Journal of Aging Studies 35 (2015) 104–110

Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

Journal of Aging Studies

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/jaging

Dementia, distributed interactional competence and social membership

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ARTICLE INFO

Article history:
Received 16 May 2015
Received in revised form 5 August 2015
Accepted 7 August 2015
Available online 11 September 2015

Keywords:
Dementia
Collaboration
Interaction
Scaffolding
Social membership
Material anchor

ABSTRACT

The article analyzes how a person with dementia playing a guitar collaborates with other people in a joint activity. The analysis shows that a person with dementia may gain social membership in a group of persons with and without dementia through social interaction, collaboration, scaffolding and use of material anchors. It shows that interactional skills as well as skills as guitar player are not only products of a mind–body system, but also a product of collaboration between different actors with different participant statuses in a particular situation. The guitar player's mind emerges in the social context of the joint activity and scaffolding. Scaffolding comes from interactive moves from the other participants without dementia and from the guitar. The guitar represents a material anchor. It is a tool for participation, experiences of pleasure, and coping, but it is also a challenge that requires management of face threatening events.

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Introduction

As recently pointed out by Hydén (2014) most research on persons with dementia has focused on individuals and their declining cognitive abilities. Dementia is commonly perceived as an intellectual regression in individuals caused by progressive neurobiological decline. The disease emerges in the form of socially deviant behaviors. From a biomedical point of view such behaviors may be pathologized (Dupuis, Wiersma, & Loiselle, 2012) and seen as signs of progressive neurobiological decline. In our article we turn the focus on dementia away from an individualistic and biomedical perspective. Instead we focus on social dimensions of dementia, such as capacities for or forms of participation in social interaction and other types of social activity. Little research exists on such topics.

Display of ordinary and competent social membership and personhood emerges through participation in social activities (Sacks, 1984). Participation in social activities requires social commitment (Clark, 2006; Searle, 2010) and communicative competence (Gumperz & Hymes, 1972) or abilities to understand and produce verbal or non-verbal acts that express meanings. A major research question for this article is if, or in what sense, individuals with dementia may become competent participants in social activities or social situations. A concept of "competence" is central to the article; it should not be associated with any kind of professional evaluation of cognitive competence. Instead the concept refers to general social capacities as they emerge in social situations. Social activities represent different activity types (Levinson, 1979) and language may often, but not always, play a significant role in these activities. In social situations exchange of meanings may be multimodal and dialogical (Goffman, 1981; Rommetveit, 1974).

Dementia has several dimensions. One dimension is the neurological aspect of the disease, which is the topic of medical and neuro-scientific research with focus on how damages of the brain cause dementia. Another dimension regards personal, practical and social consequences of dementia. The disease has implications for social interaction, collaboration and participation in social activities, social membership and personhood. These implications may not appear in medical settings or

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http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jaging.2015.08.002
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neurobiological labs, but they make the disease into a social and even a medical condition, they influence the everyday lives of persons with dementia, their relatives and their care workers. In this article we focus on how persons with dementia may emerge as competent members or participants in social activities when collaborating with others. We refer to one particular case, an episode of shared activity related to music.

Music-based activities are popular in care homes, but whether music is therapeutically useful is debated (Spiro, 2010). Some studies (Sherrot, Thornton, & Hatton, 2004; Witzke, Rhone, Backhaus, & Shaver, 2008) argue that music is improving the state of individuals with dementia; others (Vink, Birks, Bruinasma, & Scholten, 2006) argue that there is no evidence to support or reject the use of music therapy in the care of older people with dementia. Whether music therapy is effective or not, Spiro (2010: 892) argues that music activities may "provide well-being, improving mood, promoting socialization, memories and stimulation of frames of mind, and relaxation." Our concern here is not to evaluate music as a therapeutic effort or as cognitive or emotional stimulation. In settings like the day center, where our observations were done, activities like playing an instrument or listening to music may be understood in the perspective of "managementization" (Maravelias, 2011), which means that in institutional settings various everyday activities may be turned into therapeutic endeavors. In our case music is not part of a therapeutic effort, it is a social and collaborative activity of the kind we want to analyze and our focus is on collaboration and the social situation. We will present a guitar-playing scene with several participants and explore the ways a person with a dementia diagnosis and other persons without such a diagnosis interact and collaboratively generate a situation in which musical activities are central.

