Conversation analysis in social work research: a scoping review

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Abstract
Given the emphasis on communication in social work, the empirical study of social work interactions is an important area for research. By examining recordings of naturally occurring social interaction and analysing participants' practices in close detail, conversation analysis (CA) provides rigorous resources for understanding the practical challenges and opportunities of professional intervention. Since the origins of CA in the 1970s, this approach has been used for investigating interactions in a wide range of institutional domains. Based on articles published in peer-reviewed journals in English, this scoping review maps the development of CA in social work research. The review gives an overview of the institutional contexts, professional groups and client groups that have been investigated using CA methods, as well as how their interactional practices have been examined. We show contributions of CA to understanding social work in terms of specific interactional practices, how practitioners accomplish challenging institutional activities in interactions and how theories and ideals about interactions relate to social work practice. The review highlights research gaps concerning clients' resources for pursuing agendas, embodied conduct in social work, contributions to the cumulative body of CA research and implications for practice. We discuss these findings in relation to CA

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as a relatively new approach in social work research and the challenges which CA may need to address to become a more integrated part of social work research and practice.

Introduction

Talk and interaction are 'the backbone of social work' (Hall et al., 2014: 2) and communication skills 'lie at the heart of social work practice' (Richards et al., 2005: 409). Thus, it might be expected that the influence of conversation analysis (CA) – a rigorous approach for systematically studying social interaction – would be significant in social work research and training. CA studies have shed light on the interactional work in many different institutional settings (Antaki, 2011) and have provided a basis for the development of communication training (e.g. Stokoe, 2014). Yet, social work has generally turned not to CA but to communication theory or humanistic psychology, focussing on idealised models of talk rather than practical realisations (DeMontigny, 2019). Although social work researchers sometimes investigate naturally occurring encounters, using observations and audio-recordings, these interactions tend to be analysed with frameworks that examine what the practitioner does according to predefined categories (e.g. Forrester et al., 2020).

By contrast, CA research examines how participants in interaction themselves produce and coordinate their actions in orderly ways by using a range of audible and visible resources (see Sidnell & Stivers, 2014, for an overview). This focus on participants' own orientations to the meaning of their actions can improve our understanding of the complex dynamics as institutional guidelines, law and policy are realised in practice. In presenting CA as an alternative approach for investigating interaction in social work, Rawls et al. (1997: 135) conclude: 'Instead of looking for the meaning of actions and utterances in private intentions and mental states, social workers need instead to look toward the immediate interactional surroundings for an understanding of the interactional relevance of behaviour and of our own contribution to that behaviour'. Promoting an 'ethnomethodological turn' in social work, DeMontigny (2020: 131) also suggests that work within this broader field – of which CA is an important part – 'provides a pathway for both understanding and teaching effective social work through a reflective and reflexive turn'.

To advance the uses of CA in social work research and practice, there is a need for a better understanding of its contributions so far. Previous review studies have been important for demonstrating the contribution of CA in different settings, such as helpline interaction (Bloch and Leydon, 2019), online interaction (Paulus et al., 2016) or interview interaction (Roulston, 2006) and have also synthesised research about best practice in healthcare, for example, shared decision-making (Land et al., 2017) and communication with patients about behavioural change (Albury et al., 2019). The objective of the current

study is to provide an overview of existing CA research in social work and closely related settings, examining what signifies this subfield and how it has developed. For research in social work and closely related settings, we ask a) when and where this research has been published and b) which professional fields and client problems have been studied. In a core sample of studies specifically focussing on social work *practice*, we also ask c) how the studies have been designed, d) what the foci and findings of conducted research have been and e) what implications for social work this literature has. By such means, this review sheds light on the benefits and challenges associated with applying a CA approach to social work and identifies gaps in the research conducted so far.

Methods

We examine articles that apply CA methods to interactions involving social workers and/ or interactions that focus on social problems intimately linked to social work or that take place within social work-related settings. We draw on Arksey and O'Malley's (2005) framework for scoping reviews, which is suitable for investigating multi-disciplinary fields as it provides a technique for 'mapping' literature that may address broader topics. Scoping studies typically aim to summarise the extent, variety and characteristics of conducted research in a heterogeneous field and identify patterns and gaps in the literature (Tricco et al., 2018). The analytic process is not linear, but iterative, organised in five stages that may be repeated where necessary: (1) identifying the research question, (2) identifying relevant studies, (3) selecting studies for analysis, (4) charting the data and (5) collating, summarising and reporting results (Arksey and O'Malley, 2005). Our work has been informed by the PRISMA extension for scoping reviews (Tricco et al., 2018); we consulted the checklist when designing the study and incorporated applicable checklist items at the reporting stage (non-applicable items included using a structured abstract, which conflicted with journal guidelines).

### Eligibility criteria and search terms

The review focuses on published articles in peer-reviewed journals in English, until and inclusive of 2020. The delimitation in terms of language was made partly for practical reasons – despite the aggregated language skills within the author team, we would be unable to cover more than a dozen languages. This choice is also aligned with the objective to describe the formation of a cross-national subfield of research and is appropriate as the development of the field coincides with the increased focus on publication in English in academia more generally. The choice to study only articles in peer-reviewed journals has similar grounds. Although there is a significant amount of influential work in this field published as doctoral theses, book chapters or books (e.g. Baker et al., 2005; DeMontigny, 2019; Hall et al., 2006; Hall et al., 2014, Seltzer et al., 2001; to mention only a few), the language of this type of publications varies more based on the country of origin than peer-reviewed articles; including such sources only in English would therefore make the sample more biased in terms of country of origin. For similar reasons, we excluded 'grey literature', such as reports or government documents, which are important for social

work but beyond the scope of this review. Finally, because CA as a term was not used before 1970, we included studies as early as possible, with the aim to shed light on the development of the field over 50 years (cf., Parry and Land, 2013).

To identify relevant studies, we searched Scopus, Web of Science, EBSCO, ProQuest and the EMCAWiki, using a combination of terms related to both CA and social work. We tested a wide range of search terms to ensure we would capture articles that were relevant to the study without delimiting the search field too much. As Arksey and O'Malley (2005: 23) argue, it is 'important to maintain a wide approach in order to generate breadth and coverage', suggesting that an initially comprehensive selection can be reduced in subsequent stages. We did not employ an alternative search strategy (e.g. hand-searching or consulting our networks for suggestions) since investigating the results of formal searches itself gives insight into the field's formation and delimitation, in line with the purposes of our study.

To capture studies using CA, the criterion was that any of the terms 'conversation analysis', 'discursive psychology' (DP) or 'membership categorisation analysis' (MCA) would be used in the title, keywords or abstract, thus excluding broader terms such as 'communication' or 'interaction', which would generate a wide range of studies outside of our scope. The choice to include DP and MCA was motivated by the fact that articles at the intersection of these fields and CA are sometimes labelled not as CA (despite applying a CA methodology and contributing to the CA literature) but as DP or MCA. A case in point is a paper by Hepburn and Wiggins (2005), which was identified in our search despite being framed as DP rather than CA and was found to indeed conduct a CA investigation in conjunction with DP. Meanwhile, the term 'ethnomethodology' was not used as a standalone search term since it, like 'communication', generated an unmanageable number of articles beyond the scopes of our study. In the initial searches performed to ensure the relevance of different search terms, we checked the first 30 articles found using 'ethnomethodology' as a search term and concluded that these were either non-empirical, did not examine interaction in accordance with CA or (if they did) had already been captured by other search terms.

Similarly, what is seen as *social work* is not obvious, especially when looking at literature from many countries, in which the boundaries of social work as an academic and professional discipline may vary (a point we return to in the concluding discussion). For this reason, we adopted an inclusive approach to make sure we identified studies of social work that did not necessarily use the *term* 'social work' in the abstract, title or keywords (but might use other relevant terms, such as 'child protection', or 'substance abuse'). We used a search string of social work-relevant words, including linguistic and grammatical variations, relating to various client groups (e.g. 'unemployed'), social problems (e.g. 'poverty'), professional practice (e.g. 'foster care') and theoretical concepts (e.g. 'street-level bureaucracy') (see the Appendix for a full list). The search string was developed by the authors and assessed by two social work experts to make sure we included a sufficient variety of social work areas. This procedure is in line with Arksey and O'Malley's (2005) recommendation that experts and practitioners should be consulted to enhance the results and make them more useful to the field of practice.
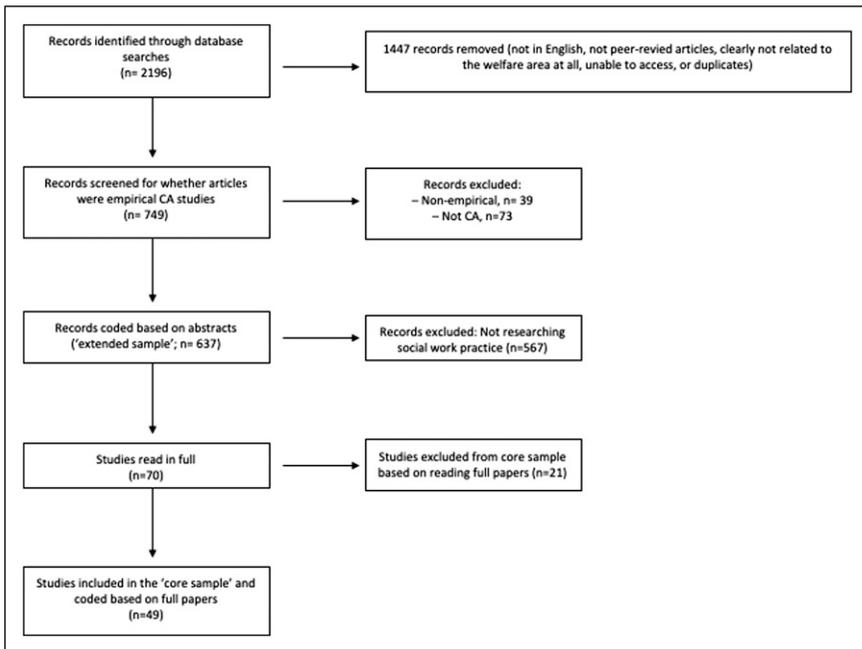
Figure 1. The review process.

