Categorisation practices, instructed actions, and teamwork as occasioned phenomena: structuring the 'carry off' in mountain rescue work[1]

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Abstract

This article describes human-assisted mobilities during a mountain rescue training exercise. The organisation of a 'carry off' – evacuating a casualty on a stretcher – is shown to be accomplished through relevant categories-in-action and, in particular 'locatively-generated' categories; categories that are dynamically accomplished via members' shifting positions relative to the stretcher. These categorisation practices are shown to be central in the organisation of key action phases including the issuing of instructions to lift or lower the stretcher, the organisation of a 'hand-over-hand' manoeuvring of the stretcher, and the verbalisation of the upcoming terrain whilst walking together with the stretcher. The article demonstrates how these practices, rather than relying on teamwork, are the work in and through which 'team' is accomplished, displayed, and discovered by its members.

Keywords: mobilities – categorisation practices – membership – teamwork – landscape.

German abstract

Der Beitrag beschreibt menschengestützte Mobilität im Rahmen einer Übung eines Bergrettungsteams. Es wird gezeigt, wie die interaktive Organisation eines *carry off* – der Evakuierung einer verunglückten Person auf einer Trage – durch handlungsrelevante *categories-in-action*, vor allem 'ortsabhängig-generierte' Kategorien, geleistet wird; Kategorien, die dynamisch hervorgebracht werden, indem die Teilnehmer*innen wechselnde Positionen an der Trage einnehmen. Für diese Kategorien wird gezeigt, dass sie eine substanzielle Rolle bei der Bewältigung jener Aktivitäten spielen, aus der sich die Rettungsübung wesentlich zusammensetzt. Diese Aktivitäten umfassen Anweisungen zum Anheben oder Absenken der Trage, die Organisation eines *hand-over-hand*-Manövers der Trage sowie die Verbalisierung des zu beschreitenden Untergrundes bei gleichzeitiger Fortbewegung mit der Trage. Der Beitrag zeigt auf, wie diese Praktiken weniger auf Teamwork beruhen als dass sie die Arbeit darstellen, in der und durch die die Teilnehmer*innen 'Team' herstellen, sichtbar machen und entdecken.

Keywords: Mobilitäten – Kategorisierungspraktiken – Mitgliedschaft – Teamwork – Gelände.

1. Introduction

This article is concerned with 'human assisted mobilities' in and as the work of mountain rescue. The analysis draws on and contributes to developments in ethnomethodology (EM) and membership categorisation analysis (MCA) concerning the relatively neglected matters of embodied membership practices (Reynolds 2017; Mondada 2020) and the organisation of spatial and 'locatively-generated' categories-in-action. The article also represents an effort in a 'pure and applied ethnography' (Watson 1999) in that the analysis presented is intended to contribute to members' own concerns with the 'correct' way to lift and handle the stretcher. The article describes the various phases of the organisation of lifting, lowering, and maneuvering the stretcher as a coordinated and concerted activity and, as such, is also concerned with instructed actions and situated doings (see, e.g., Lynch/Jordan 1995). The article thus aims to respecify assisted mobilities in terms of their categorial organisation and members' renderings of 'the stretcher problem'. Of particular relevance to this special issue, the 'stretcher problem' is a primarily interactional and linguistic matter relating to the coordination of the 'lift' and 'carry' during the evacuation of a casualty. Indeed, for the team, it serves as a key site for the consideration of their ways of formulating and doing 'teamwork' as characterised by what they call 'voluntary professionalism'.

Both in situ and at the level of formulation of the team's formal guidelines and training, how the lifting and maneuvering of the stretcher gets done is treated as a matter concerning the relationship between (at least) three elements: the structuring of the verbal instructions; who or, rather, what category of member should give them; and the coordinated mobility actions of 'the stretcher party'. The article thus describes the organisation of specific practices involved in: the timing of the lift; the accomplishment-in-use of spatial and locative categories for the allocation of tasks; and the categorisation and verbalisation of the terrain that the stretcher is moved through and with. The organisation of human assisted mobilities is shown to be a members' problem and, in this case, a problem that offers a perspicuous setting for inquiries in to the organisation and production of a 'team' context. The conclusion, for the team, is that although the stretcher lift can be executed in any number of ways, a shared format for doing so limits the possibility of 'bad lifts' occurring.

2. Instructed actions, oriented objects, and occasioned categories

For the mountain rescue team, both generally and specifically for the activities described herein, how their activities are accountably done is a matter of practical and symbolic importance. As with other activities within professional or quasi-professional settings, there exist formal written descriptions of the 'correct' procedures for the range of activities undertaken. Yet, at the same time, there is a recognition within the team that these cannot be straightforwardly learned and repeated 'by rote'. What is particularly significant for the work of mountain rescue is that the context of those activities varies greatly, as do the staff of those activities. To compare to the classic context of a laboratory – a relatively controlled and stable environment, with a regular staff performing specialised roles – mountain rescue work can take place in a hugely varied range of environments and, due to its entirely voluntary character, relies upon a varied and relatively shifting staff (and particularly so in 'area calls' where two or more teams work together). When a call goes out, around 40 members are messaged and will respond depending on availability. Whilst there are specialist roles within the team (incident controllers, casualty carers, and party leaders), it is never certain who will respond to a particular call until that call is already in action.

