

Studies
in
discourse and grammar

Syntax and Lexis in Conversation

Studies on the use of linguistic resources
in talk-in-interaction

Edited by Auli Hakulinen
and Margret Selting

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Studies in Discourse and Grammar

Studies in Discourse and Grammar is a monograph series providing a forum for research on grammar as it emerges from and is accounted for by discourse contexts. The assumption underlying the series is that corpora reflecting language as it is actually used are necessary, not only for the verification of grammatical analyses, but also for understanding how the regularities we think of as grammar emerge from communicative needs.

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in talk-in-interaction

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Introduction*

Auli Hakulinen and Margret Selting

Goals and methodology

This volume is a collection of current work at the interface of linguistics and conversation analysis. It focuses on syntax and lexi(cal semantic)s in talk-in-interaction, continuing and complementing earlier work as published in the volumes 'Interaction and Grammar' (Ochs, Schegloff & Thompson, Eds., 1996), 'Studies in Interactional Linguistics' (Selting & Couper-Kuhlen, Eds., 2001), and 'The Language of Turn and Sequence' (Ford, Fox & Thompson, Eds., 2002a).

The contributions to this volume are all based on audio or video data from natural social interactions that were consequential for the participants at the time of the recordings. They aim at a description of language or particular linguistic structures as resources in conversational interaction, i.e. as phenomena that are on the one hand shaped by interaction and on the other hand deployed and exploited for the organization of sequential talk in interaction.

In contrast to work in other pragmatic approaches within linguistics, it is self-evident for research at the interface between linguistics and conversation analysis (CA) to work on the basis of a corpus of natural interactional data.¹ This kind of research is strictly inductive. Its goal is to reconstruct the participants' own categories in organizing talk-in-interaction. This precludes the application of pre-conceived categories for automatic searches of the data-base and generalized ascriptions of functions and meanings to these categories, as is typically the case in, e.g., corpus linguistics. Instead, after making a data collection which shows the sequences of interaction with the object of study in its conversational environment, this object of study is analyzed in its sequential interactional context, both with respect to its form or structure and its function for the organization of interaction. In contrast to many approaches in discourse analysis, the objective is to discover in what ways talk and its detailed structurings are jointly accomplished by the participants in a conversation. This also precludes the analysis of utterances and actions/activities in terms of a single speaker's intentions and action plans. Validation of the analysis is achieved by showing that and how participants in interaction orient to the object under analysis, e.g. in the ways that the recipients of turns at talk produce their responses and subsequent turns.

The model of conversation and interaction that all contributors adhere to is strongly inspired by conversation analysis. It is in particular the methodology of sequential analysis that is made use of. This means that analyses make reference to practices and actions in turn construction and turn taking, repair, topic management, actions such as assessments, story telling, the constitution of institutional contexts, etc. – all of which have been sequentially described by conversation analysts (see the numerous publications by the first generation of conversation analysts, especially Sacks, Schegloff, Jefferson, Drew, Heritage, Lerner, which cannot all be listed here – a very recent collection of work by first-generation CA practitioners has been edited by Lerner 2004; overviews have been given by, e.g., Levinson 1983; ten Have 1999; Hutchby & Wooffitt 1998; Steensig 2001; Mazeland 2003).

The scholars working in the new and innovative research field at the interface of linguistics and conversation analysis are not only linguists.² Studies in this interdisciplinary area of scholarship are dependent upon the cooperation of linguists with an orientation to studying language in social interaction and sociologists with an interest in the linguistic underpinning of their analyses of the resources used in social interaction. The objects of study are linguistic items in their activity contexts: syntactic structures and lexical items as well as the semantic relationships between them in data from natural social interaction.³ However, since the methodology recognized to be best suited for the description of spoken interaction is conversation analysis, the ultimate aim of the studies in this collection is to analyse these structures as practices and to discover the actions performed by them.

There has been a remarkable co-occurrence of developments in Europe and the USA in research at the interface between linguistics and conversation analysis. These developments started independently from each other at first and thus separately attested to the relevance and need of such research – of its being ‘in the air’ on both sides of the ocean. While the analysis of linguistic structures in conversation led to the perspective of an ‘interactional linguistics’ in the European context (cf. Couper-Kuhlen & Selting 2001), a somewhat analogous perspective although with wider scope of research orientation was followed in the United States under the name of ‘discourse-functional linguistics’ (Ford, Fox & Thompson 2002b: 4). Multiple occasions of contact and cooperation of the persons working in these research orientations have shown that the goals and methodology of these two approaches are to a large extent overlapping.

Besides investigations on the role of phonetic and prosodic cues (cf. the recent volume ‘Sound Patterns in Interaction’, edited by Couper-Kuhlen & Ford 2004), the study of syntax and lexis in conversation is an important and expansive field of inquiry at the interface between linguistics and CA. Indeed, such traditional core areas of study within linguistics as phonetics, syntax and lexi(cal semantic)s are the very fields which attest to the productivity of combining linguistic and conversation analytic theory and methodology in the study of talk-in-interaction (cf. Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson 1974: 720 and Schegloff 1996a for this term).

The contributions to this collection analyse natural data from conversations in a number of different European languages. The languages involved are: English, Ger-

man, Danish, Swedish, all representatives of the Germanic languages; Italian, which belongs to the Romance language family; and Finnish, which belongs to the Finno-Ugrian language family and has a non-Indo-European origin. Where possible, we have tried to incorporate studies that deal with similar practices and actions in the sequential organization of conversation in different languages in order to enable cross-linguistic, and at least in part cross-cultural, comparison. So, we present papers by Duvallon and Routarinne on Finnish parentheticals and by Auer on delayed self repairs after parentheticals in German; studies by Wootton and by Lindström on requests in two very different contexts and languages. Moreover, papers on ‘exaggerated versions’ or ‘overstatements’ by Drew and by Couper-Kuhlen and Thompson look at one sequential phenomenon from two different perspectives. In the long run, cross-linguistic and cross-cultural description of comparable practices of organizing talk in social interaction will be invaluable for the theory and practice of both inter-European as well as international communication.

Why study syntax and lexico-semantics in conversation?

Work on ‘phonology for conversation’ was started early by British linguists (see Local, Kelly & Wells 1986); and studies on ‘interactional prosody’ or ‘prosody in an interactional perspective’ followed suit (Couper-Kuhlen & Selting 1996a; see also Selting 1995); both of these have proved very promising research areas. This phonetic-prosodic research, which was explicitly called for in the classical 1974 paper by Sacks et al., has over the years become an exciting area bringing up new empirical and theoretical discoveries. In our view, the areas of syntax and especially lexico-semantics in conversation deserve as much analytic attention in the future as phonetics and prosody have had in the past.

In general, for the construction of conversational practices and actions, participants use co-occurring structures and devices from different levels of linguistic organization, e.g. not only from prosodic, phonetic-phonological, but also from morpho-syntactic and lexico-semantic structures in turns-at-talk in their sequential context. Recipients, on the other hand, typically interpret utterances holistically and functionally and display their interpretation of prior turns in their own subsequent turns. CA-informed research has aptly shown that the interpretation of utterances in conversation is dependent upon their position in the sequential organization of talk in the interaction. That ‘context’ may include both what has preceded a turn and what comes after it, is convincingly shown in the Wootton paper in this volume. It illustrates how the task of the researcher is to deconstruct the activity that is interpreted in a holistic way by recipients into constitutive cues, structures and devices, and to reconstruct the way in which it is thus systematically made interpretable for recipients. With respect to CA, a linguistic analysis can contribute to uncovering, or ‘unpicking’, the systematic linguistic structures and devices that – besides their position in the sequence – lead to and enable interactionalists’ and analysts’ sequential interpretations of utterances (see,

e.g., Goodwin 1979 for an early example of how interactional meaning is constituted by and derived from both grammatical *and* sequential structures).

In the following, we will briefly outline prior work in the fields of syntax and lexico-semantics in conversation and relate the contributions to the present volume to that work.

Syntax in conversation

In their seminal paper on ‘A simplest systematics for the organization of turn-taking for conversation’, Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson (1974) pointed out the important role of syntax for turn-taking and other organizational systems of talk in interaction. Syntactic units are important resources for the construction of turn-constructional units and turns. As types of possible turn-constructional units – for English – they mention “sentential, clausal, phrasal, and lexical constructions” (ibid.:702).

For spoken language in interaction, however, syntactic entities like sentences are not to be conceived of as static or fixed, but as flexible and such as can be adapted to the “organization of turns and their exigencies” (cf. Schegloff 1979:281). This is why Sacks et al., when talking about transition relevance places as the relevant loci for the negotiation of turn-taking, do not talk about the ends of sentences, clauses, phrases, etc., but of “‘possible completion points’ of sentences, clauses, phrases, and one-word constructions” (1974:721). It is the flexibility of the ‘possible syntactic units’ that enables them to be used for the organization of turn-taking in conversation. Furthermore, these pioneers also recognized that the delimitation of turn-constructional units is not a matter of syntax only. Rather, units are made recognizable by their prosodic packaging:

For example, discriminations between *what* as a one-word question and as the start of a sentential (or clausal or phrasal) construction are made not syntactically, but intonationally. When it is further realized that any word can be made into a ‘one-word’ unit-type (...), via intonation, then we can appreciate the partial character of the unit-types’ description in syntactic terms. (1974:721f.)

In the present volume, Selting takes up the issue of the interplay of syntax and prosody for the construction of units. She shows how similar syntactic structures can be packaged differently through prosody, and thus be adapted to different tasks in different phases of storytelling.

In his article on ‘The relevance of repair to syntax-for-conversation’, Schegloff (1979) further elaborated the notion of a ‘syntax-for-conversation’. His idea is that the syntax of spoken language in interaction should be looked upon as a resource that is deployed and exploited for the organization of turns and sequences in conversation. This study explicated the distribution and functions of repair for the syntax of spoken natural dialogue and opened up a very fruitful field of enquiry – one in which traditional syntax has had nothing to say, as repair is a non-existent phenomenon in written language, and foreign to introspective linguistics as well.

A later paper of Schegloff's (1996a) was also an eyeopener expanding the scope of interactional syntax to the systematic study of turn constructional units (TCUs) from the point of view of action: "at every possible completion of a TCU, the turn-so-far will have amounted to – will be analyzable as – some possible action or actions" (ibid.: 58).

Especially during the 1990s, a rich array of work was published on the syntactic structures of talk-in-interaction. Much of this work had an early projection in the Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson (1974) paper, and subsequently, in the themes taken up by Schegloff, as mentioned above. One focus of interest has been the internal expansions of sentences or clauses. Sacks et al. (1974: 709) already pointed out that "sentential constructions are the most interesting of the unit types, because of the internally generated expansions of length they allow – and, in particular, allow BEFORE first possible completion places".

In the present volume, Duvallon and Routarinne discuss examples of sentences which are internally expanded in different ways, even at points of maximal grammatical control, i.e. within NPs or after transitive verbs. The items parenthetically inserted may include words, several TCUs, or even a sequence of turns involving change of speakers. Parentheticals are thus used as a resource allowing speakers to attend to additional activities while at the same time preserving the initiated and projected sentence and action. From a slightly more cognitive point of view, Auer discusses parentheticals in connection with delayed self repair. After the beginning of a sentence, speakers can insert a parenthetical remark that in some way or other elaborates or corrects what went before, prior to recycling, and then continuing the suspended sentence. For a speaker, the inserted parenthesis is a means to cope with the problem of linearizing semantically hierarchical information in a recipient-designed way.

Constructions other than sentences in turn-constructional units have also become the focus of interest among interactional linguists, including unattached noun phrases (e.g. Helasvuo 1988 and 2001) and pivot or apokoinou constructions (Scheutz 1992). In the present collection, Scheutz continues this line of work; he presents different formats of pivot constructions from Austrian German data and shows that they fulfil different functions in spoken language.⁴

Other prominent topics of research have been elements at the "fringes" of possible sentences, such as increments (e.g. Auer 1991, 1996; Schegloff 1996a) and preposed constructions traditionally called left dislocations (Selting 1993; Scheutz 1997). Both these topics are taken up again in some of the papers in the present collection (Monzoni, Selting).

Today, at the interface between syntax and lexis, the notion of 'construction', from empirical approaches to 'construction grammar', is being brought together with an interactional linguistic perspective. 'Construction' is a way of talking about items that have a partly fixed and partly free format. Such items have been discussed in terms of 'formats' within CA. Construction grammar makes it clear that there are important items cutting across the traditional boundaries between syntax and lexis which frequently occur in talk-in-interaction. Indeed, the fact that 'constructions' cannot always be clearly analysed as either syntactic or lexico-semantic phenomena has its reflexion

in this volume: While Günthner's analysis of *wo*-constructions in German is in this introduction discussed under the heading of 'lexico-semantics in conversation', the paper itself was placed with the studies on 'syntax in conversation' in the volume. This – at first unnoticed – discrepancy is a good indicator of the intermediate status of the object of study between the traditional fields of syntax and lexico-semantics. Rather than try to fix this general problem superficially for this volume, we have decided to draw attention to it here, in order to promote thinking about it.

In this volume, the paper by Couper-Kuhlen and Thompson appeals to a constructional schema for describing what they call 'concessive repair practices', i.e. practices used by speakers for revising a prior overstatement. And in several other papers construction-like formats are discussed: Monzoni shows how left and right dislocation constructions are used as resources for achieving abrupt shifts in action, especially in discordant environments. Wootton studies the deployment of a specific question format, which he calls the '*Can you* ... construction', by a five-year old child in talk with her parents. He shows how the construction indexes a specific interactional configuration: in contrast to statements or imperatives, this device is used to redirect an expected course of parental action.

Lexico-semantics in conversation

There have been significantly fewer attempts at interactionally oriented work on lexical and semantic phenomena than on syntactic constructions. Little work has been done on words from open classes, i.e. nouns, adjectives or verbs. Of the little work done on these classes, most of the interactionally oriented studies have been done on referential expressions, i.e. on nouns, NPs and pronouns, much less on adjectives or verbs. In their classical paper on reference to persons, Sacks and Schegloff (1979) show that there are two basic principles guiding the selection of lexical items as forms of reference: the principles of minimization and of recipient design. The principle of minimization requires speakers to select single reference forms; the principle of recipient design requires the speaker to choose items according to a preference for 'recognitionals' that neither over- nor underestimate the recipient's ability to interpret the reference.

In his study of reference to persons with full lexical NPs and pronouns, Schegloff (1996b) shows that reference forms are action-dependent, position-dependent and recipient-designed. First of all, the choice between the second person pronoun *you* and a proper name, e.g. *Auli*, depends on the action performed by the speaker. Secondly, in unmarked cases, locally initial reference occasions or positions call for the use of full NPs and/or (definite) descriptions (e.g., *my colleague from Finland visiting me just now*), while locally subsequent reference occasions or positions rather call for the use of third person pronouns (*she*). With respect to recipient design, recognitionals are preferred over non-recognitionals, e.g. personal names are preferred over descriptions.

Fox (1987) has shown that the use of pronouns instead of full NPs creates conversational structure. She shows that long-distance pronominalization ('return pop') is deployed to signal that a prior sequence which was started by the antecedent full NP is still open, whereas the use of another full NP signals that a new sequence is being begun.

The lexical category of deictic pronouns has been intensively analysed by Finnish linguists (Laury 1997; Seppänen 1998; and Etelämäki forthcoming). This work has brought new insights into what it really means to say that these items are indexical, and that they are used in a reflexive, i.e. context-renewing manner. In the mainstream linguistic tradition, the 1st and 2nd person pronouns have been referred to as speech-act pronouns, and therewith automatically separated from the non-participant, or even 'non-person' category of the 3rd person. The Goffmanian-Goodwinian solution of breaking down the categories of speaker and addressee into an ever changing participation framework with a multitude of potential roles (Goffman 1986[1974]; Goodwin 1981) had an early follower in Levinson's (1988) article on the (theoretical) decomposability of participant roles. Hanks' study (1992) was a landmark in making a clear distinction between the spatial-relational use of deictic pronouns, and their indexical import. This distinction is of crucial relevance when one looks at deictics in authentic interaction.

For Finnish, Seppänen (1998) studies the choice of the three demonstrative pronouns *tämä* – *tuo* – *se* (roughly corresponding to English 'this', 'that' and 'it') and the implications of different choices among these when referring to people co-present in a speech situation, instead of referring to them with a 2nd person pronoun *sinä*; Etelämäki (forthcoming) analyses the import of the demonstrative pronoun *tämä* ('this') with respect to the organisation of sequential structure and the unfolding of joint activities. Because in these studies context is taken to be the intersubjective, sequential environment rather than a spatial context or the 'canonical speech situation', their analyses revise the standard notion as expressed in grammatical descriptions of a static pronominal system with clearly definable boundaries between e.g. personal and demonstrative pronouns on the one hand, and proximal and distal demonstratives on the other.

Another illustration of the power of interactional studies in revising traditional explanations of the use of reference forms is the case of the so-called 'generic' zero person use in Finnish (roughly corresponding to English *you* or *one* or German *man*). A frequently repeated pragmatic analysis was that generic expressions were used to 'avoid' specific person reference, as an indirect and polite way of referring to the current speaker or the recipient. However, on closer inspection of interactional data, it becomes evident that these expressions may and in certain contexts do perform a very different task: According to a more CA-informed semantic analysis by Laitinen (1995:355; cf. also Sorjonen 2001:136), the zero is said to open an indexical site for co-participants to be recognized and identified with – it opens a place for shared experience and shared consciousness. What had become a pragmatic straitjacket tied up with avoidance of explicit personal pronouns is now opened up as an exciting view

of zero as a positive resource for participation in delicate, often affiliation-seeking situations.

In this volume, it is especially the papers by Drew, Schulze-Wenck and Deppermann that show how word selection and the semantics of lexical items are interactionally relevant. Drew discusses instances in which word selection is interactionally generated, i.e. locally motivated by the immediately prior sequence, but where the resulting first version is then retracted when the requirement for the selection of the first and often more dramatic version is gone. Schulze-Wenck takes up and further explores Sacks' notion of 'first verbs'. She shows how verbs like *wanted to* and *tried to* are used to project multi-unit turns in different kinds of sequential environment. Deppermann shows that conversational contrast does not always rely on the use of lexically contrasting items but rather that the semantic opposition between words is locally constructed and interpreted on the basis of more or less routinized interpretive strategies.

Particles are words that have not received enough attention within traditional linguistics, as they have been thought of as being optional and marginal for the analysis of the propositional content of sentences. It is Finnish and German scholars in particular who have focused their work on particles from an interactional point of view – first of all, on the ones that in the Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson (1974:719) article were called 'appositionals'. In that paper, their definition was still somewhat vague:

Appositional beginnings, e.g. *well, but, and, so* etc., are extraordinarily common, and do satisfy the constraints of beginning. But they do that without revealing much about the constructional features of the sentence thus begun, i.e. without requiring that the speaker have a plan in hand as a condition for starting.

From the 1990s on, there are a number of papers that discuss these turn-initial particles from an interactional perspective (see, e.g., the work on causal clauses introduced with *weil* ('because') in German (Günthner 1993, 1996) and *because* in English (Couper-Kuhlen 1996) or the use of the connector *maar* ('but') as a topic resumption marker in Dutch (Mazeland & Huiskes 2001)). Their work shows that such words not only have the lexical meaning that we know from their use in single sentences and predominantly from written language. They are also used in particular positions in conversational sequences in which they produce sequential interactional meanings as well: German *weil* constructions with different word orders seem to be used for different activities in conversation. Dutch *maar* as a resumption marker has quite a different meaning from its purely syntactic use as a connector indicating opposition.

In the present volume, the papers by Günthner on *wo*-initiated turn-constructional units and by Steensig and Asmuß on Danish and German 'yes but' constructions continue this vein of research. Günthner looks into the multifunctionality of *wo*-initiated clauses and demonstrates how they are employed especially in delicate situations, either backing up future actions or accounting for preceding ones. Steensig and Asmuß study prosodically integrated and prosodically separate 'yes but' constructions as responses to suggestions or to assessments that prefer agreement. Whereas the integrated

construction is used to perform a ‘no fault’ disagreement, the separate one is used to implicate a more problematic rejection of the previous action.

Another sub-group of particles occurring in turn-internal position, with a tendency to become cliticized, is called ‘Abtönungspartikeln’ in the German linguistic tradition. These have long been an object of study within pragmatics, where they have been looked at predominantly from the speaker’s perspective; recently they have also become one of the foci in CA informed linguistics (see e.g. Hakulinen on *nyt* (1998) and *kyllä* (2001)). The use of this set of particles is both language-specific and context-sensitive, which makes their literal translation into lexical items in another language notoriously unsuccessful.

An early article by Schegloff (1982) on ‘uh huh’ and other “things that become between sentences” paved the way to the interactional study of yet another lexical group, alternatively called feedback items, response tokens and response particles. This group of words can best and perhaps exclusively be understood through inspecting their employment in talk-in-interaction. Particles like English *yeah* and *mm*, or Finnish *joo* and *niin* lack propositional content and can only be assigned a very rough meaning in isolation. Yet, in interaction, they often form an utterance and a turn on their own. According to Sorjonen (2001:280), among the “vectors of meaning” that these particles convey to the interaction are, e.g., (dis)affiliation, compliance or closure relevance – all clearly intersubjective notions relating to the cooperation between the participants in an interaction.

In the present volume, Heinemann’s paper on the Danish response particles *nej* ‘no’ and *jo* ‘yes’ continues this tradition of research. Heinemann differentiates between grammatical and interactional (dis)preference relations between successive turns: In preferred sequences there is matched polarity between the prior utterance and the following response particle. In Danish, the preference for matched grammatical polarity is so strong that there is a specific particle *jo* that is used when a grammatically dispreferred particle is needed as an interactionally preferred response.

The interdependence of forms and functions

What is the benefit, the pay-off, of work at the interface of conversation analysis and linguistics addressing issues in syntax and lexico-semantics in conversation? The title of our collection, ‘Syntax and Lexis in Conversation’, suggests that our analyses focus on linguistic items or structures/constructions as used in conversation. And indeed, some of them do just that. Yet, some of them start out from actions as interactional events in conversation, and aim at the identification of the linguistic resources used to perform these actions in their interactional contexts. In taking these possible starting points for their analyses, the authors of the chapters to this volume provide sample analyses following the two kinds of questions that interactional linguists typically ask, as outlined by Couper-Kuhlen and Selting (2001:3):

(i) what linguistic resources are used to articulate particular conversational structures and fulfil interactional functions? and (ii) what interactional function or conversational structure is furthered by particular linguistic forms and ways of using them?

However, even though these two starting points are possible, we should be aware of the fact that the two kinds of analyses may lead to different results. If we start out from language structures or forms and study their deployment in interaction, this yields a systematic analysis of the linguistic structures focused on, but gives us a diverse and not necessarily comprehensive picture of the sequential contexts in which they are used, let alone providing an account of the actions thus performed. If we start out from the action (in interaction) and identify the linguistic practices associated with it, this may yield a systematic analysis of the interactional or sequential structure, but it may not yield a comprehensive account of the linguistic devices and patterns involved. In order to arrive at a rich description of the ways in which actions are performed in their interactional contexts, we find ourselves going back and forth between looking at the detailed linguistic properties of items or constructions and inspecting the evolvement of the interaction. An intermediate stage of focussing on forms and structures may be a necessary and fruitful step in this enterprise, however: it provides us with important knowledge about linguistic forms and structures in interaction. Research on prosody in conversation has revealed the ways in which various aspects of prosody are used as resources in conversation; this research can now be relied on for a more comprehensive analysis of actions in conversation such as turn-taking, repair, topic organization, genres, etc. After the intermediate stage has yielded linguistic descriptions of language use in conversation, the analysis of actions and their accomplishment via linguistic and non-linguistic devices will be richer, better informed and more systematic than without it.

As this volume shows, work at the interface of conversation analysis and linguistics, especially in the European context, has taken up a host of syntactical and lexico-semantic issues, many of them already projected in Sack's original work, and has become truly international, with researchers of diverse affiliations and working in different mother tongues being involved in the enterprise. We hope that the papers presented in this collection will inspire further work in the fields of syntax and lexico-semantics in conversation along the lines outlined here.

Notes

* We are grateful to Elizabeth Couper-Kuhlen for helpful comments on an earlier version of this paper.

1. This data is represented in transcriptions that try to capture the details of spoken language with the means of the orthographic systems of the respective language (for the rationale and

the problems involved in this see Couper-Kuhlen & Selting 1996b:40ff.). Most researchers use the transcription system devised by Gail Jefferson (Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson 1974; for an overview see Psathas & Anderson 1990); in the German research context, most researchers use an adaptation of the Jefferson transcription system that is intended to represent prosody in a way more compatible with the findings of prosodic research (Selting et al. 1998). In this collection, we use two to three lines to represent utterances in languages other than English. The first line represents the original. The second line gives the English translation and/or glosses. Where this was not felt to be enough, a third line of free translation was added for clarification.

2. Many of the contributions to this volume were presented in their first versions as papers at the EuroConferences on Interactional Linguistics (Spa 2000 and Helsinki 2002, funded by the ESF and the EC).
3. Of course, syntactic structures and lexical items and categories can hardly be thought of as not pre-conceived, given the long tradition of thinking and research about them. When they are objects of study as resources of social interaction, however, their relevance for the participants of interaction should never be taken for granted but should be demonstrated with recourse to the data.
4. Furthermore, the use of sentence types in interaction, such as interrogative structures (as well as their partial functional equivalents), has been analysed especially in institutional environments (e.g. Heritage & Roth 1995; Heritage 2002).

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PART I

Syntactic resources in conversation

Syntax and prosody as methods for the construction and identification of turn-constructive units in conversation*

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In this paper I link up the discussion of units, or more precisely – turn-constructive units, with the analysis of increments and clause-combining in talk-in-interaction. I will present a case study of a narrative in which two instances of increments and two instances of clause-combining with syntactically very similar structures are displayed differently with respect to prosody. I aim to show that, taking the context of the multi-unit turn of the narrative into consideration, the different structuring of possible syntactic units in one or more than one TCU is by no means accidental. The different structuring rather suggests the interpretation of different practices or activities within the organization of storytelling in conversation. The respective importance of syntax and prosody is divided locally, and not once and for all. I will propose some methods for the systematic reconstruction of members' methods of constructing and making recognizable interactionally and interpretively relevant TCUs in conversational interaction.

1. Introduction

For a number of years, I have been concerned with the analysis of linguistic structures, in particular those of syntax and prosody, as members' resources of constructing and recognizing units in their sequential contexts in talk-in-interaction. One of the challenges is to relate the notions of basic units in linguistics and in conversation analysis. Within syntax, the sentence has traditionally been looked upon as a or even *the* basic unit for linguistic description. Research on the grammar of spoken language has shown the difficulties in applying this traditional notion to the analysis of spoken language (see, e.g., Crystal 1979). When Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson presented their 1974 model of turn-construction and turn-taking, they also used the notions of sentences, clauses, phrases and the like. As far as I understand their approach, however, there is a true motivation for the use of these terms: in CA the notions of sentences, clauses etc. were designed in order to capture the speaker's interactionally relevant

knowledge about these structures. This knowledge could be relied on as a resource for devices such as the projection of possible turn endings and turn transition. For the purposes of CA, the notions of syntactic unit-types such as sentences, clauses etc. proved much more useful than the looser notion of utterance. In addition, however, Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson (1974:721f.) clearly mentioned the need to look more closely at intonation as one of the devices deployed in order to make sentential, clausal, phrasal and one-word units interpretable as interactionally relevant units.

The great advantage of Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson's model is that it provides an ingenious account of turn construction and turn taking which is the basis of many insightful analyses of talk-in-interaction. We should not abandon its insights and premisses too easily. With respect to the issue of units, however, it has become apparent during the last few years that some of the basic notions of CA, especially the notion of turn-constructive unit (TCU) within the model of turn taking, is problematic. In particular, the precise definition of the TCU as well as the assumed relation of syntax and prosody in its construction have turned out to be controversial (see, e.g., Ford, Fox, & Thompson 1996; Schegloff 1996; Selting 2000).

2. The relationship between linguistic and interactional units

2.1 The Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson view

In my opinion, the problem basically results from the unclear relationship between grammatical and interactional units. As is well known, in their simplest systematics, Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson (1974) propose two components which are relevant for the organization of turn-taking: a turn-constructive component which deals with the construction of TCUs, and a turn-allocational component which deals with the regulation and negotiation of turn allocation at the end of each TCU for the next such unit.

TCUs end with places of possible completion of unit-types, transition relevance places (TRPs), which make turn transition relevant but not necessary (Schegloff 1996:55). This means, as Schegloff (*ibid.*) insists, that TCUs are potentially complete turns. The TCU, according to these authors, is thus a unit in conversation that is defined with respect to turn-taking; it is *not* defined as a linguistic unit.

However, in their further discussion of TCUs, Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson (1974:702) suggest a systematic relation between TCUs and grammatical units: "There are various unit-types with which a speaker may set out to construct a turn", they say. "Unit-types for English include sentential, clausal, phrasal, and lexical constructions (...)". Linguistic unit-types, and in particular syntactic constructions such as sentences, clauses, phrases and lexical constructions allow the projection of possible completions or TRPs of TCUs.

Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson, when commenting on the structure and recognizability of units, mostly mention and elaborate on their syntactic structure. At the same

time, however, while not dealing with it in detail, they are well aware of the importance of prosody and intonation for the formation and recognition of units and, possibly, unit types.¹

So, on the one hand, the turn-constructural unit is defined with reference to syntactic units, but, on the other hand, it has to be kept in mind that it is not per definition a linguistic unit. It is an interactionally relevant unit, a potentially complete turn that ends in a TRP. How does it then relate to linguistic units?

2.2 Recent proposals

There have been at least three different proposals to remedy the problem of uncertainty as to what turn-constructural units are or as to how they should be defined, namely by Ford, Fox and Thompson; by Schegloff; and by myself. I will try to summarize the main points as I understand them.

Ford and Thompson (1996) propose the notion of turn unit and the notion of Complex Transition Relevance Place (CTRP) as the end of a turn unit. They analyse quantitatively the convergence of intonation, grammatical and semantic-pragmatic, i.e. action, completion, to make a turn unit interpretable. Syntax and prosody seem to contribute about equal weight. Pragmatic completion has to be defined with recourse to intonation, which indicates the reflexive relation between linguistic cues and their interpretation in talk-in-interaction. CTRPs are defined as places that “intonation and pragmatic completion points select from among the syntactic completion points” (Ford & Thompson 1996: 154). – In another paper, however, Ford, Fox and Thompson (1996) propose to depart from the analysis of units altogether and concentrate on the analysis of practices for constructing co-participation. The problem I see with this approach is the following: There are many clear cases of recognizable units within turns, but we also have to admit that there are also cases in which the parsing of successive smaller units in a multi-unit turn is not clear-cut but perhaps even left unequivocal by the speakers. But if we give up Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson’s notion of TCU, we give up an important component of their model and thus lose the ingenious way of analysing interaction it inspired.

Schegloff (1996) basically retains the notions of TCU and turn construction as proposed in the classical model. He conceives, on the one hand, of “grammar as the – or one – basic organization for the turn constructional unit” (p. 55), and, on the other hand, the TCU as “the (or one) key unit of language organization for talk-in-interaction” (ibid.). Although he often mentions prosody, and later gesture, as cues relevant in the formation of TCUs, he also seems to retain the classical model’s assumption of syntax as the primary structure, with prosody only entering the picture as a secondary cue at most. “From the point of view of the organization of talk-in-interaction, one of the main jobs grammar or syntax does is to provide potential construction- and recognition-guides for the realization of the possible completion points of TCUs, and potentially of turns” (p. 87, italics of the original not reproduced here). In another paper, Schegloff describes the relation of syntax and prosody as fol-

lows: “If syntax can be taken to ‘nominate’ a spate of talk as structurally a possibly complete turn (given its sequential position in the trajectory of action), intonation can second the nomination – or not” (Schegloff 1998:237).

In a footnote, Schegloff explains this weighting of syntax and prosody, with syntax carrying more weight than prosody, as follows:

My own inclination to treat syntax as (ordinarily) setting the parameters within which prosody is deployed and interpreted is influenced by the observation (Sacks, Schegloff, & Jefferson 1974, pp. 720–722) that syntactic possible completions not realized in prosodically final contours are nevertheless not uncommonly the site of ‘mis-targetted’ (i.e., immediately withdrawn) start-ups of next turns by interlocutors, whereas turn-final contours – such as full falls – at positions in turn-constructional units which are not syntactically complete do not apparently occasion such ill-placed turn starts. I understand this to betoken the relevance and efficacy of syntactic parsing by interlocutors even where not converged with prosody, but not the reverse. (Schegloff 1998:237)

I have myself returned to the classical papers in order to propose a slightly revised version of the classical model which I think might solve the problems that I experienced with the analysis of my German data (Selting 2000, 2001). In what follows, I will sketch some basic assumptions of this proposed revision. I will claim that syntax and prosody are equally important in the construction of TCUs in my German data. Only the systematic interplay of syntax and prosody makes TCUs in their semantic, pragmatic and sequential context recognizable.

With my work, I try to continue earlier analyses of units in talk as presented by Local and Kelly (1986), Local (1992), and Selting (1995a, 1996a, 2000, 2001). All these analyses have attempted to show that the interplay of syntax and prosody plays a constitutive role in the interlocutors’ construction and interpretation of stretches of talk or of units such as TCUs. Furthermore, as has already been shown (Local, Kelly, & Wells 1986; Local, Wells, & Sebba 1985; Wells & Peppé 1996; and Wells & MacFarlane 1998), not only in the construction of units but also in the organization of turn-taking is it impossible to reduce the interplay of syntax and prosody and – with prosody playing a constitutive role –, in particular, the role of prosody to a secondary or seconding one.

Recently, research on increments and clause-combining has again attested to the relevance of the interplay of syntax and prosody for the organisation of interaction. Increments are defined as expansions or continuations of possible syntactic constructions after possible completion points. Increments have been discussed by, among others, Auer (1991, 1996), Selting (1994), Schegloff (1996), most recently Walker (2001) and Ford, Fox and Thompson (2002). Walker’s MA thesis hypothesizes: “different classes of increments show different kinds of phonetic regularity” (2001:86). One of these is the integration of the expansion with the prior unit versus its setting off and exposure into a separate unit.

The same principle holds for the continuation of talk after a clause with another, syntactically continuing, coordinated or subordinated clause. The packaging of possi-

bly syntactically cohesive continuations as integrated in one or as separated into more than one unit is an interactional resource that is deployed in order to suggest different semantic and interactional meanings: e.g. different kinds of causal and other subordinate or coordinate clauses (cf. Ford 1993; Couper-Kuhlen 1996; Günthner 1993, 1996, 2000).

With my paper, I want to link up the discussion of units, or more precisely turn-constructive units, with these two different lines of work carried out during the last few years, the analysis of what have come to be known since Schegloff's (1996) paper as increments and the analysis of clause-combining in talk-in-interaction. I will present a case study of a narrative in which both two instances of increments and two instances of clause-combining with syntactically very similar structures are displayed differently with respect to prosody. Display of possible syntactic structures in one prosodic unit suggests constructions as one TCU; display of possible syntactic structures in more than one prosodic unit suggests more than one TCU. I want to show that, taking the context of the multi-unit turn of the narrative into consideration, the different structuring of possible syntactic units in one or more than one TCU is by no means accidental. The different structuring rather suggests the interpretation of different practices or activities within the organization of storytelling in conversation. The relationship of syntax and prosody is constructed locally, as a resource for storytelling, not once and for all. The analysis of increment and clause-combining structures draws on previous insights about the respective constructions in talk-in-interaction by myself and others and tries to illustrate and explain their usage and function within the sequential context of storytelling. With this I want to show that the interplay of resources from the linguistic signalling systems syntax and prosody within multi-unit turns is interactionally relevant. This motivates my proposal to conceive of the TCU as a linguistic unit (see below).

When in the title of my paper I announced that I would deal with 'methods for the construction and identification/analysis of turn-constructive units in talk-in-interaction', the term methods refers to members' methods, as deployed by members and reconstructed by conversation analysts and interactional linguists, in order to construct and make identifiable/analysable the turn constructive units in talk-in-interaction.

In the next section, I will present and analyse an extended piece of data with respect to the constructions mentioned above. I will briefly repeat the gist of what I regard as the most important problem with respect to the definition and analysis of units. After the analysis, I will return to the general issue of the relation of syntax and prosody for unit construction and the definition of the TCU before drawing conclusions.

3. Illustration: An extract of talk

To illustrate the issue, I will present an extract of talk from a conversation between three young women. This conversation is part of a corpus of audio-taped face-to-face conversations between three participants at the University of Oldenburg. The participants, three women in their twenties, have been close friends for some years. Before the extract presented here, the three friends have been talking about swimming. Eli and Dor sometimes go swimming in the morning, while Mia claims to be afraid of cold water. This is what her first remarks in lines 1–2 of the transcript still relate to.

The extract has been transcribed according to the conventions of GAT (Selting et al. 1998), a transcription system developed by a group of German Interactional Linguists and Conversation Analysts. GAT has been designed on the basis of the CA-transcription system developed by Gail Jefferson, but is intended to represent prosody more systematically and in compatibility with conventions in phonetics and phonology in linguistics. Most of the conventions will be intuitively clear. Only a few conventions need to be mentioned here:

- Punctuation marks denote intonation at the end of units, i.e. TCUs in my usage of the term;
- CAPs for entire syllables denote stronger, primary accents; cAps for only a single letter denote weaker, secondary accents.²

Everything else of importance will be mentioned in the analysis.

