The Embodiment of Consumer Knowledge

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**Running Head:** LLEWELLYN

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An investigation into the embodiment of consumer knowledge is presented, drawing on ethnomethodology and the allied field of conversation analysis. Analysing video recordings of 189 service encounters at the ticket desk of an art gallery, the study explores the embodiment of consumer knowledge, how consumer knowledge is witnessable from quotidian details of customers’ embodied conduct, how they talk, move their bodies, gesture, handle objects, and cast their gaze. Consumer knowledge is shown to be socially organized, with social considerations informing what customer should know, and how customers’ faulty assertions and claims should be treated. In the way firms approach consumer knowledge, the paper describes how they might create or undermine interactive value. The article breaks new ground by demonstrating that consumer knowledge is relevant for understanding the actions of consumers, not only as a result of cognitive processes, but also because it is embodied.

*Keywords:* consumer knowledge, ethnomethodology, conversation analysis, practice theory, embodiment, interactive value formation
Longstanding and contemporary developments in marketing have emphasized the importance of social interaction with customers, recently in relation to the creation of value (Clark 1996; Broderick 1999; Echeverri and Skålén 2011; Grönroos 2012) with authors arguing a central activity of marketing is “interaction with customers” (Vargo and Lusch 2004). Yet, studies of customer interactions have focused mainly on the meso or macro levels, “providing few answers regarding how customers and employees engage…at the basic level of direct interactions” (Neghina et al. 2015, 222). The field is yet to produce a tradition of rich interactional analysis (but see Von Lehm 2006, 2014) that considers how customers in naturalistic settings deal with front-line service employees, confront various problems and “learn together” (Ballantyne and Varey 2006). In the place of empirically grounded understandings are theoretical or “anecdotal accounts” (Echeverri and Skålén 2011) where interaction is too easily imagined to consist of idealized actions and motivations, e.g., interactants that have preformulated plans, strive to obtain value from interaction, look for relationships with firms, and work to understand each other’s resource integration processes.

Drawing on ethnomethodology and the allied field of conversation analysis (Garfinkel 1967; Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson 1974), which are “ways of understanding practice and practical action” (Nicolini 2012, 134), the present study analyzes video recordings of one hundred and eighty-nine customer interactions. Rather than thinking of customer knowledge as something “inside the customers head”, and thereby accessible only through separate dialogues designed to facilitate “sharing” and “feedback” (Ballantyne and Varey 2006; Neghina et al. 2015, 224), it is re-thought as a pervasive and observable property of customers situated conduct, a continually relevant concern apparent in the way customers cast their gaze, hold and manipulate objects, gesture, formulate utterances and position their bodies. Indeed, service
interactions are shown to often hinge on the ability of front-line service employees to access, and continually recalibrate their actions in response to, embodied knowledge. This work is difficult, because interaction is fast moving, and thoroughly relational, with relevance for the creation and the destruction of value (see also Echeverri and Skålén 2011). Practices for managing customer knowledge are shown to be something of a minefield where the flipside of help, clarification and learning is embarrassment, misunderstanding and mild offence. At the heart of consumer knowledge is a basic tension. Whilst consumer knowledge is typically imperfect, frontline service workers may have to politely overlook customer ignorance and for “good organizational reasons” (Bittner and Garfinkel 1967) omit to notice their ambiguous and flawed claims and assertions.

The paper is organized as follows. The theoretical location is outlined across three sections that consider how customer knowledge has been approached in previous literature, the ethnomethodological principles that underpin the research, and key study concepts. The research context, a prestigious art gallery in the UK, is introduced alongside a discussion of research methods used to collect and analyze video recordings. The analysis is presented across four sections that locate the relevance of consumer knowledge for the accomplishment of service interactions with customers. The study claims a number of contributions which are discussed towards the end of the paper. It provides a subtle recasting of the nature of customer interaction, placing consumer knowledge at the heart of the account. Defining features of consumer knowledge are considered, as a specific kind of knowledge. Finally, the article contributes to existing sociological literature through the distinctive video-based analysis that is presented, which has a number of theoretical, methodological and practical implications for how customer interaction is understood.
THEORETICAL LOCATION

Between “Know-How” and “Know-That”

For the most part, studies in marketing have observed consumer knowledge by applying psychological theories and quantitative and experimental techniques (Sujan 1985; Ratchford 2001; Moorman et al. 2004; Carlson et al. 2008; Clarkson, Janiszewski, and Cinelli 2012; Isaac and Grayson 2017). In this work, knowledge is a property of mind and studies have focused mainly on what Ryle (1945) calls “know-that,” which refers to “descriptive” or “propositional” knowledge. Propositional knowledge can be expressed in declarative statements, which may be verbal claims that something is the case, such as knowledge of somebody’s name, the whereabouts of a city, or the price of goods. These are things that people can claim to know and, by the same token, may believe they know when they do not. To capture this distinction, studies have differentiated between objective and subjective consumer knowledge. Objective knowledge relates to “accurate stored information” (Moorman et al. 2004), whilst subjective knowledge refers to consumers’ “beliefs about their knowledge” (Carlson et al. 2008). The “calibration” of consumer knowledge (Alba and Hutchinson 2000) describes the relationship between objective and subjective knowledge, the gap between “confidence and accuracy” (Alba and Hutchinson 2000, 123). Objective and subjective knowledge have been shown to be separate constructs with distinct measures (Moorman et al. 2004), and a considerable body of literature has explored their relevance to consumer choice.

Whilst psychological research has mainly considered “know-that,” more managerially and sociologically oriented studies have analyzed what Ryle (1945) calls “know-how,” emphasizing consumers’ knowledgeability, manifest in various practical doings (Allen 2002; Canniford and Shankar 2012; Arsel and Bean 2012). In this work “knowing” is relational and situated (Neghina...
et al. 2015). In more managerial literature, know-how or tacit knowledge is linked to firms’ competitive advantage and contrasted with explicit or recorded knowledge (Storbacka and Lehtinen 2001) which is understood to be more enduring. The focus has been the accumulation of know-how within the firm, and how firms might generate, share and renew this “know how” through trusting dialogue with customers (Ballantyne and Varey 2006). In this work, customer knowledge is often linked to actions designed to facilitate “sharing” and “feedback” (Ballantyne and Varey 2006; Neghina et al. 2015).

In the more sociological tradition, practice-based studies have also focused on “know-how”. The consumer is theorized neither as a cultural dupe (Garfinkel 1967), nor as a calculating rational actor (Arsel and Bean 2012), rather through their actions, customers practically, rather than necessarily discursively, recognize “rules” (Phipps and Ozanne 2017) that anchor consumption practices and guide activity. Shove and Pantzar’s (2005) account of Nordic walking, and Seregina and Weijo’s (2017) account of cosplay illustrate a general concern with in situ displays of consumer “know-how.” Phipps and Ozanne (2017) emphasize the role of tacit knowledge in consumption, whilst Canniford and Shankar (2012) describe surfers’ engagement with local stocks of knowledge pertaining to coastlines, tidal movements, and beach topography. Such conceptualizations eschew the distinction between objective and subjective knowledge. Rather, customers display “know-how” whilst in nightclubs (Goulding et al. 2009), tasting craft beer (Maciel and Wallendorf 2017), or crafting the perfect costume (Seregina and Weijo 2017).

This article extends the concerns of practice-based literature by taking a subtly different tack, analyzing the embodiment of consumer knowledge, how frontline service employees recognize what customers know from an immediate situated engagement with their talk and embodied activity. This distinction can be traced back to Wittgenstein (1958), who distinguishes
between knowledge as a “mental state” and knowledge as the “rendering of activity” to describe the difference between privately-held knowledge on the one hand, and public displays that embody knowledge on the other. The distinction is clear enough: people can appear to know something that they do not, and they can fain ignorance; they can “bluff” and they can “play dumb.” Front-line employees gauge what consumers know, not by reading their minds but by engaging with the way they practice their embodied activity. Whilst customer knowledge is “a key construct in understanding customer behaviors” (Park, Mothersbaugh, and Feick 1994; Alba and Hutchinson 2000), little is known about how consumer knowledge is practiced and thereby available to firms. Consumer knowledge is subtly re-cast, from a value enhancing “add-on” that enables firms to better understand customers and their desires, to the very engine room of interaction where customers and service employees are “at all times cognizant of what they take to be the real-world distribution of knowledge and of rights to knowledge between them as a condition of correctly understanding how…utterances are to be interpreted” (Heritage 2012, 24).

Theoretical Assumptions

This study draws on theoretical assumptions and study policies associated with ethnmethodology (Garfinkel 1967) and the allied field of conversation analysis (Sacks et al. 1974; Heritage 2012, 2018), which together “constitute one of the most important ways of understanding practice and practical action” (Nicolini 2012, 134). They provide a distinctive framework for analyzing direct interactions with customers. The “subtly different tack” described above is known as “ethnmethodological respecification” (Garfinkel 1991), which involves taking a concept ordinarily treated within the auspices of theoretical discourse, and recasting it as an inferential and moral problem faced by actors engaged in social interaction. It is
important to begin by contextualizing this approach, which is relatively new to this field (but see Von Lehm 2006, 2014).