In terms of the specific focus of this article, and indeed 'live' discussions within the team at the time of writing, the lifting of the stretcher is a central example of whether and how actions should be formally proscribed (the other key example being the forms of rope systems and their operation (for something of this, see Smith 2020)). In topicalising their own practices, the question turns on whether there is a need for a fixed 'standard operating procedure'. The specifics of the case relate to lifting the stretcher off the ground, from a kneeling position to standing, in order to carry, or pass, it, out of the casualty site. It is accepted that the person on the head of the stretcher should issue the commands for the lifting or lowering of the stretcher (although as we will see, this is sometimes not the case). The question is whether, on each occasion of lifting and lowering, the person at the head of the stretcher says: "Is anybody not ready?" followed by "Ready, brace, lift/lower", or whether some other form of instruction can be given, for example (as we shall see below) "one, two, three, lift" or "lower on three, one, two, three". The members' concerns are with the indexicality of those instructions and whether the actions can or indeed should be strictly formatted by formal guidelines or whether the actual words used do not matter so much at all, so long as the structure of the instruction is communicated clearly. There is the rub. Of what does 'communicated clearly' consist?

'Instructed actions' have been a central topic of ethnomethodological inquiries. Studies of various activities and contexts have demonstrated how describable formal structures of activities do not, and cannot, describe the 'just what' of the accomplishment of those activities in specific material, temporal, spatial contexts (Lynch 1985; Lynch/Jordan 1995; Garfinkel 2002); a point routinely missed by formal Sociology (Sacks 1963; Garfinkel/Sacks 1970). Instructions for a given activity are not the doing of the activity, they cannot be straightforwardly grasped 'off the page' (Garfinkel 2002). Indeed, such 'instructed doings' are the resource of a number of ethnomethodological tutorial problems and studies including following sketch maps (see Liberman 2013), building flat pack furniture (Garfinkel 2002), building

and using a DIY 'AI' kit (Sormani/Booker 2019), the playing of board games (Hofstetter/Robles 2019), navigating using technology (Smith et al. 2020), and producing and following videos providing tutorials in various practical tasks such as cutting one's own hair or fixing a bicycle (Tuncer/Brown/Lindwall 2020). In a related manner, the relationship between institutionally ratified procedures and their in situ accomplishment has been studied in a wide variety of contexts including laboratories (Lynch 1985; Sormani 2016), driving or cycling on the road (Smith 2017), the coordination of surgical procedures (Mondada 2014) and, of course, in the use of photocopying machines (Suchman 1987). The common finding among these studies is that the 'rules' and formal procedures do not provide for the context in which the activity is to be completed at that time, in that place. Rules and, as it recurrently turns out, instructions do not contain the rules of their own application (Wittgenstein 1953).

Much of what follows is concerned with matters recognised in a team 'debrief' session concerning the performance of an exercise involving them handling a stretcher around, over and through various obstacles in a car-park next to the team's base (Fig. 1).

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1.   TM1: There should be someone dedicated in control at all times.
2.        People just took the control when they felt it needed um to be taken
3.        rather than listening to someone specific
4.        and that whoever that specific person was
5.        sometimes give the wrong call or they'd say
6.        when you're ready blah blah blah
7.        and sometimes they didn't say that
8.        so I think it needs to be a bit more formalised in the calling
9.   TR:  OK
10.  TM2: Yeh. There's no standardised
11.       D explained what it was and we need to practice that
12.       you can't just make it up as you're going along.
13.       ...
14.       And that's the difference between us and the fire brigade.
15.       Because they have a standard operating procedure and we don't.
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Fig. 1: Transcript of team debrief

People can and do make up their activities as they go along. Liberman's (2013) various studies have been particularly insightful in demonstrating how ethnomethods are *discovered* in situ, rather than possessed and deployed by an individual. At the same time, however, this is a specific context – a quasi-institutional, quasi-professional context – in which the doing of an activity is not only concerned with practical outcomes – like drivers negotiating passage through an intersection where the lights have gone down (Liberman 2020) – but with the form of the doing itself (including its potential observability by an auditing public). The team's work, then, displays an orientation to 'professionalism' in the sense of them being members of the team who should all know, in any given call out, the key tasks to be carried out, and how to do them. The question relating to the stretcher lift and lower is the degree to which the instructions given need to be formalised and formatted in a uniform manner or whether the form is less important than the outcome: a 'good' and 'safe' lift characterised by coordination between members that ensure a steady, not rapid, and level, not tilted, lifting of the stretcher.

2.1. The study, the data, and some methodological remarks

I joined the Mountain Rescue team as a 'Foundation member' in January 2017. All members complete 12 months of training and assessment to become a Probationary member, followed by a further 12 months of training culminating in a series of assessments of competency in areas of navigation with map and compass (including at night), building anchors for abseiling and lowering, technical rope work (setting up and operating a 'vertical lower' of the stretcher), and ownership and maintenance of personal kit (including clothing, technical climbing gear, and personal protective equipment (helmet, goggles, gloves)). They then become 'Operational' and 'Full Team Members'. This article is, then, written 'from within' mountain rescue work in several senses and draws inspiration from the 'work studies programme' (Garfinkel 2002; Rawls 2008; Sharrock/Greiffenhagen 2019) and variously associated ethnographic work concerning the detailed description of work practices (Atkinson 1995).

A key starting point for such studies is the specification of actually existing work practices that are not present in classic sociological studies of work. The quiddity or, as Garfinkel (with Weider 1992:203) later redefined it, 'haecceity' of work practices form a 'missing what' in mainstream studies, yet are the unavoidable things and accomplishments of the work itself. This is, however, not to say that the prize is simply the description of previously unnoticed detail but, rather, the analysis of how that detail lives as the organisational stuff of the work itself; detail that constitutes the 'missing what' in existing studies of mountain rescue work (e.g. Lois 2003). The other side of the coin is that more narrowly empirical analyses risk sacrificing an attention to the social organisational features of the scene, by only re-describing the detail of a given setting as afforded by video materials.

