

Touch in establishing and sustaining contact in civilian crisis management training

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English abstract

This study examines trainees in a civilian crisis management training course and their use of touch as a resource to build and maintain interactional space during a traffic accident simulation exercise. The trainees produce non-procedural touches on an injured driver 1) to establish and sustain contact, and 2) to signal co-presence and involvement while accomplishing parallel engagements. The data consists of video recordings and is analyzed with ethnomethodological conversation analysis. This paper demonstrates the construction and reconfiguration of interactional space through embodied means, addressing a literature gap surrounding non-procedural touch between adults in institutional environments. The findings outline the role of touch in communicating reciprocity during moments of disengagement and when participants do not share mutual gaze. The analysis also illustrates how participants coordinate touch and body torque to signal their orientation and involvement while participating in several trajectories of action.

Keywords: touch – institutional interaction – civilian crisis management – interactional space – communicative touch – corporeality.

German abstract

Diese Studie untersucht Teilnehmende eines zivilen Krisenmanagementtrainings und deren Einsatz von Berührung als Ressource zur Aufbau und Aufrechterhaltung eines Interaktionsraums während einer Verkehrsunfall-Simulation. Die Teilnehmenden produzieren nicht-prozedurale Berührungen am verletzten Fahrer, 1) um Kontakt herzustellen und aufrechtzuerhalten, und 2) um Ko-Präsenz und Involviertheit anzuzeigen, während sie parallele Aktivitäten ausführen. Das Datenmaterial besteht aus Videoaufnahmen und wird mit ethnomethodologischer Konversationsanalyse ausgewertet. Der Beitrag zeigt die Konstruktion und Rekonfiguration von interaktionalem Raum durch verkörperte Mittel auf und adressiert eine Forschungslücke in Bezug auf nicht-prozedurale Berührungen zwischen Erwachsenen in institutionellen Kontexten. Die Ergebnisse verdeutlichen die Rolle von Berührung bei der Kommunikation von Rezipienz in Momenten des Disengagements sowie in Situationen, in denen die Beteiligten keinen wechselseitigen Blickkontakt teilen. Die Analyse illustriert zudem, wie die Teilnehmenden Berührung und Körperdrehung (body torque) koordinieren, um ihre Orientierung und Involviertheit anzuzeigen, während sie an mehreren Handlungstrajektorien gleichzeitig beteiligt sind.

Keywords: Berührung – institutionelle Interaktion – ziviles Krisenmanagement – Interaktionsraum – kommunikative Berührung – Körperlichkeit.



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1. Introduction

This article shows how trainees in a civilian crisis management training course utilize non-procedural touch in interaction with a (simulated) injured driver while carrying out a traffic accident simulation exercise. The term 'non-procedural' refers to the communicative rather than medical function of the haptic action (e.g. Buono et al. 2025; Guo et al. 2020; Watson 1972, 1975). The trainees employ touch in their construction of interactional space (Mondada 2009) which facilitates the trainee's accomplishment of the team's task – attending to the driver. The data comes from a civilian crisis management training course: Hostile Environment Awareness Training (HEAT). Among other crucial topics related to deployment in crisis areas, the HEAT course trains its participants in basic first-aid training. This study focuses on moments of haptic contact that differ from procedural touches such as the checking of a person's body for injury or the manual support of a person's neck and head. This paper thus adds to the limited literature on touch between non-romantically involved adults and non-procedural touch in institutional settings. Overall, the analysis reveals the role of touch within the construction and maintenance of an interactional space, but it also provides answers to the following questions:

- How do trainees use touch to establish and sustain contact with the driver?
- How do trainees signal their co-presence and involvement with the driver while accomplishing parallel engagements?

Interaction research has examined crisis- and emergency-related work across diverse contexts, including civilian and military crisis management training (Rautiainen 2025; Puputti/Rautiainen 2025; Kamunen/Rautiainen 2024; Haddington et al. 2022; Kamunen et al. 2022; Rautiainen et al. 2022), emergency calls (e.g. Haddington/Stokoe 2023; Kevoe-Feldman/Iversen 2022; Sikveland et al. 2022; Sikveland 2019; Riou et al. 2018; Riou et al. 2017; Svennevig 2012; Drew/Walker 2010), mass casualty incident training (Pitsch/Krug 2023), paramedic emergency drills (Deppermann 2014), and emergency care simulations (Tsuchiya et al. 2022). These studies have focused on decision-making, communication practices, and the coordination of joint activities. The current study addresses a gap in the literature by analyzing the use of touch in a (simulated) emergency context, providing novel insight into the role of tactile and haptic actions in institutional interaction.

The study is conducted with ethnomethodological conversation analysis (EMCA; Haddington et al. 2024; Sidnell/Stivers 2012; Nishizaka/Hayano 2025; Maynard/Clayman 1991). Unmotivated looking (Sacks 1984) led to the discovery of the trainees' utilization of touch as a resource in shaping interactional space.

Although the trainees carry out the simulated exercise in a safe environment with no life-threatening consequences, their ways of doing and *being-with* (Goffman 1972) their co-participants are no less authentic. The training prepares the trainees for their professional work in civilian crisis management, and thus the data exhibits genuine interactions of learners within their professional sphere (see Rautiainen 2025; Arminen et al. 2014). Despite the professional and simulated environment, the participants' own actions convey their presence in a socio-material and affective world (Cekaite 2020; Goffman 1963, 1983).

2. Background

This section provides an overview of the conceptual and theoretical foundations of the analysis, discussing prior research on interactional spaces and touch.

2.1 Interactional space

Participation in social interaction is dependent on the construction and maintenance of interactional space (Cekaite 2016; Mondada 2009), which enables participants to provide and gain access to each other's interactional conduct, acting as the basis for joint action (Haddington/Oittinen 2022). Grounded in and influenced by the works of Goffman (1972), Kendon (1990), and Goodwin (2000), Mondada's conceptualization of interactional space (2009; 2013) regards a space shared by participants engaged in interaction who have access to mutually shared social conduct (Haddington/Oittinen 2022). Interactional space is contingent on the coordination of bodies-in-motion (Merleau-Ponty 1962), and therefore, it is dynamic, continuously monitored and shaped *in situ* by the participants who create it as a shared practical achievement (Mondada 2009; D'Antoni et al. 2022; Cekaite 2016). Participants use talk, body posture, orientation, gaze, and gestures to build and manage their interactional space (Goodwin/Goodwin 2004; Mondada 2009) and to maintain the reciprocity and availability which it provides.

