shows how recipient silence can also effectively act as a repair mechanism.

Appendix E: Pronominal choices and laughter: two recurring features in salon talk

There are of course many recurring interactional features in salon talk. Two in particular that turned out to be salient in the analysis were pronominal uses, particularly use of generic 'you' to do referring; and laughter (see for example Sections 3.2.5, 3.4). Here I offer as background an overview of research on these two features.

E.1 Pronominal choices for referring to self.

Discussing referring practices in talk-in-interaction, Schegloff comments that the pronouns 'I' and 'you' (and their variants) are the most common forms of reference for self and other-present respectively (1996: 441-49). O'Connor's research, examining prisoners' stories of violence, similarly finds that 'I', 'my' and 'me' were overwhelmingly used by her narrators to refer to themselves. Given these unmarked forms of referring to self and other, alternative usages are generally marked (Schegloff 2007b: 436).

Schegloff (1996) argues that 'you' may include the speaker in a manner that either generalises – 'everyone' – or, in contrast, that invokes the speaker's personal knowledge and/or experience in the matter discussed, that is, stands in contrast with the impersonal 'you'. In a similar vein O'Connor, discussing prisoners' stories of violence, identifies five different uses of 'you' (O'Connor 2000: 75-117). Such uses might serve to involve and possibly also include the other in the reference term by generalising the experience recounted in a way that to differing degrees both 'invites the listener into the experience' (*ibid*, p.84) whilst retaining the speaker's personal involvement. O'Connor makes the point that the use of 'you' may simultaneously distance the speaker from an experience whilst experientially involving the addressee

in a happening outwith their normal experiences (*ibid*, p.105), thereby facilitating 'the empathetic involvement of the interlocutor' (O'Connor 2000: 105). Other uses, O'Connor suggests, are more impersonal, pointing to people in general, and sometimes serving to distance the speaker from the experience in an impersonal or aphoristic manner. She also notes that some speakers switched from 'I' to 'you' 'at moments of high evaluation' (*ibid*, p.100), which resonates with Tannen's (1983, 1986) finding that one of the resources used by her Greek female story-tellers to heighten involvement was the use of 'generic you'. Similarly, De Fina shows how choice of pronoun in story-telling enabled tellers to express 'distancing, involvement, or solidarity with topics and participants, and conveying responsibility or lack of it' (2003: 53). Thus the use of 'generic you' by tellers served to depersonalise the tales told, whilst simultaneously involving the recipient (*ibid*, p.84). In particular, she found that codas to stories tended to have a generalising form, a finding supported also by Scheibman's (2007: 133) research. Furthermore, Scheibman argues with respect to generalizations such as generic 'you' and 'they' that because they 'often make reference to societal norms, they are involved in the reproduction of belief systems' (2007: 126). She goes on to suggest that because it *formally* refers to those present, this implicit referential aspect of 'generic you' to those present helps appeal to their general experience of life or the situation under discussion.

One of the most frequent uses of 'you' in O'Connor's data was in the discourse marker 'you know' (or y'know). Here, drawing on work by Holmes (1986) she comments on its use, variously, as an indicator of confidence, or, conversely as a marker of uncertainty, 'about the message or about the interlocutor's acceptance of the message content' (O'Connor 2000: 99). Schiffrin highlights the informational and interactional uses of this utterance, which in sum, signals the kind of recipient action required by the speaker (1987: 295). In short, 'y'know' may serve both an involving

and asserting function. It can also, notes O'Connor, serve as a 'framing device' in reflective narratives of self (2000: 99).

'Generic you' is not the only means other than 'I' whereby a speaker can refer to herself, and Schegloff (1996) discusses a number of other forms for this purpose. These uses include 'we', which itself can denote a range of referents, from parties present, through denoting membership of a collective (De Fina 2003), to institutional usages (Zimmerman 1998: 99). Speakers can also refer to themselves in the third person using either their name or a third-person pronoun; and of course, speakers may also use a range of means to refer to themselves in 'constructed dialogue' (Tannen 1983, 1986), whether such dialogue is speech or thought. Here such uses include the second-person pronoun, a third-person pronoun or descriptive noun-phrase. All these uses are found in my data.

As this discussion has illustrated, speakers have a range of options for self-referencing, and the choice of referent varies by sequential context and project in hand. In short, as De Fina stresses,

'by manipulating pronouns speakers can ... convey subtle social meanings that relate to their social identities or to their positions with respect to other interlocutors, both present and absent, and to the experiences and topics that are being discussed' (2003: 52).

E.2 Laughter

As many authors have noted, whilst laughter often signals non-seriousness in interaction it does not always do this; nor, conversely, does the absence of laughter necessarily indicate seriousness in an interaction (Holt 2013). However, it is frequently the case that the presence of laughter (among other linguistic and

paralinguistic features) is one of the discursive resources used by participants to signal that the current or previous turn is being treated non-seriously (*ibid*). As Holt (2013) shows, serious and non-serious orientations to talk are frequently interwoven in interaction.

Laughter has been shown to be 'a systematically produced, socially organized activity' (Jefferson et al. 1987: 152). Jefferson showed how participants may invite laughter from fellow interlocutor/s through either laughing themselves or through designing their utterance in such a way as to indicate to their recipient/s that this point constitutes a locus for recipient laughter (Jefferson 1979: 82-3). Thus laughter may be either invited via post-completion laughter by the speaker, or volunteered at an appropriate point by the recipient. As Jefferson demonstrated, recipients may also decline to laugh through remaining silent or alternatively, by pursuing serious topic talk. Recurrently, in fact, recipients *do* accept speaker invitations to laugh, thereby displaying affiliation with the speaker and others present, sometimes over extended sequences (Jefferson 1984: 348; Jefferson et al. 1987: 159), although such extended sequences are comparatively uncommon in interaction (Holt 2013: 2112).

Sequences in which laughter occurs can do a range of complicated interactional work including the shaping of 'displays of alignment, affiliation, shared laughter, intimacy, and resistance' (Glenn and Holt 2013: loc217). Thus Jefferson (Jefferson 1985; Jefferson et al. 1987) showed how laughter may be used to pursue the intimacy associated with the telling of improprieties of one kind or another. Studies have also shown how laughter may manage other delicate interactional work such as, *inter alia*, reporting of complaints, mitigating disagreements or other dispreferred responses to an FPP, negotiating tricky social actions such as offers and requests, modulating sympathy, and so on (Clift 2013; Hepburn and Varney 2013; Holt 2013; Shaw et al.

2013). In such delicate work, Jefferson highlighted how the precise placement of the laughter can be important in pointing to 'the tender component' of an utterance (Jefferson 1985: 30). In managing this interactional work laughter also does a range of identity work. For example, laughing in the delivery of a trouble can display the troubles-teller as 'troubles-resistant' (Jefferson 1984: 351); laughter or laughter particles in reporting of a complaint serves to mitigate the identity of the speaker as a 'complainer' (Clift 2013: loc.6041); and laughter can index that a social action achieved in an utterance is delicate (Beach and Mandelbaum 2005: e.g., 349, 51). More obviously, laughing at another's witticism or amusing anecdote helps construct the teller herself as 'witty'.

A common element of these multi-various interactional and identity-constructing uses of both 'generic you' and laughter is the way they help participants to manage their (dis)affiliation in the ongoing interaction, to mitigate or smooth over potential troubles, whilst constructing positive or valued identities for self and other.

Appendix F: Example Ethics Form (Clients, Focal Salon)

Ethical approval was gained for both the pilot (initial phase of data collection) (REP-H/11/12-10) and the main phase of data collection (REP-H/12/13-13). With respect to the latter, different information sheets and consent forms were developed for stylists and clients. The differences between these information sheets/consent forms is relatively minor. I thus attach as an example only the sheet used for clients.