Dementia and interaction

Dementia affects cognition and memory, linguistic capacities, emotional states and anxieties (Spiro, 2010). Decline of cognitive and linguistic functions will gradually affect participation in social interaction and communication (Hydén, 2014; Spiro, 2010). Researchers have debated how cognitive and functional decline may affect persons with dementia and their environment. Some researchers (Davis, 2004; Herskovits, 1995) have been concerned with the kinds of loss dementia may lead to, while others (e.g. Beard, Knauss, & Moyer, 2009; Hydén, 2013a; Hydén, 2014), without rejecting the cognitive decline that follows from dementia, have been concerned with the resources persons with dementia still have and may have if supported by others. Kitwood (1997) argued for the importance of the social environment for the functioning of persons with dementia and the progression of the disease. This kind of research is particularly relevant for our study since it focuses on how cognitive and social skills, that seemingly have vanished, may emerge through social collaboration. Vikström, Josephsson, Stigsdotter-Neely and Nygård (2008) studied couples with one of the spouses diagnosed with dementia. They found that the healthy spouse lowered the expectations to the spouse with dementia, and that the two collaborated to complete everyday tasks. Central for a positive outcome of this kind of collaboration is "scaffolding" (Cicourel, 2013; Hydén, 2011; Vygotsky, 1978; Wood, Bruner, & Ross, 1976), which refers to kinds of instructions or support provided by competent others or use of various kinds of tools in connection with completing tasks, solving problems or learning. The term has been used in theories of learning and language acquisition, in cognitive science and in research on problem solving as socially distributed cognition. With regard to various activities persons diagnosed with dementia may improve their functional levels when supported by others. Scaffolding may thus improve individuals' abilities to complete tasks or make cognitive capacities emerge when collaborating with others. Hydén (2011, 2013) shows how spouses, when one of them has dementia and struggles with memory and word finding, collaborate to make the spouse with dementia able to tell a story. The spouse without dementia acts as a "scaffolder" or "tool", helping the other to take part in and participate in meaningful ways in the storytelling activity. An analysis of a meal preparing situation (Hydén, 2014) where two persons with dementia and two staff members in a day center work together also demonstrate that persons with dementia can collaborate and manage relatively well if they are supported by others and by certain relevant artifacts. Studies by Goodwin (2004, 2006) show how a person with aphasia interactively compensates for his loss of speech. Hydén (2013b) explores a communicative situation involving two women with dementia living in a residential care unit. One tells the other a story and the other listens actively by providing regular minimum responses to what is told. The story does not develop according to conventional narrative norms, but the listener confirms and responds in a manner showing that she is listening and paying attention to what is said. She shows commitment to the shared activity and speaker and listener cooperate so that storytelling as a conversational activity works.

Research on how loss of verbal and cognitive skills may influence an individual's social self and personhood focuses on how such skills emerge in collaborative settings (e.g. Hydén, 2014). Some argue that loss of cognitive capacities may result in "loss of self" or "loss of being" (Davis, 2004). Others argue that loss of cognitive and linguistic capabilities do not represent loss of self, because self is embodied and the embodied self cannot be reduced to a neurologically well-functioning brain. The understanding of self as embodied was maintained by Merleau-Ponty (1962). Kontos (2012, 2014) argues that selfhood continues to reside in people with dementia because it is embodied. Selfhood is enacted through habitual embodied gestures, actions and routines. In relation to music she gives an example of how a man unable to communicate with his son through words is able to use his habitual and embodied musical skills to communicate. Hydén (2013a, 2013b) makes similar points in his study of bodily engagement in storytelling by persons diagnosed with dementia. Twigg (2010) also argues that self and personhood are bodily phenomena that may be maintained in persons with dementia.

Cognition and personhood may also extend beyond the body. Buse and Twigg (2014) have recently argued that a handbag may represent a memory tool for persons diagnosed as demented. Selfhood may also be expressed through the use and content of such material objects as handbags. An individual's self is connected to social scenes, activities and things. When a handbag supports an individual's memory, it acts as a "material anchor" (Hutchins, 2005) that supports and stabilizes cognitive processes.

