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Ageism and interactional (mis)alignment: Using micro-discourse analysis in the interpretation of everyday talk in a hair- salon

Abstract

In the fifty years since Robert Butler coined the term, *ageism* remains one of the most widely-experienced forms of discrimination in Europe. Some forms of ageism seem overt and easy-to-identify; in many cases, though, it is invisible and deeply rooted in everyday life. This applies, too, to ageism-in-interaction. As I argue in this paper, this can be very subtle, deeply embedded in a web of routines and expectations generated over a longer interactional history.

I illustrate this by focussing, as a case-study, on an encounter in a hair-salon between an 83-year-old woman and her stylist, aspects of which we might initially be tempted to attribute to the stylist's orientations to the client's (older) age. However, as I show, closer scrutiny of the emergent interaction, combined with progressive widening of the analysis to encompass data outside this focal exchange, suggests more nuanced understandings of what's going on. As I also aim to show, the nose-to-data attention to the emergent interactions in this case-study, informed by conversation analysis and combined with wider ethnographic knowledge, is the tool-kit we need to unveil the less visible instances of ageism-in-interaction.

Key words

Language, ageing, everyday ageism, interactional sociolinguistics, being busy

1 Introduction

In 1969, Robert Butler coined the term *ageism* to denote negative stereotyping on the basis of age, and discrimination against people for the same reason (Butler 1975: 12). Some fifty years later, research shows that ageism remains one of the most widely-experienced forms of discrimination in Europe (Age UK 2011), with stereotypical understandings of ageing as inevitable decrepitude continuing to dominate (Jolanki 2004; Nikander 2009). Such beliefs, combined with stereotypical “old” appearances, can lead to people being treated negatively, with implications for older identities. Sometimes the effect of such decline-related stereotypes is clearly visible. For example, the well-documented use of *elderspeak* with older adults, particularly those in institutions, is argued to be shaped by ageist stereotypes of older people as incompetent (see overview in Grainger 2004). On other occasions, though, the source of our instinctive sense that something is amiss in a particular interaction or instance of talk may be more elusive. As Coupland (2014 [2001]: 198) reminds us, “We should not expect language practices to be transparent carriers of ageism.”

So how can we make principled connections between such singular instances of talk on the one hand and wider processes like ageism on the other? This is a continuing issue in much research examining talk-in-interaction. However, due to the relative scarcity of sociolinguistically-orientated research into ageing, it is an issue that has only relatively recently entered the gerontological research agenda (Nikander 2009). Nevertheless, given that ideologies like ageism “will occasionally surface as linguistic and visual representations,” then analysing such surfacing is a “key project for sociolinguistics” (Coupland 2014 [2001]: 197). Much research into ageism has relied on interview studies, but among other issues, these tend to capture the more memorable instances of ageism, and are not located in the ordinary settings where people may actually encounter it. In this paper, by contrast, I examine the way ageism surfaces in everyday talk in a hair-salon. I argue that far from being locatable in a specific exchange or particular linguistic usage, ageism-in-interaction can be very subtle, deeply embedded in a web of routines and expectations generated over a longer interactional history.

My starting point is an audio-recording of a story told by an 83-year-old woman to her stylist. Noting the apparent lack of affiliative uptake by the stylist at the end of the older client's story, we might initially be tempted to attribute this to ageism; and as socially-literate members of society, we should surely not discount such ethnographic instincts. However, those instincts need to be tested through careful micro-discourse analysis of not only the focal exchange but also interactions from the same collection involving both the same and different participants. As I aim to show, the nose-to-data attention to the emergent naturally-

occurring interaction in this study, informed by conversation analysis and combined with wider ethnographic knowledge, is the tool-box we need to unveil the less visible instances of ageism-in-interaction.

1.1 A laugh and lack of uptake: a case of ageism?

I start by considering the focal exchange between the client, Lesley (83), and her stylist, Joellen (57). This occurred near the beginning of Lesley's weekly shampoo-and-set appointment, some 2½ years into their acquaintanceship. Joellen has just started washing Lesley's hair. (See transcription notation, Appendix A.)

