



Social Interaction. Video-Based Studies of Human Sociality.
2020 Vol. 3, Issue 2
ISBN: 2446-3620
DOI: 10.7146/si.v3i2.117066

Social Interaction

Video-Based Studies of Human Sociality

A CA perspective on kills and deaths in Counter-Strike: Global Offensive video game play

Fredrik Rusk¹ & Matilda Ståhl²

¹Nord University, Bodø, Norway

²Åbo Akademi University, Vasa, Finland

Abstract

The interest in studying multiplayer video game play has been growing since the mid-2000s. This is in part due to growing interest in games that are part of eSports settings such as Counter-Strike: Global Offensive (CS:GO), which is one of the main games within eSports, and is the video game that is studied in this paper. Studies of multiplayer video game play from a conversation analysis (CA) participant perspective appear to be scarce, although they are steadily becoming a legitimate topic in ethnomethodological conversation analytical (EMCA) studies. EMCA studies have mostly focused on aspects around the screen, and on how physically present players interact and draw upon resources both on- and off-screen. Some studies have taken the CA perspective further and blur the on-/off-screen dichotomy to better understand on-screen actions as social actions worthy of study. The aim of this article is to describe and gain new understanding of how participants socially organize their game play with a focus on sequentiality and accountability connected to “kills” (K) and “deaths” (D) in CS:GO. The social organizational structure of game play connected to K- and D-events in CS:GO can be described as a set of “rules” that participants orient to. In short, these rules appear to encompass communication efficiency: K-events are more often other-topicalized, and D-events are more often self-topicalized; spectating provides more sequential and temporal space for topicalization; and D-events are oriented to as more problematic events in need of further negotiation. In-and-through describing the social organization connected to K- and D-events from a participant’s perspective, it becomes evident that “killing” and “dying” in-game is not oriented to in a literal fashion. They are oriented to as frequent events that are basic parts of the game’s mechanics and of playing the game to win or lose.

Keywords: Conversation analysis, Video games, Accountability, Interaction

1. Introduction

The mainstream status of multiplayer video games has led to the social sciences becoming interested in gaming, including ethnomethodological conversation analysis studies (EMCA, cf. Reeves, Greiffenhagen, & Laurier, 2017 for an overview). There are two research gaps that appear in the social sciences about games that concern the research in this article. The first is a lack of research on the video game play from a participant perspective that investigates members' methods in-game to enable an account of the social organization of the in-game interaction (Reeves et al., 2017). The second is a low interest in first person shooter (FPS) game play (cf. Frostling-Henningsson, 2009; Jansz & Tanis, 2007; Kiuorti, 2019; Manninen & Kujanpää, 2005; Reer & Krämer, 2019; Wright, Boria & Breidenbach, 2002). As a "new" form of interaction, game play is still underexplored. To comprehend video game play from a situated participant perspective we need to study the in-game interaction as players are playing the games. With a greater understanding of the systematics, structure and social organization of the interaction, we can, for example, better understand affordances for learning that these games can provide (cf. Baldauf-Quilliatre & Colón de Carvajal, 2020; Bennerstedt, 2013; Laurier & Reeves, 2014; Reeves, Brown, & Laurier, 2009; Reeves et al., 2017; Silseth, 2012).

This paper analyses video game play in the online multiplayer FPS game *Counter-Strike: Global Offensive (CS:GO)* (Valve Corporation & Hidden Path Entertainment, 2012), to better understand on-screen, in-game actions as social actions. The aim is to describe and gain new understanding of how participants socially organize their game play with a focus on sequentiality and accountability connected to "kills" and "deaths" in *CS:GO*.

2. EMCA studies on video game play

A central argument in this article is that there is a need for research into participants' in-game interaction and social practices in video games that aims for a more "neutral" stance towards games and steps away from preconceived notions, ready-made categories and underlying normative perspectives (Baldauf-Quilliatre & Colón de Carvajal, 2015; Bennerstedt, 2013; Rambusch, Jakobsson,

& Pargman, 2007; Reeves et al., 2017). EMCA informed approaches (Garfinkel, 1967; Sacks, Schegloff, & Jefferson, 1974; Schegloff, 1996) can provide tools to analyse how in-game interaction is oriented to, by and between players, as sequentially organized in-and-through the context of the game (Reeves et al., 2017).

The study of multiplayer video game play from an EMCA participant perspective is steadily becoming accepted as a legitimate topic (cf. Aarsand, 2010; Aarsand & Aronsson, 2009; Baldauf-Quilliatre & Colón de Carvajal, 2015; 2020; Bennerstedt, 2013; Hung, 2011; Mondada, 2011, 2012, 2013; Piirainen-Marsh & Tainio, 2009a; 2009b; 2014; Reeves et al., 2009; Reeves et al., 2017; Sjöblom, 2011). These studies form a heterogeneous group that share an interest in exploring the social practices that emerge in-and-through the temporality of interactive game play. They employ a participant perspective and attempt to understand the practical methods used by gamers when playing. However, they mostly focus on social practices around the screen and on the interplay between physically co-present players. There are some EMCA studies that focus on the embodied organization of in-game interaction (cf. Baldauf-Quilliatre & Colón de Carvajal, 2015; Bennerstedt & Ivarsson, 2010; Brown & Bell, 2004; Laurier & Reeves, 2014), and these studies blur the on-/off-screen dichotomy to better understand on-screen actions as social actions worthy of study, *per se*.

