

Accounting for leaving the break room: work obligations as a resource in transitions from one activity to another at the workplace

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Abstract

We approach break taking at work as social activity and examine break closings as a type of transition from one activity to another. Using conversation analysis, we draw on video data from five work communities in Finnish institutions of higher education and focus on a linguistic practice that the participants frequently utilize in the break closings: accounts to end the break citing work obligations. Our data show that in addition to multimodally adjusting their leaving to the ongoing break activity, the participants may present the resumption of work as a necessary obligation and use this conventionalized practice to leave the company of others legitimately. Thus, they display their orientation to the significance of co-presence and social solidarity between colleagues and to the leave taking as a somewhat accountable action.

Keywords

account, accountability, break taking, conversation analysis, social solidarity, transition

1 Introduction

In this paper, we examine break taking at work as social activity and analyze break closings as a type of transition from one activity to another. The study stems from observations made in our own work community and focuses on a linguistic practice that the participants utilize in the break closings, namely accounts citing work obligations. We started noticing and collecting some of the accounts that our colleagues were making when they were getting ready to end a break and return back to work. The following excerpts appear in our ethnographic notes:¹

- a) *Pittääpä lähtä hommiin taas.* 'Gotta get back to work.'
- b) *Ai. Pittääpä lähtä kattoon, onko mulla opiskelijoita oven takana.* 'Oh. Gotta go see if there's any students behind my door.'
- c) *Mun pitää nyt lähtä. Olen pahoillani.* 'I've got to go now. I'm sorry.'
- d) *Japanilaiset oottaa.* 'The Japanese are waiting.' (as a reference to a pending Skype meeting with Japanese colleagues)
- e) *Ei ne videot ittestään litteroiju.* 'The videos won't transcribe themselves.'
- f) *Apua, mulla alkaa tapaaminen opiskelijan kanssa.* 'Oh no, I'm about to have a meeting with a student.'

All these accounts (a–f) are uttered by the person ending the break and returning back to work, and in all the cases, ending the break is somehow accounted for by citing work obligations. Our notes contain only one case in which the account is given by a person who is still going to continue the break.

- g) *Menkää te vaan. Mulla on vielä näin paljon jäljellä.* 'You go ahead. I still have this much left.'

In this account (g), the participant in a manner of speaking gives the others permission to act upon their need to transfer to another activity while accounting for her own actions by referring to the unfinished lunch, thus topicalizing the temporal discrepancy between the participants in the given situation: the others are ready to resume work whereas the one giving the account is still in the middle of having lunch. All the above accounts – and the accounts in our data – are extracted from contexts in which the times of the breaks are not officially set nor is their length predetermined, which evidently has consequences for the participants: they are all in a position in which they are locally accountable for continuing or closing a given break. Yet, as already mentioned, it is typically the participant closing the break that provides the account – not the ones continuing the break. In order to study this phenomenon in more detail, we examined video data from different break rooms and analyzed what is it that participants actually orient to when they end their breaks and move back to

¹ The colleagues who produced these accounts in real life have given their informed and free consent for using the accounts in the paper.

work.

In this paper, we will show that, overall, the participants engage in subtle orchestration of verbal, bodily, material and spatial resources to coordinate the ending of the break and the ongoing activity. As part of this, they may employ the practice of citing work obligations in order to account for their leave taking from the break room and the company of others, particularly. The practice is used by the participants to publicly acknowledge not only their ensuing departure but also their continued orientation to the ongoing break activity. This practice can also be treated as a resource of providing social solidarity, as it is produced for the benefit of the other participants. The displays of social solidarity are clearly discernible in the interactional situations in which some kind of a problem and need for social support are oriented to by the participants. To display solidarity and support the other(s), the participants may use specific practices, such as encouraging assessments and various other empathetic and caring turns that have previously been noted especially in medical, counselling and peer contexts (see Jones, 1997, 2001; Pudlinski, 2005; Ruusuvuori, 2005; Vayreda & Antaki, 2009; Logren et al., 2019). Albeit in a more implicit way, social solidarity is also visible in everyday interactional practices that display affiliation and promote solidary relations. Studies concerning these latter practices comprise one of the most studied areas within conversation analysis and reveal that social solidarity emerges in the structure of social interaction: sequences are constructed of successive actions that are contingent on the prior action so that the participant advances the course of action initiated by the prior participant by producing a preferred next action or accounts for not conducting in this way (e.g. Clayman, 2002). For instance, if a participant produces an initial assessment, the preference for another participant is to agree with the prior turn by producing a second assessment (Pomerantz, 1984). All in all, the participants employ various means, on the one hand, in promoting harmonious actions and, on the other hand, in suppressing uncooperative and disaffiliative actions (e.g. Heritage, 1984; for a review, see Clayman, 2002). Such action may also be taken to indicate that the participant has some positive regard for the prior participant (Clayman, 2002).

Our analysis will show that the practice of citing work obligations in order to account for leave taking from the break room and the company of others is linked to maintaining and promoting social solidarity. After all, such accounts may be considered courteous and can be seen to be produced for the benefit of the other participants to preserve solidary relations between colleagues, which indeed are consequential. In fact, several studies suggest that collegial support correlates positively with job satisfaction, job performance and productivity and negatively with burnout, for example (e.g. Dababneh et al., 2001; Baruch-Feldman et al., 2002; Abu Al-Rub, 2004; Amarneh et al., 2010). In what follows, we will first discuss, on the one hand, the notions of co-presence and accountability, and on the other hand, activity closings and moments of transitioning from one activity to another

especially in light of previous conversation-analytic studies. We will then continue by introducing our data and analyzing three examples of accounts relating to work obligations and two relating to other matters at break closing. Finally, we will discuss the significance of the accounts to end the break citing work obligations by contrasting them with other accounts in the interaction between colleagues at work.

2 On co-presence and ending encounters

When individuals enter a break room at work and find themselves in the immediate presence of other people, they become a co-participant in an *encounter* if they and the other person(s) in the break room share and sustain a focus of visual and cognitive attention, or a co-present person in a *gathering* if they do not share such mutual orientation (see Goffman, 1961, 1964; see also Mondada, 2009). In both cases of co-presence, participants have the possibility to monitor each other with their naked senses and are accountable for adhering to the cultural rules that establish how they are to conduct themselves in social situations, for example with regard to terminating an encounter (Goffman, 1964). Our data from break rooms include both encounters and gatherings, but here we focus only on encounters, the moments in which participants necessarily share orientation with each other as they are engaged in conversation (see Goffman, 1964).

