

The initiation of showing sequences in video-mediated communication

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Abstract

This article focuses on a particular type of object-centered sequence in video-mediated conversations, in which one participant shows a co-participant some object or feature of her environment. First, we study the way and sequential position in which showings are initiated as recognizable sequences: in a position in which a new topic is relevant, as an occasioned side sequence, or as a "touched off" showing, following talk about a potential "viewable". Second we show how showings are initiated with distinctive prefaces which do different types of work: a) they offer a sequential slot for the recipient to align with or disalign from the projected course of action; b) they suspend the form of looking which is relevant to 'talking heads' talk, and enact and make relevant a distinctive way of looking at and seeing a given showable, which is assembled for the purposes of this particular occasion; c) they make further talk conditional to the viewing of the object, thus opening a slot for the manipulating the latter into a 'show position'; and d) they frame the showable as an object "for us" to see together, so that showing sequences can be described as a kind of relational bid: if the participants display that they jointly "see" the showable in an adequate way, this vindicates the kind of relational "us" which made relevant the showing in the first place.

Keywords: video-mediated communication – multimodal interactions – objects in interaction – showing objects – occasioned showings – touched-off showings – showing prefaces – relational work.

German Abstract

Dieser Artikel untersucht objektzentrierte Sequenzen in videovermittelten Gesprächen, bei der ein/eine GesprächsteilnehmerIn einer/einem anderen ein Objekt oder ein spezifisches Merkmal seiner Umgebung zeigt. Zunächst werden drei Formen und sequenzielle Positionen der Initiierung von Zeigesequenzen dargestellt: wenn ein neues Thema eröffnet wird, als Nebensequenz oder als "Touched off-Showing", nachdem über etwas potenziell "Zeigbares" gesprochen wurde.

Anschließend zeigen wir, wie Zeigesequenzen angekündigt werden. Ankündigungen dienen verschiedenen Aufgaben: a) Sie bieten dem/der EmpfängerIn ein sequenzielles Zeitfenster, in dem er/sie sich nach dem projizierten Handlungsablauf richten oder sich von ihm entfernen kann; b) sie unterbrechen die für das "Sprechende Köpfe"-Gespräch relevante Weise des Sehens und aktivieren eine andere Sichtweise auf das "Zeigbare"; c) sie machen das Weitersprechen von der Betrachtung des Objekts abhängig und öffnen somit ein Zeitfenster, in dem das Objekt in eine "Zeigeposition" gebracht wird; d) sie machen das "Zeigbare" zu einem Objekt "für uns", zu einem gemeinsam Ansehbaren. Zeige-Sequenzen sind also eine Art Beziehungsangebot: Wenn die GesprächsteilnehmerInnen zeigen, dass sie gemeinsam das Gezeigte in angemessener Weise "sehen", bestätigt dies die Wir-Beziehung, die das Zeigen erst relevant gemacht hat.

Keywords: Video-vermittelte Kommunikation – multimodale Interaktion – Objekte in der Interaktion – Objekte zeigen – situative Vorführungen – showing prefaces – Beziehungsarbeit.

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1. Introduction

The object of this paper is to analyze a particular type of object-centered sequence, i.e. showing sequences in video-mediated communication. The original language in the video recordings is French. This practice can be glossed as the mention of a previously not visible object or material feature of the environment, and its bringing into view for the other participant to see and appreciate. Defined as such, "showings" are a commonplace phenomenon, occurring in many different settings. They are also an important part of the larger class of what we might call "ostensive practices", in which something is brought somehow to the visual consideration of the recipient. However, they are understudied compared to other ostensive practices also involving "environmentally coupled gestures" (Goodwin 2007), such as pointing. Previous research in the ethnomethodological and conversation analytic tradition (EM/CA) has paid a lot of attention to pointing as a dynamically evolving 'gestalt contexture' (Goodwin 2013; Mondada 2016), interweaving embodied conduct and talk-in interaction in sequentially implicative ways (Goodwin 2000, 2007; Hindmarsh/Heath 2000a; Mondada 2007). And while pointing presupposes some kind of mutual visual access (Hindmarsh/Heath 2000b), showings in VMC are oriented to the contrary pre-supposition: that there is an asymmetry of (mostly visual) access, and the need to make the object visible in some way to a co-participant so that it can be talked about. In the following picture, the co-participant – visible in the left corner of the image – had no visual access to the shoe before it was brought in the visual frame.



Figure 1: Showing a shoe.

This asymmetry has several implications. First, the initiation of showings is sensitive to sequential concerns and often involves some specific prefatory work to make the potential 'showable' relevant (Lerner/Zimmerman 2003; Kidwell/Zimmerman 2007). Second, showings enact a joint focus on the visual event, and the way in which a "showable" becomes perceptible. Third, this sudden visibility projects specific responses in talk and embodied conduct, in relation to the way the recipient suddenly "sees" the relevant "showable", such as assessments (Fasulo/Monzoni 2009; Oshima/Streeck 2014; Raclaw et al. 2016). Showings therefore unfold as distinctive sequences; they also reveal specific interactional concerns. Sacks suggested that human interaction involves a very general "orientation towards the co-participant" which he construed as a maxim: "design your talk with an orientation to what they know you know" (Sacks 1992:564). We will argue here that showing sequences make visible a particular multimodal version of this general orientation which could be captured by the Sacks-like maxim: "design your talk with an orientation to what they (your co-participants) can see (or cannot see) that you see".

Showing sequences are inseparable from "evidential boundaries", sorts of barriers to perception which are direct and unavoidable consequences of being situated in the world (Goffman 1974:215-216), and of the way our environments are cluttered (Gibson 1986). Such "evidential boundaries" ceaselessly shift according to participants' embodied conduct, and may be exploited as interactional resources, for instance to create a "concealment track" to perform hidden activities (Goffman 1974). Goffman describes how co-participants are somehow attentive to such "evidential boundaries", and therefore attend to what co-participants can or cannot see, when they use them as resources to produce meaningful interactional moves. Evidential boundaries are integral to the intelligibility of showing sequences as such. Instead of exploiting them as a "concealment track", co-participants strive to unveil to the other what the evidential boundary might have been occluding. Reconsidering earlier studies in co-present settings which involved showing sequences (even if they were not analyzed as such), such an orientation to evidential boundaries is obvious. The manipulation of objects by children may be distant from adult's eyes (Kidwell/Zimmerman 2007); a haircut may be hidden behind one's head (Oshima/Streeck 2014); a cloth may fall over our whole body, much of which is occluded from sight (Fasulo/Monzoni 2009), or what happens on the mobile phone's small screen may be perceptually unavailable to co-participants even when mentioned (Raclaw et al. 2016). Video-mediated communication involves a particular perceptual twist with respect to co-present settings for it introduces a new and highly salient type of evidential boundary, i.e. the visual boundaries of the video shot in the Skype window. This frame significantly and prominently reduces the domain of mutual visibility for co-participants. Because at any moment, they only see a little part of each other's ecology, video-mediated communication (VMC) offers many opportunities to show things and occasions to demonstrably display the sensitivity of the ongoing interaction to what the co-participant can or cannot see.