Data charting and analysis

The performed searches resulted in 749 articles, after removing duplicates as well as records that were not articles, not in English or clearly unrelated to our scope. These data were then reduced and analysed in two steps (see Figure 1).

First, we read all abstracts and assessed whether the studies were empirical applications of CA – which 637 of the articles were – hereafter referred to as our 'extended sample'. Note that articles labelled as DP or MCA – that were included in our searches – were also assessed for whether they used CA at this stage and those that did not were excluded. Abstracts were then coded for whether the studies investigated social work practice, what contexts were studied, etc. (see the Appendix for a list of codes). The process was collaborative in that the team jointly decided which codes for data extraction to use, based on our aims, and coded a first batch of ten papers together to verify that the coding scheme was relevant, and the assessments were aligned. We then divided the remaining articles between the team members and coded them individually, while meeting regularly to discuss difficult cases and ensure continuous alignment. The codes were used for descriptive, quantitative analysis of the extended sample to identify developments in the broader field of studies dealing with social work-related topics, that is, that investigate problems key for social work (e.g. substance abuse, intimate partner violence or learning disabilities) or closely related organisational settings or professions (such as public

administration or care work in residential homes). Such studies contribute important insights to social work as a discipline and professionals in these settings are sometimes trained as social workers.

Second, we singled out the articles coded as specifically investigating social work *practice* (70 in total), which were read in full. We found that 21 of these papers did not, in fact, investigate social work practice, and the remaining 49 articles – hereafter referred to as our 'core sample' – were then analysed in depth, partly informed by Parry and Land's (2013) method for systematic reviews of CA studies. Because our aim was to give an overview of the field rather than identify best practice, we used descriptive coding categories for data extraction suggested by Parry and Land (2013). This coding involved identifying research questions, commenting on data type and transcription, describing the institutional contexts under study, identifying CA phenomena analysed, checking how interactional details were treated and describing findings and practical implications (see the Appendix for a list of the articles in core sample, as well as their most important features). However, we excluded quality appraisal and aggregate analysis, in line with the methodology of scoping reviews (cf., Arksey and O'Malley, 2005). As with the extended sample, data extraction was done first jointly with a smaller set of five articles, upon which the codes were adapted and clarified. For example, while Parry and Land coded for CA phenomena, we coded for social work phenomena too. We continued individually where each team member read and coded a selection of the remaining papers. We used thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006) to identify recurrent patterns in the qualitative data (aim, phenomenon, findings and implications). These were first independently identified by three of the authors and then agreed upon by all authors.

Findings

Our findings indicate that CA has begun to establish itself as a subfield in social work research, but its influence is still limited. The analytic results are reported in five sub-sections. First, we give an overview of the broader development of the field. Second, we describe the institutional contexts: what professionals and client groups have been studied so far? In the third section, we discuss the design of the studies, and in the fourth, we report three themes in the foci and findings of articles in the core sample. Finally, we examine how these articles frame their implications.

When and where: An overview of the field and its development

The number of studies using CA to examine social work settings has grown steadily since the 1980s but still constitutes a fairly small field. In the extended sample, the first article was published in 1983, whereas in the core sample, the first article appeared over a decade later (see Figures 2 and 3). It is thus only in the last twenty-five years that work applying CA to social work practice more specifically has been published in international journals.

Corresponding to general patterns of CA publications, we found that most studies in our extended sample have been conducted in English-speaking and European countries, particularly the Nordics. Most studies ($n = 93$) were from the UK, followed by Sweden

($n = 30$), the US ($n = 26$), Australia ($n = 22$) and Finland ($n = 18$). It is, however, important to note that in most cases ($n = 330$), the country of origin was not specified in the abstract. Similar patterns are visible in the core sample ($n = 49$), with the UK being the most
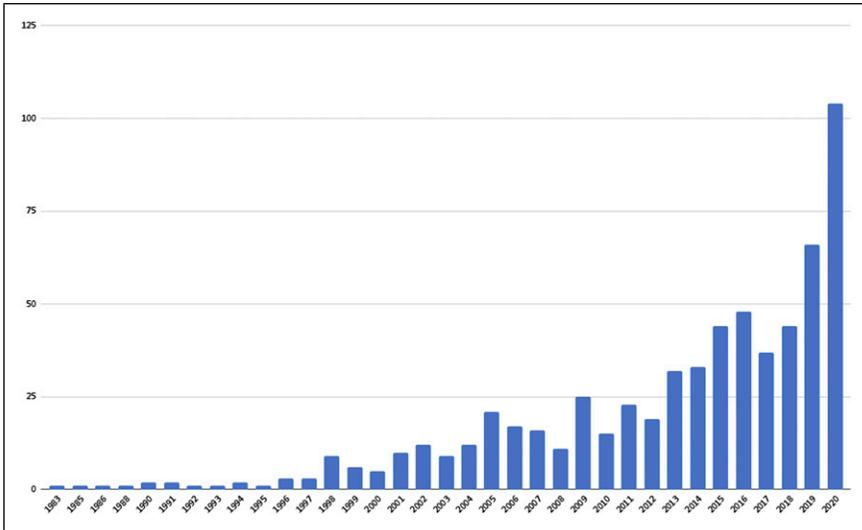
Figure 2. Articles per year in extended sample.
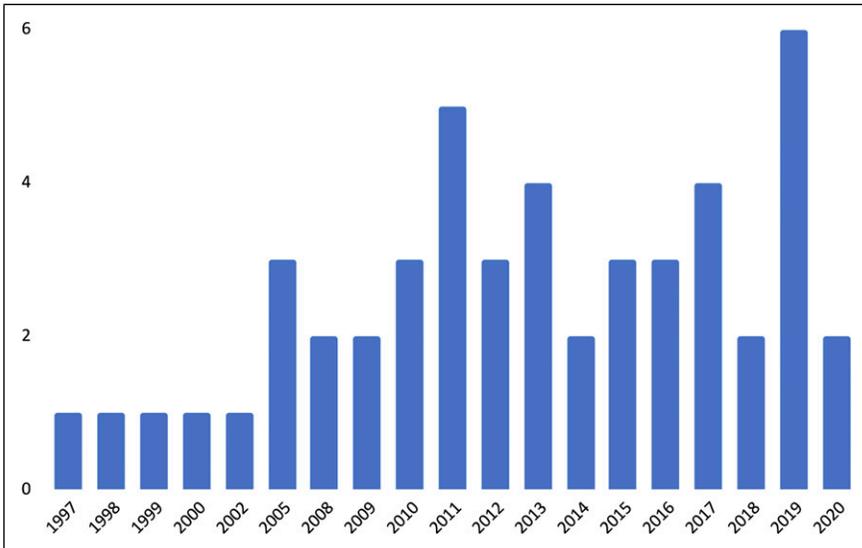
Figure 3. Articles per year in core sample.

Figure 4. Professional groups in extended sample.

common country of study (*n* = 14), followed by the Netherlands (*n* = 7) and Denmark, Canada and Germany (*n* = 3, respectively).