Ethnomethodology is a framework for analyzing the situated accomplishment of instantiations of social order, that is, how actors produce and witness the familiar happenings of ordinary society. Rather than a cognitive accomplishment, made possible because actors are socialized into a society’s values, for Garfinkel (1967), and others such as Giddens (1984) who draw heavily on Garfinkel’s work, the reproduction of social order is understood as a practical accomplishment, resolved in and through ways actors assemble courses of activity so they are witnessable as one thing, rather than another. For example, Llewellyn (2011) analyzes how homeless magazine vendors witness “customers” who want to buy a magazine and distinguish them from “benefactors” who want to give them donations. Sellers are able to “see customers”, not because they know in advance what is going to happen, but by recognizing and participating in the practical ways in which “customers” and “benefactors” embody their respective activities and identities, in the way they walk, handle objects, and speak. In this way of thinking, social order is not external to actors, but a continual achievement by them, and is thus empirically recoverable through the close analysis of social interaction. Ethnomethodology is the study of this continual ongoing work through which “social order” is produced by and for social actors.

In ethnomethodological studies, a particular image of the social actor is presented, as someone who continually monitors the quotidian details of talk and embodied activity (Garfinkel 1967). But the image is not of a hyper-rational subject, an obsessive information processor. Rather, the ethnomethodological actor is endlessly and inescapably engaged in “practical sociological reasoning” (Garfinkel 1967). Much of this work will sink beneath the surface of their conscious reflection and will instead form part of what is termed “practical consciousness”
In response to the question “do you know the time?”, the recipient may not have to “think” whether they should give the time (“it’s 7:30”). The production of a “request” may instead be a “seen but unnoticed” (Garfinkel 1967) instantiation of social order. But, whether they have to think about it or not, their response will nevertheless exhibit “practical sociological reasoning”. Suppose the recipient instead answered “indeed I do.” Their “practical reasoning,” i.e., that they have interpreted the question as an “inquiry” about their knowledge rather than a “request,” will be publicly available to the speaker, who might respond should that not have been their aim. For ethnomethodology, reasoning is thereby public and intersubjectively available rather than private and subjective. Of course, actors will make private inferences about what is “motivating” others and what others “know,” but such inferences are subject to the same constraints. The moment people do things in public settings, others can “orient to” what they have “on their mind” and why they might have responded that way (Sacks 1992).

From what has been said thus far, ethnomethodology might seem mainly a local affair concerned with how people understand and piece together social interaction, that is somewhat decontextualized from debates about wider social structures and discourses. Whilst this has been argued by critics, ethnomethodologists see things otherwise and set out to analyze the practical accomplishment of apparently external social facts or “contexts” (Nicolini 2012). For example, rather than being a purely individual or local concern, the social organization of consumer knowledge is a central concern of the present article. What does it mean to say that consumer knowledge is socially organized? Take high-end Sushi bars as an illustrative example. In an ethnomethodological study conducted in Japan, Yamauchi and Hiramoto (2016) describe fearful encounters where there are no menus and customers are expected to know what food is on offer.
by sight alone, as well as how to competently order their meal. This “context” is realized through the lexical and prosodic composition of questions posed by chefs, that brutally presuppose a particular distribution of knowledge within the scene, that chefs know will be troublesome for all but the most experienced customers. These were terrifying but strangely rewarding interactions, where novice customers were sometimes thrilled to escape “unharmed” (Yamauchi and Hiramoto 2016). In high end Sushi bars then, customer knowledge is very clearly socially organized, it is a subordinate kind of knowledge that is subject to the authority of the chef, whose knowledge should neither be confirmed nor challenged by the customer.

As this example suggests, consumer knowledge is a novel vantage point from which to think about the construction or destruction of value during direct interactions with customers (Vargo and Lusch 2004; Echeverri and Skålén 2011). For the expert and the novice customer, the challenge of interacting with the Sushi chef generates pleasure and a sense of drama. Whilst high-end Sushi restaurants are an extreme example, in less theatrical ways consumer knowledge may be implicated in the interactional formation of value more generally. After all, all actions performed by service employees will carry presuppositions of what the customer knows, and this may be experienced as more or less intimidating, annoying or thrilling. For the novice customer, value might arise from work done to guide and cue their participation, work that enables poorly informed customers to navigate the basic objects that comprise service interactions. If the employee presumes the customer is fully knowledgeable, they risk alienating first-time visitors unfamiliar with the service. On the flipside, if service employees presuppose too little knowledge, they risk patronizing knowledgeable customers who are familiar with the categories, rhythms, and imperatives of the setting. At the heart of these dilemmas is a broader question about the nature and status of consumer knowledge itself. Is customer knowledge a subordinate...
kind of knowledge that is subject to the authority of service employee, or is the assumption quite different, that “the customer is always right” and that their errors should be politely overlooked and their knowledge privileged? Either way, the presuppositions firms make about customer knowledge may not only be more or less accurate, but also more or less palatable. In the way frontline service employees practically handle customer knowledge, they may subtly enhance or undermine the customer experience.

**Study Concepts**

In recent years, ethnomethodological and conversation analytic research has become more focused on “practical sociological reasoning” pertaining to knowledge, under the heading of “epistemics” (Heritage 2012). This work has explored how people rely upon assumptions about what others know, express those in the design of social actions, and continuously update those assumptions as interaction unfolds. Drawing upon this work, the present article analyzes direct interactions with consumers from the vantage point of consumer knowledge. Concepts from the field of “epistemics” are now briefly introduced as they relate to three questions which inform the analysis that is presented below: (1) what are customers expected to know, (2) who is entitled to challenge them, and (3) how should such reparatory interventions be practiced?

First, the study asks what customers and employees should know. On entering service settings, customers and employees will navigate numerous “territories of information” (Heritage 2012). In the art gallery studied below, these relate to things such as prices, customers’ tax status, their age, how the gallery defines “families,” customers’ plans for the day, the implications of paying “gift aid,” and so on. Typically, parties will not have equal “epistemic access” to all relevant domains (Stivers et al. 2011). For example, whilst customers will know their own age, employees will not have access to this information, other than from how the customer looks.
Similarly, employees will not know in advance, for example, the customers’ plans for the day. In relation to the setting, whilst the employee may have “epistemic primacy” (Heritage and Raymond 2005) with regards to information about the service domain, what can both parties presume is in the “common ground” (Clark 1996)? For example, is information about prices in the “common ground”? What is the customer’s “epistemic responsibility” (Stivers et al. 2011) to hold such basic functional knowledge? When speaking to customers, employees will inevitably presuppose they have some degree of access, but where should they draw the line? Heritage (2012, 4) uses the term “epistemic gradient” to describe actions built in ways that presuppose a particular distribution of knowledge. The question “do you want to gift aid that?”, i.e., pay the higher “gift-aid” price, which appears often in the materials below, has a steep epistemic gradient, because it presupposes the customer alone has access to this information. In Heritage’s (2012) terms, the employee is “K-” (low knowledge) whilst the customer is “K+” (high knowledge). The question supposes too that the meaning of “gift aid” is within the epistemic domain of both parties. The question “any concessions at all?” has a flatter gradient, because whilst customers will have this information, i.e., whether they qualify for the cheaper concessionary price, the question is only posed by employees who suspect the customer might qualify.

In addition to considering what is within the common ground, we might also consider who judges whether customer knowledge is complete, partial, or flawed, and how these judgements are made. A start might be to suppose the customer is “always right” about domains to which they have privileged epistemic access. If only customers can know their own tax status, they are surely “right” when giving this information. But even here things are complicated, for instance in settings where there might be a “special motive” for inquiring further. In bars, for example,
people can be challenged over their age, even though information about age is a “type-1 knowable” (Pomerantz 1980), i.e., a domain where the speaker has primary rights to know what is true. So, customers’ claims may not be taken on face value where there is a “good organizational reason” (Bittner and Garfinkel 1967) for checking. This may work against a customer who is refused service, or in favor of a customer who unknowingly qualifies for a price reduction, with potential implications for “interactive value formation” (Vargo and Lusch 2004).

A final intriguing consideration relates to third parties. Three groups of actors were routinely involved in the service interactions analyzed below, namely customers, members of their “ensemble” (Barnhart and Penaloza 2013), and frontline service employees. Each is in a different position to judge consumer knowledge. The role of companions is especially intriguing in this regard, as we shall see later.

Finally, the study explores how questions about consumer knowledge should be broached. Should customers’ errors be overlooked and their knowledge privileged? Sometimes, customers may make life easy for the employee. In the way they formulate their actions, they may adopt the stance of an unknowing actor, thereby inviting the employee to perform some “reparatory action” (Schegloff 1992), such as a clarification or explanation. But what happens when customers do not actively invite such responses, when they are acting under a misapprehension? Several such cases are considered below, and these raise questions about service employees’ “rights” to challenge what customers assume to be true. Employees are effectively thrust into a bind. They may intervene bluntly and unilaterally correct customers, which may undermine the creation of “interactional value” (Echeverri and Skålén 2011), more subtly enable them to see their errors and participate in reparatory work (Schegloff 1992) or overlook the problem entirely,
with a host of potential consequences. This study explores how employees broach faulty consumer knowledge, unilaterally, collaboratively or not at all.

THE RESEARCH STUDY

Research Context

The study was conducted with a prestigious provincial art gallery set within extensive landscaped gardens in the UK. The ticket counter is approached from an antechamber connected to the main entrance of the substantial Georgian property. Once through the desk, customers may then access the shop and café, or go straight through to the exhibitions and permanent collections, where they might interact with a small number of guides. A visit to the gallery would involve a relatively small number of direct interactions with front-line service employees. Typically, just one member of each “party” would interact with staff at the ticket desk. Subsequent interactions might then take place in the café, shop or in the gallery itself. The focus of the present study are interactions at the ticket desk. Here, customers paid one of four main prices to enter the gallery. Price schedules, positioned in the car park and the ticket hall, introduced customers to objective information about the gallery’s prices and protocols. Customers’ knowledge of this information is relevant to all ticket orders. It is thus a useful “perspicuous setting” (Garfinkel 1967) to examine consumer knowledge.