The studies referred to above expose how individuals with dementia or other types of diseases may become active

participants in social situations or activities by help of others, with or without dementia. This literature explores situations in which persons diagnosed with dementia may become part of enabling distributed cognitive systems (Harris, Barnier, Sutton, & Keil, 2014; Hutchins, 1995). In our article we focus on how socially distributed cognitive systems or cognitive ecologies (Hutchins, 2010) in the form of organized social interaction and collaboration generate social membership and how social selves or persons emerge on social scenes produced by interactive practices. Social membership implies display of a social self. The works of G. H. Mead (1934) and Erving Goffman (1981) have informed our understanding of the social self as an emergent phenomenon connected to social activities, situations and practices. According to Mead's approach, mind belongs to both body and environment; it is by nature interactive and changing. Embodiment is significant for social participation and display of a social self. We use the term embodiment similar to Merleau-Ponty's concept of bodily habit (Merleau-Ponty, 1962), which conflates physiological processes with mindful perception. According to the analysts mentioned above, mind and cognition are extended and distributed beyond the skin or scull of the individual and may emerge in interaction with and with support from others and become situationally stabilized by means of "material anchors" or things that are used as part of an activity.

Dementia, mind and social membership

Dementia has to do with the brain and the neurological system. But dementia may not therefore be distinguished from what we call "mind," and various analysts have argued against a biological reductionist conception of mind. Gregory Bateson's (1979) systemic and holistic conception of mind and distributed mental processes was developed as an argument against cognitive and biological reductionism. American pragmatists rejected individualist conceptions of mind (Rosenthal, Hausman, & Anderson, 1999) and George Herbert Mead (1934) insisted that it is through participation in social life that the individual actualizes her physiological potential for mind.

We cannot discuss mind with reference to the subjective experiences of persons diagnosed with dementia. Instead our approach is informed by externalist definitions of mind and cognition (Wilson, 2004), which make mind observable in social contexts as social action. The sociologist Eviatar Zerubavel (1999) uses the term "social mindscapes" and argues that language, communication and exchange of expressive signs make meeting of minds or intersubjectivity possible. Zerubavel emphasizes that mind and cognitive processes require participation from various agents. In studies of work, Engeström and Middleton (1998) argue that collaborative or interactive activities make the mind emerge.

Garfinkel and Sacks (1970) were concerned with "membership knowledge." They defined a "member" as a competent participant in social interaction and other joint activities. Individuals who participate adequately in social interaction or other forms of collaborative activities display adequate social membership. Acquisition of social membership requires display of agency or person and participant status relevantly connected to specific situations and activities. The question if or how persons with dementia can acquire social membership, and display social selves or personhood when they progressively lose neurological functions is implied in our main research question.

Methods and material

The article draws on a Norwegian study, "Collaboration systems in the protection of citizenship for persons with dementia."The study explores different types of interaction and collaboration between persons with dementia and persons without, using ethnographic methods. The research for this article was conducted as participant observation at a day center in Norway for people diagnosed with dementia. The day center is localized nearby a nursing home, which is also included in the study. Such day centers are parts of the public welfare sector. For this paper approximately 20 people diagnosed with dementia were observed. All of them lived in their own home.

The aim was to explore social dimensions of dementia with a realist ethnographic approach. Various activities and situations were systematically observed and described as accurately as possible in field notes. The first author also participated in various and ordinary activities at the center. Our focus was on the activities of people diagnosed with dementia and on staff activities at the day center, and our analytical, descriptive and interpretative approaches are informed by social interactionism (Atkinson & Houseley, 2003), pragmatism and phenomenology.

In addition to participant observation, methods of data collection included informal talk with individuals diagnosed with dementia and with members of the staff. The data collection period lasted for 7 weeks, and 4–6 h were spent in the day center per day. Observations were unstructured but activity-directed and took place within the public areas of the day center. The first author took part in such activities as meals, bingo, fitness classes, reading sessions, knitting and dancing. She helped to clear the tables after meals together with users, spent time together with users, engaged users by looking at books together with them, played games, talked, served drinks, or just sat together with them and observing their activities and how they interacted with each other and with staff members. This means that the first author took the role of a participant observer.