We found more variation regarding publishing outlets, which speaks to the inter-disciplinary character of both social work and CA (cf., Sidnell & Stivers, 2014: 3). In the extended sample, 276 different journals were represente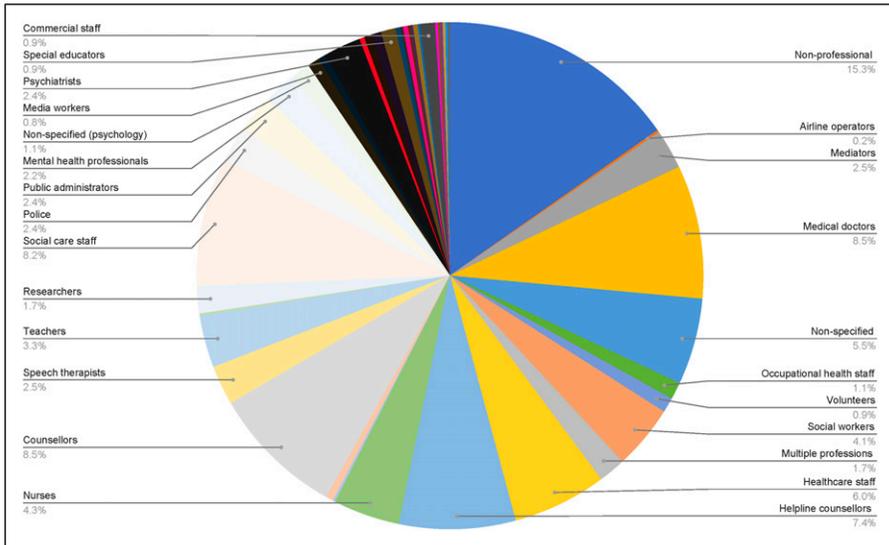d, with those from the discourse field being most prevalent. *Research on Language and Social Interaction* was the most common source (*n* = 33), followed by *Discourse Studies* (*n* = 32) and the *Journal of Pragmatics* (*n* = 23). This is likely a consequence of the wide range of topics and fields captured by our searches, so that although many studies were published in journals focussing on specific fields of application (including social work, but also healthcare, public administration, etc.), no single journal gathered a large amount of CA studies. This was not the case in our core sample. In line with the more explicit focus on social work, about half of the papers were published in social work journals and just over a quarter in discourse journals. The most common source was *Qualitative Social Work* (*n* = 5), followed by the *Journal of Social Work Practice* (*n* = 4) and the *International Journal of Child and Family Welfare* (*n* = 3).

Whose interaction? Professional fields and clients' problems

The range of professions featured in the extended sample illustrates the multiplicity of contexts where issues closely related to social work as a discipline are dealt with, and the fact that clients who meet social workers may have compound problems and often see professionals in related fields too (see Figure 4). Of the studies featuring a specific
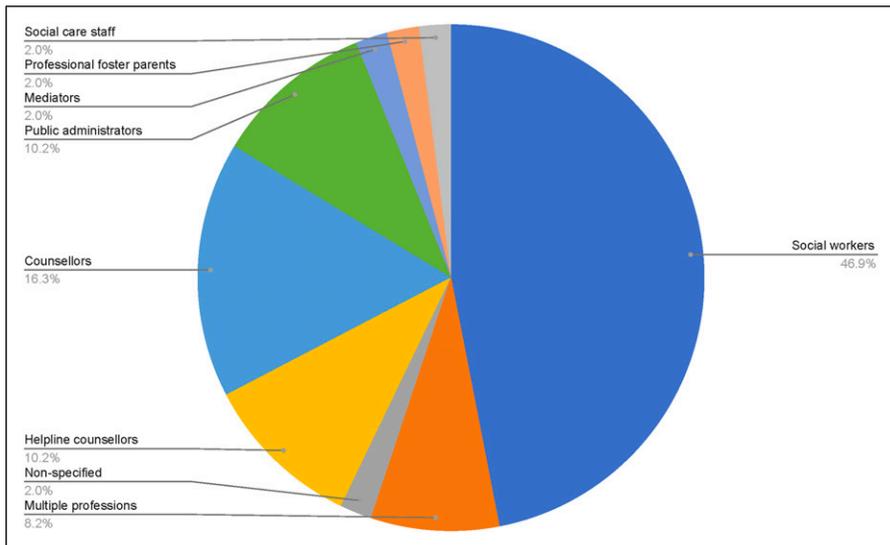
Figure 5. Professional groups in core sample.

professional group, counsellors and medical doctors were most common (each featured in 8.5% of publications), followed by social care staff (8%). While only 4% of the studies specifically claimed to include social workers, it is important to note that these labels are based on the abstracts alone, and so categories such as 'counsellors' may include trained social workers.

In contrast, the core sample included fewer professions (see Figure 5). Social workers were the largest group (47%), followed by counsellors (16%), public administrators (10%) and helpline counsellors (10%). The variation here speaks to how the terminology for describing professionals engaged in social work may vary (also depending on national context). The data came from a variety of settings, with social work with children and families in a therapeutic, statutory or helpline setting being most common, while we also found examples of unemployment units, mental health services and addiction treatment centres.

The extended sample included a wide range of featured clients (see Figure 6): the most common were people with learning disabilities (16%), people with mental illness (10%) and people with communicative disorders (7%). This reflects how our initial searches captured a large number of studies of encounters within healthcare and social care. In the extended sample, 18% of the studies focussed on children or youth, 7% on older people and the remainder either specified the clients as adults or did not mention age at all.

In our core sample, most studies (78%) examined interactions between professionals and clients and the largest client categories (see Figure 7) were people who were un-employed (10%), parents of children 'in need' (10%) and prospective adoptive parents (10%). If adding up all the parent categories (including prospective parents), they
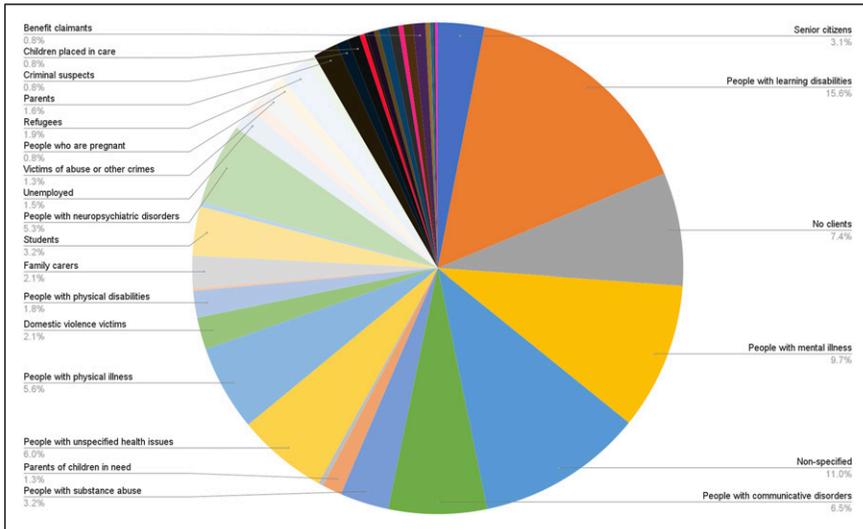
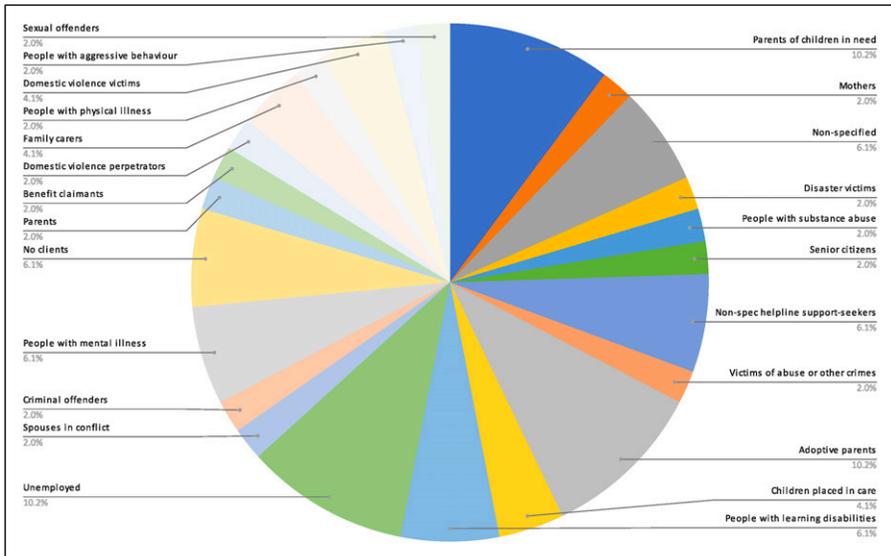**Figure 6** Client groups in extended sample.

Figure 7. Client groups in core sample.

accounted for 29% of the studies, making encounters with parents the most studied. Meanwhile, we found no studies of social work encounters with, for instance, people who were homeless. Regarding clients' age categories, most studies in the core sample were of

interactions with adults – if age was specified – while 33% featured children or youth. Only one study categorised clients as 'older adults'. The larger interest in children or youth, as compared to older people, was thus a more emphasised pattern in the core sample.

Study design: applying CA to contribute to social work research

Looking more closely at how the analytic approach was described in the core sample, we see that a vast majority of studies (about 90%) described using or being informed by CA. About half used CA by itself, but several combined CA with ethnomethodology or other approaches, such as discursive psychology, membership categorisation analysis or discourse analytical approaches. There were also a few articles that described the approach in a different way (e.g. 'micro sequential analysis' or 'interaction analysis').

Eleven of the articles were single-case studies, that is, analysed a single encounter, whereas most ($n = 21$) had what we call a multi-case design, that is, data included more than one encounter with analysis focussed on broader interactional patterns of institutional relevance. Seventeen of the articles were collection-based, examining the systematic use of a particular feature or action in a specific sequential context across the encounters. Analyses of deviant examples that could confirm patterns in such collections were rare ($n = 5$). Most studies ($n = 42$) were of face-to-face interaction, whereas seven studies were of mediated interaction such as telephone. Nevertheless, audio recordings dominated the examined studies ($n = 34$). In the studies of face-to-face data, 28 relied on audio recordings (sometimes with participant observation), meaning that it was not possible to include and analyse participants' gaze, gesture or other visible forms of bodily conduct. It is not so surprising, therefore, that almost three quarters ($n = 36$) of the studies in our sample did not include any analysis of embodied elements.