The field of EMCA research on game play is growing, but there is still a need for more research with a more refined CA perspective (Reeves et al., 2017). Although EM and CA share many concepts, there are some elements that differentiate the two, such as CA's emphasis on the sequential organization of social interaction (Schegloff, 2007).

3. Accountability and sequential organization

CA's understanding of sequentiality has led to a form of analysis of multimodal interaction (Mondada, 2016; Heath & Luff, 2012) and video game play that is embodied through avatars and in-game resources (cf. Baldauf-Quilliatre & Colón de Carvajal, 2015; Bennerstedt & Ivarsson, 2010; Brown & Bell, 2004; Laurier & Reeves, 2014). Video and screen recordings of naturally occurring activities

enable researchers to study the systematics of accountability and sequentiality in detail.

The EMCA concept of accountability is shown to be important when players analyse their own and others' conduct in-game to determine what the possible, or relevant, next actions are (Bennerstedt & Ivarsson, 2010; Brown & Bell, 2004). Players do things in a way that make their "doings" recognizable to others (Bennerstedt & Ivarsson, 2010). These findings are of special interest to studies of game play in which the players are not physically co-present and can only interact in-game, such as the subject of this article.

This article employs CA to describe and gain new understanding of, how participants socially organize their game play with a focus on sequentiality and accountability connected to "kills" and "deaths" in *CS:GO*.

4. Context: CS:GO game play

The data is of two eSports teams playing *CS:GO* matches online against other teams. The data is from a collaboration with a vocational school in Finland that offered the option to study eSports as a minor subject (cf. Ståhl & Rusk, forthcoming) in the semester of 2017–2018. The students (17-18 years old) participating in the study were part of two official school teams and were encouraged to practice together at least once a week.

CS:GO is an online FPS multiplayer game (Valve Corporation & Hidden Path Entertainment, 2012). In a *CS:GO* match, two teams have 5 players each and the game is played over several rounds. The team that wins the most rounds wins the match. Rounds are approximately 2 minutes long and usually the matches last for 20–45 minutes. Players are dropped straight into the action and start as either counterterrorists (CT) or terrorists (T), and then switch over. The game is played on different maps that have different goals for CT and T. Our data includes only bomb planting (T), or defusing (CT). Entire matches are played on a single map. A team wins a round if it succeeds in exploding/defusing the bomb, or in stopping the opposing team from achieving their goal. The latter can be done by killing every opposing player in the round, or by stopping them from achieving

their goal for the entire round. Killing and dying are therefore important events in the game.

When a player dies, they have to wait until the round ends, and can only then start again. During this period, they function as spectatorsⁱ. The game keeps statistics on different parameters and variables. Each player is ranked based on their performance in each match in competitive mode. There are 18 ranks in total and each is presented by a number, a title, and an icon. Stats are a form of ranking within a particular match based on several variables such as kills, assists and deaths. The relevant statistics for this article are those on kills (K) and deaths (D). Kills include how many opponents players have killed, and deaths include how many times players have died during the match. For players, the number of kills appears to be the most important (Ståhl & Rusk, forthcoming). Kills appear to be part of the core game mechanics, and can provide players with extra benefits (e.g., cash bonuses for buying better guns and equipment).

5. Data collection and selection

The students screen recorded their matches and these recordings were shared with the researchers. The two focus players chosen for this study are those who sent a recording of each match they played during the data collection period (Emil [Team 1] and Martin [Team 2]), both of whom sent seven recordings. Almost 9 hours of data from a total of 14 matches have been analysed. The matches are 27–44 minutes long and are played on several different maps.

None of the phenomena and practices analysed in this study were conceived prior to the data collection. They emerged in the data through repeated “unmotivated looking” (Psathas, 1995; Schegloff, 1999). Through this, we found that while kills (K) and deaths (D) appeared to be very frequent and seen, they were unnoticed events of the game play. K- and D-events cannot be considered actions or practices, *per se*, in a CA understanding of the terms. However, they are part of the elementary game mechanics and some of the K- and D-events were made explicit by participants in the interaction. This article looks at situations where there is a K- or D-event, with a particular focus on those that are made explicitly relevant with regards to accountability in the in-game interaction and are

either topicalized (Stokoe, 2000; Maynard & Zimmerman, 1984) or non-topicalized. The initial data selection included situations characterized by players killing or dying. Within this body of situations (2360 K- and D-events), the data selection focused on including situations where players explicitly make the accountability of a K- or D-event the topic of the conversation. The aim is to describe and understand how participants use the interactive and collaborative setting of the game to organize their interactions with regards to accountability and sequentiality in and around K- and D-events