The notes from the observations were written regularly and systematically during the data collection period. The researcher withdrew periodically from the ongoing activities at the day center to write notes about activities, episodes, situations and referred the observations as closely and detailed as possible.

Guitar playing as shared activity

This article is based on a particular episode from the day center. It was a naturally occurring situation, which involved four persons, one person diagnosed with dementia, one staff member, one apprentice and the researcher. We have named the person diagnosed with dementia "Hans." He is a former schoolteacher in his early sixties. He is polite and looks good, and he is always very deferential in relation to others. The linguistic abilities of Hans are severely restricted because of his illness. He is fond of music and used to play guitar. He also likes to socialize and even if his limited speech capacity makes verbal communication or participation difficult for him, he enjoys joining groups of persons who have a conversation. He may now and then start a sentence, but it is difficult for him to find words and to complete an utterance.

The apprentice was a young male student who came to the day center one day a week to get practical experience from caring. He also played guitar. The staff member was a woman with long experience from the day center and the researcher was in a liminal position as participant and observer. The situation belonged to a kind of situations or activities that were not institutionalized as part of a program. It was spontaneously initiated by staff members to engage patients in joint activities. This time it was initiated because Hans was walking restlessly around. The staff member thought it would be good for him to have something to do, so she suggested he might play guitar together with the young apprentice, who also enjoyed guitar playing. This involved the apprentice in the situation. Hans had been a competent guitar player and was still expected to manage this activity well enough to have a positive experience from it. But to have such an experience he needed an audience that engaged, involved and committed Hans to guitar playing. They were also needed to form a collective for Hans to participate in; they had to be his collaborators. The apprentice had a special role in this particular situation as he also played guitar.

Guitar playing

The activity described below was initiated when the apprentice asked Hans if he played guitar. Hans confirmed that he did and he went into another room and got his guitar. When he came back he seated himself at the corner of a table. For reasons of reference the description of what followed is divided into six paragraphs.

(1) The apprentice sat at the same table. Once he was seated Hans started to play and sing. There were no words, but humming. Listening to his playing and singing, it was possible to recognize a difference between the verse and the chorus of the song. The chorus was played more confidently and sung with a stronger voice than the verse. When he started he played and sang in a low voice, as if he were checking out if it was right, then his voice and playing rose into a confident and rhythmic performance. He played and sang the same melody repeatedly for a while, (he performed as a competent guitar player with an audience) singing hardly any proper words; but in between he tried to formulate some words. After a short break he started to play another melody and hummed vocals such as "*ba,ba,ba, da-ra-ra da, da, da, la, la, ba-ra-ra*." The staff member asked him if this was "Sven Ingvars" (a Swedish dance–music band). He answered "*Yes, it is... About.*"

(2) The apprentice then asked Hans if he might borrow the guitar and play a melody. Hans handed the guitar to the apprentice — turning it adequately around so the apprentice could start playing immediately. The way he handed over the guitar was not only a ritual gesture of politeness, it also looked like the way a teacher hands over the guitar to a pupil. The apprentice said he would play Credence Clearwater. Hans responded "*...yeah...yeah… I know…*"

(3) The young apprentice played his melody. Afterwards Hans exclaimed "*Great! Really great!*" He clapped his hands, laughing and said "*I have to try to……*" Hans looked at the researcher and the staff member while saying this as if to involve us in his positive response. We nodded and confirmed "*yes he is really good*."

(4) The apprentice gave the guitar back to Hans and asked him to play the same melody. Hans tried, but could not find the right tune; he obviously searched, listened to the sound and heard it was not right. The apprentice then told him to play a G and then an E on the guitar. Hans said "*yes*" and his bodily response indicated that he knew about where on the guitar he would find G, but he could not find G from the verbal instructions. The apprentice then physically took Hans' fingers and placed them where they should be and said "*here is the G*." Hans said "*yes*." (The staff member remarked that this was music young people liked). But even if Hans' hand was physically directed to the G, he could not play the melody. Instead he started to hit the strings, seemingly accidentally, till he suddenly caught up with the melody he played initially. It was as if his embodied competence suddenly took over. Hans could also hear and recognize what happened and it made him continue playing the melody. First he played carefully and insecure, then as he was getting into the melody he played with more and more confidence and competence. His fingers moved routinized and confident along the guitar.