Although simple and apparently descriptive, the gallery’s prices and protocols formed part of a distinct “servicescape” (Bitner 1992) or set of “structuring conditions” (Arnould and Thompson 2005, 871). These raised a number of problems that are explored below, and played an active role in the interactional constitution, and not just the simple descriptions, of “families” (two adults and two children), “adults” (aged 17–59), “children” (aged 5–16), and those who qualified for “concessionary” prices (over 60s, students and unemployed). Entrance to the
“grounds” (the gardens) cost £1, whilst “members” paid a one-off annual fee and subsequently entered without paying. At the centre of the schedule was a delicate normative problem: whether customers wished to pay “standard” prices (adult £8; concession £6), or “gift-aid” prices which were 10% higher (adult £8.80; concession £6.60). The price schedule in the hall framed gift aid as the default choice (“please ask if you would prefer not to help us in this way”).

Surely this is a very simple setting? Selling tickets is, after all, a task often performed by basic machines. After an initial period of observation, it became apparent these were interesting and nuanced interactions, where customers were often judged, sanctioned, generous, helped, bewildered, etc. The gallery’s prices, lexicon, and protocols posed a series of practical and normative problems for the majority of customers. Several questions arose frequently. Does the standard ticket include entry to the grounds? Does it include entry to the exhibitions? What does gift aid mean? Is the customer a member of the gallery or just on the mailing list? Do children have to pay? What are the entitlements of membership? How are families composed? Is there a student discount? Do older customers have to prove their age? Most customers were unclear or puzzled by some aspect of the gallery’s offering and would co-produce ticket orders with gallery staff navigating issues such as their age, tax status, plans for the day and willingness to donate.

The most recurrent problem was “gift aid,” which is worth considering a little further. A relatively recent policy in the UK, gift aid enables arts institutions to reclaim basic-rate income tax (20%) from ticket sales if customers are UK taxpayers and voluntarily choose to pay a higher entrance price, thereby “gifting” the institution. It is a framework around which customers can co-create economic value and goodwill with arts organizations through the practice of gift exchange. In the gallery, the standard adult entrance price was £8. If customers agreed to pay the gift-aid price of £8.80, the gallery received a total of £11, that is, £8.80 from the customer and an
extra £2.20 from the UK government. This policy was significant for the gallery, but any impact on its bottom line relied on customers knowing what gift aid meant, for the gallery and their own conduct, namely that they would have to pay ten percent more, give their name and address, and wait to sign a form.

Data Collection and Analysis

The present paper analyzes unfolding configurations of bodily movements, words, and material objects. For such work, casual observation and note taking is ineffective. In social encounters, multiple modalities interact simultaneously (Goodwin 2000). Gestures, gaze, facial expressions, and bodily inclinations interact with talk and materiality in ways that are fast-moving and hard to delineate. Video recordings were selected because they allowed activities to be repeatedly reviewed and because they capture “practical sociological reasoning.” The camera does not provide an objective account but supplies a “good enough” record to work with (Heath, Hindmarsh, and Luff 2010).

Approximately 16 hours of video recordings were collected over three days at the payment counter (see figure 1). The counter is approached from an antechamber linked to the main entrance of the substantial Georgian property. Once past the desk, customers may access the shop and café, or go straight through to the exhibitions and permanent collections. One hundred and eighty-nine unique transactions were recorded at the payment desk. For micro-sociological research that addresses prosody, intonation, gaze, and gesture, this dataset is sizeable. A camera and microphone were installed in a prominent but unobtrusive position (see figure 1). The camera pointed towards the customer and provided side views of employees, their screen, and keyboard. In line with ethical recommendations (Heath et al. 2010, 30), notices alerting customers to the study and offering them an opt-out were placed at the entrance and front desk.
The opt-out would have meant deleting a section of data. While some customers inquired about the study, none opted out.

The first stage of the analytical process involved separating out extracts from the digital recordings, numbered from 1 to 189. A rudimentary descriptive appreciation of each extract was developed, based on multiple views and note taking. Next, working with data transcribed in line with the Jefferson (1984) notation system used by ethnomethodologists and conversation analysts, sequential analysis was performed that was attentive to the local accomplishment of social order within these interactions and, over time, with the role of customer knowledge in these processes. The analytical approach can be illustrated by considering a very simple introductory extract, as a segue into the empirical sections.

In extract 1, the customer walks towards the counter. She is alone, in contrast to the majority of customers who visited with companions. She extracts her membership card and shows it to the employee, holding it in front of him (image A) until he has clearly glanced towards it. The brief verbal greeting exchange (lines 1–2) is laminated over this embodied activity. Following the employee’s glance towards the card, and without saying anything, the customer starts to return it to the wallet she is holding in her left hand (images B and C). Her activity “exhibits knowledge” (Sacks 1992) her sense that members only have to display or flash their cards to be given tickets.
In a very straightforward way, the customer’s faulty knowledge of the gallery’s processes is apparent from her embodied activity. She has moved her membership card to her wallet, and this can be seen by the employee and taken as practical evidence of what the customer knows of the process. In this case, she is wrong. Members need to hand over their cards to the employee, who has to *swipe* them to generate tickets. It is not enough to simply *flash* the card. There is a gap between what the customer takes to be the process and what is actually the case, and the customer is unaware of this.

The employee identifies the “trouble source” (Schegloff 1992), i.e., the card being returned to the wallet, in an embodied fashion, immediately reaching towards the customer’s purse with his right hand before saying “can I juss” (line 4). The action is both finely “choreographed” (Whalen, Whalen, and Henderson 2002) and socially delicate. His hand moves towards her
purse, but stops short of grabbing the card itself. Gesturally and then verbally he is requesting the card, but he does not correct the customer outright by trying to grab the card, nor does he complete the verbal request. He is “initiating repair” (Schegloff 1992), that is, allowing the customer to recognize her faulty knowledge and produce the reparatory action herself. In this way the gallery’s protocol is revealed to the customer. It is a simple though artfully produced instantiation of social order. She responds, recovering the card from her wallet and passing it to him (images C and D). In addition to the embodied and unspoken work that has taken place, the customer supplies a verbal accounting of what is happening, “wanta zap me” (line 6), that is, swipe the card.

Following close consideration of individual sequences in this fashion, consumer knowledge became the central analytic focus. It became clear that the majority of customers were variously confused or wrong about one or other territory of information relevant for their choice. The analysis shifted to a more abstract mode, searching for patterns across individual sequences. In this regard, the interactions came to be imagined along a “start-to-finish” temporal horizon, consisting of stages at which parties might access and orient to incomplete, faulty or absent knowledge: prior to the order being processed, as the tickets were being processed, or after they had been purchased. Plotting cases out in this way revealed something of the complexity of consumer knowledge as an object of “practical sociological reasoning,” and it became possible to ask why some knowledge problems progressed unnoticed to a certain point, and why others were never publicly exposed. This final stage of work started to reveal the social organization of consumer knowledge—the social considerations that seem to explain the “readiness of people to challenge others” (Seregina and Weijo 2017, 154).
FINDINGS

Adequate Knowledge

We start by considering simple cases where, from the composition of their talk and embodied conduct, customers’ propositional knowledge was taken-for-granted and assumed to be entirely adequate for the task at hand. The interaction runs smoothly. The focus then shifts to cases where troubles arose at different stages.

In some interactions, consumer knowledge was displayed on the basis of independent demonstrations. Knowledge was invoked by the consumer independently of the employee. Consider extract 2. Here, the customer orders two tickets but fails to specify whether she wants to pay the “gift-aid” or the “standard” ticket prices. To elicit this information, the employee starts to ask a clarifying question - whether the customer “would like to gift-aid that today or” (lines 1-2); but before the question extends to describe the alternative option, the customer interjects saying “I can’t.” This is akin to a “proof” or “demonstration” of knowledge (Sacks 1992). The gift-aid scheme is open only to UK taxpayers, and her response strongly implies that she knows this, independently of the employee. In a similar case, not considered in detail, a customer ordered “two concessionary tickets,” spontaneously disclosing that she and her companion were “both UK taxpayers,” thereby revealing her knowledge of the gift-aid scheme, independently of the employee.

Of course, in such cases the employee cannot know what the customer actually knows. In extract two, is the customer right that she “can’t” pay the gift-aid price? All the employee can
draw on is her talk and embodied activity, and from this no further questions are asked. After all, the customer’s assertion makes relevant an information domain to which she clearly has privileged access (Stivers et al. 2011); only she knows whether she is a UK taxpayer, and the employee has no pertinent basis for challenging her claim. He has to take it at face value; the customer has to be right.

For the most part, customers exhibited knowledge (Sacks 1992) less directly, by using the right words or by moving their bodies in the right ways. In one case, not explored in detail, the customer theatrically and apologetically winces when opting to pay “standard prices”, thereby embodying her appreciation that she was not donating. In extract 3, knowledge is similarly an embedded property of the customer’s response. Here the customer has again not specified whether she wishes to pay the standard or the gift-aid price. The employee presents her with a choice by asking a question that introduces a normative bias, that is, “do you want A or just B?”