Most of the articles described using a Jeffersonian approach to transcription (see Hepburn & Bolden, 2014) but the level of detail varied. Thirty one studies included detailed transcripts with linguistic and interactional details, timed gaps and pauses, and marked overlapping talk. In 23 studies, however, transcriptions included little information about delivery, and non-verbal features such as laughing or sighing were described rather than transcribed (e.g. noting *that* the participant laughs rather than capturing the quality of the laughter as, for example, HAHAHA or hehehe). Transcripts did not necessarily include line numbers and it was sometimes difficult to detect when an utterance was intonationally, grammatically or pragmatically complete (what conversation analysts call a turn-constructional unit, or TCU). Articles with data from languages other than English ($n = 18$) sometimes did not include the original language ($n = 6$), meaning that some linguistic and interactional details were inevitably lost in the data displayed. Only nine articles had a two-line transcript with the original language and the English translation matched line-by-line, and none had a third line displaying the original word order and specifying features such as particles (cf., Hepburn and Bolden, 2014:69). The analytic focus also varied. While CA studies commonly examine more than the topical or semantic content, attending also to grammar, prosody, etc., one fifth of the articles did not do this or gave little attention to such aspects. Finally, there was only one article that quantified the data.

In conclusion, many of the articles in the core sample can be understood as mainly contributing CA-based insights to social work research and practice, rather than developing the CA literature on interactional phenomena as such. This corresponds to the major outlets being social work journals rather than discourse-type journals, as discussed in the first analytic section. In the next section, we will discuss the focus and findings of the core sample in more detail.

Focus and findings: practices, activities and theory

In line with the central precepts of CA, studies in the core sample generally examined the interactional organisation of social work encounters in detail, attending to the sequentially organised, moment-by-moment unfolding of participants' actions. There were three main themes in their analytical focus and findings: interactional practices, institutional activities and the relationship between theory and social work practice.

Identifying interactional practices

In CA, practices are defined as resources for doing things (Pomerantz and Fehr, 2011) and an important contribution of CA research is the cumulative identification and description of interactional practices. For instance, Pino (2017) has shown how participants in group therapy can use I-challenges – drawing on personal experience to offer an alternative view – to avoid overstepping their rights to know and assess another person's situation. In our core sample, seven studies focussed on a specific practice. For instance, Paoletti (2013) examined how professionals used storytelling to discuss delicate matters, and Iversen (2019) studied how social workers used claims of understanding to respond to children's resistance in interviews about their experiences of abuse. Another example was a study by Noordegraaf et al. (2008a) on how social workers asked hypothetical questions in interviews with prospective adoptive parents. They showed that by using the practice of 'future talk', social workers both tested the clients and helped them become better-prepared parents. Before the excerpt below (from Noordegraaf et al., 2008a: 321), the social worker (SW) had suggested that a future child might have a different personality than the parents, and asked in line 27 what that would mean for the mother (PAM):

```
27 SW: (2)→ =a tendency to how how how what would that mean to you?
28 PAM:      well [I think=
29 SW:            [>>because you are very d↑ifferent< you understand?
30 PAM:(3)→ =I think you'll try to offer supp↑ort as well as possible in a
31           certain direction (2.0) in a direction that suits him or her
32 SW:      (.) [mm
33 PAM:     =  [and in which they feel happy, of course they have to
34           feel happy in life (.)
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Noordegraaf et al. (2008a) pointed out how the social worker treated the mother as someone able to reflect on herself (line 27) and how the mother was quick to demonstrate her pedagogical skills (lines 30–31). Their analysis thus showed how practices relate to the social worker's tasks but also that these practices may not necessarily work smoothly

as 'future talk' brought out pedagogical talk rather than self-reflection. In the studies mentioned above, the analyses drew on findings about previously identified interactional practices to investigate how they worked in specific social work settings. We found no studies that identified new practices specific to social work.

Investigating institutional activities

Institutional activities can be understood as a set of practices that guide the formation and recognition of action in specific settings, often in the form of task-oriented phases, for example, 'openings', 'history-taking' or 'documentation' (Levinson, 2014). Twenty four studies described the complex organisation of institutional activities, involving participants' mobilisation of diverse interactional practices. There was a fundamental concern about practical problems faced by participants and the studies primarily investigated how social workers accomplished challenging social work tasks (e.g. making treatment recommendations in multi-professional teams, Arminen and Perälä, 2002). To a lesser extent ($n = 7$), they investigated clients' difficulties in pursuing their concerns, such as managing professionals' assessment, documentation or decisions related to their case (e.g. Hepburn, 2005; Jørgensen, 2019). A study investigating how social workers accomplished difficult tasks was Koprowska's (2017) article, which showed various practices used by social workers in child protection conferences to discuss parents' strengths and shortcomings. For example, they used what Koprowska (2017: 115) called a 'reference switch' to include parents:

```
SW:     Lauren's acknowledged that she's
        had some difficulties in the past, erm,
        predominantly around amphetamine
        use and some criminal activity. So we've
        sort of talked around that and (.) obvious-
        ly, around Tony as well, and some (.) sort
        of tried to sort of work out then basically
        how (.) how you're going to manage with
        the baby int'it?
Lauren: Yep (ICPC-04)
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Koprowska (2017) noted the social worker's use of several pronouns and argued that this was a way to display Lauren as able to talk honestly about herself: to move from being a listener to being an addressee. By unpacking the practices by which different activities were carried out, the studies showed how social work was done and how particular practices were used to manage specific challenges. Koprowska (2017) offered an insightful example by showing that reference switches were related to narratives portraying the parent as reformed or meriting support, because the social worker needed to address the parent in third person. In cases without such redemptive features, such practices were not used. In five studies, researchers followed a phenomenon from text to talk, or talk to text. For instance, the studies showed how social workers included and omitted aspects of clients' talk in documents (Arminen and Perälä, 2002; Noordegraaf et al., 2009a), and

how clients' interactional conduct was used in texts as proof of their character or relationships (Noordegraaf et al., 2010).

Findings about social workers' interactional practices, both with a focus on the practice and activity, addressed constitutive and often challenging aspects of social work, such as the tension between care and control, asymmetries between professionals and clients and the pursuit of institutional agendas.

Comparing theory and social work practice

A third theme in the studies was a focus on investigating what can be called a 'micro-macro link' (Schegloff, 1987) – the relationship between guidelines, theory or ideals and what actually happens in the interaction. In 19 studies, this meant identifying the differences between how social work 'should' be done, as described in guidelines or policy, and what social workers did in their encounters, whereas three studies pointed out good practice for reaching ideals. Studies that addressed the complexity of practices in relation to institutional ideals (e.g. client-centredness, Hepburn et al., 2014; self-determination, Pilnick et al., 2011; and active participation, Solberg, 2011a) would point out good practice for reaching ideals, failures to realise them or practices that went against general ideals of inclusion (e.g. unpacking how asymmetric relations were established in relation to normative standards of race and culture, see Lee and Horvath, 2014).