Extract 1 [associated Art_10_Audio1.mp3 with Extract 1]

1. Joellen so have you had a good ↑wee:k?
2. Lesley ↑ye:s ↓not too bad
3. (I've) been busy
4. Joellen been ↑busy,
5. what've you been up to ↓this week
6. [then
7. Lesley [well >I've been
8. I< did the washing I did
9. earlier this week
10. (..)
11. and er (.)
12. did the ironing
13. Joellen uh huh
14. Lesley and: er (.) made some cakes
15. (.)
16. Joellen o:h ni:ce
17. Lesley and er
18. (4)

As we can see, upon being invited to talk about her week (l.5), Lesley recounts a list-like chronicle of mundane daily living (De Fina 2003: 98): washing (l.8), ironing (l.12) and baking (l.14). Joellen provides a response token (l.13) and assessment (l.16), but after Lesley's "and er" (l.17), a gap ensues with no further uptake from Joellen (l.18). During this exchange I was present in the salon and made the following fieldnote:

Extract 2 (Fieldnotes)

Joellen ran the water, and then as she started washing Lesley's hair asked, "Have you had a good week?" "I've been very busy," responded Lesley, and Joellen looked across to where I was propping up the upright beam by the desk and laughed.

Stivers (2013: 201) argues that "at story completion, some form of uptake is typically due, and noticeably absent if not provided," indicating disaffiliation with the teller. I return later to

Joellen's apparently disaffiliative lack of uptake at the end of Lesley's story, her glance at me, her laugh, and what these might be doing. For now, I note that together these could be seen as instances of Joellen poking fun at an older client and failing either to attend to or empathise with her, both characteristics observed in talk between older and younger interlocutors (e.g., Grainger 2004; Jansson 2016). Furthermore, the sing-song intonation of Joellen's question is characteristic of the over-accommodative elderspeak referred to above. So we might have an instinctive sense that something is amiss in this exchange, something we might be tempted to call ageism.

However, closer scrutiny of this extract combined with both comparisons with other interactions involving Lesley and Joellen and wider ethnographic understandings of the site and participants adds rather more nuance. Before embarking on that closer scrutiny, I discuss the study's methodology.

2 Methodology

The data on which this paper draws derive from a wider project into older women's identity construction in their talk and practices in a small independent hair-salon. The study was informed by interactional sociolinguistics. This, explains Rampton (2006: 24), regards interaction as central in the construction and reproduction of identities, and to that end engages in micro-linguistic analysis of talk, often, as here, drawing on the analytic tool-box of Conversation Analysis (CA). It also uses ethnographic methods to gain insights into participants' longer interactional histories and their location in particular settings.

2.1 Data collection

The central data for the wider project comprised 20 hours of audio-recorded talk during 27 hair-appointments of nine female clients aged 55-90.¹ Two to four appointments were recorded for each participant. This enabled comparisons to be made both between participants and for individual participants over time, giving insights into participants' longer interactional histories and routines.

These data were complemented by nearly two years' observation in the salon and interviews with both Joellen and the client-participants. Consent was obtained from all participants and

¹ No salon-workers and few clients consented to video-recording. Although this is a limitation in the analysis, careful attention to non-verbal sounds, plus ethnographically-acquired knowledge of salon practices and specific notes in certain instances, mitigates the issue somewhat.

all names are pseudonyms in line with the ethical approval granted by King's College London Arts and Humanities Research Ethics Panel.

2.2 Data analysis

The audio-recorded data were analysed using the tools of CA. This focusses on understanding people's everyday sense-making methods in interaction, drawing on an apparatus that supports detailed scrutiny of a range of aspects of interaction (see chapters in Sidnell and Stivers 2013), and adopting a bottom-up approach to data, scrutinising successive turns-at-talk and participants' emerging interactional goals.

CA aims to "analyse what the people in the scene make visible to each other" (Antaki 2012: 493), and so has tended to eschew use of data exogenous to particular interactions, other than to clarify contextual aspects like terms, relationships and general institutional structures. A challenge, though, with ideologies like ageism, is that they are internalised, including by those whom they target, such as older people (Andrews 1999; Coupland 2014 [2001]). They may thus become *invisible*. So as de Fina points out, "ideological presuppositions ... are not always oriented to or made relevant to the current interaction by participants" (2013: 57), yet may nevertheless underpin participants' interactional positioning.