- (1) K0: 731-761 ((Laufnr. Uher 297-314))
 ((at the end of talk about going swimming in the morning))

01 Mia: SIEHse,=
 you see
 02 =bisse DOCH wasserscheu;
 you ((refers to Eli)) ARE afraid of water
 03 (1.33)
 04 Eli: aber NICH sEhr;
 but not much
 05 ((clears [her throat))
 06 Mia: [bis du eigentlich in willemschaven (0.21)
 did you in Wilhemshaven
 07 ins ^MEER gegangen,
 go into the sea
 08 (0.58)
 09 Mia: zum baden?
 to swim
 10 (0.87)
 11 Eli: 'EIN 'MAL.
 just once
 12 (1.64)

- 13 Eli: und zwar hab ich da: in wil[lemsHaven
and that was when I in Wilhemshaven
- 14 Mia: ['EIN 'EINziges 'MA[L nur?
 [<h [h>
 [<f> <f> [
 [<tense voice> [
just one single time
- 15 Eli: [JAA,
yes
- 16 (0.66)
- 17 Eli: da hab ich in willemsshaven in som ca↑'FE ge'Arbeitet,=
then in wilhelmshaven I was working in a kind of cafe
- 18 <<len> =am 'STRA:ND;>
at the beach
- 19 (0.24)
- 20 Eli: 'SCHW(h)ALben'nEst-
 ((name of cafe))
- 21 (.)
- 22 Dor: hm;
- 23 Eli: .h u:n:d 'dA sind immer die ganzen ↑'OMmas ↑'SCHWIMmen
 gegangen.
and all the old ladies went swimming in the sea there
- 24 .hhh die warn alle total ↑'FIT;[=nich,=
they were all absolutely fit you know
- 25 ?:
 [((clears throat))
- 26 Eli: =sind 'RAUSgeschwommen,
swam out into the sea
- 27 und und: und habm: also so be↑'STIMMT so:
and and and well certainly did about
- 28 .hhh be↑'STIMMT auch ihre tausend 'mEter [gemacht (0.24)
certainly made their thousand metres
- 29 Dor: ['hm,
- 30 Eli: <<all> oder was,> (0.19)
or so
- 31 und 'dAnn wieder 'RAUSgekommen; (0.67)
and then came out again
- 32 .h und ich wollte 'Einfach mal 'MIT; (0.51)
and once I simply wanted to swim with them
- 33 'bIn dann mit 'RAUSgeschwommen und nich wieder
swam out with them and couldn't
- 34 zu'RÜCKgekommen weil ich schon er↑'SCHÖPFT 'war,
swim back because I was too exhausted
- 35 .h[h
- 36 Mia: [hh:
- 37 Dor: ['hm:[:;
- 38 Eli: [dann ham mich die 'Ommas wieder annen 'RAND
then the old ladies brought me back to the
- 39 ge'brAcht, (1.13)
shore
- 40

- 41 und da bin ich ↑'NIE wieder 'rEingegangen;
and then I never went in again
- 42 (0.57) .h
- 43 <<p> hheh>
- 44 (0.26)
- 45 Dor: hm:;
- 46 (1.07)
- 47 Mia: aber ↓'DAS find ich irgendwie: für jemand: (0.66)
but that I find somehow for someone
- 48 die ↑'!NICH! am 'mEer (0.35) irgendwie so 'GROß
who didn't near the sea somehow grow
- 49 geworden is <<all> find ich> das 'SEHR er'stAunlich;
up I find that very surprising
- 50 (0.55)
- 51 Mia: ICH stell mir immer vor
I always imagine

As the activities of and within storytelling are important for my analysis of increments and clause-combining in this extract, I will now first give an overview of the activities enacted: In lines 6–7, Mia asks Eli, who grew up in a seaside resort on the North Sea, Wilhemshaven, whether she went swimming in the sea when she lived there. With her answer *EIN MAL* in line 11, Eli announces a story. This corresponds to how Harvey Sacks (1992) analysed the organization of storytelling. Sacks points out (1992:227) that activities such as telling a story in many cases are projected as needing more than one sentence to accomplish. In order to secure the turn for an extended story, story tellers seem to seek and/or be allotted an extended turn by producing a preface or pre-sequence such as announcement/invitation – ratification before the launching of the big package of the story proper (cf. also Jefferson 1978). This is here initiated with Eli's story announcement in line 11, after which she pauses for 1.64 seconds. This pause allows her recipients to respond and, should they desire, to prevent her from telling the story. Eli starts telling the story in line 13, but is interrupted by Mia's astonished repair initiation (cf. Selting 1996b). After her confirmation in line 15 which is done in overlap, and an ensuing pause, Eli starts again and now tells her story in lines 17 through 41. The story comprises the following components: In lines 17–33, Eli gives some details about the background and the development of the situation focused on; in lines 34 and 35, she formulates the dramatic development to the outrageous point of her story. This telling of the dramatic development is responded to by her recipients in lines 37 and 38. After that, Eli finishes her story by telling the outcome, namely that the old ladies brought her back to the shore and she never went swimming in the sea again. (On the organization of storytelling cf. Sacks 1992:esp. 3–17; Goodwin 1984; Quasthoff 2001.)

How are activities like this, and the practices used to make them recognizable, to be analyzed? What is a TCU here: every syntactic clause, every component part of the story, or the entire announced and thus projected story?

4. The issue

The received view in CA as introduced by Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson (1974) is this: In most cases TCUs consist of some kind of possible syntactic construction. We would thus rely on syntactic criteria and treat every syntactically possible unit, i.e. a sentence, clause, phrase, or word, as a TCU. In this case, the projection of larger activity types, such as stories which consist of longer stretches of talk than single sentences, would have the effect of constraining, overlaying and blocking story-internal completion points of TCUs from being treated “as normal transition relevance places” (Houtkoop & Mazeland 1985:599).

In this view, we thus need to distinguish between TCUs that do and those that do not end in operative TRPs. The TRP of the non-final TCUs in the turn is suspended until the possible turn-final TCU. The production of larger projects is describable as an interactive achievement in which speakers suspend and recipients refrain from making use of suspended TRPs.

A critical point of this view that in my opinion needs amendment is the fact that there are other than syntactic means to form and project single TCUs and longer projects, i.e. prosodic, lexical, semantic, pragmatic and activity-type specific devices. The strong (or even sole) reliance on syntactic criteria is unjustified, as has been shown by Ford, Fox and Thompson (1996) and Selting (1996a, 2000, 2001).

I am going to concentrate on the interplay of syntax and prosody in their sequential context. With respect to prosody, I will especially pay attention to pitch and loudness; length/duration, tempo and pause will be referred to wherever relevant and necessary. These seem to me to be the most relevant prosodic parameters used in German talk for the signalling of unit construction and delimitation. Furthermore, pitch, loudness and length are deployed to make accented syllables recognizable. In general, an intonation unit has at least one accented syllable; the final accented syllable of an intonation unit is also called the nucleus or the nuclear accent, signalling the semantic focus of the unit (for an introduction to (English) prosody cf. Couper-Kuhlen 1986). Other parameters such as breathing and changes in voice quality, like creak or whisper, do not seem to be used systematically in my German data for this task. Pitch and loudness will be illustrated with acoustic analyses carried out with the software PRAAT (Boersma & Weenink <<http://www.praat.org>>). In all the figures showing the acoustic analyses, the calibration is kept constant; the upper parts of the figures show the measured intensity, the lower parts of the figures show the result of pitch extraction, i.e. F0 (dotted line), both aligned with the syllables as transcribed in the bottom lines of the figures. Obvious errors in measurements of F0 have been hand-corrected.

The data extract shows some interesting cases for the analysis of unit-construction in their sequential context, relating to (1) increments, i.e. the expansion of possibly complete syntactic units, and (2) clause-combining, i.e. the combination of syntactic units and their interplay with prosodic unit-formation respectively.

Here and elsewhere, for the systematic reconstruction of members' methods of constructing and making recognizable interactionally and interpretively relevant units,

several questions can always be asked that lead directly to the reconstruction of *how* units are built as well as to an account of *why*, in the sense of *what for*, they are built in this way. These questions are:

- (i) *How* is a stretch of talk organized structurally, i.e. with respect to:
 - a. its syntactic structure? I.e.: Where are possible syntactic completion points? How are they expanded?
 - b. its prosodic structure? I.e.: How are the prosodic parameters pitch, loudness, length, and possibly others such as pause etc., deployed at the possible syntactic completion point and at the beginning of the expansion?
- (ii) *Why*, in the sense of *what for*, is it organized this way? I.e.: What does this kind of structuring achieve in the conversational activity and/or sequence at hand?

In the following, I will work through these questions for the analysis of some of the lines in Extract (1). I will describe utterances that are syntactically similar but prosodically different, with the result that they perform different functions with respect to the components of storytelling under construction. I will repeat the relevant lines of the transcription here, now with an interlinear translation and with a few glosses added that might help to understand the grammatical structure of German as far as it is of interest here. (The gloss 'VERB2' identifies the second part of the verb.)

4.1 The prosodic display of expansions of syntactic units

Expansions of syntactic units are constituted in lines 6–9 and 17–18. Let us first look at Mia's question in lines 6–9:

06 Mia: [bis du eigentlich in willemshaven (0.21)
 did you PARTICLE in Wilhemshaven
 07 ins ^{MEER} gegangen,
 into-the sea go (=VERB2)
 08 (0.58)
 09 zum baden?
 to swim

(i) *How is it organized, syntactically and prosodically?*

Mia first asks the question *bis du eigentlich in willemshaven* (0.21) *ins MEER gegangen*, which could have been a possible turn on both syntactic and prosodic criteria. We have a convergence of both a possible syntactic and a possible prosodic completion at the end of *gegangen* here. Syntactically, the second part of the verb *bis gegangen* here completes a possible interrogative clause. Prosodically, rising pitch in the final syllables of the possible complete clause, in combination with decreasing loudness after the long accented syllable *MEER*, which itself is realized with greater loudness and low F0, signal and constitute a possible turn-ending here (cf. also Wells & MacFarlane 1998 on the relevance of final major accents as TRP-projecting accents). This possible turn, a question, makes an answer by Eli sequentially relevant.

But, as Eli does not respond immediately, Mia expands her turn after a brief gap by adding the prepositional phrase *zum baden?* in a syntactically and prosodically cohesive way, i.e. the expansion is made as both a syntactic and a prosodic continuation of the prior turn. Syntactically, the prior clause is simply extended by a prepositional phrase, bringing the clause to another point of possible completion (cf. Auer 1996). Prosodically, the pitch of the expansion starts at about a similar height as that where it left off at the end of *gegangen*; loudness in the strong syllables *zum ba* is similar to that in the strong syllable *gan* before. This can also be seen in the acoustic analysis shown in Figure K0-06,07 (see next page).

The PRAAT analysis shows that both *gegangen* as well as *baden* end with very similar F0-values. Nevertheless, the first ending at *gegangen* is perceived as rise-to-mid and transcribed with ‘,’, whereas the second ending at *baden* is perceived as rise-to-high and transcribed with ‘?’. A possible explanation of this discrepancy is offered by Liberman and Pierrehumbert (1984): As in our perception of the pitch of intonation units we seem to automatically calculate a normal declination trend, i.e. falling overall pitch, pitches later in the intonation unit that have the same measured F0-values as pitches earlier in the intonation unit are perceived as higher.

(ii) *Why/what for is it organized like this?*

Although it was presumably not designed as such before, the prior TCU is expanded in order to adapt the turn to Eli’s lack of immediate response. Retrospectively, on sequential criteria, the sequence would have to be represented as in extract (1’), i.e. with the silence attributed to the addressed recipient Eli:

(1’) (= detail of extract 1)

06 Mia: [bis du eigentlich in willems haven (0.21) ins ‘MEER gegangen{,}
 did you PARTICLE in Wilhelms haven into-the sea go (=VERB2)
 Eli: (0.58)
 Mia: *zum baden?*
 to swim

By producing an expansion which is a syntactic and prosodic continuation of the prior unit, with pitch and loudness continued and without an accented syllable of its own, Eli seemingly just takes her prior TCU to a second point of possible completion, thus pursuing a response. The possible TCU-ending at the end of line 6 is retrospectively ignored – hence the curly brackets { } around the symbol for the intonation at the end of the prior unit there. In this question-answer sequence, Mia uses syntax and prosody in order to produce a new or a continued ending of the turn. The expansion can be seen as both self-repair after the lack of response as well as a repair of the turn-taking problem which caused the expansion of the question. Eli finally takes the turn for her conditionally relevant answer in line 11.

The expansion during Eli’s restart of storytelling in lines 17–18 is organized quite differently.

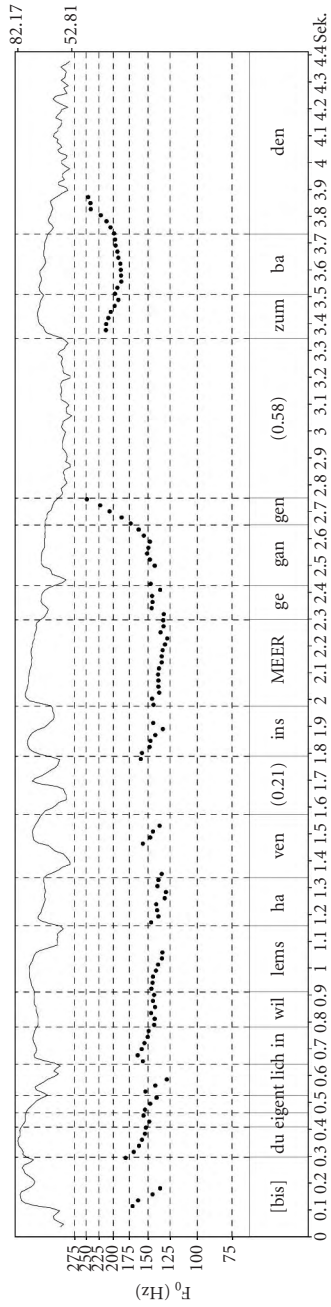


Figure K0-06,07

- 17 Eli: da hab ich in willemschaven in som ca↑'FE ge'Arbeitet,=
 then have I in wilhelmshaven in a-kind-of cafe worked (=VERB2)
- 18 <<len> =am `STRA:ND;>
 at-the beach

(i) *How is it organized?*

Again, the possibly complete syntactic sentence and prosodic unit in line 17, *da hab ich in willemschaven in som caFE geArbeitet*, is expanded in line 18 by producing a simple syntactic continuation of the sentence, namely *am STRA:ND*; again a prepositional phrase. This time, however, the expansion is done in a prosodically non-cohesive way. It is packaged in a prosodic unit of its own, after a prosodic break between *geArbeitet* and *am* that is made interpretable by a small pitch drop from the end of *geArbeitet* to the beginning of *am*. Yet, *am* starts, as is usual in German syllable onsets of this type, with a glottal stop. This might have caused the measured F0 in the acoustic analysis to show a slight fall at the very end of *geArbeitet* which, however, is not auditorily perceived. Furthermore, the expansion is added with latching, i.e. without any gap, usable as a means of 'rushing through' into the next unit (Schegloff 1982). In addition, the expansion is produced with changed tempo to <lento>, and with its own accented syllable. Pitch and loudness both have their own trajectories in each unit. The pitch of the possibly complete clause reaches a high peak in the accented syllable of *caFE*, then falls down in the syllable *ge* and rises again in the final syllables *Arbeitet*, altogether a falling-rising nucleus as described in the British School (cf. Couper-Kuhlen 1986: 96f.). In contrast to this, the expansion *am STRA:ND* has a high onset and falling pitch in the accented syllable, a falling nucleus (ibid.). This can again be seen in the acoustic analysis in Figure K0-18,19 (see next page).³ – As the turn for the delivery of the story has been secured earlier, no recipient is expected to take over.

(ii) *Why/what for is it organized like this?*

This expansion is not dealing with any kind of problems in turn-transition. Eli is just restarting her telling of the projected and ratified story, i.e. the turn belongs to her for the telling of this story. Her way of constructing lines 17–18 can rather be analysed as a rhetorical strategy of presenting pieces of information one at a time in separate TCUs at the beginning of the story: By packaging information in separate TCUs with their own accented syllables, each TCU presents a piece of information with its own focus.

Both these analysed cases show that similar types of syntactic continuations of possible sentences or clauses can be displayed prosodically differently in order to achieve different activities in talk. Different kinds of continuations of prior syntactic constructions can be used as a resource for different interactional purposes (see also Selting 1994, 1995a, b; Auer 1996). However, a free translation into English would obscure an important structural difference between English and German: While English sentences tend to have syntactic completions fairly open to continuations, for German what is analysed as the sentence brace, with the second part of the verb in clause-final position, provides a much clearer cue for syntactic completion, for instance here the

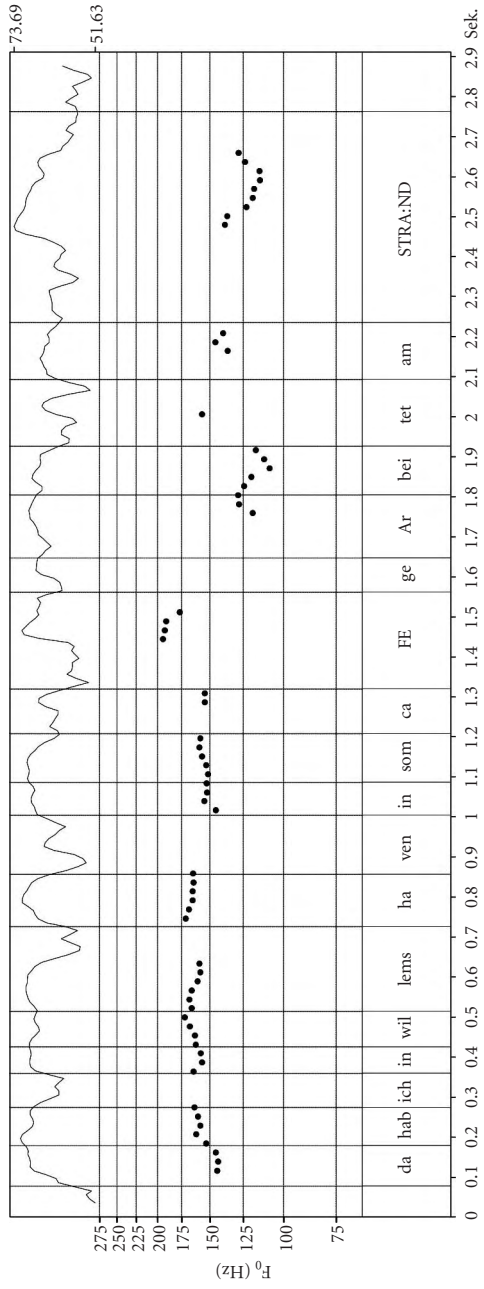


Figure K0-18,19

second parts of the verbs *gegangen* and *gearbeitet* which syntactically complete the sentences. While in English prosody is used to – as Schegloff (1996) puts it – “second or not to second” a possible syntactic completion point, in German it seems to do *more*. It may either second possible syntactic completion points, especially in clauses with a second part of the verb in final position, thus excluding them from the prior TCU, *or* it has to camouflage or overrule them, thus integrating expansions after second parts of the verbs into TCUs, although they are syntactic expansions after clearly possible completion points. In contrast to English, German prosody thus seems to carry more weight in signalling designed completion points of TCUs.

The expansion in line 9 is a prototypical example of what Schegloff (1996:90) describes as an increment that is used for post-possible completion. The prepositional phrase used there is also a clause constituent of the prior unit, as described by Ford, Fox and Thompson (2002), being used as an increment to respond to a recipient’s lack of response.

The second expansion described, the one in line 18, although syntactically very similar, would probably not qualify as a possible increment, because it is not used in a place after a possible turn-completion but only after a possible TCU-completion, far away from possible turn-ending, since rising intonation projects turn-holding here. Yet, the same kind of syntactic constituent in a separate prosodic packaging is also frequently used in increment-positions like these – at least in German, as has been shown by Auer (1996).

4.2 The prosodic realization of the combination of syntactic units

Later in the extract, there are two other instances of syntactically similar constructions but with very different prosodic deliveries. The first instance occurs at lines 27–32, where Eli gives some background description about the old ladies swimming out into the sea.

```

27 Eli: =sind `RAUSgeschwommen,
      have swum-out (=VERB2)
28     und und: und habm: also so be↑`STIMMT so:
      and and and have well like certainly about
29     .hhh be↑`STIMMT auch ihre tausend `mEter [gemacht (0.24)
      certainly PARTICLE their thousand meters done (=VERB2)
30 Dor:
      [ ` `hm,
31 Eli: <<all> oder was,> (0.19)
      or so
32     und `dAnn wieder `RAUSgekommen; (0.67)
      and then again out-came (=VERB2)

```

(i) *How is it organized, syntactically and prosodically?*

We have the three complex syntactic clauses (1) *sind RAUSgeschwommen*, (2) *und und: und habm: also so beSTIMMT so: .hhh beSTIMMT auch ihre tausend mEter gemacht (0.24) <<all> oder was,>* and (3) *und dAnn wieder RAUSgekommen;*. Syntactically,

these utterances could be analysed as one single complex co-ordinated so-called elliptical construction tying back to (and leaving out the subject *die* ('they') from) line 25: *die warn alle total FIT;=nich*,⁴ (Incidentally, in line 31 we find another syntactic expansion, *oder was*, retrospectively integrated into the prior unit, but I shall not deal with that here.) All three clauses are displayed in separate prosodic units: They all have their own intonation contours and nuclear accents, with clear unit-final intonation contours at the end of the clauses: rising-to-mid pitch at the end of the first and second unit (before the expansion), both projecting more-to-come, and falling pitch at the end of the third unit. Boundaries between units are further indicated clearly by a (0.19) second pause between the second and the third clause. The many repairs and breathing and pauses slow down the tempo of delivery. This structuring can again be seen in the acoustic analysis (see Figures K0-26,27 and K0-28-31).

(ii) *Why/what for is it organized like this?*

Eli is here describing the background of her story. Her organization of this component arguably fulfils rhetorical purposes. With these clauses formulated as separate TCUs, with again one piece of information packaged into one unit, and with the internal organization suggesting a slow tempo, the situation before the dramatic event is detailed in order to slowly create suspense, this leading up to the culmination of her story. The recipient Dor minimally acknowledges the piece of information most highlighted, i.e. the stating of a large number, after several self-repairs on Eli's part: the old ladies surely did their *tausend meter*. This means that this recipient responds to the presentation of the information in separate TCUs by acknowledging the salient one, which is, however, not displayed as the last piece of information to be expected here.

A similar syntactic construction is used at lines 34–35, where Eli presents the dramatic development to the outrageous culmination of her story.

34 'bIn dann mit ˈRAUSgeschwommen und nich wieder
 have then with-them swum-out (=VERB2) and not again
35 zu'RÜCKgekommen weil ich schon er↑'SCHÖPFT ˈwar,
 come-back (=VERB2) because I already exhausted was (=VERB2)
36 .h[h
37 Mia: [hh:
38 Dor: ['hm: [: ;

(i) *How is it organized?*

Again we find three syntactic clauses involving both coordination and subordination: (1) *bIn dann mit RAUSgeschwommen*, (2) *und nich wieder zuRÜCKgekommen*, and (3) *weil ich schon erSCHÖPFT war*. Syntactically, these three clauses could be analysed as a single complex, so-called elliptical construction, this time tying back to (by leaving out the subject *ich* ('I') from) the sentence *und ich wollte Einfach mal MIT*; in line 32.⁵ These three clauses, which could also in principle have been told in three separate prosodic units, seem to be bound together to form one single unit (Figure K0-33,34).

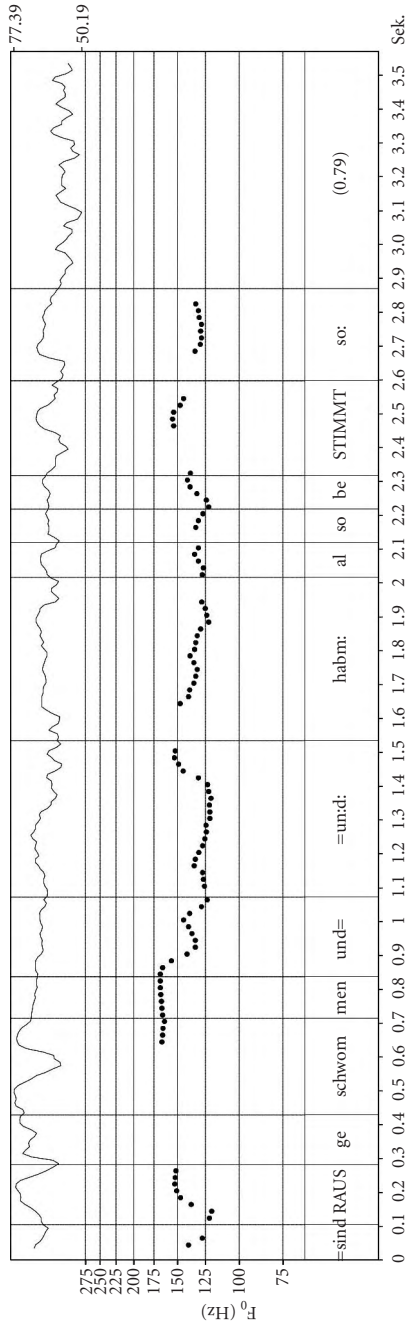


Figure K0-26,27

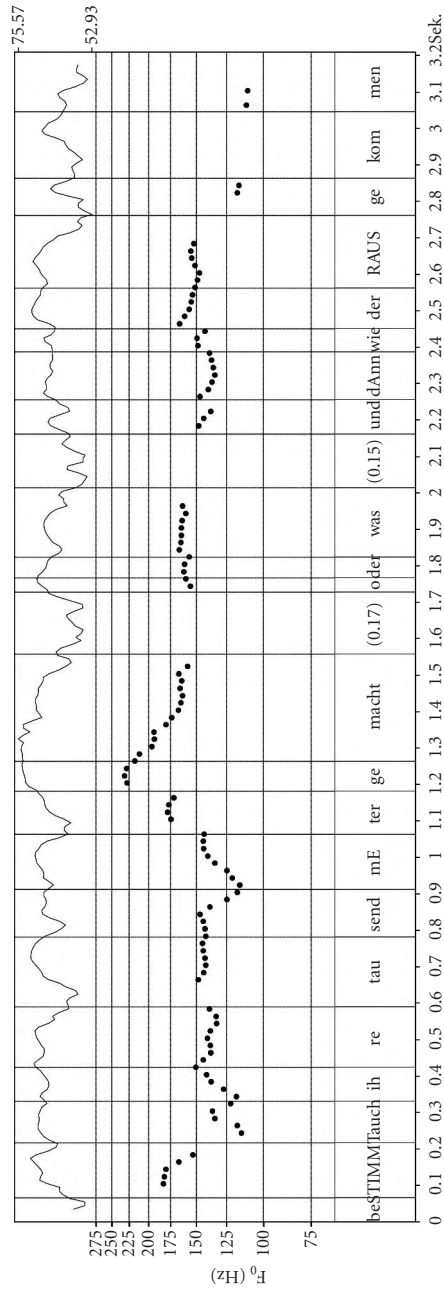


Figure K0-28,31

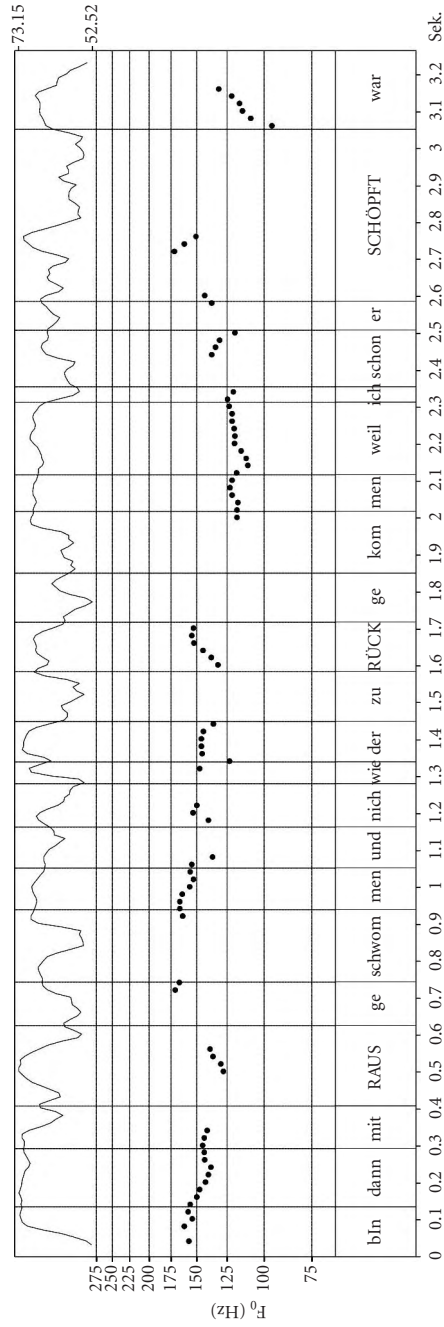


Figure K0-33,34

Yet, there are two possibilities of analyzing this complex construction prosodically: *either* as three separate prosodic units corresponding to the syntactic clauses, with only weak internal boundaries, and bound together in a so-called paratone (Couper-Kuhlen 1986: 189ff.), i.e. one longer superordinate unit with a cohesive overall falling intonation contour, *or* as one single unit without internal boundaries and with two prenuclear and a final nuclear accent which is also the most prominent one. No matter which of these two analyses we prefer, the important point is that the entire complex construction is presented by the speaker as a single unit, irrespective of its internal organization. Apart from the final accented syllable *SCHÖPFT*, the overall F0 is falling from the beginning to the end of the construction. Likewise, as the intensity values show, loudness is slowly decreasing over the course of the construction, again except for the final accented syllable *SCHÖPFT*. In the syllable *SCHÖPFT*, both higher pitch, greater loudness and greater length/duration are deployed to make this syllable recognizable as the most prominent one in this construction. Prosodic cohesion is much stronger here than in lines 27–32: there is fluent production without repairs and without pauses between or within clauses. Here the tempo of delivery is much faster.

(ii) *Why/what for is it organized like this?*

This kind of formulation suggests that a different component of the story is being told than before, namely that Eli here produces the dramatic development to the outrageous culmination of her story.

This time, the recipients' responses do not come until after the end of the delivery of the culmination of the story, and in overlap with the storyteller's inbreath, in lines 37 and 38: Both recipients respond with reciprocity tokens that signal the uptake of the culmination. Thus, the recipients treat the entire construction as a single unit by postponing their responses until after its recognizable end. The recipients' responses warrant the interpretation of the prior unit both as the telling of the culmination, and as an outrageous one that makes a serious response relevant.

Furthermore, the syntactically complex sentences and clauses that I have compared and shown to be packaged differently in order to suggest different interpretations and activities within story telling, show this: In contrast to common assumptions in both CA and linguistics, dependent subordinate clauses and other syntactically dependent phrases, which are normally analysed as parts of complex sentences, must – if displayed as separate units via prosody – be analysed as separate TCUs with which the speaker performs separate activities or practices. Their differing prosodic design is used as an interactionally relevant cue to the organization of interaction.

The constructions analyzed here show that in different positions in the telling of the story participants can use prosody in order to format similar types of syntactic constructions as one or as more than one TCU. This formatting is by no means unimportant, but is chosen in order to constitute and make recognizable for the recipients different activities within multi-unit turns.

4.3 The relation of syntax and prosody for unit construction

All the utterances selected show that in the German data at hand syntactically cohesive stretches, i.e. formulations that are presented as expansions or continuations of prior syntactic constructions, can be realized prosodically in different ways: as integrated into one or as separated into several prosodic units. In other words, in one place, they are displayed as one single prosodic unit by producing cohesive prosodic continuations of prior units; in other places, they are displayed as separate units by means of a recognizable prosodic break and the recognizable beginning of a new prosodic unit.

The prosodic cues that were used regularly in these data, in order to make beginnings of new or next TCUs, or new beginnings of recycled or repaired TCUs, recognizable, are the following:

- A melodic break which is constituted by an upstep or a downstep in pitch at the beginning of the TCU in relation to the pitch used before.
- And/or a fast transition into the next TCU which can be achieved either by latching (denoted by ‘=’), i.e. fast beginning of the next TCU without noticeable gap after prior TCU, or by using faster tempo (denoted by ‘<all>’) at the beginning of the next TCU, i.e. in the syllables before the first accented syllable of the next unit, or both at the beginning of the next TCU and at the end of the prior TCU.

The latter device, the different methods of constituting a fast transition into the next TCU, seems to correspond to what Schegloff (1982) has described as a rush through. The cues that are used in order to make the beginning of next TCUs recognizable are in contrast to the cues that are used to make continuations of TCUs after unit-internal pauses or trouble recognizable, namely (cohesive) continuations of the same pitch and loudness that has been used before (cf. also Local 1992).⁶

When we look at continuous discourse, we can see that syntactically cohesive continuations are very common practices of displaying the continuing of talk within the same topic, within the same sequence or even in initiating repair. It is in many cases *only* prosody that makes separate TCUs and actions recognizable as such. Syntactic formulations are packaged *as interactionally relevant units* via prosody. Prosody thus plays a constitutive, not just a concomitant role. Syntax and prosody have different scope and play different roles each, but I could not in general rank their importance as one higher than the other. Their relationship to each other for unit construction is constituted locally: Different kinds of prosodic packaging of syntactically cohesive constructions can be deployed as practices in order to achieve different tasks in interaction. It is thus the methodic interplay of the linguistic resources from syntax *and* prosody that participants use in order to make TCUs recognizable as interactionally relevant components of activities in their semantic, pragmatic and sequential context.

Yet, in our example, *only* lines 7 and 9, and later line 41, end in possible *turn* completions, i.e. operative TRPs. All other story-internal TCUs are blocked from being treated as operative TRPs. I hope to have demonstrated that we need to look at

the interplay of syntax and prosody in order to understand the construction of TCUs constituting and making recognizable activities *within* the possible turn.

If then, as I have tried to show for my data, the construction of units via syntax *and* prosody is constitutive of our production and interpretation of activities, this analysis entails a slight amendment of the classical model of turn-taking as suggested by Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson (1974). I proposed (Selting 2000) to define a TCU as the smallest possibly complete and interactionally relevant *linguistic* unit in a given sequential context, with one or more than one TCU constituting a possible turn that ends in a TRP. Such smallest possibly complete linguistic units comprise, for example, sentences, clauses, phrases, words and other verbal and non-verbal signals (see Schegloff 1996).

The reasons to conceive of the TCU as the smallest possibly complete and interactionally relevant *linguistic* unit are twofold: (1) The term linguistic is intended to subsume the resources from at least syntax *and* prosody. In particular, TCUs are signalled and delimited via the use of syntactic *and* prosodic structures in their lexico-semantic, pragmatic and sequential conversational context. In its appropriate context, a TCU is possibly complete, if it is both syntactically *and* prosodically displayed as possibly complete. (2) The linguistic unit of TCU is a rather formal one. It is not necessarily a projected complete turn, and thus not necessarily a complete action. There is not necessarily a one-to-one relation between linguistic units and actions. While TCUs are rather formal basic linguistic components of turn-construction, actions are conceived of as interpreted or negotiated achievements in interaction. Nevertheless, TCUs can *never* be conceived of as context-free; they are the result of context-sensitive inferences. There are no TCUs that are possible TCUs in all contexts. Whether an utterance is a TCU or only a fragment (that may or may not be repaired) depends on its sequential context and is therefore inferred by the recipient in the given sequential context. We need to investigate further how complete turns are being projected and under what conditions what kinds of TCUs are being interpreted as what kinds of actions in what sequential contexts.

With my analyses, I have aimed to show that the TCU as defined here, i.e. as a linguistic unit in talk constructed via the interplay of syntax and prosody in its sequential context, is indeed interactionally relevant. Within the sequential context, here storytelling, it makes components of storytelling recognizable for the recipients and thus enhances recipients' understanding – even when not ending in a TRP. The interlocutors' activities and responses could be shown to be oriented to the prior speaker's display of TCUs within the sequential context of storytelling. This deployment of linguistic resources to make activities and their components recognizable in their sequential context is what has been called contextualization (Gumperz 1982).

5. Conclusions

The construction and interpretation of TCUs and turns is the result of the speaker's use of the interplay of linguistic devices, primarily syntax and prosody, in their given semantic, pragmatic and sequential context. Linguistics, i.e. primarily syntax and prosody, provide general and in principle context-free, yet flexible syntactic and prosodic unit types which participants deploy and exploit in a recipient-designed and context-sensitive way in their practices of construction and interpretation of TCUs and turns in talk-in-interaction. Within a given context, possibly complete units are always the result of context-sensitive inferences. Different combinations of syntactic and prosodic units in the given context can be used to suggest different kinds of activities.

However, the devices of unit production do not contextualize and project TCUs as such, but TCUs as epiphenomena of the practices of turn construction and activity constitution in conversation. In other words: in the organisation of conversation, participants are not concerned with the construction of units as such, but the construction of units is contingent upon practices or activities such as holding, organizing and yielding the turn, organizing turn transition, organizing question-answer sequences, repair sequences, informings, assessments, storytellings etc. Participants in interaction talk in order to achieve their daily tasks, for instance to make small talk, gossip, tell stories, argue, get into contact with others, etc. TCUs are merely by-products of the construction of these activities. It is thus not the TCUs themselves that are relevant for participants, but the practices and activities of turn taking and activity constitution.

Yet, TCUs are the linguistic building blocks, the basic organizational structures that turns and activities are constructed with. Syntax and prosody are deployed methodically and co-occurringly to construct and make interpretable TCUs as a means of getting activities achieved methodically and in an orderly way. But even though TCUs are epiphenomena, they are nevertheless important as practices for the construction of turns and activities. TCUs are best to be conceived of as the smallest possibly complete and interactionally relevant linguistic units in their given context. They end in TRPs *unless* particular linguistic and interactional resources are used in order to project and postpone TRPs till the end of larger turns.

My perspective on units and unit-production has been a reconstructive one, one that aims at reconstructing members' methods for unit-construction as methodically used practices in the organization of talk-in-interaction.

In principle, I think, my results are easily compatible with those of Ford, Fox and Thompson (1996). Syntax and prosody are viewed as devices in the practices of turn construction. Both syntax and prosody are deployed to form units of their own kind. When the ends of syntactic and prosodic units co-occur, this suggests the end of the current TCU. When the ends of syntactic and prosodic units do not co-occur, this may be deployed as a means to either suggest unequivocal TCUs, perhaps to initiate negotiation of the issue at hand, or to suggest the interpretation of some kind of special interactional meaning.