A body of research exists on the participant(s) 1) leaving and by the same token closing the social situation and 2) leaving and removing themselves from the ongoing social situation but not closing it for the other participants. As examples of the prior, some studies on exchanges over the telephone show that the activity and the social occasion are verbally brought to a close along with terminating the call (e.g. Schegloff & Sacks, 1973; Clark & French, 1981; Button, 1987; Auer, 1990; Antaki, 2002; Maynard & Schaeffer, 2002; Bolden, 2008; Patterson & Potter, 2009). What is more, in face-to-face situations, the participants' physical doings and positionings also become meaningful interactional resources (e.g. Schegloff & Sacks, 1973; Heath, 1986; West, 2006; Broth & Mondada, 2013). With regard to leaving but not closing an occasion, Goodwin (1987) describes a unilateral departure in which one participant uses multimodal means, i.e. resources related to the movement of the participant's body with relation to surrounding objects and environment visible to others, to leave (and carry out another activity) while the other participants carry on the conversation. Also, in such transitions from one activity to another, participants have been shown to display a double orientation to the ongoing and the forthcoming activity (Deppermann et al., 2010) or to display overlapping multiple involvements in them (LeBaron & Jones, 2002). All in all, the participants accomplish activity closings as well as transitions from one activity to another reflexively and by deploying multimodal resources. That is, along with verbal pre-closing and terminal-exchange sequences (Schegloff &

Sacks, 1973) and transition markers (e.g. *okay*, Beach 1993, 1995; the Finnish *no niin*, Raevaara, 1989:149; Sorjonen & Raevaara, 2006:62; Sorjonen & Vepsäläinen, 2016; VISK § 859, § 1220), the participants' postural shifts (e.g. sitting/leaning back or turning the body), and shifts in gaze direction foreshadow a change in activity (e.g. Szymanski, 1999; Modaff, 2003; Laurier, 2008; Hellermann & Cole, 2009; vom Lehn, 2013; Broth & Keevallik, 2014). Furthermore, the participants use the social and material environment as a resource for closing interaction; for example, the initiating of walking away makes closing publicly projectable and recognizable (Broth and Mondada, 2013, Tuncer, 2015).

When closing an activity or transitioning from one activity to another, the participants may also provide an explicit account for leaving the company of others. The leaving party may appeal to some priority activity of one's own (e.g. "I gotta go") or to that of the other (e.g. "I better let y' go now") (Schegloff & Sacks, 1973:310; Liddicoat, 2007:261, see also Fatigante et al., 2010). Such turns are produced to account for conduct in interaction that is oriented to as accountable² (Robinson, 2016). That is, when participants do not abide by the preferred course of action initiated by the co-participant(s), they typically account for not doing so in some way (see Heritage, 1988; Robinson, 2016). By doing so, they act towards avoiding conflict and promoting solidary relations (Clayman, 2002). In what follows, we will examine how colleagues construct and maintain such relations as they make use of the linguistic practice of accounting for leaving the break room citing work obligations in contrast with accounts for leaving the break room citing something else.

3 Data and method

Our data comprise video-recorded naturally occurring social activity from five break rooms at two Finnish institutions of higher education, amounting to approximately 50 hours in total. The data is mostly in Finnish, but English and French are used as well. The members of staff appearing in the data seldom leave the premises of their respective institutions to go out to have coffee, tea or lunch, but it is the break room located within their work premises that is used for such purposes three times a day – in the morning, at noon and in the afternoon. Ethnographic inquiry prior to actual video data collection revealed that even though individual members of staff can freely choose the exact starting and ending time of their own break, quite a few members of each community follow a rather fixed schedule in order to gather in the break room. The video-recordings were then conducted by following the unofficial break schedule of the respective institution.

² Robinson (2016) further describes another main sense of accountability: CA-oriented research is also concerned with the account-ability of conduct in interaction. That is, participants produce and interpret social actions abiding by the 'rules' of interaction.

We have transcribed the data according to the conventions described in Jefferson (2004, see Appendix A for symbols) and Mondada (2019) and further glossed the relevant parts of the transcripts according to the Leipzig Glossing Rules (2015, see Appendix B for symbols). We investigate the sequential unfolding of naturally occurring interaction by following the conventions of conversation analysis (e.g. Sacks et al., 1974; Schegloff, 2007). All the participants in the data provided us with informed consent for the recordings, and we have anonymized any identifiable information in the transcripts.

4 Accounting for leaving the break room

In this section, we analyze break closings in which a participant uses a verbal reference to work obligations that accounts for ending the break (section 4.1) and contrast them with break closings in which a participant accounts for leaving by citing other matters (section 4.2). While doing so, we also shed light on certain particles, *jaa* and *joo*, that work together with accounts to display orientation to transitioning between activities. The use of accounts citing work obligations for leaving the break room, does not depend on the number of the participants in the break room or on the number of the participants leaving the break room, be it one participant alone or several participants in each other's wake. However, there are two notable characteristics in common with the accounts citing work obligations: firstly, the participants who give an account for leaving have been active in taking turns in the previous talk (see also Gibson, 2010); and secondly, they monitor the sequential unfolding of interaction and adjust their actions in view of the sequence closure and the ensuing lapse in the conversation. By contrast, the participants who are less involved in the ongoing interaction, for example by assuming a spectator position and/or simultaneously engaging in other activities, may leave the break room just like that without vocally indicating their departure.³ It is also worth noting that it is the ending of the break that is typically accounted for and not the continuing of it (see, however, Example 4, lines 14–16). At the moments of transitioning from break to work, the participants nevertheless can be seen to display a double orientation: while the references to work obligations, genuine or not, make explicit the participants' orientation to returning to work, they also indicate that leaving the company of the others is an accountable action. In this way, references to work obligations also make visible the participants' situated orientation to the co-presence of others in a break room and to the cultural rules of how to terminate such an encounter, and ultimately to social solidarity between colleagues.

³ Also a participant who is engaged in the encounter but has not taken turns in the previous talk is more likely to leave the break room without indicating the transition verbally (Siromaa & Kärkkäinen, in preparation).

4.1 “Gotta get back to work” – accounts citing work obligations in multimodal break closings

In break closings, the subtle synchronization of the participants’ multimodal actions may be coupled with participants providing a verbal account to end the break citing work obligations. As Example 1 shows, typically such an account is produced after the interactional participants have closed the previous sequence and there is a lapse in the conversation (see also Hoey, 2018; Vatanen, forthcoming). In the example, colleagues Riitta and Toni are having lunch in the break room. Riitta has already finished her lunch and yawns and brushes hands across her face whereas Toni is still eating. Before the beginning of the extract, Riitta has produced a noticing about the weather being surprisingly warm although looking cold, and Toni has taken up a similar stance towards the weather (on noticings, see Goodwin & Goodwin, 2012), telling how the weather in the morning affected his choice of clothing on his way to work (lines 1–3).