The 'good enough' materials described in this article were filmed with a single helmet-mounted camera worn by me. As such, data are produced in relation to the gross orientations of the head during activities in which I am a full participant. The materials have been presented using a basic form of graphic transcript (Laurier 2014) in aiming to preserve something of the in situ gestalt availability of the phenomena in question. Although there are limitations to this approach, for this article concerned, as it is, primarily with membership categorisation practices, the graphic transcript enables categorial relevancies to be viewed as shifting and dynamic, and produced through action, rather than decided by their designation in the traditional text transcript format (Watson 1997:51-52).

In aiming to describe mountain rescue activities 'from within', the study adopts some principles of Garfinkel's work studies program, particularly the 'unique adequacy requirement of methods' (UA). What we might call a general ethnographic familiarity with a setting is close to the 'weak' version of UA, in which a 'vulgar competency' is gained over time by the fieldworker 'immersing' themselves in the language and lifeworld of a given setting or group, such that one is not reliant upon second order accounts of 'what usually goes on here' (which is not to say that such accounts of work practices are without value). The strong version, however, requires something closer to a description of how the practice is organised such that the reader gains a practical familiarity with its organisational features. This, in turn, means that the description and analysis should not only be scenically recognisable

to members as their practice, but should enable reflection, modification, improvement and so on (Garfinkel 2002; Lindwall/Lymer 2005). So, whilst formal Sociological accounts might well 'reveal' to members Sociological ways of thinking about their situation (perhaps drawing out issues of 'power', or 'gender', or 'class' and so on), an ethnomethodological description should furnish members with a means to work on or with the familiar things that they are already and ongoingly in the business of working on and with. As Garfinkel (2002:182) has it:

> To find a perspicuous setting the EM policy provides that the analyst looks to find, as of the haecceities of some local gang's work affairs, the organizational thing that they are up against and that they can be brought to teach the analyst what he needs to learn and to know from them, with which, by learning from them, to teach them what their affairs consist of as locally produced, locally occasioned, and locally ordered, locally described, locally questionable, counted, recorded, observed, etc., phenomena of order*, in and as of their in vivo accountably doable coherent and cogent detail for each another next first time.

To put it another way, in the viewing of these modes of accountability, members discover for another next first time, their membership as incarnate in their own familiar practices. Membership is an ongoing, emergent, and situated accomplishment rather than something that one gains at a single point and holds thereafter. As such, a key element of those organisational features is the 'natural language' of the work site. Whilst for members such language passes as unproblematic and unremarkable, it is nonetheless a primary means of the organisation of work tasks. The natural language of the worksite accomplishes that site's work objects in and through the course of specific tasks. Worksite, in this sense, is not to be taken to mean a general work setting as it might in ethnographic research, but instead refers to the moment-by-moment, endogenous, local methods that are yielded by and oriented to a specific project or task. For example, in Watson's (1999) research on driving in mountainous terrain, drivers would use 'culturally-based terms' – such as 'washboard' in referring to a 'kind of transverse profile of a forest track or road' – in a way that demonstrated the significance of "perceptual categories of an especially salient kind, and that the terms comprised *loci* for a whole range of special driving techniques that were locally-deployed in that highly particular situation" (1999:52).

The importance of finding and analysing categories-in-use is often overlooked in ethnographic work (Sacks 1995), yet an attention to categorial order provides for a potentially fruitful respecification of ethnographic fieldwork and writing (Watson 2009, 2015:46). Moreover, as Lindwall and Lymer (2005:392) discuss, the 'vulgarly competent' ethnomethodologist should, in principle, be positioned to make recommendations for improvements in the practices studied, so long as the recommendations are born of a sense of work site categories as found in their "presence as 'professional designations' (Macbeth 2002) in the setting itself".

Given that membership categorisations recurrently and obviously feature as a constituent and central aspect for the accomplishment of the local division of labour within any given work site (along with key associated features such as the legitimacy of different categories of 'staff' to perform a particular task, or even to stand in a particular position), Watson (2015) notes that this absence is particularly puzzling given the centrality of the "strongest conception of context, that of 'gestalt contexture' in ethnomethodology" (2015:37). As I go on to describe below, relevant categories and their organisation within the scene are endogenous to that scene, and

shift in within a contexture that is "kaleidoscopic in its singularity" (Watson 2015: 37). Put another way, who is doing what, who is responsible for what, who is responsible for the allocation and oversight of those duties, and how those activities are treated as 'placeable' within a specific context is an occasioned matter, organised locally, emergently, in and through 'resources' that are part of the work setting and 'constituted in use' (Hester/Eglin 1997:20). This is an important conception that aids in avoiding various pitfalls including reducing analysis to the identification of 'individuals performing actions' without incorporating an attention to the aspects of social order that give 'individuals' presence as and within a scene's 'congregation' (Garfinkel 2002).

3. Structuring the carry off in a live exercise

The extraction and evacuation of casualties who are unable to walk themselves 'off the hill' is a primary and general concern for the work of mountain rescue. Any call out requires the coordination of members' movements across different scales by the Incident Controller (IC), Party Leader (PL), and between hill members themselves in variously designated tasks. Responding from their home or place of work, members travel to a specified, and often shifting, rendezvous point, where they will be organised in to 'hill parties'. In the case of a casualty at a known location (as opposed to a search scenario), the movements of the hill parties are then organised – depending on the situation, and members present – in relation to reaching the casualty with immediate first aid kit carried by a 'hasty party' including a qualified 'casualty carer' or 'cas-carer'. This party is then followed, after an initial assessment by the cas-carer, by a 'kit party' carrying technical equipment if an extraction on difficult, steep, or vertical ground is required, necessary medical equipment (including Oxygen or Entonox bottles and possibly controlled drugs such as morphine), the 'cas-bag' (a fleece lined, weather proof, cocoon used to keep the casualty warm), and the stretcher itself (which can be broken down into two sections, and can be handled with straps, or detachable handles, and a wheel that can be attached underneath to ease transportation on level ground). At an early stage the IC and PL will begin the formulation of an extraction plan, including the decision as to whether a helicopter will be requested, or the casualty will be transported to hospital by land ambulance which will take in to account multiple factors including the severity of the casualty's injuries and prevailing weather conditions.