With my proposal, I have tried to find a solution for the problem of defining and recognizing TCUs. Even if this works, we are now left with a new challenge: to reconstruct the relation between TCUs and turns and actions: how are turns projected, how do turns relate to actions, what constitutes and counts as an action for participants?

Notes

* I am grateful to Elizabeth Couper-Kuhlen, Auli Hakulinen and Richard Ogden for comments on earlier versions of this paper, and to Linda Paul for correcting my English.

1. In their 1974 paper, they comment on the role of intonation as follows: “discriminations between *what* as a one-word question and as the start of a sentential (or clausal or phrasal) construction are made not syntactically, but intonationally. When it is further realized that any word can be made into a ‘one-word’ unit-type, (...) via intonation, then we can appreciate the partial character of the unit-types’ description in syntactic terms” (1974:721f.).
2. For all other conventions see the appendix. Pauses were measured with the PRAAT acoustic analysis software (see below). If pauses are clearly presented and analysed as unit- or turn-internal pauses, they are placed in or at the end of lines; if they are analysed as turn-delimiting pauses, not attributable to a speaker, they are placed in a separate line between turns.
3. The acoustic analysis shows a slightly rising pitch movement at the very end of the second unit here which, however, I am unable to perceive auditorily.
4. For another way of analysing such clauses as (1) and (2), namely as verb-initial sentences, see Auer (1993).
5. Again, for an analysis of constructions like that in the first clause as a normal construction in story telling rather than as an ellipsis, see Auer (1993).
6. For more detail on the different prosodic cues at the beginning or continuation of TCUs see Selting (1995a, 1996a).

Appendix

Transcription conventions

Sequential structure

[] overlap and simultaneous talk
 []
 = latching

Pauses

(.) micropause
 (-), (--), (---) brief, mid, longer pauses of ca. 0.25-0.75 secs.;
 until ca. 1 sec.
 (2.0) estimated pause, more than ca. 1 sec. duration
 (2.85) measured pause (notation with two digits after the dot)

Other segmental conventions

und=äh assimilations within units
 :, ::, ::: segmental lengthening, according to duration
 äh, öh, etc. hesitation signals, so-called 'filled pauses'
 ' cut-off with glottal closure

Laughter

so(h)o laugh particles within talk
 haha hehe hihi laugh syllables
 ((lacht)) description of laughter

Accentuation

akZENT strong, primary accent
 ak!ZENT! extra strong accent
 akzEnt weaker, secondary accents

Pitch at the end of units

? rising to high
 , rising to mid
 - level
 ; falling to mid
 . falling to low

Conspicuous pitch jumps

↑ to higher pitch
 ↓ to lower pitch

Changed register, with notation of scope

<<l> > low register
 <<h> > high register

Changes in loudness and speech rate, with notation of scope

<<f> > =forte, loud
 <<ff> > =fortissimo, very loud
 <<p> > =piano, soft
 <<pp> > =pianissimo, very soft
 <<all> > =allegro, fast
 <<len> > =lento, slow
 <<cresc> > =crescendo, continuously louder
 <<dim> > =diminuendo, continuously softer
 <<acc> > =accelerando, continuously faster
 <<rall> > =rallentando, continuously slower

Breathing

.h, .hh, .hhh inbreath, according to duration
 h, hh, hhh outbreath, according to duration

Other conventions

((hustet)) para- und extralinguistic activities and events
 <<hustend> > concomitant para- und extralinguistic activities and
 event with notation of scope
 <<erstaunt> > interpretative commentaries with scope
 () unintelligible according to duration

(solche)	uncertain transcription
al(s)o	uncertain sounds or syllables
(solche/welche)	possible alternatives
((...))	omissions in the transcript

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Parenthesis as a resource in the grammar of conversation

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This article investigates how speakers in talk-in-interaction utilize parenthesis in order to organize information in turns, as well as to manage local interactive tasks and shape the participant framework. By parenthesis we mean constructions which temporarily suspend the progression of another syntactic construction or wider action sequence. Parentheses provide interesting challenges for practitioners of interactional linguistics. In conversation, using parentheses enables participants to embed several turn constructional units and even speaker change within a single syntactic unit.

This paper focuses on interfaces between the frame construction and parenthesis. We first discuss syntactic, prosodic and sequential/textual projection as means of indicating non-completion and suspension of the current turn constructional unit.

We also investigate how parentheses relate to the trajectory of the main line of conversation. The aim is to show that parentheses are an important resource contributing to the coherence of the conversation's contents and actions. The paper combines two approaches, conversation analysis and a syntactic approach to spoken language. This double perspective allows us to articulate differences between parentheses and self repairs which also interrupt evolving turn constructional units. The analyses are based on Finnish conversational data.

1. Introduction

1.1 Parenthesis in conversation

One of the starting points of ethnomethodological conversation analysis is that language and its structures have developed to be appropriate and functional to serve the participants' interactive goals (see Schegloff 1979, 1996; Hakulinen 1993; Couper-Kuhlen & Selting 2001). When you begin to analyze how smaller linguistic units form larger sequences in a conversation, for example how a narrative is constructed in an interaction, you sooner or later find hitches where the parts no longer follow one an-

other seamlessly. Although many segments of talk can seem incoherent when viewed only in their immediate context, a systematic analysis of the architecture of conversation brings to light phenomena which are highly regular. These hitches provide the researcher with a unique vantage point to examine how structures are produced and recognized in the course of a conversation (cf. Selting 2001).

In this paper, we would like to highlight a phenomenon which has been called parenthesis. One such parenthesis is shown in bold face in example (1), which has been drawn from Finnish conversational data:¹

- (1) [Streamer.f Sg 089]
- 01 P: mutta tästä yhteisymmärryksestä ja kuvasta
but about this general agreement and photograph
- 02 niin (0.8) >mun mielestä **se** on kyllä korkea
then (0.8) >in my view it's high time<
- 03 → aika< niin (.) ↓ **ei liity nyt mitenkään tähän**
you know (.) ↓ it's in no way connected with this
- 04 → **asiaan (nyt ni)**↓ (1.2) se meidän **vijiri** (.)
matter (you know)↓ (1.2) to get our streamer (.)
- 05 **aikaansaada**
done

A certain segment of talk can be recognized as parenthetical only in relation to its environment. Essential in this contextual relationship is to distinguish a *frame construction* which is higher in the textual hierarchy (see lines 2–5: ‘in my view it’s high time you know – – to get our streamer done’) as well as a syntactically independent parenthetical segment which is embedded within this structure and is hierarchically subordinated to it (lines 3–4: ‘it’s in no way connected with this matter (you know)’²) (for the terms *hierarchically superordinate* and *hierarchically subordinate* see also Auer this volume).

Observation of a frame construction and an embedded parenthesis is wholly retrospective (cf. Stoltenburg 2002). If we try to view the conditions of the on-line processing, as it were, we can see that when the turn in our example has progressed to *ei liity nyt mitenkään tähän asiaan (nyt ni)* ‘it’s in no way connected with this matter (you know)’ (lines 3–4) the recipient naturally does not yet know what exactly will be said next. Nevertheless, as the unit-in-progress unfolds word by word in real-time the projectability of its course increases. The recipient has probably recognized that the preceding structure (lines 2–3: ‘in my view it’s high time you know’) is incomplete: the expression *on korkea aika* ‘it’s high time’ has projected a continuation either containing an infinitive verb phrase or a nominal clause introduced by *et(tä)* ‘that’.

On the other hand, we can assume that the participants are also able to orient to changes in the trajectory and to the repairing of what has already been said. The potential for real-time editing and reanalysis is a specific resource of talk-in-interaction (e.g. Goodwin 1979 or Schegloff 1996). When in our example the inserted material does not correspond to expectations but rather breaks the trajectory of the current turn, the horizon of expectations is being reshaped. However, the segment ‘it’s in no way connected with this matter (you know)’ is not conclusively understood as a paren-

thesis until the recipient recognizes the next part, consisting of an NP and a non-finite verb ('to get our streamer done') as a continuation of the preceding structure.

Parentheses are interesting from the perspective of how information is organized in turns, since they manifest the syntactic, semantic and pragmatic multidimensionality of the text (see also Auer this volume). Often they have been characterized as asides. However, Mondada and Zay (1999) have shown how conversation utilizes parentheses in the development of topics. In fact, insertions form a fertile space for manipulating the topic of conversation. Within them, it is possible to bring up new topics, push old ones aside, or boost the status of the topic already being discussed. Parentheses often provide (background) information which is essential for the progression of the main line of the conversation.

When we approach the way in which texts emerge from talk-in-interaction, we can see that the role of parentheses is not just limited to organizing information in turns-at-talk. The various segments of a narrative require participants to perform different kinds of tasks (cf. Goodwin 1984:227). Indeed, it is possible to embed, within a syntactically unified frame construction, an entire interactional segment consisting of several independent utterances and containing more than one turn and one speaker (cf. Schegloff 1979:262–269; Svennevig 1999:271–272). This observation, and others like it, provide particular challenges for practitioners of interactional linguistics.

1.2 Research objectives

As with many other linguistic phenomena, the identification and description of parentheses are based on a whole cluster of features, *though some kind of discontinuity is an essential feature of the phenomenon*. We combine two approaches in this article, conversation analysis and a syntactic approach which we present in Section 2. The syntactic perspective allows us to articulate differences between parentheses and certain kinds of repairs.

In the empirical sections (3 and 4) we are chiefly interested in the intersection of the superordinate structure and parenthesis. We focus on how parentheses provide a resource for narrative and explicative sequences in the grammar of interaction.

We will first discuss what kinds of information participants need for recognizing that the frame construction is incomplete and has been interrupted (Section 3). These factors can be syntactic, prosodic, semantic and pragmatic. Sometimes the parenthetical interpretation can be triggered by even a single factor pointing to the discontinuity. A key feature is grammatical discontinuity. Parentheses differ from grammatical subordination in that they don't syntactically complement their frame construction (i.e. their textually superordinate structure), nor any part of it. Instead, they momentarily suspend the unfolding of a structure or some wider activity pattern (cf. Blanche-Benveniste et al. 1990: 147–150; Mondada & Zay 1999; Hakulinen et al. 2004: 1019).

In talk, a prosodic hitch or change is one kind of index of syntactic discontinuity. However, we should regard prosodic characteristics as symptoms of parentheses rather than as their necessary features, since in spontaneous talk parentheses do not

always seem to be similarly prosodically marked (see Mondada & Zay 1999; Blanche-Benveniste 1997:72–73, 121–123). Prosodic hitches can also lead to other phenomena such as repair.

There is also a discontinuity of content and action between the parenthesis and the frame construction. Berrendonner (1993) speaks of two separate but embedded discursive programs, each of which has its own relatively independent cognitive objective and each of which calls for its own, independent planning (see also Mondada & Zay 1999; Zay 1995). Parenthetical inserts can for instance be used to manage the participation framework (cf. C. Goodwin 1984, 1987 and Goodwin & Goodwin 1986).

Our second research objective is to investigate how parenthetical inserts relate to the trajectory of the main line of conversation (Section 4). We discuss the semantic relationships between the main line and the parenthesis, the work a parenthesis is doing in an ongoing sequence, its influence on the sequential organization of the conversation and the shaping of the participation framework. If an ongoing conversation is looked at from a holistic perspective, parentheses turn out to be an important resource contributing to the coherence of the conversation's contents and actions.

We may assume that the basic mechanisms for identifying discontinuity are general, although projection of an utterance is based on different kinds of linguistic details, depending on the type of language in question. This article is based on Finnish examples only. Finnish is a member of the Finno-Ugric family of languages, and one of its typological specialities is an abundance of cases. In Finnish, case endings indicate syntactical relationships: a prototypical subject NP lacks a suffix and is therefore unmarked; a prototypical object NP is marked by an accusative or partitive case ending. Otherwise suffixes indicate syntactic relationships in a way largely similar to how prepositions function in the Indo-European languages (cf. e.g. Holmberg & Nikanne 1993; Helasvuo 2001:36–64; see the end of the article for an explanation of glosses).

2. Approach

2.1 Conversation analysis in the study of parentheses

Conversation analytic research has touched upon parentheses especially in conjunction with studies of insertions and side sequences (Jefferson 1972; Svennevig 1999:257–315), repair organization (Schegloff 1979; Sorjonen 1997; Auer this volume), word search (Goodwin & Goodwin 1986; C. Goodwin 1987), compound turn constructional units (Lerner 1991) and narration (Goodwin 1984; Sorjonen 2001a:241), but lately also as a phenomenon in its own right (Stoltenburg 2002; Routarinne 2003:69–160).

When we speak about “frame construction” (cf. Stoltenburg 2002:Section 6), we often mean the same as what is called the “turn constructional unit”, hereafter TCU (cf. Sacks, Schegloff, & Jefferson 1974; Ford & Thompson 1996; Selting 1996). One of the ideas we develop here is that parenthetical inserts enable one to deviate from the

basic rule of turn-taking, each speaker being entitled to one turn constructional unit at a time (see Sacks, Schegloff, & Jefferson 1974). An embedded parenthetical sequence does not alter the trajectory of the frame construction but rather halts its progress towards a transition relevance place, TRP (Lerner 1991:447).

At a higher level than the TCU, each turn in a sequence anticipates, and to an extent also limits, what can be expected to follow it. Also, larger sequential entities can provide a frame within which a parenthesis is inserted when the sequential implications are strong enough to make a certain kind of continuation relevant (Sacks, Schegloff, & Jefferson 1974; Heritage 1984:304–307).

Repair organization is an essential part of the real-time shaping of turns. Although participants seldom explicitly articulate problems in the flow of the conversation, talk produced in real time is continuously edited during the course of the conversation, in particular when problems are encountered in the production or reception of talk. Parentheses share some characteristics with repairs, especially a speaker's self-initiated self-repairs within the same (incomplete) turn or TCU (cf. Schegloff, Jefferson, & Sacks 1977; Schegloff 1979; Sorjonen 1997). These phenomena delay the progress of the current turn towards a TRP. However, we want to emphasize that parentheses differ from repairs such as replacements and modifications (below examples (2) and (5)) both structurally and by the tasks they perform (cf. 2.2).

2.2 Syntactic analysis

In our syntactic analyses, we utilize tools for the grammatical approach to spoken language developed by the French research group GARS (Groupe Aixois de Recherches en Syntaxe) (cf. Blanche-Benveniste et al. 1987, 1990; Blanche-Benveniste 1990, 1997). The fundamental idea of this approach is that in the linear flow of talk, successive elements can relate to their environment in at least two different ways. On one hand, they can form syntagmatic units, which are based on dependency relations, notably on a governing element, i.e. a verb, a noun, or an adposition, creating rection slots in its environment. On the other hand, the relationship between two or more elements can be paradigmatic in its organization. In the latter case, the syntagmatic flow of talk is halted, as it were, on some rection slot, upon which more than one realization is produced.

The following extract exemplifies a self-repair segment and its syntactic analysis. In the segment the speaker replaces a colloquial personal pronoun *se* ('that one') with the standard language personal pronoun *hän* ('s/he'):

(2) [He.f Sg 105]

01 et mä en niinku hävinny tavallaan mitään
 PRT I NEG-1 PRT lose-PPC in a way anything-PAR
 in a way I didn't lose anything except
 02 muuta ku ne **mitä se** (0.8) **mitä hän**
 else-PAR CNJ those what that one (0.8) what he

03 söi (.)
eat-PST
 for what that one (0.8) what he ate (.)

In the grammatical perspective it is crucial that the successive sequences *mitä se* ‘what that one’ and *mitä hän* ‘what he’ do not form one syntagmatic unit together but are instead both in a similar relationship to other surrounding material. They fill the subject and object argument slots created by the verb *syödä* ‘eat’. Materials produced in one single rection slot can be presented as paradigmatic lists. The idea of syntagmatic and paradigmatic relations is illustrated below with the horizontal and vertical axes:

- (3) [*He.f Sg 105*]
 et mä en niinku hävinny tavallaan mitään muuta ku ne **mitä se**
in a way I didn't lose anything except for *what that one*
mitä hän söi
what he ate

In this kind of a graphical presentation where material filling the same syntactic position is stacked along the vertical axis, syntagmatic relations and the constructional scheme of the entire construction emerge on the horizontal axis. In each syntactic slot, the vertical column – the paradigmatic dimension – corresponds to realizations produced in talk, but it also symbolizes other possible realizations of the same rection slot. On the level of syntax, there is thus only one of each syntactic slot, whereas in principle each of them has an infinite number of lexical realizations.

In talk, paradigmatic lists are created for example when the speaker is searching for a suitable word. Similarly, we can consider the coordination of two or more elements to be a manifestation of a paradigmatic dimension:

- (4) [*Joke.t SR*]
italialaine ranskalaine ja **venäläinen** - - olivat
Italian French and Russian be-PST-3-PL
 an Italian a Frenchman and a Russian -- were
 taivaanportilla
heaven-GEN-gate-ADE
 at the gates of heaven
italialaine
Italian
ranskalaine
Frenchman
 ja **venäläinen** olivat taivaanportilla
and Russian were at the gates of heaven

We use these figures for illustrating a robust syntactic analysis, and at the same time, our hypothesis about the editing which participants in a conversation must do while interpreting its structures. In other words, the turn's recipients also identify syntagmatic and paradigmatic relations between elements.

The need for editing becomes even more tangible in example (5) below. In addition to clarifying and modifying previously produced elements of talk, the participants sometimes also anticipate some elements and later place these into their appropriate contexts:

- (5) [*That story.f* Sg 099]
- | | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|-----------------|------------------|-----------------|---------------|---------------|
| kerroinks | mä | sen | jutun | sen | (.) | siel < |
| <i>tell-PST-1-Q I</i> | | <i>that-ACC</i> | <i>story-ACC</i> | <i>that-ACC</i> | | <i>there</i> |
| ku | me | oltiin | siel | - | - | |
| <i>when we</i> | <i>be-PAS-PST-4</i> | <i>there</i> | | | | |
| did I tell you that story that one (.) there< when we were there -- | | | | | | |
| kerroinks | mä | sen | jutun | | | |
| <i>tell-PST-1-Q I</i> | | <i>that</i> | <i>story</i> | | | |
| | | sen | | | | siel |
| | | <i>that</i> | | | | <i>there</i> |
| | | | ku | me | oltiin | siel |
| | | | <i>when we</i> | <i>were</i> | <i>there</i> | |

Even during a single verb construction, the speaker might move back and forth several times along the syntagmatic axis of the construction. A structural analysis, based on distinguishing syntagmatic and paradigmatic relationships, first of all exposes the practices by which the speaker explicitly forms the constructions s/he is producing. Secondly, this perspective allows us to see phenomena that on the surface appear widely different – such as repetition, word search, certain types of self-repair as well as the use of parallels and lists – as being based on one single structural resource of language, utilization of its paradigmatic dimension (cf. de Saussure 1983 [1916]: 128; Jakobson 1956).

On the other hand, this kind of structural approach brings out differences in areas where other kinds of approaches see similarities. A syntactic feature which can be said to be typical of parenthetical insertions is that they do not syntagmatically complement their frame construction and are also not in a paradigmatic relationship to any part of it:

- (6) [*Streamer.f* Sg 089]
- | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| se on kyllä korkea aika niin | se meidän viiri aikaansaada |
| <i>it's high time, you know,</i> | <i>to get our streamer done</i> |
| ei liity nyt mitenkään tähän asiaan (nyt ni) | |
| <i>it's in no way connected with this matter (you know)</i> | |

The speaker produces another, independent structure within the construction which is underway, and then returns to the frame construction which has been kept waiting. Thus the parenthesis remains outside of both the syntagmatic and the paradigmatic axis, as it were, and therefore differs from the word replacements and construction modifications seen above (examples (2) and (5)).

3. Interfaces between frame construction and parenthesis

In this section we focus on places where parenthetical inserts interrupt the frame construction. We will discuss syntactic, prosodic and sequential/textual projection as a means of indicating non-completion and interruption. We will also consider devices enabling participants to recognize the continuation of the frame construction.

3.1 An unfinished syntactic construction as the context of a parenthesis

Parenthesis can sometimes interrupt the frame construction in places which have typically been considered to be syntactically very solidly connected. In example (7), the parenthetical segment (bold typeface) comes between the subject NP (line 1: *italiala:ine r:anskala:ine ja ↑venä:läinen*, ‘an Italian a Frenchman and a Russian’) and the finite verb (line 6: *olivat* ‘were’):

(7) [Joke.t SR]

- 01 → M: *italiala:ine r:anskala:ine ja ↑venä:läinen*,
Italian Frenchman and Russian
 an Italian a Frenchman and a Russian
- 02 °>**tai pitääkö sanoa**<° *ivy:↑läine?*
 °>*or should I say*<° *a person from the CIS?*
- 03 T: **.mth**
- 04 M: >°**ei mut sillo oli venä(jä viel)**<°=
 no but then it was Russian(a still)
- 05 T: =**ve↑nä:>läine**<,
 Russian
- 06 → M: **nii:, ni< olivat taivaanportilla** ja siin
 PRT PRT were heaven-GEN-gate-ADE and there
 yea: ((they)) were at the gates of heaven and
- 07 *jätkät juttelivat Pietaria*
 guys chat-PST-PL Peter-PAR
- 08 *o_o:telles°sa:nsa°.*
 wait-INF-INE-POS
 these guys were chatting while waiting for Saint Peter

Example (8) shows a parenthesis which is located in between a reportative expression (line 2: *Jaana s- sano* ‘Jaana said’) and the reported speech that it projects (line 4: *et se aukee* ‘that it opens...’):

(8) [What time.t Sg 081]

- 01 A: =.hhh *fe:iku mä olin* vaan niin
 NEG-PRT I be-PST-1 just so
 no but I was just so
- 02 → *h_hmmästyiny ku se Jaana s- sano*
 surprise-PPC when DET Jaana s- say-PST
 surprised when Jaana s- said

03 ↓**lu- vai lukeeks se siin lipus vai mistä mut**
 ↓do- or does it say on the ticket or where but
 04 → et se aukee (.) aukee kahelta.
 that it open open two-ABL
 that it opens (.) opens at two

In example (9), the parenthesis follows the expression *on -- korkea aika* ‘it’s high time’ (line 1) and precedes the infinitive verb phrase (lines 4–5: *se meidän viiri aikaansaada* ‘to get our streamer done’):

(9) [Streamer.f Sg 089]

01 → P: >mun mielestä se on kyllä korkea aika<
 my mind-ELA it is PRT high time
 02 → niin (.)
 PRT
 >in my view it’s high time< you know (.)
 03 ↓**ei liity nyt mitenkään tähän asiaan**
 ↓it’s in no way connected with this matter
 04 → (**nyt ni**)↓ (1.2) se meidän viiri (.)
 DET-ACC our streamer-ACC
 (you know)↓ (1.2) to get our streamer (.)
 05 aikaansaada
 get done-INF
 done

It should be noted that in Finnish the expression *on korkea aika (tehdä jotakin)* ‘it’s high time (to do something)’ behaves syntactically like modal verbs expressing necessity (cf. Vilkuna 1996:282; Laitinen 1997), such as *täytyy ~ pitää (tehdä jotakin)* ‘must (do something)’: the lexical verb is in the infinitive form. Thus, the incompleteness of the frame construction is here due to the lack of the lexical verb (*aikaansaada* ‘to get done’).³

Parentheses can also wedge their way into an NP, as in example (10) (lines 1–2, 5–7: *semmoset -- söötit kasvot* ‘a kind of -- pretty face’):

(10) [Face.f SR]

01 → N: @se(1) on semmone sil oli
 she(-ADE) is⁴ PRO-ADJ she-ADE be-PST
 02 → semmoset<@
 PRO-ADJ-PL
 @she’s like she had like@
 03 (.) **se oli ↓e:ka tyttö sen ku se oli**
 (.) it was ↓her first girl since she
 04 **saanu jo kaks poikaa. .hh**
 already had two boys
 05 → @semmone:hh >semmone venttaa semmone< (.hh)
 @PRO-ADJ PRO-ADJ wait PRO-ADJ
 @like like wait like

- 06 → semmoset aika (.) semmoset s_ööt_it
 PRO-ADJ-PL rather PRO-ADJ-PL pretty-PL
 ((she had like)) a rather (.) a kind of pretty
- 07 → kas↑ɛvot =semmoset pie:netɛ↑@
 face-PL PRO-ADJ-PL small-PL
 face kind of small@

In the Finnish version, the element *semmoset* (line 2) is a pro-adjective, which can function as an independent pronoun ('like that'), but especially in spoken Finnish it is also used as a kind of indefinite article in NPs categorizing or describing the referent (Erringer 1996; Tiainen-Duvallon 2002: 121–122; Juvonen forthcoming).

In our example, the pro-adjective *semmoset* projects a nominal head since the preceding context offers no basis for interpreting it. The incompleteness of this phrase is supported by prosody. The pro-adjective is not accompanied by utterance final prosodic characteristics such as a final fall, decelerando or creak. Instead, it ends with a turn-holding closure (here a dental stop) (cf. Ogden 2001), which has been marked in our transcription by a left-pointing arrow head <. It is also worth noting that the progress of the construction is halted already after the first occurrence of *semmane* (line 1), where the speaker retreats back along the syntagmatic axis in order to repair the beginning of the construction (*se(l) → sil*):

- (11) [*Face.f* SR]
 se(l) on semmane
she(-ADE) *is* PRO-ADJ
 sil oli semmoset<
she-ADE *be*-PST PRO-ADJ-PL
 (PARENTHESIS)

The inserted material is thus placed immediately after the repair which is understood as paradigmatic, and we may assume that an expectation about continuation has, at least partially, been formed already during the first *se(l) on semmane* 'she is/has like' fragment.

On the basis of empirical examples, it is difficult to propose any real syntactic limitations on the kinds of places where parentheses can appear (cf. also Blanche-Benveniste et al. 1990: 148–149). Nevertheless, it appears that they tend to be placed in slots where the syntactic and semantic incompleteness of the utterance is readily evident.

In our examples, prosodic features also support the impression of the syntactic and semantic incompleteness of the TCU. Beginnings of parentheses are often preceded by disruptions, such as pauses or stops. The boundary may also be marked by changes of pitch, rhythm or articulation. A parenthetical insert breaking the projection of the frame construction might, for instance, be uttered in a lower register than its surroundings (cf. downward-pointing arrows in transcriptions of examples (8) and (9)) or more quietly and in a faster tempo than the surrounding (cf. markings °>...<° in example (7)) (cf. Local 1992). In example (10), instead, the speaker alters her voice

quality in the main line of the narrative: she slurs her words through puckered lips while telling about the cute little baby. Parenthetical background information, by contrast, she presents in her normal voice. This reversal of markedness serves to remind us that prosodic cues cannot be interpreted without considering their context; they are interpretable only against their immediate environment (cf. Kewitz & Couper-Kuhlen 1999:469–473).

3.2 Sequential/textual projection

In the previous examples, parentheses utilized the syntactic incompleteness of the sentence constructions. Parentheses can also be located between two syntactically complete constructions (cf. Sorjonen 2001a:240–241). In example (12), the linkage between the framing material is based on a sequential pattern being reported in the main line of talk:

- (12) [Fade.t SR]
- 01 M: sitten ne:< (.) soitti vaan sitä (.) hhm
then they< (.) just played the (.) erm
- 02 T: [‘hhh hh
- 03 M: [(.) sitä Maammelauluu hirveen pitkää,h=
[(.) the national anthem for awfully long h=
- 04 T: =mm:
- 05 → M: eikä hiljenty sitä .h Kalle
NEG-CLI make quieter-PPC it-PAR 1NameM
- 06 → sano
say-PST
 and they didn’t make it quieter .h Kalle said
- 07 → et se oli huutanu se< äijän
that he be-PST scream-PPC DET-GEN guy-GEN
 that he had screamed into that< guy’s
- 08 → korvaa jotai et f:eidaa feidaa,
ear-ILL something-PAR CNJ fade-IMP fade-IMP
 ear something like fade fade
- 09 =>°se ilmeisest< #tarkottaa jotain että# (.)
=>°it seems to< #mean something like# (.)
- 10 #hiljennä,# ‘hh
#make it quieter#
- 11 → fse äijä oli >sillee et<f
DET guy be-PST like CNJ
 £((and)) that dude was⁵ >like that<£
- 12 → @mä fe:idasin jo@h ‘hh hohh ‘hh n(h)i
I fade-PST already ((laughter)) PRT
 @I have already faded ((it))@

Here the narrative and turn are interpretable as incomplete on the basis of the reported first pair part of an adjacency pair (line 8: f:eidaa feidaa, ‘fade fade’) after which the nar-

rative progression is broken (lines 9–10). In an ordinary organization of turn-taking, the speaker with the first pair part allocates the turn to the other participant. In a narrative context, the sequential implications of the first pair part function differently, however. Embedded in the narrative, the projection established with the first pair part seems not to entail a speaker change, but the continuation of the same speaker's turn, just as an incomplete syntactic construction would. In addition, the level intonation of the utterance indicates turn-holding. Thus, the frame of the parenthesis appears to be the adjacency pair consisting of a directive (line 8) and its response presented as reported speech (line 12).

3.3 Return to the frame

It is only possible to interpret the parenthesis at the stage where the speaker returns to the frame. In most cases, returning to the frame goes smoothly. First of all, the participant in the recipient position allows the speaker to continue after the parenthesis (see also the analysis of example (16) below, in Section 4.2). This shows that the recipient treats the current speaker's turn as incomplete. There are also no signs at the interface showing that the participants had any real trouble returning to the frame construction again. Returning can sometimes be done directly, without any explicit markers such as connectors (see above example (12) line 10).

However, there is often some particle at the interface, and in Finnish this particle is very often *ni* 'so, then' (see, for instance example (7) line 6 and below example (16)). This particle indicates continuation of an argumentative or narrative line which had started earlier but which might have been interrupted (Vilkuna 1997:63; Sorjonen 2001a:270–273). Another hinge by which the return to the frame construction is performed can be the particle *mut* 'but', if the parenthesis is in a contrasting relationship to the frame construction (see example (8) line 3 and below example (18)).

In addition to using a particle for marking the transition, the frame construction may be partially repeated or recycled. When resuming the main line of talk, the speaker thus jumps a step or two backwards along the syntagmatic axis. We may assume that the recipient recognizes the repeated material. The repetition thus functions as an explicit marker of a resumption. On the other hand, repetition also gives the speaker additional time to process the suspended construction, as can clearly be seen in example (10), which is now presented again for a syntagmatic and paradigmatic analysis:

- (13) [Face.t SR]
 sil oli **semmoset**<
she had PRO-ADJ-PL
 (PARENTHESIS)
 semmone:hh
 PRO-ADJ
 >**semmone**
 PRO-ADJ

(venttaa)	semmone <		
(wait)	PRO-ADJ		
	semmoset	aika	
	PRO-ADJ-PL	<i>rather</i>	
	semmoset		söötit kasvot
	PRO-ADJ-PL		<i>pretty-PL face-PL</i>
	semmoset	pie:net	
	PRO-ADJ-PL	<i>small-PL</i>	

Above we noted that there are usually clear prosodic changes at the beginnings of parentheses. Returning to the frame can, by contrast, be more flexible. In example (12), only the beginning of the parenthesis contrasts prosodically with the frame construction (cf. also example (17) below). If, instead, the entire parenthesis is prosodically highlighted against the frame, the return to the frame can also be prosodically clearly marked for instance by a change in voice quality as is the case in example (10) above (Section 3.1).

3.4 Summary of the discussion of the frame construction

A common feature of all our examples is that the projection of the turn is based either on the sequential or on the syntactic structure, and is often supported by prosodic cues (cf. Stoltenburg 2002). Indeed, parentheses utilize the anticipated trajectory of the construction or activity sequence. Paradoxically, these “parasites” of their frame construction particularly tend to separate elements which are tightly linked by syntax or sequential structure. For example, the reported first pair part of an adjacency pair embedded within the narrative offers a recognizable slot for the second pair part before which a parenthetical insertion can be located. Within verb constructions, parentheses can not only wedge themselves between a verb and its arguments and other adjuncts, but also into the NP between the lexical head and its modifiers. Parentheses seem to find their way into sequences and TCUs at points of maximum incompleteness (c.f. Schegloff 1996:93–94; Sorjonen 2001a:217) where the current speaker’s right to continue is beyond doubt.

4. The relationship of insertions to the main line

The syntactic autonomy of parentheses is manifested by their indifference to the structural ties of the frame. In addition, it is also impossible to predict the internal structure of an embedded insertion on the basis of the frame. Structurally, a parenthetical insertion can be just about anything: an utterance formed by one or more words, a chain of utterances or an adjacency pair, even a longer interactive sequence. Despite the lack of syntactic limitations and, especially, if we look at parentheses as parts of the sequential construction of a conversation, parentheses seldom seem wholly random or aimless

(see also Mondada & Zay 1999). In this section, we focus especially on how speakers utilize parentheses in shaping wider sequences.

4.1 Parenthesis as a metatextual comment

Metatextual comments constitute one clearly distinguishable type of parenthesis (cf. Authier-Revuz 1993). They may comment on the current activity or some particular part of the frame construction, either its form or its contents. In example (14), the parenthesis organizes the semantic relatedness of the frame to the previously discussed topic:

- (14) [*Streamer.f* Sg 089]
- 01 P: mutta tästä yhteisymmärryksestä ja kuvasta
but about this general agreement and photograph
- 02 niin (0.8) >mun mielestä se on kyllä korkea
then (0.8) >in my view it's high
- 03 → aika< niin (.) ↓ei liity nyt mitenkään
time< PRT NEG connect PRT anyway
time you know (.) ↓it's in no way connected
- 04 → tähän asiaan (nyt ni)↓
this-ILL matter-ILL (PRT PRT)
with this matter (you know)↓
- 05 (1.2) se meidän viiri (.) aikaansaada
(1.2) to get our streamer (.) done

With the parenthesis, the speaker shows that he understands he is presenting the new subject in a slot where it is sequentially misplaced. Thus he takes the preceding discussion as a reference point to which later statements are related. Parentheses can be used as means to deviate from the trajectory predicted by the context.

In example (15), the parenthetical sequence is triggered by a slang word borrowed from English (*fade* > *feidaa*):

- (15) [*Fade.t* SR] = (12)
- 01 M: sitten ne:< (.) soitti vaan sitä (.) hhm
then they< (.) just played the (.) erm
- 02 T: [`hhh hh
- 03 M: [(.) sitä Maammelauluu hirveen pitkää,h=
[(.) the national anthem for awfully long h=
- 04 T: =mm:
- 05 M: eikä hiljentäny sitä `h
and they didn't make it quieter and
- 06 Kalle sano et se oli huutanu se< äijän
Kalle said that he had screamed into that guy's
- 07 korvaa jotai et f: eidaa feidaa,
ear something like fade fade

08 → =>^ose ilmeisest< #tarkottaa
 it apparently mean
 =>^oit seems to< #mean
 09 → jotain ettäh^o # (.) #hiljennä,# 'hh
 something-PAR CNJ make quieter-IMP
 something like^o# (.) #make it quieter#
 10 fse äijä oli >sillee et<f
 f((and)) that dude was >like, that<f
 11 @mä fe:idasin jo@h 'hh hohh 'hh n(h)i n(h)i
 @I have already faded (it) @, so
 12 [siks se kes]t(h)i h(h)irv(h)een [k(h)auan fku
 [that's why it las]ted so awfully [long fwhen
 13 T: [nhh >heheh<] [hh
 ((laughter))

In the parenthesis, the narrator offers an explanation of the meaning of the word *feidaa*. She presents this information as her own inference (*se ilmeisest tarkottaa* 'it seems to mean'). Thus she can offer the explanation to the recipient without implying that the recipient does not know the meaning of the word.

Goodwin (1984, 1987) has shown how tellers can methodically use parenthetical inserts or forgetfulness presented in the middle of a structural unit. Not only can these means be used to introduce some information or facts missing in the conversation, but they can be used to delay the progression of the narrative, most typically just before its climax. This is a rhetorical device by which the recipients' attention is captured by the current speaker. In our example, we can note that the reported second pair part, delayed by the parenthesis but projected by the reported first pair part, evokes laughter in the recipient (line 13).

If we further look at the context preceding the parenthesis, we notice that direct reported speech is introduced by the expression *jotai (et)* 'something like'. The same material is repeated in the parenthesis before the standard language equivalent of the problem word (*#tarkottaa jotain ettäh^o # (.) #hiljennä* 'it seems to mean something like (.) make it quieter'). When we examine how parenthetical inserts relate to the main line of talk, it is often possible to pick some element from the frame construction which gives impetus for getting side-tracked. In example (15), the trigger for the parenthesis is the word *feidaa* 'fade'. The expression *jotai (et)* 'something like' already prepares ground for the problem material and projects the metatextual parenthesis which will attract the recipient's attention.⁶

4.2 Parenthesis as a means to change the participation framework in a narrative sequence

While parentheses interrupt the progression of the frame construction and leave it dangling in the air, as it were, they can also significantly shape the interaction, project how it will continue and create a 'horizon of expectations'.

In the context of conversation, story-telling is typically preceded by a presequence which consists of a story preface and its acceptance or rejection. In an unmarked presequence, the story preface of the intending teller immediately evokes from the recipient(s) a ‘go-ahead’ to tell the story. (Cf. Sacks 1974; Schegloff 1990: 61; Routarinne 1997: 141; Sorjonen 2002: 166–167.) In the following extract, there is interactive trouble during the presequence. When looking at how the participants settle into the roles of the teller and recipient of the joke, we can identify several ways in which the recipient resists taking her role. There are two prefaces to Mira’s story (lines 1, 4: (*no*) *minäpä kerro(:n) v(:)itsin* ‘(okay) I’ll tell a joke’), but these are followed by pauses (lines 2, 5) which delay the recipient’s (Tiina’s) reaction. The delay together with Tiina’s turn design *m’tä?* ‘what?’ (line 3) and *hmhh* (line 6) demonstrate that she does not display an immediate and obvious willingness to hear the joke.