(3) [CV. D1/21]

|   | Em: Would y’like to gift ↓aid those
|   | today, or just pay the standard.=
|   | C: =Just a ↓standard today.=thank you,

In response, the customer produces an action that “exhibits” knowledge (Sacks 1992) three times over. She asks for a standard ticket, and recycles the question’s framing (“just a standard”). In doing so, she publicly displays an appreciation that she is choosing the lesser option. Moreover, her response has two additional features, namely the mitigation “today,” and the final “thank you” (line 3). These two features of responses only ever appeared when people were not donating. It would be odd to use this formulation when donating (“just gift aid today thank you”). This is consumer “know-how” (Ryle 1945) and a simple instantiation of social order. By responding in this way, the customer embodies an awareness of the nature and implications of her choice not to donate. When customers displayed know-how in this way, questions about their
actual knowledge were never raised. There were clear social constraints on challenging knowledge in such cases. Were employees to problematize consumer knowledge, perhaps by informing them that gift aid enables the gallery to reclaim tax, they might be heard to be resisting the customer’s choice and starting the “hard sell,” which the gallery was keen to avoid so as to preserve “interactive value” (Echeverri and Skålén 2011).

Where knowledge is taken-for-granted, all might seem well. Interaction runs smoothly and the customer is swiftly progressed into the gallery. But there may be a hitch. In this setting, as long as the order looked right, employees often had few “good organizational reasons” (Bittner and Garfinkel 1967) to challenge what customers actually knew, and on what basis. An obvious implication is that many knowledge problems were concealed by orders that exhibited knowledge that customers did not have (a point revisited below in extract 8). The customer might opt for the reassuring grammar of “standard tickets”, without really knowing what “gift aid” meant. They could “bluff.” Alternatively, they might simply not know that they lack knowledge of something pertinent. In one case in the corpus, for example, a customer came back to the counter some 30 minutes after purchasing her tickets, from the direction of the café, to inquire whether her ticket gave her entrance to the exhibitions. Employees would not problematize orders that demonstrated or exhibited knowledge in the ways described above, and they would not challenge assertions where customers had privileged epistemic access to the information. Within these limits, the customer was “always right”.

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Insert Table 1 about here
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**Early Identification**

In the cases considered in this section, consumer knowledge is treated as flawed or incomplete *prior to tickets being processed*. In the more socially straightforward cases, customers adopted an unknowing stance towards their ticket order, inviting some reparatory response. In the more difficult cases, customers appeared to be unaware that their knowledge was faulty. Social hazards associated with exposing the errors of apparently over-confident customers are considered.

For the most part, when customers adopted an unknowing stance, they received the help they needed. They would say “I’m not quite sure which way to do this”, and the employee would resolve the problem for them. Consumer knowledge was nevertheless socially organized in such cases. For example, customers who adopted such a stance were nevertheless expected to take some “responsibility” for their knowing (Stivers et al. 2011). Customers oriented to this, for example, by pausing to scan the price schedule, either ahead of ordering or in response to a question they could not answer. For their part, employees would gesture towards the price schedule, to encourage customers to resolve problems themselves by engaging local artefacts.

In extract 4, this dynamic extends markedly with relevance for the customer experience. The employee actually withholds assistance from a customer who fails to take responsibility for his knowledge. The customer is asked whether he would like to pay the higher gift-aid price or just the standard (lines 3-5). This is a K+ question, designed for a customer who alone holds the relevant information. The problem is, he does not. He immediately looks puzzled (image A), tilts his head forward and, with narrowed eyes, says “hav’I what” (line 7). He does not visually lift his gaze to the schedule where the relevant information is displayed, but looks only towards the employee. The question is then re-posed (“would you like to gift-aid those,” line 7), with no
clarification or explanation. For an extended period, the customer looks quizzically at the employee. He says “gift aid” once more, again with questioning intonation. He is “initiating repair” (Schegloff 1992), but does not get help from the employee, who stands firm under the customer’s gaze.

In the end, the problem is resolved by a member of the customer’s “ensemble” (Barnhart and Penaloza 2013). As he (C1) says “gift aid” (line 10), a companion (C2) touches him on the shoulder, presumably orienting to the trouble. He turns and says “gift aid” to her (line 13) again quizzically. Finally, he gets the help he needs, through an “improvised interjection” (Barnhart and Penaloza 2013, 1134). C2 responds to the employee, saying “no” and then “not at this point” (lines 14 and 16). This is another good example of how knowledge is “exhibited” in action (Sacks 1992). From her action, it appears that C2 knows something that C1 does not. This is a description not of a “mental state” but of her “activity” (Wittgenstein 1958, 59). She may know nothing at all about gift aid, but no further questions are asked. Her action is taken by all parties to exhibit adequate propositional knowledge and the tickets are generated.

(4) [CV. D2/96]
1  C1: three concessions please.
2       (4.2)
3  E: would you like to gift aid those, today or just pay the standard admission
6       (.)
7  C1: hav’I what? = ((A))
8  E: =would you like to gift aid those
9       (2.4)
10 C1: gift aid?
11       (1.8)
12 C2: ( )
13 C1 gift aid? ((B))
14       (0.4)
15 C2: No.
16       (3.0)
17 C2: not at this point.
In extract 4, only one knowledge domain was at stake: knowledge relating to “gift aid.” We now turn to a more involved case, extract 5, where three knowledge domains are relevant: gift aid/standard, membership/mailing list, and general entrance/exhibition ticket. In this case, the customer orders “two for the Constable please” (line 1; John Constable is a noted British artist). His order is produced without any sense of error. But there is an issue. As we know, the gallery offers four main tickets—“adult/standard” (£8), “adult/gift-aid” (£8.80), “concessionary/standard” (£6.00) and “concessionary/gift-aid” (£6.60)—but the customer has ordered “two for the Constable.” He has ordered a ticket that does not exist. There is only one general admission ticket. Unlike other arts institutions, the gallery does not sell separate tickets for exhibitions, such as “for the Constable.” The employee faces a problem that we have yet to consider, the customer appears to be unaware that his knowledge may be incomplete or erroneous.

Rather than pointing out the problem directly, the employee smoothly addresses the gift-aid question first, asking whether he wants “to pay the standard price or the gift-aid” (lines 4-5). The question assumes that the customer holds this information. Echoing Yamauchi and Hiramoto (2016), employees always formulated these questions this way, despite knowing that large numbers of customers would not hold the relevant information. This was a useful part of their tool kit. Such questions do not patronize knowledgeable customers, and if they cannot answer, customers swiftly learn the limits of their knowledge. In this case, in contrast to extract 4, the customer responds in an embodied fashion, and takes responsibility for the issue at hand. He looks to the price board (image B). But, having searched the board for some four seconds, actually clarifies his age (“concession, we’re over sixty,” line 7) in response to the question about gift aid.
Again, as a matter of her professional practice, the employee overlooks the error. She notes the information about age, which is relevant after all, and once more poses the gift-aid question, without any elaboration or clarification (lines 10-11). This time without studying the board, the customer leans right in, so his head is over the counter, and states that he does not “know what the difference is.” The employee has maneuvered the customer so that he “initiates repair” (Schegloff 1992). The problem can now be safely addressed. The customer was not simply waiting for the right time to give the relevant information.

A complication then arises. Following the employee’s explanation, the customer claims he is a member of the gallery (“well I’m a member here so,” line 16). The implication being that he should be able to enter the gallery without paying. This recasts the whole encounter; social order
is “disrupted” (Garfinkel 1967). If the customer is a member, all the work to this point has been irrelevant and somewhat vexing. Members cannot gift-aid their tickets; they do not have to buy tickets. As we have seen (extract 1), members simply hand over their membership cards and receive tickets, often saying little other than “hello” and “thank you.” For this reason, the customer’s age is also irrelevant. This customer has not produced a membership card and has been responding to questions that are entirely irrelevant for members. There is a lack of fit between the verbal “claim” (to be a member) and his embodied conduct. If the propositional knowledge in his assertion (“well I’m a member here,” line 16) is correct, he certainly lacks know-how, or practical knowledge of how members “go on” (Wittgenstein 1958).

For a third time, the employee responds to the customer who is over-confident about his knowledge. She pauses and asks, “you’re a member” (line 18), directly challenging the claim. In response, the customer immediately adjusts his “epistemic stance” (Heritage 2012), weakening his claim by stating that he is certainly on the “mailing list” (lines 19-20). Having elicited his name and postal address, the employee searches the database, which is a source of objective knowledge in this case. He is not a member, he is simply on the mailing list, and thus cannot enter the gallery for free. He exhibits the “change of state” (Heritage 1984) in his knowledge using the particle “oh” (line 23), and the interaction is back on track.

The employee poses the gift-aid question for a third time, this time reformulating it lexically, perhaps lowering its epistemic demands. In this final guise, the choice is not between “standard” and “gift-aid”, a potentially simpler choice is posed, between “£6.00” and “£6.60.” Here we glimpse continual local adjustments, in this case to interrogative syntax, made in light of the reflexive monitoring of consumer knowledge. The customer does not donate. Whether he knows
he has purchased a general entrance ticket, rather than a ticket only for the Constable exhibition, is a moot point. That problem is overlooked.

We are considering cases where knowledge problems are “flushed out” prior to tickets being processed. Some customers knew they had a problem from the beginning, whereas others had to be manoeuvred to recognize their knowledge was faulty. In the cases considered thus far, knowledge problems would have been obvious to employees. Other cases posed greater challenges for staff, who could not always be sure whether the customer was indeed laboring under a misapprehension. Consumer knowledge was often opaque and potentially destructive.

Extract 6 provides an example. As we have mentioned, in interaction knowledge is embodied in quotidian details, which are often not definitive. What appears true one moment may suddenly be shown to be false; what appears false may suddenly be shown to be true. Employees may find themselves in tough positions, raising interesting questions about their willingness to tackle certain delicate problems in the context of providing a service.