The stretcher lift and carry – and the ways in which lifting and lowering appear in the course of any single carry as the stretcher is rested or manoeuvred over encountered obstacles such as stiles, gates and fences – is a core aspect of any rescue as it finds the casualty fully in the hands of the team until arrival at land ambulance or helicopter landing or winching zone. The 'care' for the casualty is evident not only in the medical attention provided (often as a shared duty between the Mountain Rescue cas-carer and a paramedic on scene), but also in manoeuvres around the stretcher. Never stepping over or straddling the casualty is a 'rule' established very early in a member's training. Handling the casualty/stretcher is a coordinated activity that is regularly topicalised by the team in training, and how the lift is coordinated verbally has been a topic of discussion. As noted above, the discussion turns on the use of language in the setting and, interestingly enough for ethnomethodologists and Wittgensteinians, whether and to what extent it 'matters' what command

is given prior to the lift. It is, however, the command, specifically, that is topicalised, rather than the work around the command; something that this article aims to address.

The training scenario described below takes place in an area popular with walkers, featuring a number of waterways and waterfalls, steep and narrow paths, and slippery ground crossed with tree roots and broken rock steps. The team are regularly called out there, and regularly for lower limb injuries of the sort featured in the training scenario. The individual playing the casualty is positioned at the bottom of a steep 'zig-zag' path, at the level of the river, on boulders. The first job of work in the extraction phase is moving the casualty on to the stretcher.

3.1. 'Packaging' the casualty

The first phase of any carry off is the 'packaging' of the casualty on to the stretcher. Depending on the injury or injuries and their mechanism, the casualty will be immobilised in specific ways with the use of vacuum splints applied to limbs and/or joints, a pelvic brace, and/or neck brace. A 'vac-mat'[2] can be placed underneath the casualty and a 'cas-bag'[3] will often be deployed to protect from exposure. Once 'packaged' – and that language alone seems to point in this direction – it is easy to begin to assume that the category becomes an object, only regaining personhood when addressed directly by a team member or on occasions where the stretcher stops so that the cas-carer or paramedic can perform various tests and communicate those to a 'scribe' (pulse, respiratory rate, blood oxygen saturation, temperature, possibly a 'cap refill' (squeezing a nail and counting how long it takes for blood to return) test on the limb that is in a splint) (see also Hindmarsh/Pilnick 2011). This view, however, overlooks how the casualty is often very much involved and active in collaborating with team members in the stages of their transportation, and particularly the earliest stages of getting the casualty on to the stretcher in the first place. Physically, if they are able, they will be asked to take their weight such that the cas-bag or vac-mat can be slid underneath them, or, in the case of a lower limb injury that has been stabilised, perhaps assist the process by 'shuffling' themselves on to the stretcher. It is not, then, the casualty that is necessarily the 'work object' of the worksite, but, rather, the immobilised limb that is the focus of the casualty and team's attentions in manoeuvring on to the stretcher. The following sequence is taken from the training exercise, and features the categorial and sequential landscape in and through which the first stage of 'assisted mobility' is accomplished.

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[2]   Vacuum mattress: a tough bag filled with small plastic beads, that can be formed around a casualty. When the air is removed, the mattress turns solid.
[3]   Casualty bag: a large, 'pile' lined bag with a tough exterior, that can be strapped to fit snugly around the casualty's body providing insulation and warmth, and a degree of comfort while on the stretcher.

Figure 2: Packaging the casualty

In organising the manoeuvring of the casualty in to the cas-bag (Fig. 2), the cas-carer (CC, left) communicates with both the casualty (seated, centre) and the team members in close proximity (the recording is all but inaudible due to the sound from the nearby waterfall). At the instruction of CC, the casualty lifts themselves off the floor with their hands and the team members work to arrange the cas-bag underneath the casualty. CC holds the casualty's right leg still whilst the coordinated manoeuvres of the casualty and the team and the cas-bag take place. Once the bag is in position, CC instructs the casualty to lay down and straighten their other leg with their assistance. The casualty is then packed in to the cas-bag, with the straps being fastened securely. Lifting the casualty on to the stretcher, and then lifting the stretcher itself is at once a straightforward and complex activity. Team members treat the lift in this way too; as an activity which 'just happens', but also which requires attention. The lift *can* go wrong, or get done in the wrong way and, as such, is an activity that, perhaps, requires formalisation.

With the casualty 'packaged', they become more manoeuvrable by the team, by virtue of the straps on the side of the cas-bag. The casualty is, by now, unable to physically assist the team further in the evacuation and their future mobility is not so much 'assisted' as taken over by the members of the team as their primary work task; hence, 'carry off' as a professional designation, as opposed to 'walk off' or evacuation by helicopter. The following section considers the sequential and categorial coordination of that work.

3.2. Timing the lift

We rejoin the training exercise, with the casualty now packaged in the cas-bag, but still positioned on the boulders. There are three separate elements to the 'project' of moving the casualty on to the stretcher that must be managed in this instance: the lifting of the cas-bag/casualty; the removal of the waterproof sheet the casualty was sat on (the "green thing" in the excerpts below) from under the cas-bag; and the

sliding of the stretcher under the casualty to the correct position (oriented to the casualty's head, shoulders, and feet). In the following scene (Fig. 3), the cas-carer (CC) is providing instructions for the process to be followed, as well as allocating the various tasks to team members.