The particular organization of VMC around the "talking heads" configuration as a default expectation (Licoppe/Morel 2012) reinforces the deep affinity between VMC and showing sequences. Producing an image that strays from the talking head configuration is something noticeable and accountable, and problematic images are

often treated as possible showing (see Licoppe 2017 for an example). In such contexts, turns-at-talk such as "Are you showing me something?", or "What are you showing me?" work as a kind of visual repair initiation, displaying a lack of understanding of what is made visible on screen.

Showing practices in VMC are also specific when compared to what happens in co-present settings. First, showings can be initiated not only by manipulating an object in a "show position" but also through camera motions (Licoppe/Morel 2014). Second, in a co-present setting bringing an object into the domain of mutual attention may allow the showing to "pivot" (Raymond/Lerner 2014) into another action, i.e. object transfer, as observed in kindergarten sequences (Kidwell/Zimmerman 2007); gift-giving (Good/Beach 2005; Robles 2012), and collaborative scientific or technological activities (Day/Wagner 2014; Tuncer/Haddington this issue). With VMC, on the other hand, any possibility for object transfer is inhibited, and showing sequences remain focused on joint "seeing and talking".

In the analytic section below, we first discuss when and how showing sequences may be initiated at a topical boundary, or through stepwise moves from topical talk (Section 3). Though showing sequences are different from topical talk, they bear a certain similarity with it from a sequential perspective, and they can even be treated as alternatives to the introduction of a new topic at recognizable topical boundaries. But they are also inherently multimodal and coupled to the environment. This reflects on the way showing sequences may be specifically achieved as "occasioned showings" or "touched off showings", which we discuss in Sections 4 and 5.

Section 6 is concerned with the design of prefatory work involved in the initiation of showing sequences. The prefaces to showing sequences enact an object of reference as an "object for 'us' to see together". They thus do a) moral and relational work (by making relevant the type of "us" for which the object may here and now constitute a 'showable'; b) perceptual work, by framing through the subtle uses of the directive *regarde* ('look') and the verb *voir* ('to see'), the kind of "seeing-together" which is relevant for this showing; and c) sequential work, by rearticulating visuality and talk so that further talk by the recipient becomes conditional to her "seeing" what is shown (and displaying that she does), in a way that is adequate enough.

It is this distinctive and typical organization of showing sequences (preface sequence, showing/appreciating), and its orientation towards sequentially rearticulating the manipulation of an object and the talk about it, which make showing sequences a clear instance of an "object-centered sequence", while also bearing some formal similarity with storytelling sequences.

2. Data collection and corpus

We have video-recorded a corpus of naturally occurring interpersonal video-mediated conversations between family and friends, involving computer-based Skype interactions. Fourteen primary participants were recruited, and the consent of about 30 of their Skype correspondents to use their Skype-based conversations with the primary participant was obtained. The whole corpus involves a little over 40 Skype conversationalists (about 1/3 male and 2/3 female), 80 hours of recorded video conversations, consisting in 180 conversations the conversationalists made available for the study. The main configurations of active Skype conversationalists in this

corpus involved geographically distant couples or partners (4 cases), parents and adult children (5 cases), siblings (3 cases), and close friends (7 cases). After carefully parsing the corpus, we isolated 90 instances in which objects were brought and held to the camera. With once in every other conversation on average, it appears to be a recurrent practice.

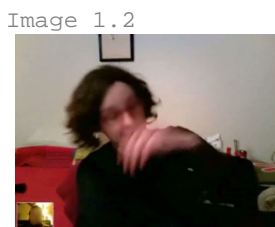
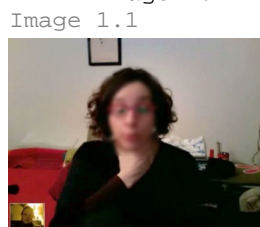
The items which were made visible in these video-mediated communications were mostly clothes (worn or not), furniture and items related to interior design, multimedia devices and especially smartphones, cuddly toys, and objects related to current activities (e.g. documents in progress, objects related to domestic chores), pets, etc. A common feature of these items is that they are recognizable as relevant to familiar and mostly domestic personal territories or 'territories of the self' (Goffman 1971), i.e. domains over which the show-er is understood to have special claims and rights. An exception to that are the cases where mobile users on the move in public places were showing one another features of their current location.

3. Initiating the showing of an object as a new sequence

Showing sequences constitute a recognizable accomplishment with a distinctive form of organization. Accordingly, there are ways in which their initiation is methodically and accountably accomplished. Their placement and design bear similarities with those of topics of conversation: showing sequences can for instance be initiated as a new sequence, at a potential topic boundary, in the kind of sequential placement where "topic changes regularly appear, as a solution to the problem of producing continuous talk" (Maynard 1980:265). Extract 1 involving two close female friends is a case in point.

Extract 1

01 ANN *°bon°* bref
 °well° so
 °Image 1.1
 02 (0.4)
 03 ANN en c'moment ça va? (.) alors eu:h
 at the moment it's all right? (.) so u:h
 04 ANN *tiens *°(.)* regarde.
 here (.) look.
 05 Ann * swift left arm movement raising index, turns body left-->
 °Image 1.2



The discourse marker *bon* (Line 1) indicates the speaker's orientation towards the possible exhaustion of a prior topic. In line with such an orientation, the speaker then produces a generic initial topic elicitor (Button/Casey 1984) on line 3. The placement of this item is slightly unusual with respect to the overall organization of the conversation, for it is done after some considerable amount of topical talk, after

a possible pre-closing (Line 1), rather than in the opening phase. It could be heard as marking a difficulty to initiate a relevant topic at a sequential placement in which it may be relevant.¹ Indeed, the speaker does not wait for an answer but goes on as if she were to introduce some topic herself (*alors eu:h*, 'so u:h', end of line 3). Like "so" in English, the discourse marker *alors* in initial position may preface a sequence-initiating action, and "indicate the status of the upcoming action as 'emerging from incipency' rather than being contingent on the immediately preceding talk" (Bolden 2009:978). However, the speaker cuts short the emerging turn construction unit, and she self-repairs it into the instruction to look, line 5.

This instruction is intelligible as the initiation of a showing sequence for a) there is nothing visually noticeable on screen where she has been appearing for some time as a talking head; b) when she utters the turn on line 4 she has turned away, displaying an orientation to features of her settings which are visually unavailable to her co-participant; c) through *tiens* ('here', line 4) in initial position, followed by the directive *regarde* ('look', line 4), she frames what she is doing as occasioned by what is going on right now, thus linking her instruction to look to her turning away. These mutually elaborative features project that she will make something visible which is to be looked at by her co-participant, i.e. the initiation of a showing sequence. In sequential terms, the instruction is done as a self-repair of a cut-off topic initiation by self, which itself appeared to repair her initial topic elicitation turn (repairing the initiation of a topic by other by means of a topic initiation by self). Thus, not only is the initiation of a showing sequence relevant when topic initiation becomes a sequential concern, but showing sequences may also be produced and treated as alternatives to topical talk in such a sequential environment.

