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"Oh my god that would hurt": Pain cries in feminist self-defence classes

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ABSTRACT

This study examines response cries produced by student spectators reacting to imagined pain in the setting of feminist self-defence classes. It investigates the vocal, verbal and embodied resources that constitute reactive displays to demonstrations and descriptions of physical techniques that can thwart attacks. It asks what the pain cries accomplish, considering their form and sequential organisation. Video-recordings of the classes were data. Drawing on discursive psychology and using multi-modal conversation analysis, the results detail how the conventionalised composition and positions of the cries make them mutually intelligible as reacting to a painful experience. They functioned to support the progression of the instructional activity that created a make-believe space where girls and women can resist violence. The findings confirm and extend what is known about the interactional environments and activities in which pain figures, further advancing the distinctive insights that an interactional approach brings. Data are in New Zealand English.

1. Introduction

The present study approaches pain as an interactional phenomenon that is produced through the sounds, words and other embodied resources used to communicate it. Understanding the situated use of the multimodal practices that together constitute a pain display and produce its mutual intelligibility is important. It is evidence of the pervasively intersubjective nature of pain in social interaction. One unique aspect of the current investigation is that it examines pain in a hitherto unexplored setting. Feminist or empowerment self-defence classes (the two terms are used interchangeably in this article) are a perspicuous setting for examining pain displays in so far as the physical techniques being taught are designed to incapacitate attackers by hurting them. Another novel element of the investigation is that the pain is imaginary, felt by make-believe attackers in constructed scenarios.

Self-defence training demonstrations require parties to jointly create and align with an imagined space inhabited by thinking, moving, feeling and interacting gendered bodies - an accomplishment that Stuckenbrock (2017) theorised as *Intercorporeal Phantasms*. Similar to the work reported here, Stuckenbrock used a detailed, grounded analysis of video recordings of self-defence training designed to teach girls how to ward off sexual attacks. Her work importantly established that imagined scenarios were realised linguistically through deictic expressions coordinated with bodily practices. The analysis presented here focuses more on sequentiality within interactions and over time showing the various 'accountabilities' of pain cries, where accountability generally refers to how the conduct of parties jointly produces mutual intelligibility in the moment (Robinson, 2016). Specifically, the relevance of pain emerged as the local self-defence demonstration progressed, producing the intelligibility of the cry. In sum, by grounding an analysis of pain cries which are responding to imaginary hurt

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created as part of demonstrations during feminist self-defence classes, this article makes a distinctive contribution theories of language and action.

2. Pain displays in social interaction

Pain, classically defined, is an unpleasant subjective sensory or affective experience as a result of real or imagined tissue damage (Main, 2016). Studies of pain in social interaction offer a distinctive perspective by examining, in detail, its embodied and linguistic dimensions in the situated activities where they naturally occur. In a landmark interactional study of pain examined in medical encounters, Heath (1989) established that conventionalised vocalisations (e.g. *argh*) during physical examinations were fitted to turn and sequence organisation, functioning to demonstrate patient suffering and legitimated their seeking help from the doctor. Affirming the remarkable orderliness of pain displays within interaction and further nuancing an understanding of what was accomplished by them in medical settings, McArthur (2018) found the sounds, expressions and winces communicating pain were a way patients' managed interactional dilemmas around providing unsolicited information to the doctor. Together, Heath and McArthur have clearly established that that pain cries have conventionalised vocal, verbal and embodied features that are systematically organised with respect to turn-taking and sequence structures. Furthermore, the precise placement of pain cries within specific activities are important to how they function in showing parties' orientations to relevant rights, obligations and concerns within the institutional setting being examined.

The sequential orderliness of embodied aspects of pain displays in doctor-patient interactions has been well-established. La and Weatherall (2020) for example, showed that an onset of a pain display was regularly coordinated with a suspension of another physical activity and that the resources out of which they were built had a regular temporal organisation so that non-vocal aspects such as gasps and grimaces preceded non-lexical vocalizations and lexical verbalisations. Also in a medical setting, Weatherall et al. (2021) reported a similar pattern, additionally noting that embodied reflex-like actions (e.g. abrupt jerks and sudden, loud in-breaths) occurred where an immediately prior event could be attributed retrospectively as the cause of the reflexive response and were a first indication of a pain experience.

Aside from medical encounters, one of the few other settings where spontaneous pain displays in social interaction have been examined is adult-child interactions. Lexicalized sound objects including *ow* and *ouch* were documented by Jenkins and Hepburn (2015) as a typical aspect of children's pain displays during family mealtimes. Overwhelmingly they occurred in turn-initial position or as turns in their own right which drew attention to a trouble with the food or with wanting to leave the table. A shared aspect of pain expressions across the different contexts of family dinner times and doctor-patient interactions is that they are both shaped by the specific local actions being advanced by the participants, which will also be the case in the present study. As will be discussed in a following section, the general aim of the classes that are the setting for this research is to empower girls and women to act by teaching about their rights and abilities to defend themselves. An issue that will be returned to in the discussion is what, if anything, this examination of response cries to imagined pain can offer questions about why these types of classes are evidentially effective in reducing vulnerabilities to violence (Hollander, 2016; Jordan and Mossman, 2018).