Furthermore, participants' worlds often include much a longer acquaintanceship than the brief set of interactions to which the researcher is normally privy – what Briggs refers to in institutional settings as "long chains of interaction" (1998: 540). Focussing on a specific exchange overlooks the way modes of interacting may consolidate into routines, shaping the focal interaction in ways participants do not visibly orientate to (Benwell and Stokoe 2006: 104). In addition, Arminen (2000) argues that wider contextual knowledge may be needed precisely in order to show that particular aspects of that context are being made relevant, for example, the moral values assigned to certain utterances.

With these points in mind, data exogenous to the focal interaction was progressively drawn upon, facilitating understanding of the local interactional practices in the site and the moral value of participants' orientations to key concepts. The starting point, though, was CA-informed analysis of the focal interaction.

2.3 Busy stories, small talk and narrative features

The focal extract for this paper is one of a collection of 170 stories of happenings in the clients' lives, which were either elicited by the stylist or self-initiated by the client. These, a kind of small talk which I dubbed *busy stories*, are an immediately-recognisable stereotypical salon genre (McCarthy 2000). Peräkylä's and Vehviläinen's (2003) concept of *stocks of interactional knowledge* (SIKs) is relevant here. They explain SIKs as models or theories

about practitioner-client interaction in particular settings, which vary in terms of degree of codification and instantiation. Hair-salon SIKs are relatively uncoded, but one aspect concerns the importance of small talk with clients, which, as both advice to stylists in trade magazines (e.g., Sophieh 2007) and interviews with salon-workers and clients shows, is widely expected.

A number of story-features are also relevant. Firstly, Jefferson (1978) showed how prospective tellers design their stories to be locally occasioned, such that they are shown to be triggered by, or related to, prior talk. One way of doing this is through a story preface, for example, “guess what”, followed by the story. Another way is through elicitation, as in Extract 3 below.

Extract 3 (Lesley)

4. Joellen been ↑busy,
5. what've you been up to ↓this week

Jefferson (1978) argued that the means of introducing the story is consequential for its structure and the alignment of co-participants to the current interactional project as a storytelling. Given the usual conversational orientation to turn-taking in talk (Sacks et al. 1974), this is important, ensuring that prospective tellers have multiple turns-at-talk to tell their story.

A second important feature is tellability. Here again the story preface is central: it enables recipients to know when the story is over and to respond appropriately at that point (Sacks 1995: Vol II, 10; Stivers 2008). It points to what is going to be *tellable* about the story. CA researchers have argued that the preferred response to stories by recipients is a display of stance that affiliates with that of the teller (e.g., Stivers 2013: 201). Stivers argues that when recipients treat a story as complete when it is not, treat it as not complete when it is, or fail to mirror the teller's stance in their reception of the story, they are “vulnerable to being heard as *disaligning* or *disaffiliating* or both” (2008: 36, original emphasis).

Finally, tellers engage in work to “display a relationship between the story and subsequent talk” (Jefferson 1978: 228), that is, to demonstrate its *sequential implicativeness*. This in turn justifies the telling.

3 Revisiting the focal extract

I now return to the focal extract, reproduced below as Extract 4 for convenience, for a more detailed scrutiny of the evolving talk.

Extract 4 (Lesley) [associated Art_10_Audio1.mp3 with Extract 4]

1. Joellen so have you had a good ↑wee:k?
2. Lesley ↑ye:s ↓not too bad
3. (I've) been busy
4. Joellen been ↑busy,
5. what've you been up to ↓this week
6. [then
7. Lesley [well >I've been
8. I< did the washing I did
9. earlier this week
10. (..)
11. and er (.)
12. did the ironing
13. Joellen uh huh
14. Lesley and: er (.) made some cakes
15. (.)
16. Joellen o:h ni:ce
17. Lesley and er
18. (4)