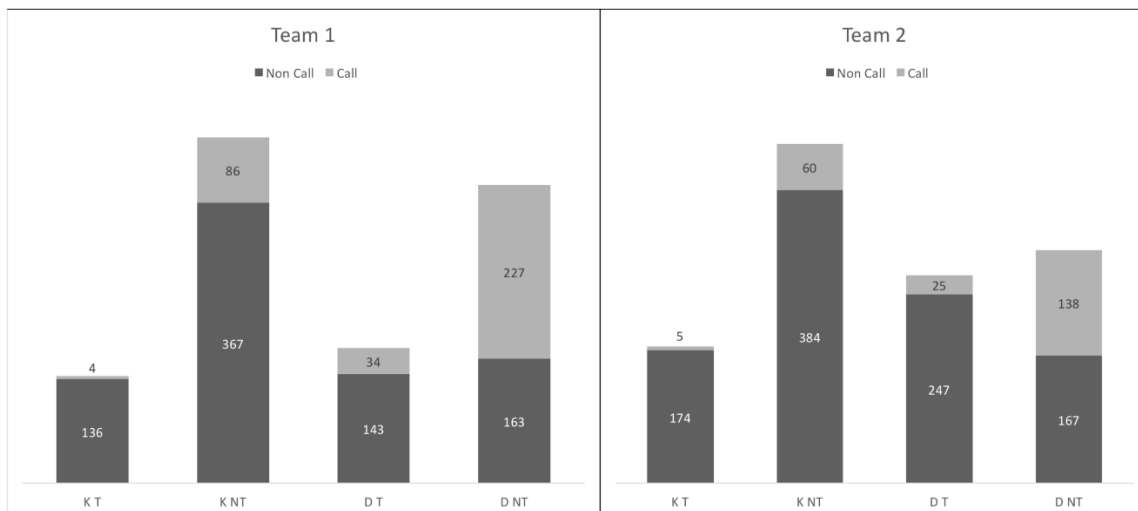
The recordings are analysed from a CA perspective (Schegloff, 2007), and the transcription builds on the Jefferson (2004) system. Some elements of Mondada's (2019) conventions for transcribing multimodal interaction are also employed.ⁱⁱ

6. The social organization of game play connected to K- and D-events

We will present a simple organizational structure of how K- and D-events appear to be topicalized or non-topicalized, and of which properties connected to these events appear to be general. Through this analysis, which allows for context-sensitivity and variability, we will present how social organization is structured in *CS:GO* matches.

All K- and D-events (Figure 1) are included in the analysis and discovery of how participants socially organize their game play with a focus on sequentiality and accountability connected to K- and D-events in *CS:GO*. K- and D-events in *CS:GO* are frequent and appear to be seen, but unnoticed events; they are in fact the game's primary aim. Rounds often end because one team has killed all the players on the opposing team. Figure 1 shows that the topicalization of a kill or death (columns K T and D T) appears to be less prevalent than the non-topicalization of said events (columns K NT and D NT). Figure 1 also shows the prevalence of calloutsⁱⁱⁱ in connection to K- and D-events (dark grey represents instances where no callout was made, and light grey represents instances where a callout was made). D-events (column D NT) can be seen to trigger most callouts.

Figure 1. Topicalization and callouts in K- and D-events.



The excerpts that will be analysed in greater detail showcase when and how K- and D-events are topicalized and not topicalized, and what this indicates regarding the social organization of game play in *CS:GO*.

6.1 TOPICALIZED EVENTS

The first two excerpts exemplify how participants topicalize a K- or D-event in-and-through single phrases or single turn-constructural units (TCUs) directly connected to the event.

Excerpt 1. KT_short.

```

>>E takes cover behind wall>>
01 E: *B [(          ) bomben      *]
      [          the bomb      ]
02 P1: * [>ja komä me< bomben *]
      [>I'm coming with< the bomb ]
      e *deploys incendiary grenade-->*throws incendiary grenade-->
03   (1.4)*
      e ---->*deploys AK-47
04 P1: [>ja komä< sho*#rt  ]
      [>I'm coming< short]
05 P2: [(          * ) ]
      e          *shoots-->
      gif          #gif1---->
06   *(1.3) *
      e *gets K*
07 P3: [*nice      ]#
08 P1: [*nu short]#
      [now short ]
      e *deploys HE grenade---->
      gif ----->gif1#
09   *(0.7)          *

```


e *throws HE grenade*



In Excerpt 1, Emil is the first to reach bombsite B. His role is to clear the bombsite and keep it clear for P1 to be able to plant the bomb. This is why they communicate that P1 is on his way with the bomb (lines 1–4), and also why Emil throws two grenades where enemies might possibly lie (lines 2 & 9). The topicalization of Emil’s K is made in direct connection to the event (line 6 & gif1) and with a single TCU (line 7). “Nice” is the most common form of topicalization of K-events and is made by a teammate. It appears to function as a short, effective way of providing a positive assessment, and its sequential position is in the direct vicinity of the K-event.

Excerpt 2 exemplifies the topicalization of a D-event. The situation is seen from the perspective of P1, who is being spectated by Martin. P1 is waiting for the enemy to appear around a corner (lines 1–2). The enemy appears, and is faster to shoot, so P1 is shot in the head and dies. Martin topicalizes the event quietly and quickly in comparison with P1, who topicalizes it by shouting (line 5)

and swearing (line 7). The situation has the same characteristics as the topicalization of a K-event (Excerpt 1).

Excerpt 2. DT_short.

```

01 P1: ^int få ja      nå:n me- [(.) (    )]
      I'm not getting anyone wi-
      p1 ^stands, waiting for enemy----->
02 M:      [ta å smoka CT]
           [smoke      CT]
03 # ^+(0.4)      +^      ^
      p1 -->^+enemy shoots+^P1 dies^
      gif #gif1----->
04 M:      °>ei,<°=
           °>no,<°=
05 P1: =a-AAH
06      (0.5)
07 P1: SAAKELI#
      DAMN IT
      gif -->gif1#
08      (0.3)
09 M: hh ((grinning))

```



Participants appear to orient towards efficient communication. They orient towards keeping talk to a minimum and only providing immediately relevant information such as callouts and information connected to the current game scenario. This efficiency also appears to be connected to not disturbing active players, since listening to footsteps and other in-game actions is crucial for success in the game. This orientation rearranges the organization of preference and accountability for not answering and so differs from that which is oriented to in everyday talk. Players are not accountable for not answering when talked to.