3. Assessment of other's pain

A relevant assessment and typically affiliating response to somebody else's pain is empathy. Empathetic responses have been examined in a variety of settings and have been found to take different forms. Verbally acknowledging upset is widely used on telephone helplines, especially when crying halts the smooth progression of the talk (Hepburn and Potter, 2007; Weatherall, 2021), although explicitly stating an understanding of somebody else's emotions can be less than affiliative (Weatherall and Keevallik, 2016). Response cries importantly contribute to the work of showing understanding in palliative care consultations (Ford et al., 2019) and in non-medical interaction (Kupetz, 2014). Empathy can also be indexed through prosody (Weiste and Peräkylä, 2014) and non-verbally through gaze and facial expressions. In a more embodied modality, comforting touch has been documented as a kind of empathetic response to children's distress (Cekaite, 2021) and towards stroke patients (Merlino, 2021). Closer to the phenomenon examined in the present study were doctors' empathetic responses to patient's pain displays. Weatherall et al. (2021) found these were designed as though the doctors themselves were having a painful experience. Similarly in the present study the pain cry is in response to someone else's experience with an important difference being that the hurt is make-believe.

Heritage (2011) noted that a significant feature of empathetic response cries was that they are affiliative without distinguishing between what exactly is the target of the stance being shared – the speaker or the event being described. Furthermore, there is a delicate balance to maintain – claiming understanding without undermining the speaker's rights to their own experiences. The following analysis will be sensitive to the possible ambiguities and delicateness about the pain cries being examined, such as appreciating the effectiveness of the pain being inflicted while not necessarily empathising with the imagined attacker. Following a conversation analytic mentality, observations will be grounded in participant's orientations to relevant actions and how those are structurally organised, keeping in mind the particularities of the setting being examined.

The regular sequential organisation of pain displays and pain cries alongside other affective stance displays in social interaction has been well-documented (Weatherall and Robles, 2021). Pain displays can be seen as a type of assessments: in first position these claim primary rights and entitlements to the experience of pain and knowledge about it (Heritage, 2011). After a first pain display, a second pain display by a next speaker can display empathy (Weatherall et al., 2021). Verbal assessments can be integrated with embodied modalities such as head nods and facial expressions (Goodwin and Goodwin, 1987; Lindström and Mondada, 2009). Grimaces are a regular feature of pain displays (La and Weatherall, 2020).

The following analysis considers how a pain cry is anticipated as a relevant response. In stories and other forms of tellings such as news announcements, the preferred response is regularly pre-figured in the initiating action such as the valency of the news (Schegloff, 2007), for example, as surprising (Wilkinson & Kitzinger, 2007). Different modalities can be also mobilised to respond to stories, such as Stivers (2008) observation that nodding and verbal continuers achieved different work. Stivers suggested that vocal continuers display alignment (supporting the structural progression of the activity) whereas head nods displayed affiliation (agreeing with the stance being taken)The present study finds the pain cries aligned and affiliated with the instructor, appreciating that a physical technique could incapacitate an attacker.

4. Instructing and demonstrating

An important strand of interactional research using conversation analysis has been in educational settings. One focus of that work is on issues to do with the interactional project of learning knowledge and skills (Gardner, 2012). A widely recognised phenomenon is the sequence of three turns (Mehan, 1979): a teacher initiates a sequence with a question, instruction or demonstration, a student responds and then the teacher evaluates and/or further develops aspects of the response towards the learning objective. Gardner suggested that it is the teacher's evaluation that is the most interesting because it is in that slot that teachers perform complex pedagogical actions including affirming learning or shaping the direction of the sequence to the learning objective.

The vast majority of studies on classroom interaction have been on second language acquisition (Gardner, 2012). However, there is an emergent body of work on instructions in physical activities such as dance (Keevallik, 2015), sports training (Evans and Lindwall, 2020; Evans and Reynolds, 2016) and martial arts (Råman, 2019). The close examination of embodied interactions have led to theoretical innovations in linguistic theory, for example where grammar is newly conceptualised as being shaped by the temporal organisations of talk with the body (Keevallik, 2015). The present study is innovative for taking a naturalistic and interactional approach to examining feminist self-defence classes. Unlike the other physical education or instructional settings where the focus of instruction is primarily on skill development, in the present one there is an additional interest in supporting psychological transformation, dispelling gendered beliefs that may prohibit acting in self-defence.

Advocates of feminist self-defence suggest that it is the distinctive mix of learning verbal and physical self-defence techniques with the facilitation of a critical consciousness about gender, power and social inequality that is key to its effectiveness (Brecklin, 2008; Hollander, 2018; Murphy, 2018; Senn et al., 2017). One aspect of the unique combination of skill development and consciousness raising is that it addresses the psychological barriers that women can face due to gender socialisation where quiet, passive complicity are valued attributes in good girls (Lytollis, 1983; Thompson, 2014). There is good evidence that the approach is effective - after completing feminist self-defence classes participants are less likely to view male violence as inevitable and more likely to see themselves as capable of self-defence (Hollander, 2018). Drawing on ethnomethodologically inspired conversation conversation analysis the present research will further knowledge about what happens in the classes, showing *that* and *how* the responses function as pain cries supporting demonstrations of feminist self-defence.