INFORMATION SHEET FOR PARTICIPANTS [C1a/]



REC Reference Number: REP-H/12/13-13

YOU WILL BE GIVEN A COPY OF THIS INFORMATION SHEET

Title of the Research Study

The role of the hair salon in the lives of older women

I would like to invite you as a client of this hair salon to participate in my postgraduate research project, which is funded by a grant from the Arts & Humanities Research Council (AHRC). Please only participate if you want to. There will be no problems for you if you decide not to take part.

Before you decide whether you want to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what taking part will involve. If you are still interested please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Please do feel free to ask me if anything is unclear or if you would like more information.

Thank you for reading this.

What is my research about and what might its benefits be?

Visits to a hair salon are important in many people's lives. For more mature women in particular the appointment may play a number of roles. My research explores how these different functions are achieved through the everyday talk

and interaction of the hair appointment. I hope that this research will contribute to the literature on language and ageing; and also highlight the role played by different social networks for older adults.

Who will take part?

I'm recruiting clients and their stylists in this hair salon. Men who are clients of this salon might also be interested in participating and providing a different perspective. Clients who participate are likely to be aged 50+, with most in their 70s to 90s.

What will be involved in taking part?

If you agree to take part in this research I would like to record a series of up to four of your hair appointments. Ideally I would like to video-record them (or part/s of them), but if you are uncomfortable with that I would just audio-record them. I would also like to audio-record one or more informal conversations (or interviews) with you to discuss your views on aspects of the research. These conversations would last around 20-30 minutes and would take place in a location convenient to you some time after the appointments.

What are the benefits and risks?

People who take part in research of this sort quite often say they enjoy the process and find it interesting; and I would certainly hope to discuss my findings with you. There are NO foreseeable risks in taking part beyond those encountered in everyday life. There might be some small inconvenience as a result of the presence of the audio/video-recorder during your appointment.

Will your details be kept confidential?

In my final and any interim report I shall use pseudonyms for all names of stylists, clients, the name of the salon, and the town. Similarly, I shall use pseudonyms for any references to names, particular places and so on. You will thus not be identifiable in any **printed** reports by people unconnected with the salon.

All file-names and transcripts associated with the **recordings** would use pseudonyms but I will not be able completely to anonymise you in the audio-/video-recordings. The risk, however, of you being identified through these recordings is very small, and with your permission, I would like to be able to use the recordings in research seminars, and make them available for other researchers who are interested in language.

I shall retain all recordings (including of the interview) until the end of my PhD (2017) and for three years thereafter in accordance with AHRC requirements.

All the data – the recordings and transcripts – will be kept securely in accordance with the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998.

Next steps and right of withdrawal

Clearly it is up to you to decide whether to take part or not. If you do decide to take part I shall ask you to sign a Consent Form and a Data Reuse form that allows us to reuse your data. Please do note that if you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason. In addition to withdrawing yourself from the study, you may also withdraw any data/information you have already provided up until it is transcribed for use in the final report, which will be by the end of August 2013, or, in the case of any sessions that might take place after that date, by one month following the recorded session.

My details

If you would like to talk about this research, have any general enquiries, or would like to withdraw from the research having agreed to take part please contact me at:

Rachel Heinrichsmeier, Centre for Hellenic Studies and Centre for Language, Discourse and Communication, School of Arts and Humanities, King's College London, Strand, London. WC2R 2LS.

E-Mail: rachel.heinrichsmeier@kcl.ac.uk.

Tel: [MOBILE NUMBER]

If this study has harmed you in any way you can contact King's College London using the details below for further advice and information (these are my supervisors):

Professor Alexandra Georgakopoulou

Centre for Hellenic Studies and Centre for Language, Discourse and Communication, School of Arts and Humanities, King's College London, Strand, London.

Professor Ben Rampton

Centre for Language, Discourse and Communication and Department of Education and Professional Studies, King's College London, Waterloo Bridge Wing,

WC2R 2LS

Email:
Alexandra.Georgakopoulou@kcl.ac.uk

Franklin-Wilkins Building,
Waterloo Road, London. SE1
9NH

Email:
Ben.Rampton@kcl.ac.uk

Thank you for your interest.

Rachel Heinrichsmeier

Please note: if you would like this information sheet or the forms in larger print or alternative versions please let me know

CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPANTS IN RESEARCH STUDIES (C1a)

Please complete this form after you have read the Information Sheet and/or listened to an explanation about the research

Title of the Research Study

The role of the hair salon in the lives of older women

King's College Research Ethics Committee Ref: **REP-H/12/13-13**

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this research. The person organising the research must explain the project to you before you agree to take part. If you have any questions arising from the Information Sheet or explanation already given to you, please ask the researcher before you decide whether to join in. You will be given a copy of this Consent Form to keep and refer to at any time.

The information you have submitted or will be submitting (i.e., the data from the hair appointment and interview) will be used within a PhD thesis and, we hope, other research papers. Please note that confidentiality and anonymity will be maintained as described in the Information Sheet, and with those caveats it will not be possible to identify you from any printed publications.

**Please
tick or
initial**

- I understand that if I decide at any time during the research that I no longer wish to participate in this project, I can notify the researcher involved and withdraw from it immediately without giving any reason. Furthermore, I understand that I will be able to withdraw my data any time up to the end of August 2013, or, in the case of any sessions that might take place after that date, by one month following the recorded session.
- I consent to the processing of my personal information for the purposes explained to me. I understand that such information will be handled in accordance with the terms of the Data Protection Act 1998.

I consent to my hair appointments being audio-recorded and/or video-recorded

(delete as appropriate)

- I consent to my interview/s being audio-recorded.

- I agree that the researcher may use my data for future research and understand that any such use of identifiable data would be reviewed and approved by a research ethics committee. (In such cases, as with this project, data would not be identifiable in any written report or in the transcripts, but the audio-/video-recordings would not be anonymised except in their file name.)

Participant's Statement:

I _____

agree that the research project named above has been explained to me to my satisfaction and I agree to take part in the study. I have read both the notes written above and the Information Sheet about the project, and understand what the research study involves.

Signed

Date

Investigator's Statement:

I _____

Confirm that I have carefully explained the nature, demands and any foreseeable risks (where applicable) of the proposed research to the participant.

Signed

Date

Appendix G: Example Interview Guide

- Jessica Crayne, Ethnographic Conversation
- Time, date and place: Wednesday 30th April 2014, 2.30pm, XYZ Coffee Shop

Introduction

- Thank!!!
- Halt/withdraw, confidential, recording
- Conversational, time available?

Hairdressers and Joellen's

- How long, how come, attraction?
- Pattern of hair appointments? Motivations? Missing appointments?
- Other salons – comparisons?
- Atmosphere
- Likes/dislikes – Joellen's? Hairdressers in general?
- Relationships?
- Talk in the salon?
- What would you do if Joellen decided to close down?

Hair management

- Hair and management?
- Changes over the years?
- Aims?

Appearance

- Daily 'appearance routine'
- Staying in/going out?
- Looking in the mirror?
- Change to appearance over time?

Getting old(er)

- Getting older: contacts or experiences?
- Being 'old' =?
- Thinking about getting older? How/when?
- Feeling old?
- 'Good age'? 'best years' were/are?
- What are the pros and cons of ageing?

Sociability and routines

- Current occupation? Pastimes? What occupies time?
- Other clients of Joellen's – know them?

Demographics

- Age?
- Married/children?
- Education level?
- Health?

Questions?