Using data from planning meetings where the views of young adults with intellectual disabilities and their parents/carers were in conflict, Pilnick et al. (2011) showed that the discourse of self-determination did not account for the parents'/carers' central role in enabling choices. In the excerpt below (Pilnick et al., 2011: 317), the mother (MO-10) addressed Louise, who was the young adult:

```
823.MO-10:  You're better doing something (.) because otherwise (.) you
824.        just sort of tend to stay in your room (.) listening to music if
825.        there's nothing else going on don't you (0.3) and that's not
826.        good all the time
827.        (0.3)
828.FA-10:  You do realise that Louise has an aspiration she wants to be a
829         pop star ((topic changes to Louise's aspirations to live in
            Hollywood))
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In their analysis, Pilnick et al. (2011) demonstrated that addressing Louise was not necessarily the mother's only purpose, since she used the turn to raise a problem of Louise just staying in her room, which had not been brought up by Louise herself. In addition, when Louise did not answer, her father (FA-10) invoked her wishes (lines 828–829), which can be a way for parents to establish the unreasonableness of their children's perspective. Thus, by showing how parents were involved in clients' choices, Pilnick et al. (2011) drew attention to how an ideal of self-determination may be far from challenges that clients and social workers face in their everyday lives and social work encounters. Three studies also showed how institutional constraints relate to social order, for example, how morality and emotions may have unforeseen consequences in people-processing

activities, such as granting a particular benefit or intervention (e.g. Velkovska and Zouinar, 2013).

Linked to these themes, the studies showed how social work was brought to life – how social workers and clients collaboratively did things. In this sense, the studies can be seen to open up the 'black box' of social work practice. This includes both descriptive studies, studies that identified best practice, and studies offering a critical examination of the relationship between theory or policy and practice.

Implications for Social Work

The publications in our core sample were generally cautious about making direct recommendations for practice. This makes sense, when one considers that 'simplistic solutions do not carry weight' (O'Brien, 2000) with practitioners, and the general strive to work against simplification in qualitative research (Clarke and Keller, 2014). Most of the papers ($n = 33$) had as their primary implication the provision of greater insight into the complexities and contingencies of practice, to make such practices more 'visible' and thus encourage practitioners to reflect on their own practice – for example, how particular conversational approaches generate different responses (Arminen and Perälä, 2002) or how group membership is established conversationally (Cashman, 2005). A subset of this group ($n = 4$) specifically sought to describe the differences between social work as described in policy, and how it operated in practice (e.g. Pilnick et al., 2011).

Two of the papers reported on attempts to implement CA findings with social workers directly by providing feedback on video-taped interactions with clients (Rawls et al., 1997) or give training sessions based on CA research (Kirkwood et al., 2016). Another paper argued that social workers could be helped by viewing their own filmed interactions but did not report on an actual attempt to do so (Hung et al., 2019). One of the papers (Noordegraaf et al., 2008b) focussed on implications for research, suggesting that by analysing conversational sequences in their local context, the findings might be more familiar or 'real' for practitioners.

Finally, and in what might be a sign of the inherent epistemic humility of CA, only seven papers identified direct implications for practice, for example, how a less demanding conversational style can be more helpful for people using services (Solberg, 2011a), how to give advice so that it is less likely to be resisted (Hepburn and Potter, 2011) or how social workers can work to ensure greater parental engagement (Koprowska, 2017; Symonds, 2020). Another four papers identified more general implications for practice, suggesting that CA can be applied to help social workers recognise good practice in different contexts (Hepburn et al., 2014), calling for more and better training (Lee and Horvath, 2014; Caswell, 2020) or highlighting the importance of grounding practice guidance on detailed understandings of what social workers actually do (Iversen, 2019). Overall, the studies highlighted the importance of context for social work practice, noting that communication strategies are related to the professional's organisational or legal position and their institutional power, so that interactional practices that work in one context may not work in the same way in another.

Concluding discussion

This review shows that CA has begun to establish itself as a framework for social work research. The reviewed publications offer knowledge on how social workers draw on specific interactional practices in accomplishing social work tasks, as well as how this work relates to ideals and theories in social work. In this sense, the review demonstrates CA to be a useful approach for showing the details of how social work is done, which is an important contribution to a field that both relies on communication and is characterised by communicative challenges involved in addressing social problems.

Given the number and recency of CA studies in social work, it is not surprising that we find research gaps. The field is dominated by Western European countries, particularly the UK, but it is notable that 330 of the studies in our extended sample did not mention in the abstract the country in which the study was conducted. Since welfare organisations are nationally specific, this may make cross-national comparisons and generalisations more difficult. The client groups that have received most attention from CA researchers are family-related (children and parents) or involve people with learning disabilities or communicative difficulties. The focus on communicative disorders may be seen as surprising in a broader social work context, and likely has to do with CA's focus on talk. Studies have so far focussed on how professionals accomplish challenging work tasks in interaction with clients but have to a lesser extent investigated clients' practices for pursuing their concerns. While this calls for broader consideration of clients' perspectives in line with emancipatory ideals in social work (cf., Wilson and Beresford, 2000), it illustrates CA's usefulness for understanding and developing professional practice by facilitating reflection on alternative ways of responding to challenges that social workers encounter. However, we found that the CA research conducted in this area so far has been cautious about making recommendations for practice. This highlights the complexities involved in translating research findings for practitioners in instances where there might not be an easy way to solve a problem (although such recommendations might of course be made in other channels more geared towards policymakers or practitioners, not covered in our review). Caution in giving recommendations might also be grounded in the ethnomethodological focus on local context (Heritage, 1984), rendering decontextualized recommendations problematic. Since practice recommendations require a firm base of accumulated knowledge, it is likely that further expansion of the field will better facilitate such outcomes, similarly to the development of CA studies of medical practice (e.g. Barnes, 2019).

The reviewed studies tend to favour single- or multi-case approaches over building collections. Although 'one is also a number' (Schegloff, 1993: 101) and single-case analyses can be important for identifying and describing phenomena, this means that the benefits of systematic examination of practices, as well as large-scale analyses of collections in and across social work settings, remain largely unexplored. This contrasts with CA applications in medicine, which increasingly rely on datasets that allow for comparison and quantification (e.g. Heritage and Robinson, 2011; Sikveland et al., 2016). More collection-based studies of social work could thus facilitate recommendations for practice in the future.

Another methodological aspect relates to the type of data used: although most studies conducted so far have been of face-to-face encounters, they often rely on audio data. The field has thus to a little extent embraced the 'embodied turn' of CA (see Heath et al., 2010; Nevile, 2015). This might partly stem from ethical concerns about using video to capture the often sensitive situations prevalent in social work practice, but exceptions in social work (e.g. Monteiro, 2016) and examples from healthcare (Pino et al., 2017) show that such concerns can be managed. In addition to not displaying bodily conduct, we found that transcripts are often 'light' in terms of technical detail and often do not include the original language if other than English. Such simplifications may be relevant adaptations to make the analysis accessible for readers that lack CA expertise and may also be contingent on restrictions from journals but make it more difficult for readers to assess the quality of the analyses.

Given these methodological aspects, most studies conducted so far may be seen as primarily contributing to social work research and practice – with the potential to also inform policy change by showing how policy is navigated on the street-level (Caswell, 2020) – rather than informing and developing CA as a discipline. There is potential for contributing new knowledge about interactional phenomena to the CA literature on both institutional interaction (e.g. regarding professional-client asymmetry, guidelines and practice) and ordinary conversation (e.g. discussing delicate topics, emotion and morality). Such developments can also facilitate aggregate analysis, enabling practice recommendations based on CA findings.

Other issues identified in the review relate to *our* methodology, and we acknowledge the limitations tied to the aim and selection procedure. The choice to only include peer-reviewed articles in English may have skewed our sample towards English-speaking contexts and excludes studies relevant to social work published in books. Our overview, therefore, may not fully capture the use of CA, especially in countries where a significant part of publication is done through more nationally oriented channels. Relatedly, recommendations for policy or practice might be more prevalent in grey literature such as reports. In addition, searches and initial coding relied on how the papers themselves categorised the methods and object of study. Studies claiming to examine communication in social work without categorising the analysis in CA terms have thus not been captured, although some of them might employ a CA methodology (for instance, studies only labelled as ethnomethodological were not included in our searches). While this limits our overview of the field, it is also likely that vague connections to CA itself is a sign of CA's relatively weak position in social work up to this point. To some extent, therefore, our results are indicative not only of the CA research *done* in the field of social work, but the extent to which such research is *categorised* as such. As CA becomes more established and CA terminology becomes increasingly recognisable, this would be expected to change. Finally, our descriptions of study findings lack quality appraisal (although we discuss issues related to quality, such as mode of transcription). As the field continues to grow, this will become increasingly relevant, and should be used as a selection criterion in future reviews.