5. Data

Video-recordings of the delivery of empowerment self-defence classes were collected as part of a larger project asking how empowerment self-defence training works to transform women and make them less vulnerable to violence. Three to four cameras on tripods were positioned in a way that would together capture the teaching and learning spaces and activities. An external radio mic, attached to the instructor was the sound input for one of the cameras.

A total of nine self-defence classes lasting between one to two days were videoed during 2020–2021, resulting in more than 45 h of footage. Four classes were for school-aged girls (ranging from 9 to 14 years-old), one class was for university women, and four were women recruited through community centres. The classes varied in size with the smallest being a community class of eight women and the largest being 29 students in their first year of high school (age 13-14 years-old). The present investigation focuses on three of the classes, each with a different teacher. Two of the classes were school-based and one was from a community group. Data was primarily in New Zealand English but also included some words and phrases in Te Reo Māori, which is an official national language.

Synopses of the recordings were made which glossed the configuration of the parties, the ongoing activities and included brief annotations of what was being said. From the synopses of the three classes being sampled, moments where there were response cries were identified. The relevant sequences of action were then extracted from the recordings and transcribed

using Jeffersonian conventions (Jefferson, 2004) with some multimodal annotations (Mondada, 2018) to highlight, where relevant, the co-ordination between talk and the body. Screen grabs were also used to capture facial expressions and gesture. Close to 20 cases were found, each was examined in detail for the composition and position of the pain cries and what it accomplished in terms of action.

6. Ethics

Consent was first sought from experienced instructors who were willing to have their teaching recorded and they proposed possible classes to record. Agreement was then gained from the relevant organisation (school or community groups), to distribute information and consent sheets to the students enrolled in the classes. Parents were able to opt their children out of the research, but none did. Only classes where all students agreed to be recorded were included in the study. The research was approved by the Victoria University of Wellington Human Ethics Committee (ID 0000027659).

7. Analytic approach

Ethnomethodology (Garfinkel, 1967; Heritage, 1984b), conversation analysis (Sidnell and Stivers, 2012) and membership categorisation analysis (Sacks, 1972; Schegloff, 2007a) provide coherent conceptual and methodological frameworks for investigating naturalistic social encounters such as the video recordings that are data for the present study. They are approaches that examine culturally shared sequential and inferential practices that parties use to construct meaningful action, making them well-fitted to finding how socialisation into the competencies of feminist self-defence training works. They were key influences in the development of discursive psychology (Potter and Wetherell, 1987) where language-in-use is taken as the direct object of inquiry for investigating disciplinary topics and concerns such as pain (La and Weatherall, 2020) and empathy (Ford and Hepburn, 2021), which DP conceptualises as actions built for mutual intelligibility. Interactional research has also been foundational inforegrounding the roles of the body in addition to language in the study of human action in interaction (Mondada, 2016), which makes such work relevant for considering the training of self-defence techniques that promote talk and the body as tools for resisting attacks.

A feminist lens is important for the present work. It motivated the broader project on how to prevent gender-based violence of which the current study is but one part. Methodologically, feminist research shares some key principles with ethnomethodology and conversation analysis, the approaches used in this study, including privileging participants' concerns and orientations (Kitzinger, 2000; Tennent and Weatherall, 2021). Feminist forms of ethnomethodology and conversation analysis, including membership categorisation analysis have importantly contributed to understanding how sex, gender and sexuality are accomplished through inferential features of language-in-use (Butler and Weatherall, 2011; Kessler and McKenna, 1978). Feminist conversation analysis has also produced critical discussions about matters relevant to gendered violence such as communicating sexual refusals (Kitzinger and Frith, 1999), disclosing violence (Tennent and Weatherall, 2019) and identifying as victims (Tennent, 2021).

8. Analysis

The analysis presents two environments where response cries are produced by student spectators in response to pain being experienced by an imaginary attacker. One environment is immediately after demonstrations of physical self-defence techniques in the here and now of the classroom and the other is in relevant response slots during 'resistance stories', detailed narratives delivered by instructors about self-defence being effectively deployed in the past. In both, the cries had conventionalised forms and occurred in close proximity to the displayed moment of (imaginary) impact between the two relevant bodies.

The examples presented below have been selected as the clearest cases that represent the fullest diversity in the collection. Extracts 1 and 2 are the same instructor showing different techniques - a shin-kick and self-defence from the ground. In the first case, close to the beginning of the class there was a greater diversity of response stances displayed by the students. In the second case, much later in the day, similar responsive pain cries were produced chorally, providing a form of evidence of socialisation that a relevant responding affective stance to display after demonstrations is they can inflict pain. Subsequent extracts include different instructors and a variety of practices used to create scenarios in which pain cries are made a relevant and normative response.