(1) *really have to go now and write*

```
01  TON:  näytti kuuttatoista mutta en luottanu siihen että,  
      it said sixteen {degrees} but I didn't trust that  
      >>holds plate and eats-->>  
      rii  >>yawns and brushes hands across her face-->  
02      (1.1)  
03  TON:  teepaita päällä tarkenis(in) pol(o)kia.  
      I'd be warm enough to cycle in a t-shirt  
04      (0.4)  
05  RII:  mjoo.  
      PRT  
06      (0.3)  
07  RII:  no ois se varmaan olluki mel(e)ko# vilak(ka).  
      well it most likely would have been quite chilly  
      fig                                     #1a
```

[FIGURE 1a HERE]

Figure 1a. Toni is eating and Riitta brushes hands across her face.

```
08      (.)  
09  TON:  °mm-m, °  
      PRT  
10      (1.0) * (1.4) * (2.2) * (0.3)  
      rii  -->*reaches for her glasses on table  
           *puts on her glasses  
           *looks out of window-->  
11  TON:  ((clears his throat))  
12      (1.8) # (1.3)  
      fig                                     #1b
```

[FIGURE 1b HERE]

Figure 1b. Toni is eating and Riitta looks out of the window.

```

13  RII:  °mm-m.°
        PRT
14      (4.1)
15  RII:  °m*ɬ,°
        -->*opens her mouth a little-->
16      *(1.0) #*(1.4) *(0.6) *(0.5) *(0.5)
        rii ->*glances at wall clock
                *closes her mouth and looks out
                *looks at table
                *reaches for her dishes on table
                *leans forward and takes dishes-->

        fig          #1c

```

[FIGURE 1c HERE]

Figure 1c. Riitta glances at the wall clock.

```

17  RII:  kyl*lä se$ on      $nyt men-tä-vä*  ¤kirjotta-an ¤ se,
        PRT      it  be.3SG now go-PAS-PC      write-ILL      it
        really have to go now and write the
        -->*rises up-----*walks towards kitchenette-->
                ¤glances at T¤
        ton                $turns head to R$looks at R-->
18      (.) process$-like, (.) (plamplam).
        process-like      blah-blah
        ton                -->$
19  TON:  °mm-hm?°
        PRT
20      (0.5)
21  TON:  (niinpä) se.
        oh yeah that
22      (1.3)
23  RII:  ku tul-i      ratkasu kerta,
        as came-3SG.PST solution PRT
        now that I got a solution
24      (.)
25  TON:  †mm-hm.
        PRT
26      *(13.4) *(21.0) *
        rii ->*washes dishes*turns, takes paper towel, dries hands and
        exits the break room*

```

Riitta first acknowledges Toni's telling by producing the response particle *mjoo* (line 5) and then agrees with him on the issue (line 7, Fig. 1a). Toni, who has just taken some food into his mouth (eating has not been transcribed), only registers and accepts her responsive actions with the minimal particle *mm-m*, thus closing the sequence (line 9, see Schegloff, 2007:120). Thereafter neither of them continues with talk and a lapse of several seconds ensues (lines 10–12). During the lapse, Riitta stops rubbing her face, reaches for her glasses on the table and puts them on and then turns

her head to look out of the window on her left side, showing signs of distancing herself from the shared focus of attention (Fig. 1b). Toni clears his throat but does not say anything (l. 11). Riitta continues with looking out, producing only the quiet *mm-m* (line 13) and then, after a 4.1-second lapse, opens her mouth a little in an audible way as if about to say something (line 15). However, her subsequent embodied actions foreshadow her forthcoming leaving: she moves her gaze and glances at the clock (Fig. 1c, see Laurier, 2008), looks out again and then at the table, leans forward in her chair and grabs hold of her dishes on the table (line 16).

As Riitta produces the account *kyllä se on nyt mentävä kirjottaa se process-like plamplam* ‘surely one has to go and write now the process-like blah-blah’, she rises up from her chair and starts to walk with her dishes towards the kitchenette (line 17). In the account, Riitta employs the necessive construction [*be-3SG V-tAvA*] ‘{one} has to V’, which expresses necessity or obligation but not an overt subject (e.g. Laitinen, 1995, 2006; VISK § 906, 1581). The use of such impersonal deontic declarative does not reveal who is the responsible agent of the nominated action (see Rossi & Zinken, 2016). However, Riitta’s simultaneous embodied engagement in carrying out a departure as well as citing her own writing task reveal that she alone is obliged to resume work (see Rossi & Zinken, 2016). The reason for her treating the writing task as mutually known by using the referent *se process-like plamplam* ‘the process-like blah-blah’, in which the pronoun *se* ‘it’ is employed like a definite article (see Laury, 1996) and *plamplam* is a nonsense word that substitutes for the rest of the theme or title of her writing (on placeholders, see e.g. Podlesskaya, 2010), is that a few minutes earlier she has solicited Toni’s assistance in translating the Finnish word *prosessinomainen* ‘process-like’ into English (not shown in the transcript). As Riitta does not look at Toni in the beginning of the account but only momentarily glances at him during the word *kirjottaa* ‘write-ILL’ just before she passes him on her way to the kitchenette, her gaze behaviour does not invite him to join her in the nominated action either (see Rossi & Zinken, 2016).⁴ As for Toni, he turns his head to look at Riitta when she initiates talk after the long lapse (line 17) and withdraws his gaze from her when she completes the word *process* (line 18). Verbally he first acknowledges the account with the quiet response particle *mm-hm* (line 19) and then implies that he recognizes the referent (line 21). However, he does not take a stand on the account, that is, whether she should go or stay in the break room, nor does he account for his own staying in the break room (even though he has stayed in the room longer than she has, he cannot leave because he is still eating). While walking towards the kitchenette to wash her dishes, Riitta still goes on to account for her leave taking by referring to the ‘solution’ (*ratkasu*, line 23) to her translation problem that earlier stopped her from doing the writing. In other words, she marks the turn as an explanation with the turn-initial conjunction *ku(n)*

⁴ The kitchenette is located on Toni’s right (not shown in the figures), so Riitta must walk between the table and Toni in order to get there.

'as' and exhausts the one legitimate reason not to resume work. Again, Toni acknowledges her account minimally with the response particle *mm-hm* (line 25).

Example 2 presents another case in which a participant refers to work obligations as she closes her break and resumes work, but here the departure results in the departure of a colleague, too. There are seven colleagues in the break room, and most of the participants are having a conversation in English. However, two colleagues, Ulla and Riitta, are having a side conversation on a settee in Finnish with each other. Before the extract starts, Ulla has told Riitta an embarrassing, yet benign and funny, story concerning an acquaintance of hers, and at the beginning of the extract, they close the storytelling sequence. Soon after that Ulla both produces a breathy transition marker and accounts for leaving the break room (lines 12 and 14).