In some circumstances, when players get a kill or die in more unusual or interesting circumstances, players may engage in more elaborate conversation if the temporal and sequential situation permits. Excerpts 3 and 4 exemplify these situations. Excerpt 3 shows the in-game action from the perspective of P1, who is being spectated by Martin. In Excerpt 3, P1 and his teammate need to defuse the bomb.

Excerpt 3. KT_long.

```

p1 #>>^gets a no-scope K^>>
gif #gif1----->
01 M: ^nice (de va nice)=
      (that was nice)=
p1 ^runs towards bombsite----->
gif ----->gif1#
02 P2: #=( )
p1 ^deploys HE grenade----->
gif #gif2----->
03 ^ (2.0) ^
   ^throws HE grenade^

04 P1: ^>site.<
p1 ^takes cover----->

05 M: ->^on site ye(a).
p1 ->^runs to planted bomb----->
06 ^ (0.7) ^
p1 ^HE grenade explodes and P1 gets K^
07 P3: O(HH[H]o:::.#
08 M: [ni:ce. #
gif ----->gif2#
09 P2: ( )
10 (P3): ( )
11 ^ (2.5)
p1 ->^defuses bomb
12 M: >(planta för)< sho:r(t).
      >(planted for)<
14 (0.9)
15 P4: (ta ut full pull)
      (take out full pull)
16 (3.1)
17 P3: de va (en) ganska cheeky nade=
      that was a pretty cheeky nade=
18 P1: =haha .hh

```



P1 moves towards the bombsite to defuse the bomb planted by the enemy. Moving towards the bombsite, he gets a no-scope K, which is hard to accomplish because players hit their target without the help of a crosshair (see gif1). This is topicalized (line 1) in a similar fashion to Excerpt 1, although with an additional affirmation of how nice it was. Next, as he runs for cover (lines 1–3), P1 deploys and throws a High Explosive (HE) grenade towards the bombsite at which there is an enemy. He gets a K with the grenade (line 6), and this is topicalized by both Martin and P3 (gif2, lines 7 & 8). P1 then proceeds to defuse the bomb and win the round for his team (line 11). The last K is topicalized further (lines 17–18)

when P3 says that the grenade throw was “cheeky”. The K is in other words considered as noticeable by the players and they orient to it as an event that is, in that specific temporal and sequential environment, worth topicalizing further.

The following situation, Excerpt 4, exemplifies a situation with similar characteristics as Excerpt 3, concerning a D-event. In it, P1 is surprised by the position of the enemy.

Excerpt 4. DT_long.

```

en #>>+enemy shoots P1 dead+>>
gif #gif1----->
01 E: ((clears throat))=
02 P1: =hu kom han dit,
      =how'd he get there,
03     (0.9) #
      gif ->gif1#
04 E: ((coughs))
05     (0.6)
06 P2: [måst ] ha sprungi [runt      från T spawn]
      [has to] have run  [back around from T spawn]
07 E: [(va-) ]
08 P1:                [h- hu kom han      hel- ]
      [h- how did he come al- ]
09     (1.2)
10 P1: ja han måst ha      >j(u/o)< kommi från >jå< från T spawn m- förstås
      yea he has to have >yea< come from >yea< from T spawn m- of course
11 E: int [finns de nån annan] väg.
      there [is no other ] way.
12 P1: [elle- ]
      [or- ]
13     (0.4)
14 P1: [nåjå. ]
      [well yea.]
15 E: [(om int)] han teleporta.
      [(if he) ] didn't teleport.

```



In Excerpt 4, P1 (E's teammate) is the last left on his team and he dies (gif1). He topicalizes the D-event in a manner that shows he does not understand how the enemy managed to get to that position (line 2, gif1). His teammate P2 provides an explanation of the most likely route the enemy took (line 6) and P1 accepts that explanation (line 10). E confirms there was no other way (line 11), and while P1 appears to be formulating an alternative (line 12), he then rephrases and acknowledges the explanation provided by P2 and E (line 14). Excerpt 4 shows how the unusual circumstance, topicalized by P1, triggers a longer sequence of conversation regarding how the enemy got behind him to shoot him in the back. Excerpt 4 also shows how the temporal and sequential place in-between rounds provides space for these longer, more elaborate, topicalizations of K- and D-events.

Excerpts 3 and 4 indicate that longer topicalizations are reserved for situations that are contextually exceptional and that sequentially and temporally permit further topicalization. These longer topicalizations are sequences where participants may engage in more elaborate discussions of the topicalized event, and may attempt to figure out what happened and why. In other words, the

'longer' topicalization sequences have a different function from the shorter ones. Non-topicalization, and especially non-topicalization with no more than single phrases, appears to be preferable and more functional in a game with such a fast temporality (see, e.g., Colón De Carvajal, 2016). The time between rounds, approximately 15–20 seconds, is a temporal and sequential position in which players may engage in more elaborate conversations regarding K- and D-events in the previous round, especially regarding the final K- or D-event in the round that led to a win or a loss.

6.2 NON-TOPICALIZED EVENTS AND CALLOUTS

Another aspect that appears to be connected to the orientation to effective communication, is that the topicalization invades the sequential space in which the callout is made. If a K- or D-event is topicalized, the situation will less frequently involve a callout (see Figure 1). The following excerpt exemplifies the most common sequential place in which a callout is made – after a non-topicalized D-event (Excerpt 5).