In extract 6, the problem is not gift aid but the age of the customer, who has approached the counter with her elderly mother. The customer has a plan. She has a voucher that reduces the entrance price of an “adult” ticket. Pointing to her mother, she says “my mother, obviously an OAP,” and “I’ve got that [the discount voucher] for the adult one,” namely herself (lines 1 and 2). Taking the stance of a knowledgeable actor, the customer thus self-identifies as an “adult,” which the gallery defines as anyone aged between 17 and 59. In response, the employee indirectly challenges the order and her reasoning. There is a special motive for doing this, in the customer’s favor. If she qualifies for a concession, she will save a little money. He confronts the problem with a degree of delicacy, through the practice of “informing” (Echeverri and Skålén 2011, 358). He informs her of the protocol (“over sixty is the concession price,” lines 3-4). His
action implies she may be in error, thinking she is an “adult” (aged 17-59) when she is actually a “concession” (over 60), and his delicacy is surely insufficient to control the potential offence, should he be wrong. This derives from the nature of the employee’s “epistemic access” (Stivers et al. 2011) to this domain. As the parties will surely grasp, this comes only from the customer’s physical appearance.

(6) [CV. D2/99]

1  C:   I’ve got THAT (for the adult one) ((A))
2   (26)
3  E:  over sixty is the concession
4   (price)
5   (1.2)
6  C:  well I’m Not.
7   (.4)
8  C:  huh huh huh=
9  E:  =I see ((B))

Without looking at the board, the customer responds (“well, I’m not,” line 6). From her response, her knowledge is not at fault and she is somewhat taken aback. This is a claim about the composition of her action, rather than any “fact” (Wittgenstein 1958), and further aspects of the social organization of consumer knowledge are apparent here. The customer’s actual age has to be taken on trust, as she has epistemic primacy with regard to this information. The employee can hardly problematize the customer’s knowledge of her own age, and it would be most odd to ask her to prove her age because she is ordering the higher “adult” price. Her knowledge claim
has to be accepted. Yet the point remains. She simply wants to enter the gallery, but to do this she has had her physical appearance judged, negatively. We sense the destruction of value in this interaction.

Cases have been considered where knowledge problems are surfaced ahead of tickets being processed. In many cases, customers would adopt an unknowing stance that enabled the employee to perform reparatory work. Where customers appeared overconfident, employees enabled them to witness the limits of their knowledge and participate in reparatory work. In the most challenging cases, employees had to work on the basis of a “best guess” (extract 6) about what the customer knew, deploying local sociological reasoning that might be flawed. Customer knowledge was hazardous in this regard, and employees would often take knowledge on trust, to avoid these kinds of awkward encounters that might undermine the customer experience.

**Last-Gasp Saves**

This section considers cases where flawed or incomplete consumer knowledge was exposed as the employee was processing the tickets, at the “last gasp.” In such cases, the order was initially deemed adequate and only later found to be problematic. At this stage, opportunities and practices available to catch knowledge problems diminish significantly.

We start with the cute practice of *confirmation*, which publicly orients to adequate propositional knowledge, but “fishes” for potential problems. In extract 7, the customer approaches the counter and places a one-pound coin down, in front of the employee. There is only one ticket in the gallery that costs a pound, which is “grounds entry” (entry to the gardens), but the customer is also holding a ten-pound note in his left hand, enough to purchase a general
entry ticket. Is he in two minds? Immediately on placing the coin down, the customer pauses and looks directly up towards the employee. She orients to his embodied action as a complete order, looks down to the screen, and starts typing. She is processing his “grounds entry” ticket.

(7) [CV. D1/72]

1. E: ticket f’the grounds.
2. C: hmmm (**see A to B**)  
3. (.4)
4. C: yeah I want to go and see the constable exhibition later, after we’ve had lunch=
5. E: =okay (.4) well when you buy a gallery ticket it includes the grounds (admission), so you don’t need to buy the grounds and the gallery tickets.
6. C: right. (**C**)  
7. (.2)
8. E: so do you want to get your gallery one now= (**D**)  
9. C: =>okay< may as well.

In this case, the employee could have said nothing, printed the tickets, and bid the customer good day. But she adds a little finesse. As she starts to type, she says “ticket for the grounds” (line 1), in such a way as to “confirm” rather than “query” the order. In terms of prosody, it is produced as a statement of fact, akin to a commentary, without questioning intonation. She is not “initiating repair” (Schegloff 1992). Nevertheless, this simple practice is enough to open up the whole question of what the customer wants, which in turn exposes his faulty propositional knowledge, leading to a change in his purchase behavior. Had she simply processed the tickets, the customer’s faulty knowledge might not have been visible to either party. As it stands, he is ordering a ticket that he does not need to buy. He should buy a ticket for the grounds if he is only
visiting the grounds. If he wants to visit the gallery after visiting the grounds, he should buy the
general admission ticket, which includes grounds entry, thereby saving him a little money. The
employee has added value through the interaction.

The employee’s “confirmation” immediately leads the customer to modify his embodied
stance. He looks away to the price board, hesitates (“hmmm,” line 6) and covers his coin with his
hand, as if withdrawing his order. In a recurrent practice, he describes his plans for the day (lines
8-9), levelling up the employee’s epistemic access to this domain and allowing her to resolve the
problem. By providing this information, the customer orients to the employee’s epistemic
primacy: her job is to do the knowledge work, she is the teacher. It is worth briefly considering
how this is done.

Following the employee’s explanation (lines 9-13), the customer still appears not to have
grasped the relevant propositional knowledge. There has been no “change of state” (Heritage
1984). His response is hesitant, stretched, and quizzical (“ri::ght,” line 14). The employee orients
to this straightaway. She immediately “formulates” (Pomerantz 1984) the upshot of her previous
explanation, directing him to the action he should perform: “so, do you want to get your gallery
one now?” (lines 16-17). Syntactically, she formulates his choice in a way that “prefers” an
affiliative (or “yes”) response (Pomerantz 1984). She is guiding him gently and with tact to
perform a knowledgeable action. She uses her “know-how” to access and manage the customer’s
propositional knowledge. He alters his choice and, once resolved, goes on to pay the higher gift-
aid price, generating value for the gallery too.

We now consider a second example where a knowledge problem was “caught” as tickets
were being processed, this time through happenstance. This extract makes relevant data already
considered above. Whilst the simple ticket orders considered in extracts 2 and 3 exhibited
knowledge, whether the customers actually held accurate knowledge was a moot point. The customers may have been opting for “standard tickets” simply because “standard” sounds reassuringly normal. In the data for this study, only companions ever investigated whether this was a possibility. These cases neatly reveal a further way in which consumer knowledge was socially organized. If employees were to problematize customers’ knowledge of gift aid, they might be heard to be *resisting* their choice and perhaps starting a “hard sell.” Companions occupied a different social position. They could challenge the customer in order to save them from unwittingly performing an uncharitable deed.

(8) [CV. D1/9]

```
1  C1:  two adults and a child please.
2       (5.2)
3  E:   >okay< the:: adult tickets would you like to gift aid those today or just pay the standard admission
4  C1:   [just standard please((A))]
5  (.)
6  C2:  no gift aid because then (they)
7       ) tax back and (     )
8       (.4)
9  C1:  FINE.
10      (3.8)
11  C2:  (st-) it doesn’t cost you anymore,
12       (4)
13  E:   it’s an extra ten percent on top of the price of the ticket ((B))
14  C2:  oh, alright then (well) ((C))
15  C1:   [I’m not bothered
16  E:    either way (.). no it’s done.
17       (4)
18  E:   so you’re sure about that.
19  C1:       [YEAH.
```

In extract 8, the customer has not stated whether she wishes to purchase gift-aid or standard tickets. The employee poses the familiar interrogative question (lines 3-5) that has the features noted above (“A or just B”). The customer chooses to purchase the cheaper “standard” tickets.
Reproducing the bias in the question, she recognizes that she is purchasing the lesser option ("just standard please," line 7). This case is almost identical to that considered in extract 3.

The employee likewise assumes adequate consumer knowledge and inputs the data; the tickets are being processed. The customer has specified an appropriate category without delay or hesitation. She has recycled the "just" in the question, which recognizes that she is choosing the lesser option. Everything looks right. It is a simple instantiation of social order. It is unlikely the employee even considered whether there may be a problem. A few moments later a different picture emerges.

Following her order, the customer’s companion freely orients to an occasion where he might unilaterally correct her by explaining the meaning of gift aid (lines 9-10), thereby publicly orienting to her as someone who lacks this knowledge, and to his own epistemic primacy (Stivers et al. 2011). In the contemporary vernacular, he “mansplains.” What is more, the customer accepts this positioning and changes her mind ("FINE,” line 12), committing to purchase gift-aid tickets. As with extract seven, the problematization of her knowledge is relevant to her choice, and she will now pay the higher price, bolstering the gallery’s revenues a little.

A complication then arises that emphasizes the fragility of consumer knowledge. At line 13, all parties are now assuming that the customer’s companion holds accurate knowledge. Following her begrudging agreement ("FINE,” line 12), an extended pause opens up, with the two looking at one another testily. Once more playing the knowledgeable actor, her companion further explains the situation, again orienting to his own epistemic primacy. He adds that gift aiding the tickets will not “cost you any more” (line 14). As we know, he is quite wrong about this. In this case, it is only because he tries to placate her that his faulty knowledge is publicly exposed, to himself and others. Up to this point, none of the actors, including the companion
himself, has recognized that his knowledge is poorly calibrated with regard to price, that he is “over-confident” (Alba and Hutchinson 2000).

The employee responds to his over-confidence by unilaterally correcting him (lines 16-18). This happened rarely in these materials, where employees almost always enacted a preference for repair over correction (see Schegloff, Jefferson, and Sacks 1977). In this case we see a special circumstance. Unless the employee swiftly intervenes, the companion will soon discover the actual implications of gift aiding the tickets, when they are charged the higher price. Having overheard their conversation, if the employee does not clarify the facts of the matter, the customer may feel he has been in dereliction of his duty.