(2) *I wonder if one should go dabble with something*

```

01  RII:  hän on kärsinyt se[n.
        he has paid the price.
02  ULL:                                [he he ɛon varmaan.ɛ
                                         sure he has.
03      (.)
04  ULL:  joo vaikka kuulosti että ihan oikeesti ei ɛh(h)aita%*nnu?ɛ
        yeah even though it sounded like it really didn't matter
                                         %looks at R->
        rii                                     *looks at U->
05  RII:  joo, [he# he %he he he he
        PRT
06  ULL:  [he# he %he he he% he he he *he he*
        -->%turns gaze forward%looks straight ahead-->
        rii                                     -->*turns gaze forward
                                         *looks straight ahead-->
        fig                                     #2a

```

[FIGURE 2a HERE]

Figure 2a. Riitta and Ulla laugh and look at each other.

```

07  RII:  †vo:i etɤ[tä.
        oh dear
08  ULL      ɤ[mm,
        ɤwipes her right eye with her hand-->
09      (0.5)
10  ULL:  °he he°ɤ
        -->ɤ
11      (1.5)
12  ULL:  HHH jaa%h, ((in a breathy voice))
        PRT
        -->%turns head-->
13      (.)%(.)
        ull -->%looks halfway at R-->
14  ULL:  >pitäs%-kö-hän si-tä jotaki ho#mmata,<%

```

```

should:3SG-Q-CLI it-PAR something:PAR do:INF
I wonder if one should go dabble with something
-->%looks down and leans forward-----%
fig #2b

```

[FIGURE 2b HERE]

Figure 2b. Riitta looks straight ahead; Ulla leans forward.

```

15      %*(0.9)%
ull    %rises up from settee%
rii -->*turns head to U-->
16 RII:  *mei%naa-k-ko,
        think-2SG-Q
        you think so
        -->*looks at U-->
ull    %takes hold of cup and moves it on the table-->
17      (.)
18 ULL:  *@meina%a-n?@
        think-1SG
        I think so
        ->%walks to exit-->
rii ->*looks right-->
19      *$(0.5)
rii ->*leans forward-->
sai    $glances at wall clock-->
20 ULL:  he [he
21 RII:  [#jo$*o-o, ((in a breathy voice))
        PRT
        -->*rises up-->
sai    -->$
fig    #2c

```

[FIGURE 2c HERE]

Figure 2c. Ulla walks towards the exit, Saija glances at the wall clock and Riitta leans forward on the settee.

```

22      (0.8)*(0.6)%(3.2)*((talk in English continues))
rii    -->*walks to exit*exits break room
ull    -->%exits break room

```

In line 1, Riitta, the recipient of the telling, provides the evaluative summary of the telling *hän on kärsinyt sen* ‘he has paid the price’ and, in so doing, adopts a compassionate stance towards the protagonist of the telling. Ulla, the teller, first laughs and aligns with the stance (line 2) but then slightly corrects Riitta’s understanding of the story (line 4). At the end of her turn, their eyes meet, and next Riitta acknowledges the new gist of the telling with the response particle *joo* (line 5). They both laugh, looking at each other (lines 5–6, Fig. 2a). During the laughing, first Ulla and then Riitta turns her head to look straight ahead, marking a possible completion of the sequence (see Rossano,

2012; see also Holt, 2010), and next Riitta produces the response *voi että* ‘oh dear’, both expressing an affective stance without making the stance lexically explicit and implicating a topic closure (line 7, see Hakulinen & Sorjonen, 2012). Ulla’s response *mm* implies that she has nothing more to add (see Hoey, 2017), and she wipes the tears from her right eye (lines 8–10). A lapse in talk of more than 2 seconds ensues, during which Ulla laughs faintly (lines 9–11).

After the lapse, Ulla produces an audible sigh and the breathy *jaa* and turns her head to look halfway at Riitta (line 12–13). The particle *jaa* has been shown to function as a receipt of new information, i.e. a change-of-state token (e.g. Sorjonen, 1999; Koivisto, 2017), but in this case, *jaa* follows a lapse and rather indexes a change in the speaker’s state of orientation (on the Danish change-of-state token *nå* in the transitions between activities, see Heinemann, 2017). At the same time, however, *jaa* implies that the decision making on the next course of action is incomplete and hence projects more to come (see also Siitonen & Wahlberg, 2015; Koivisto, 2019). Furthermore, the turn-initial sigh and the breathy nature of *jaa* add an extra nuance of resignation to the particle. That is, the sigh-like quality of the transition marker could indicate weariness at the face of some kind of exertion, implying the speaker’s divergent stances towards work and rest (see also Pehkonen, 2020). The whole turn may, therefore, be heard to orient to some obligatory or even laborious activity in the near future (line 12, see also Hoey, 2014). Indeed, in what follows, Ulla identifies the next potentially laborious activity by providing the account *pitäsköhän sitä jotaki hommata* ‘I wonder if one should go dabble with something’, still not looking at anybody (line 14, Fig. 2b). The account is in its syntactic form an interrogative clause in the conditional mood, including the necessive construction [*pitää* V-INF] ‘{one} must V’ without an overt subject to mark who should do the dabbling.⁵ Such a generic subject is an indexical site for other participants to be identified with (zero-person construction, see Laitinen, 1995, 2006), and also the reference to work (*jotaki hommata* ‘dabble with something’) is so general that it may apply to others’ duties, too (cf. the specific referent *se process-like plamplam* ‘the process-like blah-blah’ in Example 1). However, despite 1) the interrogative form, 2) the generic subject and 3) the general reference to work, the clitic particle *-hän* ‘I wonder’ constructs the turn as a personal pondering that is used to account for leaving without pursuing an answer (see Hakulinen, 2001 [1976]). Indeed, this is how Ulla herself orients to it: she leans forward on the settee and prepares to rise up already during the turn and does not seek eye contact with Riitta, thus acting towards closing the break and the interaction between the two.

⁵ There are several necessive constructions in Finnish, in which the finite verb is in the 3rd person singular and an optional overt subject is in the genitive case (see VISK § 1354). If the construction does not have an overt subject, then it is most often interpreted as the zero-person, that is, the referent of the missing subject is generic and human (see e.g. Laitinen, 1995, 2006).

A 0.9-second gap ensues (line 15), during which Ulla gets up without waiting for Riitta to respond, and Riitta turns her head to look at Ulla. Riitta, too, treats the previous verbal action as an account because she responds to it with the question *meinaakko* 'you think so' (line 16). At this point Ulla is already standing and moves her cup more towards the center of the table. Then she starts to walk towards the exit and produces the affirmation *meinaan* 'I think so' with an animated prosody (untypically in Finnish, rising intonation with stress on the second syllable, line 18), which provides the turn with an exaggeratedly enthusiastic tone. Ulla's short pulses of laughter after a 0.5-second pause (lines 19–20) indicate that she orients to her own previous turn as a humorous one not to be taken too seriously. During lines 16–21, the other five participants in the break room have a lapse in their conversation that has been conducted in English, so the Finnish-speakers among them may also hear Riitta and Ulla talking. Indeed, Saija, who is sitting on a chair next to the settee, glances at the clock on her left just after Ulla's affirmation (Fig. 2c), showing orientation to the passing of time off work (see also Laurier, 2008). During this silent moment, Riitta leans forward and then produces the particle *joo* 'yeah' or 'right' in a breathy manner and starts to rise from her seat before finishing the particle. In so doing, she indicates to the rest of the five participants – yet without looking directly at anybody – that she is leaving the break room. By using *joo* as a transition marker – compared to *jaa* that was used by Ulla – Riitta implies that her decision to leave has already been made (see Sorjonen, 2001:282). This is also in line with their bodily actions as Riitta produces the particle *joo* when she is already leaning forward and rising up (line 21) whereas Ulla produced the particle *jaa* (line 12) before her account for leave taking or any visible embodied actions projecting it (line 14).