Excerpt 5. DNT_call.

```

>>+enemy throws flashbang----->
01 E: kitchen+*e,
----->+
e          *blinded by flashbang-->
          is,
02  +##(2.8)          *+
----->          *
e  *shoots at enemy  *
en +moves out of kitchen+
gif #gif1----->
03 E: ((clears throat))
04  +(1.4)          +
en +shoots and kills E+
05 E: ute kitchen,          #
     outside
gif ----->gif1#

```



In Excerpt 5, Emil is at a bombsite. He sees a flashbang being thrown towards him and calls it out (line 1). The enemy then moves in towards the bombsite, and although Emil is still fairly blinded by the flashbang (gif1, lines 2–3), he engages. The enemy kills him and in the immediate next turn he calls out where the enemy is (lines 4–5). Through the callouts, Emil updates his teammates on how the context is changing. The first callout indicates that the enemy is in the area called the “kitchen” (line 1), whereas the second indicates that the enemy has now moved outside the kitchen (line 5).

Callouts are important for players in *CS:GO*. This is indicated by the fact that the most usual response to a D-event is to not topicalize and make a callout in the immediate next turn. If a D-event is topicalized, the interactional space for the callout appears to be overtaken by the interactional work connected to the topicalization. The preference for non-topicalization indicates an orientation to callouts being important, and indicates that they appear to have precedence over the topicalization of a K- or a D-event.

6.3 D-EVENTS AND ACCOUNTABILITY

The above-mentioned analyses provide a broad overview of the characteristics of how players in *CS:GO* handle K- and D-events. However, there appear to be differences between how the two events are oriented to regarding accountability and topicalization. The main differences involve self- or other-topicalization, and the treatment of accountability.

When a K-event is topicalized, the player making the topicalization is usually different from the player getting the K (Excerpt 1. Lines 5–7). In contrast, when a D-event is topicalized it is more often the dying player who topicalizes it (Excerpt 4. Lines 1–2).

Excerpt 1. Lines 5–7.

```
>>E takes cover behind wall>>
01 E: *B [(          ) bomben          *]
      [          the bomb          ]
02 P1: * [>ja komä me< bomben *]
      [>I'm coming with< the bomb ]
      e *deploys incendiary grenade-->*throws incendiary grenade-->
03 (1.4)*
      e ---->*deploys AK-47
04 P1: [>ja komä< sho*#rt ]
      [>I'm coming< short]
05 P2: [(          * ) ]
      e *shoots-->
      gif #gif1---->
06 *(1.3) *
      e *gets K*
07 P3: [*nice ]#
08 P1: [*nu short]#
      [now short ]
      e *deploys HE grenade---->
      gif ----->gif1#
09 *(0.7) *
      e *throws HE grenade*
```

Excerpt 4. Lines 1–2.

```
en #>>+enemy shoots P1 dead+>>
gif #gif1----->
01 E: ((clears throat))=
02 P1: =hu kom han dit,
      =how'd he get there,
03 (0.9) #
      gif ->gif1#
04 E: ((coughs))
05 (0.6)
06 P2: [måst ] ha sprungi [runt från T spawn]
      [has to] have run [back around from T spawn]
07 E: [(va- ) ]
08 P1: [h- hu kom han hel- ]
      [h- how did he come al- ]
09 (1.2)
```

10 P1: ja han måst ha >j(u/o)< kommi från >jå< från T spawn m- förstås
 yea he has to have >yea< come from >yea< from T spawn m- of course
 11 E: int [finns de nån annan] väg.
 there [is no other] way.
 12 P1: [elle-]
 [or-]
 13 (0.4)
 14 P1: [nåjä.]
 [well yea.]
 15 E: [(om int)] han teleporta.
 [(if he)] didn't teleport.

Regarding the treatment of accountability in K-events compared to D-events, there seems to be more interactional work done in D-events (cf. Excerpt 4). Participants do not orient towards there being anything that needs to be specifically pointed out, or that a player becomes accountable for his actions leading up to a K. However, if the K-event was exceptional, then the player responsible for the K-event is accountable for the “extraordinariness” of said event. Nevertheless, there is no discussion regarding why and how it happened; it is only topicalized in the form of how “epic” the event was (cf. Excerpt 3).

D-events appear to be more complex with regards to how players orient towards accountability for actions that lead up to them. In D-events, players are looking for “answers” to how the D-event occurred. Accountability in D-events is brought to the surface, oriented to and explicated in a different way than in K-events. Players, and especially those dying, orient towards finding an “explanation” for what took place. The next situation, Excerpt 6, is an example of this. The excerpt also exemplifies the orientation to effectiveness in communication and the fact that long topicalizations are, therefore, oriented to as non-preferable.

Excerpt 6. Topptippen.

```
#>>P1 gets a K>>
gif #gif1----->
01 E: ^°åhå°
      °oh°
      p1 ^looks around behind cover----->#
      gif ----->gif1#
02 (0.4)
03 E: that (.) one hundred and=eighty=
04 P1: =mm-m
05 (0.3)
06 P1: [tänkte ] att ändå ^^ ( ) sku one=shotta=
      [thought] that would ( ) would one=shot=
      p1 ----->^^jumps out of cover moves towards stairs--->
07 E: [hhh ]
08 P2: =crisp +clean +
```