How people establish contact with each other in the beginning of encounters occurs through openings. Studies of encounters show participants employing embodied resources, such as bodily orientation, gaze, gestures, prior to verbal or vocal turns (e.g. Sacks 1992; Kendon/Ferber 1973; Mondada 2009; De Stefani/Mondada 2010, 2018; Auer 2020). Gaze, in particular, is a crucial component of beginnings of encounters. In his study of greetings, Kendon (1990) notes how participants look at one another before exchanging verbal greetings. This echoes Goffman's (1964) observations wherein individuals exchange glances before further interaction. Similarly, Mondada (2009:1977) describes: "before beginning to speak, participants achieve the mutual orientation of their bodies and of their gaze". Along the course of their interaction, participants seek to remain in each other's perceptual range (Gibson 1979; Hutchby 2001) where they can hear, see, and sense each other. Their access to this range is not always equal, and depending on the arrangement or proximity of participants, or their material environment, they may have to navigate asymmetries and different affordances (see Haddington/Oittinen 2022). Maintaining orientation thus requires varying levels of work from participants. For example, Haddington and Oittinen (2022) illustrate interaction inside a car, where a backseat

passenger shifts their bodily orientation by leaning forward to make themselves available for interaction with a front seat passenger. The back seat participant also utilizes hand-on-shoulder touch to gain and direct the front seat passenger's attention. In a similar vein, Brown and Hübscher (2022) discuss participants' preference (in intimate interactions) to be on the same "physical plane" (410), where both participants either sit or stand, for example. Participants may lean forward or even touch their co-participant to decrease the physical distance between them (Brown/Hübscher 2022; Guerrero/Floyd 2006). Research has shown that participants intricately design their actions in ways that are tailored to their recipient or interlocutor. The management of interactional space becomes even more complex when participants are involved in multiple activities. Participants must therefore balance and distribute their multimodal resources according to various interactional demands (Haddington et al. 2014). Participants may shift their posture, accomplishing a body torque wherein they display their involvement in multiple spaces through diverging orientations of body sectors (Schegloff 1998).

In interaction research, a focused exploration of the role of touch in navigating the interactional space is limited (see, however, Cekaite 2016). The present study offers novel findings pertaining to this focus. The next section provides an overview of the findings regarding touch in social interaction.

2.2 Touch as an interactional resource

Participants use various multimodal resources in their interaction with each other, interacting within inter-kinesthetic fields that include the presences and movements of others (Meyer et al. 2017). Among these resources, physical touch serves as a primordial medium for communication and connection (Goodwin/Cekaite 2018; Katila 2018; Montagu 1971). Interactional research has examined participants' use of touch as a crucial resource for communicating social meanings and managing social relations (Cekaite 2020). Touch has often been conceptualized within two categories, procedural (or instrumental) and non-procedural (or communicative) touch (e.g. Guo et al. 2020).

Interactional and sociological studies have focused greatly on procedural touch in healthcare settings, as these task-oriented touches are a general feature of medical activities. For example, these touches feature in common caring tasks in nursing (De Augustinis et al. 1963; Goodykoontz 1977). Interaction analysts have examined touch between medical/healthcare professionals and their patients, exploring the features of procedural touch (e.g. Keel/Caviglia 2023; Kuroshima 2020; Merlino 2020; Raia et al. 2020; Greco et al. 2019; McArthur 2019; Heath/Luff 2013; Nishizaka 2007, 2011).

Non-procedural touch has been documented in medical, educational, and everyday contexts. For example, hugs, strokes, and pats (e.g. Weiss 1986) serve a communicative, interpersonal purpose. These types of touches have been linked to comforting, relational, and affective qualities in interaction (Katila et al. 2024; Burdelski 2020; Guo et al. 2020; Raia et al. 2020; M. H. Goodwin 2017). Communicative touch is also used to achieve an interactional purpose, such as referring to something (Nishizaka 2011), greeting, leaving an interaction, making requests or refusals (Raudaskoski 2020), gaining a co-participant's attention (Merlino 2020), and guiding a co-participant's actions (Katila et al. 2024; Guo et al. 2020; Cekaite 2010,

2016). Given the highly interpersonal nature of touch, touch givers must manage socio-cultural habits and norms and consider whether their physical contact is culturally appropriate (see Heinonen/Tainio 2023; Keränen/Uitto 2023; Keevallik 2020; Suvilehto 2018). Kosurko and Webb (2024) show how gentle hand-on-hand touch is used to engage non-responsive participants into a shared activity. Similarly, Eilittä (2024) studies childrens' summons practices as complex multimodal gestalts consisting of various embodied practices together with verbal turns. Children are seen coordinating verbal summonses with embodied actions including gaze, bodily orientation, movement, and touch to establish joint attention (Eilittä 2024). Cekaite (2016) describes how sustained touch organizes the participation framework and creates an operative framework of mutual attention. It becomes a "corporeal anchor" signaling touch-giver's bodily co-presence (Cekaite 2016:35). Cekaite (2016) also demonstrates the use of touch in multiactivity situations, where participants use touch alongside body posture, orientation, and talk to project their future attention, thus managing multiple (overlapping) engagements. The dynamic and fluid nature of touch must be acknowledged – touch often overlaps or swiftly transitions from one function to another (Katila et al. 2024; Raia et al. 2020). The intelligibility of touch, like all interaction, is tied to the time, place, and context of its occurrence (Maynard 2013).

There is a lack of research on communicative touch between adults who are not intimately involved or are interacting in an institutional context (see, however, Cekaite/Heller 2024). The present study addresses this gap by illustrating non-procedural touches in an institutional environment, one where medical, procedural touches are common, given they are a part of general first-aid (palpating the injured, checking their pulse, and so on). Therefore it is worthwhile to also examine the interactional context of communicative touches, which do not stem from the trainees' institutional training, but emerge *in situ* based on the participants' conduct.