Example 3, the last in this section, presents an almost similar account for leaving the break room as the previous Example 2. This time, however, the turn that is used for accounting for leaving is also treated as a proposal by the other participants, and the ending of the break and the resumption of work are negotiated collaboratively. Four colleagues Pirkko, Maija, Sanna and Johanna are sitting at the table in the break room. They are just closing the previous topic, and thereafter Pirkko produces an interrogative formatted account (lines 19–20).

(3) *should one go to work*

01 PIR: (niinku) si[tä systeemiä s[iellä-,
like the system there
02 MAI: [↑Mmm. [kaikke[a.
all
03 PIR: [jo[o,
PRT
04 SAN: [°mm-m°.
05 (.)
06 PIR: systeemiä s*ielä sotkeepi.
messing up the system over there
mai *nodding-->

```

07      (.)*(.)
mai    -->*
08  MAI:  jo[o.
      PRT
09  JOH:   [m-m,
10      ɤ(0.4)
      san  ɤcrosses hands, elbows leaning on table-->
11  SAN:  ((yawning))
12      (.)
13  PIR?:  °mm-m°.
14      (0.5)ɤ(0.3)%(0.8)
      san  -->ɤopens her crossed hands-->
      joh  %moves her crossed hands-->
15  PIR?:  %tsk,
      joh  ->%looks at watch-->
16      (.)#
      fig  #3a

```

[FIGURE 3a HERE]

Figure 3a. Johanna looks at her watch.

```

17  PIR:  .hɤh[h
      san  -->ɤgrabs and lifts her mug-->
18  SAN:  [°vähän&(-) [ (--) °,
      a little
19  PIR:  [ >↑PI%täš-kö   sitä% men-nä
      should:3SG-Q it-PAR go-INF
      should {one} go to work
      pir  &lifts left arm-->
      joh  -->%looks at P---%looks at her hands and
      adjusts ring on her finger-->
20  PIR:  &#t(h)ö-i-hin.<h&h
      work-PL-ILL
      to work
      ->&looks at and touches watch with RH
      &looks at and reaches for keys with RH-->
      fig  #3b

```

[FIGURE 3b HERE]

Figure 3b. Pirkko looks at and touches her watch with her right hand.

```

21  MAI:  ↑M[m-m?
      PRT
22  SAN:  [°pitäs      si-tä&#* me[n-nä°.&
      should:3SG it-PAR go-INF
      {one} should go
23  JOH:  [pitäs,&ɤ(.) pitäs*      kait ja,
      should:3SG should:3SG PRT and
      {one} shou- I guess {one} should and
      pir  -->&grabs keys on table with r. hand
      &holds keys in her hand-->
      mai  *leans forward-----*reaches for keys-->

```

san
fig

-->empties her cup-->>
#3c

[FIGURE 3c HERE]

Figure 3c. Pirkko grabs her keys on the table with her right hand.

Pirkko starts to close the previous sequence with her formulation of the upshot of the topic *systeemiä sielä sotkepi* 'messing up the system over there' that deals with some interference in the global postal system (lines 1 and 6, see Schegloff, 2007:186). Maija produces the aligning response *joo*, expressing that she does not have anything to add to the ongoing topic (line 8, see Sorjonen 2001:262–264), Johanna, in the same vein, produces the particle *mm* (line 9); Sanna in turn yawns audibly (line 11). Finally Pirkko produces the quiet *mm-m*, closing the topic (line 13). This is followed by a 1.6-second lapse in the conversation, during which Sanna merely opens her crossed hands and Johanna moves her hands slightly (line 14). Starting simultaneously with Pirkko's click sound *tsk* (line 15, see Ogden, 2013), Johanna takes a glance at her watch (Fig. 3a), and this is followed by Pirkko's resonating movement: towards the end of her verbal turn *pitäskö sitä mennä töihin* 'should one go back to work', Pirkko lifts her left hand and looks at and touches her watch (lines 19–20, Fig. 3b). Immediately after completing her turn, Pirkko looks at and reaches for and grabs her keys on the table (lines 20–23, Fig 3c). Her embodied actions reveal that she is already preparing for leaving.⁶

Here again, the turn referring to work obligations is composed of the necessive construction [*pitää* V-INF], the generic subject (zero-person construction) and the general reference to work, and it is syntactically an interrogative clause in the conditional mood. Yet, in contrast to Example 2, the turn does not include the clitic particle *-hän* that could translate as 'I wonder'. Coupled with the embodied actions that clearly project leaving, the turn cannot be treated as a question whether the speaker should leave for work or not – although it is interrogative in its syntactic form – but rather as an account that explains her ongoing embodied actions and forthcoming leaving. Although she does not look at any of the participants during and after the turn and thus does not direct her verbal action to anybody in particular, the others orient to it as a potential proposal: Maija accepts it at once by producing the particle *mm* with an emphatic or dynamic prosody (↑*Mm-m?*, line 21, see also Stevanovic, 2012) and by leaning forward to reach for her keys (line 23), and so does Sanna by using the same words as Pirkko *pitäs sitä mennä* '{one} should go' (line 22) and then by emptying her cup (line 23). Johanna likewise repeats the same verb *pitäs* '{one}should' in her acceptance, yet downgrading her commitment with the particle *kait* 'I guess' (line 23). In other words, their bodily and

⁶ In the data, the participants typically carry their keys in their hand when they enter the break room and let the keys lie on the table during the break. Consequently, grabbing one's keys on the table is a common embodied action that projects that the participant is about to leave the break room (Siromaa & Kärkkäinen, in preparation).

verbal actions display their orientation to Pirkko's action as one that projects Pirkko's ensuing departure from the break room, on the one hand, and as one that directs them to end their break as well, on the other hand.

To summarize the observations in Examples 1–3, the leaving participant may produce a verbal account that cites work obligations for ending the break and parting the company of the colleagues legitimately without explicitly obliging the others in the break room to act. In so doing, the account speaker orients to a particular kind of accountability with regard to co-presence and social solidarity among the participants in the break room: "I could certainly continue the break with you but work awaits." Before and during the account, the vocal and bodily-visual cues, such as glancing at the watch or clock on the wall and leaning forward and reaching for one's dishes or keys, foreshadow the transition from a break to work. The participants adjust their verbal and embodied actions carefully to each other's actions and utilize lapses in talk, particularly, so that the sequences of ending the break and returning back to work are collaboratively constructed under constant mutual monitoring. It is also worth noting that the length of the break is negotiated collaboratively between the participants, and such negotiations include resonating verbal and bodily resources.

4.2 "I'll go and get some coffee" – accounts citing other matters in leaving the break room

To highlight the special nature of the accounts citing work obligations, in this section we introduce two examples of accounting for leaving the break room which differ from Examples 1–3 in three particular ways. Firstly, the participant who is leaving the break room starts the departure before a recognizable closing of the previous sequence. Secondly, although the participant accounts for her departure, she does not appeal to her work obligations. Thirdly, the participants design their accounts differently compared to Example 1–3.