Figure 3: Preparing the lift

The initial generic instructions to "we" are hearable as directed to those members positioned around the stretcher and already in position to perform the lift, not to anyone who can hear the instruction. The instruction is, then, category-relevant but in a sense that goes beyond 'role'. The initial turn (Fig. 3, panel 1) from CC also prefigures the signal that will structure the lift. In this case, *who* will give the lift command is also clear, if not explicitly stated. CC is not relinquishing 'control' of the situation, via next speaker allocation, by directing another member to give the command; so, not the 'head of the stretcher' in this instance which might be read locally in terms of the stretcher being still located within the cas-site and, as such, still under the command of CC who has primary responsibility for the casualty. The instructions are furnished with embodied demonstrations of the moves that are to be carried out, or, rather, their general orientation (e.g. Fig. 3, panels 2, 3, 4, 5). Indeed, these are not embodied demonstrations of technique per se but gloss the phases of the actions to be done and, importantly, by whom (for example, the re-moval of the "green thing" from under the casualty). We also have a nice instance and demonstration of an indexical members' measurement in terms of what consti-tutes "just about high enough". There is no need for the height to be specified as 'just high enough' can be both understood and discovered in the doing of the lift, relative to the stretcher, *as* the stretcher is slid underneath it. The same might also be said for organisation of the timing of the lift "on lift".

After checking "everybody got him" (Fig. 3, panel 6), CC moves to the second phase of the 'packaging' of the casualty, by providing the formulation of the lift instructions for a second time (Fig. 4, panel 1). These serve both as instructions for the lift and instructions that the lift proper is imminent.

Figure 4: Placing casualty on stretcher

Again, the timing of the lift is specified as happening "on lift", following "steady". The lift is executed on "lift" (Fig. 4, panel 2) and the stretcher is slid under the casbag and casualty (Fig. 4, panel 3). The lift is held 'just about high enough' until a team member in the best position to do so gives the "ok" (Fig. 4, panel 4) indicating that the stretcher is in position. This is recognised in the next turn from CC which immediately begins the lower (the lift is held just high enough and just long enough, for good practical reasons as well as the safety of the casualty).

Significantly, the call for lower is not pre-figured, but mirrors the structure assembled locally for the lift phase demonstrating a background understanding of consistency. Two assessments of the lift follow; a general assessment of the manoeuvre as being "seamless" (Fig. 4, panel 6), and a confirmation of "nice". The 'rights' to give assessments are not only taken at particular moments in the course of an activity but can also be categorially organised (Watson 2015). In this instance, it is a senior team member that gives the general assessment and the second most experienced at the scene (other than CC) that supports it (other parties to the scene are very recent recruits).

The timing of the lift itself 'just happens' and cannot be said to rely upon any specific competencies; a member of the public, for example, could participate in the lift (although this is a very unlikely scenario). What is required is a general orientation to the 'rhythm' of the instructions, and understanding-displayed-in-action that the instructions are deployed such as to be instructive for the timing of the lift. I do not mean only in terms of the words themselves, although they are relevant, but the other elements of the structuring of those instructions that perhaps escape the transcript. The 'rhythm' and timing of the instructions apparently impact upon the speed of the lift. So when CC says "we're going ready, steady, lift on lift" the timing of the phrase provides for the ability to 'lift on lift'. It might also be noted that 'the lift' glosses two component parts – the lift itself, and the holding of the stretcher at an appropriate height 'just about high enough' – and so the spatio-tem-

poral structuring of the lift is built in to and accomplished in and across the instruction and the lifting in which what 'just about high enough' is discovered as an object and product of lifting's work.

Any actual in situ accomplishment of the coordinated lift figures as another miraculously mundane accomplishment of members' practices: the lift just comes off in the way that it does. Additionally, it does not, quite, seem right to describe the lifts and lowers as a straightforwardly paired set of actions as found in other instances of instruction-response sequence. Lifting on 'lift' appears closer to the concerted activity of clapping along with a metronome or, indeed, dancing or group singing. As Garfinkel (2002) observes, to separate out the metronome and the clap is to confound the action. On the other hand, to insist that the lift or lower (or clap, or step, or key change) simply gets done 'through rhythm' is not to say much at all. The timing of the lift happens at just the place where it can happen, which is to say the timing of the lift is accountable via – is built in to – the formatting of the instructions. A 'good lift', for all practical purposes, happens on lift and not at lift's prompt. The team are not reacting. What is clear, at least in this example, is that the instructions were practically adequate for that task as realised through the lift being completed on time, and confirmed through the organisation of the lower. We might, then, suggest that in this coordinated doing the category device 'team' is both produced and available to its staff. Seamless.

This, of course, is not to say that 'bad lifts' do not happen. It is worth noting that I have seen very few 'bad lifts' in four years with the team, and all of them during training exercises. As noted above, of what a 'bad lift' consists is oriented to the perspective and safety of the casualty. In training scenarios I have observed – and experienced, as casualty – what might be called 'fast lifts' by novices. Across these cases, it seems that when the instruction is delivered quickly, and particularly when the lift instruction is formulated as "one, two, three, lift", a quick lift will follow. Being raised rapidly from the ground when you have no control over what happens to you can be a little disconcerting.

Returning to the training scenario at hand, what might be called a 'mis-cued' lift occurs after a brief rest is taken. Whilst CC coordinated the first lift in delegating responsibilities to team members who, in the doing of these tasks, have an equal and shared categorial status, in what follows we see how different locations around the stretcher, and particularly the position at the head of stretcher, is highly relevant for the coordination of further lifts and lowers away from the cas-site. In other words, the 'lift's work' is sequential and categorially ordered in and through the very intersection of 'turn-generated categories' and 'category-generated turns' (Watson 2015) as well as what I call 'locatively-generated categories'. As described below, this offers the possibility of moving forward with Lena Jayussi's (1984:36) earlier observations regarding the generative character of places and their contexted particulars.