en +shoots at P1+
 09 P1: uh(h) (.) nãni (.) gē:nast när=ja börja hoppa så °(händer
 of course as soon as I start jumping then °(happens
 10 #kommer)°^
 comes)°
 p1 ----->^
 gif #gif2--->
 11 +^(1.9) ^ +
 en +throws HE grenade and shoots+
 p1 ^shoots^
 gif gif2----->
 12 P1: +ja- +#m=tsk [VA FITTAN GÖR] DOM(h)=
 ye- [WHAT THE FUCK ARE THEY] DOING(h)=
 en +shoots, gets K+#
 gif ----->gif2#
 13 P3: [>dendä naden< (.) perfekt]
 [>that nade< (.) perfect]
 14 P1: =.hhhh [gē:nast vet=du va-]
 [as soon as you=know=wha-]
 15 P2: [crisp clean] lock=
 16 P1: =ja s- (.) sni:kar >genast när ja tittar [bort å] börjar
 =I s- sneak >as soon as I look [away and] start
 17 hoppa så börja dom skjū:ta<
 jumping they start shooting<
 18 (X): [(clears nose)]
 19 P1: gē:nast >när ja e på topp-tippen=av- av s- sh- s-< vittu: ,=
 as soon >as I am at the top-tip=of- of s- sh- s-< fucking,=
 20 P3: =topp tippen=
 =the top tip=
 21 P1: =stairsen så (.) vittu: nade ar dom de
 =the stairs then they fucking nade it
 22 (.) [eller- (de)]
 [or- (it)]
 23 P2: [tiputiputipu][u:,]
 [birdiebirdie][birdie:,]
 24 E: [(hej)][v- vi rushar B nu]
 [(hey)][w- we rush B now]
 25 P3: [(hhh)e (h) e (h)]e(h)e ((grinning))
 26 P1: [genast efter] naden ha pama å ja ri:piik:a=>svijsj< komä de
 [straight after] the nade has exploded and I repeak=>swish< there's
 27 E: [()]
 28 P1: et skott i huvve (.) (h)e(h)
 a shot in the head
 29 E: [B rush B rush
 30 [(the next round starts))



Excerpt 7 is a situation in which P1 (Emil's teammate) is the last left in the round against three enemies. Before line 1 in the transcript, P1 gets a K (gif1). Until line

6 he is moving slowly so that the enemies cannot hear his steps. On line 6, when he goes after the killed enemy's AK-47, he jumps and runs. This creates sound, and he gets shot at by another enemy (lines 6–8). P1's teammates topicalize his K (lines 1, 3 & 8) and P1 responds (lines 4 & 6). However, as soon as another enemy shoots at P1, all the spectating players go silent. Only P1 comments on the enemy's ability to find him (gif2, lines 9–10). P1 has now moved to the stairs, from where he attempts to fire at the enemy on the other side of the bombsite (gif2, line 11). As P1 moves up the stairs, the enemy throws a grenade and shoots (gif2, line 11). The grenade and shots hit, and P1 dies (gif2, line 12).

This D-event triggers a long topicalization by P1. He explicates his distrust that the enemy is playing the game fairly. P1 seems agitated, speaks fast, and has trouble finding words, and is therefore, doing self-repair in several positions. In his topicalization (lines 12, 14, 19, 21, 26 & 28), he reiterates the events with an emphasis on the moments in which he understands the enemy as having had an advantage because they were using cheats. His argument is that they cheated, because they knew exactly where he was when he made noise and, therefore, they were able to aim exactly at his position, even though he was behind cover. P1's topicalization is not taken up by his teammates. Instead, they applaud the skills of the enemy (how the grenade throw was "perfect" [line 13], and how the shot in the head was a "crisp clean lock" [a reference to a meme, line 15]). The fact that they do not join the topicalization is further emphasized when they tease P1 for his loss for words (lines 20, 23 & 25) and when Emil attempts to shift the focus of the conversation to what strategy they should employ in the upcoming round (lines 24 & 29).

D-events bring out the interactional work in which players balance their own and others' accountability and make it visible. It appears that co-players are not as open for discussing events when the dying player does not accept his own accountability and blames the D-event on cheating or other reasons beyond the player's accountability. It appears that it is preferable to take responsibility and be accountable for the D-event by admitting that an opponent is better, or by admitting having made a mistake.

7. Discussion

K- and D-events in *CS:GO* appear to be frequent and fundamental aspects of the game (2360 K- and D-events in 14 matches). This is why the analysis of social practices connected to K- and D-events may provide a gateway into describing and understanding the systematics of how social organization in *CS:GO* is structured.

The social organization of game play connected to K- and D-events in *CS:GO* can be described as a set of “rules” that participants orient to. In short, these rules appear to be: communication efficiency; K-events are more often other-topicalized, D-events are more often self-topicalized; spectating provides more sequential and temporal space for topicalization; and D-events are oriented to as more problematic events in need of further topicalization.

Generally, when a K- or D-event is topicalized, participants do this in-and-through single phrases or single TCUs. This may be connected to the fact that participants orient towards efficient communication (see, e.g., Kiourti, 2019). Players appear to orient towards being short and clear in their talk-in-interaction for a number of reasons that include the game’s rapid pace (cf. Colón De Carvajal, 2016) and not disturbing active players who are listening to footsteps and other in-game actions. This orientation provides players with an organization of preference and accountability in which it is preferable not to answer when talked to. However, the period between rounds is a temporal position in-game when players may engage in more elaborate conversations regarding K- and D-events in the previous round.