In Example 4, the participant who is leaving the break room accounts for her departure with an account that implies her being cold and therefore willing to move to a warmer location at the office (line 10). Such an account does not treat the departure as an obligation but as a matter of personal comfort, and certainly not an obligation that applies to the other participants. Consequently, the account is also responded to differently compared to the previous examples. In the example, three colleagues Sanna, Laura and Jaana are having tea around the table in the break room. Before the excerpt starts, Sanna has produced the noticing *ne on perjantain bileet* 'it's a Friday party' about the optional weekly after-work event of their work community that would take place later that day, fishing for information whether the others are going to take part in the party or not. After the noticing, the

participants have looked at each other by turns and only smiled to each other and laughed faintly. The excerpt starts as Laura produces the first verbal response to Sanna's noticing (lines 1–2).

(4) *but now I think I'll go to warm myself up*

```

01 LAU:  muuten hyvä mutta mun pittää läht(i)ä
         otherwise {sounds} good but I must go
         >>looks straight ahead-->
         san >>looks at table-->
         jaa >>looks at L-->
02      kaup[pa]an.
         to the store
03 SAN:  [peʁrjantaipileʔ[et,
         Friday party
04 JAA:  ʔ[ ((cough, &[cough))]
         -->ʔturns head right, lifts r. hand to cover her mouthʔ
05 SAN:  &[mut      ] ʔ>ei täällä oo& varmaan<
         but      there aren't really
         lau      -->&purses lips-----&
         jaa      ʔlowers r. hand and
                  turns head-->
06      #ketäänʔ [pileen]täjiä&kään.
         any party people here in the first place
07 LAU:  [mm,      ]
         PRT
                  &turns head right, lifts l. hand-->
         jaa      -->ʔlooks at S-->
         fig      #4a

```

[FIGURE 4a HERE]

Figure 4a. Jaana lowers her right hand after coughing, Laura looks straight ahead and Sanna looks at the table.

```

08 JAA:  nii-(h)i,
         PRT
09      &(.)*(0.6)*#(0.5)
         lau ->&touches her hair with l. hand-->
         san  -->*lifts gaze, upper body and hands
                  *takes r. hand close to her neck-->
         fig      #4b

```

[FIGURE 4b HERE]

Figure 4b. Laura touches her hair with left hand; Sanna makes hesitating movements with her hands.

```

10 SAN:  @mutta ny*t mie taija-n* lähte-ä& *lä:#*m&mittele-mä-ä#n.@
         but  now  I   think-1SG go-INF    warm-INF-ILL
         but  now I think I'll go to warm myself up
         -->*lowers hands-*turns head to L

```

```

                                *leans tow. L, touches table
                                *withdraws fr. L, looks a.->
lau                                -->&turns head tow. her mug, lowers
                                l. hand
                                &lifts mug with r.h.-->
fig                                #4c                                #4d

```

[FIGURE 4c HERE] [FIGURE 4d HERE]

Figure 4c. Sanna leans towards and looks at Laura.

Figure 4d. Sanna withdraws away from Laura and looks straight ahead.

```

11      *(0.4)
      san ->*stands up-->
12 JAA:  (miɑ*tä̃h?)
          what
          -->ɑlooks at her mug, moves r. hand-->
      san  -->*takes 2 steps backwards-->
13      (0.4)&(.)
      lau  -->&drinks-->
14 JAA:  mu-aɑ vähän @tä*ä@, ((creaky voice))
          I-PAR slightly this
          I'm kept slightly
          -->ɑgrabs and lifts her mug-->
      san  -->*moves chair and glances at J-->
15      (.)
16 JAA:  tee lämmiɑ#ttä-ä.
          tea warm-3sg
          warm by this tea
          -->ɑholds mug in r. hand-->
fig      #4e

```

[FIGURE 4e HERE]

Figure 4e. Jaana looks at her mug in her right hand, Laura drinks and Sanna smiles and glances at Jaana.

```

17      (.)
18 JAA:  †tä*ä kyllä pi&kkase,
          although this tends to be
      san  -->*walks into her office-->>
      lau  -->&lowers her mug-->
19      (.)
20 JAA:  meɑinaa& olla vähänɑ liian iso kuppi niinkuɑ juua silleen töis#sä
          slightly too large this mug for like drinking tea at work
          -->ɑshifts mug from r. hand to l. hand
          ɑtaps mug bottom with r. hand
          ɑmoves keys on table-->>
      lau  -->&lays mug on table, looks at J-->>
      fig

```

#4f

[FIGURE 4f HERE]

Figure 4f. Jaana looks at her mug in her left hand, Laura looks at Jaana, and Sanna is exiting the break room.

In lines 1–2, Laura acknowledges the Friday party as a good option but names her shopping duty as a reason for not being able to participate.⁷ Staring at the table (Figure 4a), Sanna draws the conclusion from Laura's response that the party most likely will not have any participants and implies her dissatisfaction with the state of affairs (lines 3, 5–6). Laura displays her sharing Sanna's stance by pursing her lips discontentedly (line 5) and producing the response particle *mm* (line 7). Jaana follows this exchange actively with her gaze: she looks at Laura when Laura produces her response (lines 1–2), then turns her head away from the others for a while and coughs (line 4–6), and finally turns to look at Sanna while Sanna implicitly complains about the anticipated outcome concerning the Friday party (line 6). Jaana then takes a turn but does not display willingness to take part in the party nor give any reason for not participating. Instead, giving a faint laugh, she produces the response particle *niin* and thus treats the 'no participants – no party' outcome as one possible outcome (see also Sorjonen 2001). Under the circumstances, the Friday party talk is not closed recognizably.

Laura, who has already let the others know about her household commitments, distances herself from the talk by turning her head to the right and lifting her left hand and touching her hair (lines 7–9, Figure 4b). Jaana in turn is still engaged in the talk: during a 1.3-second pause following her *niin* response, she still looks at Sanna, who now lifts her gaze from the table, straightens up and makes a couple of hesitating hand movements in front of her upper body (line 9, Figure 4b). However, Sanna does not elaborate the topic further but accounts for her leaving the break room by resuming – and appealing to – an earlier topic in their encounter, namely the cold temperature of the break room (*mutta nyt mie taijan lähteä lämmittelemään* 'but now I think I'll go to warm myself up', line 10). At the same time, she first lowers her hands, then turns her head and leans towards Laura and touches the table, and finally withdraws from Laura and looks straight ahead again (Figures 4c, d). Without waiting for the others' responses, she stands up and takes two steps backwards (lines 11–14). Laura responds to Sanna's account first in an embodied way: right after the word *lähteä* 'go', she prepares to drink by first looking at her mug and then lifting it (lines 10–13). Jaana in turn produces the question word *mitäh* 'what', but it is unclear whether it comprises the whole turn (an open-class repair initiator, see Haakana et al. 2016) or whether she leaves the turn unfinished. Either

⁷ It is worth noting that Laura employs the same necessity construction [*pitää* V-inf] '{one} must V' as the participants in Examples 2 and 3. However, here the syntactic form is not interrogative but declarative and the construction is combined with an overt subject which marks who must accomplish the duty in question (*mun pitää lähtiä kauppaan* 'I must go to the store').

way, during the turn and the following pause, she, too, looks at her tea mug and moves her hand towards it (lines 12–13), and then grabs and lifts it and produces the counter account *mua vähän tää tee lämmittää* ‘I’m kept slightly warm by this tea’ for staying in the break room and not leaving in Sanna’s wake (lines 14–16, Figure 4e). At the same time Sanna, who is already moving her chair under the table, acknowledges Jaana’s counter account by smiling and glancing at her. Still holding the tea mug in her hands, Jaana then goes on talking about the size of it with Laura while Sanna walks into her office next to the break room (Figure 4f, lines 18–).