EM/CA research on topical talk and topicality has also underlined the importance of "stepwise moves" connecting what participants were talking about just before with what they are talking about right now without sharp recognizable boundaries (Sacks 1992). Showing sequences may be initiated at topical boundaries, in a way that makes them appear to latch on previous talk. Such partially "stepwise" initiations at topical boundaries appear to be particularly relevant when the previous talk involved visual concerns, as in Extract 2 below, involving Ben and Ava as brother and sister.

¹ As Sacks notes: In a good conversation, "what you would find is that new topics are never 'introduced', they just happen along. Though at any given point we're talking to something more or less markedly different than what we were talking about a minute or five minutes ago, it didn't happen by virtue of people saying, characteristically after a pause, "So what have you been doing?" or varieties of things that say "Let's start a new topic"" (Sacks 1992:355).

Extract 2

- 01 AVA sur les réglages euh à faire euh (.) parfait
on the adjustments er to make er (.) perfect
 02 ^□(1.5)^□
 Ben ^-----^moves camera up to adjust his 'talking head' shot
 □Im 2.1 □Im 2.2
 Image 2.1 Image 2.2



- 03 AVA je conseille.
I recommend.
 04 (0.4)
 05 AVA ça n'a pas changé derrière toi.
it hasn't changed behind you.
 06 AVA je ne vois pas tes bouteilles de vin à ta gauche mai::s
I can't see your wine bottles on your left bu::t
 07 (1.5)
 08 BEN ah mais elles sont pas là
ah but they are not there
 09 BEN elles sont derrière l'ordi [maintenant °en fait°
they are behind the computer now actually
 10 AVA [ah mais oui
ah yes of course
 11 AVA ça a bougé
it has moved
 12 BEN ouais ouais (.) mais ça tu sais ça
yeah yeah (.) but this you already know
 13 AVA *□moi regarde j'ai acheté un abat-jour
me look I have bought a lampshade
 Ava *moves camera to her right-->
 □Im 2.3
 14 (2.0)*□
 Ava ---->*

□Im 2.4
 Image 2.3



Image 2.4



- 15 AVA tu [vois?
can you see?
 16 BEN [le truc vert là?
the green thing there?

After Ben's slight camera adjustment during the silence on line 2 (Image 2.1 and 2.2), Ava expands briefly on her previous turn (line 3), and notices an absence about her co-participant's surroundings as she can now see them in the VMC frame: *ça n'a pas changé derrière toi*. ('it hasn't changed behind you', line 3). This noticing appears occasioned by the camera adjustment. In other words, participants attend to camera motions in a way that enhances the local sensitivity of their conversation

to visual considerations. A discussion of what she can or cannot see follows (lines 6 to 12), the details of which need not concern us here. After line 12 anyway, some "wine bottles-not-being-there" topic has reached a potential completion point, and a sequential opportunity opens up for the initiation of a new topic.

Indeed Ava orients to that opportunity by launching a recognizable showing sequence preface: *moi regarde j'ai acheté un abat-jour* ('me look I have bought a lampshade', line 13). It is designed with an instruction to look, and an announcement which frames the referent as new and unknown to the recipient. The referent (the new lampshade she has bought) is not only made relevant as a newsworthy 'talkable about', but also as a 'showable': the mention of it follows the instruction to look, and while the lampshade was not initially visible, she turns the camera at the start of the utterance, which projects the visual appearance of it. The camera motion is achieved during the utterance (line 13) and the subsequent 2-second pause (his not speaking then displays his alignment with her showing project), and finishes with the object visible at exactly the moment she launches her visual check *tu vois?* ('can you see?', line 15) In this case the showing of the lampshade latches on the previous talk through different tying devices. First the 'me' (line 13) in initial position frames the showing sequence as a kind of reciprocal move: whatever we were doing with 'you' before, we are now doing with 'me'. Moreover, Sacks noted that topical coherence and stepwise moves could be produced and recognized through co-class identification of relevant items in the conversation (Sacks 1992). Before line 13, the co-participants were talking about the visual disappearance of items of interior design which used to be visible or on display. In both cases, the foci of interaction are 'talkable-about's', which, though different, are both on display in the immediate visual environments of the co-participants, the mention of which puts into play concerns with visual accessibility and noticing. With the lampshade (an item of interior design) being framed as new and there in her home, and as a showable (therefore as something on display near her) there is a strong degree of continuity between the previous topical talk and the showing sequence. By starting to move the camera at exactly the same time she initiates her showing preface, she displays her orientation to the readiness-at-hand of the lamp shade with respect to the action of showing it.

The interactional issues regarding the sequential placement of showing sequences are therefore similar to those regarding the initiation of topical talk. Topic boundaries provide a slot for the initiation of a showing sequence, as a new and different line of talk and embodied conduct is relevant. Showing sequences may even be treated as an alternative to topical talk, as shown in Extract 1. Moreover, showing sequences are often framed as occasioned by the embodied orientation of the potential show-er to her current ecology. In this respect, showing sequences bear a more specific family resemblance with a particular form of topical talk, i.e. "setting talk", in which the occasioned consideration of their shared environments constitutes a crucial resource for the co-participants to produce topical talk (Maynard/Zimmermann 1984). The occurrence of such setting talk displays the more general principle of the "local sensitivity of conversation", that is "the tendency built into every topic talk to focus on elements of the encounter's context which are situated or occur in the participants' field of perception but have not been topicalized so far" (Bergmann 1990). Sacks (1992:93, our emphasis) described such materials for conversations as "local resources":

We can see that a vast amount of conversation is devoted to those makings that everybody *brings with them*, and that even though people don't make an altogether only topic out of these makings, they nevertheless show, again and again, that they're attending those things, awaiting their possible use, so that when something happens, then they can use it.

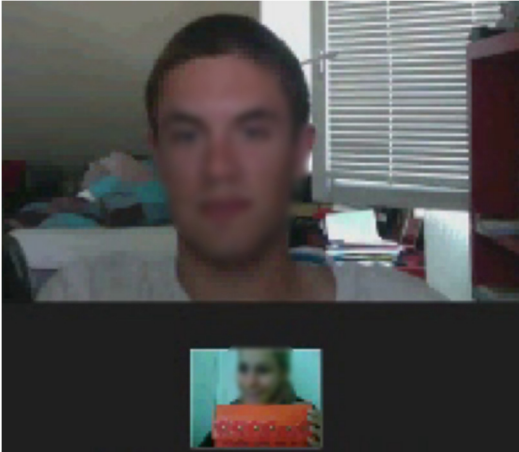
In the case of VMC, part of the environment is shared on screen, but great parts of what each participant brings with them are also not perceptually available to the co-participant. So, while VMC may support forms of occasioned setting talk initiated by visual noticings of things on screen (Velkovska/Zouinar 2017), in many cases a 'just discovered' local resource is not visible to the co-participant(s). It may have to be shared to realize its potential as a 'talkable-about', i.e. it has to be shown. To paraphrase Sacks on the need to turn a local resource into an "object for us" to initiate topical talk, showing sequences constitute a powerful resource to transform a discoverable, non-shared item from an "object to me" (the potential show-er") into an "object for us" (the Skype conversationalists). In VMC environments, the local sensitivity of conversation takes the distinctive form of a sensitivity to local "viewables", which is conducive to the initiation of showing sequences.