Joellen's question to Lesley (l.1) launches a new sequence of talk. Marked, as it is, as other-attentive with its *so-preface* (Bolden 2006), this displays Joellen's orientation to the hair-salon SIK of fostering small talk with clients following prior attention to hair-business (checking the water temperature). This new-sequence-initiating question is designed as a polar *yes/no interrogative*, which not only prefers agreement, but prefers this in a type-conforming way, that is, "yes", or similar token (Raymond 2003: 946). Lesley not only provides the expected agreement but, with her emphatic "yes" (l.2), does this in a type-conforming way. However she immediately modifies this with "not too bad", and then claims to have been busy. Auer (2005) shows how utterances may project more than one possible next action, and with this in mind, I suggest there are two ways of interpreting Lesley's response in ll.2-3.

3.1 Alignment to a storytelling project

Firstly, "not too bad, I've been busy" could be seen as constituting a story preface: if Lesley has been busy, there must activities to recount. And we see that Joellen does orientate to it in this way, by eliciting an account of Lesley's week (ll.4-5). Lesley then takes the floor for several seconds with minimal comment from Joellen, as she aligns to the other's interactional project of storytelling. Then, as Lesley seems to come to an end in l.17, Joellen, instead of affiliating, seems to allow a gap to elapse (l.18) – or does she? Importantly, we need to identify to whom this gap belongs. There seems to be nothing to indicate that Lesley's "and er" of l.17 will not, as after ll.11 and 14, also be followed by a further activity to demonstrate the claimed "been busy" of her story preface. That is, Lesley's "and er" of l.17

seems to project continued talk. So rather than Joellen's apparent lack of uptake constituting disaffiliation (and lack of attention to an older client, as suggested in Section 1.1), we could see her silence here as alignment to Lesley's ongoing storytelling project. To evaluate the story thus far as busy would risk Joellen both disaligning with that interactional project and engaging in the well-documented exaggerated praising of elderspeak (Jansson 2016: 65-66).

3.2 Misalignment about "been busy"

Turning to the second interpretation, as we have seen, Lesley's response to Joellen's enquiry comprises three parts: a strongly affirmative "yes", a modifying "not too bad", and "I've been busy". "Not too bad" is the kind of response that, Schegloff (2005: 455) argues, signals the "possibility of complainability, while denying its achievement". That is, Lesley's week might have been bad, but wasn't; and the appositional nature of "I've been busy" presents this as the reason her week has been "not too bad". It does troubles resistivity. By this reading, "been busy" projects as next action for Joellen not so much a story-elicitation as an acknowledgement (and perhaps an assessment like "that's good"). So in this case, Joellen's elicitation in ll.4-5 can be seen as interactional misalignment. Lesley's final "and er" (l.17), so far from projecting more talk, can then be understood as a symptom of this misalignment, and as it develops can be seen to be projecting "no more to say."

So we have two interpretations of what is going on here; and it is at this point that wider ethnographic understandings can take us further.

4 Widening the focus

In widening the focus, I examine firstly the moral value assigned by Lesley to being "busy". I then examine what Lesley's other busy stories reveal about her and Joellen's interactional routines; finally I compare these busy stories with those told by another client who, like Lesley, told most of her busy stories as a result of stylistic elicitations.

4.1 Moral value of "been busy"

For Joellen, as frequent conversations revealed, being busy is about getting through a long list of tasks in limited time. Her "what've you been up to?" to Lesley (Extract 4, l.5), displays an expectation that Lesley will similarly produce a list of activities to demonstrate her busyness.

My interview with Lesley, though, suggests that for her, "been busy" has different connotations. Casting lack of stimulation as the cause of "deterioration" in a friend, she constructs herself in interview as doing her best to *age well* through keeping active and

stimulated, despite her severely restricted mobility. The chores Lesley manages in a typical day, though relatively few, are both very time-consuming, given her arthritis, and constitute busy in terms of remaining stimulated. That is, “being busy” is not only filling time with activity; it is also an attitude of mind, which, to summarise her view expressed in interview, involves trying to remain mentally alert, positive and non-complaining. This importance of keeping busy is central to an anti-decline conceptualisation of ageing, with continued activity presented as a moral imperative for older people to counter depression, disengagement and loneliness (Andrews 1999); and both my own interviews and other interview research (e.g., Jolanki 2004) show that older people orientate to this moral imperative.