The data considered above reveal interventions at the last moment. They expose the witnessability of propositional knowledge from objects, bodily movements, and the design of utterances. At this late stage, opportunities and practices available to staff to catch knowledge problems diminished. Only through cute practices and a reliance on chance were problems and misapprehensions revealed.

**Overlooked Knowledge Problems**

As these interactions progressed, opportunities to identify and tackle knowledge problems diminished. In some cases, such opportunities opened and closed without action being taken. In this final section, such cases are considered.

There were two main sub-categories here. First, the employee might see a problem but simply “give up” and leave it unresolved. We have already seen a case above. In extract five, whether the customer knows he has purchased a general entrance ticket, rather than a ticket for
the Constable exhibition, is a moot point. In another case, not explored in depth, the gallery was busy. A queue was lengthening following the arrival of a coach party. When an employee posed the gift-aid question to a customer with a hearing problem, his response was so unfathomable and strange that she gave up and simply processed “standard tickets.” These cases neatly illustrate staff making policy “on the fly.” Whilst the price schedule presented “gift aid” as the default price (“please ask if you would prefer not to help us in this way”), in practice staff defaulted to “standard prices” for social reasons, in order to speed up the queue and to avoid overcharging customers who lacked knowledge of the policy.

Second, and perhaps most intriguing, were cases where customers appeared to be mis-sold tickets. We have already sensed why this might happen. In extract 6 above, the employee faced a tough choice between potentially overcharging or offending the customer. In such cases, employees might overlook a potential problem and simply hope for the best.

Extract 9 illustrates such a case in a little more detail. The issue is gift aid once more. The initial ticket order again fails to specify which price the customer wishes to pay. The employee responds by asking “do you want to pay the standard price or the gift-aid” (lines 1-2). This question poses a choice between social activities (donating or not donating) that are neither socially nor interactionally equivalent. The customer has been asked to donate and declining the request might be awkward. One contribution of conversation analytic research has been to describe *declinations*, which are routinely packaged up as “dis-preferred” responses (see Pomerantz 1984), a notion explained below.
Following the employee’s question, the customer says “I’ll just gift-aid please” (lines 3-4), makes a negative or blocking hand gesture, and turns her head away from the employee. Even though she has verbally agreed to donate, she is acting like someone who is declining a request by producing a “dis-preferred response” (Pomerantz 1984), i.e., one that blocks rather than goes along with the employee’s action. First, and most obviously, she says “just,” which suggests she is buying the lesser of the two options. Second, she says “please” (line 4). In this setting, customers only said “please” and “thank you” when they were not donating. There were no other cases, and extract nine is most likely a mistake. Third are the embodied components of the customer’s conduct. The hand gesture is forthright and makes her negative stance definitive. Simultaneously she turns away, giving the appearance of being unpersuadable and wishing the matter to be closed. She has verbally chosen to pay the higher price, but as if this were the socially negative choice. There is a rub between what is said and what is done. She does not appear to know that gift aid is the more expensive option.

Insert Table 4 about here
Why does the employee progress the ticket order, despite it having these features? The customer is acting as if her knowledge is unproblematic, but her order is ironic and pointing out the error might be quite embarrassing. Moreover, to catch an error, the employee has a narrow temporal window within which to unilaterally correct the customer (“sorry, do you know that gift-aid is more expensive?”). Finally, the employee cannot be sure of being right. Perhaps the customer has simply “misspoken” and only appears to lack knowledge. In extract 7 we saw a neat way around this problem when the employee produced a confirmation. The employee in extract 9 might have engaged in this practice, for example saying, as if to herself, “so that’s one gift-aid ticket at the higher price of 8.80,” but the brief opportunity for fashioning such a response passed, and the potential error was overlooked.

**REVIEW OF FINDINGS**

The study has analyzed direct interactions with customers from the perspective of consumer knowledge, which has been shown to have continual and often decisive relevance for the organization of the interactions that were examined. In each case in the corpus, the employee came to a point where they had to make a “call” about what the customer knew and whether they knew enough to proceed. Sometimes this took the form of a conscious judgement, other times, from the way actions were composed, consumer knowledge would have appeared utterly unproblematic. Consumer knowledge has been shown to be evident in the way customers talk, move, glance, gesture and position their bodies, as well as a source of a wide array of problems. The “skills and knowledge” (Vargo and Lusch 2004, 2) staff used to access, navigate and repair customer knowledge appeared key to the formation of value at the ticket desk, and the smooth, discrete and effective passage of customers into the service setting. Key empirical findings are reviewed below.
In relation to what, we have seen numerous knowledge domains were relevant to these service encounters and were more or less socially accessible to the gallery (Stivers et al. 2011), which was a source of numerous problems. For example, employees did not have access to the customers’ plans for the day, and some errors would consequently not have been visible to them. In extract 7, the customer’s error was only witnessable because he disclosed his plans for the day, levelling up the employee’s epistemic access to this domain. Employees had tenuous access to customers’ age, which was accessible to them only through physical appearances, and customers clearly had primacy with regard to this information. In seeking to ensure that customers were not overcharged, employees often found themselves in a tight spot, armed only with blunt instruments like informings (“over 60 is the concession price”) or inquiries (“any concessions at all”) which strongly suggest they already know the answer. There was a special motive against challenging customers knowledge of gift aid, which might sound like starting a “hard sell.” Only with regard to membership was there an objective source of information, a simple database that employees could access.

In relation to who, the study found companions, employees, and customers oriented to different epistemic entitlements and responsibilities. Employees’ initial actions always presupposed customers had full knowledge of the gallery, even though they knew that the vast majority of customers did not. For the most part, customers who lacked knowledge oriented to an obligation to search for information in the common ground; they scanned the schedule before approaching the counter, looked to the schedule following questions, and posed reparatory questions to companions rather than employees. Staff oriented to this feature of the social organization of consumer knowledge also, for example, by gesturing to the price board, and by imposing sanctions, albeit fairly gentle ones (extract 4), when customers failed to recognize what
was in the common ground. Whilst all parties presupposed that *employees* were fully knowledgeable about prices and protocols, only *companions* oriented to an entitlement to challenge customers’ gift-aid choices, albeit sometimes incorrectly (extract 8). The study has revealed divisions within the consumers’ “ensemble” (Barnhart and Penoloza 2013), with companions both “resolving” (extract 4) and “undermining” (extract 8) consumer knowledge.

Finally, the study has revealed that consumer knowledge was broached with particular delicacy and care. Employees would not correct customers outright, other than in a small range of special cases (extract 8). They would politely overlook obvious errors and enable customers to learn, by participating in on-going reparatory work (Schegloff et al. 1977). They would reach towards but stop short of touching objects (extract 1), begin but not complete requests (extract 1), innocently confirm ticket orders (extract 5), indirectly inform customers of pertinent rules (extract 7), and re-formulate interrogative syntax (extract 5) to make questions easier to answer. This was sedate but fast-paced work. Employees often had very little time to determine “what constitutes a problem and for what reason this problem needs to be resolved” (Arsel and Bean 2012, 913). In extract 9, when the customer says “I’ll just gift aid please,” the employee has a very narrow window, perhaps of one or two seconds, within which to fashion a response that is effective and attentive to the social implications of unilaterally correcting the customer.

**DISCUSSION OF THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS**

**Understanding Direct Interactions**

A distinctive way of understanding direct interactions with customers has been presented that draws attention to practices that produce “social order” (Garfinkel 1967; Woermann 2017). The collaborative work of producing and sustaining the “identities”, “plans”, “intentions”, etc., that comprise direct interactions with customers has largely escaped analysis by marketing scholars
(but see Vom Lehn 2006, 2014), who have more often explored the expectations and perceptions of customers and employees (Vargo and Lusch 2004; Grönroos 2012). But, there is an intriguing link between the ethnomethodological approach applied above, and existing research on service interactions. Existing research on service interaction analyzes products of social order, but without explicating their “situational roots” (Woermann 2017). For example, suppose a researcher observes something as mundane as a “customer waiting to be served” (Echeverri and Skålén 2011, 361). No matter how unremarkable, they have observed a situated accomplishment. For “waiting to be served” to stand as an adequate and recognizable description, the customer’s body would have to have been arranged so they could be seen to be “waiting to be served”, rather than “searching for information”, “killing time” or whatever else. Ethnomethodological studies are unique because they analyze this work, how people produce the basic objects that comprise service interactions. This work is largely taken for granted in marketing literature. Filling-in this “missing what” (Garfinkel 1967), would place many marketing concepts “back onto [their] feet” (Woermann 2017, 153), connecting them with the “local accomplishment of order” to which they are ultimately accountable (Woermann 2017, 153).

This is worth doing because the work of producing social order matters for the interactional formation of value. Echeverri and Skålén (2011, 361) illustrate this point nicely. They consider a case where a bus driver fails to stop for a customer who, whilst not yet at the bus stop, is nevertheless “see-able” as hurrying in that direction. Her bodily activity is assembled within a material environment precisely so the driver can witness her “plans” and “intentions” and respond accordingly. She “wants to be served”. She is not rushing beyond the bus stop to “meet a friend”, “get to work”, or “get to the shops before they close”. The driver’s failure to practically recognize the customer’s embodied work, by stopping, was noticed and sanctioned by
other customers, who confronted him directly. In this example, the work of accomplishing social order matters for the interactional formation of value (Vargo and Lusch 2004). The employee failed to orient to the unspoken work performed by the customer to embody her course of action, and her desire that he should stop. Practices for accomplishing orderly consumption activities represent a fascinating site where firms can build or diminish value.