Showing sequences also differ from topical talk, because they are inherently multimodal, in the sense that engaging into such a sequence involves simultaneously attending to the talk-in-interaction *and* to the material environment. This has important implications regarding the way showing sequences might flow from topical talk without it having reached a recognizable boundary. Two configurations for this may be observed in our corpus: "occasioned showings" and "touched off showings". In the former, the showing sequence is initiated while topical talk is still relevant, but at a moment when the speaker has somehow distanced herself from it through her embodied conduct. It is then designed as a side sequence, embedded into topical talk (section 3 below). In the latter, it flows from a very particular kind of topical talk, in which some recognizable direct or oblique reference has been made to a recognizable "viewable", the showing of which can be seen as a minimal stepwise move (section 4 below). Both cases reflect on the fact that showing sequences are constitutively coupled to the environment.

4. "Occasioned showings": Initiating showings as side sequences, embedded into topical talk

In this configuration, the potential show-er displays through her embodied conduct her relative disengagement from the ongoing topical talk, though the prior turn was not closing-implicative. This relative disengagement provides her with a practical opportunity to attend to her environment and to discover there some "showable"; and with a sequential slot where she can initiate a showing as an occasioned side sequence. The two participants in extract 3 below are a couple but do not live together.

Extract 3

- 01 AMY attends j'avais chercher mes tickets tu quittes pas
wait I'm going to fetch my tickets don't leave
- 02 (0.8)
- 03 BOB (si) t'es millionnaire (ça va) être cool hein
(if) you're a millionaire (it's going to be) cool huh
- 04 (20)
- 05 AMY mon amour?
my love?
- 06 (0.9)*(0.5)
- 07 Amy *reduces web window, their images appear on Amy's screen
- 08 AMY en plus t'as pas vu *mon nouveau portefeuille
what's the more you haven't seen my new purse
- Amy *brings purse in frame, closer to cam
- Im □Image 3.1
- 
- *(0.8)*(0.6)
- 14 Amy *puts Bob's image in full screen
 *second hand goes to side of purse

While they are talking about lottery tickets which Amy bought, she suspends the ongoing talk-in-interaction with the initial instruction *attends* ("wait", line 1), followed by an account for the break (she announces her going to fetch the tickets), and eventually an instruction for him to stay online. This suspension projects her quick coming back and the possible resumption of the topic in progress. Conversely, Bob's comment on line 3 displays his current orientation to the topic and activity in progress, and projects further talk about it. When Amy comes back, after a lapse of about 20 seconds, she produces an attention-getting summons, in the form of an endearment term, thus signaling her return and the resumption of the interaction: *mon amour?* ('my love?', line 5). Shortly after his image appears on her screen (line 6), and she gets visual cues that he is attentive.

Her next turn, rather than referring back to the lottery tickets, is introduced with *en plus* ('what's the more', line 8) which may be heard here as a misplacement marker, projecting more talk not related to what precedes. It also frames what follows as somewhat occasioned, the unstated occasion providing a kind of tacit warrant for not returning immediately to the topic of the lottery tickets. She follows up with a turn-at-talk designed as an assertion: *t'as pas vu mon nouveau portefeuille* ('you haven't seen my new purse', line 8), turning the object of reference (the purse) into a newsworthy 'showable'. This turn-at-talk also does relational work: that the purse be something Bob could and should see makes him a category person with

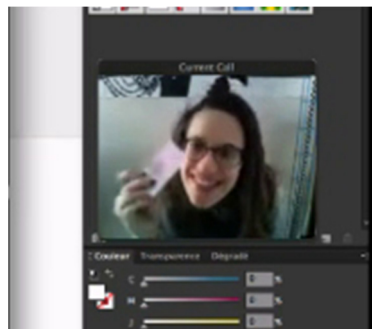
Extract 4, where Amy and Lucy are two sisters, involves the production of a showing as a side sequence in a related way. At the start of the extract, Amy is talking about the thesis she is currently writing

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01 AMY      mon mémoire il est en arial c'est pas du arial ça.*
            my thesis is in arial font this is not arial.
            Amy                                     *bends
            backward,
                                                    looks down

02          (0.7)*(1.0)*(0.2)*(0.3)
03 Amy      *takes hand away from face
04 Amy      *directs same hand to object on the table
05 Amy      *noise of hand hitting table to grab object
06 AMY      *Lucy regarde
            Lucy look
            Amy      *moves upper body, face and object closer to screen-->
07          (0.4)* □(0.1)*(0.3)*(2.4)
08 Amy      -->*smiling face and object side by side
            Im        □Image 4.1
09 Amy      *-----*brings object closer to cam

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While at the end of line 1 the topic is not recognizably exhausted (and they will pick it up again, data not reproduced), Amy bends backward, which is an embodied way of marking a possible disengagement within the regime of visual accountability characterizing VMC, in which any move away from a talking heads configuration is potentially interpretable as a form of distancing from the current joint focus of attention (Licoppe/Morel 2012). Thus, she potentially creates a recognizable sequential opportunity for something else, and her co-participant seems to align with this by not talking in the pause that follows. In her movement backwards, she also looks away from the screen, down on her desk, and takes the opportunity to pick up

an object on the desk. It is as if her relative withdrawal allowed her to 'discover' some object on her desk as a potential relevancy. Here as well the object-oriented sequence seems to emerge in an occasioned manner from visual incipency. Amy then brings her found object to the screen while uttering an instruction for her sister to look: *Lucy regarde* ('Lucy look', line 6). The sister's name in first position works as an address term which summons the recipient's attention while selecting her as next speaker (Lerner 2003). The subsequent instruction to look makes further talk conditionally relevant to the visual grasp of the object. From a multimodal perspective, the unannounced visual appearance of the object is co-extensive and synchronized with the production of the whole utterance. This is an economic way to initiate a showing sequence in which the recipient is framed as able to recognize the object on the basis of some prior shared history, i.e. an "evocative showing" (Licoppe 2017).