3. Data and method

This study features data from two training courses for civilian crisis management. These Hostile Environment Awareness Training courses (HEAT; Puputti et al. 2024) prepare trainees from various fields before they are deployed to high-risk areas. The course participants come from a variety of professional backgrounds, including policing, emergency response, and humanitarian aid. Each implementation of the course includes four teams of five to six trainees, totalling eight teams that were recorded for this study. The course includes lectures on key safety topics as well as simulated training exercises where the trainees practice various skills related to their work in the crisis areas. The data comes from a corpus of 100 hours of video recordings. The trainees have given their informed consent for the recordings to be used for research purposes.

This study focuses on recordings of eight teams working through the final day of the course. One of their simulated exercises features a road traffic accident scenario, in which the team is alerted of an accident involving locals and European Union (EU) personnel. In the scenario, a vehicle driven by EU personnel has hit a local woman. The driver has suffered some kind of medical attack prior to the collision. An actor portrays the driver, and although she has a general script that she

follows, her interaction builds *in situ* with the participants around her. The passenger has left the vehicle presumably to search for help. The team arrives at the destination and is tasked with inquiring into what has happened. They are expected to provide aid to the parties involved in the accident, but detailed instructions are not given, and the teams must manage the situation without further guidance. This generally involves attending to and caring for the injured driver of the vehicle and the person who has been hit. Local people (portrayed by actors in the exercise) also arrive at the scene to see what has happened. The teams must report their knowledge via radio and request more help. Each team carries out the simulation twice, as they are given a second opportunity to practice what they would perhaps prefer to do differently.

Simulations and role-play are often used in training in institutional settings. They provide trainees with a safe space to practice various moves in various encounters. Actual scenarios are used as the basis for the simulated exercises, adding to the 'real-ness' (see Rautiainen 2022). The simulated nature of the interaction does not automatically take away from the trainees' authentic orientation toward their encounters (see Stokoe 2013; Rautiainen 2022). As analysts, our position is not to judge the authenticity of participants' actions, rather, we examine their conduct as genuine interaction from a professional training environment.

This study is rooted in ethnomethodological conversation analysis (Garfinkel 1967; Sidnell/Stivers 2012; Eilittä et al. 2023). In line with this mentality, meaning making occurs within contextual configurations and through multiple overlaying resources (Cekaite 2020; Goodwin, C. 2000). The data is examined moment-by-moment from the participants' own perspectives to observe how they make sense of the temporally unfolding interaction (e.g. Sacks et al. 1974; Nishizaka/Hayano 2025). The use of touch constitutes a part of practical action and interaction order (Cekaite 2020). EMCA enables the detailed examination of the situated use of touch, allowing the analyst to closely inspect the type, location, duration, function, and interactional context of touch (Cekaite 2016). Although as analysts we cannot determine for sure how a recipient experiences or senses touch (see, e.g., Jakonen 2024), we can speak based on how they respond through interaction and how the touch-giver visibly designs their haptic actions. The praxeological context and the unfolding of interaction conveys how participants orient to and interpret the touches they give or receive (Cekaite 2020). Transcripts utilize Jeffersonian conventions (2004) and Mondadian style for embodied actions (2018). Filtered images highlight key moments for illustrative variation.

4. Analysis

The analysis is organized in two sections, under two analytical focus points. The first section demonstrates how trainees use touch to construct an interactional space. This involves establishing contact with the driver, displaying engagement, and communicating reciprocity. The trainee must navigate the maintenance of interactional space when the driver displays disengagement. The second section focuses on the trainees' use of touch in signalling co-presence and involvement with the driver while participating in two courses of action and parallel engagements.

4.1 Establishing contact and indicating reciprocity

This section focuses on how the participants build a shared interactional space through the use of various multimodal resources, including touch. The analysis will demonstrate how the trainees establish contact with the driver and communicate the reciprocity of their talk to the driver.

The first excerpt (1) features trainees Matias (MAT) and Anita (ANI) and the driver (DRV) of the accident vehicle. The team has arrived at the instructed location and Matias and Anita approach the vehicle. The focus is on Matias, and the transcript will show his pre-opening work to gain access to the driver's space, his verbal greeting that he coordinates with touch, and the final achievement of joint engagement between him and the driver.

Excerpt (1): ((How are you))



