The interactional emergence of 'if' requests:
Constructions, trajectories, and sequences of actions

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Our paper concerns the sequential emergence of directives formatted as 'insubordinate' or main-clauseless conditional clauses in Swedish and Finnish conversational interaction. Although subordinate clauses are normally thought to project main clauses to follow (e.g. Auer 2005), prior research has shown that crosslinguistically, 'if' adverbial clauses are commonly used without superordinate clauses for making requests (Evans 2007). This is also true of *jos* and *om* 'if' clauses in Finnish and Swedish (Laury 2012; Laury, Lindholm & Lindström 2013).

The directive, insubordinate *jos* and *om* clauses in our data fall into the more specific functional categories of requests, proposals and suggestions (Couper-Kuhlen 2014). We will show that these directives, even if syntactically unintegrated, are associated with an orderly sequential pattern organized in adjacency pairs; these emerge in conversation in response to actions done or not done by the recipients of the request.

Consider this typical sequence from our Swedish data, taken from a conversation between an elderly person (E) and her caregiver (C).

1 C:	*vänta ska vi få handd<u>u</u>ken* [(*för den*-) wait let's get the towel (cause it-)	
2 E:	[*snä- å sen* plea- and then	**PRE**
3	<u>**om**</u> **du ville dra: den där röda m<u>a</u>ttan** (0.2) [**hit**. **if you would pull that red mat (0.2) here**.	**REQUEST/ CONDITION**
4 C:	[*ja<u>:</u>* yes	**RECEIPT**
5	[(*ska ja gör*-) (will do-)	**COMPLIANCE**
6 E:	[*så går* (.) *lättare för me:j å*= so it's (.) easier for me to=	**CONSEQUENCE/ ACCOUNT**
7 C:	=*å kliva u:r*, =to climb out,	
8 E:	*å stiga opp*, to step up,	

E is about to climb out from a bathtub. She formulates a cut-off **preface** of a 'please' type (line 2) and then makes a **request** to C formulated as a conditional clause (line 3). The conditional clause has a terminal prosody, and C **complies** with the request (line 5).

Note, however, that in line 6, E formulates a syntactically fitting consequent to the antecedent condition, which functions as **an account** for the request. The consequent is thus sequentially emergent rather than preplanned. From a macro perspective this may look like a canonical conditional clause combination, but the emergence of this construction results from interactional work in a sequence of actions.

In our data, we also find free-standing conditional antecedents without any consequent; such clauses have the potential to accomplish full-fledged actions in their own right. As we have seen, however, the interactional and syntactic structures emerge sequentially and there is a continuum of (in)dependence. What we find are emergent trajectories of action which may or may not end up in the form of a complete conditional clause combination. The conditional clause may be prefaced by some material, followed by a consequent clause or an account, as in the example above, or simply by an acknowledgment token or non-verbal compliance that may or may not end the sequence. The emphasis of our study is on such sequential trajectories; by this, we want to contribute to a better understanding of the role of subordination in talk-in-interaction and the emergent nature of units in conversation.

Our paper is based on Finnish, Finland Swedish and Sweden Swedish corpora of conversations in everyday and institutional settings.

References
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