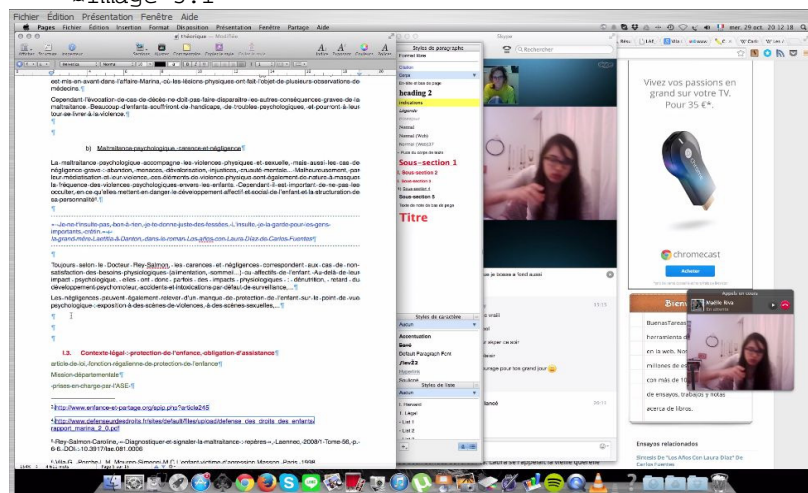
In summary, these two cases of "occasioned showings" are initiated as side sequences, when a relative embodied withdrawal provides an opportunity to look away, a visual occasion for a "showable" to be discovered, and a sequential slot to talk about this occasioned noticing. It shows the local sensitivity of the video conversation to the possible emergence of showing sequences through occasioned noticing. It also provides us with a sense of the way showing sequences are inherently multimodal and different from topical talk, even though they can be used as an alternative to it at topical boundaries.






5. "Touched-off showings": Making a showing relevant through the mention of a 'viewable' item

For the same reason, showing sequences do not generally flow from topical talk in a stepwise fashion, unless the talk makes salient visual concerns and potential "viewables". In the latter case, there seems to be a preference for showing the viewable which is talked about: this phenomenon we call "touched-off showings". Consider Extract 5 below, involving two female friends, Bess and Anna.

Extract 5

01 Im □(1.0)
□Image 5.1



- 02 BES beh moi j'pense que j'vais aller dîner
beh me I think I'm going to go for dinner
- 03 (1.0)
- 04 ANN okay (.) ba::h tu m'rappelles après?
okay (.) bah you'll call me back after?
- 05 BES alors t'as mal?
so does it hurt?
- Im  Image 5.2
- 06 Ann *(2.0)*
Im *-----*stops, looks up the screen and smiles
Image 5.3
- 
- 07 ANN *ça- no:n là j'ai pu mal *mais ça fait un peu pf-
it- no there I don't hurt any more but it feels a bit c-
- 08 Ann *arm to webcam *moves webcam towards foot
Im Image 5.4 Image 5.5 Image 5.6
- 
- 09 (.)
- 10 ANN *j'sais pas si t'arrives *à voir?
I don't know if you manage to see?
- Ann *tries to hold foot visible and points

In this video call, Bess initiates pre-closings (Schegloff/Sacks 1973) with *beh moi j'pense que j'vais aller dîner* ('beh me I think I'm going to go for dinner, line 2), which provides sequential opportunities to come up with new topics of conversation. After Anna has agreed to the pre-closing (line 4), Bess takes the sequential opportunity by asking a new question: *alors t'as mal?* ('so does it hurt?', line 5), a yes/no question referring to something in the experiential domain of the recipient, and which therefore works as a "topic-proffering" (Schegloff 2007:169-171). The French *alors* in initial position functions like "so" in English, to mark the action initiated as relevant and pending (Bolden 2009). Through her question, Bess displays prior knowledge (that something might have happened to Anna which might still be hurting), entitlement to ask, a strong expectation of relevance and that the recipient will understand what this is about. The incipient character of such a topic initiation may find its origin both in the fact that the recipient has just undergone something, that this is common ground for them, and also in Anna's current activity,

since she visually appears to be busy away from screen (e.g. Image 5.2), and in the zone of her feet. Bess will indeed display an understanding that the question deals with the procedure itself – being tattooed – and more precisely the pain which might accompany its aftermath. She provides a type-conforming response, with an initial "no", an account, and last the beginning of an elaboration about another aspect of what she feels (line 7). The elaboration is made relevant by the fact that "topic proffering" enacts a preference for elaborate responses and expansions (Schegloff 2007: 171).

However, the response is not just verbal. As the recipient provides her on-topic response, she picks the camera and moves it towards her feet. At the moment her tattooed foot becomes visible, she is starting to describe her particular sensation, and she cuts this topical expansion, and the actual word, short. By ending the talking head arrangement with her camera motion, Bess makes visually accessible and relevant to the co-participant something which was not visible before. Since this does not appear to illustrate what she is talking about topically (her feelings) this can be treated as the initiation of a showing sequence. The cut-off of the topical talk at the moment she was going to come to her point (the feeling other than pain which she is experiencing) provides in itself a cue that such topical talk may not be relevant any more. In other words, her actions in the visual field (turning the camera from her towards her feet) and in the talk (cutting short her topical expansion), and the way they are temporally organized to fit with one another (the visual appearance of her tattooed foot coincides exactly with the cut-off in her topical utterance in progress) are mutually elaborative: they provide for a kind of "multimodal contexture" (Mondada 2016) from which a showing sequence recognizably emerges. The following inquiry on line 10, purporting to determine if Anna "can see", retrospectively confirms that the focus of the interaction is not the topical talk any more but the action of seeing something, and the subsequent talking about it dependent on what the recipient has been able to see in it, i.e. to manage a showing sequence.

The potential 'showable' has not been mentioned in any way yet. However, the showing sequence is initiated in a fluid way, without any explicit cues and as a kind of incipient action. Whatever the showable may be, it is something which can be made relevant from the previous topical talk with such a minimal stepwise move. Since the previous talk was about the implementation of a new tattoo, that a tattoo is bound to be visible and displayed, at least on certain occasions, the kind of potential showable which flows from such talk with minimal effort is the tattoo itself. Its 'showability' is furthermore enhanced by the fact that it is new, and that it is a joint topic of interest (it is the potential show-recipient who first inquired about the tattoo procedure). Conversely, the fact that it is indeed the tattoo which is made visually relevant here retrospectively confirms the initiation of the showing sequence as a minimal stepwise move. The way the showing sequence is achieved with respect to what was talked about before and the relevance of a particular item as the 'showable' being put in play here and now are also mutually emergent features of the activity in progress.

Making topically relevant something which can be understood as a potential 'showable' seems to provide an opportunity and a warrant to initiate such a showing in a minimal stepwise fashion. Part of what provides for this possibility of a showing sequence to flow swiftly and efficiently from this kind of topical talk, is that the relevant item is recognizable as ready-at-hand with respect to the action of showing

Amy's announcement of future action regarding their previous topic *j'vais regarder s'il est sur e-Bay* (I'm going to look if it's on e-Bay on eBay', line 1) can be heard as a cue that she will temporarily disengage from the conversation, and Bob takes it as a sequential opportunity to change topics. As Amy takes the floor again, so does he on overlap to display his enjoyment of a new piece of clothing: *eh j'suis trop content d'la ceinture* ('hey I'm so happy with the belt', line 3), which works as a "unilateral topic initiation" (Button 1991). However, with the indexical expression "the belt", he shows that he knows that she knows about this belt. The initial position "eh" works as an attention-getting device and misplacement marker and makes his following subject-side assessment of the belt as occasioned, as if he had just thought about this relevant conversational item, thus accounting for it being volunteered as a topic at that particular junction. Finally, the design of the assessment emphasizes the strength of his feeling ('so happy'), and projects some further elaboration. Thus, a variety of devices and markers accountably introduce the belt as a relevant "talkable-about". They also frame the belt as relatively new and newsworthy, for it is for new purchases that one may display eagerness to express pleasure

in having them. In response, Amy initiates a pre-sequence, literally a pre-(showing) request sequence, thus displaying a shared orientation towards treating this object as a show-able indeed. She first checks that he has the belt with him right now, i.e. that it is ready-at-hand to be shown with *tu l'as là?* ('you have it here?', line 5), and once he has confirmed (line 7), with an instruction to show: *attends vas-y montre* ('wait come on show', line 9).