In undertaking this review, a recurrent discussion among the authors was what 'counts' as social work. These discussions guided the development of inclusion and exclusion criteria but also more generally highlighted the complexity involved in answering the apparently simple question: is this social work or not? In part, this discussion arose from the fact that the authors are of various nationalities and have familiarity with different

(European) models of welfare. The definitional complexity of whether social work should be seen as limited to encounters involving a qualified social worker or include any form of conduct (regardless of professional training) aimed at promoting social change, development and well-being among marginalised groups, also results from the decision taken in some countries to protect the title of 'social worker'. In the UK, for instance, anyone could describe themselves as a social worker until 2000, after which it became a legally protected title that required registration with a government-mandated body. Thus, before 2000, 'social work' described what you did, whereas post-2000, it describes who you are as a professional. In the end, we did not seek to define social work in such fixed terms, which is reflected in the review results and discussion above. With a narrower definition of social work, the identified literature – our core sample – would have been smaller, and some of the tendencies that we found might have been more (or less) prominent.

Finally, the review has implications for social work research and for CA as a discipline. Our results highlight why social work interactions need to be studied in their own right, but also that social work researchers and practitioners can learn from CA studies in other institutional settings and may need to look beyond traditional social work outlets to recognise the cumulative knowledge that CA has generated. In short, we argue that social work research and practice could benefit from a fuller application of CA. Meanwhile, Peräkylä and Vehviläinen (2003:747) have argued that if CA is to impact research and practice of a professional field – such as social work – the analysts must 'find the forums and practices for communication among researchers, professional practitioners and educators' as well as become familiar with the interactional stocks of knowledge of that field. Conversation analysts doing research in this area would thus benefit from considering how to make their findings available to social work researchers and practitioners *not* trained in CA, to facilitate accessibility, recognition and impact.

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Appendix

Social work search terms:

- social work
- social care
- child protection
- homeless
- community development
- community care
- social service
- welfare
- addiction
- mental health
- mental illness
- job center
- suicide
- functional capacity
- child counselling
- dispute mediation
- unemployment
- atypical interaction
- geriatric
- alcoholic
- elderly
- helpline
- social benefit
- child abuse
- substance abuse

- reflective practice
- reflexive practice
- home help
- street-level bureaucracy
- residential care
- family counselling
- social housing
- group therapy
- social intervention
- delinquent
- delinquency
- occupational therapy
- bully
- social gerontology
- juvenile justice
- penitentiary
- emancipatory
- foster care
- family support
- family intervention
- refugee
- domestic violence
- violence against women
- intimate partner violence
- poverty
- disability
- shelter
- social worker

CA-related search terms:

- conversation analysis
- conversation analytic
- discursive psychology
- discursive psychological
- membership categorization analysis
- membership categorisation analysis

Search string:

TITLE-ABS-KEY("conversation analysis" OR "conversation analytic" OR "discursive psychology" OR "discursive psychological" OR "membership categorization analysis" OR "membership categorisation analysis" AND "social work" OR "social care" OR "child protection" OR "homeless" OR "community development" OR "community care" OR

"social service" OR "welfare" OR "addiction" OR "mental health" OR "mental illness" OR "job center" OR "suicide" OR "functional capacity" OR "child counselling" OR "child counseling" OR "dispute mediation" OR "unemployment" OR "atypical interaction" OR "geriatric" OR "alcoholic" OR "elderly" OR "helpline" OR "social benefit" OR "child abuse" OR "substance abuse" OR "reflective practice" OR "reflexive practice" OR "home help" OR "street-level bureaucracy" OR "residential care" OR "family counselling" OR "family counseling" OR "social housing" OR "group therapy" OR "social intervention" OR "delinquent" OR "delinquency" OR "occupational therapy" OR "bully" OR "social gerontology" OR "juvenile justice" OR "penitentiary" OR "emancipatory" OR "foster care" OR "family support" OR "family intervention" OR "refugee" OR "domestic violence" OR "violence against women" OR "intimate partner violence" OR "poverty" OR "disability" OR "shelter" OR "social worker") AND PUBYEAR < 2021

Coding of extended sample (abstracts):

- Studies naturally occurring interaction (y/n)
- Studies social work practice (y/n)
- Professional group
- Client group
- Client age group
- Country of study

Coding of core sample (full papers), in addition to codes above:

- How is the methodology described?
- Transcription (notes of detail, translation etc.)
- Participants in the interaction
- Number and description of institutional contexts/sites
- Aim and/or research question(s)
- CA phenomena examined
- Social work phenomenon studied
- Size of overall dataset in minutes
- Size of overall dataset in number of interactions
- Number of excerpts in publication
- Does analysis attend to sequence? (y/n)
- Does analysis attend to grammatical, pragmatic and/or prosodic features? (y/n)
- Does analysis include embodied elements?
- Does analysis include examination of atypical/deviant cases?
- Face-to-face or mediated interaction?
- Audio/video recordings?
- Data type (research interviews, focus groups, phone calls, workplace meetings, client meetings, peer-professional meetings, counselling)
- Two-party or multi-party?
- Interaction between a) professional-professional; b) professional-client; c) client-client

- Overall design (single-case, multi-case, collection)
- Description of main findings
- Author-proposed implications for social work
- Reviewer's notes and comments relating to inclusion/exclusion in core sample

Reviewed articles in the 'core sample':
(see table on the following pages)

Author(s)	Year	Journal	Professional group (sole, or the primary group if several professional groups are featured)	Age group	Client group	Country	Participants in the interaction (qualitative description)	Aim and/or research questions	Methodological approach (as stated in paper)	Transcription (notes of detail, translation, etc.)	CA phenomena examined	Social work phenomenon	Does analysis predominantly describe more than one party's turn? (attend to sequence)	Does analysis examine more than just the typical/automatic content (attend to grammatical, pragmatic and/or prosodic content)?	Does the analysis include embedded elements?	Does analysis include examination of atypical cases/ deviant cases?	Face-to-face or mediated	Audio/ video recordings	Overall design (single case, multi-case, collection)
Arminen, I. and Perälä, R	2002	Nordisk alkohol- & narkotikatidskrift	Multiple professions	Not specified	People with substance abuse	Finland	Addiction therapists	How is information processed and used by a multiprofessional team about clients?	Conversation analysis	Jefferson, only translations included	The procedural consequentiality of an institutional context on actual activities. Epistemics	How professionals support addiction treatment ideology	Yes	Yes	No	No	Face-to-face	Video	Multi-case
Bierbriger, D. and Kurt, U	2015	Social Work & Society	Public administrators	Youth	Unemployed	Germany	Social workers and young job seekers	How do conflicts become apparent at the level of conversational interaction, and how are they formed, processed and stopped by the participants in the interaction?	Ethnomethodological conversation analysis	Transcription according to GAT, only translations	Disagreement	How to manage conflict	Yes	Yes	No	No	Face-to-face	Audio	Collection
Cashman, H. R	2005	Journal of Pragmatics	Non-specified	Older	Senior citizens	USA	Social worker and older people	The paper investigates the relationship between social categories such as ethnicity and group membership and conversational codeswitching	Conversation analysis	Jefferson, not so detailed. Two-line translation	Codeswitching, categorization and repair	How to deal with ethnic similarities and dissimilarities	Yes	Yes	No	No	Face-to-face	Audio	Multi-case
Caswell, D	2020	European Policy Analysis	Public administrators	Not specified	Unemployed	Denmark	Social workers and unemployed	How is the political focus on labour market participation translated into talk in interactions between street-level bureaucrats and vulnerable unemployed clients?	Micro-sociology and conversation analysis	Verbatim, not Jefferson, only translation	Institutional talk more broadly	The enactment of policy in specific institutional settings, unemployment, street level bureaucracy	Yes	Yes	No	No	Face-to-face	Audio	Multi-case
Dall, T. and Caswell, D	2017	Discourse & Communication	Social workers	Not specified	No clients	Not specified	Rehabilitation teams (4-6 members with different professional backgrounds) who meets with a client and his or her caseworker	To examine patterns of negotiation in multi-party decision-making in social work	Discourse analysis	Jefferson	Expanding and postponing	Decision-making with and without the client present	Yes	Yes	No	No	Face-to-face	Audio	Multi-case
Franzén, A. and Aronsson, K	2018	Discourse Studies	Social workers	Children	Domestic violence victims	Sweden	Attorneys and social workers	How are Blame-account sequences constructed by social workers in court hearings?	Discursive methods and membership categorisation	Jefferson	Blame account sequences, divergent problem formulations and categorisations	How episodes of violence and people are formulated and categorised respectively by social workers in family law court hearings	Yes	Yes	No	No	Face-to-face	Audio	Single case
Guo, J. Y	2012	Journal of Offender Rehabilitation	Counsellors	Not specified	Criminal offenders	China	Prison counsellor and a prisoner	How do prison counsellors and inmates seek to achieve their goals in counselling sessions?	Conversation analysis	Jefferson	How questions are posed about delicate topics	How prison counsellors ask about sensitive topics, how they ask about acceptance of guilt (as required by practice guidance) and how they give advice	Yes	Yes	No	No	Face-to-face	Audio	Single case