Appendix H: Additional data extracts

I. Mrs Farming's troubles-telling (Mrs Farming, Appt2)

09:47
1. Mrs Farming I tell you what (.)
2. I wish (you had) some energy pills
3. cos I could certainly do with some
4. Joellen ah::
5. (1)
6. Joellen I don't think this weather's
7. helping very much
8. Mrs Farming no
9. Joellen everybody you talk to says that
10. they're [tired
11. Mrs Farming [yes
12. it's ↑terrible
13. (12) ((male client audibly talking with Clare))
14. Mrs Farming you know I thought yesterday (1)
15. something I want to do
16. and thought oh I'll just sit down first
17. and I thought this is ridiculous
18. Joellen [mm
19. Mrs Farming [so (???) I must get down to the doctors
20. because they haven't got the results
21. from (.)
22. what they did
23. I have from the surgeon
24. but not from the surgery he's al-
25. our doctor's already sent two letters
26. Joellen [oh
27. Mrs Farming [I've igno:red them ha h[e
28. Joellen [ts
29. Mrs Farming £I said to Lucy yesterday£
30. the next thing on the agenda when we get
31. all this s::ettled (.)
32. is er the doctors
33. (.)
34. Joellen °you're getting it all sorted now°
35. (1.5)
36. Mrs Farming well we're still not hearing a bloody word
37. from the:[:
38. Joellen [↑reall[y
39. Mrs Farming [no from the er (1)
40. bloke in Blenheim
41. Joellen °oh:°
42. Mrs Farming the solicitor I don't kn[ow
43. Joellen [ye[h
44. Mrs Farming [actually
45. if he doesn't do something this week
46. I'm going to ring up and [say
47. Joellen [yeah
48. Mrs Farming thank you I'll take my (.)

49. [business elsewhere]
50. Joellen [business ↑elsewhere]
51. Mrs Farming yes
52. Joellen mm
53. (1) ((*sound of door closing*))
54. Mrs Farming °cos I'm just about fed up with it°
55. Joellen yeah
56. (2)
57. 00:11:06
58. Mrs Farming Morning ((*Mrs F greets Denise, who talks to Joellen and Clare about encountering a 7th day Adventist*))
59. (20)
60. Mrs Farming ((*Mrs Farming resumes, very softly, drowned out by man talking*))
61. Joellen mm yeah
62. (.)
63. Mrs Farming (?????) you know
64. Joellen it's annoying when you're not (.)
65. getting anywhere though isn't it reall[y
66. Mrs Farming [yeh
67. [yes
68. Joellen [though and (.)
69. you're paying them to [do a job
70. Mrs Farming [yes
71. Mrs Farming [yes
72. Joellen [you ex[pect it to be done
73. Mrs Farming [yes
74. Mrs Farming it's <so laid back>
75. and so casual you wouldn't believe
76. (3)
77. Mrs Farming I shall say to him actually: (.)
78. I've I'd rather if you don't need (.)
79. my (.) business
80. Joellen mm
81. Mrs Farming so I'll go local
82. Joellen yeah
83. Mrs Farming er because it'll be easier for me
84. and probably easier for you
85. Joellen yeah
86. (2)
87. Mrs Farming I I you know I've been very er (0.5)
88. nice to him on the phone
89. so I've (??(h)??) [he he he
90. Joellen [he he he
91. Mrs Farming he he he
92. (2)
93. ((*Mrs Farming coughs*))
94. Mrs Farming cos I said to him you know (.)
95. I don't know what I'm doing
96. <until you can tell me>
97. what you can do for me
98. Joellen that's right yeah
99. Mrs Farming I mean until we get the money all settled

100. (???) I don't know how
 101. if I can stay there or not
 102. [(with ???? their ???? taking)
 103. Joellen [no this is it isn't it
 104. Mrs Farming yeah
 105. (3)
 106. Mrs Farming you know
 107. and at ninety
 108. it's not quite the place to be
 109. in that situation [is it
 110. Joellen [no it isn't
 00:12:27((17 seconds of silence between Joellen and Mrs Farming ensue during which a story Denise is telling Rachel becomes audible. Then Mrs Farming launches a new topic relating to her hair.))

II. Joellen 'outs' Violet's age (Violet, Appt1)

04:34
 1. Joellen did you go up there
 2. Violet I would have liked to
 3. I was just saying I was up there for the (.)
 4. when she (.)
 5. for the c- (y' [know)
 6. Joellen [for the co[ronation] (.)
 7. Violet [coronation]
 8. Joellen was yo[u
 9. Violet [yeah:
 10. I was only (...) sixteen then
 11. Joellen ye[ah:
 12. Violet [s(h)o he he
 13. and so I was full of energy he he
 14. Joellen <↑seventy ↑six> (.)
 15. I know ho(h)w old she is no(h)w he he
 16. Rachel he he [he he he
 17. Bethan he he [he he
 18. Violet [NOT YET (...)
 19. [no not till August no
 20. Joellen [he he he he he he
 21. Violet >got a little [while to go<
 22. Joellen [oh right (.) he he he he (.)
 23. Violet >a ↑[while to go yet<
 24. Joellen [okay he he he >seventy< fi::ve he he [he
 25. Violet [he
 26. he he he .h yeah::
 04:56

III. Joellen reassures Mrs Sargent that she could be 'up to' using an iPad (Mrs Sargent, Appt1)

12:06:
1. Mrs Sargent m- my husband would like an i-pad
2. 'cos you've got an i-pad haven't [you
3. Joellen [°I've
4. got an i-pad [yeah°
5. Mrs Sargent [he'd love one of those
6. but (.)
7. ↑we're not up to
8. [technology that's the trouble]
9. Joellen [(they're) easy to use though]
12:14

IV. Resisting associating tiredness with 'getting a bit older' (Mrs France, Appt1)

This is Mrs France's first recorded appointment, and Rachel has been chatting with Mrs France as she waits for Joellen to attend to her. When Mrs France arrived, she had made a comment to Joellen about feeling tired, but this was not recorded as her participation had not been confirmed.

10:29
1. Rachel I' (h)ll leave you to cha[tʃ
2. Joellen [.h ↑ho(h)w are you
3. to↑day he he he [he he
4. Mrs France [yeh I'm fine [Joellen
5. Joellen [>I think we've
6. done that bit haven't we you're< [ti:red
7. Mrs France [yeah yeah
8. ye[ah
9. Joellen [.h ye[ah
10. Mrs France [WELL (.) I'm always tired lately
11. [y'know
12. Joellen [I know I kno[w:
13. Mrs France [I mean [it's
14. Joellen [he he he he he
15. (.)
16. Joellen &things are just all too much aren't they&
17. he he he [he
18. Mrs France [well you know I mean I've been
19. retired two years now [and it
20. Joellen [is it two years
21. Mrs France it's two ye:ars and I thought um
22. Joellen you were gonna have a rest
23. Mrs France >I did<

24. Joellen and you're not

25. Mrs France no: and (.) y'know when my [mum use-

26. Joellen [°usual°

27. (.)

28. Joellen usua[l

29. Mrs France [yeah bit (.) um could [thin it

30. Joellen [at the back

31. Mrs France thin it out yeh please um (.) yeah when my mum

32. (.) said er to me that she after she'd

33. been retired a little while she said .h (.) I

34. don't know how I had time to go to wo[rk

35. Joellen [no makes

36. you laugh [donnit when (?????) £do it

37. Mrs France [↑yeah

38. Joellen yourself£ [he he he he he h

39. Mrs France [I ↑know: and now I think um yeah:

40. he [he he he

41. Joellen [he he he he he he >£how did I have time

42. to go to work£<

43. (.)

44. Joellen I think you get put on more when you're: not

45. at work he he [he

46. Mrs France [yeah well (.) I I you know I

47. am put on quite a lot

48. Joellen °yeah°

49. Mrs France um

50. (2)

51. Mrs France and you (..) i::t starts off with <mum could

52. you ju:st>

53. Joellen yeh

54. Mrs France and then it sort (.)

55. work goes into sort of every da:y

56. and you several hours

57. Joellen yeah

58. (.)

59. Joellen 's not funny int [it

60. Mrs France [no:: [no

61. Joellen [and it does tire

62. you out more as you get bit [older

63. Mrs France [↑well y- you know

64. I start thinking

65. lately I've been thinking (..)

66. ↑gosh I really feel ti:red by about (.)

67. eight nine o' clock at night (.)

68. and then I think (.)