In the first example the instructor (INS, in the transcript) shows a physical technique called a shin-kick. The title shows that it comes from the first day of a two-day class, close to 38 min into the first of three time blocks, that is within the first hour of the class. The excerpt begins with the instructor's announcement of what she is about to do while she is walking to the end of the school hall to position a soft sparring pad against the wall. The execution of the kick is begun from a position called 'stance' that the students have been shown earlier, which is the stable position from which to initiate all other self-defence techniques. The pain cry in this case (line 06) occurs as a solo turn, immediately after the kick connects with the sparring pad.

```
Extract 1  WDS Day1/2 B1/3 37.55 very painful

01 INS:    I'll just show you a full power shin ki:ck
02         +(2.0)+ *(0.6)
           +walks to the wall+
                  *positions the kick pad -->*
03 INS:    kick pad (0.8)* <and> #+(0.9) + .hh #+ DHO +=
                     -->*
                                  +stance+      +kick +
   fig                           #fig 1        #fig 2

06 STD:    =#u::w
   fig      #Fig3
```

Fig 1

Fig 2

Fig 3 STD

```
07         (0.4)
08 STB:    oh my god (that would hurt someone)
09 STD:     [  that's   so    scary      ]
10 INS:    *[ca:n you imagine how painful] that would be?*
           * walks back to re-join the circle of students*
11         (0.4)
12 STD:    very painful
13         (0.3)
14 INS:    yeah
```

At the beginning of the extract, the instructor announces her next action which enables the student spectators to project what will happen next. The instructor will be demonstrating or, as she puts it, *showing* (line 01) a self-defence technique called *a shin-kick*. As described by Stuckenbrock (2017), the instructor enacts the sequence, with the target of the kick being an imaginary co-participant, represented in this case by the pad.

The form of shin-kick that the instructor is going to demonstrate is linguistically marked as one that is done at *full power* which differentiates it from some other kind. In a repair context, adding detail can produce a locally relevant distinction (Wilkinson and Weatherall, 2011). Although not a repair here, the marking is functioning similarly. Just prior to the above extract, the instructor has been explaining and demonstrating how to do a shin-kick and the class has been practising the move all together with no target. So a *full power* shin- kick differentiates it from the repetitive moves of the shin-kick that they have just been doing where impactful force is not applied. The expression also pre-figures a relevant assessment of the demonstration of the kick to be an assessment that orients to the kick's powerfulness, done by a skilled self-defender.

Coming after the announcement, the action of positioning the kick pad (line 02) is preliminary to the demonstration. It is an embodied form of what Goodwin (1996) called a 'prospective indexical', which contributes to the projectability of the completion of a next action. The *and* (line 03) shows that what is to follow is an element of the ongoing course of action (Heritage and Sorjonen, 1994) but the talk is suspended while the instructor gets into the preparatory stance position (see Fig. 1). She then takes an audible inbreath which projects an effortful move as well as a vocalization. As she kicks (Fig. 2), she produces a loud sound unclearly articulated as something between a 'no' and a 'go-way', which are the directives addressing an imagined attacker – a vocal self-defense technique that students have also been practicing previously. The unclear sound occurs simultaneously with the kick and there is a loud sound as the foot connects with the kick pad (not annotated in transcript) which brings the turn and the delivery of the physical action to completion.

Latched to the kick's impact sound, a student (STD, in the transcript) produces our target phenomenon - a pain cry. It is a vocalized high back vowel sound, slightly diphthongized produced with a grimace. The position of the cry, immediately after the kick's impact, and its conventionalised vocal and embodied features together produce a reaction that is seemingly eruptive and somewhat out of control (Goffman, 1978). The timings alongside the sound and facial expression have been noted in medical settings as being characteristic of pain displays (Heath, 1989; McArthur, 2018; La and Weatherall, 2020) where they can also be used to empathetically (Weatherall et al., 2021) respond to someone else's experience of pain in the here and now. However, in this case it is imagined pain experienced by an imaginary recipient and inflicted by an instructor acting as a self-defender. The position and form of the cry responds to the demonstration as something that would hurt.

The intelligibility of the pain cry as additionally teaching something new is advanced by another student, STB (line 08) who produces a response of surprise *oh my god*, an assessment that was set-up as a relevant response in advance, as is typical with the sequential organization of surprise (Wilkinson and Kitzinger, 2006). STD (line 09) produces a lexicalized assessment *that's so scary* providing a turn taking slot to agree about the fearfulness of the situation. However,the instructor further progresses the relevance of pain by inviting the students to consider the impact of the kick on the target, asking *can you imagine how painful that would be* (line 10). Note that three different speakers used *that* over a series of three separate turns (lines 08, 09 & 10). Drawing on linguistic theories of deixis and intercorporeality, Stuckenbrock (2017) suggested that verbal pointing to make-believe bodies in motion, such as the 'that's' here which refer to the act of kicking, is part of the creation of a phantasm where there is a female self-defender interrupting a sexual attack. Here, a student (STB) aligns and further progresses the imaginary scenario being invoked and the proffered assessment by upgrading the level of pain being imagined to *very painful* (line 12) which the INS endorses with a *yeah* (line 14).

In sum, the response cry (line 06) is consistent with the emergent temporal unfolding of pain displays documented by Weatherall et al. (2021). In a relevant ongoing activity (e.g., medical examination), there is an embodied reflex-like action (e.g., a wince or grimace), closely associated with a non-lexical or minimally lexicalized sound, which gains an eruptive quality because of its position to an immediately prior triggering cause. Regularly, that is followed by an explicit reference to the sensation just experienced. In the above extract, a pain cry is part of an instructional sequence that creates an imaginary scenario and also normatively shapes the response such that pain rather than another emotion (for example, fear) is relevant.