(5) The researcher asked Hans if he knew the song "*Knock, knock, knocking on heaven's door*." Hans responded by nodding and said to the researcher "*yeh… we can do it together..*", pointing at the researcher and the others.

(6) He tried to play, but he could not find the right tune. Two of us were humming the melody. Suddenly he stopped. It did not work as intended. The staff member asked him if he knew "*Love me tender*" by Elvis Presley, she tried to find a melody she thought he knew because of his age. She mentioned that one has to think about his age and what kind of music he liked when we suggest melodies. Hans said yes, and to support him, the staff member started to play the melody she had suggested from a small computer. Hans tried to play along, but he was struggling and looked distressed. His incompetence became audible and visual and he was obviously aware of this. The situation had become uncomfortable for him. The staff member and the researcher were singing along, trying to help him getting into the melody. But Hans had problems following the melody from the computer and the singers, and when it ended it became silent. Suddenly Hans started to play "*Love me tender*" on the guitar. He played without music from the computer and he played very well, and even if he made a mistake now and then, he corrected himself and got it right. The researcher and the staff member sang together with Hans, who hummed the song — with a growingly confident voice.

The social situation

Mind emerges through participation in social situations and activities. The strip of activity described above represents a social situation, which included several participants. Even if the situation occurred within an institutional context, the situation had an emergent local nature, constituted and defined by the ongoing collaborative activities of the participants. Social activities may be analyzed with reference to contexts at various levels (Duranti & Goodwin, 1992). Our analysis is not institutional; instead it focuses on activities within this local situational and interactional context, which is similar to what Goffman (1967) referred to as the institution of face-to-face interaction. The apprentice and a staff member initiated the situation, as referred to above in paragraph (1). Once initiated,

the situation framed a certain activity, guitar playing, but not primarily as an individual activity; it was accomplished as a collective or joint endeavor. Several agents with different participant statuses (Goffman, 1981) participated in ways that facilitated social cohesion and social action. Hans was central for the activity and it was essential that he would be committed to the situation. He got his guitar on request and seated himself at the table together with the apprentice, ready to play. Hans was asked to participate in an activity and he responded positively. A social commitment to the shared activity had been established together with a common ground (Hanks, 2006) for the joint endeavor. The participants mutually recognized what was about to take place. In the unfolding situation guitar playing was the core activity around which the collaborative endeavor was organized. The guitar was fundamentally and situationally important. It was in relation to the guitar and what was done with it that the situation unfolded.

Common ground refers to shared framing and is important for adequate exchange of meanings and maintenance of a social situation. In paragraph (1) the staff member asked Hans if he was playing music from a Swedish dance–music band. The staff member's question was a response to the music Hans played and Hans confirmed that the questioner had hit the right category of music, even if it was not exactly "Sven Ingvars". His response was interactionally adequate and meaningful to the staff member even if he did not complete his answer verbally or tried to specify which band used to play this tune. No further questions were needed. The response to the question indicated a common ground; a shared recognition and joint agreement about meaning had been expressed to indicate that the interacting agents understood what kind of music was played.

Social interaction

The participants formed a group, with a stable spatial organization. Hans and the apprentice sat at the table facing each other, while the staff member and the researcher stood close by when Hans started playing. After Hans had played his first tune he was asked what he had played and he responded to the question. During the whole episode an interactional structure was obvious, and even if Hans' verbal contributions were not complete, the respondents made them into meaningful interactional moves.

In the sequence referred to in paragraph (2) the apprentice asked if he might borrow the guitar and play. He said what he wanted to play, and Hans responded by handing the guitar over to him. A verbal response was not needed. As an interactional move the way Hans handed the guitar over was ritually appropriate. Implicitly it indicated that the apprentice might start to play, and the apprentice announced the melody he would play. Hans responded indicating that it was a melody he knew. His verbal response was restricted but situationally adequate. The apprentice then played his melody (paragraph 3), and when he finished Hans applauded and said, "*I have to try to…*" Hans did not finish the sentence, but interactionally his words constituted an adequate response that expressed an intension related to the other's guitar play. Hans' approval and his following utterance expressed appreciation. It was also an act of deference in Goffman's (1967) sense. He credited the young apprentice with his competence as guitar player. This was a ritual expression of politeness and appreciation; it expressed competence necessary to enact the interaction rituals of everyday life referred to by Goffman (1967). Such social, moral and interactional competence served as an expression of membership competence in this particular situation and the shared activity Hans was involved in. At the same time, the group and the group members' dialogical responses to and their supporting of Hans' contributions represented a vital context that informed and enabled Hans' interactional efforts. When his restricted utterances were heard in context and given meaning by the other participants, Hans communicated adequately and participated meaningfully in social interaction. Exchange of meanings was multimodal and not restricted to verbal utterances. The structure of the activity was maintained by the participants' interactional moves, and Hans' participation was anchored in the group's interactional structure.