However, if for Lesley the claim to have “been busy” is as much as anything about an attitude of mind – as much about having kept herself stimulated as having done a lot – then Joellen’s question, “what have you been up to then?”, is going to cause her interactional problems. She is asked to tell a story where no story was projected; and her response to Joellen’s question is constrained in that it now needs to demonstrate her busyness. As we see, signs of trouble do ensue, with repair (l.7), pauses (l.10, 11, 14, 15), and hesitations (l.11, 14) displaying Lesley’s uncertainty about the tellability of her account. Had her “been busy” been a story preface and a claim to have lots of activities to recount, such uncertainty should not have been an issue.

So Lesley’s struggle to generate further talk from her story centres here on misalignment about the moral value of “being busy”; that is, Joellen asks a question that for Lesley was unanswerable on her own terms. But the question was also unanswerable on Joellen’s terms: the tasks listed by Lesley do not, for Joellen, given what we know of her daily routine, constitute being busy. However, this is something that Joellen would have known, as we consider next.

4.2 An unchanging interactional routine

The lack of uptake shown in Lesley’s telling of Extract 4 was not an isolated incident. The following week an almost identical sequence ensued (see Appendix B), at the end of which Joellen evaluated Lesley’s account with “not much then”; another time, Joellen presented a candidate response of “not a lot” before Lesley even had an opportunity to respond to her question.

During Lesley’s next appointment, whilst she was under the dryer and unable to hear surrounding talk, Joellen laughingly made the following comment to Lesley’s friend, there to have her own hair cut:

Extract 5 (Fieldnotes)

'It makes me laugh, every week I ask "what have you done this week then?" and she says, "well I did the washing, did the ironing".'

And indeed, as we saw in Extract 2, Joellen did actually laugh on that occasion. We should note that this laugh was not audible on the recording and thus probably not either to Lesley. However, drawing on Harvey Sacks' (1995: 82) insights on exchanging glances, we can infer that Joellen is inviting me to see what she construes as a laughable element in the interaction, namely the way Lesley's weekly story never changes. This inability to change is an attribute that is also stereotypically associated with more negative, decremental, conceptualisations of older age, as interviews with participants revealed. Yet the audio-recordings show that Joellen herself asked Lesley more-or-less the same question every week. In posing the same question she contributes to the very thing she laughs about; that is, she is helping co-construct Lesley's unchanging elderliness. We might suggest that Lesley herself contributes to this construction of unchangingness in varying her response so little. For example, she could talk about one of the nature programmes that in interview she mentioned she likes watching. However, comparing Joellen's approach to another client, Joanna, modifies that view somewhat.

4.3 Comparing implementation of hair-salon "stocks of interactional knowledge"

Like Lesley, Joanna (55) was a relatively new client (she had been attending Joellen's for about 18 months), but was much younger (younger than Joellen in fact). Like Lesley, though, she too told mundane stories of daily life, as in the exchange below.

Extract 6 [associated Art_10_Audio2.mp3 with Extract 6]

1. Joellen s:o what else have you got (.)
2. going on today apart from ↑hai:r
3. Joanna um (.) well (.)
4. it's hair: (.)
5. dog walk (.)
6. and um:
7. go to(.) Harfeld common(.)
8. then a: (.)trip trip round er
9. (..)
10. do some shopping(.)
11. Joellen °yeh°
12. Joanna and then it'll be time probably for
13. another dog walk
14. Joellen ye(h)h he he he he
15. he .h fthat's the tro(h)uble with
16. these dogs£
17. Joanna YE[H
18. Joellen [£dog walking£
19. [he he he h.
20. Joanna [er yeh th- that's right

As with Lesley, Joellen's other-attentive so-preface (l.1) displays her orientation to the hair-salon SIK of fostering small talk with clients. The story Joanna tells is as unexciting as Lesley's: dog-walking (ll.5-7), shopping (ll.8-10), dog-walking again (ll.12-13). Notably, Joanna produces the same indications of trouble that Lesley did (e.g., ll.3, 6, 9); and as with Lesley, this displays her uncertainty about the tellability of her account. However, Joanna had clearly made no claim to have anything to recount, which further supports the second interpretation of Lesley's "been busy" (Section 3.2).