69. >oh good God I've been on my< feet all day:

70. he [he he [he he

71. Joellen [yeah: [that's it

11:53 ((15 seconds of no talking follows))

11. Mrs Pace don't get away with it
 12. I want the reduction if this is cheap day (.)
 13. so (.) she started it (..) didn't sh[e
 14. Rachel [she did
 15. Mrs Pace she did
 16. (2)
 17. Mrs Pace poor old soul I am
 18. Clare .hh he
 00:06:31

VII. 'Not quite grey yet' (Violet Appt2)

02:27
 1. Violet the colours th-
 2. they're fine as before
 3. I think it was quite nice
 4. Joellen goo[d
 5. Violet [it's got this (.)
 6. amazing how it's gone in the centre
 7. th[ere hasn't it
 8. Joellen [yeh
 9. Violet .h it's not quite grey yet anyway
 10. [it's still (.) shining [through
 11. Joellen [no [it's still there
 12. it's still shining [through
 13. Violet [mm
 02:39

VIII. Clare's 'age deferral' story (Mrs Farming, Appt2)

00:08:11
 1. Mrs Farming (it's a pain in the) knees [aren't they
 2. Clare [I know (.)
 3. he's just turned fi(h)fty he [he he
 4. Mrs Farming [he he[he
 5. Clare [an' he
 6. sli(h)pped over at work and (.)
 7. damaged his um ligaments in his
 8. back of [his (knee hurts)
 9. Mrs Farming [oh dear
 10. Mrs Farming oh that is painful oh (.)
 11. that is (..) pain[ful
 12. Clare [I said er
 13. that's what happens when you [er
 14. Mrs Farming [ye[s
 15. Clare [get to
 16. fifty (.)
 17. it's all [downhill
 18. Mrs Farming [he he he [he
 19. Clare [he he
 08:28

IX. Suiting as reason for colouring hair (Mrs France, Appt1)

The following is one of the rare episodes in which colouring hair and concealing grey or white hair was mentioned. Mrs France's comment in l.1 has been preceded by a discussion about the bleaching effects of the sun.

00:29:34

1. Mrs France I'll have to get the bottle out again
2. (.)
3. Mrs France I [catch sight of meself and (.)
4. Joellen [he
5. Mrs France .h blonde hair doesn't suit me (.)
6. I'm not u-used to it I think
7. Joellen yeah that's probably what it is (.)
8. [isn't it]
9. Mrs France [y e h] °yeh°

00:29:43

Mrs France here seems about to commence a small habitual story-telling in l.3, but then breaks off before stating the consequences of 'catching sight of herself'. In her new start from l.5, she connects the CBA of her hair-colouring practice with two categories of person: firstly, not being a person whom blonde hair *suits*; and secondly, not being a person who is *used* to blonde hair. That is, she engages in the CBA 'colouring hair' to avoid being in the unaccustomed category 'blonde', rather than to avoid being in the category 'person who looks older'. Her stress on 'suit' in l.5 helps the emphasis on this as a reason. There are, though, signs of trouble and lack of epistemic authority in her statement in addition to the repair from l.3 to l.5: pauses (ll.3,5,7); stumble (l.6); 'I think' (l.6). Joellen's agreement is down-played ('probably', l.7). Then with 'isn't it' (l.8) she cedes authority over the assessment to Mrs France. Neither party display certainty about Mrs France's expressed motivation for colouring her white hair. This suggests that both orientate to it as a claimed motivation made for 'appearances sake'; that is, to *avoid* making a connection with ageing.

X. Story of Judy Murray (Mrs Little, Appt2)

00:02:48

1. Mrs Little (obviously) I must admit (.)
2. talking about hair I was horrified (..)
3. on the (..)
4. on the television this morning (.)
5. o-on sort of the news type thing (.)
6. .h they led with the fact that um
7. <Andy Murray's mother> (.)

8. um wasn't obviously having quite
9. so much colour in her hair
10. she'd gone more ↑grey and I thought (.)
11. HOW .h [h.h.h. honestly he he
12. Joellen [...h he he he he mean he he
13. I can't say she enamours people to her-
14. towards her any [more than Andy Murray does
15. Mrs Little [no
16. Joellen but [.h THAT IS SO INSULTIN[G
17. Mrs Little [he .h h... he he [I must admit I
18. I was absolutely horrified because
19. .h it isn't very much differ[ent
20. Joellen [no::
21. Mrs Little and I mean
22. she's going through what we all go through (.)
23. .h the in between stage
24. [and she's come out the other end]
25. Joellen [t h a t ' s r i g h t y e h]
26. Mrs Little and then it's fine to be grey [but (.)
27. Joellen [I know
28. Mrs Little d'you know in that little bit where you're (.)
29. neither fish nor fowl then [you (.)
30. Joellen [yeah
31. Mrs Little sort of (.) start going paler (.)
32. just as I am (.)
33. Joellen ye[h
34. Mrs Little [.h so that [it it's sort of less noticeable
35. Joellen [he he
36. Mrs Little and I thought oh: goodness poor wom[an
37. Joellen [that's so
38. ru:[de he he he
39. Mrs Little [well it is isn't it
40. and to think that we led w- he he. with that
00:03:40

XI. 'In-passing' verbal appreciation (Mrs Sargent, Appt2)

In this extract, Mrs Sargent is in the course of telling Joellen about a recent per-Christmas lunch she had enjoyed.

31:38
1. Joellen hun- no [oh:
2. [((mirror out))
3. Mrs Sargent and um (.)
4. there was the odd person come in (.)
5. who hadn't [booked
6. Joellen [yeah
7. Mrs Sargent and then they sat in the top bit
8. Joellen yeah
9. Mrs Sargent ((clears throat)) °thank you (.) >yeh
lovely<°

10. Joellen [°s' all right°
 11. [((clatter as Joellen replaces the mirror))
 12. (1)
 13. Mrs Sargent but yes it was nice (.)
 14. and then of course you can go in the shop
 31:50 ((continues her story))

XII. Monitoring talk (Mrs France, Appt3)

16:00
 1. Joellen he he [he he he
 2. Mrs France [I said (.)
 3. Joellen [he he he he he he he he he
 4. he h he he he
 5. Mrs France [↑well I didn't think it ↑wa:s
 6. he he he he he he he
 7. .h £I said
 8. if that was [you I think
 9. Joellen [.h h...
 10. Mrs France I ought£ to pu(h)ll o:ver he he [he he
 11. Joellen [ye(h)ah
 12. he £better chuck you ↑out£ he [he he he
 13. Mrs France [ye(h)h he
 14. Joellen chu(h)ck you in a field he he [he
 15. Mrs France [.h £ye:s£
 16. s:ee them [bits
 17. Joellen [yeah
 18. they're all curling [out
 19. Joellen [they are
 20. (.)
 21. Joellen they're £going£
 22. Mrs France good .h ye:h so
 16:19

XIII. Non-type conforming SPP to 'the usual' (Mrs Little, Appt4)

00:05:02
 1. Joellen are you having your usual
 2. Mrs Little .h well
 3. I think so unless we have any other (.)
 4. better suggestions (.)
 5. I seem to be getting (1)
 6. .h °blonder° (.)
 7. [°tryin-°
 8. Joellen [...h
 9. Joellen n-it's been quite sunny this year
 10. hasn't it
 11. Mrs Little yes it [has

12. Joellen [you been out it in quite a bit
13. Mrs Little yes I must admit I have [yes
14. Joellen [yeh:: [that's
15. Mrs Little [oh well
16. that's
17. Joellen that would (.) um
18. Mrs Little >that's all over now though [isn't it<
19. Joellen [be why:
20. Mrs Little .he ye(h)s yeh [right
21. Joellen [well I dunno though
22. [we've been having some ↑flovly sunshinef
23. Mrs Little [mm we have yes
24. Joellen but it is supposed to be over isn't it
25. Mrs Little yes
26. (1)
27. Mrs Little well in that case then we'll do (.)
28. what we normally do then really thank you
29. (.)
30. Mrs Little um
00:05:30

XIV. Troubles telling in Joellen's Hair Palace

a. Joellen elicits potential trouble from Violet (Violet, Appt1)