The latter instruction is made of three successive imperatives. The first one, 'wait', signals that her potential answer to his assessment is made conditional to her seeing the belt and is therefore to be delayed until the belt has been adequately shown. Imperatives project compliance and display maximal entitlement (Curl/Drew 2008; Craven/Potter 2010). Choosing a directive over other requests formats enact the relevant action as part of an ongoing and jointly relevant project (Rossi 2012). Therefore, the last component 'show' retrospectively marks the showing of the belt as something which has been made relevant by the previous talk, even though it was not mentioned explicitly. Even more strikingly, the second component "go ahead" frames the showing as something which was already projected in his initial assessment of the belt, and to the achievement of which she collaborates, so that the showing sequence and the belt have become a project "for us". She thus retrospectively provides an understanding of his mention and assessment of "the belt" as making relevant a project to show it. A showable is thus an object a) that can be displayed and visually appreciated; b) that is not currently visible or visually available but can be viewed as 'ready-to-hand' with respect to manipulating it into visibility; and c) which can be understood and constituted so that sharing it visually may be a relevant joint project "for us". Through her actions, Amy display that mentioning a potentially recognizable 'showable' is enough to make the initiation of a showing sequence of the said object a relevant and expected course of interaction here and now. In other words, the mere (topical) mention of a 'viewable' (conditions a and b) in a way that it may be recognized as a potential 'showable' (condition c) enhances the local sensitivity of the video conversation to the initiation of a showing sequence, and turns such an achievement into an accountable and expected outcome.

Such a sensitivity to the visual implications of a talked about viewable displays in another way the local sensitivity of video conversations (and probably also face-to-face conversation though data are needed to substantiate this hypothesis) to showability, and which could be expressed as a Sacks-like maxim: "if some item is mentioned so that it can be understood as a 'showable', then it is relevant to show it here and now". To be understood as a 'showable', the item of reference has to be framed as a 'viewable', i.e. something known and experienced to be close to the speaker and to lie beyond the "evidential boundaries" which are enacted in the current interactional setting, but which is also ready-at-hand to be made visible in the current situation. Finally, for a 'viewable' to be understood as a 'showable' it has to be enacted as a joint concern for the participants, i.e. an object "for us", the joint visual consideration of which becomes then interactionally meaningful. "Touched-off showings" therefore point to a particular form of articulation between visibility and talk. The speaker who refers to an object which can be considered as a potential 'showable' in the sense defined above, may be held accountable for not showing it. Such an orientation about what the other can see of what 'we' are talking about may be a more general feature of co-present interaction, valid both for VMC and co-

present interaction, but more readily displayed in the former because of the constitutive asymmetries of visual access which characterize it.

6. Prefacing a showing

6.1. Prefatory work and 'ostensive epistemics'

Let us return now to the notion of showing sequences which we have used rather loosely until now. In what sense should they be construed as sequences, and more specifically, in line with the topic of this special issue, as 'object-centered sequences'? Looking back to the situation in which a showing is initiated in a sequential slot where the initiation of a new topic is relevant, we see that in most cases the initiation of a showing involves some preparatory work. Showings involve the display of an object and talk about it, but any kind of object can be recruited and described in a potentially infinite number of ways. In the course of an interaction in general (and in the particular case of showing sequences here), when objects are referred to, they are dynamically assembled for the occasion, to be apprehended under a certain relevant perspective (Hindmarsh/Heath 2000a). Initiating a showing sequence involves precisely the performing of such an assemblage in a recognizable, public fashion. This can be done very explicitly through an elaborate preface, as in Extract 8 below, involving Lin and Bea as girlfriends and a couple.

Extract 8

```

01 LIN      alors (.) (biche) je voulais te montre:r *mmpff h h h
            so      (.) (honey) I wanted to show you
            Lin                                           *straightens up
02          *(3.0)
03 Lin      *puts on her coat
04 LIN      *et te demander s- *s'il te plaît ou pas
            and ask you w- whether you like it or not
            Lin      *bends down, face appears in frame
            Lin      *straightens up, face disappears
05          (0.9)
06 BEA      le manteau?
            the coat?
07          (0.7)*(0.7)
08 Lin      *moves down vertically to show coat

```

A preface like *alors (.) (biche) je voulais te montre:r* ('so (.) (honey) I wanted to show you', line 1) can be heard as doing four things. First, it provides a slot for the show-recipient to (dis)agree with the projected showing, or here an opportunity for the show recipient to request a clarification (line 6). Second, it projects some embodied conduct in which something will be made visible in a way that is made intelligible with respect to what is said, such as putting on a coat in line 6, and especially her embodied display of how she looks in the coat (line 8). The recipient's clarification question with the candidate answer *le manteau?* ('the coat?', line 6) provides evidence for the way Bea is inspecting the screen in search of meaningful congruences between what she can see there and the current talk. Showing prefaces are oriented towards such a member's concern with visual and aural congruence. This also puts into play the issue of 'ostensive epistemics': The less the recipient

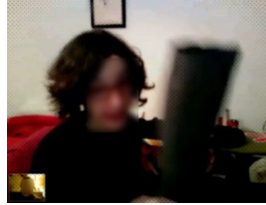
may be expected to know about the showable, the more preparatory work may have to be done to introduce the showing. The preface design enacts a kind of "ostensive epistemic stance": it explicitly frames the recipient as unknowledgeable with respect to the showable. Third, the preface provides for a particular articulation of visibility and talk. It both projects talk as conditional to the viewing of the showable (and therefore postpones it until the manipulation of the latter in a show position) and provides some relevance constraint (the talk should be relevant in some way to the viewing itself). Here the preface projects a visual apprehension of the showable oriented towards its assessment, and an actual assessment: *te demander s- s'il te plait ou pas* ('ask you w- whether you like it or not', line 4). Fourth and finally, the preface turns the showable as an object relevant to both participants. It enacts a kind of 'relational contexture': the action of initiating the showing of this particular showable at this particular moment makes it relevant for "us", and correlatively the kind of "us" for which it may be relevant warrants the initiation of the showing. Here the showing of my (Lin's) new coat to determine whether "you" (Bea) like the way I (Lin) look in it is relevant for "us" as a couple. It is the kind of things that couples do, and conversely, since "us" as a couple is an omni-relevant categorization in such conversations, it is a resource which can be relied on to warrant the initiation of the showing of the coat in this particular way.