Despite the recipient’s reluctance, which jeopardizes the entire joke, Mira begins to tell it after the preface. The telling begins with a list of three terms in the nominative case expressing nationality (line 7: *italialaine ranskalaine ja venäläinen* ‘an Italian, a Frenchman and a Russian’). This list creates the expectation for a verb that would go with it. In addition, the list also reveals the joke’s genre and projects the main line of the narrative. We know to expect a three-part joke: the endeavours of the Italian and the Frenchman create an expectation, and the Russian is supposed to comically break that expectation (cf. Sacks 1978: 252–256). Both syntactic and sequential/textual features thus define the turn’s expected trajectory and show that both the wider narrative sequence and the immediate TCU are incomplete. However, at this very point the progression of the construction is broken. This obvious incompleteness after the beginning of the turn holds the turn for the speaker, since the turn is maximally in the speaker’s grammatical control (cf. Schegloff 1996: 93–94). With respect to turn allocation, the speaker can afford a detour without losing her turn:

(16) [Joke.t SR]

- 01 M: [no minäpä kerro v:itsin.
okay I’ll tell a joke
- 02 (0.4)
- 03 T: m’tä?
what?
- 04 M: minäpä kerro:n vitsin.
I’ll tell a joke
- 05 (0.4)
- 06 T: hmhh
- 07 M: italiala:ine r:anskala:ine ja ↑venä:läinen,
Italian Frenchman and Russian
an Italian a Frenchman and a Russian
- 08 → °>tai pitääkö sanoa<° ivy:↑läine?
or must-Q say-INF person from the CIS
°>or should I say<° a person from the CIS?
- 09 → T: .meth

- 10 → M: >°*ei mut sillo oli venä(jä viel)*°<=
NEG but then be-PST Russi(a still)
 >°no but then it was Russi(a still)°<=
 11 → T: =*ve↑nä:>läine*<,
Russian
 12 → M: *nii:*, *ni*< *olivat taivaanportilla* ja
PRT PRT were heaven-GEN-gate-ADE and
yea: ((they)) were at the gates of heaven and
 13 *siin jätkät juttelivat*
there these guys were chatting
 14 *Pietaria odo:telles°sa:nsa°.*
while waiting for Saint Peter

In line 8, the parenthetical sequence is initiated by the interrogative utterance (°>*tai pitääkö sanoa*<° *ivy:↑läine?* ‘or should I say a person from the CIS?’). It could be viewed as a word search addressed to the speaker herself. However, it does not manifest any turn-holding markers such as sound stretches, pauses and stops within the TCU or hesitations which are typically linked with genuine word search (cf. Schegloff, Jefferson, & Sacks 1977; Sorjonen 1997). Indeed, this somewhat ironic utterance has been formulated and produced in a way which invites a response from the other participant. By proposing an alternative to the last nationality-expressing term, the teller reformulates the joke’s stereotypic framework with an updating element (*ivy:↑läine?* ‘a person from CIS?, line 8) which the unknowing recipient also has access to.

In the parenthetical interactive sequence (lines 8–12) the recipient’s indistinct response (line 9: *.mth*) instead of a clear go-ahead marker shows that there is still friction in the participation framework. In line 10, the statement of the teller (*ei mut sillo oli venä(jä viel)* ‘no but then it was Russi(a still)’) re-contextualizes the preceding question. It can also be heard as her own suggestion to end the parenthetical sequence. In any case, this additional information that Mira offers finally evokes a verbalized response from the recipient. Tiina’s response *ve↑nä:>läine* ‘Russian’ (line 11) displays her interpretation to be that the first pair part is still valid. By participating in the choice of word, Tiina displays a more active reciprocity than previously. The teller accepts the term with the particle *nii* (line 12) and returns to the telling of the joke by using the particle *ni* (cf. Sorjonen 2001a:271).

Our example illustrates the potential of metatextual parentheses. On the one hand, it shows a negotiation over a choice of words. As an activity, the parenthetical sequence also proves to be a means for influencing the participation framework. This detour is a way of reacting to problems in the participant roles and displays how the teller monitors the recipient’s responses. The parenthetical sequence invites the recipient to more actively join in the current activity. Within a syntactically unified frame construction it is thus possible to embed a complete parenthetical interactive sequence consisting of several TCUs and more than one turn and one speaker.

4.3 Parentheses as providing forward-oriented interpretative cues

Metatextual embeddings focusing on a particular word are typically located as close to the problem material as possible, either immediately following or preceding it (Authier-Revuz 1993; Zay 1995).⁷ In the above examples, parentheses contain typical metatextual statements (*ei liity tähän* ‘it’s not connected with this’, *tarkoittaa jotakin* ‘mean something’, *tai pitääkö sanoa* ‘or should I say’). The next example also concerns a metatextual statement. However, the perspective differs from the examples we have discussed so far:

(17) [Cool term.f Sg 033]

- 01 A: ja nytkin se on ollu semmosella
and now again she has been off on one of those
02 (.) .nff .mt
03 pitkällä matkalla (0.8) matkal- ((cough)) siellä
long trips (0.8) trip- ((coughs)) there
04 ((Kaukoidässä)) ja sano että kyllä nii< (0.8)
((Name)) and said that PRT PRT
05 → ((in the Far East)) and said that yes that< (0.8)
.mt niij jotensakin tuntuu(h) (0.5) >°miten se
PRT somehow feel-3-SG how she
that somehow it feels like (0.5) >°how’d she
06 → käytti niin°< jännää termiä että °tuntuu
use-PST so cool-PAR term-PAR CNJ feel-3-SG
use such°< a cool term like °it feels
07 että° (p-) (4.0) olis ollu ku hoidossa
CNJ (b-) be-CON be-PPC like therapy-INE
like° (b-) (4.0) like she’d been in therapy
08 B: [(p)h_hh_h:haha .hhh
[(laughter))
09 A: [(.) k_aiikki< (.) p_ahat ajatukset on menny
[(.) all (.) bad thoughts wiped
10 p_o[is ja
away and
11 B: [j_oo: j_oo:
[yes: yes:

In the parenthesis (>°miten se käytti niin°< jännää termiä että ‘how’d she use such a cool term like’) which begins at line 5 and interrupts the quote, the referential anchoring is the same as in the reportative clause (line 4: *ja sano* ‘and said’). The interrogative form of the expression, however, makes it evident that, at the moment, there is a word search going on. Here the parenthesis delays, but also clearly projects, the material in the frame it is oriented towards. The verb *tuntuu* ‘feels’ which precedes the interruption and is also repeated after the parenthesis, as well as the way the parenthetical sequence is formulated, project a continuation and evoke expectations about its syn-

tactic form and semantic content (*tuntuu joltakin* ‘feels something-ABL’ or *tuntuu että* ~ *kuin* ‘feels like’).

Prosodically, the parenthesis is divided into two parts.⁸ Thus, prosodic contextualization does not always remain the same throughout the parenthesis, but speakers can also slide back to their normal registers (see also Section 3.3) or highlight something within the parenthesis, as is the case here. The beginning is produced more quietly and faster than its surroundings, which also emphasizes the fact that the frame construction has been broken. The end of the parenthesis, *jännää termiä* ‘cool term’, is a characterization. It is presented more loudly, which suggests that it will be significant in what follows.

C. Goodwin (1996:383–385; see also Sacks 1974) calls expressions of the same type as *jännä termi* ‘cool term’ for prospective indexicals. By the term he refers to classifications or descriptive terms that can function cataphorically in cases where the recipient has no access to the characterization. As prospective indexicals, they offer an interpretation framework which should be applied to the talk that follows. They also hint at the type of response which is expected. In the current example, the completion of the frame construction (lines 6–7: °*tuntuu että*° (p-) (4.0) *olis ollu ku hojdosssa* ‘it feels like (b-) (4.0) like she’d been in therapy’) might not quite live up to the expectations the prospective characterization evokes, i.e. the speaker does not quote any ‘cool term’ in her completion. Nevertheless, the recipient assesses the completion with laughter (line 8).

4.4 Parenthesis in negotiating the structures of conversation

Forward-oriented parentheses, which provide additional background information and steer reception, create dramatic tension when the recipient has no access to the situation being spoken of (cf. example (17) above). This subsection discusses what may happen when the recipient also knows something about the matter at hand.

In example (18), the participants (Brita and Aira) talk about going to a rock concert with a third female friend, Jaana. Prior to the excerpt, Aira has said that she brought Jaana her concert ticket and only then noticed that the concert will be held during the week. In addition, Aira has said that it is odd that the concert supposedly begins at two. Brita has then explained to her that the crowd will be allowed to enter the concert venue starting at two, but that the band won’t begin to play until around six. Another concert has been touched upon, too.

At the beginning of the excerpt below Aira asks a question which leads not to an answer but to an extended repair sequence (see the long pause at line 2, Brita’s NTRI at line 3, her candidate understanding at line 5, and finally the turn at line 7 which is filling the second pair part slot without doing the action required by the first pair part, i.e. the answer does not provide the information asked for). Line 8 onwards, Aira’s turn, which also contains the parenthetical insertion of interest here, is connected to the inquiry sequence she had begun before, functioning as an additional background account. Such an account is sequentially relevant since the recipient has treated the

question in line 1 as problematic. The turn at line 8 returns to the previously discussed question about the starting time of the concert:

(18) [*What time.t* Sg 081]

- 01 A: >no moneltas te ootte ajatellu meneväne<.
 >well what time have you thought about going<
- 02 (1.5)
- 03 B: si(h)iis s(h)inne.
 you mean there
- 04 A: ni.
 yeah
- 05 B: fsillof. hh
 fwell thenf hh
- 06 A: nii. hh >he [he he he< .hhh heh heh j(h)oo]=
 yeah [((laughter)) yes]
- 07 B: [k(h)u(h)ule ei aavistustakaa]=
 [listen I have no idea]
- 08 A: =.hhh fe:iku mä olin vaan
 NEG-PRT I be-1-PST just
 I no really I just was
- 09 niin hämmästyny
 so surprise-PPC
 so surprised
- 10 → ku se Jaanaf s- sano ↓lu- vai
 when DET Jaana s- say-PST is wr- or
 when Jaanaf s- said ↓do- or
- 11 → lukeeks se siin lipus vai
 is written-Q it DET-INE ticket-INE or
- 12 → mistä
 where-ELA
 does it say on the ticket or where
- 13 → mut et se aukee (.) aukee kahelta.
 but that it open open two-ABL
 but that it opens (.) opens at two
- 14 B: joo lukee se siinä.
 PRT is written it it-INE
 yeah it does say on the ticket
- 15 A: .hh >ai no siitä [se sit varmaa luki<
 PRT PRT it-ELA she then probably read-PST
 oh well [she must've read it there then
- 16 B: [ja on se sit (siis)
 and is it then (PRT)
 [and it is also
- 17 niinku:(.)] se konsertti-ilmutus (.) mikä on
 PRT DET concert announcement which is
 you know (.)] that concert announcement (.) which is

- 18 Hesarissakin ni siinä^hän se
newspaper name-INE-CLI PRT it-INE-CLI it
 in the paper it
- 19 lukee kanssa.
is written as well
 says so there as well
- 20 A: ai no ehkä se on lukenu sit s*ii*tä
PRT PRT perhaps she is read-PPC then it-ELA
- 21 joo
PRT
 oh well perhaps she read about it there then since
- 22 koska se sit sano että se haluis
because she then say-PST that she want-CON
 she then said that she'd like
- 23 mennä sinne heti kahelta.
go-INF there immediately two-ABL
 to be there right at two
- 24 B: .mt höh siis
what huh I mean
- 25 [°ka- kaikkein typerint°
 [°this is the silliest°
- 26 A: [mut e:i^hän sinne nyt sit kannata
[but it isn't worth going there then

The embedded insertion beginning at line 10 (*lu- vai lukeeks se siin lipus vai mistä* ‘do-or does it say on the ticket or where’) is situated between a reportative clause and reported speech (cf. Section 3.1). The frame construction of the parenthesis (lines 8–10, 13: =.hhh *£e:iku mä olin vaan niin hämmästyny ku se Jaana£ s- sano – – et se aukee* (.) *aukee kahelta*. ‘no, really, I was just so surprised when Jaana s- said – – that it [the concert venue] opens (.) opens at two’) is an utterance which recycles a previous claim modifying its content and in the form of reported speech. More precisely, the information which has been corrected by the other speaker (i.e. what happens at 2:00 pm is the opening of the concert venue, not the starting of the concert) is now presented here as something someone else (Jaana) said. Additionally, the expression of affect (‘I was just so surprised’) seems to motivate the parenthetical insertion. With the help of the parenthesis, the current speaker provides an interpretation that would lighten the socially problematic and delicate implications expressed by the affective formulation concerning the reported issues.

The parenthetical statement is an interrogative (cf. also examples (7), (16) and (17)). The interrogative mood is contrasted with the frame construction’s declarative form, and the return to the main line of talk hinges on the particle *mut* ‘but’ (line 13) (cf. Mazeland & Huiskes 2001). The parenthesis is shaped and situated in such a way that it is only possible to interpret it after the speaker has returned to the frame. More specifically, the basis for interpreting the pronoun *se* ‘it’ is not offered until the latter part of the frame (*lukeeks se siin lipus* ‘is it [that it opens at two] written on the ticket’, see lines 11–13). This shows how the use of referring expressions is a sign of cohesion

which intertwines the main line of the discourse and the parenthesis (cf. Zay 1995; Duvallon forthcoming).

The embedded question (lines 10–12) may first seem rhetorical since Aira does not leave a slot for answering. However, after the referential interpretation of the insertion is made accessible to the recipient, Brita's turn at line 14 (*joo lukee se siinä* 'yeah it does say on the ticket') invites us to consider the interrogative as a genuine question. In other words, the recipient utilizes the interrogative form of the parenthesis by treating it as the first pair part of an adjacency pair. The link between the first and the second pair part, which are physically separated, is constructed through the repetition of the same syntactic schema and the same lexical material (see also Fox 1987:26–36; Tiainen-Duvallon 2002:220–226, 251–281, 294–318). Note that in Finnish the word order of not only polar questions but also confirming answers begins with a verb (on polar interrogatives in Finnish see Hakulinen 2001; Sorjonen 2001b):

- (19) [*What time.t* Sg 081]
 line 11: lukeeks se siin lipus
 is written-Q it on the ticket
 line 14: lukee se siinä
 is written it on it

By interpreting the interrogative embedded in the parenthesis as a genuine question, Brita alters the trajectory and participation framework of the conversation. She elevates the issue of what evidence Jaana has for saying what she said to the status of main line. By doing this, Brita, as a knowing participant, becomes the one to advance the main line: Aira receives Brita's answer (line 14) as news (she begins with *ai* 'oh', line 15) and Brita grabs the slot offered by the news receipt to further clarify the information (lines 16–19) (see Terasaki 1976:4–9; Button & Casey 1984:181–183; Sorjonen 1999:175).

However, friction emerges in setting the trajectory of the conversation. The example evolves around the polyvalency of the Finnish verb *lukea* 'be written/read.' This verb can be used in constructions with various organizations and meanings, while their English counterparts need two different lexemes for their expression. In line 15, Aira constructs her turn of receiving the news on the verb *lukea* which was already present in the conversation, but changes the construction in such a way that the subject's semantic role appears as agentive (*se lukee siitä-ELA* 's/he reads [something] on it'). Another alternative is to use the verb in the sense of the English 'it is written' construction, as is done in the parenthetical expression (*se lukee siinä-INE* 'it is written on it'), in which case the subject is non-agentive and is interpreted as *something*. Indeed, the pronoun *se* in line 15 picks the story's protagonist Jaana as its referent. Thus it appears that Aira is already attempting to turn the trajectory of the conversation back to the narrative. However, at lines 16–19, Brita goes on to formulate her utterance as a continuation of the parenthesis both with respect to its structure, semantics and type of activity. Finally, in line 22, Aira manages to return to the narrative, with the help of

a link she creates with the conjunction *koska* ‘since/because’ (*ehkä se on lukenu sit siitä joo koska se sit sano...* ‘perhaps she read [about it] there then since she then said...’).

In example (18), a subplot which was initially intended as a parenthetical offers itself as an opportunity for the other participant to influence the design and direction of the sequence. This example shows that the structures of a conversation are negotiable and that other participants in the conversation besides the current speaker have a possibility to influence its formation.

5. Conclusion

The starting point of our analysis has been to characterize parentheses as constructions which temporarily suspend the progression of some other syntactic construction or wider action sequence. In their most characteristic form, parentheses are independent constructions which neither syntagmatically complement their frame construction nor are in a paradigmatic relationship to it. A parenthetical segment is recognized only in relation to its environment. A prerequisite of such an interpretation is that the textual or sequential relationship between the frame construction and the framed segment is seen as hierarchical.

The syntactic independence of the parenthesis and the frame construction is supported by at least three facts. Firstly, you cannot predict the internal structure of a parenthetical insert on the basis of the frame construction. Secondly, even though there may be solid ties between the parts of the frame construction, based on syntax or sequentiality, they do not prevent parentheses from being inserted. Indeed, parentheses seem to utilize specifically those syntactical or sequential places where an expectation for continuation is evoked. The use of parentheses plays it safe: when the progression of the turn and the construction is interrupted, its projection has already been created either on syntactic or sequential grounds. Thirdly, prosodic context cues support the perception of structural, semantic and actional separateness of the frame and the parenthesis. Here it is specifically the contrasting of different cues which makes the discontinuity and the juncture hearable. In addition, prosodic marking seems to be more apparent at the point where the frame is interrupted than when one returns to it.

Sequentially, several systematic characteristics can be found in the occurrences of parentheses. It is usually possible to identify a triggering feature in the main line of the conversation, one which motivates the parenthetical sequence. The semantic link between the frame construction and the parenthesis can be constructed upon some specific linguistic element. This is typical especially of metatextual comments concerning a specific lexeme. Affective expressions also seem to motivate parentheses. More generally, parentheses are linked to critical phases in the semantic formulation or sequential activity in the main line. These triggers may be more extensive than just a particular linguistic element.

An ongoing activity in the main line of talk can be readjusted by the parenthesis in various ways. Although the parenthetical sequence temporarily halts the progression

of the main line, it often also projects and significantly shapes expectations of what is to follow. Parentheses are excellently-suited to the management of interactive activity, for example by shaping the participation framework to fit to the present activity. Another typical task of parentheses is to provide a background for a narrative. Background-providing parentheses not only orient the recipient(s) to the circumstances at the time when the event took place but can also steer the interpretation of the narrative's contents.

We have argued that parentheses utilize the expected trajectory of the current turn and structure. This idea is based on the first basic rule of the organization of turn taking, namely that each participant is entitled to one TCU at a time. Parentheses are one means offered to the speakers by the grammar of interaction that allows them to expand their turn without having to negotiate this with the other participants. When the progression of the main line of talk is suspended, the initial system of turn-taking freezes, as it were. A parenthetical insertion can then develop into an exchange allowing a subordinated turn for other participants but without cancelling the previous speaker's right to resume the halted turn.

Information presented in parenthetical sequences may also change the trajectory of the main line. This shows that all structures of a conversation are adjustable to the situation. They are not predetermined, but undergo constant negotiation. This negotiation can take place between the participants, but an alternative to it is the monitoring of one's own talk. It is worth noting that participants nevertheless attempt systematically to resume a previous activity which has been deviated from.

One of the essential questions is what kind of structural knowledge conversation as an activity is based upon. In this article we have tried to expound two views linked to interactional linguistics. By analyzing parenthetical inserts, we have illustrated that linguistic structures are real tools for speakers, tools that they use to recognize and form hypotheses about the structural units under construction. We have also illustrated factors which show that the participants' grammar includes information both on syntactic structures and on the construction of activities. Syntactic structures and sequential activities are equally parts of the toolbox of the grammar of interaction, used for predicting and regulating the progression of turns.

In Section 2.1, we noted that the phenomenon we call parenthesis shares some characteristics with what is called self-repair. Both interrupt the syntagmatic progression of the utterance and use the same markers to indicate the point of interruption. However, discontinuity between the frame and the parenthesis gives reason for further clarifying the relationship between these phenomena. If replacements and modifying repairs can typically be described as the speaker's movement back and forth along the syntagmatic and paradigmatic axes of the ongoing construction, then parenthesis on the other hand would seem to remain outside of this two-dimensional representation.

In the textual fabric, parentheses form a third dimension to which the speaker can digress. By opening a parenthetical sequence, speakers place themselves outside the activity they are currently advancing, becoming outside observers, as it were. From this vantage point they can, either alone or together with the recipient, not only regulate

the semantic progression of the turn but also more widely shape the conditions of the action and interpretation.

Notes

1. This article is based on empirical language examples from Finnish which have been selected from audiotaped conversation databases. The samples we cite come from the conversation material archives of the University of Helsinki Department of Finnish (signum “Sg”) and from Routarinne’s personal collection. All conversations have been taped in authentic settings. Conversations are either face-to-face (name of material followed by “f”) or telephone conversations (indicated with a “t”). Each example cited has its own nickname, such as example (1) *Streamer* which is always repeated if the same excerpt is analyzed again. The data have been transcribed according to the conventions of conversation analysis. The key to symbols used in the transcriptions is provided in the Appendix. We use bold typeface to highlight the features we are discussing, most often to show the parenthetical sequences in our examples. A free translation is provided on its own line. This article is based on an earlier Finnish-language version (Duvallon & Routarinne 2001). We are especially grateful to Auli Hakulinen and Margret Selting, who gave us valuable comments on an earlier version, and to Nely Keinänen and Kimmo Absetz, who translated the article.
2. The parenthesis is uttered in a lower register than its surroundings. This is indicated by downward-pointing arrows. In addition, the sequence has flat intonation. In the transcript there is a lack of underlining which is used to indicate stress.
3. At least two different kinds of analyses can be presented about the pronoun *se* ‘it’ at the beginning of the construction. On one hand, this pronoun can be viewed as a semantically dummy element that fills the preverbal slot in the linear structure of the utterance. On the other hand, the pronoun *se* can be perceived as having the same referent as the object NP *se meidän viiri* of the verb *aikaansaada*. In that case one possible translation of the utterance *se(-ACC) on korkea aika se(-ACC) meidän viiri(-ACC) aikaansaada* would be ‘it should be finished without delay, this streamer of ours’. When processing a real time conversation, neither of these two alternative interpretations necessarily emerges more clearly than the other.
4. In Finnish, the verb *olla* can have both the meaning ‘to be’ and ‘to have’. In the latter case, the owner is indicated with an adessive case NP, e.g. *minu-lla on* ‘on me is’.
5. In young people’s speech, the verb *oli* ‘was’ is frequently used in a quotative function (cf. e.g. Routarinne 1990: 27; Kajanne 1996: 228) just like in English (cf. *be like* + quote; Romaine & Lange 1991).
6. Here the cues projecting a parenthesis and self-repair or word search seem to overlap (cf. e.g. Schegloff 1979; Sorjonen 1997: 118–119).
7. In this respect as well, parentheses have the same properties as self-repairs. Both are typically done as close to the problem-causing material as possible.
8. The frame construction is also prosodically noteworthy since it contains a turn-holding glottal closure (line 3) (see Ogden 2001) as well as a pause which breaks the rhythm and anticipates a digression (cf. Klewitz & Couper-Kuhlen 1999).

Appendix

Transcription symbols

.	falling intonation contour
,	level intonation
?	rising intonation
↑	rise in pitch (within an utterance)
↓	fall in pitch
<u>Emphasis</u> is indicated with underlining	
:	lengthening of the sound
°	degree signs indicate a passage of quite/soft talk
£	smile voice
#	creaky voice
@	animated voice quality
< >	decelerado, slower pace than in the surrounding talk
> <	accelerado, faster pace than in the surrounding talk
<	hiatus, a head of the arrow pointing left indicates that the prior word or expression is ended in a closure, often in a glottal stop
su-	dash indicates a cut-off of a word
[overlapping talk starts
]	overlap ends
=	no silence between two adjacent utterances
(.)	micropause: 0.2 seconds
(0.5)	silences timed in tenths of a second
hh	letter <i>h</i> (or several of them) indicates an audible aspiration
.hh	a period + the letter <i>h</i> (or several of them) indicates an audible inhalation
(h)	<i>h</i> in brackets within a word indicates aspiration, often laughter
()	item in doubt
(-)	word in doubt
(())	a comment by transcriptionist

Principles of glossing

- 1 1st person ending
- 2 2nd person ending
- 3 3rd person ending (in singular treated as unmarked form not coded)
- 4 passive person ending

Case endings	abbreviation	approximate meaning
Ablative	ABL	from
Accusative	ACC	grammatical object
Adessive	ADE	at, on
Genitive	GEN	possession
Elative	ELA	out of, from
Illative	ILL	into
Inessive	INE	in

Nominative	NOM	unmarked form, not coded
Partitive	PAR	partitiveness

Other grammatical coding

CLI	clitic
CNJ	conjunction
CON	conditional mood
DET	determiner (demonstrative pronoun as an article)
IMP	imperative mood
INF	infinitive
NEG	negation (verb)
PAS	passive voice
PL	plural
POS	possessive suffix
PPC	past participle
PRO-ADJ	pro-adjective
PRT	particle
PST	past tense
Q	interrogative
lnameF	1st name, female
lnameM	1st name, male

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Delayed self-repairs as a structuring device for complex turns in conversation*

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This paper looks into the interactional basis of the grammatical format of parentheticals. It will be claimed that such a basis can be found in abandoned or broken off units of talk in conversation which are not immediately recycled (repaired) but whose activity status is attended to at some later point of the emerging talk. These abandoned/broken off units, then, are not erased or “overwritten” by the subsequent structure, but their projectional force remains valid and needs to be attended to by recipients. On the interactional plane, I will focus on those post-break-off structures which introduce subsidiary elements of talk (often materials qualifying or specifying the upcoming main point of the turn) and after which the speaker returns or attempts to return into the broken-off/abandoned structure.

It will be argued that this interactional format crucially depends on the strength of the projection in the broken-off or abandoned unit fragment. Arguably, this projectional force increases when it is supported by formal means – particularly by syntax. From here, so I will show, a process of grammaticalisation sets in which leads to the grammatical format of parentheticals.

1. Introduction

Conversation analysis and interactional linguistics share an interest in the temporal unfolding of units of speech in time. Nonetheless, the temporality of speech is still little understood. Psycholinguistic research, which is more advanced in this respect, provides evidence that our memory for on-line syntactic processing is limited; far-reaching syntactic projections in time tend to fail, both in production and reception (cf. Dijkstra & Kempen 1993; Townsend & Bever 2001). The same cannot be said of our pragmatic memory; although possibly distorted, pragmatic experiences can be kept in memory for a long time. We tend to remember *what* somebody said (and above all, what s/he meant by it, i.e. what kind of action was performed), but not *how* it was said. Our memory seems to disattend form, and it is for this reason that Charles Hockett listed “rapid fading” among the “design features” of (spoken) language (Hockett & Alt-

mann 1968). But how long exactly can we store linguistic structures in memory? One way of answering the question (chosen by psycholinguists) is to look at complex syntax (centre-embedding constructions or the like) and analyse at what point and under what conditions speakers and hearers fail to process it adequately. Another way, chosen in this paper, is to ask whether participants in an interactional encounter make use of the formal structure of speech events in the more or less distant ‘conversational past’ for their present formulations. It is beyond question from such a point of view that syntactic form *can* remain relevant beyond the termination of a syntactic construction (i.e., after a syntactic projection has been dealt with); it does so, for instance, in some so-called elliptical utterances which can only be understood if they are processed against the background of a prior syntactic construction. Often it is the immediately preceding utterance which provides the structure on which the ‘elliptical’ follow-up is modeled, be it produced by the same or another speaker. However, speakers can also refer back to non-adjacent utterance parts, as in the following example:¹

(1) (‘Big Brother’/German Reality TV show)

- 01 Sbr: lebensmittel weg das is ne SÜNde.
food away that is a sin
 throwing food away is a sin
- 02 → Jrg: also das mag=isch au nisch.
well that don't I like either
 well I don't like that either
- 03 Sbr: nee-
 no
- 04 Jrg: da werd=isch au fuchsteufelswild.
there become I also fox-devil-wild
 it really drives me mad
- 05 — Adr: die uta au nich.
the Uta also not
 neither does Uta

The syntactic structure of Jürgen’s utterance in line 2 *das mag isch au nisch* provides the pattern on which Andrea builds her own utterance (line 5) *die uta* (‘ellipsis’: *mag das auch nich*).² What mechanisms exactly of ‘ellipsis’ in German syntax are responsible for the fact that it is possible to build one utterance on the pattern of another, and to hear them as being related, is not an issue here and has been described in detail by syntacticians (cf. for German, e.g., Klein 1993). But since Andrea’s utterance is two turns away from Jürgen’s original utterance, there is evidence that coparticipants keep in mind syntactic patterns at least for a short time.

Another syntactic format in which past syntactic events need to be kept in memory in order to process future ones are parentheticals in which the post-parenthetical continuation continues the pre-parenthetical beginning without retracting to it:

(2) ((job interview))

- 01 I: <<acc> es Is natürlich immer SO;> (1.0)
it is of-course always like-that
of course it's always like that
- 02 → .h als klEine regionalbank, (-)
as small regional-bank
for a small regional bank
- 03 auch w:enn denn ab und zU immer noch
even though PRT now and then always once
ma:l- (.) n=paar geGRÜNdet werden,
(in a) while a couple founded are
even though now and then one is founded
- 04 hat man das schOn SCHWER;
has one it PRT difficult
it is rather difficult
- 05 im [europäischen WETTbewerb.
in-the European competition
among the European competitors
- 06 B: [h:m,

The interviewer in this job interview self-interrupts in line 2 after the noun phrase *als kleine Regionalbank*; after a parenthetically inserted concessive clause in line 3, he continues the interrupted clause with the finite verb due after the initial noun phrase (4). Again, both speaker and recipient need to build on the utterance in line 2 in order to process that in line 4, i.e. the former cannot be deleted immediately since the latter reuses it structurally. As in the case of 'ellipsis', the phenomenon provides evidence that language users keep formal aspects of utterances in memory for some time since they need them for the interpretation of future conversational events.

In this paper, I will deal with delayed self-repairs of which (2) is a special case in more detail. The question I want to ask is: when a speaker self-interrupts and thus produces a fragment of talk (i.e. an utterance that does not constitute a well-formed syntactic gestalt), under what conditions can recipients overwrite this fragment and when do they need to keep it in memory for further processing?

2. The phenomenon: Delayed self-repairs

In conversational German (but presumably in other languages as well), a recurrent pattern is this: an emerging syntactic pattern is broken off by the speaker; he or she then starts a new turn constructional unit (TCU) which introduces a different line of thought, subtopic, or argument; having finished this unit, the same speaker returns to the broken-off structure and recycles it syntactically and/or semantically.³ In the course of this delayed repair, a complete (turn constructional) unit is produced. Ex-

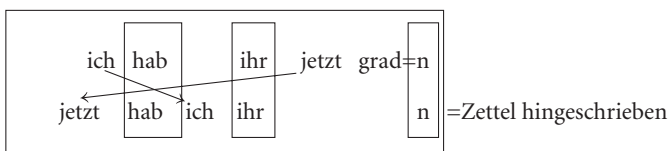
tract (3) is an example in which the delayed repair of the fragment is easy to recognise on formal grounds:

- (3) ((father M and daughter F, telephone conversation, father is caller))
- 01 M: ja und (-) is MAMmi da?
yes and is mommy there
 and (-) mommy is at home?
- 02 F: nein die is NICHT da;
no she is not there
 no she isn't
- 03 M: bist du kurz nachHAUse gekommen?
did you briefly home come
 so you came home for a short while?
- 04 F: ja (.)
yes
- 05 ich hab ihr jetzt grad=n=
I have her PRT just= a:CLIT
 I just left her a
- 06 =weil sie hatte gesagt ich soll mal
because she had said I shall PRT
 hEinkommen oder,
come-home TAG
 because she said I should come home, right?
- 07 [(hoffentlich) is sie jetzt nich DAGewesen.=
(hopefully) has she now not there-been
 (I hope) she hasn't been here (already)
- 08 M: [ja SEHR schön
yes very nice
- 09 F: =jetzt hab ich ihr n= ZETtel
now have I to-her a:CLIT =note
 hingeschrieben;
written
 I left her a note now
- 10 M: ja is auch RICHTig
yes is PRT correct
 yes that's good

The father (M) has called his teenage daughter (F) when she has just come home from celebrating carnival in the streets of a southwest German town but is going to leave again soon. After the father has mentioned the mother in line 1, and reformulated the daughter's previous statement (not shown in the extract) that she dropped in at home (line 3), the daughter starts a turn constructional unit in line 5 (*jetzt hab ich ihr grad=n*, 'I just left her (i.e., the mother) a...') which remains incomplete in many ways: syntactically, it lacks the obligatory non-finite form of the verb, in this case a participle which can be predicted on the basis of the auxiliary *hab(en)*, as well as, on a lower level of syntactic projection, the object noun due after the clitic indefinite article *n* (clitic form of

ein 'a'); prosodically, it is marked as incomplete by hovering intonation and the lack of a nuclear pitch movement, and semantically, it is hearably unfinished since we do not know what the daughter 'just did'. Note, however, that in all three domains – syntax, prosody and semantics – certain continuations can be projected:⁴ syntactically, a noun is predictable, which in turn will be followed by a right brace non-finite verb form;⁵ prosodically, a nuclear accent will follow, and semantically, '...left a note' is in the given context more or less predictable. Having thus abandoned a turn constructional unit at a point at which numerous projections are in play, the daughter starts a new unit which gives a *weil*-prefaced account ('because, she said I should come home'). It is not entirely clear whether this utterance gives an account of why the daughter 'did come home briefly' or of why 'she just left her (... a note)' at this point. (We will return to this issue in Section 4 below.) In overlap with the father's enthusiastic but somewhat paternalizing agreement in line 8 (*ja sehr schön*) the daughter expresses her concern that the mother might have been home before in line 7; in that case, her note would have come too late to prove that she has complied with the mother's request. Only after that does she return to the broken-off TCU in line 5 and recycles most parts of it in what now becomes a well-formed syntactic, prosodic and semantic unit in line 9 (*jetzt hab ich ihr n=Zettel hingeschrieben*). Self-repair is delayed by one turn-constructional unit which intervenes between the reparandum and the repair itself.

The fragment and the recycled/completed version can easily be linked to each other on formal grounds, since the speaker re-uses the lexical materials of the former in the latter (with the exception of the particle *grad*, all words are repeated). The only difference is that within the same syntactic pattern, two constituents change places: while the personal pronoun *ich* 'I' was sentence-initial (i.e. in the pre-verbal position) in the first version, the adverb *jetzt* 'now' takes its place in the second version, moving the pronoun into post-verbal position (see figure below).



We have therefore good structural grounds in order to identify the reparandum and the repair. But what is the semantic relationship between the two? As has been shown many times in conversation analysis (starting with Schegloff, Jefferson, & Sacks 1977), repair work does not necessarily imply correction of a mistake. In repair, some speaker retracts to a prior point in the utterance or sequence and 're-does' it. This also applies to the present case. Arguably, speaker F does not aim at correcting some faulty word or construction in this example; otherwise it would be hard to explain that she repeats the first part of the construction in an almost identical way. Rather, the format of a delayed self-repair in this cases relates to the linearisation problem in language: how to translate complex, hierarchically structured information into the linearity of speech.

The daughter can be heard to break off her first report on what she did on the grounds that this report came too early, i.e. at a point in which her recipient would have needed some subsidiary information in order to understand what she is about to say. More concrete: telling the father that 'she left a note' for her mother is no relevant news unless he knows that she had promised the mother to come home in-between. So even when 'because she said I should come home' is understood as an account of why the daughter did come home, it is at the same time necessary to know about the mother's wish in order to understand why the daughter left her a note.

One could argue (and it has been argued, cf. Zimmermann 1965; Givón 1988) that in spontaneous speech speakers are caught in a permanent cognitive conflict between, on the one hand, the tendency to formulate first what to them appears to be the most important information (which in the present case would for the daughter be the fact that she has just left a message for the mother), and, on the other hand, the necessity to establish common ground on which this information can be processed (understood and appreciated) by the recipient (in this case, the information that the mother had asked the daughter to come home briefly). According to this view, the break-off and delayed repair would reflect some kind of dilemma about what is the most urgent business to attend to at that moment in the conversation. The shift from a speaker-oriented to a hearer-oriented perspective would leave a trace in the speaker's speech production – the repair phenomenon –, but essentially take place in the speaker's mind. For the recipient, the resulting break-off would be irrelevant at best, at worst it would render the utterance messy, thereby impeding understanding. As a consequence, it would seem to be a reasonable strategy for the recipient to delete such broken-off materials from cache memory immediately. And indeed, it is possible in the present case to arrive at a well-formed sequence after such a deletion:

- M: and (-) mommy is at home?
 F: no she isn't
 M: so you briefly came home?
 F: yes (.)
 because she said I should come home right?
 [(I hope) she hasn't been (already)]
 M: [yes very good
 F: I left her a note
 M: yes that was right

In this paper, I will propose a different view. It starts from the linearity problem in language as well, but it looks at it, not in terms of the speaker's cognitive processing, but in terms of speaker-hearer interaction in the on-line production of conversational speech. More precisely, I will argue that it can be useful for the recipient not to delete structural fragments from memory immediately but to monitor the speaker's production with some time-depth; and that for the speaker, delayed self-repairs can be a technique for structuring complex turns.

3. On-line syntax and syntactic break-offs

In spontaneous speech, fragments of TCUs occur quite frequently. Roughly following Jaspersen (2002) and Selting (2001), they can be classified (a) by the way in which the speaker continues after the broken-off/abandoned fragment, and (b) by the way in which the non-continuation of the emerging pattern is locally organised. Disregarding syntactically complete but otherwise incomplete utterances which are outside the scope of this paper, the first criterion gives a three-fold classification:

- the present speaker may repair the syntactic structure immediately after the break-off by retracting either to its beginning or to some suitable point in it;
- the present speaker may continue the broken off structure without retraction;
- or, if neither of these possibilities are chosen, the present speaker may quit the syntactic structure entirely.