3.3. Good enough lifts, turn-allocation, and locatively-generated categories

The lifting of the stretcher takes place within an ongoing course of activity organised around evacuating the casualty from the scene. The work of carrying the stretcher – interspersed as it is with lowers and lifts – relies upon categorisational

practices for the organisation of that work. As briefly introduced above, the coordination of activities around the stretcher is done in orientation to the casualty/stretcher itself and, primarily, in relation to the 'head' and 'feet' of casualty which are themselves oriented to the terrain. For reasons primarily relating to comfort and the circulation of blood, it is important that the casualty is either level or 'head up'. The physical handling of the stretcher might thus be said to be handled linguistically. The 'stretcher' forms what might be called a physical categorisation device in itself, with a collection of (spatial) categories, and emergent 'rules of application' for the relevancy of those categories. So whilst categories of 'head' and 'feet' are mapped from the body of the casualty to the stretcher and its physical design, the spatial contexted particulars are also generative for the mapping and ordering of the activities of the team as what Garfinkel (2002) called 'oriented objects'. The stretcher is, thus, made a constantly spatially-oriented and spatially-orienting object.

In the next scene (Fig. 5) we see the attempted organisation of the lift by the member positioned at the head of the stretcher ('Rob'). The significance of the 'head of stretcher' category is a formal professional designation relating to a standard procedure that the member at the head will 'call the lift' – they can see all the other members around the stretcher as well as monitoring the casualty. The categorial designation for the calling of the lift is purely locative: whoever is in that position will be expected to take, or be given, command of the lift. In this sense – as least as far as the formal procedure goes – the issuing of the lift instructions is, by turns, what we might call a locatively-generated category-bound activity, as well as a category-generated turn (Watson 2015).

Figure 5: Miscued 'good' lift

The excerpt begins shortly after the team member in the white helmet, Chris, positioned at the side of the stretcher, has 'taken charge' of the situation by issuing the instruction for lowering the stretcher in order to take a rest. It is in an awkward position where the corner of the steps prevents it from being placed fully on the

floor. After a short time, the team begin organising for the next lift and to move off again. The beginning of the lift phase is marked by some competition for the floor and for the control of the lift sequence. It begins with an "OK" from Rob at the head of the stretcher position. There is then a second "OK" from another team member, before Rob attempts to control the floor and begin the lift proper with a more explicit "on me". The 'on me', issued as it is from the 'head of stretcher' position, is hearable as a self-selection for projecting the next activity-turn: the issuing of the lift instructions.

Following the 'on me', Chris continues to produce elements of the institutionally preferred sequence of the lift with a turn checking if anyone is not ready at the start of the sequence (Fig. 5, panel 1). This is a standard turn, designed specifically to disprefer a response and is usually issued by the 'head of stretcher' member prior to giving the instructions for the lift/lower. If silence follows then the lift can commence, but in this instance there is some 'faff' going on at the end of the stretcher concerning a strap and its positioning (Fig. 5, panel 2; straps are for carrying in certain occasions but can also form a trip hazard). It is possible that, given his location on the stretcher, it is the faffing with the strap that occasions Chris to issue the "is anyone not ready?" turn, although it might also be read – given that he had previously issued the command for lower from the side position – as displaying seniority in the taking control of the situation (indeed, Chris is the most senior member of the stretcher party).

Once the strap is secured, Rob then resumes control of the lift process in full this time, re-stating the readiness question and offering, as we saw above, the pre-figuring of the command-to-come (Fig. 5, panel 3). In this occasion, the pre-figuring is treated *as* the instruction and the team lift on the pre-formulation of 'lift'. A 'good' lift is produced at the 'wrong' time (Fig. 5, panel 5). Still, the lift *is* 'good': that is, the lift was not dangerous, uneven, or too fast. In and through the shared laughter, and through Rob continuing to produce the countdown to the lift, the mis-cued lift is treated as a trivial matter yet also recognised and topicalised as a 'mistake' (Fig. 5, panel 6).

In the following excerpts (Fig. 6 and 7), the team are preparing to move the stretcher around another series of a number of awkward corners. The first stage (Fig. 6) concerns the lifting of the stretcher, whilst also arranging team members in such a way that the stretcher can be passed, not carried, up and around the awkward corner: a manoeuvre referred to as 'hand-over-hand'.

In this case, the Party Leader (PL) is in full control of the scenario, which has to do both with seniority and, perhaps, the awkwardness of the positioning meaning there is no clear 'head of stretcher' to whom control can be delegated (Fig. 6, panel 1). Indeed, the following sequence demonstrates a different sort of 'control' over the actions of the team and formulation of the lift itself. PL begins the coordination of the lift phase not via the formalised calls seen in the previous excerpts, but through closely monitoring and directing the attention of specific team members: the occasioned by the 'faffing' with a strap (Fig. 6, panels 2, 3) where the team member in question is tapped on the shoulder (Fig. 6, panel 2) and the second by a member asking the casualty if they are "good" (Fig. 6, panel 4). The joke regarding ignoring the casualty is responded to by the team with joint laughter, over which PL quickly gives a compressed formulation (relative to the other cases) and the lift is performed.

Figure 6: Another 'good' lift

To continue into the hand-over-hand phase (Fig. 7), team members must organise themselves such that there are always members ahead of the stretcher to pass it to. As made clear in the instructions issued by PL (Fig. 7, panel 1), the solution is that once the stretcher has passed your hands, you must 'peel out up to the head'.