18:28
1. Violet well that rain didn't come did it
2. (.)
3. Joellen no:
4. we had a bit didn't [we this morning but=
5. Violet [did we
6. Violet =this morning
7. it must have been while I was in the
8. hospital
9. when I came out
10. there were puddles everywhere
11. and it was lovely when I went in
12. (0.5)
13. Joellen were they um pleased with you?
14. (.)
15. Violet um (.)
16. n- I ↓don't know:
17. I think they're puzzle(h)d with m(h)e he
18. he he actually he he he he he
19. .h they do(h)n't know wha(h)t
20. to do(h):: with me ↑next
21. he he he he he he he he shh
18:47

b. Joellen aligns as trouble-recipient to Mrs France's troubles talk (Mrs

France, Appt1)

22:18 ((11 seconds without talk precedes this))
1. Mrs France I've got a sta:ir gate
2. at the bottom my stairs (.)
3. to stop the dogs going up↑stairs
4. Joellen mm
5. Mrs France well it started out for [grandchild]
6. Joellen yeah
7. Mrs France and I've left it there
8. to stop the dogs going up↑stairs
9. (.)
10. Joellen [mm
11. Mrs France [well the puppy (.) it (..)
12. because I've had (.) a new a new (???) post
13. to put in the sta:irs (.) the::
14. it didn't have screw eye?
15. to hook the gate over?
16. Joellen oh right=
17. Mrs France =>so I've been< tying it up (.)
18. with a ribbon >you ↑know<
19. Joellen yeh
20. (.)
21. Mrs France er for the time being (.)
22. .h cos (.)
23. I come down sta:irs (.)
24. an' >every time I come down<
25. if I get sidetracked
26. and I don't do the ribbon up (.)
27. she's been up the stairs?
28. she's ripped all the stair carpet up (.)
29. got all [the underlay up (.) from underneath
30. Joellen [oh::< no::::
22:58 ((troubles-telling continues))

XV. Mrs Farthing's interview story of getting older and learning to age well

00:42:14

1. Rachel .h do you ever think about getting older
2. yourself?
3. (.)

4. Mrs Farthing ↑well yes you do be[cause you suddenly feel
5. Rachel [yeh
6. Mrs Farthing that you've got (.) a few more limitations
7. than you had [°before°
8. Rachel [right
9. (0.5)
10. Mrs Farthing you're not walking quite so fast [you're not
11. (.)
12. Rachel [right
13. Mrs Farthing um (.) you're not doing things in quite the
14. same way that you °did°
15. (3)
16. Rachel okay
17. (0.5)
18. Mrs Farthing but you just (.)
19. .h accept those (.)
20. >you know< (.)
21. .h I mean we were (.)
22. yesterday we were with um (...) of
23. a party er:: of (..)
24. >you know< on a coach
25. Rachel yeh
26. Mrs Farthing .h who came from all (.)
27. >you know< (.)
28. from Toppingham and
29. Rachel all around
30. Mrs Farthing um er all around
31. Rachel [yeh
32. Mrs Farthing [and: um: (.) there's one lady that we (.)
33. chat to quite a bit
34. and she's (a) lovely lady (.)
35. very smart
36. Rachel hm [mm
37. Mrs Farthing [.h and <she is> (.)
38. ninety four nex:t week
39. Rachel right
40. (1)
41. Mrs Farthing very smart
42. Rachel [mm
43. Mrs Farthing [very with it
44. Rachel hm mm
45. Mrs Farthing and (..) um (.)
46. the party is going to Paris: (.)
47. er later on in the year
48. Rachel [oh
49. Mrs Farthing [last year we went to (.) Edinburgh
50. Rachel m[m

51. Mrs Farthing [>no this year we went to Edin[burgh<
52. Rachel [yes I
53. re[member that
54. Mrs Farthing [for the (.)
55. Mrs Farthing for the festival
56. Rachel ye[s
57. Mrs Farthing [and she came then suit
58. and s- brought her case
59. and everything you know (.)
60. no concessions (.)
61. Rachel right
62. Mrs Farthing asked or or needed °you know° (.)
63. .h and er >somebody said are you ↑going<
64. are you going to: um (.)
65. er Paris Catherine (.)
66. oh no she said I (.)
67. I I can't afford it
68. (so) I'm not going (.)
69. .h WELL she said
70. I'm going to Italy I ca(h)n't
71. affo(h)rd to g(h)o to It(h)aly
72. [a(h)nd Pa(h)ris he he he he he he he he
73. Rachel [h.. h... h... ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha
74. Mrs Farthing he he
75. .h £and ↑I thought£
76. well there the(h)re's ↑spi(h)rit for you
77. you know but (.)
78. she's very smart sh-
79. features are are beautiful you know
80. Rachel [mm
81. Mrs Farthing [>very< white hair
82. Rachel ri::gh[t
83. Mrs Farthing [(all ???)
84. (2)
85. Mrs Farthing so you see people like that you know [and
86. Rachel [mm
87. Mrs Farthing you think (.)
88. ↑oh well there's li(h)fe after
89. ei(h)ghty ha ha [ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha
90. ha ha
91. Rachel [h... h...h...h...
00:43:54

XVI. Additional busy story extracts

Busy stories have been timed from either the explicit trigger (such as a salon-worker's elicitation) or the start of a client's self-initiation. In assessing the *duration* of such stories I have excluded mid-story digressions, further developments and reciprocal busy stories by the stylists. This was because I wanted to focus on the client's talk of being active *now*. For example, in Appendix H.XV1.c below, Joellen initiates a digression in the middle of Violet's story about going to Bromley (l.24) that extends for several turns. This digression is excluded from the duration timing. The busy story

itself was deemed to end at the point that the talk moved from an account of what the speaker had done, regularly does or was planning or hoping to do, into either silence or more general development on the theme.

a. Visit to Purley Manor (Mrs Little, Appt1)

Mrs Little has been looking at the coverage in Hello magazine of the recent royal wedding in the Netherlands, May 2013.

00:29:59

1. Mrs Little whereas ↑last week
2. la:st week I went to (.)
3. Purley Manor
4. which I haven't been to (.)
5. very [often=
6. Joellen [.h
7. Joellen =no:
8. ↑I was supposed to be going there
9. I don't think I've ever been there actually,
10. Mrs Little I [caught the
11. Joellen [how did you find it,
12. Mrs Little oh absolutely glorious
13. I caught the tulips
14. which made [me think of the Dutch
15. Joellen oh
00:30:12

b. A pre-Christmas lunch (Mrs Sargent, Appt2)

Mrs Sargent breaks around six seconds of silence to tell a busy story of a recent lunch.

30:50

1. Mrs Sargent we went to (.)
2. .h me and a couple of friends went to
3. Singleton on Monday,
4. Joellen oh what [for ↑Christmas ↑dinner ↑there
5. Mrs Sargent [for Christmas lunch ((*continues*))
30:56

c. Going to Bromley (Violet, Appt1)

12:04

1. (13)
2. Violet got a trip up to um (.) ts er (1)
3. Bromley Theatre,
4. Joellen ↑oh righ[t,
5. Violet [er: on (.)
6. °what's the day Wednesday° (.)