The second criterion provides an additional two-fold classification between cut-offs, in which the non-continuation of an emergent structure is marked (in English as in German) by segmental phonetic means (particularly by glottalisation, Jaspersen's "closure cut-off", according to the GAT system transcribed by ' in the following), by prosodic means (non-complete phrasing plus prosodic reset) and/or by the use of certain particles/repair markers, and abandonments in which no such cues occur. Schematically:

	CUT-OFF	ABANDONMENT
QUIT	✓	✓
RETRACT	✓	✓
CONTINUE	✓	

Figure 1. A simple model for dealing with fragments in conversation

(Continuations offer no choice between abandonment and cut-off since only a hearable break-off justifies speaking of a fragment.)

The following examples illustrate some of these possibilities:

(i) *quit/abandon*

(4) ((bulimia therapy session; Swabian dialect))

- 01 A: s=isch aber SO:, (2.0)
it is however so
 but it is like this
- 02 dass i des IT unbedingt so- (1.0)
that i that not necessarily so
 that I always like
- 03 gefühl setz i man(ch)mo GLEICH mit eme
feelings do I sometimes equate with a

GRUND zum esse; (2.0)

reason for eating

I sometimes equate feelings with a reason for eating

The abandoned TCU is syntactically, prosodically and semantically incomplete, although hovering intonation is observed at the point of abandonment. Neither the proposition (or any other compatible with this TCU fragment) follows, nor is the syntactic construction taken up immediately or later in the conversation. The break-off itself is not marked locally by glottal constriction on the last segment.

(ii) *cut-off/retraction*

(5) ((Big Brother - reality TV show))

01 Sbr: sladdi und thomas
 (name) and (name)
 Sladdi and Thomas

02

warn	auf de:r'
were	on the
were	on the:
warn	nominiert. ne,
were	nominated. PRT-NEG
were	nominated. you see?

The break-off of the emerging syntactic pattern is marked by elongation and glottal constriction on *der*. The speaker then retracts to the left sentence brace constituent (the finite verb *war(e)n* 'were', marked by the box) and brings the TCU to completion, replacing *auf der...* by *nominiert*.

(iii) *cut-off/continuation*

(6) ((job interview))

01 I: <<acc>ich weiß jetzt zwar=im=moment
 I know right-now PRT in-the moment
 NICH ob sie'> (1.0)
 not whether you

right now I don't know whether you (1.0)

02 sich (.) in ROSTock, oder in schweRIN,
 yourself in Rostock or in Schwerin
 applied in Rostock, or in Schwerin,

03 oder in HAMBurg beworben haben, (.)
 or in Hamburg applied have
 or in Hamburg

In this example, the speaker cuts off the syllable *sie* by glottal constriction, but continues to produce the projected TCU nonetheless, without retraction.

The model of Figure 1 can neither deal with delayed repairs as in extract (3), however, in which the options ‘quit’ and ‘retract’ are combined, nor with parenthetical insertions as in extract (2), in which the option ‘abandon’ is combined with ‘continue’. In order to capture such cases, a temporal dimension has to be included. *Immediate* recycling of a broken-off structure (the option ‘retract immediately’) overwrites (deletes) the reparandum, such that the fragment can be disregarded for further on-line processing of the meaning of the emerging utterance by the recipient.⁶ But this possibility of instant erasure is not available for cut-offs and abandonments which are not immediately followed by a repair of the fragment, but may be dealt with through *delayed* recycling (ex. (3)) or a *delayed* continuation (ex. (2)). The recipient has to keep these fragments in mind since they may foreshadow what the speaker is about to say at a later point. This is obvious for ‘smooth’ post-parenthetical continuations as in (2), but it also holds for recyclings as in (3). Here, the repetition of the materials preceding the insertion may help a ‘forgetful’ recipient to retract to the precise syntactic position in which the emerging syntactic construction begins; however, there is no way for the recipient to predict whether the speaker will choose the option of ‘retraction’ or that of ‘continuation’. In addition, as will be argued below, the fragment plays an important role for indicating that a complex subject matter (often in an extended turn) is under production and is therefore highly functional in foreshadowing some non-next utterance.

From the point of view of the on-line processing then, a more adequate model is that of Figure 2 which summarises the recipient’s options for recognising and dealing with repair.

4. The directionality of delayed self-repairs

At this point, a basic distinction needs to be introduced. The format of delayed self-repairs can be retrospectively oriented; in this case, the materials inserted after the break-off and before the repair in some way or other elaborate or correct materials produced *before* the fragment. Or it can be prospectively oriented; in this case, the materials inserted after the break-off lay the ground for, contextualise, frame etc. what is going to come *after* the repair.

The retrospective type is exemplified by the following extracts:

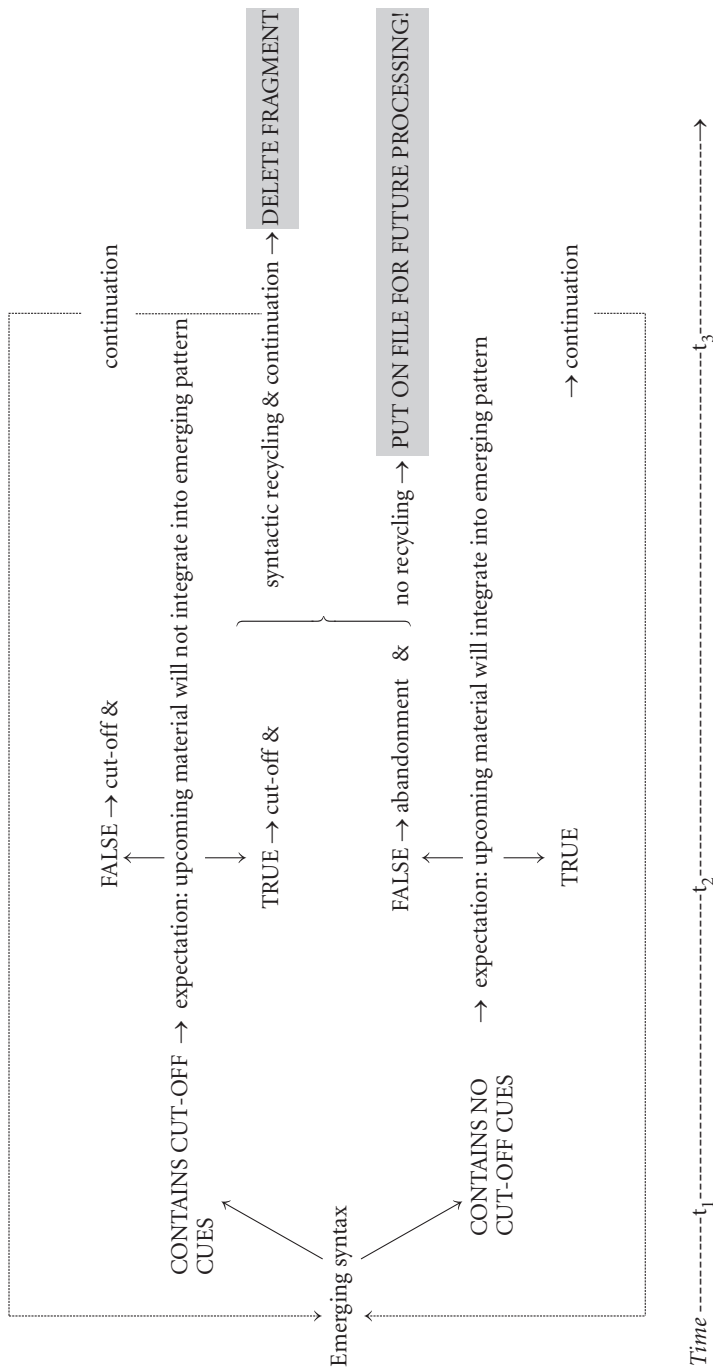



Figure 2. A revised model for dealing with fragments in conversation

(7) ((bulimia therapy group session))

- 01 M: weil .h ich ess auch MEISTens SO viel
because I eat PRT mostly so much
 because .h mostly I eat so much
- 02 bis=es mir rIchtig WEhtut. (0.5)
until it to-me really hurts
 until it really hurts
- 03 ich kann da SELten
I can there rarely
 I can rarely
- 04 Oder bis des gAnze zEUG das ich
or until that whole stuff which I
 mir gekAUft hab WEG is.
for-me bought have away is
 or until the whole stuff which I bought is gone
- 05 .h und ich kann da sElten vorher
and I can there rarely before
 AUFhörn.=
stop
 and I can rarely stop before that
- 

(8) ((Job interview; interviewer I talks about the fusion of his own bank with another one which in his opinion was a friendly take-over in order to avoid an unfriendly one; the old state of affairs was not as positive as it may have looked like, since:))

- 01 I: <<f>das birgt immer die
this includes always the
 geFAHR? (-) .hh e:hm (.)
danger?
 this ((i.e., being independent)) always includes the risk uhm
- 02 <<rall> dass IRgendwann mal-> (-)
that at-somewhen time
 that at some point
- 03 größere pakete AUFgekauft
larger packages ((of shares)) bought-up
 werden, (.)
get
 somebody will buy larger packages ((of shares))
- 04 [und ZACK? (.)
 and bang
- 05 B: [h:m,
- 06 I: schon sind wir <<rall> in
already are we in
 irgendeiner;>(-) v versICherungshand?
some in insurance's hand
 we are in some in insurance's hand

07	(.)oder in irgendeiner (.) .h AUSländischen or in some foreign bank, (.) bank('s) or in some foreign bank('s)	
08	<<f> HAND?> (.) hand	
09	oder wieauchIMmer, (.) or whatever	
→ 10	DAS is (.) .h this is	
11	<<acc,mp> oder auslandsBANKhand,> (.) or foreign bank's hand	
→ 12	DAS=is=eh (.) geFÄHRlich. this is uhm dangerous	

As the double arrows on the right side indicate, we are actually dealing with two delayed repair processes here which are intertwined. Only the second reparandum shows a breakoff/abandonment. The first repair has as its reparandum the TCUs *bis es mir richtig weh tut* ‘until it really hurts’ in extract (6), line 2, and *in irgendeiner ausländischen Bank Hand* ‘or in some foreign bank’s hand’ in extract (7), lines 7–8. Repair is semantically motivated in the first example (the reparandum is refined by the addition of a second possibility: *oder bis des ganze zeug das ich mir gekauft hab weg is* ‘or until the whole stuff which I bought is gone’). It is due to a syntactic problem in the genitive construction⁷ *in irgendeiner ausländischen bank hand* ‘in some foreign bank hand’ in the second example (which is corrected into the compound *auslandsbankhand*). Both repairs are delayed until well into the next TCU (*ich kann da selten \ vorher aufhörn* ‘I can rarely \ stop before that’, lines 3–5, and *das is \ gefährlich* ‘this is \ dangerous’, lines 10–12). This second TCU is interrupted in order to produce the delayed repair of the first TCU at a point where its misplacement is hearable. After the repair of the first reparandum, the speaker returns to the broken-off second TCU and brings it to completion as well.

More interesting, perhaps, are forward oriented (prospective) delayed repairs as in extract (3), to which we now turn.

5. Types and functions of prospectively oriented delayed self-repairs

In Section 2 I have argued that delayed self-repairs are a strategy to handle the linearisation problem in language: how to translate complex information into the linearity of speaking. This tentatively formulated functional description of delayed repairs now needs further discussion.

Consider the following extract from a bulimia group therapy session:

- (9) ((M talks about her feelings of guilt when she eats 'heavy' food; TW = therapist))

- 01 TW: DAS müsstn sie AUShaltn könn;=hm?
that should you stand can:INF TAG
 that you should be able to stand, huh?
- 02 dass andre DENkn, (-)
 that others think
- 03 M: j[a]
 yes
- 04 TW: [sile sind gierig.
 you are greedy
- 05 M: .h vor allem weil ICH' (0.5)
 above all since I
- 06 also (1.0) ich denk ja geNAUso über
well I think PRT the-same-way about
 andere; (0.5)
others
 well (1.0) after all I think the same way about others
- 07 aso ich hab ma mit einer
you see I have once with one(FEM)
 zuSAMMgewohnt,=
together-lived
 well I once lived together with a woman
- 08 und .h die hab ich EH nich so leidn
and her have I PRT not so-well stand
 könn un sie mich AUCH nich,
can:INF and she me either not
 and I couldn't really stand her and neither could she me
- 09 und dann hab ich IMmer so .h (0.5)
and then have I always like
 and then I always like
- 10 und (-) DIE: is schon wesentlich DICKer als
and she is PRT really bigger than
 ich;=
 I
 and she really is a lot bigger than I am
- 11 und dann hab ich ECHT immer gedacht- (0.5)
and then have I really always thought
 and believe me I always thought
- 12 ich hab so alles des (-) AUF se
I have like everything that on her
 projeziert
projected
 I projected like all that on her
- 13 und wenn se viel geGESsn hat,
and when she a-lot eaten had,
 and when she was eating a lot

- 14 =die hat sich .h SAHne n ganzn becher SAHne
she put herself cream a whole cup-of cream
 mit Apfelschnittchen drin gegessn
with slices-of-apple in-it eaten
 she put cream a whole cup of cream she ate with slices of apple
 in it
- 15 =und das war für mich ECHT der ABScheu.
and that was to me really the disgust
 and to me this was really disgusting
- 16 <<fast>n hab ich gedacht>
then have I thought
 then I thought
- 17 .h des is ja wohl (1.0) des is
this is PRT PRT (1.0) that is
 FURCHTbar; (1.0)
appalling
 isn't that that is really appalling
- 18 wie KAMmer denn sowas ESSn un auch
how can-one Q-PRT such-a-thing eat and PRT
 noch mit gÜtm geWISSn.
even with a-good conscience
 how can you eat anything like that and without even feeling
 guilty

In this example, the speaker is about to make a point which is relevant in the framework of the therapeutic session – in the present case, the major point of her contribution is already stated in the very beginning of her turn in line 6 ('after all I think the same way about others'). This turns out to be the preface for a story which M starts in line 7 ('I once lived together with a woman...'). She now faces the problem of having to show that the story is relevant to her point, and thus to the therapeutic session in general, while, at the same time, producing a convincing and (perhaps) entertaining narrative which needs some kind of elaboration. How can she do both things at the same time despite the fact that language requires a linearisation of information? The answer is: by doing one thing while the other is hearably 'under work'. In the extract, the link between the preface and the story is established by the fragment *und dann hab ich immer so...* 'and then I always did like...' (first arrow, line 9), foreshadowing the punchline of the story. Although it is not possible at this stage to guess precisely what M is about to say, the syntactic format in which this turn component is started projects some kind of formulation of a mental or real-world action by the teller: the first person pronoun *ich* combines with the auxiliary *haben* 'to have' which is used to form the perfect tense of transitive verbs that mostly require an agent. This unit is broken off in favour of more details about the antagonist and her obesity (line 10). After that, the fragment is recycled for the first time: it is now made to include an infinitive verb form of the verbum sentiendi *und dann hab ich echt immer gedacht* 'and believe me I always thought', line 11. But this is not a syntactically complete unit yet; rather,

a complement phrase (expressing M's thoughts) is projected. Once more, the speaker interrupts herself now in order to first provide the therapeutically relevant term (*projeziert* 'projected') and then narrative details about the way in which the antagonist consumed cream and the teller's emotional response to it (lines 14–15). Only then, and after the initial fragment has been recycled another time (*hab ich gedacht*), does the speaker describe her thoughts (and feelings) about the antagonist and complete the syntactic construction, establishing in this way the link to her story preface in line 6, i.e. her own feelings of guilt when eating 'heavy food' being identical to what she thinks about others.

It is clear that in a case such as this, the materials inserted between the fragment and its recycled version do not elaborate or correct some utterance preceding the fragment, i.e. they are not retrospectively oriented. Instead, they prepare (frame) the central point of M's turn in the therapeutic context (lines 16–18), i.e. they are prospectively oriented.

This example also gives us a better idea about the functions of delayed self-repairs. By using the format, the speaker is able to prove to her recipients that she is approaching her main point. At the same time, she is able to prepare this point by numerous details which authenticise the story and justify her behaviour. The recipient needs to keep both the semantic and syntactic projection of the fragment and the materials inserted between the break-off and the recycling in mind: taken together, they put him/her on the right track in the interpretation of what the speaker is about to say. In somewhat more general terms, I want to suggest that by the format of a (prospectively oriented) delayed recycling, a speaker can achieve a particular kind of coherence in a larger turn in which a complex matter is to be formulated. This coherence is hierarchically structured. The fragment is semantically superordinated to the utterances inserted after the break-off. Since the hierarchically superior information is projected to come, the recipient knows more or less precisely what she or he must wait for and attend to.

Here is another example from the bulimia group therapy session:

- (10) ((In the following sequence, P mentions as an example M's problems of seeing the therapist 'as a man' rather than a therapist in order to prove her statement made before the extract begins that each participant's problems are different.))

01 P: vielleicht ganz konkret,
perhaps quite concretely
 to be quite specific perhaps

02 .h der Herr (NAME) als Mann,
the mister (NAME) as (a) man
 Mister X ((the therapist's name)) as a man

03 ich hab ihn irgendwie NIE a' (0.5) als
I have him somehow never a as
 MANN (-) als ProBLEM empfunden
(a) man as (a) problem perceived

- oder .hh (-) so; (0.5)
or so
 as a man I never ((saw)) him as a problem
- 04 die Trennung MANN MENSCH, .hh (-)
the division man human-being
 the division between the man and the person
- 05 irgendwie des hab ich (-) VORher (-)
somehow that have I before
 somehow I had this earlier
- 06 des=s=so= n problem;
this is a kind of a problem
 this is one of those problems
- 07 des hab ich Auch WIEdererkannt bei mir.
that have I also recognised with me
 which I recognised in me as well
- 08 .h das hab ich aber VORher
that have I however before
 schon (-) .h ver
already over
 but that I somehow over-
- 09 GLAUB hab ich (0.5)
believe-I have I
 I think I
- 10 oder so BILD ich mirs ein,
or so imagine I to-me-it VERB-PREFIX
 or I imagine it to be like that
- 11 (-) n stückweit (-) WETTgemacht;
a degree-to compensated
 compensated for it to a certain degree

Once more, a fragmentary TCU (line 5: *des hab ich vorher...*) projects a syntactic (a participle) as well as a semantic continuation (in the present context, where the speaker wants to argue that M's problems of separating the man from the therapist are an issue she herself was never particularly suffering from, one might for instance expect a continuation like 'I had already ... dealt with that before'). This utterance remains fragmentary (first arrow, line 5). The speaker now inserts some materials which provide a relevant background for the statement-in-progress, i.e. that the problem itself was not unknown to her. After that, the utterance fragment is hearably recycled in line 8 (a repetition of the first fragment to which the verb prefix *ver-* is added; a fitting verb would be *ver-arbeiten* 'overcome', 'digest') but broken off again (second arrow). A repair follows almost immediately (after *glaub*) in which this prefix and thereby the projected verb is overwritten and the fragment recycled from the position after the pronominal noun phrase *das* onwards. After a parenthetical (see below, Section 7) utterance with modalising function in line 10, the fragment of 8 is finally brought to completion in line 11, using a different verb than the one projected by the prefix *ver-*, namely *wettmachen*:

das *hab ich* *aber vorher schon ver'*
glaub *hab ich* *n stückweit wettgemacht*

The TCU 'I ... compensated for it to a certain degree' contains the main contribution to the ongoing verbal struggle between P and M. The argument is that M's problem, the attraction she feels towards the therapist as a man, is not P's problem any longer, and that therefore it needs not concern her. Between the first fragment and the repairing completion (*das hab ich vorher schon n Stück weit wettgemacht*), P inserts a topically subordinated but nonetheless important information which lends credibility to her statement (lines 6–7). Again, the speaker hearably undertakes to make a point which contributes to the ongoing interaction, while, almost at the same time, inserting subsidiary materials. In this sense, example (9) resembles the previous example (8) in functional terms.

But (9) is also well-suited to make an additional point. In written German the complex concessive information structure which is conveyed in this turn in lines 5–11 through the delayed repair format could have been rendered differently, i.e. by a hypotactic *obwohl*-construction such as

obwohl ich dieses Problem bei mir auch wiedererkannt habe, hatte ich das vermutlich vorher schon ein Stück weit wettgemacht.

'although I know this problem myself, I presume that I had come to grips with it before to a certain degree.'

This concessive construction expresses the same kind of hierarchical structure as does P through the format of the delayed repair, but by means of grammatical hypotaxis. In both versions (written and spoken), a subsidiary information ('the problem is known to P') is introduced which highlights the relevance of the main point ('P has come to grips with the problem'). However, the delayed repair pattern establishes this hierarchical relationship in a much looser way.⁸ The speaker does not encode explicitly one particular semantic relationship (concessivity), and she can do without the embeddings formally marked by hypotaxis as they would be unavoidable in written language. The delayed repair format therefore is a non-grammaticalised way of doing hierarchically structured linearisation in spoken language. Considering that linearisation is the essence of syntax, we may speak of a non-grammaticalised syn-taxis typical of oral communication.

So far I have discussed examples in which the broken-off TCU was eventually followed by some kind of syntactic repair in which the structure of the fragment was re-used. This is not always the case. The relationship between the fragment and its delayed repair may be of a purely semantic kind, i.e. the fragment may project both syntactically and semantically, but the speaker may pick up and tie back to the semantic projection in his or her delayed repair only. Consider the following example:

- (11) ((Another quarrel between P and M; before the extract starts, P has attacked M by reproaching her of not accepting the group's arguments. P defends herself:))

01 P: also ich=es=is=ja NICH so dass ich des
 well I= it= is=PRT not so that I that
 einfach .h NICH Annahme und WEGschiebe;
 simply not accept and push-away
 well I after all it is not the case that I reject that ((what the others
 say)) and push it away

02 aber ich MUSS des doch (1.5)
 but I must that PRT
 but after all I have to

03 JA:, ich muss des doch auch verDAUN
 well, I must that PRT also digest
 könn;
 can
 well I have to be able to digest it

→ 04 M: JA; =aber ich hab immer n Eindruck
 yes; =but I have always an impression
 dass du des NICH
 that you that not
 sure but my impression always is that you don't

05 .h also (-)
 well

06 auf ALLES was mer SAGT kommt
 to everything what one says comes
 irgendwie ne prompte erWiderung von dir.
 somehow a prompt reply from you
 you have a reply ready for everything that is said

→ 07 nd DANN (.) DANN denk ich ja öh (-)
 nd then then think I yes uhm
 and then then I think well

→ 08 eigentlich m lässt du GAR nix auf
 actually let you quite nothing on
 dich einwirken.
 you act
 actually you don't let anything act on you

After M has reproached P of not accepting any critique of her, P counters 'I have to be able to digest it'. Now M starts a turn which hearably uses an opposition format (yes – but), i.e. it projects disagreement (first arrow, line 4). However, the utterance is broken off before the finite verb has been produced. After the break-off, M inserts evidence for her previous reproach that P does not let the group criticise her: she always has an answer ready (line 6). Then the repair of the fragment follows, but the fragment's syntactic format is not taken up and recycled: 'actually you don't let anything act on you' is only semantically a paraphrase of the projected negation of 4 ('you don't \ digest

it'), and can therefore be heard as another version of the fragment produced earlier, but its syntactic form bears no relationship to it.

6. A projection that fails

So far, I have tried to show that fragments of TCUs have the potential of solving the conflict between hierarchical complexity of information and the linearisation requirement of spoken language. The conversational format of delayed repairs can now be summarised as follows:

the delayed repair format

- 1st component: fragmentary TCU → projects more to come
= semantically superordinate structure
- 2nd component: non-projected syntactic/semantic unit
= semantically subordinate structure
- 3rd component: repair/completion of fragment
= semantically superordinate structure in toto

The **conditions** under which this kind of processing is possible are:

- 1st condition: the fragment is not immediately followed by a repair (which overwrites the fragment)
- 2nd condition: the fragment is (in its context of occurrence) capable of projecting some continuation.

Evidence for the projective force of fragments can be taken from those cases in which the 3rd component of the format is absent. In the following case, the fragment foreshadows a statement of intention or perhaps a suggestion. However, the speaker cannot actually produce this projected activity because the recipient's intervening activities remove the basis for it. The non-delivery of the projected continuation requires an account:

- (12) ((Telephone conversation between two lovers in the late afternoon. M has to meet some business partners after the phone call.))

- 01 F: .hhh und wann musst du DORT sein? (-)
and when must you there be
and when do you have to be there?
- 02 M: oh in=na halbn STUNde <<creaky> ETwa;>
oh in a half hour roughly
oh in half an hour roughly
- 03 F: halbe STUNde;=
half hour
half an hour
- 04 M: =<<pp>hm,>

- 05 i wart da noch auf den (.) ANruf,
I wait there still for the call
 I have to await their phone call
- 06 und dann fahr ich LOS.
and then drive I off
 and then I'll drive off
- 07 F: <<breathy voice> ahn,>
 uhm
- 08 (0.5) .hhh also um:: (-) m:
so a:t
 so at
- 09 <<f> wann kannst du dich dann
when can you:NOM you:AKK then
 wieder auf MICH kontentriern?>
*again on me concentrate?*⁹
 so when will you be able to contentrate on me again?
- 10 M: (-)m::: <<high pitch> so um ZEH:N;>
around at ten
 mm at around ten
- 11 (-) [HOFF=ich
hope I
 I hope
- 12 F: [hm um ZEHN;=
uhm at ten
 uhm at ten
- 13 M: =ja.
 yes
- 14 F: .th also pass=auf;=
so pay-attention
 now listen
- 15 ich möcht so bis um: (-) eh bis (.)
I want around until at uhm until
 I want to until at around eh until ten
- 16 gehst Du dann GLEICH ins bett?
go you then immediately to-the bed
 will you go to bed immediately then?
- 17 M: ich HOFFe;
I hope
 I hope so
- 18 F: du HOFFST;=
you hope
 you hope so
- 19 M: =<<p>ja.> (-)
 yes

- 20 F: na dann kann ich nicht mal n WHISki
well then can I not even a whiskey
 trinken mit dir heute;
drink with you today
 well then I won't even be able to drink a whiskey with you today
- 21 M: DOCH:
yes
 yes you will
- 22 F: ja?
yes
 I will?
- 23 M: mhm, merk ich(s) TROTZdem;
mhm realise I (it:CLIT) nevertheless
 mhm, I'll notice nonetheless
- 25 F: ja?=
yes
- 26 M: =mhm,
- 27 F: <<p>also; (-)
so
 well then (-)
- 28 .hhh dann denk ich so um ZEHN,
then think I around at ten
 I'll think around ten
- 29 (-) gAnz fest an DICH;
really strongly of you
 of you very much

This extract is taken from the closing phase of the telephone conversation between M and F. In closing sections, arrangements for future meetings are regularly on the agenda. Time therefore is an important matter. In this context (and after a previous question regarding time in lines 1–3) F's fragment *also um...* ('well at...', line 8, first arrow) clearly projects a temporal expression, since the preposition *um* is typically used to formulate time. Instead of producing this temporal phrase fully, F self-interrupts and asks a question ('when will you be able to concentrate on me again?', line 9) which is subsequently answered by M (line 10) and the answer is modified by a stance phrase (line 11, *HOFF=ich* 'I hope'). On the basis of this information, F now recycles the fragment *also um...* and includes it into a more complex turn which she introduces by the pre-to-pre formula *pass auf* ('now listen', lines 14, 15). The following utterance (line 15, second arrow) starts as a delayed repair in line 8: the temporal phrase *so um X Uhr* ('at around X o'clock') is now integrated into a declarative sentence indicating F's wish or intention (*ich möchte so um...* 'at around ... I want to...'). But once more the TCU remains unfinished: the semantically central part arguably is what F intends to do (*möchte...*) at what time (*so um...*), and both are left unspecified. In the projection space created by this second broken off TCU, F once more asks a preliminary question: is M going to go to bed after he has come back from the meeting with his business partners (line 16)? M answers positively through another stance phrase (*hoff*

ich ‘I hope’, line 17) which is echoed by F (line 18) and reaffirmed by M (line 19). The following comment by F ‘well then I can’t even drink a whiskey with you today’ (line 20) marks the cancellation of a proposal or suggestion which F has been projecting for quite a while (since line 8): the suggestion which F has been trying to prepare by various preliminary activities turns out to have been *ich möchte so um 10 mit Dir ’nen Whiskey trinken* ‘at around 10 I want to have a whiskey with you’. (The couple has a ritual of having a drink individually at the same time of the day when they are separated, thinking of each other.) It can no longer be produced since M won’t have the time for it. M’s answers to her preliminary questions have made it impossible for her to continue with a full version of the broken-off TCU. Therefore, the fragments cannot be taken up and no delayed repair follows. Nonetheless, we (and M) learn through F’s account in line 20 that such a projection was hearably in play.¹⁰

7. Delayed self-repairs and parenthesis

Quite a few instances of break-offs followed by delayed self-repairs span a small stretch of speech only. The delay is minor, i.e., the subordinated utterance short:

(13) (reality TV show)

((Andrea has just been at the hairdresser’s. Sabrina talks to Andrea while combing her hair.))

- 01 Sbr: das is so schön hier hinten,
this is so beautiful here in-the-back
 it is so nice in the back here
- 02 .h <<gently> hier-
 here
- 03 ((giggles))>
- 04 ((cheeping noise))
- 05 .h nee.
 no
- 06 du hast echt nen schönen hinterkopf;
you have really a beautiful back-of-head
 you really have a beautiful back of head
- 07 hat=er rischtisch schön so’;
has he really beautifully like
 he ((the hairdresser)) has really beautifully
- 08 .hhh musste ma gucken mal im
have-you PRT to-look PRT in-the
 spiegel.
mirror
 have a look in the mirror

→ 09 hat er rischtisch so schön
 has he really like beautifully
 HOCHgestuft.
 layered
 he really beautifully layered it

Sabrina's insertion (line 8) between the fragment (7) and the delayed repair (9) suggests to Andrea to look into the mirror in order to support her (Sabrina's) evaluation that the hair-dresser did his job really well. The insertion is clearly subordinated (and supportive) to the main point.

Insertions of this kind are frequently treated in the syntactic literature under the heading of parenthesis or parentheticals.¹¹ It may therefore be asked how the delayed repair format relates to this notion. There is some evidence¹² that parenthesis is a concept that belongs to written language (cf. the metonymic use of the term for punctuation in English). In written language, parenthesis is marked by '(xx)' or '- xx -', and in its prototypical grammatical form characterised by the insertion of material into an unrelated syntactic frame which does not require the inserted materials. As a consequence deletion of the parenthetical materials will leave the structure of the surrounding sentence well-formed.

Prototypical parentheses can also be observed in spoken language (where prosodic phrasing takes over the role of punctuation marks). Extract (2) above is an example, which is repeated here for convenience:

(2) ((job interview))

01 I: <<acc> es Is natürlich immer SO;> (1.0)
 it is of-course always like-that
 of course it's always like that
 02 .h als klEine regionAlbank, (-)
 as small regional-bank
 for a small regional bank
 03 auch w:enn denn ab und zU immer
 even though PRT now and then always
 noch ma:l- (.) n=paar geGRÜNdet werden,
 once (in a) while a couple founded are
 even though now and then one is founded
 04 hat man das schOn SCHWER;
 has one it PRT difficult
 it is rather difficult
 05 im [europäischen WETTbewerb.
 in-the European competition
 among the European competitors
 06 B: [h:m,

This structure bears an obvious resemblance to the delayed repair format: a 'fragment' (first arrow) is followed by a semantically and pragmatically subordinated TCU and

taken up in the following segment (second arrow). However, there are also important differences.

- i. First of all, there is of course no repair involved; the pre-parenthetical utterance is abandoned and continued post-parenthetically.
- ii. This means that the post-parenthetical segment resumes and continues the fragment without backtracking, i.e. no materials contained in the fragment are repeated and recycled. From a cognitive point of view, this makes it more difficult to identify the predecessor to which the continuation needs to be tied in order to result in a well-formed frame. While this is unproblematic for written language, research on parenthetical insertions in spoken language has shown that the longer the parenthesis, the more likely is a non-smooth continuation (recycling, backtracking; cf. Schönherr 1993; Stoltenburg 2002).
- iii. The syntactic position in which the first utterance is broken off in the delayed repair format is usually close to the end of the clause (often before the right bracket, and always at a point where the nuclear pitch movement of the intonational phrase is imminent). It may occur within a phrase (as in (12), where the break-off is after *so*, an adverbial modifying the following participle *hochgestuft*). In contrast, parentheses usually occur early in the clause, often between the front-field and the left sentence brace (the finite verb *hat* in extract (13)). As shown by Stoltenburg (2002), there is a systematic correlation between smooth continuation vs recycling after the inserted materials on the one hand, and the syntactic position of the break-off on the other. This suggests that there are canonical syntactic environments for prototypical parentheses (parenthesis niches). In German, they exclude break-off within a phrase, and highly favour (if not require) placement before or immediately after the left sentence brace. The break-off in (12) occurs outside a parenthesis niche.

8. Conclusion

In order to come to an understanding of how grammar and interaction are linked in conversation, the temporal unfolding of language in time needs to be taken seriously. This requires a new way of looking at linguistic structure which I have called on-line analysis elsewhere (Auer 2000): a kind of analysis that emphasises the projection, emergence and termination of syntactic patterns in real time. Projection is intimately linked to hierarchy, for what makes a given stretch of talk (structurally or content-wise) predictable is, in all domains of linguistic structure, some kind of superordinate, not-yet-complete pattern the production of which is ‘under way’. In order to recognise projections, we rely on the hierarchical organisation of language. On-line analysis as a consequence cannot be based on a ‘flat’ conception of language (such as the naive idea of language as a step-wise concatenation of elements into strings through strictly local transitions, e.g. from one word to the following). Rather, we need a rich

hierarchy of dominance relationships (syntactic, semantic and prosodic) in order to account for projections. These hierarchical relationships reach out beyond the scope of the sentence, proposition, or intonational phrase.

In this paper, I have applied the on-line approach to a particular format, that of delayed repairs. There are various ways in which linguists have been dealing with the phenomenon of syntactic repair in conversation. The best-known of them is also the most questionable one: it assumes that repair work makes natural language unsuited for acquisition since it makes it impossible for children to extract the necessary information about wellformed structures of their mother tongue from their caregivers' verbal input (see, e.g., Pinker 1994). In this approach, repair work is looked upon as the debris of language (production). An empirically more interesting approach holds against this position that the way in which repair phenomena are handled in natural conversation is highly structured and can be described in syntactic terms. This implies that doing repair in syntax requires syntactic knowledge, presumably of the same kind as in syntax elsewhere. Monitoring repair can therefore be quite useful for the language learner; in fact, some central features of the syntactic structure of a language can be extracted from the syntax of repair (cf. Levelt 1983; Uhmman 2001). One might add in support of this position that the prosodic make-up of repairs often makes it easy to disentangle the 'good' from the 'bad' structures and therefore guides the learner through the actual speech data, separating the 'debris' from the valuables.

I have sketched a third position which goes one step further and claims that repair in spoken syntax offers ways of putting complex and hierarchically structured information into sequentially/linearly ordered speech without using the hypotactical structures of written language. The format of delayed self-repair is a technique of dealing with the linearisation problem of language. It should not be looked upon as a remedial device correcting some deficiency in the way in which a speaker translates complex ideas into linear speech (which may or may not be the case), but rather as part of the solution to this problem.

In line with this interpretation, it can be noted that the delayed repair format often occurs in extended turns in which complex matters need to be talked about; and more often in speakers with some rhetorical skills than in linguistically unexperienced ones. (For instance, in job interviews it is more often used by the interviewers and by applicants for managerial posts (bank trainees) than in less verbose speakers for blue collar jobs; in therapeutic interviews it is more frequent than in reality TV – Big Brother – data.) Thus, the social and situational distribution of the uses of this repair format make clear that it is not typical of linguistically unskilled persons who do not know how to express themselves any better. In fact, the format is not 'deficient' in any way, but an efficient and non-imposing way of bringing across complex pieces of information with a high degree of hierarchical organisation.

Notes

* This paper has profited from comments by many colleagues of which the two editors of this volume – Auli Hakulinen and Margret Selting – deserve special mentioning for their extensive and careful feedback on the first version of the text. Karin Birkner and Geli Bauer pointed out some essential flaws in an earlier version which I have tried to eliminate. Needless to say that the now published version does not necessarily coincide with the point of view of any of the above-mentioned, and that responsibility for it remains entirely my own.

1. All transcriptions follow GAT (cf. Selting et al. 1998).
2. *Nisch* is a regional variant of *nich(t)* ‘not’, *au* a regional variant of *auch* ‘also’.
3. Same-speaker self-repair in which the repair occurs in the same TCU as the reparandum has been extensively discussed in conversation analysis (cf. Schegloff 1987; Fox & Jasperson 1995; Fox, Hayashi, & Jasperson 1996 and many others). Equally, delayed other-repair (initiations) have received some attention (cf. Schegloff 1992, 1997). However, self-repair which is delayed by at least one TCU as in the format discussed here has not been discussed in the conversation analytic literature so far.
4. On projection in interactional linguistics see Auer (2005, with further references) as well as Ford, Fox and Thompson (1996).
5. For a short summary of the fundamental clause structure patterns of German see for instance Auer (1996:62–63).
6. This is not to say that it may not have interactional meaning, particularly when produced in turn-competitive environments; cf. Goodwin (1979).
7. Left-branching embedded genitives such as ((*des Ministers*)_{NPgen} *Leibwache*)_{NP} are stylistically marked and subject to strong grammatical restrictions; indefinite feminine prepositioned genitives such as *(*einer Bank*)_{NPgen} *Hand*)_{NP} are impossible presumably because of processing difficulties: the first NP cannot be parsed unequivocally as a genitive NP since it is also open to a dative reading. In the case at hand, the dative reading is even enforced by the preceding preposition *in* which requires a dative NP such that in on-line processing (*in (einer Bank)*_{NPdat})_{PP} is much more likely than (*in (((einer Bank)*_{NPgen}) *Hand*)_{NPdat})_{PP} but leaves the second noun *Hand* unattached.
8. This is the reason why an equivalent hypotactic format is not always available, as, for instance, for example (1).
9. Spoonerism (*kontentriern* instead of *konzentriern*) in the original.
10. M’s in his reply that ‘he will notice nonetheless’ (despite being in bed sleeping?) tries to argue somewhat clumsily against this conclusion, redressing the safe-threat inherent in this declination of F’s proposal. However, the lack of hesitation with which this counterargument is produced may indicate that he was well anticipating the failure into which his answers to F’s preliminaries will lead her.
11. Cf. Berrendonner (1993), Simon (2004), Schönherr (1993).
12. Cf. Stoltenburg (2002).