Harris, J., Danby, S., Butler, C. W, and Emmison, M	2012	Text & talk	Helpline counsellors	Children	Non-specified	Australia	Counsellors and children/young people	How do helpline counsellor use emails to propose that clients move from email counselling to telephone counselling?	Ethnomethodology and conversation analysis	N/A	Requests, suggestions, offers	Online therapeutic counselling, making changes to an established counselling relationship by requesting to switch to telephone counselling	Yes	Yes	No	No	Mediated	Text	Collection
Healy, K. and Mulholland, J	1998	Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare	Social workers	Youth	Mothers	Not specified	Social workers and adolescent mothers	To demonstrate the potential of using discourse analysis and CA methods to understand practice processes	Discourse model, combining post-structural discourse principles and CA methods	Some detail beyond mere words (e.g. pauses), but not full Jefferson	Action-reflection processes related to silence	Active listening, client support and how to encourage reflection	Yes	Yes	No	No	Face-to-face	Audio	Multi-case

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Hepburn, A.	2005	Journal of Constructivist Psychology	Helpline counsellors	Children	Non-specified helpline support-seekers	UK	Child caller; helpline counsellor	To investigate how young people's competence is constructed and oriented to by the adults participating in the interaction	Discursive psychology, Conversation analysis	Jefferson	Categorisation, reports and epistemics	Asymmetry and competence in adult-child interactions, reporting abuse	Yes	No	No	Yes (comparative analysis)	Mediated	Audio	Multi-case
Hepburn, A. and Potter, J.	2011	Social Psychology Quarterly	Helpline counsellors	Children	Non-specified helpline support-seekers	UK	Child protection officers and callers to the NSPCC	To consider interactional practices for managing advice resistance	Conversation analysis	Jefferson	Advice, advice resistance	Advice giving, child protection	Yes	Yes	No	No	Mediated	Audio	Collection
Hepburn, A. and Wiggins, S.	2005	Discourse & Society	Helpline counsellors	Children	Victims of abuse or other crimes	UK	Trained helpline counsellors (child protection officer, CPO) and callers to the helpline	How is body size/weight constructed as an accountable issue: how are formulations of size/weight drawn on in practice; how are they related to issues of knowledge; what institutional activities are performed through formulations of weight/size?	Discursive psychology (paper does a CA-type DP)	Jefferson	Questions/answers	How body-weight is treated as implicative of child neglect and as relevant when reporting abuse	Yes	Yes	No	No (but multi-case, so lays out different types)	Mediated	Audio	Multi-case
Hepburn, A., Wilkinson, S. and Butler, C. W.	2014	Research on Language & Social Interaction	Helpline counsellors	Children	Non-specified helpline support-seekers	UK, Australia	Different helpline settings	How can CA helpline research be applied?	Conversation analysis	Detailed Jefferson	Advice, emotion	Client-centred advice, managing emotion and the relation between guidelines and practices	Yes	Yes	No	No	Mediated	Audio	Collection
Hitzler, S.	2011	Qualitative Social Work	Social workers	Adults	Parents of children in need	Germany	Social worker, head of service and mother and child	How is professional identity constructed in the context of a multidisciplinary SW setting?	Ethnomethodological CA, membership categorisation and positioning analysis	Jefferson	How professional identities are constructed	How decisions are communicated and justified by SWs when meeting with a parent and child	Yes	Yes	No	No	Face-to-face	Audio	Single case
Hitzler, S. and Messmer, H	2010	Qualitative Social Work	Social workers	Children	Children placed in care	Germany	State social worker, a representative of the service provider and the client or client family	To sketch a somewhat more precise and systematic picture of how previous notions of decision-making may be interconnected, by investigating decision-making processes as practical accomplishments	Ethnomethodological conversation analysis	Some detail but not full Jefferson, no line numbers, only translations	Decision-making, participation	Client participation in decision-making	Yes	Yes	No	No	Face-to-face	Audio	Multi-case
Housley, W	1999	Sociological Research Online	Multiple professions	Not specified	Non-specified	Not specified	Team Leader, Social Workers, Counsellor, Lay Volunteer, Social Work student	To explore 'interactional dimensions of role within multidisciplinary team talk'	Conversation analysis, membership categorisation analysis	Orthographic	Role, categorisation	Multidisciplinary teamwork	Yes	No	No	No	Face-to-face	Audio	Collection
Housley, W	2000	Text	Multiple professions	Not specified	Non-specified	Not specified	Team Leader, Social Workers, Counsellor, Lay Volunteer, Coordinator and Social Work student	To examine how knowledge is a situated product in multidisciplinary team meetings	Draws from both conversation analysis and membership categorisation analysis	Jefferson	Epistemics	Multidisciplinary team meetings, decision-making, crisis situation	Yes	Yes	No	No	Face-to-face	Audio	Multi-case
Hung, E. N. Leung, G. S.-M. and Cheung, J. C.-S.	2019	Journal of Social Work Practice	Counsellors	Children	People with aggressive behaviour	Hong Kong	NGO play therapist, children playing with each other	How does the social worker handle the client' emotions in the therapy session?	Conversation analysis	Not quite Jefferson transcription (a bit less detail), embodied conduct described rather than transcribed. Not clear whether the language was English in original	Display of emotion	How play therapy works	Yes	Very little	Yes	No	Face-to-face	Video	Single case

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Iversen, C	2019	British Journal of Social Psychology	Social workers	Children	Domestic violence victims	Sweden	Clients (child) who has experienced domestic violence and social worker	How SWs and abused children manage shared understanding of personal experiences	Conversation analysis and discursive psychology	Jefferson including originals in Swedish (two-line)	Questions and answers, affiliation	How social workers can elicit information about domestic violence without seeming to not understand or come off as inattentive or uncaring	Yes	Yes	No	No, but multi-case, so lays out different types	Face-to-face	Audio	Collection
Jenks, C.; Firth, A. and Trinder, L.	2012	Text & Talk	Mediators	Adults	Spouses in conflict	Not specified	Parents, mediator and lawyers	How do arguments unfold during mediation? Uncover the sequential placement and interactional features of direct challenges and contradictions	Conversation analysis	Jefferson (simplified)	Turn-taking, questions, repair	How professionals mediate parental disputes and arguments	Yes	No	No	No	Face-to-face	Audio	Collection
Jorgensen, S	2019	Journal of Social Work Practice	Social workers	Adults	Family carers	Denmark	Parents, social worker	Exploring how strong negative emotions are displayed and dealt with	Conversation analysis	Orthographic	Emotion in interaction	Navigating care and control in social work with children and families	Yes	Yes	No	No	Face-to-face	Audio	Single case
Kirkwood S, Jennings, B., Laurier, E., Cree, V. and Pani, B	2016	European Journal of Social Work	Social workers	Adults	Domestic violence perpetrators	UK	A) Prof-client: (re-enacted) interaction between SW and service user; B) Parri, CARM-based session	Applying CARM to social work	Discourse analysis, conversation analysis	Orthographic	(CARM)	Reflective practice	Yes	No	No	Yes	Face-to-face	Video	Single case
Koprowska, J	2017	International Journal of Child & Family Welfare	Social workers	Children	Family carers	UK	Chair, multiple professionals, clients, family members plus child, note taker	How to work effectively in partnership with parents whose children are the subject of child protection	Conversation analysis	Orthographic (lines not numbered)	Openings, reference, narrative, responses and categorisation	Parental involvement	Yes	No	No	No	Face-to-face	Audio	Collection
Kristiansen, E.D.; Rasmussen, G. and Andersen, E. M	2019	Logopedics Phoniatrics Vocology	Social care staff	Adults	People with learning disabilities	Denmark	Visiting researcher, staff member and care resident	How do staff members manage the tasks of following person-centred care practices and complying with measurable, system-based institutional requirements?	Multimodal conversation analysis (EMCA)	Jefferson and descriptions of embodied conduct, includes both original language and translation	Multiactivity	Person-centred care	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Face-to-face	Video	Single case
Lee, E and Bhuyan, R	2013	The Social Service Review	Counsellors	Not specified	People with mental illness	Canada	Counsellor and parent (immigrant)	Explore how whiteness manifests in cross-cultural communication, how whiteness informs clinical assessment and how clients resist whiteness while negotiating belonging	Conversation analysis and critical discourse analysis	Jefferson, but overlaps are not vertically aligned, silences are not marked and/or timed, it's not very detailed	No specific focus (more typically focused)	How therapy in social work perpetuates racial hierarchies in cross-cultural dyads	Not so much	Very little	No	No	Face-to-face	Audio	Multi-case
Lee, E and Horvath, A. O	2013	Smith College Studies in Social Work	Counsellors	Not specified	People with mental illness	Canada	Clients and therapists	How are cultural dialogues initiated and what is the focus and content of the talk?	Conversation analysis	Simplified from Drew and Heritage, Perakyla, Lee and Bhuyan	References to race and ethnicity	Cultural competence in mental health	Not so much	Yes	Yes	No	Face-to-face	Audio/ video	Multi-case
Lee, E and Horvath, A. O	2014	Journal of Social Work Practice	Social workers	Adults	Parents	Canada	Clients and therapists	To examine how culturally different client and therapist dyads engage or disengage when addressing or dismissing culturally relevant aspects of the client's life	Conversation analysis	Jefferson	The flow of the sequence, and what happens when it does not flow – abrupt changes, interruptions, over-talking and dismissing	Counselling practices	Yes	Yes	No	No	Face-to-face	Audio	Single case
Lee, E., Henderson, J. and Johnstone, M	2019	Social Work Education	Social workers	Not specified	People with mental illness	Not specified	Therapists and clients	How the social worker demonstrates and claims understanding of the client	Conversation analysis	Jefferson + descriptions of embodied conduct	Epistemics, claiming vs demonstrating understanding	client involvement	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes (comparative analysis)	Face-to-face	Audio/ video	Single case

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Noordegraaf, M., Van Nijnatten, C. and Elbers E	2009	Research on Language & Social Interaction	Social workers	Adults	Adoptive parents	Netherlands	Social workers and prospective adoptive parents	To identify the activity of adoption assessment in the opening sequences of meetings; how are the relationship and the occasion constructed in the opening activity?	Conversation analysis	Jefferson but not so detailed, two-line with original language included	Openings, assessments	The assessment procedure in the adoptive process of the child protection bureau	Yes	Yes	No	No	Face-to-face	Audio and video	Collection