7. .h to↑morrow Thursday (..) [um
8. Joellen [what're you
9. going to [see
10. Violet [birds of a feather,
11. it's [the original] cast
12. Joellen [↑oh right]
13. Violet ['cos they're doing a tour aren't they (.)
14. Joellen [the original one,
15. Violet aren't they (.) Pauline Quir[k and (.)
16. Joellen [yeh
17. Violet whoever (.) um so (.)
18. we're going to the Bromley Court for lunch (.)
19. [and then
20. Joellen [oh very nice (('posh' accent))
21. Violet sounds very posh (('posh' accent)) doesn't it
22. Joellen yeah
23. Violet [and
24. Joellen [I used to live there of course
25. Violet Bromley [Bromley yeah we used to (.)
26. we used to go in to Bromley shop]ping
27. Joellen [(?????????????????????????????????????)
28. High Street]
29. Violet did you yes lo-
30. it used to be lovely don't know what
31. it's [like now
32. Bethan [(???) he [he he he
33. Violet [things change
34. don't they Joellen yeh
35. Joellen yeah (.) they ce(h)rtainly do(h)
36. (2)
37. Joellen yeh I haven't been up there for quite a while
38. actually
39. (..)
40. Violet no you see I wouldn't like to I I wo-
41. I mean going (.) on a coach [so we'll
42. Joellen [yeah
43. Violet be looked after [but I wouldn't drive up there
44. Bethan [(he he he)
45. Joellen is that happening to↑morrow [then
46. Violet [yeah
47. Joellen ↑oh right
48. Violet no no sorry it's not
49. Joellen oh it's not
50. Violet I've confused myself no it's with the
((13:11 - 13:31: 20 seconds *omitted at Violet's request*))
51. Violet they're but (.)
52. anyway they just do they mostly do trips out
53. on coaches and things which is (.)
54. my fa(h)vourite pa(h)stime [anyway he he he
55. he he he he he he he he he
56. Joellen [yeah (?????
57. pastime) lunches and trips out he he he .h
58. Violet yea:h he he [he he
59. Joellen [don't blame you
60. Violet no it's good
61. (1)
62. Violet and you get like you- you-
63. picked up in Town you (.) on the
64. coach you no- you're dropped back there
65. you haven't got any (.) parking problems

66. or (.) you know you just (.)
 67. it's lovely you're (.) taken care of [really
 68. Joellen [it's all
 69. done for you [(.) yeah
 70. Violet [it's lovely yeah
 13:58 ((*story continues with evaluation of the projected trip and a funny story by Bethan*))

d. Going on holiday (Mrs Little Appt4)

01:13:22
 1. Joellen 'v you got a busy day today,
 2. Mrs Little yes I have got quite a few (.)
 3. bits and pieces to do
 4. it's not ↑too long till we go away
 5. on holiday
 6. [so
 7. Joellen [oh: right >where is it you're going,<
 8. Mrs Little er: <walking i- just south> of (.)
 9. Grenada (.)
 10. [so in the (.) Sierra Nevada
 11. Joellen [↑oh lovely
 12. Mrs Little >yes< but it's not (.)
 13. not until the nineteenth but (.)
 14. Joellen [yeah
 15. Mrs Little [when you only have Wednesdays off
 16. it's either this Wednesday
 17. or next Wednes[day and (.)
 18. Joellen [yeah
 19. Mrs Little that's it [really
 20. Joellen [(I know someone)
 21. who's going to (.) Ali[↑]cante that [(month)
 22. Mrs Little [oh yes
 23. yes
 24. mm
 25. (.)
 26. Joellen walking
 27. Mrs Little yup
 28. Joellen I think she goes around about that time
 29. [(every year)
 30. Mrs Little [yes in fact it's a nice time
 31. to [go actually
 32. Joellen [yeah
 01:13:55

e. Going on holiday (Mrs Sargent, Appt1)

28:49
 1. Joellen r you away again at all? ↑no
 2. (.)
 3. Mrs Sargent ↑yeah next Tuesday
 4. Joellen next Tuesday
 5. Mrs Sargent ye[ah:
 6. Joellen [(I thought you were off (.)
 7. ????? time last year)
 8. where is it this ↑time,
 9. Mrs Sargent the Mediter[↑]anean

10. Joellen oh that's nice
 11. (1)
 12. Mrs Sargent well I don't know how warm it'll be (but [????])
 13. Joellen [no
 14. Mrs Sargent we're going up to the North Mediterranean (????)
 15. ((*continues talking of her holiday*))
 29:04

f. Mrs France busy in the house (Mrs France, Appt3)

Prior talk related to Mrs France's daughter's creative activities. Mrs France here explains what she has been doing during a period of enforced inactivity following a toe-operation mentioned earlier in the appointment.

21:17
 1. Mrs France I've been painting lampshades
 2. Joellen ↑lampshades
 3. Mrs France yeah I've been do:ing: erm (.)
 4. er little rabbits running round lampshades
 5. [an' [b u t butterflies:]
 6. Joellen [↑oh right [like (???) children's]
 7. Mrs France yea[h
 8. Joellen [childrens,
 9. Mrs France um:: but[terflies and stuff] yeah
 10. Joellen [oh that sounds nice]
 11. (1.5) ((*clatter as Joellen replaced the dust-pan and brush in the corner*))
 12. Mrs France yeah they look nice (.) I'm pleased with them
 13. (4) ((*Joellen now pumps mouse into her hand and applies this to Mrs France's hair, and then unwinds the cable of the blow-dryer*))
 14. Mrs France so I take those and try and sell [tho:se
 15. Joellen [sell
 16. them (.)
 17. at a craft fair or something
 18. Mrs France well [in Needleham
 19. [(*blow-dryer starts*))
 20. Joellen oh right yeah
 21. (8)
 22. Mrs France it's all about keeping busy
 23. Joellen yeh
 24. (2)
 25. Mrs France I mean it's harder this weather because (.)
 26. I wanna go out and do things in the garden
 27. Joellen that's [right
 28. Mrs France [but in the winter:
 29. I love sitting indoors messing about
 22:07

g. Mrs France in the garden (Mrs France, Appt 2)

07:52
 1. Mrs France I've um been trying to get (.)
 2. gardening done and (.)

3. the roses this year 're fan[tastic
 4. Joellen [I know
 5. they're <beautiful> aren't they
 08:00

h. An archaeological find (Mrs Crayne, Appt2)

00:02:10
 1. Mrs Crayne .h two large ladies found (.)
 2. one of which is ME: (.)
 3. found an unrecorded Roman villa
 4. and we've °been having fun°
 00:02:15

i. A client's response to bereavement (Mrs Farthing, Appt2)

15:19
 1. Mrs Farthing sh- I- I'm ama:zed at how well
 2. she's(.)
 3. co[ped with] things [you know
 4. Joellen [ye:ah::]
 5. Joellen [how the: um (.)
 6. she seems t- (..)
 7. she's coping
 8. Mrs Farthing ye[ah
 9. Joellen [but she keeps herself very busy
 10. Mrs Farthing yes
 11. (..)
 12. Joellen which (.) you [would (when ????)
 13. Mrs Farthing [well I mean she's
 14. I think she's behaved (.)
 15. marvellously reall[y with it all
 16. Joellen [yes
 15:35

j. Pursuing sequential implicativeness in busy stories (Mrs Farming, Appt2)

The following extract and brief discussion shows how clients sometimes pursue the sequential implicativeness of their stories when the close of the story coincides with the end of that treatment component. This story appeared as Extract 3.27; the point of focus is from l.72.

00:44:48

1. Mrs Farming but it's my (.)
2. lack of energy that is appalli[ng
3. Joellen [mm
4. Mrs Farming really
5. (2)
6. Joellen well Adele (.)
7. at <90 years of age> (.)
8. .h ↑you (.)you're entitled to [have >a
9. Mrs Farming [I kno::w
10. Joellen little bit< of [en- of (lack) of [energy
11. Mrs Farming [I kno::w [but you
12. Joellen .h he [he he
13. Mrs Farming [you do (.) you you
14. I get annoyed with myself
15. Joellen I know
16. Mrs Farming I get so (.)
17. irritated (.)
18. .h like last week
19. we did all the net curtains
20. and that in the bedroom (.) [the girl did
21. Joellen [mm
22. Mrs Farming them (.) for me (.) which:
23. she's made a good job of [it (.)
24. [((Joellen
starts spraying Mrs Farming's hair))
25. and: she said I won't be here to (.)
26. pull that wire across to put the net back
27. can you manage (.)
28. oh yes I said that's easy
29. I'll get the stool and I'll stand on it
30. Joellen ↑oh my go(h)od[ne(h)ss he he he he he]
31. Mrs Farming [(go-) no the stool] is fine
32. Joellen oh [that's all right
33. Mrs Farming [it's th- it's the steps I can't do
34. (.)
35. Mrs Farming [you know the three ste[ps
36. Joellen [right [yeh
37. Mrs Farming [and she said are you sure
38. because I'd rather
39. [((Joellen finishes spraying, places the
canister on the trolley))
40. you [leave them and I'll come round
41. and do them
42. [((Joellen pulls out the mirror to show
Mrs Farming the back of her head))
43. Joellen mm
44. Mrs Farming that's lovely Joellen I don't know how you
45. ma(h)na(h)ge it he he [he ha ha ha ha
46. Joellen [he he he
47. Joellen .h
48. Mrs Farming and:: I said [↑oh: no: I can do that (.)
49. [((Joellen replaces the
mirror under the trolley))