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Pivot constructions in spoken German*

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1. Anakolutha and pivots

By advocating a “Syntax-for-Conversation,” Schegloff (1979) affirms the importance of repairs in oral communication. A pivot element may be seen as a special case of a preferred place for repairs: “If there is a convergence between the first element of a repair and some element of the ongoing turn-in-production, the shared element is often used as the place to initiate repair” (275). In the example that Schegloff quotes, this repair function is obvious, clearly marked by hesitation, repetition and pauses:

(1) M is looking at a picture of V and his family [Schegloff’s (17), 276]

M: I saw it but I never looked yihknow et did-eh-deh-deh-
middle one looks // just like

Therefore, according to Schegloff, the phrase *the middle one* is a pivot element shared equally by the “ongoing turn-in-production” and by the repair sentence: “The phrase *middle one* is potentially syntactic with what precedes; it turns out to be the ‘subject’ of a new sentence” (Schegloff 1979:276). Schegloff analyzes another example in a similar manner:

(2) [Schegloff’s (16), 276]

‘hhh Whad about uh:: (0,8) Oh yih go f::- you- How many
days? you go **five** days a week. Ri//ght?

You go is interpreted here as a pivot element: on the one hand, it belongs to the question *how many days you go*, and on the other hand, to the answer *you go five days a week*. The end of the projected question serves simultaneously as the beginning of the answer it elicits.

These examples evoke several unanswered questions. Could it not be the case that in (2) we are merely dealing with the syntactically regular sequence of a question and a self-attempted answer? After the actual break after *what about*, the speaker begins a question, albeit with a few problems: *yih go [...] how many days?*, and he attempts a hypothetical reply to it: *you go five days a week, right?* In this case, we would

have no pivot element. On the other hand, we can look at the linear sequence of the individual phrases.

(2)' [yih go] [how many days] [you go] [five days a week]

In this case there could be two possible pivot elements:

(2)'' yih go **how many days** - **how many days** you go - you go five days a week

Let us address three aspects of this problem:

- i. We can see that during the production of utterances within a turn, changes in the syntactic structure can be made, but it is only in retrospect that these are recognized as changes and could therefore be categorized as two different syntagmatic structures.
- ii. If we consider merely the linear sequence of the individual constituents, the word order of the utterance (as Schegloff seems to do), it is impossible to determine what type of syntactic structure we are dealing with. In the example above, we could conclude that there are either no or two pivot elements within the short segment. We need to ask whether pivot constructions are a syntactic structure in themselves, and if so, what formal parameters are the decisive factors.
- iii. A third point should be taken into consideration: are repairs really the only interactive function of pivot constructions?

Specific pivot or pivot-like constructions have already been described in classical rhetoric as a literary stylistic element – as “apokoinou” (cf. 2.1.4). The apokoinou is regarded as an aberration from the grammatical norm, as a syntactic break-off, which is granted to “poetic license.” Pivot constructions share this categorization as syntactic break-off with many other syntactic phenomena, which are classified by the norm-oriented grammar research as “anakolutha” – nothing more than a “catch-all category” into which everything that doesn’t conform to the syntactical-grammatical norm of the written language is thrown without any serious attempt at an adequate description. However, a more careful examination of such apparent syntactic break-offs reveals that this is an extremely heterogeneous group indeed. While actual syntactic break-offs exhibit no specifically definable “regular” structures, many of the phenomena traditionally relegated to this catch-all category display highly regular and precise structures that can be described in formal and functional ways (e.g., hanging topics/left dislocations (Selting 1993; Scheutz 1997), “dependent” main clauses (Auer 1998), rightward expansions (Auer 1992) – to cite only a few examples). These phenomena all share certain characteristics: they are based on processes of verbalization that make use of grammatical knowledge; and they are consistently used as linguistic resources in interaction.

One of these clear-cut syntactic structures is the pivot construction, examined more thoroughly here, whose characteristics will be discussed based on data drawn from spoken German. Our collection encompasses approximately 300 pivot construc-

tions taken from a corpus of everyday face-to-face conversations, each with two to four participants of various social backgrounds. The language employed is essentially colloquial Austrian German, in some cases a more dialectal variety of Middle Bavarian in Upper Austria.

2. Formal characteristics of pivot constructions

A pivot construction consists of three adjacent parts A-B-C:

- (3) des is **was FURCHTbares** is des.¹
 that is something AWful is that.
 That's terrible.
 A B C

The pivot element B, which forms the center of this construction, is connected to the preceding as well as to the following syntactic constituents, the initial periphery A and final periphery C. Separately, the initial part A-B and the final part B-C are each grammatically correct, whereas A-B-C taken together results in an ungrammatical syntactic structure (according to normative grammar). The pivot element is a constituent of the so called mid-field (i.e. the position after the finite verb in declarative sentences with XV-word order) in the initial part A-B and simultaneously constitutes the front-field (i.e. the sentence initial position before the finite verb) of the final part B-C. While the final part comprises a complete sentence in any case, the initial part represents either a syntactically complete sentence as in (3) or – most often – a syntactically incomplete structure, consisting of the front field, the finite verb and at least one additional syntactic constituent (cf. (4)).

- (4) S describes a medical treatment²

- 01 S: da hat er ihm **milliMEterweis**
 there has he him milliMEter by millimeter
 A millimeter at a time,
 02 hat er ihm einigstochen.
 has he him injected.
 he injected him.

In any case, the pivot element B corresponds to the syntactic projections opened in the initial periphery A – it is an uninterrupted continuation of a syntactic construction begun in A. We find a cohesive intonational contour in the prosody as well; the primary accent often lies on the pivot element, as it does in the examples above.

The pivot construction should be considered distinct from a syntactic break-off and subsequent new beginning as in (5); a distinction which presents few problems if a completely new syntactic construction is begun at a possible pivot element.

- (5) 01 *mein vater war ein (-) hhh*
my father was a (-) hhh
 My father was a –
 02 (acc) *von beruf is er gelernter schuster.*
(acc) by profession is he trained shoemaker.
 by profession he is a trained shoemaker.

In this example, we see a break-off of the construction *begun* and the subsequent new beginning. The potential pivot element *von beruf* ‘by profession’ is not a syntactically correct continuation of the initial segment *mein vater war ein* ‘my father was a’. Moreover, the break-off and the new beginning are also indicated prosodically by the pause after *ein*, the lower new beginning and clearly accelerated tempo in *von beruf*.

There is also a distinction between pivot constructions and parentheses. These structures look quite similar, because we often also find with parentheses that the preceding elements are repeated after the insertion.

- (6) 01 *das is (-) i mein das kann man ruhig sagen (-) das is*
That is, I mean one can safely say, that is
 02 *a schande für den ganzn ort.*
an embarrassment for the whole town.

However, it can be clearly seen that the insertion of *i mein das kann man ruhig sagen* ‘I mean one can safely say’ is not a syntactic projection of the preceding part, but instead, represents a structure syntactically independent of its environment. The prosodic separation of the parenthetical remark reflects this syntactic structure through the clear pauses at both ends and the lower pitched new beginning at *i mein* ‘I mean’. Moreover, the initial phrase of the sentence *das is* ‘that is’ is repeated with the same word order after the parenthetical remark, whereas in a pivot construction, the word order of the initial part would be inverted when it appears in the final part. It is more difficult to differentiate when attributive and appositive additions are attached to a pivot element (cf. (7)); parenthetical insertions are also possible before (or following) the pivot element (cf. (8)):

- (7) S about the procedures for putting the children to bed
 01 S: **wir habm einmal ah vor einiger zeit immer am**
we have once uh before some time always in
 Some time ago we always used to,
 02 **abnd ebn wann=s ins bett gangen**
the evening just when=they-CLI to bed gone
 in the evening just before they went to bed,
 03 **sind (.) habm wir da noch gschichtn vorglesn.**
have (.) have we then still stories read.
 read stories.

(8) S characterizes the technical skills of her son

01 S: der is halt (-) sagn=wir (-) **handwerklich**
 he is well (-) say-PL1=we (-) *technically*
 He is, well, let's say, technically
 02 is=er net a=so.
 is=he not a=such.
 not so [good].

In (7) we find a step-by-step specification of the first temporal adverb *einmal* 'once' by the PP *vor einiger Zeit* 'some time ago'; this PP is itself modified by the temporal adverb *immer* 'always' and the PP *am abend* 'in the evening', and the latter PP is modified by the attributive clause *wann sie ins bett gegangen sind* 'when they went to bed'. In (8), a metacommunicative hypersentence *sagn=wir* (lexicalized as a kind of particle) is parenthetically inserted preceding the pivot element.

In spite of those appositions, additions, or parentheses the character of the pivot construction is clear. The pivot element fulfills a structural syntactical projection of the initial periphery and is also embedded in the final periphery, forming in each case a cohesive intonation contour at least with this final part.

2.1 Types of constructions

2.1.1 True mirror-image constructions

Examples like (3) (*des is was FURCHTbares is des* 'that is something awful is that') represent an unequivocally definable pattern: they display a completely symmetric structure around the pivot element B. Segment C repeats segment A in a mirror-image order of the constituent parts. The pivot element fulfills the same syntactic function in both parts A-B and B-C. The strong syntactic integration of this sequence is reflected in the prosody as well. The main accent in B lies on *FURCHTbares*; the entire series A-B-C constitutes a single intonation unit. We perceive no pause and the pivot element is integrated into the pitch contour of the verb-second clause with falling pitch. I will call this a "true mirror-image construction," adopting a term from Franck (1985). Such a prototypical construction with a mirror-image repetition of segment A requires that A-B already constitutes a syntactically complete sentence. This is often the case in predicate constructions like (3) in which the VP consists of the linking verb *sein* 'to be' and a predicate constituent (NP, PP, ADJ, ADV). Most of the time, however, we find that A-B is a syntactically incomplete structure, and mostly the finite verb in A is the first part of a verbal brace. The verbal brace is a distinctive characteristic of German syntax; it refers to a positional separation of the different parts of the predication (finite verb and non-finite parts of the verb phrase) – for example the separation of the finite auxiliary verb in the second position and the non-finite lexical main verb at the end of a sentence. We see this in example (4) (*da hat er ihm milliMEterweis hat er ihm einigstoehen* 'there has he him millimeter by millimeter has he him injected'), a verbal brace consisting of the finite auxiliary verb *hat* 'has' and the non-finite verb

einigstoehen ‘injected’; the modal adverbial *milliMEterweis* is the pivot element. In contrast to (3), the initial part A-B does not result in a complete structure, but exhibits an unsaturated syntactic projection. The finite auxiliary verb *hat* as the first part of the verbal brace opens a slot that is not filled until the realization of the non-finite lexical verb *einigstoehen* as a closing brace element.

2.1.2 Syntactically less integrated mirror-image constructions

Another type of mirror-image construction can be found in the following examples, where there is a clear pause before the pivot:

- (8) S characterizes the technical skills of her son
- 01 S: der is halt (-) sagn=wir (-) **handwerklich**
 he is well (-) say-PL1=we (-) *technically*
 He is, well, let’s say, technically
- 02 is=er net ein=so
 is=he not a=such
 he’s not so [good].
- (9) S about the correct way to mow a public meadow
- 01 S: des ghört (-) de (.) da: (-) **mit**
 that should be (-) de (.) da: (-) *with*
 That should be mowed with
- 02 **ein mähbalkn** ghört=s gmäht.
 a mowing attachment should be=it-CLI mowed.
 a mowing attachment.

Prosody is not the only way in which these examples with pauses before the pivot elements deviate from the previous case. They all exhibit additional elements in the clause before the pivot, for example, the metalinguistic expression *sagn=wir* ‘let’s say’ in (8) or the fragmental repetitions *de da* in (9). This implies that “repair work” is being undertaken here: in (8) a negative judgment is being set aside or weakened or at least delayed; in (9) the speaker has difficulty finding the right word. This combination of characteristics exemplifies a second type of mirror-image construction, one in which the pivot element is not as completely integrated as it is in (3)–(4). This partial syntactic integration is signaled by a prosodic characteristic, a pause immediately preceding the pivot element. The intonational contour doesn’t show any break, however, ensuring that an intact intonational unit still exists in each case. Therefore, we do not interpret these cases as a break in the construction before the pivot element. Despite the pause, the subsequent element is understood as a continuation of the interrupted construction. In addition to the progradient intonation contour, the usually incomplete verb phrase of the initial part contributes to this integrative structure: the syntactic projection of the finite verb makes a specific brace-closing element relevant, which also functions as a possible completion point. In the initial part A-B, this closing element is not available, so the syntactic projection is open until the brace-closing element is realized at the end of the entire pivot construction. This is especially clear in collaborative turns,

in which the speaker and the listener produce a pivot structure together. The listener anticipates the expected structure:

- (10) A and B inform C about the possibility of getting an apprenticeship for their son
- 01 A: na gut, .hh jetzt is=er eh (-) **in in Aigen beim**
na good, .hh now is=he ah (-) in in Aigen at
 Well, good. Now he is in Aigen, at
- 02 **Lindorfer**
Lindorfer's
- 03 B: is=er untergebracht.
is=he placed.
 he is placed.

2.1.3 Modified mirror-image constructions

In addition to the constructions already discussed, there is also a large group of examples in which the initial and final peripheries are not identical, but where the pivot element nevertheless fulfills the same syntactic function in both syntagmas. It appears necessary to address the content of the initial part A-B again in the final part B-C, or to suggest a fitting interpretation. What we have here is a final variation and modification of the initial structure. Such modifications apply to temporal (cf. (11)) and modal characteristics (cf. (12)) of the verb complex, lexical substitutions (cf. (13)) and similar items. For example:

- (11) 01 dann bin=i no **sechs jahr als verheiratete frau**
then am-PP=I still six years as a married woman
 Then I spent another six years as a married woman
- 02 war=i no bei meine eltern.
was=I still with my parents.
 in my parents' home.
- (12) S about the age of his friend at the time his family left
- 01 S: wie=s wegkommen sind war er (-) **zehn**
when=they-CLI left had was he (-) ten
 He must have been ten or
- 02 **zwölf jahr sowas** wird er gwesen sein.
twelve years or so will he have been.
 twelve years old or so when they left.
- (13) a farmer's wife speaks about bulls at their farm
- 01 also jetzt der größere, den wir drübm habm,
as for the larger one that we have over there,
- 02 der macht nichts, der ist ruhig.
he doesn't do anything, he's quiet.
- 03 → also da kann **sogar i** geh da hin.
so then can even I go over there
 So even I can go over toward it.

These characteristics lead us to refer to such cases as modified mirror-image constructions.

2.1.4 *Apokoinou constructions*

Examples such as Schegloff's (1979:276)

- (1) M: I saw it but I never looked yihknow et did-eh-deh-deh-
middle one looks // just like

should be clearly differentiated from those discussed up to now. In (1) the differences between the initial and final peripheries are syntactically and semantically obvious: A-B and B-C are basically different clauses; the pivot element represents different syntactic functions and categories in A-B vs. B-C (PP vs. NP), respectively. In addition, prosodic characteristics (for example pauses, accelerations and decelerations in tempo) could also signal a syntactic break-off. In Schegloff's example there is no indication of the corresponding prosodic features. However, the hesitation and repair signals inserted indicate a high degree of prosodic disintegration. There seems to be, therefore, a syntactic disintegration as well. That would make it difficult to describe such cases as a type of regular syntactic structure.

Among my data there are extremely few potential cases of this structure. The following is one prototypical example:

- (14) S reports about troubles with the window handle of his car

01 da is **die fensterkurbel**; (-)
there is the window handle; (-)

02 (acc) hab=i abgedreht gehabt.
(acc) have=I broken off had.

I had already broken off the window-handle.

Here, the subject of the initial clause becomes the accusative object of the final clause. However, the prerequisite for such a fusion is that the shared item has the correct morphological form for both of the fused sentences. If the morphological markers for nominative and accusative NPs are different, the utterance would be considered ungrammatical. See (14)', and (14)'' for the ungrammatical products of a contrived pivot construction from the two individual sentences in (14)':

- (14)' [constructed]

01 da is der fensterhebel. den fensterhebel
there is the window handle-NOM. the window handle-ACC

02 hab=I abgedreht gehabt.
have=I broken off had.

- (14)'' [constructed]

01 *da is **der fensterhebel** hab=i abgedreht gehabt.
the window handle-NOM

(14)''' [constructed]

01 *da is **den fensterhebel** hab=i abgedreht gehabt.
the window handle-ACC

In (14)'', the ungrammaticality results from the nominative NP (*der fensterhebel*) which cannot function as an accusative object in the final part B-C (**der fensterhebel hab=i abgedreht gehabt* 'the window handle-NOM have I broken off had'), whereas in (14)''', the accusative morphology (*den fensterhebel*) cannot represent the subject in the initial part A-B (**da is den fensterhebel* 'there is the window handle-ACC').

When the exact prosodic properties are taken into account, the interpretation of example (14) as a pivot structure becomes increasingly problematical. A brief pause after *fensterkurbel*, together with a contour break and an acceleration in the following syllables, make us more inclined to view this passage as a syntactical new start after a break-off, or as a combination of two independent declarative sentences, the second of which lacks a front field.³

The semantics of the initial and final parts appear to be a further definitive criterion: it seems necessary for the final part B-C to be semantically identical to, or at least compatible with, the initial part A-B. If these two parts refer to substantially different contents, a pivot construction would be considered unacceptable, whether or not the pivot element in A-B vs. B-C fulfills the same or a different syntactic function.

(14)'''' [constructed]

01 *ich schenke dir die fensterkurbel ist kaputt.
I give you the windowhandle is broken.

In my conversational data there are no instances of pivot constructions in which the semantics of the initial part is essentially different from the semantics of the final part and/or in which the pivot element fulfills different syntactic functions in the initial and final part. Exactly these sorts of cases are described in classical rhetoric as a specific structure, as *apokoinou*. Indeed, numerous examples of this type of construction can be found, especially in Old and Middle High German literary texts, which also display pivot elements with different syntactic functions in the initial and in the final clauses (cf. Gärtner 1969; Scheutz 1992).

(15) [Roland vs.4484, Middle High German]

ouh verluren sie thar weder **viere unde sehzc man** vielen
vone ther biscoves vanen. (Middle High German)
Auch verloren sie dort **vierundsechzig Mann** fielen auf der
Seite des Bischofs. (translation into New High German)
*Also lost they there forty-six men fell on the side of
the bishop.*

Even if we haven't found any *apokoinou* constructions in the sense discussed above, there is nevertheless a number (though small) of examples in which the initial and final parts display larger formal differences than appears to be the case in the modifying mirror-image constructions discussed in 2.1.3.

(16) S talks about her mother's biography

- 01 S: sie hat so a haushaltungsschul gmacht und
she has so a homemaking school done and
 She went to a home economics school and
- 02 hat dann **in verschiedenen haushaltn** is sie dann
has then in various households has she then
 then she was in various households.
- 03 gwesn.
 been.

(17) S reports about leisure facilities in her village

- 01 S: es war da auch amal a **nähkurs** is
it was there also once a sewing class has
 A sewing class was once
- 02 veranstalt wordn
conducted been
 conducted there.

(18) a teacher about the dialect use in his pupils' families

- 01 T: die habm **eine derartig ah derbe mundart**
they have such a uh strong dialect
 They speak such a strong dialect
- 02 sprechn die daheim
speak they at home
 at home.

Although these examples display clear differences between the initial and the final parts, nevertheless, we still find that these two parts exhibit a clear semantic identity. The final part reformulates the content of the initial part, by employing other lexical elements and/or different syntactic structures. It is obvious that a shifting of perspective has taken place within the central pivot element. With the pivot element as a new syntactic starting point, the preceding structure changes as well: In (16) a reformulation with new lexical material has taken place (*[sie] hat dann in verschiedenen haushaltn [gearbeitet]* 'she then [worked] in various households' becomes *in verschiedenen haushaltn is sie dann gwesn* 'she's been in various households'); in (17) the initial active clause *es war amal a nähkurs* 'there was once a sewing class' is turned into a final passive clause *a nähkurs is veranstaltet wordn* 'a sewing class was conducted'; in (18) only the verb is changed: *they have such a strong dialect* becomes *they speak such a strong dialect*. However, in spite of all the lexical or structural differences the semantic identity of the initial and the final parts is preserved in each case. This makes it clear that we are not dealing with apokoinou constructions as outlined above, but that these examples should rather be classified as modifying mirror-image constructions.

2.2 Characteristics of pivot and periphery

Next, we will refine the current description of this structure by discussing the relationship of the pivot element to the initial and final peripheries.

2.2.1 Initial periphery

As a rule, the initial periphery of the mirror-image construction consists of a very “light weight” front field and the finite verb – usually an auxiliary verb, which serves as the opening element of a verbal/sentence brace. In the overwhelming majority of cases, personal pronouns or local and temporal pro-forms are found here (cf. the following examples; pro-forms are underlined).

- (19) S talks about being a member of a political party

01 S: i war **acht jahr** bin i bei der partei gwesn.
I was eight years have I with the party been.
 I was a party member for eight years.

- (20) S tells about the difficulties to get an apprenticeship for her son

01 S: und da hätt **der herr xxx** hätt halt
and there had-CON the mr. xxx had-CON
 And Mr. xxx had
 02 versucht den bubm
tried the boy-ACC
 tried to find the boy
 03 bei einem tischler unterzbringen.
at a carpenters to apprentice.
 an apprenticeship there with a carpenter.

- (21) 01 dann is wieder **a rücklicht** is hin
then is again a tail-light is broken
 Then again a tail-light is broken.

Less frequently, the “thematic” *es* ‘there’ occupies the initial position before the finite verb, while the front-field elements are shifted to the focus position at the end of the clause, as in (22). Alternatively, a verb-second clause lacking a front field is constructed, such as in (23):

- (22) S about minimal standards of dealing with people

01 S: und es ghört **ein kleins bißl respekt**
and there belongs a little bit respect
 And a little respect
 02 ghört auch her.
belongs also there.
 would be in order.

(23) S calls for a threshing barn for the local museum

- 01 S: ghörert auch **sogar ein=alter dreschkastn**
belongs-CON also even an old threshing barn
 Even an old threshing box
- 02 ghörert her.
belongs-CON here.
 would be appropriate.

2.2.2 Final periphery

The final periphery consists of a verb-second clause, whose front-field is occupied by the pivot element. In the true mirror-image constructions (see 2.1.1.), the final clause contains a duplication of the initial clause with modified word order. However, this applies only to the obligatory sentence elements. For example, if the initial clause contains pro-forms with adverbial functions occupying the front-field, they are usually eliminated in the final periphery (cf. (20), (21)). The same is true of optional elements such as modal particles in the mid-field (cf. the modal particle *halt* in (8)).

Since the initial part A-B is usually not a complete sentence, additional new elements appear in the final part B-C. The length of this concluding part varies depending upon the position of the focused pivot element in the initial part (cf. (24) vs. (25)):

- (24) 01 da hätt=er bald nicht (-) **zurück** hätt=er
there had-CON=he almost not (-) back had-CON=he
 He was almost
- 02 bald nicht gekonnt.
almost not could-PP.
 unable to return.
- (25) 01 er hat **in Salzburg** hat=er ja einmal (.) i glaub **zwei**
he has in Salzburg has=he yeah once (.) I think two
 I believe he was
- 02 **semester lang** hat=er eine gastprofessur ghabt.
semesters long has=he a guest professorship had.
 a guest professor in Salzburg for two semesters.

While in (24) the initial part A-B is almost complete (following the focused directional adverb *zurück* ‘back’ as the pivot element, only the past participle *gekonnt* ‘could’ would be needed to complete the sentence), the initial part in (25) is merely the beginning of a rather long sentence. Following the first focused pivot element *in Salzburg*, the peripheral part C consists at first of the finite verb and subject and an iterative temporal adverb *einmal* ‘once’. Then follows the durative temporal adverbial *zwei semester lang* ‘for two semesters’, after the parenthetically inserted metacommunicative phrase *i glaub* ‘I believe’. A further pivot construction is formed, with *zwei semester lang* as pivot element, and only then do we reach the accusative object *eine gastprofessur* ‘a guest professorship’ and the past participle *ghabt* ‘had’, which closes the verbal brace.

In the case of the modified mirror-image construction (see 2.1.2.), the initial clause is not only completed by the final clause, but is also simultaneously modi-

fied to some extent. The following examples illustrate the characteristic modifications (modified constituents underlined):

- the choice of another type of subject (with the resulting effect upon the verb morphology) as in (26), in which the initial subject, expressed by the enclitic personal pronoun 2. SG *musst* = *musst du* ‘you have to’, is replaced by the indefinite pronoun *niemand* ‘nobody’ in the final periphery.

(26) S reports about a death due to pneumonia

- 01 S: der is an einer lungenentzündung gestorbm (-)
He died of pneumonia
- 02 eh im spital drin. (-)
even in the hospital inside.
- 03 aber wo musst=denn heut
but where must-CLI-SG2=then today
 But where nowadays –
- 04 → **mit=a=lungenentzündung heut mit=n penizillin**
with=a=pneumonia today with=the penicillin
 after all with penicillin
- 05 muss doch niemand mehr sterben.
must after all no one anymore die.
 no one has to die of pneumonia any more.

- a modification of the temporal or modal aspects of the verb complex.

- (12) 01 wie=s wegkommen sind war er (-) **zehn zwölf jahr**
when=they left had was he (-) ten twelve years
 He must have been ten or twelve years old
- 02 **sowas wird=er gewesen sein.**
or so will=he have been.
 or so when they left.

- the substitution of the verbal complex.

- (18) 01 die habm **eine derartig ah derbe mundart**
they have such a uh strong dialect
 They speak such a strong dialect
- 02 sprechn die daheim
speak they at home
 at home.

2.2.3 Pivot element

An examination of our data reveals extremely varied syntactic functions and categories serving as the central elements of pivot constructions. The most usual type are adverbials (cf. (8), (9), (10), etc.) – they account for fifty percent of the total cases. Subjects (cf. (21), (22), (23)) and direct objects (cf. (18)) are the second and third most common types respectively. These syntactic functions can be represented by different

syntactic categories: NPs, PPs, ADJs (cf. (8)), ADVs (cf. (24)), dependent clauses as in the following example:

- (27) a teacher about the pupils' use of dialect in the school and at home
- 01 T: daheim können sie (.) **wenn sie wolln** können
at home can they (.) when they want can
 At home they can
- 02 sie dann eh in dialekt redn.
they then anyway in dialect speak.
 speak in dialect if they want anyway.

Pronouns are very seldom found as pivot elements. In the few examples in our corpus, they always carry primary focal stress; cf. (13) with a focusing particle *sogar* 'even', which insures the primary focal stress on the subject pronoun, or (28), in which the pronoun *einer* 'one' is contrastively focused:

- (28) S talks about one of the two sons of family friends
- 01 S: da hat **EIner** hat klavier glernt.
there has One has piano learned.
 There one of them learned to play the piano.

Two facts seem worth mentioning:

(i) Finite verbs cannot serve as pivots. We can tell that this is not due to coincidental gaps in our corpus, since contrived examples are judged to be unacceptable, as in (29):

- (29) [constructed]
- *er **hat** er das gemacht
he has he that done

Perhaps these examples are unacceptable because transforming the initial part *er hat* (with its verb-second position) into a final structure with the verb as pivot element results in a verb-first position (*hat er*) for the final part. This would, in turn, change the sentence mode from a declarative to an interrogative sentence:

- (30) [constructed]
- er **hat** das gemacht.
he has that done.
hat er das gemacht?
has he that done?
 He did do that. → Did he do that?

Such a transformation of the sentence mode is obviously impossible in a pivot structure as analyzed here.

However, we do not find clause-final non-finite verbs serving as pivot elements either, despite the fact that this would not require an inversion of subject and (finite)

verb, as in the above example, and would therefore not change the sentence mode. In this case, the invented examples are also judged unacceptable at first.

(31) [constructed]

*er hat ein neues RAD **gekauft** hat er ein neues rad
 he has a new BIKE bought has he a new bike

Nevertheless, the acceptability of constructed data improves significantly if one uses the non-finite main verb plus the non-verbal part of the verbal phrase as a pivot element (cf. (31)'):

(31)' [constructed]

er hat **ein neues RAD gekauft** hat er
 he has a new BIKE bought has he
 He has bought a new bike.

(ii) Corresponding to these findings, the position of the focus exponent in the pivot element appears to be decisive: even the non-finite main verb can serve as a pivot element, if it serves as the exponent of a (contrastive) focus:

(32) [constructed]

01 A: hast du das moped von deinem freund gekauft?
 Did you buy the moped from your friend?
 02 → B: nein, das hat er mir **gesCHENKT** hat er mir das.
 no, it has he me preSENTed has he me it.
 No, he gave it to me as a gift.

This result is consistent with the aforementioned fact that no unstressed pronouns are used as pivots either.

3. Functional/interactive aspects of the pivot constructions

3.1 Pivot constructions as a focusing strategy

3.1.1 Fusion of focus and topic position

Looking at the first prototypical case of the pivot construction, the syntactically well-integrated mirror-image construction, it is relatively easy to determine its functional potential as a focusing strategy. The role of focus in questions and answers and in establishing textual coherence seems to be to identify the new information that the utterance is to convey. With special focus operators such as negation, quantifiers or particles like *nur* 'only', it seems to identify a set of relevant alternatives (cf. *Only JOHN can help us [and not Tom or Mary].*). Focus in declarative sentences is usually marked by a high pitch accent. Without going into detail, it appears that the unmarked position of the most prominent pitch accent – and therefore of the focus – in German generally

occurs toward the end of the sentence; the accented constituents function as focus exponents of a variable focus domain.

This is also reflected in our data. During the discussion of the initial periphery A, we have already indicated that the front field is usually occupied primarily by light anaphoric elements such as adverbial pro-forms (cf. *da*, *dann* ‘there, then’ in (20), (21)), personal or deictic pronouns (cf. (18), (19)). However, the focused elements more vital to the information structure of the utterance don’t appear until after the finite verb in the mid-field, and this is also precisely where the pivot elements are to be found. In the initial part A-B, the pivot element is located in the mid-field – usually preceding the potential, but not actually realized, closing element of the sentence brace. This very position in the end of the mid-field is, as mentioned above, the unmarked position of the primary focal accent, the unmarked position of the focus exponent. It is therefore not surprising that in our data, most pivot elements have a high pitch accent – that is, they are focused. This applies especially to the true mirror-image constructions.

The second relevant concept is the distinction of topic and comment. Topic is usually defined as “what the sentence is about.” The preferred position for the topic is the beginning of a clause; in most of the recent research on topic in German, topic is determined strictly by position – the first position in a declarative (verb-second) sentence (cf. Molnár 1991). Since this position can be occupied not only by syntactic subjects or objects, but also by adverbials, it seems more appropriate to define topic not so much as “what the sentence is about” but as “the frame within which the sentence holds.”

Therefore in German, topic and focus are in complementary distribution. When unmarked, the topic occurs in initial position, whereas the focus area is the final position. The pivot construction combines these two positions: while the pivot element occupies the clause-final focus position in the initial part A-B, it simultaneously occupies the topic position of the front field in the final part B-C, as we have seen. That is, we have here a fusion of the unmarked focus position of the initial part and the topic position of the final part. This means we are dealing with focused topics; the pivot construction proves to be an effective and elegant topic-focusing strategy that occurs exclusively in the spoken language.

In the next example (33) we see some of the interactive demands of a pivot construction:

(33) A tells about a performance of a pianist on TV

- 01 A: *da war der da,*
there was he there,
 He was there.
- 02 *na da habns zu SECHst habns*
well there have they as SIX have they
 The six of them
- 03 *a stückl gspielt. (-)*
a piece played; (-)
 played a piece at the same time.

- 04 auf SECHS klaviere.
 On SIX pianos.
- 05 B: auf SECHS klaviere.
 On SIX pianos.
- 06 A: auf SECHS klaviere habns a stückl gspielt.
 on SIX pianos have they a piece played.
 They played a piece on 6 pianos.

A is telling about an entertainment program on television, in which a certain piano player often performs. After the introduction, stating that this particular pianist did indeed appear (line 1), the fact that six persons were involved in performing the piece is focused on in the pivot construction (line 2). As an afterthought after the verbal brace ending *gspielt* ‘played’, he goes on to say that there were not only six people, but that the piece was played on six different pianos (line 4). This new focus established in the afterthought is repeated by the astonished B (line 5). Then in the last turn, A takes up this focused element once again and presents it as a topic for the following clause (line 6). To a certain extent, we can follow the step-by-step construction of a “proto” pivot structure as it happens: The events occurring in this sequence as a string of separate turns could be condensed (“telescoped”) into a single pivot construction as well, and the corresponding pivot construction would be:

(33)' [constructed]

da haben=s **auf SECHS klaviere** habn=s a stückl gspielt
 there have=they on SIX pianos have=they a piece played
 They have played a piece on six pianos.

This example seems particularly instructive for a functional understanding of true mirror-image pivot constructions. In the course of a particular conversational activity, one element is brought into the foreground, and this simultaneously shifts the perspective: this focused element becomes the new source of the topic within the same turn, and the final periphery contains the commentary on that topic. So what we have here is a kind of change in topical activity and perspective in the ongoing turn. This is usually connected with an upgrading of the relevance of the topic.

In these findings, we can affirm a correspondence between functional and formal aspects: The shifting of perspective during the production of a TCU corresponds to the shifting toward a new syntactic structure within an as yet incomplete clause – with the central pivot element as a prosodically marked area for the shift and the initial periphery as a “rush through” with light anaphoric elements in the front field (or the lack of a front field altogether).

3.1.2 Portioning of information

At the same time, the pivot construction introduces the opportunity to apportion the information by establishing multiple foci in a syntactic clause. The following example demonstrates a two-part focus:

(34) S reports about his life as a weekly commuter

- 01 → S: ja du i fahr **MONtags** fahr i WEG,
well you I drive MONdays drive I aWAY,
 Well, you, I leave on Mondays
 02 und FREItags fahr i HEIM.
and FRIdays drive I HOME.
 and come home on Fridays.

In normal word order (*i fahr MONtags WEG*), the two foci (*MONtags*, *WEG* ‘mondays, away’) would immediately follow each other and would have to be expressed by two equally strong isolating focus accents. The pivot construction renders this unnecessary and allows both focus areas to appear separately. This is even clearer in (35), where the pivot element is further specified by an “afterthought” immediately after it:

(35) S talks about a co-worker’s position

- 01 S: der war am HAUPTbahnhof, (.) also
he was at the MAIN train station, (.) well
 He was a foreman at the main train station
 02 im exPRESSgut war=er MEIster dort.
in exPRESS shipping was=he FOREman there.
 in the express shipping department.

The corresponding “condensed” sentence would have to be: *der war am HAUPTbahnhof im exPRESSgut MEIster*, with a tripartite focus expressed by three equally prominent accents in close proximity. The form chosen here solves this problematic situation in a much more elegant manner: first the specification *im exPRESSgut*, a kind of attribute, is added to the NP *am HAUPTbahnhof* as an “afterthought”. Since it is anchored in a pivot construction, the first two foci are separated from the third focus *MEIster*, which occupies the unmarked focus position at the end of the clause.

3.2 Pivot constructions as a cohesion/coherence-establishing device

We often find pivot constructions following problematical positions requiring extra effort in formulation, i.e. troubles in verbalization or difficult points to explain to the interlocutor. In such cases, this may result in disturbances in the process of speech production, i.e. pauses, parenthetical remarks, and expansions. In order to insure and stabilize the textual cohesion, neighboring parts of the utterance which preceded the problematical section are repeated. Pivot constructions are often created in this manner, as illustrated in the following examples:

(7) S about the procedures for putting the children to bed

- 01 S: wir habm **einmal ah vor** **einiger zeit immer am**
we have once uh before some time always in
 Some time ago we always used to,

- 02 **abnd** **ebm wann=s** **ins bett** **gangen**
the evening just when=they-CLI to bed gone
 in the evening just before they went to bed,
- 03 **sind** (.) **habm wir da noch** **gschichtn vorglesn.**
have (.) have we then still stories read.
 read stories.

(36) the owner of a textile mill reports on economic problems

- 01 **wir habm dann wie dann die garnkrise** **war**, (-)
we have then as then the thread crisis was, (-)
 During the oil crisis
- 02 **die rohölkrise**, (-) **habm=wir schwer** **verloren.**
the oil crisis, (-) have=we badly lost.
 we lost badly.

(37) S informs a friend about the possibilities of pupils' participation in school activities

- 01 S: **und jeweils is=es glaub=i is=es** (-)
and each time is=it think=I is=it (-)
 And I believe
- 02 **also maximal zweimal acht wochn** **is=es**
so maximally two times eight weeks is=it
 it is at most twice – for eight weeks each
- 03 **möglich, daß ein Schüler da teilnehmen kann.**
possible, that a pupil there participate can.
 that a pupil can participate.