Another way to preface a showing is to combine directives (often "look", present in two thirds of the prefaces in our sample, more rarely "wait") with an utterance pointing to a relationship to the object. Consider the following, an extended version of Extract 1.

Extract 1 (expanded)

- 06 ANN □°bon° bref
 °well° so
 □Image 1.1
07 (0.4)
08 ANN en c'moment ça va? (.) alors eu:h
 at the moment it's all right? (.) so u:h
09 ANN *tiens □(.) regarde.
 here (.) look.
10 Ann * swift left arm movement raising index, turns body left-->
 □Image 1.2
 Image 1.1 Image 1.2
-
-
- *(1.0)*
11 Ann *-----*bends down, disappears from image
 (1.0)*(0.4)*
12 Ann *back in image
13 Ann *brings boot in image

14 ANN parlons d'truc de filles
let's talk about girl stuff
 Im □Image 1.3



In this initiation of a showing, the prefatory work is achieved through the instruction *regarde* ('look', line 4), the embodied work (turning back and away from screen and reappearing with an object in hand), and then a proposal to talk (line 9). The proposal frames the talk related to the showing, and hence the showing itself, as a kind of joint project which would be beneficial for both participants (Couper-Kuhlen 2014; Clayman/Heritage 2014). It also does categorization work, since talking about what is made relevant here is stated as the kind of things girls (and more specifically female friends) do together. The proposal enacts a slightly less steep epistemic gradient than in Extract 9 (below), for the showable is not mentioned explicitly, and the recipient is framed as able to recognize it for what it is. Moreover, the fact that it is the kind of things girls talk about together operates as a resource to narrow down the field of possibilities. The verbal part of the prefatory work can also be reduced, as in Extract 4 above, where it is limited to 'Lucy look' while bringing the object to the fore. It can disappear altogether in some instances, in which something is just brought to the screen without any accompanying talk (for an example, see Licoppe 2017:78-79). Such a collapse of the verbal part of the prefatory work displays participants' orientation towards ostensive epistemics. It enacts an epistemic stance in which the recipient is framed as knowledgeable enough about the item in play both to recognize it, and to recognize it as a showable, and as being able to determine by herself how to apprehend it. So, the design of the verbal part of the prefatory work is highly sensitive to the epistemic statuses of the participants with respect to the potential showable.

6.2 The directive *regarde* ('look') and its implications in the initiation of showing sequences

Except in the case of a complete elision of its verbal component, the initiation of showing prefaces often involves the directive *regarde* ('look'). This is the case in about two thirds of the cases collected in our corpus. The directive itself may sometimes constitute the bulk of the preface as in Extract 3 above.

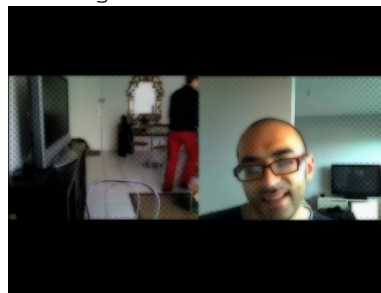
Participants usually make a difference when they initiate such showing sequences between *regarder* (to look) and *voir* (to see). The first verb is regularly used as in instruction in the initiation of the showing, while the second surfaces in a different way, for instance in cases of trouble. In Extract 5 above, when the participant brings her foot to the camera, and she expresses her uncertainty regarding the way her foot is visually displayed for the camera, she formulates it as 'I am not sure you can manage to *see* it'. Seeing is thus treated as an accomplishment, in a

way which resonates with Ryle's philosophical analysis of *to see* as a verb of success (Ryle 1954). One has to *look* in order to, and the use of *regarde* as a directive in the initiation of showing sequences aims at securing the recipient's compliance in striving to see what might be seen. Since the instruction to look is usually produced while the recipient is already looking at the screen, its point is not merely that the recipient looks, or goes on looking (for instance to keep on gathering sense impressions), but to look so as to *see*. And also to see something in a certain way, not only see but *see as*, for showing prefaces frame the way a potential show-able is to be seen and talked about. The kinds of *looking* and *seeing* (and also of show-able) which are made relevant in the preface, and which are to constitute a public phenomenon are a local accomplishment, dynamically assembled for this particular occasion. The instruction to look, then, does two things. First, it suspends the kind of *looking* relevant when doing topical talk in the VMC settings; second, it makes relevant a different kind of looking oriented towards eventually seeing the showable in a certain way.

But why are such instructions sometimes produced and sometimes not? It is interesting to note here that they can be placed in two different positions in the initiation of the showing sequence. *Regarde* can be introduced as the first item pertaining to the preface itself, before anything has been said about the showable, as in Extract 1 above, or as a final one as in Extract 9 below, where Tom and Jay are two male friends.

Extract 9

01 TOM *hhh* o::h j'ai rach'té ça va t'r-*
 hhh o::h I bought again it will r-
 Tom *---*turns head behind *turns to Jay
 02 TOM ça va t'rapp'ler des *souv'nirs
 it will remind you some memories
 Tom *stands up, walks-->
 03 (0.4)
 04 TOM j- ça m'manquait
 i- it was missing to me,
 Im □Image 9.1



05 (0.8)*
 06 Tom ---->*bends to pick up pot
 07 (1.0)

08 TOM reg*ga:rde *c'que j'ai *ach'té: □
look at what I bou:ght
 Tom *raises with pot
 Tom *turns full body to screen
 Tom *brings plant in frame, walks back
 to computer
 Im □Image 9.2



The showing is announced and the showable framed as something which indexes shared memories (lines 1-2). As Tom finishes this part of the preface, he rises and moves away from screen for a brief moment to go in the next room, while Jay remains silent and turned to the screen. As Tom is getting back he provides the directive to look (line 8). Two things are notable here. First the directive is not just to look, but to 'look at what [he has] bought', i.e. to look at a showable which has been framed and "made show-worthy" before. Second, the utterance is timed so that it ends when the actual "showable" (a plant) becomes visible to Jay. In this way, the design and placement of the visual directive target the precise moment where the show-recipient should be able to "see" the 'showable' in the way the preface has framed it, projecting the production of a relevant action at that very moment, to be done as much as possible as an "unwitting" response (Webb et al. 2013). This is characteristic of visual directives in final position.

This helps us understand what visual directives may do when produced in first position instead. First-positioned instructions often take the streamlined form "look", rather than "look at X" (see for instance Extracts 1 and 3), since the potential showable has not yet been mentioned or introduced as show-worthy. The instruction then projects that a proper "looking", different from the way participants were looking before, is relevant in the future. It instructs the recipient to keep scrutinizing the screen for the moment something relevant might be seen in an adequate way. It therefore introduces an obligation to look for the lapse of time the show-er will need to put the showable on display, and during which irrelevant images might be produced (in which there is nothing to be "seen" in a possibly relevant way, neither the co-participant as a talking head, nor a recognizable showable). The initial position directive anticipates potential trouble related to the irrelevance of what will be visible on screen while the showable is brought into a show position, while projecting the occurrence of something to "see" at some later point.