Fig. 1

```

01      (0.4)
mat     >>walks up to DRV side of car-->
drv     >>holding chest with R hand-->
drv     >>leaning forward-->
drv     >>gaze down-->
02      (2.4)+(.)          α+(1.3)          +
mat     -->+knocks on DRV door +knocks on DRV window+
mat     αleans twd window-->
03      (2.2)@α+
ani     @walks up to passenger door-->
mat     -->α
mat     +opens DRV door
04      (1.3)$%
drv     -->$gazes left-->
drv     -->%leans back
    
```

```

05      (0.7)+@(.)$ (1.8)
    mat      +turns off car engine
    ani      -->@turns off car music
    drv      $gazes forward-->
06  MAT      h+i, $ #
    mat      +puts fingertips on DRV shoulder-->
    drv      $closes eyes-->>
    fig      #Fig.1
07      %(0.5)
    drv      %shifts torso left-->>
08      hfow are you?
    mat      fleans down and twd DRV-->
09  DRV      uhm I had rea+llyf bad chest pain,
    mat      -->+
    mat      -->f
10      (0.5)
11  MAT      you have [really bad chest pain?]

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Matias approaches the vehicle on the driver's side (line 1) to investigate what has happened. The driver is holding her chest with her right hand, leaning slightly forward and gazing down (line 1). Matias knocks on the driver's door (line 2) to summon her, i.e. to "establish joint participation" (Sikveland 2019:168; D'Antoni 2022; Pillet-Shore 2008). Summonses are attention-getting devices used by participants in attempts to establish contact in the opening phase of interaction (González-Martínez/Balantani 2024; Pillet-Shore 2008; Eilittä 2024). The driver remains unresponsive and does not orient to Matias' summons. She maintains a forward-leaning position, gazing downward and holding her chest. Matias knocks again, this time on the driver's window (line 2), upgrading his summons since the driver has not responded. He simultaneously leans toward the window. The driver still maintains her position and gaze, displaying disengagement. Meanwhile, Anita approaches the vehicle on the passenger side (line 3). Matias opens the driver's door (line 3), orienting to the driver's lack of response to his two summons as unusual and warranting manual action from himself. Still holding her chest, the driver leans back into her seat and turns her gaze left (line 4), now orienting to Matias' presence and thus responding to his summons. She does not move away or protest the opening of the door, thus treating Matias' actions as acceptable. Upon opening the door, Matias and Anita proceed to turn off the engine and radio to ensure safety and hearability (line 5), orienting to the driver as incapable of doing these actions herself.

After, Matias remains in the physical proximity of the driver. The driver shifts her gaze back to facing forward, away from Matias, and at this point, the two do not share mutual gaze. Gaze is a resource for pursuing response (Stivers/Rossano 2010) and common in the preparatory work of (pre-)openings (Goffman 1963). Matias produces a first pair part *hi* (line 6), greeting the driver and summoning her into verbal interaction (Schegloff 1986). It is at this point that he also touches the driver by placing three fingertips gently on her shoulder, a bodily area that can be considered cross-culturally neutral (see Heinonen et al. 2020). (Fig.1). As the driver is facing away from Matias, we may presume that Matias orients to the lack of mutual gaze by using touch to communicate the reciprocity of his verbal greeting toward the driver. The temporal and sequential position of the touch conveys the participatory nature of the haptic action. The touch, together with talk, serves to summon the driver into interaction, upgrading Matias' greeting following the driver's prior non-

responses. The touch indicates reciprocity and the expectancy of a response. Matias initiates the construction of a shared interactional space with his verbal greeting and touch. The driver now responds by slightly turning her torso toward him (line 7). With her embodied response, the driver and Matias have collaboratively achieved an interactional space.

Matias does not wait for a verbal response greeting from the driver and produces an interrogative *how are you* while leaning in toward her (line 8). This can indicate Matias' task-focused orientation to the situation, with the team's assignment being the investigation of the accident and attending to injured individuals. Matias' leaning posture toward the driver enforces his embodied engagement in the interaction and full orientation toward his co-participant (Goodwin 1984). Instead of responding to Matias' greeting, the driver replies to his interrogative by describing her physical ailment (line 9). During this turn, Matias retracts his touch. The temporality of the touch indicates that Matias employed it to invite a response from the driver. Once the driver has responded verbally and ratified the establishment of contact, Matias ends his touch. Matias replies to the driver by repeating her statement as a candidate understanding (line 11).

The excerpt has shown the role of touch in the fine-grained coordination of joint attention and interactional space between a trainee and driver. Before the participants mutually engage, the trainee carries out interactional work to come into copresence with the driver. This includes approaching the driver in the vehicle and summoning her through several knocks on the door. Once the trainee has arrived to the physical space of the driver, he produces a verbal greeting coordinated together with a fingertip-shoulder touch on the driver. This displays the trainee's orientation to the lack of mutual gaze in the interaction, due to the driver's limited visual access caused by her forward posture in her seat. By touching her during his opening turn, the trainee focuses his verbal greeting toward the driver and invites a response. The touch also serves to signal the trainee's engagement in the interaction. Once the driver responds with a postural lean toward the trainee, an interactional space is established with the participants now mutually recognizing each other in their encounter. The trainee holds the touch for the duration of multiple turns, only retracting his hand once the driver begins her first verbal response. The interactional space is constructed and configured by the participants through touch, body posture, and talk.

Excerpt (2) focuses on Maisa's (MAI) interaction with the driver and how she establishes contact following a side activity. Prior to the excerpt, Maisa and her team have arrived at the scene, and she makes her way toward the vehicle. Not transcribed, the car radio is blaring loudly.

Excerpt (2): ((Hey hello))