In (7) we find an extensive step-by-step specification of the first temporal adverb *einmal* 'once', described in detail above. A similar case is (36) – as part of the pivot element, the attributive clause *wie dann die garnkrise war* modifies the temporal proadverb *dann* 'then', the technical term *garnkrise* 'threadcrisis' requires further explanation and is substituted in an afterthought by the common term *rohölkrise* 'oil crisis'. In neither example is there a feed-back signal at the relevant positions during the production of the pivot element; possibly this is what also stimulates the speaker to add additional information. In (37) the speaker seems to be unsure; after the initial periphery *und jeweils is=es* 'and each time is=it', a metacommunicative sentence (*glaub=i* 'I think') is inserted parenthetically. This is followed by a repetition of the finite verb and the subject pronoun *es*. The temporal adverbial phrase that follows, the pivot element *maximal zweimal acht wochn* 'maximally two times eight weeks', brings this phase of insecurity to an end; the pivot construction re-establishes syntactic cohesion with the initial structure of the clause.

Pivot constructions can also be found after longer interruptions, due to pauses for planning, etc.; cf. the following example:

- (38) A, B report about a check-up as a prerequisite for life insurance
- 01 A: i bin **EINmal** bin i oben gewesen,
I have ONce have I up there been,
 I was up there [at the doctor's] once.
- 02 da habm wir a (-) so a (2.0)
there have we a (-) such a (2.0)
- 03 → B: .hh a **LE[bmsversicherung]** habm wir abgeschlossn,]
.hh a LI[FEE insurance have we bought,]
 We bought a life insurance policy.
- 04 → A: [**a LEbmsversicherung** habm wir
[a LIFE insurance have we
- 05 *abgeschlossn.]*
bought.]
 We bought a life insurance policy
- 06 B: da habm wir ja zu einem doktor gehen müssn.
We had to go to a doctor.
- 07 A: da muasst di ja untersuchn lassn.
Then you have to have yourself be examined.

After the first pivot construction (line 1) *ich bin EINmal bin ich oben gewesen* ‘I was up there [i.e. at the doctor’s] once’, the following syntactic unit begun with *da habm wir a* ‘there have we a’ opens a syntactic projection that makes one expect a continuation; but then insecurity and hesitations are apparent. A few tenths of a second before A proceeds (line 4), B (A’s wife) begins to speak (line 3), and both speakers simultaneously and collaboratively produce a pivot construction to continue the structure already begun.

It can clearly be seen that in the cases discussed here – in contrast to the examples discussed in 3.1 – there is neither a shift in perspective, nor the initiation of a topic, but rather a reestablishment of the activity that already existed. This different function is also reflected in the form of the pivot construction type used here. The syntactically less integrated type is characterized by pauses or insertions before the pivot element, or, if the pivot element is expanded or modified, also by pauses within or after the pivot element.

3.3 Frames for quotations

The introduction of a quotation exemplifies a special case of repeating formulations. They almost always appear as pivot constructions, for example:

- (39) 01 und da hat er gsagt **des gibt=s nit**, hat er gsagt,
and then has he said that can't be, has he said,
 And then he said, “that can’t be,” he said
- 02 dass=du=sie schon einmal gwechselt hast.
that=you=they-ACC already once changed have.
 “that you already changed them once”.

This very special type of pivot constructions appears to fulfill a specific interactive function. The pivot element consists of entire sentences or several elements related as direct quotations. The beginning and end portions of these quotations are marked by a syntactic frame, consisting of a hypersentence with the obligatory use of the verbum dicendi *sagen* 'to say' both in the initial and in the final periphery. The word-for-word repetitions of the initial and final elements of this frame function as "quotation marks" with a clear reference to the speaking/acting individuals. This may be needed in order to differentiate between the various individuals in a narrative.

3.4 Pivot constructions as a repair procedure

As quoted at the beginning, Schegloff (1979) views pivot constructions predominantly as a preferred procedure for repairs. In our data, we do indeed find many repair procedures carried out with the help of pivot constructions. But this is far less prevalent than one would expect. We can differentiate between two well-represented groups of repairs, which, in turn, correspond to specific types of pivot constructions.

First, there are repair procedures related to the pivot element itself. These may be found in true mirror-image constructions. They include a pause preceding the pivot element or before the repair within the pivot element. In addition, other indicators of repair can often be found, such as lengthening, break-offs, or particles. A few examples follow:

(40) S talks about his youth during the Nazi-regime

- 01 S: ja ich war **unter der** (-) **unter** (-) **also unterm**
yeah I was under the (-) under (-) well under
 Under
- 02 **Hitler** war=I einmal im büro hauptamtlich
Hitler was=I once in the office full-time
 Hitler my main function was
- 03 bei der Hitlerjugnd.
with the Hitler-Youth.
 with the Hitler-Youth.

(41) S reports about his membership in a bookclub

- S: ja bin=a **beim Don** (.) **beim Donauland** bin=i mitglied.
yes am=a with Don (.) with Donauland am=I member.
 Yes, I'm a member of the Donauland [book club].

(42) S reports about questionnaires of an opinion poll

- 01 im Haus untn habm=wir **vier** (.) **fünf**
in the house downstairs have we four (.) five
 We had four, five
- 02 **scheine** habm=wir ghabt untn im Haus.
questionnaires have=we had downstairs in the house.
 questionnaires downstairs in the house.

These examples demonstrate various types of repairs. The specific function of the pivot construction – with regard to the signaling of cohesion as discussed above – is to continue the utterance begun before the repair. At the same time, the continuation signals the end of the repair section.

Second, there are repair procedures related to the periphery. These can be found in modifying mirror-image constructions. In contrast to the first type, they repair primarily conversationally inappropriate utterances. These modifying mirror-image constructions alter the meaning of the entire sentence almost “imperceptibly” and avert possible unwanted inferences in the interpretation of the initial periphery. For example, there is a shift in perspective in (12):

- (12) 01 *wie=s wegkommen sind war er (-) **zehn zwölf jahr***
 when=they left had was he ten twelve years
 When they left,
 02 **sowas** *wird=er gwesen sein.*
 or so will=he have been.
 he must have been ten or twelve years old or so.

After it has been recognized that the speaker is a bit uncertain about the exact age of the boy, the indicative mood of the verb of the initial periphery is changed, and along with it, the functional sentence type as well. The assertion of the initial periphery is downgraded to a mere supposition.

In the next example, the attitude of the speaker toward what he is saying shifts during the utterance:

- (43) collaborative talk about the death of a prominent pianist
- 01 A: *der dings is auch gstorbm hab ich glesn in der*
 What's-his-name has also died. I read it in the
 02 *zeitung. Wie heisst er, der beim Konrads da*
 paper. What's his name, the one who always
 03 *immer gespielt hat; wie heisst er.*
 played there at Konrad's? What's his name?
 04 B: *mir fällts jetzt auch nimmer ein.*
 I can't recall it now either.
 05 C: *na i i weiss=es aa nit.*
 No, I don't know that either.
 06 → *i hab=s im **R**adio habm=sie=s*
 *I have=it-CLI on the **R**adio have=they-CLI=it-CLI*
 I have [heard] it on the radio. They said it on the radio,
 07 *sogar gsagt.*
 even said.
 even.

While speaker C (line 6) begins to report in the initial part of the pivot construction that he heard of the death of the previously mentioned pianist at Konrad's on the radio – *i hab=s im radio* ‘I have it on the radio’ would only require *gehört* ‘heard’ to be complete –, he modifies this beginning in the final part to something that was “even

said on the radio.” This new statement thereby emphasizes that the radio producers judged this information relevant enough to be included in the newscast. Moreover, the focused pivot element *im Radio* ‘on the radio’ diverts attention from the earlier sequence (lines 1–3), in which speaker A reports that he had read about the death of a prominent individual in the newspaper. He tries in vain – despite several attempts – to remember the name of the deceased. Speaker B relates that he can’t remember the name now either. Now C enters the conversation, admits his ignorance as well, and continues with the cited pivot construction, contrasting the newspaper account with the radio announcement.

In the final example, a (rhetorical) *wh*-question is changed to an emphatic declarative statement.

(26) S reports about a death due to pneumonia

- 01 S: der is an einer lungenentzündung gestorbm (-)
He died of pneumonia
- 02 eh im spital drin. (--)
even in the hospital inside.
- 03 aber wo musst=denn heut
but where must-CLI-SG2=then today
 But where nowadays –
- 04 → **mit=a=lungenentzündung heut mit=n penizillin**
with=a=pneumonia today with=the-CLI penicillin
 after all with penicillin
- 05 muss doch niemand mehr sterben.
must after all no one anymore die.
 no one has to die of pneumonia any more.

This quoted passage is preceded by a sequence where the speaker tells of a handicapped young man who has died of pneumonia. In her opinion, the actual reason for the young man’s fatal illness was his handicap, which compromised his respiratory organs. Rather than confirming her assumption, her interlocutor answers her by saying that he does not know anything about this case. Thereupon the passage quoted above follows, in which the speaker first repeats her information about the fatal case (lines 1–2). Since her interlocutor does not react to this, she also repeats her assumption to the actual cause of the death. For her general statement, the speaker first chooses a rhetorical question in the impersonal *du*- (‘you’) form: *wo musst [du]= denn heut mit=a=lungenentzündung [noch sterben]* ‘where do you have [to die] of pneumonia nowadays?’ (line 3f.). This undirected utterance is, however, identical in form to a question that could be specifically directed toward her interlocutor (whom she does not know well enough to be addressing him with the *du*-form). This ambiguity in form runs the risk of being misunderstood and considered impolite. Moreover, this question format seems too weak to support the emphasis and emotional strength of her statement. This leads to a repair – the pivot element becomes the starting point of a very insistent declarative statement with an impersonal subject (*mit=a=lungenentzündung muss niemand mehr sterben* ‘no one has to die of pneumonia any more’). This pivot

construction fulfills a double duty: it solves the potential problem with the undirected question and, moreover, it lends the statement a special emphasis by combining the rhetorical question and the simultaneous reply to that question.

Repairs to the appropriateness of an utterance, as in the last example, are frequently found in our material. Among the types of pivot enumerated here, the examples in which the final periphery is not the exact mirror-image of the initial periphery, but rather modifies it, seem inherently suited to this purpose. The syntactic function of the pivot element remains the same in both clauses. However, there are slight changes in meaning, which can be interpreted as a consequence of the speaker's re-evaluation of the conversational context and his corresponding reaction to it.

4. Conclusion

The pivot construction is one of those syntactic phenomena systematically ignored by canonical syntax research. Moreover, this type of construction challenges a basic principle of syntax, namely, that one and the same syntactic function can occur only once in a given sentence. Our research of the data of spoken language makes it clear, however, that there are numerous specific structural and functional characteristics which indicate that the pivot construction is indeed a genuine syntactic structure of its own. It appears that an adequate understanding of this structure requires a procedural, incremental view of language. For the most part, the production of syntactic structures is not an automatic reproduction of internalized patterns, but, instead, responds step by step to the changing contextual constellations. The changes in perspectives and activities during the turn-production require constant adaptations of the syntax to be able to react optimally to the immediate conversational demands.

The pivot construction, with its tripartite form and the potential for different syntactic connections between the middle part and the peripheries (with the pivot element as the central "shifting area"), proves to be a prototypical product of such an ongoing adaptation process; its structures reflect the production requirements of spoken language in a distinctive way.

In spite of its formal flexibility, three basic types of pivot construction in spoken German can be distinguished, corresponding to different conversational functions:

- the true mirror-image construction – this serves to establish and emphasize topical elements; a new (focused) topic is introduced in the pivot element and commented on within the same TCU;
- the less integrated mirror-image construction – used as a formal resource to assure and to re-establish textual cohesion;
- the modified mirror-image construction – as unobtrusive a repair as possible in the same turn.

In addition, it appears particularly noteworthy that this construction, here analyzed in modern spoken German, is also found in other languages – cf. for English, Walker

(2002); for Swedish, Norén (2003). For Romance languages, Dovicchi-Heintzen (2004) reports on Sicilian “echo-verb” structures (*si chiama Novoli si chiama* ‘his/her name is Novoli is his/her name’). However, in spite of overt similarities in principle, pivot structures exhibit differences specific to individual languages. While those in present-day German can almost exclusively be classified as mirror-image constructions, in other languages, we also find those apokoinou constructions observed in historical forms of the German language (and in this case even in written texts). It would be an intriguing task to determine the parameters responsible for the formation of each language-specific type of pivot constructions and their potentially different interactive functions.

Notes

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1. The transcription conventions correspond to the GAT proposal (Selting et al. 1998). For the target lines, both glossings and free translations are given. Abbreviations used in the glossings are:

SG1	1st person singular	SG2	2nd person singular
CON	subjunctive mood	PP	past participle
NOM	nominative case	ACC	accusative case
CLI	clitic personal pronoun		

2. A short statement of the context of the quoted passage has been added when needed for comprehension; S is the abbreviation for *speaker*.

3. Such verb-first declaratives are a very common structure in spoken German; this very structure is also demonstrated by the immediately following clauses in the ongoing turn:

(14) [S reports about troubles with the window handle of his car]

da is die fensterkurbel; (-)(acc) hab=i abgedreht gehabt,
there is the window handle; (-)(acc) have=I broken off had,
 ‘I had already broken off the window handle.’

hat er mir geholfen,
had he me helped,
 ‘He helped me.’

haben wir ausgebaut,
have we dismantled
 ‘We dismantled it.’

is er zum bertl mit mir gefahrn.
is he to Bertl with me driven.
 ‘He rode to Bertl’s with me.’

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The use of marked syntactic constructions in Italian multi-party conversation*

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A characteristic feature of spoken Italian is the frequent use of marked syntactic constructions. According to previous research, such deployment has deprived these constructions of their pragmatic function. This paper examines how some marked syntactic constructions (topicalization, left dislocation and right dislocation) characterize a specific conversational activity: disconnected interjections, through which abrupt shifts in action and/or topic are engendered. In such cases, marked syntactic constructions are contextually deployed and they display specific pragmatic functions. First of all, through the use of such formats the focus of the turn is on the new element introduced in the talk, hence showing an orientation of the speakers to the fact that their turns are sequentially and topically unrelated to the current talk. Secondly, such marked syntactic constructions are differently distributed in relation to the development of topics in conversation, thereby showing a close monitoring of the previous talk by interjectors.

1. Marked syntactic constructions in Italian: An overview

If we describe Italian by focusing on its linguistic and syntactic features, and more specifically in relation to the basic order of the clause constituents, we can say that it is a SVO language as other European languages, such as English. Hence, a comparison of Italian and English based on the order of syntactic constituents would reveal that these two languages are identical. However, through such a statement we would miss an important point. In spite of this basic syntactic feature, naturally occurring clauses in Italian – unlike in English – are often characterized by a wide range of alternative orders of their basic constituents. In Italian we very frequently find constituents which are displaced from their unmarked position (i.e. the SVO order), such as dislocations, left-cleft sentences, topicalizations, etc. – i.e. which linguists refer to as marked constructions. Such an extensive deployment of marked constructions is a linguistic feature which especially characterizes Italian.

According to Benincà (1999:264), such a frequent use of marked syntactic constructions is related to some general syntactic properties specific to Italian. Here we

will briefly report the two most important ones: the frequent absence of subjects, and the rich paradigm of clitic pronouns.

In English the subject of the clause is usually explicitly expressed through a noun or a pronoun (for instance, “do they love her?”). In Italian, instead, it is most frequently indicated just through the conjugation of the finite verb. For instance, the aforementioned English example can be translated as:

- (1) *La am-ano?*¹
 Her-O-CLITIC love-3rdPL
 ‘Do they love her?’

Here the subject of the clause is expressed by the conjugation of the verb in the third person plural *am-ano*. Since Italian is a Null Subject Language (Rizzi 1982), such a form is not marked and it is employed when the subject may be identified by referring to its linguistic context (Renzi 1988: 120).

The frequent use of marked clauses is also favoured by the rich paradigm of clitic pronouns that Italian displays. This gives the possibility to produce sentences in which constituents are displaced from their assigned grammatical positions, but where it is still possible to connect them with their grammatical functions (Benincà 1999: 264). For instance, in example (1), the SVO order is not respected: the object of the clause (*la*, ‘her’) is displaced from its post-verbal position and anticipated before the verb. This is due to the fact that *la* (‘her’) is an accusative clitic pronoun: these pronouns are usually positioned before the verb and not after it.²

These two syntactic features, then, set up a vast range of possibilities to displace constituents from their basic positions, so that marked syntactic constructions are frequently found in Italian both in the written and especially in the spoken language.

Given such a frequency in the use of marked syntactic constructions we have to distinguish between a syntactic markedness and a more pragmatic markedness. The mere syntactic markedness is given by the displacement of the clause constituents. Through such syntactic positionings the clause may provide additional information which is related both to the linguistic and extra-linguistic context: hence, marked syntactic constructions are also pragmatically marked. However, according to Italian linguists (e.g. Berruto 1985, 1987; Renzi 1988; Simone 1999; Sobrero 1999), the pragmatic markedness of such constructions in everyday use has almost disappeared: they make the claim that utterances which are marked from a syntactic point of view do not seem to be oriented to as such by users, especially in the spoken language. The use of “marked constructions” is in fact even more extended in conversation and it specifically characterizes a quite informal register. Hence, in spoken contemporary Italian – and especially in informal talk – both marked and unmarked syntactic orders are freely deployed. Such a frequent use of marked constructions seems to have deprived them of their pragmatic function: i.e. marked and unmarked orders seem to be employed in the same way by speakers (Renzi 1988: 121).

However, most of linguistic investigations on marked syntactic constructions in Italian are not based on naturally occurring data (with the exception of the work by

Duranti & Ochs 1979). For this reason, the need to analyse the deployment of such marked formats in talk-in-interaction. Our investigation – done through a CA approach – is based on a corpus of naturally occurring multi-party family interactions which were recorded while participants were having dinner. In such a context, the deployment of marked syntactic constructions was frequently found. Here we will examine the use of such formats in relation to a specific activity type (see Section 2).

In the remainder of this section we will illustrate the types of marked constructions which were found in our data and we will discuss some of the features they display. In Section 3 we will analyse the use of such marked forms in relation to the interactional context in which they occur.

In order to better describe the properties of marked constructions in Italian, we will first consider an example of a clause which follows the basic SVO order of constituents.

- (2) Mangiate il melone col prosciutto?
 Eat-2ndPL the melon with-the ham?
 ‘do you eat the melon with the ham?’
 (S) + V + O (NP) + PP

In this interrogative sentence, the order of the constituents is unmarked: the subject (you, 2nd person plural) is not expressed since it is already indicated by verb conjugation “-ate” (in *mangiate*; pro-drop phenomenon, cf. Rizzi 1982), and followed first by the direct object (*il melone*, ‘the melon’), then by the prepositional phrase (*col prosciutto*, ‘with the ham’).

The same sentence may be differently constructed by placing the direct object in different positions in the clause. We can have the direct object at the very beginning of the clause, and obtain a *left dislocation* (henceforth, LD), as in the following:

- (3) Il melone_i lo_i mangiate?
 The melon_i it_i eat-2ndPL?
 ‘The melon_i it_i do you eat?’³
 O_i (NP) + O_i (pronoun) + V + (S)

The direct object – expressed through the noun (*il melone*) – is placed at the very beginning of the clause and then it is verbalized again through a clitic pronoun (*lo*). As it may be noted, the translation of this sentence does not respect the order of constituents we usually find in LDs in English. The position of the pronoun which refers to the dislocated element is in fact different in the two languages. In Italian, clitic object pronouns are placed before the verb. Hence, in LDs the pronoun is expressed immediately after the full noun phrase it is co-referential with. In LDs in English, instead, the pronoun is placed after the verb. This sentence then would be correctly translated as the following:

- (4) The melon_i do you eat it_i?
 O_i (NP) + V + (S) + O_i (pronoun)

- 5 F: *perche' passano due ore prima che*
because pass-3rdPL two hours before that
m' addormento.
myself fall-asleep
because it takes me two hours to fall asleep.

In this case, even though the item introduced in the discourse through LD is new (*Tua madre che russa_i non me ne_i parla*, 'Your mother who snores_i don't even mention it_i', l. 4),⁴ it is still related to the more general issues discussed in the previous talk. Similar cases were found also in German: LD is used as a conversational resource to introduce and topicalize a new element in the talk which is nonetheless related to the already established topic of the conversation, as in the case of mentioning a further aspect of that topic or an "example" of it (Selting 1993:307).

The fact that the new referent introduced through the LD is still connected to the more general topic of the talk is quite important: even though topic shifts are usually engendered through LDs, such shifts will not be abrupt, thus maintaining both topical and conversational coherence. LDs are not only employed in talk for introducing new referents which are nonetheless related to the more general semantic frame of the talk. In English, for instance, Gelyukens distinguishes between referent-introducing LDs – deployed to introduce new referents which may be irrecoverable from the context – and contrastive and listing LDs (Gelyukens 1992; Selting 1993:315).

LD is not the only construction through which an element can be placed at the beginning of a clause. One such movement is the *topicalization* of a unit by delivering it in first position, as is the case in the following instance:

- (6) *Il melone mangiate?*
 The melon eat-2ndPL?
 O (NP) + (S) + V
 'Do you eat the melon?'

Moreover, note that unlike LD, the object is placed at the beginning of the clause but it is *not* expressed again by the pronoun (compare with example (3)). Through this construction the initial constituent is presented as news. Moreover, this word order is usually employed to set the initial constituent in contrast with the previous discourse (Renzi 1988:135).

Constituents of a clause may also be placed towards the end of it, as it is the case in *right dislocations* (RDs) which are also frequently found in spoken Italian. Let us consider again example (2) and turn that sentence into a right dislocation:

- (7) *Lo_i mangiate il melone_i?*
It_i eat-2ndPL the melon_i?
O_i (pronoun) + (S) + V O_i (NP)
'Do you eat it_i the melon_i?'

In RDs the referent which is first expressed through a pronoun (*lo*, 'it') is then indicated again later by a full noun phrase (*il melone*, 'the melon') produced after the verb.

Through this construction the dislocated element is highlighted – like in LDs. By beginning the clause with an object pronoun, that referent is indicated as already known by the recipient, even though it is later explicated by the full noun phrase. In this respect, RDs display a similar function to LDs. However, as Renzi (1988) notes, RDs are also employed when a new topic is initiated in the talk.⁵

It must be remarked that RDs may be the result of an expanded construction: i.e. the full noun phrase may be added to the clause as an increment or expansion. Let us consider the first part of the previous example:

- (8) Lo mangiate?
 It eat-2ndPL?
 O (pronoun) + (S) +V
 ‘Do you eat it?’

By producing such an utterance, the speaker assumes that his/her recipient may identify the referent indicated by the pro-form (the clitic accusative pronoun *lo*, ‘it’) from the conversational context, or from other contextualization cues, such as gestures (for instance, through pointing). However, such a turn may also be modified in due course through an increment which amounts to a right dislocation as in (7), so that the referent is made explicit by the full noun phrase.⁶ In other words, a turn which had been projected from the beginning as a syntactically unmarked clause may then present a marked construction with additions done during its delivery. It must be noted that, at least in German, such expansions may be prosodically integrated into the previous intonational contour. Through such prosodic integration, “the speaker gives a kind of cataphoric reading to the pronoun which is elaborated by the expansion, although the entity referred to by the pronoun has usually been mentioned in the conversation just before” (Auer 1996: 77). Hence, RDs may also have an explicative function (cf. Berruto 1985). Such an explicative function is particularly important when RDs are employed to introduce a new topic in the discourse (cf. Renzi 1988: 146).

As it was remarked at the beginning of this section, all these marked constructions are used with such a frequency in conversation – and especially informal talk – that they do not seem to be oriented to as such by participants. Nonetheless, as will be discussed later on, these forms are associated with specific conversational actions and they are differently distributed with respect to the development of topics and actions in the talk.

2. Disconnected interjections

As it was discussed above, even though marked syntactic constructions are a feature of Italian which specifically characterizes the spoken language, previous research did not investigate the specific interactional environments in which these constructions may be more frequently employed, nor what type of conversational actions are characterized by them. Hence, the need to analyse instances taken from naturally occurring talk.

In our corpus marked syntactic constructions were very often found in discordant conversational environments, such as when speakers produce turns which are not connected with the immediately prior talk (what we will refer to as disconnected interjections, see below). Speakers would intervene through disconnected turns while other conversational activities were in progress. In order to understand this phenomenon, we have to take into account the interactional environment where such actions were performed. Our analysis is based on a corpus of ordinary face-to-face multi-party family interactions which are characterized by a substantial number of participants, ranging from four to twelve. Such a high number of interactants may affect the interaction at various levels.

First of all, when we consider the participation framework and the respective interactants' roles in multi-person talk we have to distinguish between ratified participants to the interaction and others whose presence is not ratified by the current speaker(s), such as bystanders and overhearers (Goffman 1981). As Goffman points out, such roles are not stable throughout the talk but they often vary: speakership may be acquired also by those interactants who had not been ratified at the beginning of the interaction. So that, for instance, those who at the beginning of a conversation were cast as by-standers may then later actively participate and become ratified participants. For this reason, we can speak of a dynamic participation framework which is unstable, especially when the number of participants is quite high, as in the case of our data. Such changes in the participation framework often come to be associated with specific interactional activities such as opening or closing an encounter, and leaving or joining the current interaction (Goffman 1981).⁷

The organization of the participants' roles in multi-person conversation is also related to turn allocation. In an interaction where the number of participants is quite high, the distribution of speakership may come to be concentrated "among a subset of potential next speakers" (Sacks, Schegloff, & Jefferson 1974:712), so that the chances for each single interactant to be selected by the current speaker may be fewer and some might be left out of the interaction entirely. This is even more true if we consider those participants whose presence is not ratified: bystanders might never get the chance to be selected by the current speaker(s). For this reason, bystanders – wishing to join the current conversation or to initiate a new one – might opt for self-selection (Sacks, Schegloff, & Jefferson 1974; see also Egbert 1997). Through self-selection the risk of concentrating speakership among just a few participants is avoided, and its deployment is more frequent in multi-person interaction than in dyadic talk (Sacks, Schegloff, & Jefferson 1974).

During multi-person conversations, participants' roles may change and in some cases some interactants may initiate a new interaction. Multi-party interaction with four or more interactants provides a further opportunity: some may detach themselves from the current talk and initiate a new one while the other one still continues. There is in fact a potential for a speaker to find other non-ratified participants – and thus potential recipients – for starting a new conversation. In such instances, schism becomes a systematic possibility where a participant self-selects and successfully engages other(s)

in interaction (Sacks, Schegloff, & Jefferson 1974; Goodwin 1987; Egbert 1997). When two concurrent and independent conversational clusters emerge, a schism is achieved. These two simultaneous conversations rely on two different participation frameworks; two independent turn-taking systems; and in each interaction different sequence types and topics are developed (Egbert 1997:3).

Previous research demonstrated that when schism occurs, the new emerging interaction is in some ways related to some aspect of the context exogenous to the talk (see Egbert 1997:32). In general, most occasions of talk occur when other simultaneous non-conversational activities are under way. For instance, in our data, conversation is only one of the multiple activities participants were engaged in, such as having dinner, having coffee, cooking, etc.; so that in some cases contingencies arose and participants joined or left the concurrent interaction in relation to them. This, in turn, would influence some of the conversational activities the participants were performing. Speakers would focus their attention on aspects of the context other than the conversation – such as non-verbal activities, the physical surroundings or contingencies emerging during the interaction – with the result that interactants would orient to conversational and non-verbal activities as having equal importance, or they would even treat conversation as having a subordinate role.⁸

These other features of the context exogenous to the verbal interaction would influence the conversational actions performed by some participants, so that new and disconnected talk would be triggered by the concurrent non-verbal activities or by contingencies arisen during the interaction (cf. Bergmann 1990; Egbert 1997).

In some instances, the concurrent activities influence the verbal actions the interactants may perform, such as in the case of offers. For instance, while some others are speaking, a participant would bring in some food and offer it (see extract (14) below). In other cases, interactants would also exploit the concurrent non-verbal activities or elements present in the physical environment and use them to intervene in the talk with a disconnected turn, by pretending that they are triggers for their talk (cf. Bergmann 1990; Egbert 1997:33). Let us consider the following extract where a participant (Federica) is telling a narrative during dinner:

(9) [CMM:BOX98:6:sofa/g.p.:40-48]

(While Federica's narrative is under way, Cinzia is cutting some cheese)

- 1 FE: >°dico io° la< ringrazio. poi
say-1stSG I you thank-1stSG then
 c'ho pensato=
it have-1stSG think-PPC
 >°I say I° < thank you. then I thought about it=
 2 FE: =ho detto io adesso mi
have-1stSG say-PPC I now me-DAT
 faccio portare=
make-1stSG bring-INF
 =and I said now I'll ask them to bring me=

- 3 FE: =il::=(?ma-)=il co°so°; pago ↑tutto↑,
the the thingy pay-1stSG everything
 =the::=(?ma-)=the thin°gy°; I pay for ↑everything↑,
 4 (1.0)
 5 ((Fe. looking at Ci; Li. looking at Ci.))
 6 FE: mi capita come l'altra volta=
me-DAT happen-3rdSG like the other time
 it happens to me like the other time=
 7 FE: che quando paghi tutto:::=
that when pay-2ndSG everything
 that when you pay for everything::;=
 8 ((Ci. puts down the cheese on the table in
 9 front of herself))
 10 → LI: =è buono eh::? ((to Ci.))
be-3rdSG good PRT
 =it's good isn't it::?
 11 ((Li. points at the cheese and moves her arm
 12 towards it))
 13 CI: ((looks at Li.; three quick but not complete
 nods))

In this fragment, Federica is telling about the purchase of a sofa-bed, a narrative which had been previously prompted by a question by Cinzia who is her aligned recipient (data not shown). Meanwhile, the other participants are engaged in other concurrent activities, such as eating. At a certain point during the narrative, Cinzia helps herself to some cheese for a second time. During the last turns of this part of the telling, a bystander (Lina) has been closely monitoring what Cinzia is doing (see l. 5), and as soon as Cinzia puts down the cheese on the table, Lina self-selects and intervenes with an assessment of it (*è buono eh::?*, l. 10).

If we consider the environment exogenous to the talk, we can say that Lina's assessment is related to the non-conversational actions done by Cinzia. Through her turn she topicalizes an element present in the physical context related to the action just performed by Cinzia. Lina seems to be orienting to it as a trigger to self-select and start speaking. Hence, an action which does not have any conversational relevance seems to create an opportunity which is then exploited by a bystander to intervene and initiate a new conversation. She does so by producing a turn which is related by topic and action type (i.e. an assessment of the food Cinzia has helped herself to) to the activities of another participant.⁹ However, that interactant is also concurrently participating in the current interaction under way as a recipient.

This turn, then, is closely related to the concurrent non-verbal activities of a co-participant and it is *not* connected in any way with the talk in progress. Moreover, it displays a series of features through which it seems to overtly breach conversational norms. The utterance in extract (9) (l. 10) does not show any relation to the immediate prior turn: it is not topically connected with the preceding talk and it is not relevant to it. Lina intervenes at a point where Federica has just produced the first part of a com-

pound syntactic construction, a when-then clause *quando paghi tutto::;* ('when you pay for everything::;'; l. 7). The end of this TCU is also characterized by a syllable stretching through which the teller invites a collaborative completion (Goodwin 1979; Lerner 1991, 1992). However, the utterance by Lina does not complete the previous turn in progress. In other words, she does not contribute to the narrative and, more generally, the conversational goal of the other interactants. Hence, Lina's turn also breaches one of the maxims of the Gricean cooperative principle, namely the Maxim of Relation, according to which speakers' contributions should be relevant to the preceding talk (Grice 1975). Even though the relevance of a turn may be connected with a much broader situation than just the immediately prior talk, "an utterance U is relevant to a speech situation if U can be interpreted as contributing to the conversational goal(s) of speaker or hearer" (Leech 1983:94). Lina's turn does not advance the narrative: instead of cooperating with the teller in pursuing her main goal in the interaction, she pursues a different goal which does not coincide with the teller's one.¹⁰ This is also corroborated by the fact that any activity in conversation is usually shaped by its immediate conversational context (Schegloff & Sacks 1973; Sacks 1992). By contrast, her turn has no relation to it: it is not a relevant next action to the immediately prior utterance. For these reasons, it poses a potential threat to the conversational order, or at least we can say that it goes against conversational norms.

Moreover, it must be noted that this remark may be understood only in connection with the concurrent non-verbal action done by Cinzia, on which it relies for its design: the turn *è buono eh::?* does not display any subject (pro-drop phenomenon, cf. Rizzi 1982), however it is indicated through the non-verbal action done by Lina, since she is pointing at the cheese while producing this turn (see extract (9), l. 11–12). Through such turn, she topicalizes an action (i.e. cutting the cheese) done by the teller's main recipient; and through it she is introducing a new topic in the talk, regardless of the concurrent verbal activity in which the others are engaged.

Through this type of turn she initiates a new type of sequence (an assessment sequence). She does so by using a first pair-part (FPP), the assessment, which makes relevant the production of a second pair-part (SPP) (Schegloff & Sacks 1973; Pomerantz 1984; Sacks 1987). Furthermore, note that through the use of a FPP she maximizes the chances of involving her recipient in interaction with her: the production of a FPP makes relevant the delivery of the SPP, and if this is not produced it remains relevantly absent and it can be pursued until delivered. Hence, Lina builds up a sequential environment in which the active engagement of her recipient is relevant, in spite of the fact that she is concurrently involved in another interaction. Moreover, through the use of a FPP she shapes the subsequent contribution to the talk by her recipient.¹¹

In sum, then, the turn by Lina is not related to and continuous with the immediately prior talk for a series of conversational and sequential features. It is not syntactically continuous to the immediately prior turn; it is topically disconnected; and it starts a new sequence through a FPP. Hence, we can state that her utterance is *disconnected* from the immediate preceding talk.

So far we have described Lina's utterance as disconnected from the concurrent talk because of its sequential and topical properties. However, it is disconnected also in regard to its sequential placement. As it has been remarked before, this turn is placed at a point where the current speaker's utterance is still in progress. It has not reached a local pragmatic and syntactic completion, i.e. a TRP, since Federica has just delivered the first part of a two-part syntactic construction. Thus, the intervention is evidently delivered interruptively with respect to its immediate conversational context. For this reason, we can define it as an *interjection*.¹² It must be noted that most of these turns are produced either interjectively with respect to the current speaker's utterance, as in the case under discussion; or they are, nonetheless, placed in the midst of other conversational activities, usually a narrative, at a point where these activities are still far from a global pragmatic completion point. We rely here on the definition of Ford and Thompson, according to whom a turn has reached a global pragmatic completion point when it displays final intonation, when it has reached a syntactic completion and when it does not project "anything beyond itself in the way of a longer story, account or other agenda" (Ford & Thompson 1996:151). For this reason, these turns are also not connected with the current talk as far as their placement is concerned: in other words, the speaker who intervenes does not orient to it in any way. In short, then, we can define these turns as *disconnected interjections*.¹³

By virtue of their very nature of being unconnected to the concurrent talk and not relevant to it, they seem to be delivered in a disorderly fashion, or at least they do not seem to follow any orderliness underlying conversational norms. Hence, as analysts we might consider them as violations to conversational norms. If these interjections constituted violations, their delivery should in the first place be avoided: thus, they should be rare, and there should be ways available to the participants to sanction them. By contrast, they occur regularly in multi-party interaction, and they are not at all treated by co-participants as violations to conversational organization. For instance, when interjections are produced in overlap, competition for the floor is not engendered: interjections are always designed as brief incursions in the current talk (see below) and they do not display competitive supra-segmental features: i.e. they are neither signalled nor treated as "interruptions".

Moreover, even though they are not topically connected with and they do not seem coherent with the prior talk, close examination shows that they are *orderly*: they are organized in an ordered way and they present a describable pattern. If this were not the case, the interaction would break down. Our investigation of these interjections shows, rather, that they are resources which speakers employ in order to either change the topic of the talk, even though abruptly, or to instigate a new concurrent interaction. Moreover, this is possible not only through the interjector's turn but also through the co-operation of the other participants in the talk who employ practices in order to allow either smooth change of topics, digressions and schisming (cf. also Egbert 1997).

In spite of their nature of not being connected with the immediate prior and/or concurrent talk, these interjections show a close monitoring of the current conversational activities. Interjectors seem to orient to the interjectiveness and (potential)

interruptiveness of their turns by designing them as brief incursions in the current speaker's talk: all the interjections are made up of one TCU only. In this way, interjectors seem to show an orientation to minimizing any disruption of the concurrent talk. In certain cases, the interjections are formed by minimal elements and they are self-contained, in other words they are not expandable (see also below, Section 3): This results in the production of brief utterances which are built either through the use of particular grammatical constructions, or by relying on the physical environment and/or the concurrent activities in order for the utterance to be intelligible. For instance, as it has been already pointed out in the discussion of the previous case ((9), l. 10: *e' buono eh::?*), the interjection does not include a subject of the clause, in spite of the fact that it introduces a new topic in the conversation (the cheese). However, the interjector indicates the subject of the clause by pointing at the cheese that her addressed recipient is cutting, so that her pointing seems to be used in place of the deictic pronoun, which in this case would be the subject of her utterance (i.e. 'that one is good'). Therefore, by relying on her recipient's concurrent non-verbal activity and through the pointing, the interjector utters a minimal turn formed only by a verb and an adjective.

The brevity of interjections is achieved by relying on resources that are independent from the current talk, such as: the use of specific syntactic constructions (see below); the use of FPPs; and non-verbal communication (such as pointing, see excerpt (9)). Hence, one of the very features which characterizes these interjections – i.e. their connectedness to the current non-verbal activities and/or to the context exogenous to the talk – may also influence their design. This will be more thoroughly discussed in Section 3 below, where we will consider the marked syntactic constructions which often characterize these turns and through which interjectors seem to display an orientation to the abrupt shifts in topic and in action their utterances engender in the talk.

3. Marked syntactic constructions as an interactional resource

As was pointed out in the previous section, the basic feature of interjections is that they are not connected in any way with the concurrent talk: they initiate new conversational actions; and when topical talk is produced, they introduce new topics in the conversation abruptly. They are, nonetheless, closely connected with the concurrent non-conversational activities and/or aspects of the physical environment which are triggers – or exploited as triggers – for the production of new unconnected talk. Due to their very nature of not being related to the conversational sequence under way, then, it might be assumed that such turns are accidentally produced and especially that interjectors intervene without paying any attention to the development of the current talk.