The present paper has produced a further example, but with a distinctive twist. Whilst the passenger and driver can be assumed to know what “rushing to catch a bus” looks like, in the gallery customers were often naïve, and did not know how to competently participate in the production of social order. They would verbally claim to be a “member”, whilst acting like a “non-member”, they would answer questions without knowing what they meant, or that were irrelevant for them, they would order “gift aid tickets” but as if they were refusing to donate, and so on. Whilst some customers gave-up, and relied upon employees to produce competent actions for them, others were “learning together” (Ballantyne and Varey 2006), not just technical details, but how to competently participate in the forms of social order that comprised these encounters. In the gallery then, service employees had to direct, guide, and cue the participation of customers, enabling them to witness and navigate the basic objects that comprised these interactions. This demanded subtlety, finesse and the exercise of judgement. Employees would overlook mistakes, intervene indirectly, adjust their lexicon in light of troublesome responses, apply discretion in the customers favor, and so on. This work could be successful and appreciated. Customers were progressed smoothly and “agreeably” (Neghina et al. 2005). They might learn something of the gallery or be saved a little money from time to time. This work could also fail, leaving customers feeling old, uncharitable, or simply confused. In the way they enabled customers to navigate social order, there was clear scope to build or destroy value.
The main focus of ethnomethodological work is the organization of interaction, rather than how interaction is perceived after the event. Prevailing theoretical frameworks have tended to prioritize, not the organization of interaction, but *customers subjective judgement of interaction*. The more prevalent idea in the field is that value is “collectively produced but subjectively experienced” (Holbrook 2006). Where does ethnomethodological work stand in relation to this dichotomy? An initial point is that it may be difficult to fully understand customers subjective responses without a thorough-going appreciation of “what” they are responding too. There has to be some referencing back, not to idealized glosses of interaction, or *post hoc* anecdotal accounts, but to interaction itself (Hill, Canniford, and Mol 2014). More theoretically, ethnomethodological studies attempt to think past the separation of mind and body apparent in the aforementioned dichotomy. They do not understand “subjective experiences” (Holbrook 2006) and “meanings” (Ballantyne and Varey 2006, 344) to be products of “mind”, disembodied and stripped of an immediate material environment. Subjective experience is not only introspectively “imagined” (Holbrook 2006) but also “lived”, temporally and materially situated, and thereby intersubjectively available. At the heart of the accomplishment of social order there is one party trying to access the “subjective experience” of the other, what is “on their mind” (Sacks 1992). Indeed, perhaps interactive value starts to take shape at precisely these moments, where the customer gets a palpable sense that the firm knows what they are “thinking”, “feeling” or “intending.” Ethnomethodology invites the analysis of subjective experience as part of the larger problem of how customers and firms connect and find common ground in interaction.
Understanding Consumer Knowledge

Previous studies of customer knowledge have emphasized the importance of actions designed to facilitate “information seeking”, “sharing” and “feedback” (Neghina et al. 2015, 224). The present paper has gone further, arguing customer knowledge is an on-going concern, a matter of continual vigilance and up-dating (Heritage 2012). At each turn, a potentially relevant concern is whether and how the customer is variously misinformed, confused or wrong in relation to some pertinent domain of information. Rather than something shared with firms through “trusting dialogue” (Ballantyne and Varey 2006), customer knowledge has been shown to be embodied and continually available to firms from quotidian details of customers’ embodied conduct, how they talk, move their bodies, gesture, handle objects, and cast their gaze.

By analyzing the situated achievement of consumer knowledge, a particular image of the customer emerges. Rather than assuming an idealized customer, who is knowledgeable of the choices they face and motivated to work with firms to cocreate value, the customers who participated in this research were for the most part “picking their way through” service interactions as if “playing a game” (Wittgenstein 1958) which was slowly being revealed to them. Interaction unfolded mainly in response to pragmatic considerations as customers tried to establish the relevance of local categories, demarcations and rules for their actions. For the most part, customer “plans,” to the extent they could be said to exist, were improvised and underpinned by a desire to “get through” the encounter, rather than to realize a social relationship. Confronted with “gift aid”, the primary problem was what it meant and service employees, contra managerial instructions, would default to “standard prices” thereby orienting to a customer that lacked knowledge and perhaps interest in the settings categories and demarcations.
Whilst existing marketing literature has distinguished “consumer knowledge” as a conceptual domain (Carlson et al. 2008; Clarkson, Janiszewski, and Cinelli 2012; Isaac and Grayson 2017), the character of consumer knowledge, as a particular kind of knowledge, has not been clearly distinguished. Previous studies have shown that customer knowledge may be more or less accurate, or more or less taken for granted, but so can all other knowledges. The question remains then: what is distinctive about consumer knowledge? We know that knowledge held by students is a subordinate form of knowledge that is subject to the teacher’s authority (Macbeth 2004). Does this apply to consumer knowledge, or is the service employee subordinate to the customer who is “always right”? By recovering the social organization of consumer knowledge, this article has taken some steps towards addressing this question, albeit through empirical work in a single site. We have seen that the customer is not always right, and that service employees are not subordinate producers of instant clarification and advice. They routinely held the line, policed the common ground, and held customers to account when they failed to recognize what they should know, or failed to take independent steps to remedy problems. Employees often acted as teachers, dealing out sanctions or enabling customers to discover pertinent information in their environment. At the same time, there was clearly something of a protective shield around consumer knowledge. For “good organizational reasons” (Bittner and Garfinkel 1967), service staff would politely overlook errors and not ask too many questions about what customers actually knew of their activities. They would only ask certain questions if there was a particular motive for doing so. If everything looked right, no further questions were asked. Consumer knowledge is distinctive, in part, by operating primarily on a “need to know” basis. We have seen too the extremely delicate and careful ways in which service staff navigated consumer knowledge, without wishing to cause offence. For these reasons, although customers were not
always right, they probably believed they were right more often than was actually the case (see also Alba and Hutchinson 2000).

**Methodological Implications**

A final set of implications concerns the development of sociological literature in marketing and consumer research (Canniford and Shankar 2012; Woermann and Rokka 2015; Seregina and Weijo 2017) and how ethnomethodological studies might inform this work. One particular area of work is worth reflecting upon. Recent studies have emphasized the role of the body in the achievement of situated consumption practice (Hewer and Hamilton 2010; Shove, Pantzar, and Watson 2012; Hill, Canniford, and Mol 2014; Woermann 2017), following Allen’s (2002, 518) call for understandings of consumer dynamics that accommodate the nexus of “flesh and materiality.” Phipps and Ozanne (2017, 368) consider “embodied competence” in new practices, in relation to “the skills required to do laundry, bath, flush a toilet or water the garden” with limited resources at hand. Hill et al. (2014, 385) call for analysis of “onflow accounts” that capture the “ongoing movement of bodies, spaces and objects together,” techniques such as introspection are promoted, and video is considered useful, because it may generate new “feelings” and “senses” in customers who watch themselves back. In contrast, to capture the embodied, routine, and habitual nature of consumption activity, ethnomethodology ties the body to the accomplishment of social order, uncovering in fine detail how the body moving in a material environment is central to the achievement of the joint sense making that underpins consumer interactions. The body is no longer just a matter of individual perception, but an active and dynamic field across which multiple actors might fashion joint projects and experiences. Video recordings, which have rarely been used in consumer research, may be central to
uncovering this work, because they place the consumer’s body centre stage as a diverse and flexible resource for co-accomplishing consumer activity.

**PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS**

The study has described a novel way in which firms can learn what customers know of their service offering, and how this shapes their experiences. More usually, firms and research agencies have addressed these questions by collecting data from surveys and interviews, that are at least one-step removed from the concerted achievement of service interactions themselves. But as Hill et al. (2014, 385) argue, much consumer behavior is embodied, habitual and precognitive. More practically, in interaction things happen quickly, and are multi-layered. Recall is always an issue. In extract 7 above, even minutes later, it is highly unlikely the customer would be able to reflect upon when he covered his coin, how he looked to the price schedule or the uncertain way he said “right”. Video materials straightforwardly remove these constraints. Across a few hundred cases it is possible for firms to get a very clear sense of what customers know (and do not), how this is impacting their experience, and whether interaction is generating value. In the gallery, it was clear customers for the most part did not know the meaning or implications of “gift aiding” their tickets, and the gallery had much more work to do in order to realize the considerable financial and social benefits of this scheme. The price schedule, which introduced new and potentially ambiguous terminology, such as “standard-concession” was taxing for many customers and left them bewildered and unsettled before their experience had really begun. It did not enable them to embody their activities so the firm could easily recognize their preferences. These tensions were apparent in the actions of employees who would, as a matter of their occupational practice, and *contra* managerial advice, default to “standard” rather than “gift aid” prices in order to preserve the customer experience and avoid
overcharging people. Because ethnomethodological work is so close to practice, it has the ability to reflect back to practitioners and managers commonplace happenings that are so familiar to them they are “seen but unnoticed” (Garfinkel 1967).