The next example shows the same instructor and class as the previous one but taken from a later point, towards the end of the first day. Three students respond with pain cries chorally. The extract comes from a demonstration of self-defence from the ground. Compared to the previous case, there is an even closer mapping of the participants to the roles in the imagined scenario because a student volunteer is positioned in the role of the perpetrator, so the participation framework is what Evans and Lindwall (2020) call 'demonstration as enactment'. The extract begins with the instructor explaining how to get into a good position: being off your butt and having your legs between you and the attacker (see Fig. 1).

```
Extract 2 WDS Day 1 B3 52:52 smash his face as well

01  INS:    Uhm girls immediately up off your butt. back. into this
02          position.  you're on your tail bone.  your legs (0.2) and
03          (0.2) hands splayed.  Uhm keeping your powerful kicking
04          <strong legs in between you and him (0.4) my legs are
05          free to make *(0.2) #what I'm going to do* is ↑what are the=
                        *lifts left heel off ground *
    Fig                         #fig 1

06          =targets that I can hit from here
07  STP:    shin and knee and maybe [toes]
08  STB:                            [TOES]
09  ST?:    what about his nose?
10  ST?:    face as well
11  ST?:    toes?
12  INS:    yeah theres quite a few targets ↑there
13          .hh  *I can [.hh #(0.2) hit the shins(0.2)I]ca:n=
                  *. . . - - - heel to shin , , , . . .- - - >
    Fig                     #fig 2

14  STW:                [ ( oh and there's the groin )  ]
15  INS:    =#dislocate the knee [(0.2) I can  ]#SM:a:sh the genitals *=
            heel to knee- - - -, , , . . . .. - - - -heel to groin,,*
    Fig      #fig 3                             #fig 4

16  STW:                          [and the groin]
17  INS:   =.hh when he reaches over to grab me °reach over
18          to grab me my dear I won't hurt you° *I can smash
                                                 *, , , , , ,-->
19          #his face as well*
            ---h to face, , ,*
    Fig     #fig 5

20  STB:    #[u:w]
```

21 STG: [u:w]
22 STP: [u:w]
Fig #fig 6


fig 1


fig 2


fig 3


fig 4


fig 5


Fig 6

23 INS: NO (0.2) GET AWAY (0.2) GET LOST using voice uhm to
24 ST?: (send an alarm)
25 ST?: get someone to help
26 INS: yeah

The beginning of the extract shows the instructor explaining and demonstrating a strong defensive ground position which is basically one where the attacker can be kicked. The instructor's use of person references shows complex changes in footing (Goffman, 1981). She begins as instructor, addressing the students collectively with *girls,* telling them what to do in the imagined scenario *immediately up off your butt* (line 01). She then starts describing the body arrangement that she is in, using the possessive pronoun *your* (lines 02-04) to position them as the self-defender that she is embodying. The pronoun *him* verbally points to the student volunteer as the imaginary attacker who is normatively male.

At lines 04-05, the instructor shifts footing back to herself by referring to her legs, using a first person possessive pronoun in a turn that is interrupted *my legs are free to make*, and reformatted as an announcement *what I'm going to do is*, which occurs simultaneously with her lifting her heel off the ground projecting a readiness to kick (see Fig. 1). The progression of her turn of talk is disrupted a second time, this time to transform it into a first pair part, a question, (Schegloff, 2007), initiating a learning sequence *what are the targets that I can hit from here,* making a response naming vulnerable body parts relevant, something that they have been told about earlier.

A first student promptly responds, proposing two targets *shin and knee* with a possible third target of *toes* which is chorally completed by another student (lines 07-08; Lerner, 2002).

Other responses are also proffered (lines 09-11). The instructor positively evaluates the responses collectively at line 12 *yeah there's quite a few targets there,* going on to demonstrate ones that are actually vulnerable (i.e. not the toes).

The demonstrations of the first three possible targets have a repetitive quality (lines 13-15). A semi-fixed expression (Keevallik and Weatherall, 2020) emerges that claims a self-defensive agency. It is formatted as *I can + self-defence verb (hit/dislocate/ smash)+ the vulnerable body part (shin/knee/genitals)* to produce a three part list that *I,* who is the imaginary female self-defender, is able to aim for. In almost perfect simultaneity (Keevallik, 2015) and with a clear rhythm, each of the semi-fixed utterances is synchronised with a kick directed at each of the named body parts of the volunteer. For the shin (see Fig. 2) and the knee (see Fig. 3) the instructor's foot contacts the student who is standing passively in the position of imagined attacker. The contact is precisely timed with the delivery of the self-defence verb. The timing is the same for the genitals with a difference being that direct contact is not made (see Fig. 4). The transcript also shows a student (STW) offering *the groin* as another possible response (lines 14 and 16).