```

01          □ (0.9) □
   drv      >>eyes closed-->>
   mai      □approaches □opens door
            car
02          (1.5)□
   mai      □crouches inside car-->
03          (1.4)
```

04 MAI a:h@ (0.3)+ #(0.3) @ (.)+
mai @gaze at DRV @gaze twd radio-->
mai +puts R hand +
fig on DRV midriff #fig.2



Fig. 2



Fig. 3

05 (0.7)
06 hey^a hello? ^a
mai ^aleans twd ^amanipulates radio buttons-->
dashboard
07 (1.0)
08 just gonna turn it,
09 (3.0) phuhh (.) mheh-ha^a,^a
mai -->^a
mai ^abacks out of car-->
10 (0.5)^a
mai ^agaze twd DRV-->
11 are you ok+ay?^a #
mai +puts R hand on DRV arm/chest area
mai -->^a
fig #fig.3
12 DRV yeah no+ I ha^a@d+so bad chest pai+n.
mai +moves hand to +retracts hand +fiddles
DRV shoulder thermal blanket
w/hands-->>
mai -->^a@gaze forward-->
drv %turns torso twd MAI-->
13 (0.7)%
drv -->%turns head twd MAI-->>
14 MAI chest@ pa+in.
mai -->^a@gaze twd DRV-->>
15 DRV mmm yeah,

The driver has her eyes closed as Maisa approaches the vehicle (line 1). Maisa immediately opens the car door and crouches inside, showing orientation to the situation as warranting this measure. Upon entering the interior of the vehicle, Maisa produces a non-verbal utterance *a:h* (line 4), reacting to the loud radio. During this utterance, Maisa gazes toward the driver, who still has her eyes closed. As a signal of her presence to the potentially unresponsive driver, Maisa places her right hand on the driver's midriff (line 4; Fig.2). Maisa's hand is open with her fingertips making contact with the driver. Maisa has now attempted to establish contact with the driver, but the driver remains unresponsive. Maisa orients to the loud radio with her gaze (line 4) and retracts her hand. She produces a verbal greeting *hey hello?* with rising intonation (line 6), her second attempt to establish contact. Simultaneously, she leans toward the dashboard and attempts to shut the radio (line 6), which she verbalizes (line 8). Maisa's greeting does not get a response from the driver. Some seconds pass as Maisa struggles with the dashboard, and she produces an outbreath and giggle, displaying her frustration and amusement at her own troubles (line 9). Maisa's orientation toward the driver is put on hold for the duration of the radio-related sequence. The two participants do not succeed in "full scale co-participation" (Goffman 1963:102) due to the driver's lack of response and Maisa's side activity. Maisa manages to turn off the radio and backs out of the car, remaining crouched in the doorway. Now, in a third attempt, Maisa shifts her full orientation toward the driver through gaze (line 10) and a verbal interrogative *are you okay* (line 11). The turn is accompanied by a touch, as Maisa places her right hand on the driver's upper arm and chest area (line 11; Fig.3). The touch occurs through an open palm, gently and calmly. It serves to indicate the driver as the recipient of Maisa's turn and displays expectancy of a response. The driver now responds to Maisa's question with a discourse marker *yeah no* followed by a troubles announcement

regarding her chest pain (line 12). Her response evidences shared engagement and joint attention between the two. After the discourse marker, Maisa moves her hand to the driver's shoulder (line 12). The shift in the touch points to the role of touch in the establishment of contact. By moving her hand, Maisa orients to the driver's verbal response and their accomplishment of interactional space, also signalling her upcoming retraction of the touch. The driver torques her upper body toward Maisa, displaying further engagement. As the driver continues her turn, Maisa retracts her hand and begins to fiddle with a thermal blanket that she may have to utilize (line 12).

The excerpt has shown how a trainee navigates the establishment of mutual attention and an interactional space while managing a side activity. While orienting to a troublesome radio, the trainee carries out a brief haptic touch on the driver's midriff in an attempt to initiate contact. However, the trainee shifts her orientation toward the radio, and mutual engagement has not occurred yet. After solving the issue of the radio, the trainee fully orients to the driver and coordinates a verbal interrogative with a gentle touch on the driver's upper body. With the driver's verbal response, the two engage in a "mutually ratified state of participation" (D'An-toni et al. 2022:298). The participants mutually construct their shared interactional space with touch, body posture, and talk.

Excerpt (3) features trainee Argo (ARG) and the injured driver (DRV). Argo has been by the driver's side for a couple of minutes, establishing contact with her and gathering information about the situation. The transcript continues after Argo has informed his team that there is another missing person to report, and he crouches back down to talk with the driver. We focus on Argo's use of touch to communicate reciprocity of his talk at a moment when there is a change in the driver's perceptual range.

Excerpt (3): ((Really soon))

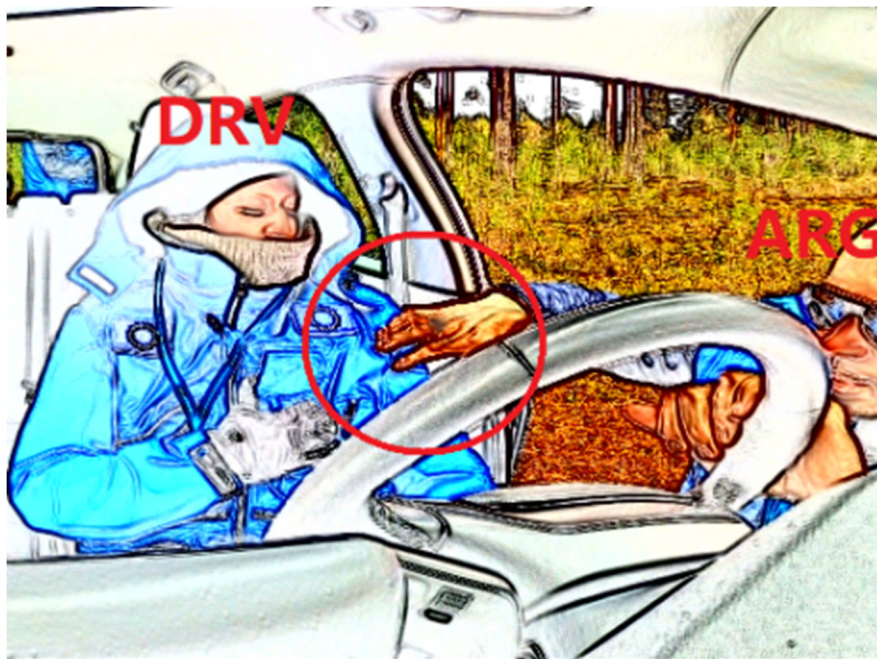


Fig. 5

01 ARG so you fee-\$ (.) you okay?
 drv >>leans back in seat-->>
 drv \$closes eyes-->>

02 (0.6)

03 DRV I feel re[ally bad.]
 04 ARG [okay (.) yæeah.]
 05 (0.4)+ #
 arg +puts fingertips on DRV shoulder-->
 fig #fig.5

06 uh we,
 07 (0.7)
 08 we're gonna hh+ h- #call for hem help uh@ really soon,