When a K-event is topicalized, the player making the topicalization is usually a player other than the one getting the K. In contrast, when a D-event is topicalized it is more often the dying player who topicalizes it. Additionally, when a K- or D-event is topicalized, the topicalization invades the sequential space of callouts. There appears to be an orientation to callouts being important in-game. This is indicated by the fact that the most common response to a D-event is to non-topicalize and to instead make a callout in the immediate next turn. Callouts appear to be part of game strategy in this type of game in particular. Callouts are employed to co-construct a shared knowledge and understanding of the game

environment through sharing game relevant information such as the locations and intentions of teammates and opponents.

There seems to be more interactional work done with regard to D-events. They appear to be more complex with players being accountable for their actions leading up to the D-event. In D-events, players are looking for explanations of how the D-event occurred. D-events appear to be oriented to as pivotal events, which can help in becoming a better player through understanding what happened. These topicalizations appear to be part of game strategy and of better understanding opponents' actions and learning how to stop them in following rounds. However, D-events are also topicalized by dying players in ways that shift accountability to someone or something else beyond the player's agency. D-events bring out the interactional work where players balance their own and others' accountability and make it visible. Taking responsibility and accountability for the D-event appears to be the preferred path.

In-and-through describing the systematics of *CS:GO* in-game interaction from a participant perspective, K- and D-events are shown in a different light than when analysed from a normative perspective (Bennerstedt, 2013; Rambusch et al., 2007; Reeves et al., 2017). "Killing" and "dying" in-game is not oriented to as literal events. They are, instead, frequent events that are part of the fundamentals of the game mechanics. There appears to be no malevolence in the events from a social organizational perspective, other than that of winning or losing rounds and matches.

This article is only scratching the surface of the systematics of the organization of social actions in FPS video game play. However, there is a clear potential for understanding actions in-game through a systematic and structured analysis of players' actions on-screen (cf. Wright et al., 2002; Reeves et al., 2017). Through studying players' in-game methods in ways that are sensitive to the accountability and sequentiality of their actions, we can better understand video game play per se.

References

- Aarsand, Pål André (2010): Young boys playing digital games. *Nordic Journal of Digital Literacy*, 5(01), 38–54.
- Aarsand, P. A., & Aronsson, K. (2009). Response cries and other gaming moves—Building intersubjectivity in gaming. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 41(8), 1557–1575.
- Baldauf-Quilliatre, H., & Colón de Carvajal, I. (2015). Is the avatar considered as a participant by the players? A conversational analysis of multi-player videogames interactions. *PsychNology Journal*, 13(2-3), 127–148.
- Baldauf-Quilliatre, H., & Colón de Carvajal, I. (2020). Encouragement in videogame interactions. *Social Interaction. Video-Based Studies of Human Sociality*, 2(2).
- Bennerstedt, U. (2013). Knowledge at play. Studies of games as members' matters. (Doctoral dissertation, University of Gothenburg, Gothenburg, Sweden).
- Bennerstedt, U., & Ivarsson, J. (2010). Knowing the Way. Managing Epistemic Topologies in Virtual Game Worlds. *Computer Supported Cooperative Work*, 19(2), 201-230.
- Brown, B., & Bell, M. (2004). CSCW at play: “There” as a collaborative virtual environment. In *Proceedings of the 2004 ACM conference on Computer Supported Cooperative Work (CSCW '04)* (pp. 350–359). New York: ACM.
- Colón De Carvajal, I. (2016). Désaccord entre joueurs dans les jeux vidéo: vraie opposition ou fausse compétition? [Disagreement between players in videogames interactions: true opposition or false competition?]. *Cahiers de praxématique*, 67.
- Frostling-Henningsson, M. (2009). First-person shooter games as a way of connecting to people: “Brothers in blood”. *CyberPsychology & Behavior*, 12(5), 557–562.
- Garfinkel, H. (1967). *Studies in Ethnomethodology*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Heath, C., & Luff, P. (2012). Embodied Action and Organizational Activity. In J. Sidnell & T. Stivers (Eds.), *The Handbook of Conversation Analysis* (pp. 283-307). Chichester, West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Hung, A. C.-Y. (2011). *The work of play: Meaning-making in video games*. New York: Peter Lang Publishing Inc.
- Jansz, J., & Tanis, M. (2007). Appeal of Playing Online First Person Shooter Games. *CyberPsychology & Behavior*, 10(1), 133-136.
- Jefferson, G. (2004). Glossary of transcript symbols with an introduction. In G. Lerner (Ed.), *Conversation Analysis: Studies from the first generation* (pp. 13-31). Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
- Kiuorti, E. (2019). “Shut the Fuck up Re! 1 Plant the Bomb Fast!” Reconstructing Language and Identity in First-person Shooter Games. In A. Ensslin & I. Balteiro (Eds.), *Approaches to Videogame Discourse: Lexis, Interaction, Textuality* (pp. 157-177). New York: Bloomsbury Academic.