On completion of the third repetition of semi-fixed expression, the instructor begins a possible scenario of what the perpetrator might do next *when he reaches over to grab me* (line 17). At that precise point, there is another change in footing. The instructor directs the student volunteer to enact the role of the perpetrator in the scenario *reach over to grab me*. Directives that nominate a relevant co-demonstrator are a typical format used in demonstrations of physical techniques (Evans and Lindwall, 2020; Råman, 2019). The instructor makes the footing change by a shift in volume to a quiet voice, the use of a post-positioned term of endearment *my dear* and some reassurance *I won't hurt you*. Here the 'I' clearly refers to the instructor who will not harm the student, a marked contrast to the *I* in lines 13-15 who can inflict pain and the *him* whose phantastic body is occupied in physical space by the student.

The instructor's move from reassuring back to demonstrating (lines 18-19) is done via the previously established semi-fixed expression which reuses the self-defence verb *smash*, adding the now within reach vulnerable body part *face* where a gendered possessive pronoun *his* is used transforming the expression into a thoroughly deictic one *I can smash his face as well* which (re) establishes a membership categorisation device (Sacks, 1972; Schegloff, 2007a) that organises the gendered violence scenario, by the use of pronouns to verbally point to a male attacker and a female self-defender. The relevant identity categories are gendered which is part of what makes the setting a feminist self-defence class where gender-based violence is omni-relevant.[1] A different

[1] In another class with a different instructor there is an explicit statement "I want you to think of yourself as a self-defender first not as a victim but as someone who has the capacity and power to defend herself".

but related membership categorisation device was documented by Tennent and Weatherall (2019) in a telephone helpline where the relevant related identities shaping local sense making were not phantastical but actual male perpetrators and female victims.

Precisely coordinated with *I can smash his face as well* is the performance of the kick, which also does not contact the targeted body part, likely due to a moral order in instruction where some body parts are more properly touchable (e.g. shins and knees) than others (i.e. genitals and faces).

The exact co-ordination of the description of the physical movement with its embodied demonstration makes the completion projectable, as evidenced by the three simultaneous empathetic pain cries in response to the demonstration. The arrows in Fig. 6 indicate the three students who uttered the cries and show their broad spatial distribution across the group of students. In an analysis of choral productions, Lerner (2002) identified several forms of talk-in-interaction that establish opportunities for co-ordinated audience participation including the preparation of a place by halting a turn before a projectable final word. The above example shows another form that also functions in that way – the production of a complete 'syntactic bodily gestalt' (Keevallik, 2015) where the unit of talk and embodied action are synchronised in their initiation and completion.

The above case shows the instructor enacting a female self-defender with agency, effectual physicality to inflict pain and knowledge realised linguistically using *I can* + *self-defence verb* + *target body part* which was coordinated with the demonstration of the physical self-defence technique. A student volunteer is positioned in the role of the perpetrator, occupying in real space in the imagined place of the attacker, similar to the 'deixis am phantasma' described by Stuckenbrock's (2017) in her analysis of self-defence training for girls where parties construct a scenario by mapping present members into imaginary membership categories. As with the previous case a joint understanding is established that harm can be inflicted using self-defence techniques to interrupt an attack. The responses align with the activity and affiliate with the phantasy created of a female self-defender incapacitating an attacker by hurting them.

The next case is from a different class and another instructor than the previous two examples. It is also from early on (i.e. just over half an hour from the beginning of the class). It shows one of the most elaborate scenarios in the collection and is the only one that is not about cross-gendered violence but rather is about bullying. In contrast with the cases discussed so far, the talk and embodied action are less closely synchronised and do not so clearly project a relevant place to produce a response. Accordingly, there are a cascade of cries close together. These cries are intelligible as pain cries, with one student even further embodying the impact of the kick by bending over. Thus, like the above cases, the following one also shows the students aligning with the physical demonstration and affiliating with the interactional project of teaching the students that they have the ability to inflict pain.

```
Extract 3 QHS Day 1 33.53. it's going to smash

01  INS:   Right so Alice is my nasty aggressive person (0.2) right?
02  cls    ((laughter))
03  INS:  .hh she's threatening to st- pinch my lunch bo:x and I really
04         don't want her to: I need to do something that's gonna
05         GIve her the message that she can't ↓mess with me (0.2) alright
06         .hhhh cun- currently we are standing at a comfortable personal
07         distance (.) right its not too awkward aye because we don't
08         know eachother .hh alright so that's cool .h but (0.2) if I
09         try to kick Alice from here I just can't reach alright (.)
10         it's not going to work .hh so +I [need] to wait for Alice
                                        +steps in-->
11  STU:                                   [oh  ]
12  INS:   to come right in close+ with her hands on my lunch box?
                              -->+
13         righ(h)t righ(h)t *and now when I kick her my foot
                             *. . . . . . . . . slomo kick -->*

14        is still travelling forward when it connects# with her leg and
          . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . - - - - - - - - - - - - - , ,
    fig                                        #1
15        its going to #smash[#.hhalright#*>just turning you]around this]=
          , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , -->*
    fig              #2       #3          #4
16  ST?:                        [ aow
17  ST?:                                          aow
18  ST?:                                                 aow
19  ST?:                                                        aow      ]
20  INS:   =way< see how close I am in her personal bubble
21         so we're finding it hard to look eachother in the eye now
           because its t↑oo awk↑wardly clo↑se (.) .h alri(h)ght
```


Fig 1


Fig 2


Fig 3


Fig 4

The scenario built in the above example is a school bullying one, where a fellow student is constructed as intending to take the would-be victim's lunch box. The set-up of the volunteer as a *nasty aggressive person* (line 01) is met with laughter from the class, likely because it is at odds with the kind of person they know Alice (a pseudonym) to be (line 02). The instructor assigns herself the role of an empowered subject who cannot be *messed with,* that if bullied, can defend herself. Bookended by *alright,* lines 06-08 show the instructor analysing the proxemics between herself and the volunteer which she assesses as a *comfortable* one with respect to their interpersonal relationship, but too far away for the successful delivery of a self-defensive shin kick.