 arg -->+moves hand to DRV's elbow crook-->
 arg @gaze down-->>
 fig #fig. 6

09 if there anything changes u:h+ (.) let me know,
 arg -->+

10 if you start to feel@ (.) worse or better,
 arg -->@gaze twd DRV-->>

11 (0.5)
 12 any other pains beside the chest pain?
 13 (0.8)
 14 DRV no (.) chest pain.

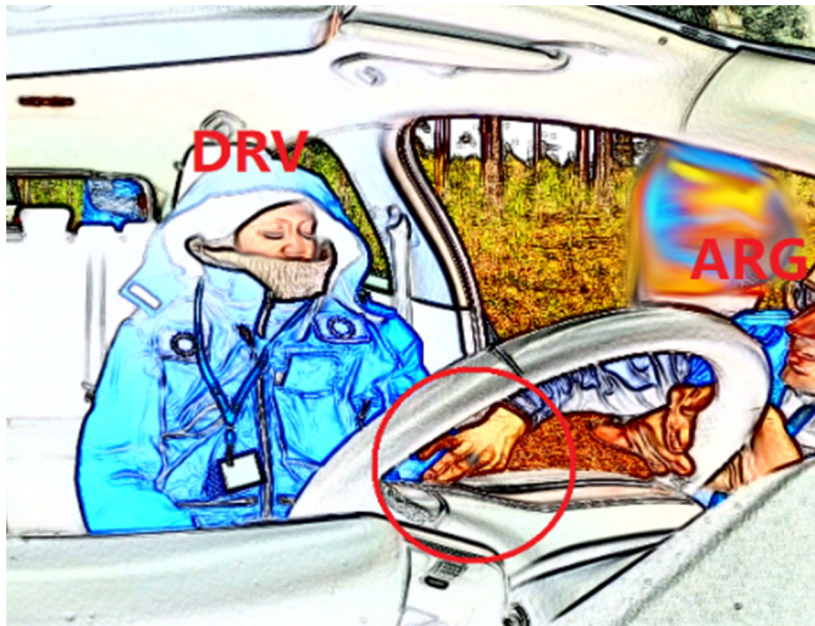


Fig. 6

Argo begins a turn resembling an assessment or an interrogative pertaining to the driver's condition, *so you fee-* (line 1), but he cuts off when the driver closes her eyes. The driver's action can be oriented to as a sign of worsening condition from the trainee's perspective. The driver keeps her eyes closed throughout the excerpt, leading to a sensory asymmetry between the participants. Argo continues by producing an interrogative to the driver: *you okay?* (line 1) as a response to her physical action. The driver replies with an assessment of her condition, describing her pain: *I feel really bad* (line 3). Before the driver has completed her turn, but at a moment when her turn's trajectory is projectable (see Endo et al. 2018:163), Argo produces

an overlapping affiliative response (line 4). Next, prior to his continuation, Argo places his fingertips on the driver's shoulder (line 5; Fig.5). He sustains the touch throughout his turn in which he informs the driver that his team will call for help soon (lines 6-8). The sequentiality and temporality of the touch, following the driver closing her eyes, points to Argo's use of it to maintain the interactional space when a visual connection is lost. Argo thus designs his interaction to accommodate the present sensorial asymmetry between him and the driver. Argo uses touch to enhance the driver's perceptual range, replacing mutual gaze with physical contact.

Continuing his turn, Argo repositions his hand from the driver's shoulder to her elbow crook to lightly hold her arm (line 8; Fig.6). During the turn, Argo proceeds to shift his gaze down, away from the driver (line 8), possibly during a word search (for "thinking face", see Bavelas/Chovil 2018). The two participants do not share mutual gaze, and Argo displays his engagement through touch. Maintaining the touch for the duration of his gaze shift configures the interactional space and enforces his ongoing involvement with the driver. Argo produces a request for the driver to inform him if her condition changes (lines 9-10). At line 9, Argo retracts his touch. During line 10, as Argo asks the driver if she has any other pain, he returns his gaze back toward her. The driver responds by stating that only her chest hurts (line 13).

The excerpt demonstrated how a trainee coordinates and distributes multimodal resources when his co-participant limits her perceptual range by closing her eyes and when the trainee himself withdraws his gaze. The ensuing lack of mutual gaze or vision affects the interactional space, which is then configured through touch. During his verbal turn, the trainee communicates the reciprocity of his talk and also conveys his attention and engagement in the interaction. The first touch occurs when the driver has closed her eyes, while the second touch occurs during the trainee's own gaze shift. The withdrawal of gaze can be an indicator of withdrawing from interaction or avoiding interaction (Goffman 1963), and as such, the trainee utilizes touch to uphold the interactional space.

The three examples show how participants employ touch in the construction and maintenance of interactional space. The first analytical question was: how do trainees use touch to establish contact with the driver and indicate reciprocity of their talk? The excerpts demonstrated that touch is used alongside verbal greetings when there is no mutual gaze between participants. The data showed that a verbal greeting without touch did not receive a response. Touch is also used to signal one's presence when entering the proximity of an individual who has their eyes closed. The temporality and sequentiality of the touches in the excerpts indicated that touch is used to seek a response from the driver. The touch-giver withdraws their touch when the co-participant responds with a turn at talk. The touch-giver accommodates for the lack of mutual gaze through touch, displaying a careful monitoring of their co-participant and designing their actions accordingly. When the touch-giver themselves withdraws their gaze, they then reconfigure the interactional space through touch to signal their continued engagement and co-presence to the driver. The excerpts illustrate how interactional spaces are actively shaped across the interaction with touch, body posture and movement, gaze, and talk. The trainees, in particular, make effort to maintain the space relevant for the ongoing interaction through proximity and touch. The driver, in comparison, maintains their physical position throughout the interaction, also displaying limited perceptual range.

4.2 Maintaining co-presence and involvement

This section focuses on how trainees use touch to reconfigure the already established interactional space with the driver while participating in several trajectories and parallel engagements. The analysis shows how the participants manage several courses of concurrent or consecutive action, and while doing so, they employ touch to convey and sustain co-presence and involvement in their interaction with the driver. The following excerpts include interaction following the trainees' initial contact with the driver.