CONCLUSION

This article has presented a novel way of thinking about direct interactions with customers as situated accomplishments. Central to the accomplishment of interaction in the research setting was the problem of consumer knowledge. Through careful analysis of video recordings, it has been shown that customers, companions, and service employees witness knowledge as customers move their bodies, talk, manipulate objects, and configure their actions. The article has shown how employees make continual fleeting, practical inquiries, second by second, to determine what customers know and whether their knowledge is adequate. The nature of these inquiries has been shown to reflect and reproduce social relations at the point of consumption, i.e., what customers and service employees might reasonably expect of the other. Consumer knowledge has been shown to be incomplete and troublesome to manage. The social organization of consumer knowledge limits how far requests, claims, and assertions can be challenged, by whom, and on what grounds. As such, even in the very simple setting considered above, actors’ sense that they share common knowledge may be illusory, leading to frequent errors, and customers who are confused or overconfident. In the way employees investigate consumer knowledge, there is plenty of scope to enhance or undermine the formation of value.
DATA COLLECTION INFORMATION

The author conducted the empirical work himself at an art gallery in the UK across the summer of 2011 and analyzed the data. All notes, images, and the video data are currently stored in an encrypted hard drive under the management of the author.
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# TABLES

## Table 1: Illustrative examples: Adequate knowledge

| Data number | Empirics | Brief commentary |
|-------------|----------|------------------|
| **Demonstrations** |          |                  |
| 1           | “We are taxpayers, so” | The customer independently invokes criteria relevant for her eligibility to pay gift aid. |
| 20, 70, 71, 109 | The customer passes the ‘right money’ | By paying with the ‘right money’, the customer demonstrates independent knowledge of the price. |
| 129         | “And you probably want my name” | Demonstrates knowledge of form-filling associated with gift aid prices. |
| 65, 113, 119, 132 | Membership card passed to hand | Recognizes the card needs to be ‘swiped’ (in contrast to 1). |
| 72          | “I know you can’t give change” | Demonstrates knowledge of rules relevant for paying with vouchers. |

| **Exhibiting knowledge** |          |                  |
| 78          | “Why not” | Following questions that pose the “gift aid or standard” choice, responses like “okay then”, “fine” and “why not”, exhibit the customers knowledge that they are doing the gallery a favor. |
| 61          | “I won’t today thank you” | The mitigation exhibit knowledge they are not doing the gallery a favor. |
| 83          | Embodied response | In response to the gift aid question, the customer declines, and winces, tilting her whole body, suggesting she knows she is declining to donate. |
| 122         | “He probably thought we were students” | The employee asks “any concessions with that”, implying they might be “over 60”, the quip (“he probably thought we were students”) exhibits knowledge of this, and of other concessionary categories. |
| Data number | Empirics                                      | Brief commentary                                      |
|-------------|----------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| **Customer adopts unknowing stance**             |                                              |                                                       |
| 27          | Pause following gift aid question           | The pause is taken to document lacking knowledge, leading to the initiation of repair. |
| 38          | “Am I a member?”                            | Simply invites the employee to clarify, in this case pointing out she is not, she is simply on the mailing list. |
| 49, 76, 77  | “What does that mean”                       | In these examples, following the gift aid question, customers topicalize their lack of knowledge. |
| 95          | “Not sure which way to do this”             | Invites clarification. The customer does not know how to assemble their large party for payment purposes. |
| 65, 98      | “Do you have to pay for the constable”      | Invites clarification, in this case the employee “puts them straight”. |
| 96          | “Hav’l what”                                | The quizzical response initiates repair from companion. |
| **Customer adopts knowing stance**               |                                              |                                                       |
| 99          | “and I’ve got this for the adult one”       | The customer self-identifies as an “adult”, which is tested, apparently incorrectly. |
| 137         | “well, I’m a member here”                   | The customer claims to be a member, incorrectly.       |
| 44          | “It’s £5.40”                                | The customer asserts the price should be 5.40 (not £6), incorrectly. |
Table 3: Illustrative examples: Last gasp saves

| Data number | Empirics                                                                 | Brief commentary                                                                                     |
|-------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 4, 37       | Companion challenges knowledge that the employee has taken for granted   | Employee is processing tickets, companion intervenes, supposing the female customer does not know what she has done by opting to pay “standard”. |
| 27          | “Go on then, we’ll do it”                                               | Following an explanation of gift aid, the female customer orders “standard”. The employee starts to process the tickets. Her male companion talks with employee, then over-rules her, and donates. |
| 72          | “Ticket for the grounds”                                                | Employee confirms order, as she is processing tickets. This is enough to expose the problem. The customer elaborates his plans for the day and his errorful knowledge is exposed. |
**Table 4: Illustrative examples: Overlooked**

| Data number | Empirics                                      | Brief commentary                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|-------------|-----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 9           | “Just the gift aid please”                    | The grammar of the response, and the embodied component, suggests the customer does not know she is donating. It is not repaired.                                                                                         |
| 31          | “yeah”, stretched, with questioning,          | In response to the gift aid question, the customer produces a questioning and uncertain “yes” response, which is taken as a straight yes, and met with thanks.                                                    |
|             | upward intonation                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| 23          | Returns to the ticket counter to pose         | This suggests she purchased within incomplete knowledge, and that this was missed by the employee (see also 137 as a potential case, but where the customer does not return) |
|             | “exhibition/general entrance” question        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| 125         | “well, you can keep the 60p”                  | The response, produced as a joke, suggests the customer does not understand “gift aid”. Rather than explaining, the employee overlooks the problem and defaults to “standard”.                        |
Figure 1. The service-counter
HEADINGS LIST

1) THEORETICAL LOCATION
2) Between “Know-How” and “Know-That”

2) Theoretical Assumptions
2) Study concepts

1) THE RESEARCH STUDY
2) Research Context
2) Data Collection and Analysis

1) FINDINGS
2) Adequate Knowledge
2) Early Identification
2) Last-Gasp saves
2) Overlooked Knowledge Problems

1) REVIEW OF FINDINGS

1) DISCUSSION OF THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS
2) Understanding Direct Interactions
2) Understanding Consumer Knowledge
2) Methodological Implications

1) PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

1) CONCLUSION
Café and shop

Price schedule

Camera location

ADMISSION

| Category          | Gift Aid | Standard |
|-------------------|----------|----------|
| Adult             | £8.80    | £8.00    |
| Concessions (Over 60, student, un waged) | £6.60    | £6.00    |
| Family (2 adults and up to 4 children) | £19.80   | £18.00   |
| Child (Aged 5-16) | £2.00    |          |
| Under 5s          | Free     |          |
| Grounds only      | £1.00    |          |
| Pre-booked groups of 15+ | 10% discount |

*Price includes a voluntary donation and is eligible for Gift Aid.

Please ask if you would prefer not to help us in this way.
1 E: hello there.
2 C: hi↑
3 (3.4)
4 E: can I juss-
5 (.)
6 C: wanta zap me.
(2) [CV. D1/30]
  1 E: the adult tickets would you like to
  2
  3 C: gift aid th[at today or [I can’t]

(3) [CV. D1/21]
  1 Em: Would y’like to gift aid those
  ↓aid those
  2 standard.=
  3 C: =Just a ↓standard today.=thank you,
three concessions please.
(4.2) would you like to gift aid those, today or just pay the admission (.). hav’I what? = (A) gift aid? =would you like to gift aid those (2.4) gift aid? (1.8) ( ) gift aid? (B) (0.4) Yes. (3.0) not at this point.
1C: two for the _constable_ exhibition please, ((A))
2E: "o↑kay"
3(.4)
4 E: did you want to pay the ↑standard price or
5 the ↓gift aid
6(4.0) ((B))
7C: concession (. we’re over sixty,=
8E: =↑yep
9C: two,
10 E: o↑kay (. did you want to do the ↑standard
11 or the ↓gift aid?
12 (1.0)
13 C: I don’t know what the difference is= ((C))
14 E: =the gift aid is sixty pence extra it just
15 means we can claim the tax back,=
16 C: well I’m a member here so (. huh:. 
17 (2.0)
18 E: you’re a Member?
19 C: yes well I’m huh(. I’m on the mailing list
20 ((sequence omitted / address and name given))
21 E: you’re not a member you are just on
22 the mailing list
23 C: oh I see
24 E: so do you want to pay the six pounds
25 or the six pounds sixty
(6) [CV. D2/99]

1 C: I’ve got THAT (for the adult one) ((A))
2 (2.6)
3 E: over sixty is the concession
4 (price)
5 (1.2)
6 C: well I’m Not.
7 (.4)
8 C: huh huh huh=
9 E: =I see ((B))
(7) [CV. D1/72]

1 E: ticket f’the grounds.
2 C: hmmm ((see A to B))
3 (.4)
4 C: yeah I want to go and see
5 the constable exhibition later,
6 after we’ve had lunch=
7 E: =okay (.4) well when you buy a
8 gallery ticket it includes the
9 grounds (admission), so y-you
10 don’t need to buy the grounds
11 and the gallery tickets.
12 C: right. ((C))
13 (.2)
14 E: so do you want to get your
15 gallery one now= ((D))
16 C: =>okay< may as well.

Covers the coin with his hand, thereby muting its semiotic force

Picks up the coin, holds it, then returns it to his wallet
(8) [CV. D1/9]

1    Cl:  two adults and a child please.
2    (5.2)
3    E:  >okay< adult tickets would you like to gift aid those today or just pay the standard admission
4    Cl:  [just standard please((A))]
5    (.)
6    C2  no gift aid because then (they) tax back and ()
7    (.)
8    C1:  FINE.
9    (3.8)
10   C2:  (st-) it doesn’t cost you anymore, (.)
11   (4.4)
12   E:  it’s an extra ten percent on top of the price of the ticket ((B))
13   C2:  oh, alright the[n (well) ((C))]
14   C1:  [I’m no either way (.). no it’s done. (.)]
15   (4.4)
16   E:  so you’re sure about t[hat.]
17   C1:  [YEAH.
E: D’you want’t pay the standard price or the gift aid.

C: [huh (.)]

I’ll just gift aid please.