Sanna’s declarative turn *mutta nyt mie taijan lähteä lämmittelemään* ‘but now I think I’ll go to warm myself up’ (line 10) with which she accounts for her leaving the break room differs from the accounts doing similar tasks in Examples 1–3 in many ways. First, Sanna orients to the previous Friday party topic as not (collaboratively) closed but still hanging in the air because she recognizably changes the topic, i.e. resumes an earlier topic, and marks the resumption with the turn-initial *mutta* ‘but’ (see Sutinen, 2014; Helisten, 2018; VISK § 1034). Second, she does not use a necessity construction to represent the departure as an obligation or necessity. Rather, by using the modal verb *taitaa*, which expresses possibility (*mie taijan lähteä* ‘I think I’ll go’), she treats the departure as her own choice rising out of personal discomfort. Third, despite the fact that she directs the account specifically to Laura by leaning towards her and by seeking eye contact with her, Sanna designs the account in such a way that it explicitly names herself as the agent of the nominated action and does not oblige Laura (nor Jaana) to leave as well. Fourth, Jaana’s verbal response to the account is another account (counter account) that explains why Sanna’s reason to leave does not apply to her. It is worth noting that in our data such counter accounts are not produced after a first account that refers to work obligations. Here, however, Jaana’s counter account shows that a participant accounting and preparing for leaving the break room makes it relevant to the others to orient to leave-taking on some level as well.

Example 5, the latter in this section, presents another case in which the participant who is leaving the break room accounts for the departure citing something else than her work obligations. Here, however, the departure is different from the one in Example 4 because the named reason to leave is her going to get coffee. Thus the account also reveals that the absence from the break room is only momentary and she is coming back. Similar to Example 4, the account speaker leaves the break room even though the previous, or rather ongoing, topic is not closed. In the excerpt three colleagues Saila, Maiju and Terttu are sitting around the table in the break room and Maiju is telling a story about the breakdown of their car on the road and the following quarrel with the insurance company over whether their insurance covers the concomitant towing expenses from such a far distance from home. The excerpt starts when Saila, one of the recipients of the story, aligns with the teller’s stance towards the policy conditions of the insurance (line 1).

(5) *I'll go and get some coffee*

01 SAI: ↑reis[sun& pää]lähän*& se [ta*pah&tuu.
it happens on the road you know

02 TER: [he he]

03 MAI [ni*in &ku se on se ɤ*idea miks se
yeah cause that's the idea why

sai >>looks at T&looks at M&looks at T&looks at M-->
 ter >>looks at S-----ɤlooks at M-->
 mai >>leans backwards----*lies back*turns head to T-*turns head fwd-->

04 va*kuutus ju[&uri on?&*ɤ
to have the insurance in the first place

05 SAI: [&↑NII-i,&*ɤ ↓se o se ylleesä se aja%&tus.
exactly that's the idea in most cases

-->&shakes her head&moves fork onto plate&lifts plate-->

mai -->* *looks at table-->
 ter -->ɤlowers her gaze
 ann %enters room,
 walks tow. table-->

06 (.)

07 &↑j:oo.
 PRT

sai-->&stands up, looks left-->

08 (0.3)

09 [ɤ*>mä hae-n kahvi-a?<]
 I go.and.get-1SG coffee-PAR
I'll go and get some coffee

10 MAI: [ɤ#no sinne] ne kyllä ne& [tie- toki,
well there they did they cer- of course

11 ANN: [↑heelou.
hello

mai -->*lifts gaze, turns head tow. S and A-->
 sai -->&turns left-->
 fig #5a

[FIGURE 5a HERE]

Figure 5a. Saila stands up; Annika approaches the table.

12 (.)

13 MAI: maɤ%kso kai&kki,
paid everything

sai -->&walks away-->
 ter ɤlooks at A-->
 ann -->%lays dishes on table-->

14 (.)

15 TER: he%[lou.ɤ
hello

16 MAI: %[(matɤkat) ja ɤ*nää vielä,
the trips and also these

-->*follows S with her head movement-->

ter -->ɤturns headɤlooks at M-->>
 ann -->%moves chair-->

17 SAI: &%*nii*,
PRT
-->&glances at M while walking-->
ann -->%sits down-->
18 MAI: Kiu#vako&skellaki ku me oltiin* sie%llä hotellissa nii,
when we were for example in Kiuvakoski in the hotel
-->*
sai -->&walks away-->
ann -->%
fig #5b

[FIGURE 5b HERE]

Figure 5b. Saila glances at Maiju while walking away to get a cup of coffee.

19 (0.3)
20 MAI: mä sa&noin Veeral et varmana* otetaan taksi,
I said to Veera that we'll certainly take a taxi
*turns head to T-->>
sai -->&exits break room and video

In lines 1–5 Saila and Maiju agree on the idea that the insurance should self-evidently cover all towing expenses, implying that it would be absurd if it did not. Terttu takes part in the conversation by looking at the others by turns (lines 1–5) and aligns with their stance by laughing (line 2). During her latter agreeing turn, Saila first shakes her head in disbelief in the face of the conduct of Maiju's insurance company and then moves her fork onto her plate and lifts the plate from the table, preparing for leaving (line 5). After a micro pause she starts standing up, marking the transition with the particle *joo* (line 7, see also Example 2, line 21), and then during getting up, accounts for her leaving with the turn *mä haen kahvia* 'I'll go and get some coffee' (line 9, Figure 5a). Simultaneously with Saila's account, Maiju lifts her gaze from the table and turns her head towards Saila and Annika, who is approaching the table from the right, and continues by telling the story further, addressing Saila especially: she looks at the opposite side of the table (lines 10–16) and follows Saila's departure by turning her head (lines 16–18). Indeed, while walking away, Saila glances at Maiju and responds with the level intonation *nii* particle, displaying that she is still listening and that she treats the prior talk as incomplete, and invites Maiju to continue (line 17, Figure 5b, see also Sorjonen, 2001:238).