Excerpt (4) includes Olli (OLL) and the injured driver (DRV). Having approached the vehicle, Olli is listening to the driver describe her pain. The excerpt continues from the driver's turn. The segment of interest begins after the driver announces that her colleague is missing, onwards from line 3.

Excerpt (4): ((Where he went))

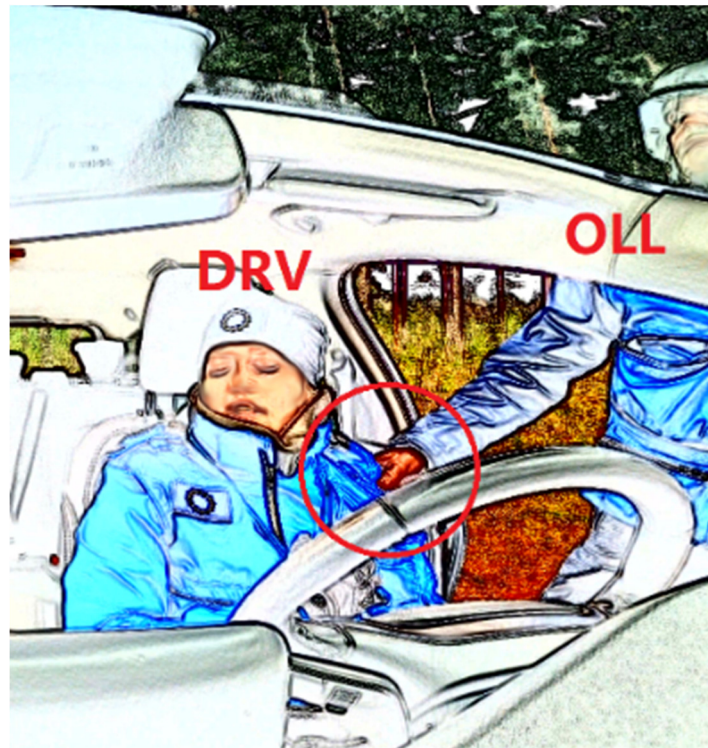


Fig. 8

- | | | |
|----|-------------------|--|
| 01 | DRV
oll
oll | it's like chest and I don't know? (.) hh,
>>leaning twd DRV-->
>>gaze twd DRV--> |
| 02 | | (0.8) |
| 03 | DRV
drv | I don't know £ where he went.£
£ gestures twd £
passenger seat
w/R hand |
| 04 | | (0.3) |

05 OLL oh you %got a,+
oll -->%straightens up

oll +holds DRV shoulder-->>
w/R hand between thumb
and fingers
06 you got a% #colleague with you,%
oll -->%gazes ahead-----%gazes left-->>
fig #fig.8
07 (0.3)
08 DRV yes (.) I did.

The transcript begins as Olli is gazing at and leaning toward the driver who is producing a multi-unit turn. The two are thus orienting to their shared interactional space. The driver utters an assessment of her physical pain, *it's like chest*, and continues with an epistemic marker, *I don't know*, and an outbreath before a brief silence (lines 1-2). She repeats the stance marker and completes her turn: *I don't know where he went* (line 3), while simultaneously gesturing toward the passenger seat, thus claiming insufficient knowledge regarding the location of another person. Olli responds with a change-of-state token *oh* (Heritage 1984) and produces a candidate understanding: *you got a // you got a colleague with you* (lines 5-6), showing that this is new information to him. Olli responds to the driver's informing of the missing person. At the beginning of his turn, Olli straightens his body so that he is no longer crouched toward the driver, instead standing and checking if he can see the colleague somewhere. This postural embodied shift, or body torque (Schegloff 1998), signals a change in his current orientation and engagement – trying to locate the missing colleague in the vicinity. Olli's lower body remains in a stabilized anchor position (Schegloff 1986), oriented toward the driver, while he redirects his upper body and head. Next, Olli establishes haptic contact with the driver. He proceeds to put his hand on the driver's shoulder and holds it gently (line 5; Fig.8). Olli continues his momentary activity of viewing his surroundings. Toward the end of his turn, he gazes left (line 6).

Olli manages the inclusion of an activity that competes for his attention and multimodal resources. For the duration of this new activity, Olli momentarily releases his gaze and posture from his previous activity (interacting with the driver) in order to inspect his surroundings. However, he maintains his involvement with the driver through touch. By sustaining a corporeal connection to the driver, Olli preserves co-presence and involvement with her while also displaying dual involvement and momentary engagement in looking for the missing colleague through body posture and gaze. Additionally, the driver's limited perception due to her spatial arrangement inside the vehicle adds certain affordances to the interaction. The driver cannot fully see Olli's actions after he straightens himself. Olli's touch signals to the driver his availability, even when they do not share mutual gaze. This is evidenced by what happens next: at line 8, the driver verbally confirms Olli's candidate understanding. By responding to Olli's turn while he is engaged in another activity, the driver orients to Olli's ongoing involvement in their shared interactional space and to her own response as 'hearable' even without a face-to-face formation.

The excerpt demonstrated how an interactional space is sustained across interaction between two participants when one engages in an exclusive activity (Mondada 2014) demanding the distribution of multimodal resources outside of the

other's perceptual range. Prior to the shift in the interactional space, the driver is seated in their seat, facing forward. The trainee is standing, crouched in the doorway of the vehicle and gazing at the driver. After receiving new information, the trainee straightens up out of the doorway to visually survey the surrounding environment. This marks a new engagement, evidenced in a body torque away from his co-participant. While his upper body and head orient to matters external to the established interactional space, the trainee's lower body remains oriented toward the driver, signalling a stabilized anchor position. The trainee employs a hand-on-shoulder touch on the driver to enforce his co-presence, signal his ongoing involvement, and project his availability (Cekaite 2016). The driver orients to this by producing her verbal response while the trainee is engaged in his momentary parallel activity.

Excerpt (6) focuses on Leo (LEO) and the injured driver (DRV). Olli (OLL), also seen in prior excerpts, features briefly as Leo's team member. The excerpt continues two minutes into the interaction between Leo and the driver. They have been discussing her pain and missing colleague. Attention is drawn to line 10, when Leo produces a turn directed to his team member and utilizes touch to coordinate his involvements.

Excerpt (6): ((Time estimation))