As we see, in l.14 Joellen picks up on Joanna's stress on "another" in l. 13 that constructs dog-walking as a chore, and affiliates by laughing and naming this as a "trouble" (l.15). So having itemised just a few mundane activities, Joanna, unlike Lesley, has achieved a positive assessment and sequential implicativeness (Jefferson 1978) of her account, as talk moves into discussion of dogs.

Most of Joanna's busy stories, like Lesley's, were produced via stylist elicitations. However, Joellen produces a greater variety of elicitations to Joanna than to Lesley, for example, enquiring about her recent Zumba classes or forthcoming holidays. And Joanna herself varies her responses to Joellen's elicitations more than Lesley does. But sometimes Joanna's responses are both as mundane and as repetitive as Lesley's, listing dog-walking and shopping (see example, Appendix B). Nevertheless, Joellen still comes in promptly with affiliative comments. That is, Joellen builds on and develops the small talk with Joanna in a way she does not do with Lesley.

So Joellen, who in interview orientated to the importance of the (uncodified) hair-salon SIK of fostering small talk with clients, seems to implement this differently with Joanna compared to Lesley. As a result, she effectively offers Joanna a different communicative experience in the salon to that offered to Lesley, one in which the conversational load is shared and stories of the mundanities of everyday life are ratified. So although Lesley could possibly vary her responses to Joellen more, Joanna wins affiliation even when producing repetitive responses.

5 Conclusions

The analysis presented here started with an instinctive sense of something being amiss, generated by a laugh and a lack of affiliative response to Lesley's account. Close inspection revealed two possible initial interpretations of what was going on in the focal exchange, with correspondingly different interpretations of the apparent lack of uptake by Joellen. Regardless of which interpretation is correct, though, as the gap developed it started to project an absence; and Joellen is perhaps at least being interactionally unhelpful in leaving the conversational "ball" with Lesley. But is this ageism, or "just" Joellen being insensitive? After all, practices like "withholding affiliation" are used in other settings where they do *not* betoken ageism (see, e.g., Stivers 2013: 203).

Our view starts to shift when we see this extract both as part of a longer history of interactions between Joellen and Lesley and compare Lesley's busy stories with those of Joanna. We see that Joellen recurrently asks Lesley about her week despite knowing Lesley will not have much to recount (in terms of Joellen's understanding of busyness); and, again despite knowing this, she receives Lesley's accounts with disaffiliative responses, ranging from silence to explicit negative evaluations, that effectively say, "so why are you telling me this?" This contrasts with the common ground Joellen finds with the stories told by Joanna, even when those are similarly mundane. Furthermore, Joellen laughs at Lesley's repetitive accounts even as she herself contributes to their laughability through her own repetitive questions. Yet Joanna's repetitive accounts are positively orientated to.² So with Joanna, Joellen systematically orientates to the hair-salon SIK (foster small talk with clients) and shares the conversational load, whereas with Lesley she doesn't.

² The frequency of Lesley's appointments (weekly) compared with Joanna's (every seven weeks) doubtless facilitated Joellen's recall of this repetition. Nevertheless, overall, Joanna's life, as storied in the salon, was as unvarying and mundane as Lesley's, but evaluated differently by Joellen.

But is this differential treatment age-related? Holland and Ward (2012: 127) suggest that “discrimination on the grounds of age can be a matter of interpretation,” and that is arguably the case here. But although there were a number of similarities between Lesley and Joanna (for example, both were relatively new clients), there was one particularly salient difference: their appearance. Researchers into older age argue that negative stereotypes of older people are particularly triggered where the person’s oldness is made especially noticeable (Bytheway et al. 2007: 93; Holland and Ward 2012: 116); and certainly, with her grey hair, wrinkled skin, stooped posture, walking stick and attendant carer/friend, Lesley gave off (Goffman 1959: 14) oldness in a way that Joanna did not. It is thus not unreasonable to conclude that it is this key difference that contributes to their differential treatment. That is, Joellen’s attitudes are shaped by (ageist) views of Lesley as inactive and boring; and these views are then reinforced by the pattern of interaction into which they have both fallen, with Lesley’s responses on previous occasions further reinforcing this stereotypical image.