Competence and social mind: individual and collective, abstract and practical

Hans' guitar playing and singing represented embodied skills, but they were also skills that Hans mindfully tried to retrieve; he could hear when he played right or wrong. When Hans tried to play the melody suggested by the apprentice (paragraph 4), support or scaffolding from the other participants, whether in form of song or direct physical assistance, could not help Hans start playing the suggested melody. He was asked to find the G on the guitar to start with and follow with E, but Hans was not able to find the G from the verbal instructions. Even when his fingers were moved physically to the G the instructions seemed to make no sense. They did not enable him to start playing the melody suggested. Instead, by trying and failing, he was able to "play" himself into the melody he had played initially, which he managed. Thus, he played himself out of a situation he did not manage and into an activity he managed well. He was again acting as a routinized and competent guitar player and a competent and central member of the group.

Hans' repertoire as guitar player might be restricted because of his illness, which also made it difficult for him to retrieve melodies he earlier could play. All of these melodies were not stored as automatic, embodied and easily retrievable skills or habitus. But this neurological shortcoming, which also displays a social shortcoming (his face and membership status were at stake), had to be handled momentarily and practically by Hans and the other participants. Together they ignored his difficulties, reframed the activity and let Hans practice his way back to the melody he managed.

Paragraph (5) refers to the part when Hans had finished a melody and the apprentice asked if Hans could play "*Knock, knock, knocking on heaven's door*." Hans responded, looking at the researcher, and suggested that the group should do it together. To do the music together implied that Hans would play and the other participants sing. Hans' suggestion might be interpreted as a strategic move to make all group members share responsibility for the musical activity or it might be heard as asking for support from the group.

One observation from the sequences reported above was that Hans, who had limited verbal capacity, also had problems following instructions. Even the direct physical support to find the G seemed to be too abstract. Moving his hand to the right

spot on the guitar did not activate any embodied skill of playing. A similar problem emerged when the melody was played from a computer. Being audibly exposed to the melody did not make Hans able to play it. But eventually it turned out that Hans actually had the embodied ability to play this melody, but he had to retrieve it practically himself, using the guitar as a material anchor to search for his skill. For Hans to be able to play, his activities had to be concrete and directed to or by the guitar. Cognition required practice, as suggested by Gee (2014) and a "thing" to practice on, and as suggested by Fauconnier and Turner (2002), things may improve or stabilize our cognitive capacities. The guitar was such a thing, and Hans' acts and fingers were directed to and informed by it.

During this guitar playing session Hans demonstrated wish and will to succeed. He wanted to show that he knew how to play the guitar and that he was able to play melodies. This will was expressed by his activities in the actual situation in relation to the other participants. His activities belonged to a social situation, they showed commitment to a shared activity, they referred to the presence of others and their responses, and they could hardly be reduced to a product of an internal biological force or impulse. Using Rose and Abi-Rached's (2013) understanding of mind, Hans demonstrated "mindfulness", which made his participation in the joint activity meaningful and meaningful participation provided Hans with social membership. It was obvious that he became uncomfortable when he was not able to play what he was asked to play and thus could not act according to his social membership status. Instead of repeated and unsuccessful attempts to play, he tended to return to or tune into melodies he managed.