7. Conclusion: Showings as object-centered sequences

Sequences are defined rather generally as courses of action "that have some shape or trajectory to them" (Schegloff 2007). In a sequence, the accomplishment of some action projects some form of conditional relevance with respect to the actions which may follow as 'nexts'. Some sequences may be shaped and recognized through an ideal-typical structure which is both context-dependent and context-free. A sequence of storytelling typically involves, e.g., for a prefatory adjacent pair, a telling, and some appreciative turn from the recipient displaying how she has "heard" the telling. How can we characterize what we have called "showing sequences" so far?

Showing sequences may be initiated as a new 'thing' when a new topic is relevant, and when it is the case, the launching of the showing is done as a recognizable course of action which may work as an alternative to (and therefore somewhat distinct from) the introduction of a new topic. Such showing sequences are characterized by an ideal-typical structure which is context-dependent and context-free, and which bears some formal resemblance with the sequential organization of storytelling (see Sacks 1992). This set of features also makes them accountable as sequences in their own right: preface sequence, manipulation of the showable object into a show position, and appreciative talk displaying how the recipient has "seen" the showable. However, where story-telling can be accomplished and recognized through, and as, talk-in-interaction, showing sequences are multi-modal through and through. They are "environmentally-coupled" (Goodwin 2007) sequences which attend to, and operate on, the lived visual ecologies in relation to talk as a constitutive feature of their accomplishment as such.

There is a formal similarity between showing sequences and storytelling sequences. They both involve an organization of the type preface sequence, development, appreciative sequence. The comparison should not be pushed too far. These are distinctive sequences doing different things, and for instance, while stories make relevant "second stories" (Sacks, 1992), showings do not seem to make relevant "second showings", at least usually. It makes some sense at the sequential level though. Part of what prefaces to showing sequences achieve is similar to story prefaces: a) they offer a sequential opportunity for the recipient to align with or disalign from the projected course of action; and b) they frame the showable as an object "for us" and to be "seen" (together) in a certain way (for stories, they frame the telling itself and how to hear it).

But showing sequence prefaces operate in a distinctive way on the articulation of visibility and talk-in-interaction. They make further talk from the recipient conditionally relevant (both sequentially and topically) to the manipulation of the object in a "show position", and to her being able to "see" the showable in an adequate way (as framed in the preface). There is still some degree of analogy with storytelling here, for in both cases the preface postpones further talk from the recipient and makes it conditionally relevant to prior actions by the initiator (telling her story or showing something). But while the preface to a story-telling works to suspend the turn-taking organization while enacting a particular way of "listening" (different from the one embedded in the turn-taking system), the preface to a showing operates on the articulation of visibility and talk, suspends the form of "looking" which is relevant to conversational talk (in the case of VMC, the talking heads organization), and enacts and makes relevant a distinctive way of looking at and seeing a

given showable, which are assembled for the purposes of this particular occasion. It is in this sense, and to account for their environmentally-coupled character, that it may be meaningful to describe showing sequences as "object-centered sequences".

We rely on the work done in linguistic anthropology about storytelling (Ochs/Capps 2001) to describe the way showing sequences unfold along five dimensions: show-ership, showability, linearity, embeddedness and morality/relationality. Based on our analysis of the sequential organization of showings, and on their relative parallelism to storytelling sequences we can construct a similar multi-dimensional space of relevance for showing sequences, along five dimensions.

'Show-ership': This dimension aims to distinguish instances in which one participant acts as the show-er to relatively passive recipients, from those in which the recipients get highly involved in the initiation and production of the showing, for instance by making requests to initiate the showing or change the way the object is shown. In the latter case, the status of show-er appears to be more evenly distributed with respect to cases where the potential show-er seems to do most of the work. Moreover, in multi-participant settings, shower-ship may even be more distributed with a different participant manipulating the object, and another the video frame (Licoppe et al. 2017).

'Showability': Some objects appear to be highly showable, and to require little or no prefatory work, while for others, the relevance of the object as a showable needs to be established through extensive prefatory work. There are also different ways to frame the relevance of the showable: because it can be associated to something new in the life of the show-er (which the recipient is not supposed to know about), or because it is something which indexes shared knowledge and experiences (which the recipient is supposed to know about). We have called the former 'informative showing sequences' and the latter 'evocative showing sequences', and shown that the design of showing prefaces is highly sensitive to such "ostensive epistemics".

Embeddedness: Showing sequences and their specific visual concerns can differ according to the way they latch on previous topical talk. At one extreme they can be initiated as separate from ongoing talk, as a new type of sequence in which the showing itself becomes the focus of the interaction (low embeddedness). At the other, they can be initiated through stepwise moves, so that they appear to latch on previous topical talk (often having a visual character) or as "touched off" sequences, after allusions to a potential showable (high embeddedness).

Linearity: Some showings are highly linear, with the show-er proposing a particular and single perspective on the showable, with the option for the recipient to align or disalign. In non-linear showing sequences, the perspective under which to view the showable (and sometimes the showable itself) is shifting in the course of a sequence. It is not defined initially but emergent, discoverable, and collaboratively discovered as the showing sequence unfolds (for examples, see Licoppe/Morrel 2014).

Morality/Relationality. Through their very production, showing sequences involve recipient design. When turning an object initially available only to the show-er into an object "for us", the recipient is enacted as someone for whom it is relevant to show and talk about this object, the particulars of which index some relationship to the shower (what "us" may mean in this particular course of interaction). Through

the mediation of the showing sequence, some membership categorial pairing becomes salient. Since seeing is a verb of success, and since the purpose of showing sequences is to "see together", showing sequences also operate as a kind of relational bid which may ratify, fail to ratify, or allow to renegotiate the "us" thus initially enacted.

This opens up the study of showing sequences in very different settings to systematic comparative analysis. The relationship of showing sequences with some foundational orientations in the articulation of visibility and talk makes this a particularly worthy enterprise. The organization of showing sequences in VMC, and in particular their initiation, with phenomena such as "touched-off showings" (where the mention of a "viewable" makes a showing salient and relevant), or the sensitivity of the design of prefaces to showing sequences to "ostensive epistemics" (what the recipient may know about the "showable" in relation to how it may be "seen"), suggest that a multimodal version of Sacks' general "orientation towards the co-participant" in human interaction might operate in the visual domain, in which talk should be designed with an orientation towards what co-participants can or cannot see. Since in VMC the domain of mutual visibility is constrained by technology, VMC offers many opportunities for showing things and occasions for the operation of that sensitivity to what the co-participant can or cannot see to become a demonstrable feature of the ongoing interaction. One can surmise that such a general orientation also operates in co-present interaction, but because the domain of expected mutual visibility is much greater, co-present situations offer less opportunities than VMC to display this visual version of the 'orientation towards the co-participant'.

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