Figure 7: Coordinating hand-over-hand

The timing of the moving of the team members must be coordinated with the movement of the stretcher. Sometimes this is a simple matter of walking around the stretcher; at other times, as in this training scenario, it might require scrambling up

steep banks to get 'to the head' (Fig. 7, panel 2 and 3). It is awkward and requires some negotiation of 'firsts' and 'seconds' in terms of moving on the muddy bank (Fig. 7, panel 1). Note again that 'feet and 'head' are central locative categories that orient the stretcher in the landscape – 'the head' is the 'front' in this instance because the stretcher is being carried up hill – as well as the team's movements around it. The execution of the 'hand-over-hand' passing the stretcher relies upon and produces the dynamic populating of the spatial and locative categories of 'head' and 'feet' and 'side' with tied actions of 'passing' and 'receiving' whilst 'spare' members are involved in moving to the head. In Fig. 7, for example, we see Rob move from 'feet' (Fig. 7, panel 1) to 'head' (Fig. 7, panel 4). The operation of the hand-to-hand process is akin to the embodied sequential-categorial order of the formatted queue, yet has a more dynamic, 'rolling' rather than step-wise, mobile order.

The spatial category 'head', when combined with 'front', selects the member as the suitable person to make the questioning and assessment as to the walkability of the upcoming terrain (Fig. 7, panel 4). The turn-taking here between PL and the front of the stretcher displays both the perceptual availability of the terrain for those at the head, and the decision making being done by PL. The decision to "have a little walk" indexes the assessment that the terrain poses no additional difficulties. This is followed by an instruction to those at the "downhill left side" position to keep the stretcher level (Fig. 7, panel 5). Note, again, that the locative category selects those members who are to act on the instruction. Some difficulties with the organisation of bodies continues (verbalised through the "oop sorry") and the phase ends with Rob telling the two members ahead of him in the hand-over-hand chain to move up as the stretcher is being walked (Fig. 7, panel 6). Again, these are not necessarily specialised tasks, but are accomplished and allocated in situ in category-relevant ways. Something more of this work is described further in the next section relating to the occasioned verbalisation and categorisation of the terrain.

3.4. Verbalising landscape in the carry off's work

Just as the lifting and lowering of the stretcher gets done within the wider sequential-categorial landscape of the organisation of the carry off and the team's structure and activities, the evacuation takes place within an physical landscape that is, in turn, categorisable, which is to say perceivable, in different ways relevant for the task at hand (see also Hester/Francis 2003; Smith 2019). To be clear, beyond the lifts and lowers, carrying the stretcher is an awkward task. The Bell stretcher alone weighs around 27kg, then there is the casualty, additional insulation and any medical equipment, such as Entonox or oxygen bottles. Up to eight team members will have to fit themselves around the stretcher, and walking is awkward – pacing and not stepping on the member in front's foot, in particular – even on open ground. Visibility is limited for all but those at the front of the stretcher.

In the following section, I describe how the movement of the stretcher occurs within a landscape that is 'talked in to relevancy' in and through the constant communication between the team, and how the movements of the team and stretcher do not take place *within* a landscape but, rather, *with* it. What that 'with' consists of is observable in the handling of the stretcher. The landscape is 'the stretcher's landscape', as occasioned in and through categories and devices accomplished-in-use in the course of the carry off's work.

Figure 8: Verbalising terrain

As with the organisation of the lift, the first turns in the sequence mark and draw attention to the next activity – in this case 'moving off'. Again we see how instructional turns are taken by team members who are relatively more senior than the present congregation and, whilst one is close by and one is on the stretcher, neither are 'at the head' (Fig. 8, panel 1). Following the coordination between the stretcher members, PL, as before, formulates the broader trajectory for the team and the stretcher and decides that the terrain is 'walkable' (this is also communicated over radio by another party member (Fig. 8, panel 2)). On moving off, there is a minimal 'response cry' from Rob at the head of the stretcher, rendering the terrain as relevant and accountable, and, specifically, as "slippy". The descriptor animates the terrain in a highly specific way for those that follow. At this point, however, the members toward the rear of the stretcher are not encountering the 'slippy' area but are, instead, concerned with manoeuvring around some other object on the right-hand side, requiring that the 'front' members move slower to "give people a chance to get round" it (Fig. 8, panel 3). Here the request "slower" from the member toward the rear of the stretcher is issued and heard as relating to the relative paces of the categories 'front' and 'back'. In this sense, whilst the stretcher party act as a whole, they pass through the terrain sequentially, with the 'front', 'side', and 'rear' members encountering different difficulties at different times. The communication between members is designed to manage this collective, differentiated, mobility. As the stretcher movement progresses, PL confirms a specific, rather than general (as in Fig. 8, panel 2), destination for the stretcher (Fig. 8, panel 5) which is responded to by a team member on the front left-hand side instructing that the party should "keep over to the left" and the member at the head checking in that the pace is good, presumably inquiring as to the projected pace from that point to the destination.

Something similar occurs with the encounter of the "big rock on the right-hand side" (Fig. 8, panel 4). There are repeated verbalisations of the relevancy of the

rock, passed from the front down the right-hand side of stretcher party. In a manner similar to that shown in studies of driving there is something like a perceptual 'division of labour' in operation here, as seen between driver and passenger(s). As noted above, however, the distinction is that stretcher party members pass the rock at different points in the trajectory of the stretcher, in a way defined by their position on it. This is clearly seen in the final stage of the excerpt (Fig. 8, panel 6). As the stretcher continues forward, the member on the left directs them to move a little bit further to the left. Rob, at the head of the stretcher issues a 'strain grunt' (Keevallik/Ogden 2020) which is accountably observed and immediately topicalised by the members behind him who issue, in turn, warnings relating to the 'big step up' that the strain grunt indexes and will be reached, in turn, by them.