Social membership

The meaning of the situation had very much to do with what Hans did within the given context. What he said, although incomplete, made contextual sense to the other participants, who reconstructed the meaning and responded to it as meaningful. It is worth noticing that this also refers to an ordinary phenomenon. Contrary to writing, spoken language is often syntactically less than perfect. It is frequently incomplete, sometimes contradictory and incoherent. The listener must be able to reconstruct coherent meanings from it and the context of speaking is useful for this reconstruction. Hans' incomplete utterances were relatively ordinary in the sense that they were context dependent and could be understood because they belonged to a shared activity and interaction that comprised more than talk. They were parts of what Wittgenstein (2009) called a language game. His utterances were communicative because they represented "talk-in-interaction," they were embedded in a social activity, and the responses from the others made them meaningful. Here interactional competence also emerged. Hans was interactively competent when collaborating with the other participants. From this successful participation his membership competence also emerged. In the situation described above, Hans had social membership in the group.

The guitar made Hans a central and potentially competent member as long as he was able to use it. To play successfully, the guitar had to be handled correctly and correct handling of a guitar requires and indicates a valued individual and social competence. This competence can only emerge because of the guitar. Without the guitar, this particular competence or quality could not emerge. But a social situation for guitar playing was also needed. Personal or moral qualities need situations and activities to emerge (Goffman, 1967), in addition the guitar was essential to this particular situation and for the activities that displayed competence and character.

It might be proposed that competent guitar playing is an embodied skill, which it probably also is, like all competent playing of a musical instrument. But Hans was also skilled in the sense that he was aware of or conscious about his own skill and his failings. Hans was able to hear when he did not succeed in playing or when he played incorrect. This could be observed when he was asked to play something he turned out not to be able to play. He tried, but as he failed he became obviously uncomfortable. When he succeeded to play correctly again, it looked as if it was his fingers that found out how to play the melody, it gave associations to Sudnow's term, "Ways of the hand" (Sudnow, 2001), which refers to the jazz pianist's competent improvisation when playing jazz. But Hans' fingers did hardly play as a purely bodily or neurological reflex or process. We could observe that Hans was listening and adjusting and correcting his play till it sounded okay to him. He could hear when he played well and we noticed that he then became more confident and he played better as his confidence grew.

There was obviously a connection between his bodily practice and cognitive or mindful processes. Playing the guitar successfully might be a product of what Samuel (1990) has termed a "mind–body system." But playing the guitar was not only restricted to the product of a mind–body system; it was an activity that took place within the frame of a social system and it represented a contribution to a shared social activity. In that respect it also showed an individual who participated and had a participant role as competent member of a socially shared activity.

Conclusion

Hans would not qualify for membership in all kinds of groups or situations, but as participant in particular and particularly structured joint activities, interacting with others and with a material anchor, such as the guitar, Hans may be made into a competent member who contributes to the group activity. In the episode described above four participants and a "thing" interacted, and doing this they constituted a cognitive ecology that provided membership competence for the participants, including Hans, and accomplished a shared activity. The guitar player had a central participant role and the guitar was an essential tool that generated activity, participant statuses and social memberships relevant for the situation. For Hans, emergence of interactional competence and social membership required scaffolding from the other participants when they tried to encourage or engage him to continue playing. The guitar was a "thing" attended to by all participants. Belonging to the cognitive ecology of the group the guitar had similarities with the handbags as tools for memory and presentation of self as pointed out in Buse and Twigg (2014) study; but the guitar was also a tool for the other participants in the joint activity. The guitar was the reason for the activity, which was organized in relation to this thing. For Hans, playing the guitar made experiences of participation,

group membership, pleasure and coping emerge, but also experiences of problems that were potentially face threatening.

Collaborative activities, such as the musical episode described above, create a social space, in the sense of an interpersonal meeting place or a space constituted by and constituting exchange of meaningful acts. In this space, the collaborative activities may allow personal properties, often considered individual, emerge as social. These qualities include personhood, mind, social membership and various forms of competence. Scaffolding has been referred to as important to participation in such activities, also when persons with dementia are involved. Hence, scaffolding represents a relatively concrete part of what Kitwood (1997) referred to as the social environment. Scaffolding may therefore be positive for meaningful participation in social activities by persons with dementia. On the other side, in relation to persons with dementia scaffolding also may have a negative potential, which is important to be aware of. When well intended support or instruction forces the person with dementia to be involved in activities that are not and cannot be managed by him or her, in spite of the support, participation may be experienced negatively and face-threatening.

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