The upshot of the position between the parties in the scenario is given at line 10, which is that the instructor, as an imaginary student self-defender, must wait for Alice as the bully to come close. However, what happens in the here and now of the classroom is that it is the instructor who moves towards the student to get at the right distance (lines 10-12), which positions her as surprisingly close, indexed by the *oh* from one of the student spectators (line 11). The instructor, having got herself into a proper position to demonstrate the shin kick, initiates the enactment in slow motion, which begins as she says *and now when I kick her* (line 13). The feminine pronoun here is consistent with the scenario because it is an all-girls school. The description goes on to note that her foot will still be travelling forward as it connects with her leg. The kick reaches its apex on the word *connects* (line 14, see Fig. 1).

The first empathetic pain cry is uttered as the kick is being retracted. It comes at the end of an additional part of the verbal description about of what will happen when the foot connects with the leg, which is that *it's going to smash.* That is, it occurs in the transition relevance place of the talk where the action, grammar and intonation collectively produce an understanding that the turn as possibly complete (Ford and Thompson, 1996). In contrast to Extract 1, where the response cries were organised with the embodied kick itself, here the cries are fitted to the talk which describes the impact, because the physical move is done in slow motion and not clearly impactful. It cannot be discerned from the recording which students issue the pain cries, but it is possible to hear that there are four, occurring one after the other from different speakers, in overlap with the instructor as she is narrating turning the student volunteer around to begin another demonstration. There is also an embodied response to the kick, which is shown in Figs. 2–4 where one of the spectating students bends her body over as if herself receiving the impact of the kick. As in the previous extracts, the pain cries claim understanding of the effectiveness of the instructor's demonstration and what the perpetrator would be feeling if they had been kicked.

The final example is distinctive from the previous ones in so far as the instructor is narrating a resistance story rather than demonstrating the delivery of a physical technique.

Nevertheless, there are still substantial similarities. The instructor enacts and describes the scenario, and pain cries occur in response. However, in this case the pain is also felt by the self-defender, not just the aggressor. The instructor is acknowledging possible harm to the self-defender can occur but be worthwhile if it thwarts an attack.

As the extract begins, the instructor is standing as part of a circle with students. She is explaining that in some cases self-defence can cause self-injury and launches a narrative to illustrate her point.

Extract 4 THW Block 2 2.07 Bit her hand

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01  INS:    in some cases if you have to defend yourself so much,
02          that something does (.) break or whatever .h u:m, tch
03          too bad if it means you're getting out.[.h ar] I hur-uh-
04  ST?:                                              [ mmm ]
05  INS:    a woman who did my course? .hh she'd just gon-coming
06          home from her aerobics class, .h very close to her
07          own home,<was about (0.2) six o'clo:ck six thirty
08          on daylight saving, >little bit< da:rk (.)
09          guy grabbed her,.h he put >her- th- his hand,
10          in her #ugh his thumb went into her mouth#,.nhh
11   fig                                              #fig 1

12           (0.4)
13   ST?:    oh god
14   INS:    she bit like (.) shit right, .hh sh-she
15           bit so hard, .h he pulled his hand out,#
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fig #fig2&3



Fig 1 Fig 2 Fig 3

16 INS: and one or two of her teeth went out.
17 ST?: u[ow]
18 ST?: [uo]w
19 STB: .ts[sss]#
fig: #fig 4

Fig 4

20 INS: [r]ight? and he ran away. Cos he was (.) yknow. ouch,
21 he was running away

In the first three lines of the above extract the instructor is explaining that sometimes self- injury is a necessary consequence of self-defence, albeit unfortunate, *too bad if it means you are getting out* (line 03). At least one student indicates agreement with that assessment by an audible affirming *mmm* (line 04). Here, as regularly occurs with stories and other tellings, the *too bad* foreshadows the shape of a preferred response as involving some appreciation of the self injury that occurred.

The instructor goes on to illustrate her explanation and assessment by launching a narrative, which she initiates with a turn similar to a routinised story preface; something like 'I heard a story about'. However, she interrupts the preface *I hur-* (line 03) to reformat the beginning of the story, *a woman who did my course* (line 05) in a way that epistemically upgrades her access to what happened (Potter, 1996). Rather than being an incident she heard about, she constructs it as something that happened to a specific student in one of her classes. The reality of the incident is further built through the details about what the woman had been doing *coming home from her aerobics class* and the time of day when the assault happened (lines 05-10).