```

01  LEO      I didn't see # any (.) any $ outside bleeding.
    leo     >>R hand on DRV forehead-->>
    leo     >>L hand palpating DRV      $ places L hand on-->
           armpit area                DRV arm
    fig          #fig.9
  
```

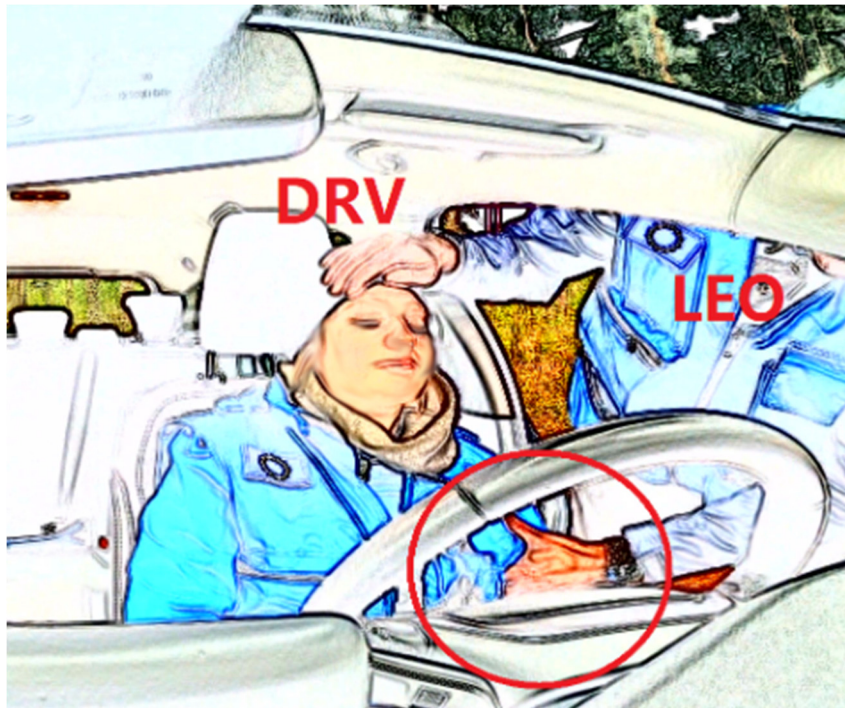


Fig. 9

02 (.) \$(0.6)@
 leo -->\$
 leo @looks to left-->
 03 (6.6)
 04 DRV u:h h h h.
 05 (2.0)
 06 h h h a i a i a i h h,
 07 (1.5)
 08 p h u h h h.
 09 (1.5)
 10 LEO h a - h a @ v e w e t i m e e s t i m a t i \$ o n ? #
 leo -->@turns to right-->
 leo \$puts L hand on-->>
 DRV shoulder
 #fig.10
 fig
 11 (0.6)
 12 t i m e e s t i m a t i o n w h e n h e l p a r r i v e s ,
 @walks up to vehicle-->>
 oll
 13 DRV h h .



Fig. 10

The excerpt continues with Leo carrying out a physical examination of the driver by palpating the area around her armpit with his left hand (line 1). Leo's right hand is supporting the driver's forehead in a procedural manner. He produces a verbal assessment based on his examination, stating that he did not notice any blood (line

1). Leo places his hand briefly on the driver's arm after the palpation as a boundary marker (e.g. Keevallik 2010, see also Robinson/Stivers 2001) between the examination and his upcoming retraction (lines 1-2; Fig.9). He retracts his hand while shifting his gaze to the left, toward events occurring nearby (lines 2-3). A silence follows, after which the driver produces non-verbal vocalizations as she breathes heavily (lines 4-8). Leo's team member Olli approaches the vehicle (line 12) and Leo produces an interrogative directed to him, enquiring into the estimated arrival time of more help (lines 10-12). Olli does not enter the interactional space of Leo and the driver, rather, he remains near Leo and the vehicle. During this turn, Leo torques his upper body toward the right (line 10) while keeping the current frontal orientation of his lower body in the direction of the driver. These actions demonstrate a double orientation of Leo's body and dual involvement on his part. At this point, Leo also employs a touch: he places his left fingers gently on the driver's shoulder (line 12; Fig.10) to convey his ongoing involvement with her while conversing with Olli. He does so despite already being haptically connected to the driver through the forehead touch. This signals that both of his touches have different functions. Whereas the procedural forehead touch has a specific medical purpose, the touch on the driver's shoulder functions as a resource in shaping the interactional space. While Leo disengages his upper body from the interactional space with the driver, he supplements this with a shoulder touch to indicate his involvement.

In line with Excerpt (5), this example illustrates how touch is employed to signal involvement and maintain an interactional space during a momentary parallel engagement and ensuing body torque. The touch communicates the trainee's future availability (Cekaite 2016) to the driver. This excerpt has uniquely shown that a participant may utilize this type of communicative touch even when they are already corporeally connected to their co-participant through a procedural haptic contact.

This section has illustrated how the trainees utilize touch to maintain their co-presence and involvement with the driver and manage the shared interactional space during concurrent or overlapping activities such as surveying the surroundings and conversing with other team members. Trainees are seen re-arranging their body posture and gaze away from the driver (body torque), while simultaneously establishing a haptic contact with them through touch. Two distinct touches may occur at the same time, one being a procedural touch and the other a communicative one, as seen in Excerpt (6). Touch is used as a resource in the reconfiguration of interactional space.

5. Concluding discussion

Through sequential analysis of naturally occurring interaction between civilian crisis management trainees and an injured driver (an actor in the training scenario), this paper demonstrates how the trainees employ touch during a road traffic accident training exercise. The study outlines the trainees' use of touch to construct and reconfigure interactional space with the driver. The analysis is set to answer the following questions:

- How do trainees use touch to establish contact with the driver and indicate reciprocity of their talk?

- How do trainees signal their co-presence and involvement to the driver while carrying out parallel activities?

Analysis of Excerpts (1-3) focused on the first question. The data has illustrated how the trainees accommodate for the driver's unresponsiveness and the lack of mutual gaze by touching the driver during opening turns. Without the characteristic resource of shared gaze in their encounter (e.g. Kendon 1990; Mondada 2009), participants distribute other multimodal resources, namely touch, to signal their co-presence and orientation in the encounter. The trainees navigate the spatial and material environment in relation to the driver's position inside the vehicle. The driver's seated position, surrounded by the vehicle's frame and interior, creates certain affordances for the interaction. The trainees do not have the opportunity to be seated, thus remaining on different physical planes with the driver, but they decrease the physical distance (Brown/Hübscher 2022) with certain physical adjustments and touch. The touch enables a corporeal connection (e.g. Cekaite 2016) between the trainee and driver. The lack of mutual gaze during conversation (see Goodwin 1980; Rossano 2012) can lead to the trainees' utilization of touch as a remedial action to mark reciprocity and that a response is expected. Once the driver begins their verbal response, or when the participants look at each other, the touch is retracted. The trainees' use of touch signals their continuous monitoring and coordination of the encounter and interactional space. The data has demonstrated how the trainees design their actions in recognizable ways that facilitate sustaining reciprocity in interaction (Haddington/Oittinen 2022).

Excerpts (4) and (5) provided findings to the second question. In institutional settings where multiple courses of action emerge, participants must manage their involvement and engagement during overlapping or concurrent trajectories. The data showed how trainees torque their bodies to display orientation to parallel engagements. The trainees maintained their stabilized lower body position while adjusting their upper body, head, and gaze away from the driver. The trainees reconfigure the interactional space with the driver through touch. By utilizing haptic contact, the trainee conveys to the driver their co-presence and availability. The driver, in turn, orients to their shared interaction by producing verbal responses during these moments, even when the trainee is engaged in a separate course of action. The findings add to limited research regarding the role of sustained touch as a corporeal anchor that organizes interactional spaces and reflects bodily co-presence (Cekaite 2016).

This study has addressed various gaps in the literature regarding communicative touch in institutional contexts and the role of touch in creating and shaping interactional space. Furthermore, the findings offer new insight into reciprocity, the arrangement of bodies-in-motion, the distribution of multimodal resources in asymmetrical encounters, and the interaction of professionals undergoing training.

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