Here we have seen something of members' producing and orienting to activities and context as a gestalt contexture. The terrain is accountable both in terms of the gross decisions between 'walking' or 'hand-over-hand' as 'culturally-based' (Watson 1999:52), occasioned action-categories, and the fine grained topicalisation of various aspects of the landscape that require attention, at different times, as they are encountered and passed by the members of the stretcher party. In just this way, and in just this instance, 'hand-over-hand' is indexical to a gestalt contexture of location and the activities that are to be done there, organised, as they are, in the categorial ways described above: locatively-generated in relation to the oriented and orientating stretcher. The terrain is thus jointly accomplished as the landscape in which to perform activities of lifting, lowering, walking or hand-over-hand, but also occasions those activities. As remarked above, the landscape is accomplished as the 'stretcher's landscape' in and through the work of the carry off.

4. Conclusion

This article has described something of the ways in which human-assisted mobility is organised in and as the context of mountain rescue work. In particular it has aimed to draw out how instructed and situated actions are categorially organised both in terms of relevant institutional categories of the team but also, more significantly, in and through occasioned, context-specific, locatively-generated and spatial-categorisations oriented to the stretcher and verbalisations of landscape features. The character of the division of labour within mountain rescue evacuations – at least in the less technical practices described herein – thus forms a perspicuous setting for the further elucidation of the situated accomplishment of the 'categorial technologies' (Fitzgerald et al. 2017) beyond narrower concerns with person description. Such categorisation practices as those described above appear to provide one way to advance ethnomethodological inquires into the actual, rather than theoretical, organisation of gestalt contexture as a 'live' and 'dynamic', 'kaleidoscopic whole' (Watson 2015). Indeed, a key significance here is avoiding the pitfalls of separating interaction from context and or the environment in which interactions are considered to take place 'within'. Occasioned categorisations of persons and specific locations are mutually elaborative, and their intersection, as calibrated within specific activities, is a pivotal yet relatively under examined aspect of the members' 'live apparatus' for the organisation of routine and specialised tasks. Importantly, it seems that locatively-generated categories are not only 'yielded by the setting' (Garfinkel 2002; Watson 2015) in a general sense, but are tied to specific 'parts with names' of an

assembled scene (Sacks 1995[I]; Smith 2020). In this way, such categories constitute the setting in highly context specific ways that, in this case, orient to the spatial orientation of the stretcher and casualty. It seems fair to assume that other situations and activities are also organised in and through such locatively-generated categories, devices, and their locally produced 'rules of application'.

In the work of the stretcher carry, we see that the categories are generated in relation to positions around the stretcher which can be filled by any member. The lifting of the stretcher is, as a structured yet shifting whole, organised in terms of distinct yet interrelated phases that orient the attention of the members around the stretcher to the lifting of the stretcher. This is describable as a formal sequential structure and can be specified in a manual. What is perhaps missing from such a formulation is a sense of how that sequential structure is staffed in Garfinkel's (2002) sense. That question is, in part, answerable in relation to the spatial and locative categories which are both generated by members position in relation to the stretcher but also in the methods that are produced and found at the scene for the lift's organisation. In the case of this training exercise, designed as it was for relatively new recruits, the activities are of an order that 'anyone can do them'. What then to say of those concerns outlined at the beginning of the paper? What recommendations to make when it seems that in this particular instance of quasi-professional human assisted mobility formalised instructions are perhaps not required for the execution of a 'good lift'? What seems clear is that whilst a 'good lift' can be accomplished so long as the communication is clear (as with the lift in Fig. 6), overlapping claims for the floor during the initial phases of the lift (as seen in Fig. 5), where it seems locatively-generated categories (i.e. 'head of stretcher') compete with others from the 'team' device relating to seniority (of either experience or rank), are sources for potentially 'bad lifts'. In a similar sense, whilst the formulation of the lift/lower instructions themselves can seemingly be done in a variety of ways, deviation from them produces at least the potential for confusion (as observed in Fig. 1). As noted above, whoever gives the instruction, the rhythm of the issued instructions are relevant to the timing and speed of the lift/lower. The lift instructions seem to be treated as the 'metronome' for the lift and so members need to be aware of the prosody of their instructing. The issuing of fixed instructions each next first time seems to provide for some reduction of potential confusion, in an environment where the allocation of who gives the instruction remains dynamic and may have to be decided in situ. What is clear throughout the excerpts and, indeed, the wider set of materials that inform this article (see also Smith 2020), is the extent to which the team are constantly monitoring and checking in with each other, and directly topicalising their own practices on the move. Over and above the concern with the form of the instructions for the lift/lower, perhaps the centrally instructional matters for the team are the ways in which 'teamwork' is visibly accomplished in the various phases of the carry off described herein.

In moving toward a conclusion, we might note that 'team' has operated in this article as an unexamined context for the activities. These activities are the 'team's activities', yes, but we might also consider how producing the coordination of these movements in formalised ways finds that 'team' is locally, contingently, and ongoingly produced and oriented to as an omni-relevant device; a device displayed by, and informing, generic activities of 'lifting', 'lowering', 'walking', 'carrying' in highly specific, mountain rescue relevant ways. The doings of the team do not 'belong' to

the team in a general ethnographic sense (see Moerman 1974) but are the team-in-action. So, even though the lifts, carries, and handling of the stretcher can be produced in generic ways – perhaps attending to little more than health and safety guidelines for lifting heavy objects – an active members' inquiry into just how those practices should get done in any given context, provides for a perspicuous setting for the team members to produce, for another next first time, their membership of the team and the locally produced work of mountain rescue as *their* work.

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