The assailant is described by an initial, non-recognitional personal reference form *guy* (Schegloff, 1996), with the subsequent gendered pronouns confirming that the perpetrator was male. The formulation of what happened, 'he put his thumb into her mouth', is halting, involving a cascade of repairs that include troubles around the gender of the possessive pronouns and the relevant body parts (i.e. 'her hand' to 'his hand' and 'his hand' to 'his thumb in her mouth'). The gesture of the instructor (see Fig. 1) provides an iconic index of the meaning of the utterance. The *oh god* from a student (line 13) shows an alignment and affiliation with the story.

The next three actions (lines 14-15) are the climax to the self-defence narrative. In the first, the instructor attributes an effortful and impactful embodied action in the formulation of the woman biting, *she bit like shit.* The strength and determination of her bite captured in the next unit of talk is constructed as the reason that the attack was thwarted: *she bit so hard he pulled his hand out.* The instructor depicts the release of his hand from the woman's mouth gesturally (see Fig. 2). A display of understanding of how that would feel to the woman is shown in the face of one student (see Fig. 3) by an intense grimace that is precisely timed in the transition relevant place (line 15) and as the instructor's gesture is at its apex. It is an embodied assessment that shows a fully aligned story recipient.

A consequence of the hand being pulled out and the third element of the climax of the story was that one or two of the woman's teeth were pulled out. At least three distinctive pain cries were audible on the recordings, in overlap and quick succession, orienting to the climax of the story and also showing the projectability of the story. Fig. 4 shows the grimaced facial expression of STB (line 19) whose pain cry took a less conventionalised form of an ingressive dental sibilant sound. The sound in this case, articulated through teeth, has a kind of poetic relationship (Rae et al., 2021) with the pain it is indexing. The pain felt by the attacker is further captured as reported speech as the instructor tells of his running away *cos he was yknow ouch he was running away.*

9. Concluding comments

The analysis has documented the forms, positions and functions of a distinctive kind of pain cry on behalf of somebody else - one that in clinical settings has been shown as doing empathy (Ford et al., 2019; Weatherall et al., 2021) but which in the feminist self-defence training setting of the present research occurred in response to imaginary scenarios where physical techniques incapacitating attackers were being demonstrated. They functioned to display an understanding of and alignment with the demonstration of the painfulness of the technique. That understanding is the basis for constructing impactful self-defence training, as resisting attack is achieved by inflicting harm to the assaulter. The resistance can also hurt the self-defender (Extract 4) but that can be the (worthwhile) cost of interrupting a sexual attack.

The pain cries took conventionalised vocal and embodied forms. The vocalisations had various phonetic forms (i.e. *uw, aow* and *uow*) that bore some resemblance to more fully lexicalized forms (e.g. *ouch* and *argh*). A more detailed and expert phonetic analysis in the future may provide further insights into that variability. One of the response cries *.tsss* (Extract 4) was remarkably well fitted in terms of vocal production to the pain it was assessing (i.e. hissing through teeth in response to teeth being dislodged). The embodied resources building the pain cries included more conventionalised forms such as grimaces and also more contextualised ones, for example in Extract 3, a student spectator bent her body over as if she herself were taking the impact of the kick. The pain cries evidenced the students' attention to and engagement with the demonstrations. Together, students and instructors constructed physical self-defence as inflicting pain, thus the project of the class is realised, that is, to teach/learn that female self-defenders can effectively cause harm to attackers.

There was also variability in the precise timing and co-ordination of the pain cries that included sounding immediately after the physical demonstration (e.g. Extract 1) and later in response to a verbal description of the impact (e.g. Extract 2). Keevallik (2015) documented different temporal organisations of talk and the body in dance classes which also seem to be evident in the self-defence setting, and likely shape the timing of response cries. For example, in Extract 1, talk was suspended to deliver the full power kick and the pain cry occurred immediately next. In contrast, where the description of the technique occurred simultaneously with a kick in slow motion, the precise moment of impact was less pronounced and the pain cries were oriented more to the turn-taking structures of the talk (Extract 3). Furthermore, not all demonstrations in the corpus attracted response cries, which is another thing which would benefit from additional consideration.

An issue raised in the introduction was what does this analysis of pain cries offer to an understanding of feminist self-defence training, in particular. Instruction in feminist self- defence is unique amongst personal safety programmes for its combination of critical consciousness-raising about gender and teaching self-defence designed specifically to counter sexual attack. It is also amongst the few preventative interventions for gendered violence that makes a positive difference to girls and women reducing fear of, and vulnerability to attack (Hollander, 2016; Jordan and Mossman, 2018). Documenting learning is something that conversation analysis can do (Depperman and Pekarek Doehler, 2021). The analysis showed that students display an understanding that self-defence can inflict harm and thwart an attack, which is a kind of knowledge that may underpin the initiative to act in self-defence.

In sum, what the present study has shown is that, in response to imaginary scenarios, the students align and affiliate with indications of the painfulness of self-defence techniques. Thus, the analysis answers questions about exactly how feminist self-defence training was delivered and received rather than its long-term impact in the case of actual attacks. By witnessing demonstrations of self-defence in constructed sexual violence scenarios the students learn that self-defence inflicts pain and can thwart a wrongful attack. Pain cries were one way such understanding was claimed and demonstrated, not just through the vocal responses but also through the facial expressions and other embodied movements. The present paper also makes an original contribution to knowledge about pain cries documenting them as affective stance display exquisitely fitted to their occasioned use.

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