50. Mrs Farming could I (.)
 51. [no I couldn't=
 52. Joellen [no
 53. Joellen =ts=
 54. Mrs Farming =I hadn't got enough energy[y to pull that
 55. Joellen [no (.) to pull
 56. i t]
 57. Mrs Farming wire] along
 58. Joellen no they they are (.)
 59. Mrs Farming yes [they're strong aren't they] yes
 60. Joellen [tough as well aren't they]
 61. Mrs Farming an' I thought (.)
 62. °oh gawd (.)
 63. can't even put the net up no[w°
 64. Joellen [he
 65. he
 66. Mrs Farming so it went up (.)
 67. one side (.) was [up
 68. Joellen [bu(h)t
 69. no(t) the oth(h)er ha [ha ha
 70. Mrs Farming [but not the other
 71. yeh (.)
 72. so it hung from the [middle bit you know=
 73. Joellen [°°there you go°°<
 74. Joellen =yeah
 75. Mrs Farming he he [he
 76. Joellen [I'll pop your bag on the des[k
 77. Mrs Farming [yeh
 78. >okay dear<
 79. (0.5)
 80. Mrs Farming but it is frustrating
 81. (2)
 82. Joellen ye:ah
 83. (2)
 84. Mrs Farming I shall have to get myself used to it
 46:11 ((15 seconds, during which Mrs Farming gets up and moves
 slowly to the desk))

Mrs Farming's story comes to a close in l.72 as Joellen finishes removing the gown, with Joellen signalling in l.73 that the treatment is finished. In l.76 Joellen further signals a move to the final stage of the over-arching activity, namely paying, without making any further evaluative comment on the story or drawing conclusions from it that link back to its occasioning, namely Mrs Farming's lack of energy (see l.2). Although Mrs Farming acknowledges Joellen's activity-closing move (ll.77-8), she continues in l.80 and l.84 to pursue a further response, and one that *does* link back to the story's occasioning. This is not forthcoming, however. Joellen is engaged in entering details on the Excel spreadsheet. Following fifteen seconds without talk between Joellen and Mrs Farming, the latter launches a new topic, enquiring after Joellen's husband.

Appendix I: Plot components of busy stories

| Participant | Characters (excl. self) | Places | Activities |
|---------------------|--|---|--|
| Mrs Farming | Solicitor Unnamed visitors Cleaner Named and unnamed friends | Home Supermarket shopping 'Out' for coffee Local town, surgery, hospital | Medical activities Trouble with solicitor Shopping Going for coffee Watching TV, tennis Cooking meals Entertaining pop-in visitors Hanging curtains, organising cleaning Planning trip to London |
| Mrs Pace | Husband Children Brother- and sister-in law, nephew | Restaurants locally and further afield Post office, dentist Home | Cooking and baking Dental appointment Dining out |
| Lesley | Named and unnamed friends Water people Milk people Window cleaner | Home | Washing and ironing Cooking and baking Finding and writing cards Paying bills Watching tennis |
| Mrs Farthing | Husband Sister-in-law Named and unnamed friends | Home Restaurants and friends' houses Stately homes Local town, dentist, hospital Southern England London and Edinburgh | Cooking Eating out, entertaining and being entertained Coach trips Holidays in UK Charity work Going to theatre, ballet, zoo |
| Violet | Daughters Son-in-law Grandchildren Father-in-law | Home Hospital Restaurants locally and in London Local shops Hotels and pubs Theatre | Television Cooking Ironing Eating out with family and friends Overnight visits Coach trips e.g. to theatre Buying, writing cards Singing karaoke Going to a wedding |

| Participant | Characters (excl. self) | Places | Activities |
|--------------------|---|--|---|
| Mrs France | Daughter Grand-daughter Unnamed friends Builder Unnamed 'other mums' Dogs and other animals | Home Garden Driving to station Supermarket Hospital Car-boot sale | Gardening: dead-heading Painting lampshades Cooking and shopping Going to car boot fairs Organising children's parties Training puppy Looking after animals Driving Having operation Clearing the drain Having visitors to stay |
| Mrs Sargent | Husband Sister Brother-in-law Named and unnamed friends | Mediterranean Home Other people's houses Restaurant Art class Charity shop supermarket | Going on holiday Eating with friends Eating out Doing art Charity work Getting to grips with computer and e-mail Shopping and cooking |
| Mrs Crayne | Client company (work) and interviewees Unnamed people at gym Unnamed friends at dig Cats Gardener Alarm company Managers in supermarket | Syria Lebanon Libya Spain Paris Supermarket Home Opticians Local dig | Clearing loft Going to the gym Doing research (for work) Working on internet Sorting out computer Doing archaeology (digging) Sorting through archaeological finds Shopping |
| Mrs Little | Husband Younger son and his friends Grandchildren Dog | Local common Supermarket Spain Stately home | Dog-walking Shopping Walking on holiday Work Doing Zumba and yoga Visiting attractions |

Appendix J: Summary of range of research studies of the hairdressing sector

| Author/s | Study focus | Study location | Methodological aspects | | |
|--------------------------|--|---|---|-------|---|
| | | | Participant and characteristics | focus | Data collection methods |
| Alexander (2003) | 'Border crossings' between cultures – a Black barber shop and Black beauty salon | USA | Client and stylists | | Ethnographic study involving personal reflections and participant observation (as client) |
| Anderson et al (2010) | Informal support (relationships and helping behaviours) offered by stylists to older clients. | USA | Stylists. | | Self-complete surveys from 40 stylists (85 female, 15 male) from 31 randomly selected salons. |
| Barber (2008) | Relations in situ (primarily from clients' perspective, but both considered). | Small hair-salon in Southern California, USA. | Male clients (mostly white and aged 30 – 63) and their female stylists. | | Ethnographic study involving five months (40 hours) of observation of the interactions and talk, in-depth interviews with 15 clients, and informal conversations and group interview with three out of four stylists. |
| Berry-Lound et al (2000) | Occupational analysis of the hairdressing sector to inform qualifications and training development | UK | Stylists and salons. | | Desk research, 9 meetings with key interest groups, survey to stratified sample of 4,000 salons in UK with 11% response (420). Eight focus groups and follow-up interviews. |
| Brookes and Smith (2009) | Intersections of technology and gender in the hairdressing sector. | New Zealand | Stylists | | Archival resources and some oral history interviews. |

| Author/s | Study focus | Study location | Methodological aspects | | |
|----------------------------|--|--|---|--|--|
| | | | Participant focus and characteristics | Data collection methods | |
| Bytheway et al (2007) | Exploring discrimination in everyday life. | UK, salon and interview | Primarily clients, with stylists' perspective on interaction either not incorporated or only barely incorporated. | Observation for five hours in salon, 15 interviews with clients. Discussions of 'hairstyling for older women with various hairdressers'. | |
| Symonds and Pearson (2007) | | | | | |
| Symonds and Holland (2008) | | | 15 women aged 60 to mid-80s. | Part of wider study into age discrimination using interviews, diaries, panel, feedback, etc. | |
| Ward and Holland (2011) | | | | | |
| Chugh and Hancock (2009) | Aesthetic labour, using hair-salons as case studies | Two salons in Central London (Covent Garden, Mayfair), UK. | Stylists (and salon practices). | Case studies in two salons. Draws on observation (one week in each) and field notes; 'ethnographic interviews' with stylist and other staff, but not clients; photographs. | |
| Cohen (2010b) | Mobile stylists, looking at managing work boundaries. | UK | Stylists | Interviews with 7 mobile stylists | |
| Cohen (2010a) | Emotional labour, looking at relations of employment, favours. | City in N. England | Stylists, both owners and employees | Self-complete questionnaires to 328 salons, 40% response (131). Interviews with 15 hourly-paid and 32 self-employed stylists in 52 salons. | |
| Cortis (2000) | Pay inequalities resulting from the invisibility of the emotional labour aspects of hairdressing | Australia, extra-situational | N/A | Archival data from the NSW pay equity inquiry. | |
| Cowen et al (1979) | Exploring care-giving role of stylists | USA, extra-situational | 90 stylists (37 male, 53 female). | Quantitative study involving structured interviews. | |