Like in Example 4, the participant who leaves the break room does so before the previous talk has come to a recognizable end: she lifts her plate during her last agreeing turn (line 5) and verbally marks her transition with the particle *joo* as she starts to get up, that is, before the others produce more talk or any particles that might imply topic closure (cf. Examples 1–3). Also worth noting is that the prosody of the particle is different from the prosody of the same particle in Example 2, in which

the particle *joo* marks the transition from break to work (Example 2, line 21). Here the particle starts with a high pitch and ends with a falling intonation and although the voice quality is somewhat leaky, it is not breathy nor sighing as in Example 2 but rather dynamic. When she is already getting up, she accounts for her leaving with the turn in which she does not use a necessity construction to represent the departure as an obligation or necessity but she uses the first person singular declarative clause without any modal verbs as a parenthetical account (*mä haen kahvia* 'I'll go and get some coffee', line 9, see also Goodwin 1987). In other words, she explicitly names herself as the agent of the nominated action and does not wait for a response from the others nor oblige them to act in any way. In line with this, she receives no verbal response, and Maiju still orients to her as one of the present recipients and resumes the storytelling. All in all, here the account speaker does not claim to leave the break room permanently but implies to return soon. Clearly this account is doing different interactional work compared to the accounts in Examples 1–4.

To sum up, in Examples 4 and 5 the participant who is leaving the break room accounts for the departure citing something else than work obligations, namely personal preferences. This is not the only difference between the examples in this section (4.2) and the ones in the previous section (4.1). Here the leaving participant initiates the departure before the collaborative closure of the previous sequence and orients to her leaving as taking place halfway through the ongoing break activity. This emerges in turn design as the leaving participant does not involve the others in the departure but explicitly names herself as an agent of the nominated action, without obliging the others in any way. This is emphasized by the lack of the zero-person construction and necessity construction (cf. Examples 1–3) and by the use of the first person non-deontic declarative instead.

5. Concluding discussion

This study on work obligations as a resource for ending breaks has shown that the participants engage in subtle orchestration of multimodal resources to coordinate the ongoing activity and the ending of the break, and it is their sensitivity to social solidarity that determines when and how to close the break. In organizing their break closings, the participants make use of the fact that the overall structural organization of breaks is interim in nature. That is, break taking is an activity that is positioned between two set activities: the beginning of the break suspends or ends one activity and the ending resumes the prior activity or begins a new one. Consequently, the participants taking a break are necessarily going to engage in some (pre)determined activity after the break. Our data have shown that in the workplace setting such activity is often quite self-evidently work. And since such post-break activity is an inevitable part of the structure of break, it is always available for the participants to invoke.

Our preliminary ethnographic observations and our analysis of the video data have evidenced that citing work obligations is a routinized practice to end a break in workplace settings. The practice is employed particularly by the participants who have taken turns actively in the previous talk. Yet they do not employ it at just any given sequential position of unfolding interaction but in sequence closure and the ensuing lapse. In other words, in managing their ending of the break, the participants monitor the ongoing interaction and utilize the forthcoming lapse, which offers a window of opportunity for leaving the break room. In this sequential environment, if the participants choose to account for their leaving verbally, they typically appeal to work obligations. Such accounts frequently include one of the Finnish *necessive* constructions without an overt subject (see Examples 1–3 and our ethnographic note a). By using these resources, the participants displace agency for their action (“one is compelled to go” vs. “one is willing to go”), but do not take an explicit stand on who must resume work. More specifically, they do not oblige the others to end their break. Moreover, by producing the account at the same time with or after glancing at any kind of a clock, leaning forward in one’s seat, reaching for keys or standing up, they displays that they do not wait for the others to respond verbally nor to follow their example (see also Rossi & Zinken, 2016). These kinds of accounted for and embodied transitions nevertheless offer the other participants a possibility to end their break collaboratively in the first speaker’s wake without marking their own leave-taking verbally.

Our examples of the accounts citing reasons other than work obligations show that they are also employed when leaving the break room but somewhat differently. They do not necessarily have as their home environment a similar sequential position as the accounts relating to work obligations but may appear before collaborative sequence closure. Furthermore, by naming the speaker as the agent of the nominated action, these accounts explicitly indicate that they apply only to the speaker. And in the end, if the account includes an implicit promise that the speaker will return to the break room, the account is doing different interactional work compared to accounts referring to work obligations. These divergent features further point out the conventionalized nature of citing work obligations as a practice to end the break at work.

Ultimately our examples highlight one way in which social solidarity is intertwined with the sequential unfolding of interaction (e.g. Heritage, 1984; Clayman, 2002). To end the break legitimately and in a socially sustainable manner, the first participant to leave uses, among other multimodal resources, an account citing work obligations, and thus presents the resumption of work as some obligatory or even laborious activity, perhaps even insinuating preference for staying in the company of others. At the same time, the participant displays her orientation to the leave taking as an accountable action. This accountability derives from the participants’ orientation to social obligations and is manifested in the examined accounts and – above all – synchronized multimodal actions that the participants employ to construct and maintain social solidarity among themselves. That the participants involve

themselves in such interactional effort, underlines the importance of break-taking activities and implicates that the participants orient to breaks as meaningful moments of togetherness.

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Appendix A: Symbols used in transcription (adapted from Jefferson, 2004).

,	continuing intonation
.	terminal intonation (falling)
?	rising intonation
[]	overlapping speech
(.)	micro pause
(1.1)	pause and its length in seconds
<u>underlining</u>	emphasis
:	lengthening
-	truncated speech
he he	laughter or laughing quality
h	hearable exhalation
.h	hearable inhalation
.joo	(period before word) word delivered during inhalation
j(h)oo	within-speech aspiration, indicating laughter or sighing
£word£	smiley voice
@word@	change in voice quality
° °	soft voice
CAPITALS	loud voice
↑	sudden rise of pitch
> <	sped up speech
()	uncertain hearing
(-)	item not heard
(())	researchers' comment

Appendix B: Symbols used in glossing (adapted from Leipzig Glossing Rules, 2015).

1SG	first-person singular ending
2SG	second-person singular ending
3SG	third-person singular ending
CLI	clitic
ILL	illative
INF	infinitive
PAR	partitive
PAS	passive
PC	participle
PL	plural
PRT	particle
PST	past tense
Q	interrogative

Figures



Figure 1a.



Figure 1b.



Figure 1c.



Figure 2a.



Figure 2b.



Figure 2c.

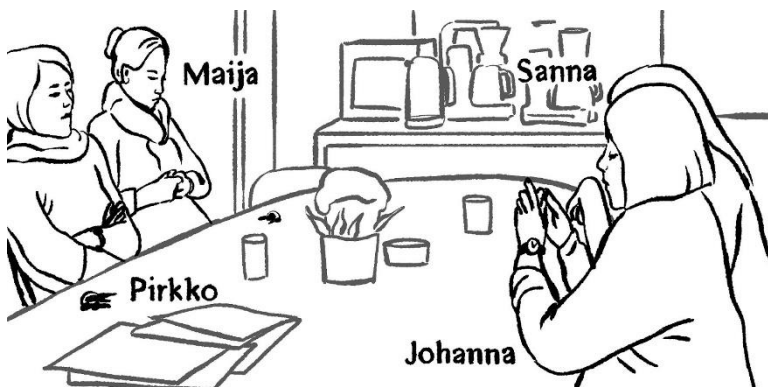


Figure 3a.



Figure 3b.



Figure 3c.



Figure 4a.



Figure 4b.



Figure 4c.



Figure 4d.



Figure 4e.



Figure 4f.



Figure 5a.



Figure 5b.