Montero, D	2016	Language & Dialogue	Social workers	Adults	Non-specified	Not specified	Social workers and clients (unspecified)	To contribute to the investigation of i) the situated production of writing in interaction and b) participants' methods for 'formulating place'	Conversation analysis	Detailed Jefferson including multimodal features (Mondada)	Writing knowledge	Taking down clients' personal details (filling out address in a form)	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Face-to-face	Video	Collection
Morriss, L	2015	Qualitative Social Work	Social workers	Not specified	No clients	UK	A social work researcher interviewing a social worker	How a social work identity is accomplished in narrative research	Ethnomethodology and conversation analysis	Jefferson	Laughter, non-seriousness, troubles-talk and affiliation	Identity as a social worker	Yes	Yes	No	No	Face-to-face	Audio	Multi-case
Mullins, E and Kirkwood, S	2019	Journal of Social Work Practice	Social workers	Adults	Sexual offenders	UK	Sexual offenders and social workers	How is shame expressed and dealt with and what are the implications for rehabilitation	Conversation analysis and discourse analysis (discursive psychology)	Jefferson	Emotion in interaction	Expressions of and dealings with shame in therapy	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Face-to-face	Video	Collection
Noordegraaf, M., Van Nijnatten, C. and Elbers E	2008	Discourse Studies	Social workers	Adults	Adoptive parents	Netherlands	Social worker and prospective adoptive parents	How social workers accomplish their institutional task of assessing prospective adoptive parents' parenting skills, especially by means of hypothetical questions	Institutional conversation analysis	Jefferson but not so detailed. 2-line translation	Hypothetical questions	Assessment of prospective adoptive parents	Yes	Yes	No	No	Face-to-face	Audio	Multi-case
Noordegraaf, M., Van Nijnatten, C. and Elbers E	2008	Qualitative Social Work	Social workers	Adults	Adoptive parents	Netherlands	Social workers and prospective adoptive parents	What function does asking questions about hypothetical situations serve? How do social workers manage to work with their conflicting roles both as helper and gatekeeper?	Conversation analysis	Jefferson	Hypothetical questions	How to assess the suitability of prospective adoptive parents	Yes	Yes	No	No	Face-to-face	Video	Collection
Noordegraaf, M., van Nijnatten, C. and Elbers E	2007b	Children & Youth Services Review	Social workers	Adults	Adoptive parents	Netherlands	Child protection officers and prospective adoptive parents	What is the function of biographies in assessments for international adoption, how do prospective adoptive parents present themselves and how is the written life story assessed and transformed in the interview	Ethnographical institutional conversation analysis	Jefferson (but hard to see any details of talk or TCUs) two-line translation	Transference between text and talk	How social workers assess suitability in both toes and talk. Social workers' decision-making	Not so much	Very little	No	No	Face-to-face	Audio	Multi-case
Noordegraaf, M., Van Nijnatten, C. and Elbers E	2010	Text & Talk	Social workers	Adults	Adoptive parents	Netherlands	Social worker and prospective adoptive parents	How do social workers assess the prospective adoptive parents' relationship: what questions do they use and how do parents answer the questions?	Conversation analysis	Jefferson but not super detailed, two-line translation	Questions and answers	The assessment procedure in the adoptive process of the child protection bureau	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Face-to-face	Video	Multi-case
Parkes, I	2013	Journal of Applied Linguistics & Professional Practice	Social workers	Adults	No clients	Portugal	Social workers, police officers, home care worker	To explore how social workers use storytelling to explore the limits of intervention, contrasting what is right for the client with what is right for the institution	Ethnomethodological framework, discourse analysis informed by CA	More than the words, but not full Jefferson	?	How to persuade clients to go along with interventions	Yes	Yes	No	No	Face-to-face	Audio	Single case

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Pilnick, A., Clegg, J., Murphy, E. and Almack, K.	2010	Sociology of Health & Illness	Counsellors	Youth	People with learning disabilities	UK	Teacher, social services team manager, parents, service coordinator and workers, psychologist, speech therapist, nurse and client.	To shed light on how principles of self-determination and choice to adults with intellectual disabilities are practically applied	Conversation analysis	Jefferson	Atypical interaction, decision-making	The transition from children to adult services, young people with intellectual disabilities and self-determination	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Face-to-face	Audio	Multi-case
Pilnick, A., Clegg, J., Murphy, E. and Almack, K.	2011	Sociology Review	Counsellors	Youth	People with learning disabilities	UK	Variation, e.g. young person with I.D., special education teacher, social services professional, service manager, coordinator, nurse, psychologist, speech therapist and parents	How do professionals manage when parents/carers express different views or wishes to those of the young adults they care for?	Conversation analysis	Jefferson	Requests, decision-making, questions/answers	Youth with learning disability and ideas of autonomy in making decisions about their life (self-determination)	Yes	Yes	No	No	Face-to-face	Audio	Multi-case
Schep, E. Koole, T., Noordegraaf, M	2016	International Journal of Child & Family Welfare	Professional foster Parents	Children	Children placed in care	Netherlands	Foster parents who do this as a full-time job, and adolescents placed in residential care	To describe patterns formed by telling initiations from adolescents and responses from professional parents to gain insight into the variety and functions of different initiations to know more about how aspects of sensitivity and responsivity are displayed	Conversation analysis	Transcripts are translated from Dutch but the originals are not included so a general low level of detail might have to do with what was lost in translation. 'Jefferson lite'	Telling initiations	Attachment relationships, how sensitivity and responsivity are managed as part of building an affective relationship	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Face-to-face	Video	Collection
Shaw, C., Chrysikou, V., Davis S., Gerber, S., Kiolis, G. and Lanceley, A	2017	Patient Education & Counseling	Counsellors	Not specified	People with physical illness	UK	Therapists (social workers and psychotherapists) and dying patients	To examine how end-of-life talk is initiated in CALM therapy sessions with advanced cancer patients	Conversation analysis	Jefferson (good amount of detail)	Questions/answers	How to facilitate talk about death/dying	Yes	Yes	No	No	Face-to-face	Audio	Collection
Solberg, J	2011a	Text & Talk	Public administrators	Adults	Unemployed	Norway	Vocational rehabilitation counsellors and clients with long-term health problems	How clients comply with counsellors' questions eliciting their proposals for work-qualifying measures	Ethnomethodological conversation analysis	Transcripts are translated from Norwegian but the originals are not included. They are fairly detailed but it's difficult to say what might have been lost in translation	Questions/answers	Clients participation and responsibility	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Face-to-face	Audio	Multi-case
Solberg, Janne	2011b	Qualitative Social Work	Public administrators	Adults	Unemployed	Norway	Counsellor at employment agency and client.	How do counsellors' eliciting questions mobilise institutional identities and set up expectations of what clients are supposed to know, and how do clients align to these expectations?	Ethnomethodological conversation analysis	Jefferson, only translations are included, not Norwegian originals so not possible to say what might have been lost in translation	Questions/answers, recipient design	Encouraging activation for the unemployed	Yes	Yes	No	No	Face-to-face	Audio	Collection
Symonds, J	2018	British Journal of Social Work	Multiple professions	Adults	Parents of children in need	UK	Family support workers, parents	How do family support workers engage parents on the telephone, when talking to them about attending a parenting programme?	Conversation analysis	Jefferson	Alignment, affiliation and formulations	How to engage clients in a programme	Yes	Yes	No	No	Mediated	Audio	Multi-case
Symonds, J	2020	Child & Family Social Work	Social workers	Adults	Parents of children in need	UK	Practitioner, parent	How do participants introduce, negotiate and come to an agreement about the possibility of both parents being included in the service?	Conversation analysis	Jefferson	Invitations, categorization and person reference	Inclusion and involvement and parenting norms	Yes	No	No	Yes	Mediated	Audio	Collection

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Toerien, M, Sainsbury, R, Drew, P and Irvine, A	2015	Social Work & Society	Public administrators	Adults	Benefit claimants	UK	Social security claimants and frontline employment advisers from a public and a private provider	To compare work-focused interviews with unemployed people from a private and a public provider of advice for unemployed people	Conversation analysis	Jefferson	Several, e.g. tag questions, advice-implicative interrogatives	Welfare-to-work, advisory 'style'	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Face-to-face	Audio/video	Multi-case
Valtovska, J and Zsolnai, H	2013	Journal of Applied Linguistics & Professional Practice	Counsellors	Adults	Unemployed	France	Employment agent and unemployed person	Which practical forms do professional judgements take in institutional interaction? What are both the relationship and the consequences on the interaction? What are the interactional and emotional consequences of the production of judgement?	Ethnomethodology, conversation analysis and membership categorisation analysis	Not so detailed (not quite Jefferson) but includes sequential placement of embedded elements (descriptions) and pictures. Translated from French into English but French originals are not included, so difficult to say if lack of detail has to do with translation or not	Questions/answers, advice	How unemployed are encouraged and guided to look for work	Yes	Yes	Yes	No (but multi-case, so lays out different types)	Face-to-face	Video	Multi-case
Verhallen, T, Hall, C J, Slembrouck, S and Kirkwood, S	2017	International Journal of Child & Family Welfare	Social workers	Not specified	Parents of children in need	Netherlands	Social worker and mother	How does compliance and conflict develop over time and how are they managed in actual encounters? How is disagreement introduced and managed?	A combination of case study and micro sequential analysis	Not very detailed, no line numbers, clear TCUs or TRPs, only translation	Disagreement, category, entitlement	Adversarial meetings/relations in child protection	Yes	Very little	Yes	No	Face-to-face	Audio	Single case
Warfield Rawls, A, Meehan, A J, Johnson Pastrani, CJ, Mays, ED, Mosby, L	1997	Applied Behavioral Science Review	Social workers	Adults and children	Parents of children in need	USA	Supervisors, counsellors and clients	To compare researched and SW-led interpretations of video-taped encounters with clients	Interactional analysis	More than the words, but not full Jefferson	Several, particularly gaze	Training	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Face-to-face	Video	Collection