The focal interaction discussed here was no headline-catching form of ageism. Rather, it can be understood as being what Bytheway and colleagues (2007: 94), drawing on Philomena Essed’s (1991) study of racism, describe as *everyday ageism*. Essed highlighted the importance of looking at potentially fleeting small-seeming occurrences infused into “systematic, recurrent familiar practices” (1991: 3) that cumulatively and together affect people’s lives. So rather than being located in the single exchange – that laugh or lack of uptake – the everyday ageism here is part of a web of recurrent almost unnoticed practices embedded in the everyday life of the hair-salon which recurrently give Lesley – and similarly-situated clients – a different (less good) experience compared to some younger clients; and which cumulatively endorse her (and their) subordinate positions (Coupland 2014 [2001]: 197).

There is another effect. Identities in this study are understood as emergent achievements partly co-constructed in interaction. In interview, Lesley constructed a positive “ageing well” identity, to which she is also inferably orientating with her “been busy” and positive colouring of her week. But Joellen’s disaffiliative responses fail to ratify this identity, and, indeed, cast her repeatedly in a stereotypical decline mould as an inactive and stuck-in-her ways older person. This then lends support to Coupland and Coupland’s (1993: 286) model of ageism as repression, repression, in this case, of both Lesley’s perspectives and her sought-after “ageing well” identity positioning.

It is important to note, as Coupland (2014 [2001]: 197) comments, that older people themselves may internalise an ageist ideology and “confirm elements of it in their own talk and practices.” We see this in Lesley’s talk, for example, her own orientation to the (positive) moral value of being busy, and her acceptance of Joellen’s right to determine what being

busy comprises. This internalisation by older people contributes to the invisibility of ageism-in-interaction (Bytheway et al. 2007: 5): the offender is not “called out”, there is no orientation to it by participants. This has methodological implications. If ageism can be invisible and not orientated-to, our ethnographic instincts are surely invaluable resources for identifying instances where something seems amiss in interaction. However, those instincts need to be tested and anchored in micro-analysis of particular encounters and chains of interactions, to unveil as precisely as possible what it is about this particular usage in this particular setting that leads us to conclude that it is an instance of ageism-in-interaction.

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Appendix A: Transcription notation

Based on Jefferson (2004).

(.)	micro-pause
<u>washing</u>	emphasis on underlined part of word
>I've been I<	spoken faster/
<days go>	slower than surrounding talk
<u>ni</u> :ce	vowel stretched out
↑yes, whe↓els	pitch shift up/down in following syllable
°yeh° FLASHED	talk softer/louder than surrounding talk
£dog walking£	"smile voice"
ye(h)h	laughter in word
he he he	laughter particles
[it's	overlapping talk starts

Appendix B: Supplementary data: additional busy stories

Extract 7 Lesley

1. Joellen so you had a good ↑week
2. (.)
3. Lesley ↑YES (.) yes
4. (1.5)
5. ((Lesley clears throat))
6. (0.5)
7. Joellen >whater you been up to-<
8. (1)
9. Lesley well ((clears throat))
10. I've done the washing (.)
11. er it's dry
12. I've got the ironing to do (.)
13. and er ((clears throat)) cooked dinners (.)
14. I er
15. (..)
16. Joellen not much the[n
17. Lesley [not much really just
18. just the ba(h)sic things ha ha
19. (6)

Extract 8 Joanna

1. Joellen <have you got a busy day to↑day or>
2. Joanna well off to (.) Hartfeld Common to
3. walk the (.) dog
4. and then (...)
5. I need t- (.)
6. >have a< quick pop round the supermarket (..)
7. sort of the day for doing everything really
8. and then [I'm (.) hoping to
9. Joellen [yeah normal day off
10. [day off fof work£ [he he he
11. Joanna [yeh [tha- that's right [(??)