- Laurier, E., & Reeves, S. (2014). Cameras in Video Games: Comparing Play in Counter-Strike and Doctor Who Adventures. In M. Broth, E. Laurier & L. Mondada (Eds.), *Studies of Video Practices: Video at Work* (Chapter 6). New York: Routledge
- Manninen, T., & Kujanpää, T. (2005). The Hunt for Collaborative War Gaming - CASE: Battlefield 1942. *Game Studies* 5(1).
- Maynard, D.W. and Zimmerman, D.H. (1984) Topical talk, ritual and the social organisation of relationships. *Social Psychology Quarterly* 47(4), 301–16.
- Mondada, L. (2011). The situated organisation of directives in French: Imperatives and action coordination in video games. *Nottingham French Studies*, 50(2), 19–50.
- Mondada, L. (2012). Coordinating action and talk-in-interaction in and out of video games. In R. Ayaß & C. Gerhardt (Eds.), *The appropriation of media in everyday life* (pp. 231–270). Amsterdam, the Netherlands: John Benjamins.
- Mondada, L. (2013). Coordinating mobile action in real time: The timely organisation of directives in video games. In P. Haddington, L. Mondada, & M. Nevile (Eds.), *Interaction and Mobility. Language and the Body in Motion* (pp. 300-341). Berlin: De Gruyter.
- Mondada, L. (2016). Challenges of multimodality: Language and the body in social interaction. *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, 20(3), 336-366.
- Mondada, L. (2019). Multimodal transcription conventions. Retrieved from <https://www.lorenzamondada.net/multimodal-transcription>
- Piirainen–Marsh, Arja/Tainio, Liisa (2009a): Collaborative game-play as a site for participation and situated learning of a Second Language. *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research*, 53(2), 167–183.
- Piirainen-Marsh, Arja/Tainio, Liisa (2009b): Other- repetition as a resource for participation in the activity of playing a video game. *The Modern Language Journal*, 93(2), 153–169.
- Piirainen-Marsh, A., & Tainio, L. (2014). Asymmetries of knowledge and epistemic change in social gaming interaction. *Modern Language Journal*, 98(4), 1022–1038.
- Psathas, G. (1995). *Conversation analysis*. London: Sage.
- Rambusch, J., Jakobsson, P., & Pargman, D. (2007). Exploring E-sports: A case study of gameplay in Counter-strike. In *DiGRA '07 - Proceedings of the 2007 DiGRA International Conference: Situated Play* (pp. 157-164). The University of Tokyo.
- Reer, F., & Krämer, N. C. (2019). Are online role-playing games more social than multiplayer first-person shooters? Investigating how online gamers' motivations and playing habits are related to social capital acquisition and social support. *Entertainment Computing* 29, 1–9.
- Reeves, S., Brown, B., & Laurier, E. (2009). Experts at Play: Understanding Skilled Expertise. *Games and Culture*, 4(3), 205-227.
- Reeves, S., Greiffenhagen, C., & Laurier, E. (2017). Video Gaming as Practical Accomplishment: Ethnomethodology, Conversation Analysis, and Play. *Top Cogn Sci*, 9(2), 308-342.
- Sacks, H., Schegloff, E. A., & Jefferson, G. (1974). A simplest systematics for the organization of turn-taking for conversation. *Language*, 50(4), 696-735.

- Schegloff, E. A. (1996). Confirming allusions: Toward an empirical account of action. *The American Journal of Sociology*, 102, 161-216.
- Schegloff, E. A. (2007). *Sequence organization in interaction: A primer in conversation analysis I*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Silseth, K. (2012). The multivoicedness of game play: Exploring the unfolding of a student's learning trajectory in a gaming context at school. *Computer Supported Learning*, 7(1), 63-84.
- Sjöblom, B. (2011). Gaming interaction: Conversations and competencies in internet cafes. (Doctoral dissertation, Linköping University, Linköping, Sweden).
- Stokoe, E. H. (2000). Constructing Topicality in University Students' Small-group Discussion: A Conversation Analytic Approach. *Language and Education*, 14(3), 184-203.
- Ståhl, M., & Rusk, F. (submitted). Weapon customization, player competence and team discourse – exploring player identity construction and co-construction in Counter Strike: Global Offensive. *Game Studies*.
- Valve Corporation & Hidden Path Entertainment. (2012). *Counter-Strike: Global Offensive*. Valve Corporation.
- Wright, T., Boria, E., & Breidenbach, P. (2002). Creative player actions in FPS online video games: Playing Counter-Strike. *Game studies*, 2(2).

ⁱ Spectators are players who do not participate in a game but can watch the game's progress. Players enters spectator mode automatically upon dying.

ⁱⁱ The transcription system used in the article is based on the Jefferson (2004) system and Mondada's (2019) system for multimodal analysis.

(.)	a micropause less than 0.2 seconds
(0.5)	a silence indicated in tenths of seconds
[text]	overlapping talk or co-occurring embodied actions
text	stress or emphasis
TEXT	louder talk than normal
°text°	markedly quiet talk
:	prolongation/stretching of the prior sound
>text<	faster talk than normal
<text>	slower talk than normal

text-	cut-off or self-interrupted talk
((text))	non-verbal/embodied activity/transcriber's description of events
(text)	likely hearing of talk
(Sam) / X	the identity of speaker is not clear
()	inaudible
=	talk/embodied activity latches on previous turn
?	rising intonation
.	falling intonation
,	continuing intonation
hh (hh)	hearable exhale
.hh (.hh)	hearable inhale
<i>text</i>	English translation in italics
*	delimits actions done by one of the focus participants E (Emil) or M (Martin)
^	delimits actions done by a co-player to the focus participants (P1)
+	delimits actions done by enemy (en)
*--->	action described continues across subsequent lines until the same symbol is reached
--->*	reached
>>action>>	action described begins before the excerpt's first line
gif	the exact situation at which a gif has been recorded is indicated with #-signs,
	the first indicates the start position and the second the end position of the gif

iii To maintain a shared understanding of the in-game interaction in FPS multiplayer games, players employ callouts, which can be described as verbal instructions of what is happening in the game. In other words, callouts are employed to co-

construct a shared knowledge and understanding of the game environment through sharing information on the locations/intentions of teammates, opponents, as well as other game relevant aspects, such as grenades, weapons and health.