| Author/s | Study focus | Study location | Methodological aspects | | |
|---------------------|--|--|---------------------------------------|---|---|
| | | | Participant focus and characteristics | Data collection methods | |
| Cox (1999) | History of hairdressing | British UK focus | UK focus | N/A | Archival research |
| Cutcher (2001) | Conditions that need to apply for pay equality for stylists to occur | Australia | | N/A | Archival data |
| Druker et al (2005) | Impact of national minimum on hairdressing. | UK | | Owner managers and stylists (mostly female). | Case study design involving in-depth interviews with 48 owner managers. Triangulation via 24 employees (mostly stylists) and 16 trainees, 2 trainers. |
| Drummond (2004) | Exploration of why businesses decline. | Small salon in UK. | | Single stylist and her salon. | Case study: structured observation and interview over two years. |
| Eayrs (1993) | Exploring how trust is formed in the hair-salon and stylists' professional identities | Small salon in NE USA, part of a small chain | | Five hairdressers and their clients (though main focus on former). Stylists aged 22-42 (all female). No information on clients (those referred to are female). | Ethnographic study involving non-participant observation with weekly field notes on interactions, combined with both structured and semi-structured interviews. |
| Furman (1997) | Older women's experiences of and perceptions of femininity, ageing and appearance work | USA, hair-salon | | Primarily client, but interaction with and perspective of stylists also incorporated. 20 female clients aged 55-86; 6 female employees aged '30s' to 'late 50s'. | Ethnographic study involving 18-months participant observation, informal conversations, intensive interviews and use of photo elicitation. |
| Gimlin (1996) | Negotiation of identity between stylists and clients in the hair-salon | Salon in New York | | Salon owners, her seven stylists, and 20 female customers. Stylists | Ethnographic study involving data collection over a year, including observation and |

| Author/s | Study focus | Study location | Methodological aspects | |
|--|--|---|--|--|
| | | | Participant focus and characteristics | Data collection methods |
| | | | aged 24-46, clients aged 21-61. | interviews with the owner, stylists and 20 clients. |
| Hall et al (2007) Robinson et al (2011) | Potential masculinities in female-dominated professions. | Two salons in North England (inner city, 'trendy' city centre). | Primarily stylists and their significant others, but observations included clients. | Interviews and observations in situ. |
| Harvey (2005) | Using Black beauty salons to explore the intersections of race, class and gender in the forces shaping women's decision to become and experience of being entrepreneurs. | USA | 11 Black female hair-salon owners. | Snowball recruitment. Interviews (8 recorded, 3 copious notes) and questionnaire. |
| Herzog (1996) | Explores the role of and perspectives on hairdressers through the centuries. | UK | N/A. | Archival research. |
| Jacobs-Huey (1998, 2006) | To identify and expound how the significance of hair for African American women and the identity of the stylist is constructed and contested in 'talk', both spoken and written, with clients, in seminars, in comedy and in chat rooms. | Includes three African American hair-salon in USA; hair seminars in USA and UK; study of a cosmetology school in the USA. | Salon owners, trainers, stylists, comedy artists and potential or actual clients (all Black and clients all female; some male stylists). | Linguistic anthropology as the methodological approach, encompassing observations, audio- and video-recording of interactions. |
| Lawson (1999) | The role of talk in hair-salon and barbershops in perpetuating (or not) gender stereotypes. | 38 different sites – barbershops, beauty salons, unisex chains – in USA. | Stylists (barbers, cosmetologists, beauty salon owners), teachers, and clients (both adults and children) | In-site observation plus in-depth interviews and personal experience in four different salons. |
| Lee et al (2007b) | Work practices and occupational identities of qualified stylists. | Four high-fashion salons across two franchised operations in | Stylists, head office directors and managers, salon managers, receptionists, stylists, colour | 38 recorded interviews, plus observation of the salons, training events, and review |

| Author/s | Study focus | Study location | Methodological aspects | | | |
|----------------------------|---|---|--|-------|---|------------|
| | | | Participant and characteristics | focus | Data methods | collection |
| | | the Midlands, UK. | technicians, apprentices | | of internal documentation. | |
| Leino et al (1999) | Working conditions and health in hair-salons | 20 salons in Helsinki, Finland | Stylists. | | Survey of chemical measurements and self-administered questionnaire among 118 stylists with 72% response (85). 81 female, 4 male. | |
| Lieverscheidt et al (1989) | Exploration of 'communication cultures' | Two small hair-salons (traditional and 'trendy') in Bern, Switzerland | Stylists, one female, one male. Clients in terms of being recorded. | | In ethnography of speaking tradition. Recordings and analysis of interactions between stylist and client plus interviews with a stylist in each salon, and interviews with 15 people to inform view of talk in the 'sub-culture'. | |
| Lindsay (2004) | Part of wider study looking at health risks in social lives of young workers. | Australia, extra-situational | In initial survey 66 hairdressers. In this study, 31 apprentice hairdressers, mostly female and young. | | Survey and focus groups | |
| Majors (2004, 2007) | The hair-salon as a site of particular kinds of communicative and interactive patterns. | Three African American salons in USA. | Black salon owner, stylists and clients (all female) | | Ethnographic study spanning eight years and incorporating field notes of observations, audio- and video-recordings, semi-structured interviews (also recorded). | |
| McCarthy (2000) | Exploring transactional, relational and 'small talk'. | UK salon. | Hairdresser and client. | | Analysis of previously-collected audio-recording of interaction between stylist and client. | |

| Author/s | Study focus | Study location | Methodological aspects | | | |
|-----------------------------|--|--|--|---|--|--|
| | | | Participant focus and characteristics | Data collection methods | | |
| McLaren et al (2010) | Hairstylists as a 'resource' to address family violence. | Australia | Stylists | Intervention (workshop) trialled then evaluated via pre-/post assessment questionnaire, interviews and focus groups. | | |
| Picot-Lemasson et al (2001) | Exploring link between visit to hair dresser and mood | France | Clients | Self-complete questionnaire | | |
| Patterson (2007) | Loyalty in the service sector (including hairdressing) | Australia | Clients | Ten qualitative interviews in service types followed by 700 self-administered questionnaires to dental, hairdressing and travel agent sectors for completion by customers. 279 hairdressing questionnaires. | | |
| Seiter and Dutson (2007) | Impact of complimenting on tipping | Utah, USA | Stylists in single salon | Experiment | | |
| Soulliere (1997) | Exploration of the setting and interactions involved in hairdressing | Small independent salon in rural town in Ontario, Canada | Stylists (one male) and clients (both female). | Six observational sessions over five weeks together with informal chats with two stylists (one of them the owner) and structured interviews with two female clients. | | |
| Weitz (2005) | Significance of hair generally for women and girls | USA, primarily interview setting but includes hair-salon | Primarily women and girls as 'doers' of 'hair work' but also considered hair stylists' perspective to an extent. 74 women and girls aged 10-83, plus 11 hairstylists. | Interviews, focus groups. | | |

| Author/s | Study focus | Study location | Methodological aspects | | | |
|----------------|---|----------------|---|-------|---|------------|
| | | | Participant and characteristics | focus | Data methods | collection |
| Willett (2000) | A critical historical account of the growth of the American beauty salon and its interweaving with both racial and gendered politics. | USA | Some former stylists (and possibly clients) | | Data: archives, personal narratives, letters, interviews. | |

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