However, the analysis of the turn-designs of disconnected interjections reveals a close monitoring and attention by interjectors to the development of topics in the cur-

rent and prior talk. Disconnected interjections correspond to what Egbert (1997:3) calls schisming-inducing turns. In the analysis of her data, she noted that abrupt topic shifts caused by such turns are smoothed out by specific turn-designs: the trigger of the new disconnected talk is positioned at the beginning of the utterance and new topics are placed at the end of it. Hence, not only do speakers closely monitor the development of topics in the current conversation, but they also orient to the disconnected nature of their turns and try to mitigate it. In our cases, disconnected interjections are very frequently characterized by a specific order of elements in the turn: they often display marked syntactic constructions which are differently employed in relation to the development of topics in the preceding and current talk.

As was discussed in Section 1, through marked syntactic constructions the focus of the clause/turn is put on the dislocated element. The dislocated object in LDs and RDs is presented as given or known by co-participants: hence, LDs and RDs have the same pragmatic function (Renzi 1988:147).

According to linguistic research (Renzi 1988:131; Selting 1993:307), the topic of LD clauses – i.e. the element which has been displaced at the very beginning of the sentence – is usually related to some part of the prior discourse. Nonetheless, in some cases the dislocated referent has not been previously mentioned and the speaker may assume that it is already known by his recipient; or that element is still connected with the general semantic frame of the discourse and it is especially related to those concerns that are in that moment at the centre of the conversation (Duranti & Ochs 1979:396).

This is particularly important when we consider one of the functions that LDs display. LDs may be used for shifting topic in conversation in a non-abrupt way, so that topical coherence is maintained, even though the centre of attention in the talk is changed. By contrast, disconnected interjections do not keep topic coherence across turns but abrupt topic shifts are engendered and new action types are initiated. For this reason, LDs should not be expected to be present in disconnected interjections.

However, LDs possess an important interactional property. They frequently occur in multi-party interaction and they seem to have a floor-seeking function: in other words, they are frequently associated with competitive moves for occupying the floor, when another participant is speaking (Duranti & Ochs 1979:403, 405).

This feature also characterizes disconnected interjections. As was pointed out in Section 2, through these turns participants self-select and occupy the floor at points when another conversation is under way. Hence, from a strictly interactional point of view, disconnected interjections have a floor-taking function. For this reason, we might expect to find LDs as a feature of these turns. This in spite of the fact that disconnected interjections always engender abrupt topic shifts or shifts in action.

If LDs may be expected to be used when disconnected interjections are produced – because of their floor-taking function, we cannot assume the same for RDs (cf. Section 1, example (7)). Similarly to LDs, the dislocated referent relates to an element which has previously been mentioned in the discourse. Hence, the use of RDs should not be expected with disconnected interjections since through such turns abrupt topic shifts or shifts in action are engendered. However, RDs may often characterize clauses

through which speakers may abruptly introduce a new topic in the discourse (Renzi 1988: 146). It could be assumed at this point that RDs may be particularly useful to interjectors for introducing new topics in conversation by, however, smoothing out the abrupt topic shift and/or the shift in action, regardless of the development of topics in the current and immediately prior talk.

In Section 1, we have also considered a third marked syntactic construction: topicalization (cf. example (6)). It must be noted that in Italian such a construction is employed to express the dislocated referent as news and especially to set up a contrast with the preceding talk (Renzi 1988: 135). For this reason, we might expect to find disconnected interjections to be characterized by topicalizations.

In sum, the aforementioned marked constructions may be used by speakers as a resource either to smooth out their disconnectedness or, by contrast, to more strongly indicate and highlight such a feature.

3.1 The use of marked constructions in disconnected interjections

A number of disconnected interjections we found in our data are characterized by RDs and leftward syntactic movements: LDs and topicalization. The use of such syntactic constructions seems to be informed by the relation between the conversational topic of turns preceding the interjections and the dislocated elements displayed in the interjections themselves. This shows an accurate monitoring of the talk in progress by interjectors. Moreover, it must be pointed out that interjections may be defined as disconnected only if we take conversation into account; however, the other basic feature they share is that they are closely connected with some aspects of the context exogenous to the talk, such as elements which are part of the physical environment and the concurrent non-verbal activities. Through disconnected interjections such elements are introduced into the talk and topicalized (cf. Egbert 1997: 33). This in turn shapes their turn-design: a number of them are characterized by marked syntactic constructions through which the focus of the clause is shifted to the new referent which is introduced. Not only is such a referent the trigger of the interjection,¹⁴ but it is also the new element and topic which is introduced in the talk and which is closely related either to the context exogenous to the conversation or to the concurrent non-verbal activities. In general, from the analysis of the data it emerged that LDs and topicalization indeed characterize those turns in which the syntactic focus of the utterance (i.e. the element placed at the very beginning of the clause) is on the new and disconnected element introduced by the interjection.

3.1.1 *Topicalization*

We will start our investigation of the different distribution of syntactic marked constructions with the analysis of a left-ward movement: topicalization. Through such a construction an element is placed at the beginning of the clause and, unlike LD, it is not later taken up by a pronoun. The dislocated referent is always closely connected with the context exogenous to the talk, such as: elements which have been used as trig-

- 13 EM: questa è una medaglia.
this-F be-3rd-SG a medal
 this is a medal.

After Emiliano's turn in l. 6, Claudia and Teresa start concurrently. Claudia rebuts Emiliano's utterance (l. 9); Teresa asks him a question (l. 10, *scusa questo cos'è?*). The subject of the question is the deictic pronoun *questo* ('this one') which is anticipated before the *wh*-component (*cos'* 'what'). This is a particularly marked construction because of the non-verbal communication she employs. By pointing at Emiliano's neck, the use of the deictic pronoun is redundant (compare with excerpt (9), l. 10). However, through such a referent she explicitly expresses the subject of the utterance; and by expressing it at the beginning of the clause (i.e. before the *wh*-component), she shifts the focus of her question onto the very element which is not related to the current talk, but which is linked to the physical environment and is used as a trigger to intervene.¹⁵

A similar case is the following, where Teresa again intervenes with a disconnected interjection:

- (11) [CMM:TR98-11:14:potatoes:33-39]
 (Emiliano and Claudia have been talking about not having slept well because of the mattresses and they are trying to find a solution for it)
- 1 CL: e: Emmi ma anche. io.=io stanotte
PRT NAME but also I I this-night
 ho provato=
have-1stSG try-PPC
 Emmi but also. I.= last night I have tried to=
- 2 TE: ((coming from the kitchen and passing by))
- 3 CL: =a prendere ([] mettiamo il
to take-INF put-1stPL the
 materasso=
 mattress=
 =to take ([] we put the mattress=
- 4 → TE: [↑E:↓MM:I.
NAME
 [↑E:↓MM:I.
- 5 TE: ((stops at one end of the table))
- 6 CL: =[().
- 7 → TE: =[↑qui↑ hai il do:lce.
here have-2ndSG the cake
 =[↑your↑ cake is he:re.

While Claudia is talking to Emiliano, Teresa interjects her talk and summons him (l. 4). Then, in the interjection the locational adverb *qui* ('he:re', l. 7) is uttered before the verbal clause *hai il do:lce* ('your cake is he:re',¹⁶ l. 7).¹⁷ By placing the locational adverb before the verb and delivering it in first position in her turn, Teresa is emphasizing that element of the clause instead of other units. By doing this, she is linking her utterance to the physical environment.

In these cases, then, it is through topicalization that interjectors indicate at the very beginning of their turns that these are not in any way related to the current talk but to the physical environment, thus marking their abrupt nature.

3.1.2 *Left dislocations*

The emphasis on the elements which are triggers – or used as triggers – of interjections is also achieved through the use of LDs in which the referent is indicated at the beginning of the turn through a full noun phrase. We will consider two extracts (12 & 13, below) which are taken from the same conversation. The first interjection in the extract below (12, l. 4–5) is produced at a point when a schism has occurred and two different interactions are taking place: Teresa and Laura are speaking to Vincenzo; Claudia is talking to Emiliano, and Cesare is not actively engaged in either of the two conversations. For reasons of space, in the first excerpt, we will report only one of the two concurrent conversations: the one between Laura and her son Vincenzo.

(12) [CMM:TR97-4:8:ham&melon:B:22-29]

- 1 VI: e allora mi dai.
and so me-DAT give-2ndSG
 and so give me.
- 2 LA: Vincenzo intero.= >e mangi pure=
NAME whole and eat-2ndSG also
 Vincenzo eat the whole of it.= >and you also eat=
- 3 LA: =tutta [quella< ro::ba_i (?mangi).
all-F that-F stuff eat-2ndSG
 =all [that< stu::ff_i (?you eat).
- 4 → LI: [allora ↑IL MELONE_i LO_i MANGIATE=
so the melon_i it_i eat-2ndPL
 [↑THE MELON_i DO YOU EAT IT_i =
- 5 → LI: =COL PROSCIUTTO::↑?
with-the ham
 =WITH THE HAM::↑ then?
- 6 LI: ((is coming from the kitchen and walking
 7 towards the table))

The first interjection (lines 4–5) is closely related to the concurrent non-verbal activities under way. Lina is coming from the kitchen and bringing some melon while the other participants have just helped themselves to some ham and they are eating. The interjection is characterized by a LD in which the new referent and trigger for the interjection (i.e. ↑*il melone* ‘↑the melon’) is expressed at the beginning of the clause.

After some turns, Lina moves to the other end of the table to reiterate this enquiry to Claudia who until then had been engaged with Emiliano. Again she employs a LD:

(13) [CMM:TR97-4:8:ham&melon:C:37-40]

- 1 AN: <(? fate) in tutti i
make-2ndPL in all the

```

mo::di:::;> ((to Te.))
ways
<(?you guys find) any wa::ys::;>
2 → LI: il meloneI loI vuoi col
the melonI itI want-2ndSG with-the
prosciutto?=(( to Cl.))
ham
the melonI do you want itI with the ham?=
3 CL: =>no.<
no
=>no.<

```

In the LD (l. 2) the word referring to the trigger of this turn is again positioned at the beginning of the utterance. Thus, once more, the interjection is presented as disconnected from the immediately prior talk. This may be due to the fact that while the previous exchange was taking place (excerpt (12)), Claudia was not attending Lina's talk (data not shown). The interjector seems to orient to this by explicitly indicating the referent with a full noun phrase at the beginning of her turn.

It must be noted that these two disconnected interjections are very different from the one considered in extract (9). As it was noted, in that case, the interjector does not express the new and disconnected subject but she strongly relies on the non-verbal activities of her co-participant – who is cutting some cheese – and she uses deictic pointing to refer to the subject of her turn. By not expressing the subject explicitly, she does not orient to the fact that her interjection is disconnected from the immediately prior talk, at least verbally. By contrast, in the instances we have just discussed (12 & 13), through the use of the full noun phrase at the beginning of the turn and the LD, the interjector marks the unconnectedness of her utterance from the very start. We could consider both LD and topicalization as resources through which speakers show that the turn in progress is not connected in any way – i.e. both as far as topic is concerned and as activity type – with the current developing talk, but is linked to an element related to the concurrent activities and/or physical environment. By contrast, the omission of the subject of the clause as in (9) – i.e. an unmarked construction – does not highlight, at least verbally, the disconnected nature of the upcoming turn.¹⁸

When we illustrated the general properties of interjections (Section 2), we stated that due to the very disconnected nature of these turns, speakers do not seem to take the current talk into account. This seems to be corroborated to some extent by the use of LDs in particular. By expressing the new and disconnected element at the beginning of the clause, interjectors do not smooth out the abrupt nature of their turns, rather they emphasize it. In such a way, they seem to instruct the recipient not to rely on the prior talk for the understanding of the upcoming turn. This is particularly relevant if we consider the fact that turns at talk are contextually oriented: when an utterance is not linked to its immediately prior turns, the speaker who produces it has to indicate in some ways that that production is unrelated to the previous talk (Heritage 1984:261). And this seems to be the very function topicalizations and LDs have.

3.1.3 Right dislocations

Disconnected interjections may also be characterized by RDs. Through RDs, a referent is first expressed through a clitic pronoun which is made explicit by a full noun phrase later in the utterance. Through the use of the full noun phrase that constituent is made prominent. We would like to remind the reader that in Italian RD clauses begin with the clitic pronoun which is placed before the verb. By expressing the referent through a clitic pronoun at first, that referent is represented as already known, even though it is later made explicit by the full noun phrase. As was discussed before, for this reason, RDs should not be expected and found in disconnected interjections. However, according to Renzi (1988:146), RDs may sometimes characterize abrupt turns.

The use of RDs in disconnected interjections seems to be a resource employed by speakers in order to highlight the broader connectedness of their actions and presenting them as linked to some earlier action or topic. In the following instance, the participants are talking about “coppa” (a type of salami) they have been eating. At a certain point, Lina intervenes to offer some more to Emiliano (lines 28–29):

(14) [CMM:TR98-3:4:coppa:1-24]

- 1 LI: questa qui e' piaciuta a
this-F-SG here be-3rdSG like-PPC to
 tutti.
everybody
 this one everybody liked it.
- 2 LI: la [mangiavano anche i tuoi come
it eat-3rdPL-PST also the yours as
 salume.
salami
 al[so your family ate it as a salami.
- 3 TE: [>si si.<
yes yes
 [>yes yes.<
- 4 TE: si' anche i bambi::ni.
yes also the children
 yes the childre::n as well.
- 5 LI: perche' e' fresca e poi::
because is fresh-F and then
 because it is fresh and then::
- 6 AN: eh?
PRT
 what?
- 7 LI: la coppa!
the ((NAME))
 the coppa!¹⁹
- 8 AN: eh?
PRT
 what?

- 9 LI: LA COPPA!
the ((NAME))
 THE COPPA!
- 10 AN: ↑che coppa=↓intendi?
which ((NAME)) mean-2ndSG
 ↑which coppa=↓do you mean?
- 11 LI: questa qui.
this-F here
 this one here.
- 12 AN: quella da man↑giare?=
that-F from eat-INF
 the one you ↑eat?=
 13 LI: ↑si'.
yes
 ↑yes.
 14 (12.0)
 15 ((Li. stands up and goes to the kitchen.
 16 She comes back with a piece of 'coppa'))
 17 AN: ()
 18 AN: ma sara' vecchia quella.
but be-3rdSG-FUT old-F that-F
 but that one must be old.
 19 TE: no mamma!
no mum
 no mum!
- 20 LI: fe' ancora dei tempi del babbo.£
be-3rdSG still of-the times of-the dad
 £it's still from the dad's time.£
- 21 TE: fe' quella che faceva il
be-3rdSG that-F that make-3rdSG-PST the
 babbo.£
dad
 £it's the one that dad used to make.£
- 22 TE: l'ha conservata la Lina=
it-F have-3rdSG preserve-PPC the NAME
 Lina has preserved it=
 23 TE: =nel poz[zo () huhh.
in-the well
 =in the wel[l () huhh.
- 24 AN: [può esse[re
may-3rdSG be-INF
 [it may b[e
- 25 LI: [perche' noi non=
because we not=
 [because we did not=

- 26 =compreiamo niente una volta. hai
buy-1stPL-PST nothing one time have-2ndSG
 capito.
understand-PPC
 =use to buy anything in the past. you see.
- 27 TE: perché il nonno la
because the granddad it-F
 macella[va.
butcher-3rdSG-PST
 because granddad butchered [it.
- 28 → LI: [la_I vuoi=
it_I want-2ndSG
 [do you want it_I=
- 29 → =un po' di questa_I?
a bit of this_I-F-SG
 =a bit of this one_I?
- 30 ((Lina turns to Emiliano and hands him some
 31 coppa))

The interjection in l. 28–29 displays a right dislocation: *la vuoi un po' di questa?* (lit. 'do you want it_I a bit of this one_I?'), in which the pronoun *la* at the beginning of the sentence is then made explicit by the referent *un po' di questa* which is related to the food that Lina is handing to Emiliano. Through the RD, the referent is presented as known by the recipient: Lina seems here to be orienting to the fact that that referent has been mentioned earlier in the talk. This occurs in spite of the fact that the interjection initiates a new disconnected sequence type (the offer).

A similar case is the following one. During a conversation between Claudia and Cinzia, Lina intervenes at a certain point to offer coffee (extract (15), lines 5 & 7). Later on, during the same conversation, Lina intervenes again in order to check whether Claudia would like coffee with sugar (excerpt (16), lines 4–5). This second interjection displays a RD as well:

- (15) [CMM:TR97-4:10:documentary:15-23]
 (Claudia has been telling Cinzia about a film on the war in Bosnia; during the turns in lines 1–2 Lina is in the kitchen)
- 1 CL: e erano mischiate::: e:: le scene=
and be-3rdPL mix-PPC PRT the scenes
 and they were mixed::: ehm the scenes =
- 2 CL: =proprio tipo da telegiornale. quelle
really kind from news those-F-PL
 vere.=
true-F-PL
 =really like from the news. the real ones.=
- 3 ((Li. is coming back from the kitchen))

- 4 CL: =con:::~::~=e::[: ()]=
with PRT
 =with:::~::~=ehm::[: ()]=
- 5 → LI: [↑chi è che prende il
who is that have-3rdSG the
caffé↑?
coffee
 [↑which one of you is having coffee↑?
- 6 CL: =di qu[esta storia qua.
of this-F story here
 =of th[is story.
- 7 → LI: [Claudia lo prendi?
NAME it take-2ndSG
 [Claudia are you having it?
- (16) [CMM:TR97-4:10: documentary:63-66]
 (Claudia and Cinzia have been talking about the attitude of people towards recent wars.)
- 1 CL: no no non ha non ha
no no not have-3rdSG not have-3rdSG
 assolutamente::~=
absolutely
 no no it hasn't it hasn't at all::=
- 2 CL: =assolutamente senso.
absolutely sense
 =any sense at all.
- 3 (0.4)
- 4 → LI: Claudia e:: lo_I volevi dolce te =
NAME PRT it_I want-2ndSG-PST sweet you
 Claudia ehm:: did you want it_I with sugar=
 5 → =o °lo_I vuoi° amaro °il caffè_I?
or it_I want-2ndSG bitter the coffee_I
 = or do you want it_I plain the coffee_I°?

Through the interjection in (16) (lines 4–5) Lina is not making an offer as in the previous case (lines 5 & 7, excerpt (15)), but she is checking if Claudia would like coffee with or without sugar. Thus the question strongly relies on Lina's prior action of offering coffee (see 15, lines 5 & 7). So even though her turn is disconnected from the immediately prior talk, it is related to an exchange which has previously occurred. Such a connection is also indicated by the RD she uses. The first part of the clause *lo volevi dolce* (lit. 'it wanted sweet', l. 4) is syntactically complete, and the pronoun (*lo*) refers to some prior action²⁰ – the offer – and to a given element (the coffee). The second part of the clause *o °lo vuoi° amaro* (lit. 'or it want bitter', idiomatic translation: 'or °do you want it° plain', l. 5) is also syntactically complete, and again it refers back to some prior referent through the use of the pronoun only. Therefore, the referent ('coffee') is presented as already known, even though the utterance is not connected with

the immediately prior turn. This is, then, syntactically further expanded by delivering the actual referent of the pronoun through a noun *il caffè* (l. 5), thus making the reference clearer.

These two expansions of the clause are built syntactically as increments of the first one:

lo volevi dolce te / o lo vuoi amaro / il caffè?
 did you want it sweet / or do you want it bitter / the coffee?

The first expansion (*o lo vuoi amaro*) is built as a disjunctive clause to the first one, by keeping the same syntactic structure, even though the verb tense is changed; and the second expansion (*il caffè*) is built as an increment both to the first and to the second one, since it is the referent of the pronoun used in both clauses.²¹

When the interjections are related to some prior talk (see excerpt (14)) and/or actions (15 and 16) but disjuncted from the immediately prior turn both as action type and/or topic, RDs are found. Through this construction, the trigger for the new talk is positioned at the very beginning of the turn. However, whilst through LDs the referent is explicitly expressed through a full-noun phrase at the very beginning of the clause, in RDs it is first expressed through a pronoun. In this way, the interjector orients to that element as being recognizable by his recipients: i.e. as already given and/or known. Only towards the end of the turn, through the delivery of the full noun phrase that referent – which is disconnected from the immediately prior talk – is made explicit and highlighted. Hence, the basic feature of the interjection (i.e. the fact that it is disconnected) is revealed only at the end of the turn: i.e. the new element is pushed further back in it; thus smoothing out its abruptness.

By contrast, through LDs the fact that the interjection is disconnected is indicated by placing the trigger for the new talk in the first (or second)²² position in the turn and referring to it through a full noun phrase. In this way, the trigger for the new utterance is highlighted. Similarly, through the fronting of temporal and local elements the interjection is contextualized as tightly linked to the physical environment and to the activities exogenous to the talk, which are oriented to as triggers for these utterances.

Moreover, while leftward oriented constructions are particularly frequent, RDs are less common. The account for this may be found in their different pragmatic function and sequential position: there are fewer cases in which the interjection, even though topically disconnected from the immediate prior and/or current turn, is somewhat connected with some element/topic that was treated in the recent talk.

Therefore, the syntactic constructions which are used in the interjections show a careful monitoring on the part of the interjector of the talk-in-progress and, in particular, of the development and change of topics. The different syntactic constructions indicate, on the one hand, a careful monitoring of the conversation as a whole and not just of the immediate prior/current turn. On the other hand, they show an orientation of the interjectors to design their turns with regard to the relation between the action and/or topic of their utterances and the activity and/or topics of the conversation as a whole. Interjectors show a strong orientation to the fact that their turns are se-

quentially and topically unrelated to the current talk. By constructing a turn where the referent – which is also the trigger for the new talk – is produced at the very beginning of the utterance and thus made prominent by its placement, they immediately present that utterance as not connected with its contiguous conversational context. However, whenever possible, a relation to some prior part of the talk is indicated through RDs, through which the abrupt shift in action and/or topic is smoothed out.

In general, then, the fact that these turns are not related to the immediately prior and/or concurrent talk is oriented to by the interjectors. If this were not a constitutive feature of talk, such syntactic constructions would not be recurrent in the design of interjections. Through the deployment of such constructions interjectors connect their utterances to features of interaction. These features can be elements endogenous in the conversation, such as the topic of some prior talk – in which case RDs are used; or they can be elements exogenous to the conversation but still closely linked to the concurrent non-verbal activities and the physical environment, in which LD and topicalization are employed.

4. Concluding remarks

Previous linguistic research (Berruto 1985, 1987; Renzi 1988; Simone 1999; Sobrero 1999) on Italian marked syntactic constructions maintains that in the spoken language such forms are not oriented to as marked by speakers because of their extremely frequent use, so that their pragmatic functions seem to have weakened. If this were the case, unmarked and marked constructions should be employed in the same way: their use should not be influenced by the linguistic and conversational context; and different marked constructions (as LDs and RDs) should be used interchangeably as well. By contrast, from our analysis it emerged that LD, RD, and topicalization display specific pragmatic and conversational functions. Such functions seem to be strongly connected both with the conversational actions which they perform and also with the way such turns are related to the talk in which they participate. These marked constructions are found when abrupt shifts in action are engendered. When disconnected interjections are delivered, these marked constructions are employed as a resource by the speakers to indicate that these turns are not connected with the immediately prior talk. Moreover, left syntactic movements and RDs are not deployed in the same way, but are differently distributed in relation to the development of topics in the conversation. In those cases in which the interjection engenders a shift in action but the trigger for the action may be related to some talk which has previously occurred, RDs are employed. In this way, the abrupt shift in action is mitigated. Through LDs and topicalization instead, interjectors connect their turns with elements of the context exogenous to the talk.

Such a use of marked constructions is particularly relevant for the actions they characterize. In spite of the abrupt and disconnected nature of interjections, the different distribution of left-movements and RDs highlights a close monitoring of the talk in progress by the interjectors. This shows that interjections are not inadvertently pro-

duced. If this were not so, in general, interjectors would not have given any indication of the disconnectedness of their utterances in their turn-design; and, more specifically, there would not have been a different distribution of syntactic marked constructions in relation to the development of topics in the preceding/concurrent talk.

Notes

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1. We will consider interrogative clauses, since they are mostly used in the conversational phenomenon we are going to analyse. It must be noted that in Italian, unlike in languages such as English and German, both affirmative and interrogative turns follow the basic SVO order of constituents: interrogatives are differentiated from affirmative clauses only by the rising (or slightly rising) intonation (cf. Canepari 1983; Bertinetto & Caldognetto 1999).
2. It must be remarked that in Italian accusative pronouns may be positioned after the verb as well. For instance, the aforementioned English sentence may also be translated as *amano lei?* ('do (they) love her?'). In this case a strong form of the object pronoun *lei* must be used.
3. We leave here the literal translation to show that LD constituents are positioned in different places in Italian, if compared to English (see below).
4. It must be noted that Duranti and Ochs (1979) indicate *tua madre* ('your mother') as the referent to which *ne* is connected to. However, the pronoun *ne* is ambiguous: it could stand both for 'about her' and 'about it'. In this context *ne* seems to be co-referential with the whole phrase *tua madre che russa* ('your mother who snores'). This for two main reasons. Firstly, as Duranti and Ochs point out (1979:400), the speakers have been talking about noises heard at night. Secondly, the speaker (F) continues with *non me ne parla' perché passano due ore prima che m'addormento* ('don't even mention it because it takes me two hours before I fall asleep'). Hence, the focus of this turn is on the fact that the speaker cannot fall asleep because of his wife who snores.
5. Renzi refers to such clauses as "abrupt" (1988:146).
6. In his analysis of RDs in German, Auer notes that the full noun phrase is a replacement of the co-referential pronoun placed at the beginning of the clause, but it is not a correction of it (1996:95 Note 11).
7. For works which analyse cases in which speakers leave a conversation see Schegloff (1992); Dersley and Wootton (2001); for instances where interactants join the current interaction see Goodwin (1986); Lerner (1992); Egbert (1997).
8. Note that this is in contrast to what Goodwin (1984) reports. From his analysis of an interaction where other concurrent non-verbal activities were taking place, it emerged that these activities were organized with respect to the talk and participants oriented to the conversation as having primary importance. In our data, such cases were also found; however, there are also many instances in which the concurrent non-verbal activities and conversation are oriented to as having equal status.

9. As far as this specific action type is concerned (i.e. inviting the assessment of some food), it must be remarked that such actions are usually done by specific participants: the host (Lina in this occasion), or by those who have provided the food. More importantly, such conversational actions are not placed at random points in the interaction, but they are always positioned after a second helping of the food by the recipients (as in this case). By helping themselves for a second time to some food, participants overtly display that they are enjoying it. And the noticing or remarking of this non-conversational – but nonetheless – social activity cannot be done anywhere in the talk but it can appropriately be done, in order to be recognizable as such an action (i.e. as noticing that a participant is enjoying the food that has been offered), at that very moment in the interaction: i.e. after the second helping. In other words, certain non-verbal activities, such as this one, provide appropriate places to produce social actions, in spite of the fact that a concurrent conversation is under way and that these new actions are not connected with it. To this extent then, these turns show an appropriateness for being produced at precise points by exploiting the right moment in interaction to do such specific social actions.

10. Furthermore, even though her turn is somewhat connected with Cinzia's non-verbal activities, the topicalization of the object used in these activities does not seem to be Cinzia's conversational goal either. Cinzia is, in fact, just performing an action – cutting the cheese – with no apparent verbal or conversational relevance. In other words, Cinzia is just performing an action amidst a range of other activities that are concurrent with the conversation (such as eating). Her primary conversational focus is participating in the production of Federica's narrative, as a recipient. This story had in fact been triggered some minutes earlier by a question posed by Cinzia herself (data not shown).

11. Moreover, note that the turn by Lina is designed in such a manner as to invite a minimal response by Cinzia. Lina in fact produces first an assessment *è buono* ('it's good', l. 10) immediately followed by *eh::?* ('isn't it?') – a question tag – through which she projects a “yes/no” response.

12. It must be noted that in linguistics the term interjection indicates response cries which usually indicate emotional states, such as ‘oh’, ‘gosh’, etc. (cf. Goffman 1981; Goodwin et al. 2002). Here we use this term in order to retain the “interruptive” nature of these interventions.

13. It must be remarked that such disconnected interjections correspond to what Egbert (1997: 3) refers to as Schisming Inducing Turn(s). Whilst in the case of her research the focus is on schisms, our analysis is more based on the nature of these interjections. Moreover, a schism is only one of the sequential consequences these interjections have on conversation: i.e. not all disconnected interjections induce a schism. For this reason, we will keep our definition “disconnected interjections”.

14. As was pointed out in Section 2, interjectors may exploit the concurrent non-verbal activities and/or elements of the physical environment and present them as triggers of their new disconnected utterances.

15. Such a marked construction is also particularly important, if we consider the brevity of this utterance. If Teresa had employed the unmarked construction *cos'è questo* ('what is this?') by placing *questo* after the verb, she could have expanded the clause (for instance, she could have said “what is this thing?”, “what is this chain?”, etc.) by making explicit the referent of *questo*. By contrast, this is not possible with the construction she employs here. Hence, she projects a very brief turn from the beginning of her question.

16. This translation must not be mistaken for the English form ‘here's your cake’ which could be uttered in the case of a speaker passing a cake to another interactant or even offering it. In

this case, in fact, Teresa is not giving Emiliano a cake and not even offering him some, but she is remarking on the fact that it is still on the table and he has not had it yet.

17. The unmarked construction for this turn would be: *hai il dolce qui* (lit. 'have 2ndSG the cake here', 'your cake is here').

18. It must be noted, however, that in (9) the disconnected nature of that interjection is indicated by the use of non-verbal communication (i.e. the pointing).

19. "Coppa" means neck and it is usually employed to refer to animals' necks. It is also a type of salami (derived from the pig's neck).

20. Note that it is *not* an immediately prior action.

21. It may also be assumed that such increments are interactionally produced, since Claudia does not immediately respond to the question. She could in fact have produced an answer after the first part of the question, or interjacently.

22. If we consider extract (12) (lines 4–5) the full noun phrase is in the second position in the turn, after a discourse marker *allora* ('so', 'now then', l. 4).

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Grammatical constructions in “real life practices”

WO-constructions in everyday German*

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In contemporary German conversation, the question adverb *wo* (‘where’) is not only used as a “local” relative adverb, but also as a connector introducing subordinate “temporal”, “causal”, and even “concessive” clauses.

In this paper – intended as a contribution to research in “interactional linguistics” (Selting & Couper-Kuhlen 2001) and particularly to the study of “grammar in discourse” (Ochs et al. 1996) – I will analyze uses and functions of *wo* (‘where’)-constructions in everyday German conversations and address aspects of the relationship between interactional meaning and the functions of grammatical constructions in discourse. I shall raise the following questions:

1. What are the interactional functions of various *wo*-constructions in German interactions?
2. Is the positioning of the *wo*-clause (as initial vs. final adverbial clause) used as a syntactic resource for different interactional functions?
3. On what bases do participants infer the particular relation expressed between the main clause and the *wo*-clause?
4. What conclusions can we draw about the process of constituting interactive meaning?

The analysis will reveal that the concrete interpretation of a *wo*-construction is contextually contingent; i.e. the multifunctionality of the connector *wo* turns out to be grounded in the interactive work *wo*-constructions are doing in everyday talk.

Thus, this study supports the view that meanings and functions are deeply connected to language use. By demonstrating the interactional emergence of meaning in conversational sequences, the article addresses issues of grammar in interaction, polysemy/polyfunctionality in everyday discourse and the relation between contextual features, sequential organization and the negotiation of meaning.

1. Introduction: Grammar and “real life practices”

At the basis of modes of linguistic thought that lead to the postulation of language as a system of normatively identical forms lies a practical and theoretical focus of attention on the study of defunct, alien languages preserved in written documents.

This philological orientation has determined the whole course of linguistic thinking in the European world to a very considerable degree, and we must stress this point with all possible insistence. European linguistic thought formed and matured over concern with the cadavers of written languages; almost all its basic categories, its basic approaches and techniques were worked out in the process of reviving these cadavers. (Vološinov 1929/1986: 71)

As early as 1929 Vološinov insisted that linguistic investigations no longer be based on the “cadavers of written languages” but on “real life practice in social intercourse”. However, it is only over the last 20 years that linguists have begun to systematically ground their work in “real life practice” and to explore the use of grammar in actual interactions. By choosing to ground their analyses on “naturally” occurring data, their research on grammar has shifted its analytical attention from the sentence (as the grammatical unit) to the turn, and thus to dialogically produced and temporally situated, contextualized communicative activity.¹ As a result, linguistic structures have proven to be deeply connected to their moment-by-moment evolving interactional production,² to cognitive aspects, such as memory capacity, processing strategies, etc.,³ as well as to the particular communicative activities and genres⁴ in which they appear and help to constitute. As Ford, Fox and Thompson (2002:20) argue

certain recurrent kinds of interactional activities precipitate certain recurrent kinds of grammar, and (...) important cues to an understanding of what grammar is can be found in considering how grammar works in everyday social interactions.

This study contributes to the recently developing body of work that examines the intersection of grammar, meaning and interaction, and investigates the use of *wo*-constructions in German interactions. Based on the assumption that grammar is a resource deployed in conversation for accomplishing action (Ochs, Schegloff, & Thompson 1996), the article explores the interactional meaning and grammatical functions of *wo*-constructions⁵ as practice based.⁶ I will show that the multifunctionality of the connector *wo* is grounded in the interactive work *wo*-constructions are doing in everyday talk.

In contemporary German conversation, the question adverb *wo* ‘where’ is not only used as a relative adverb indicating a local relationship *es gibt ja hier au total äh hyg-hygienisch aussehende restaurants wo de salmonellen kriegsch*; ‘here we also have restaurants that look totally hygienic where you can still get salmonella poisoning’, but also as a connector introducing a subordinate temporal, causal, and even concessive clause:⁷

(1) KIRCHGANG/VISIT TO THE CHURCH

- 22 Hans: des war heut NACHT-
this was today night
 tonight-
- 23 wo ich HEIMkomme bin; (.)
where I home come am
 when I came home; (.)
- 24 ein BILD für (die) GÖTTER;
a picture for (the) gods
 it was a sight for sore eyes;

(2) ALKOHOL/ALCOHOL (notes taken during a conversation)

- 1 Anna: trink lieber nix,
drink better nothing
 better not drink anything,
- 2 wo du so erkältet bisch.
where you so caught a cold are
 since you have such a bad cold.

(3) KUCHEN/CAKE

- 43 Lea: du du verLÄSST uns schon.
you you leave us already
 you you are leaving us already.
- 44 <<lamentierend> oh:::
 <<lamenting voice> oh:::
- 45 Tim: hm [(muss)]
 hm [(must)]
- 46 Lea: <<lamentierend> [wo] ich SO: nen
 <<lamenting voice> [where] I such a
 SCHÖ:Nen KU:CHn für dich gebackn hab.>
beautiful cake for you baked have>
 <<lamenting voice> [although/even though] I have baked
 such a beautiful cake for you.>

In all three examples, the traditional relative adverb *wo* (indicating a local relationship) is reanalyzed as a connector introducing an adverbial clause: the *wo*-construction in (1) expresses a temporal relation, in (2) Anna presents an account for her preceding advice (thus, the *wo*-clause marks a causal relation), and in (3) Lea expresses that Tim's leaving stands in contrast to the fact that she had baked a beautiful cake for him. With the lamenting *wo*-clause the speaker constructs "a relationship of dissonance between the two component propositions" (König & van der Auwera 1988: 107). Thus, a concessive relation is introduced.⁸

The fact that a single connector can synchronically be used to introduce causal *and* concessive relations is treated as grammatically significant, since causality and concessivity are traditionally considered relations of opposition (König 1991; König & Siemund 2000): Concessivity implies the negation of a possible causal relation.

This opposition manifests itself in such labels as “incausal”, “inoperant cause” or “anticause”.⁹

However, as these examples reveal, participants in everyday German conversations use the “local” relative adverb not only to introduce a temporal relation but also to indicate causal and concessive functions and they do not have any problems reconciling any seeming ambiguities. Instead they seem to arrive at quite straightforward interpretations of the ongoing activities. Whereas the fact that a linguistic element indicating a local relationship is reanalyzed as indicating a temporal connection is well-known in grammar theory, the observation that such an element is used to invite temporal, causal AND concessive interpretations is rather remarkable.¹⁰

The goal here is to analyze the different uses of *wo*-constructions and to show how grammatical and interactional aspects combine to contribute to varying interpretations of *wo*-sequences. Thus, I shall address aspects of the relationship between interactional meaning and the functions of grammatical constructions in discourse and raise the following questions:

1. What are the interactional functions of causal and concessive *wo*-constructions in German interactions?
2. Do participants employ causal and concessive *wo*-clauses in initial as well as in final position? Is the positioning of the *wo*-clause used as a syntactic resource for different interactional functions?
3. On what bases do participants infer the particular relation expressed between the main clause and the *wo*-clause?
4. What conclusions can we draw about the process of constituting interactive meaning?

2. Adverbial *wo*-constructions in spoken German

The following analysis is based on informal conversations among friends and family members (dinner conversations, chats over coffee, telephone interactions) as well as on institutional discourse (face-to-face counselling sessions and radio-phone-in conversations) collected from 1982 to 2001 in different parts of Germany (Baden-Württemberg, Brandenburg, Hessen, Nordrhein-Westfalen, and Thüringen). I have also used overheard accounts from ongoing conversations as well as a collection of informal e-mail-communication.¹¹

2.1 Causal *wo*-constructions

In general, adverbial clauses are treated as “bi-directional”; i.e. they can modify preceding material as well as material yet to come. As Ford’s (1993:11) study of adverbial clauses in American English conversations demonstrates, these two positions (initial and final positioning of the adverbial clause) can be “distinct in their roles in manag-

ing both the linear flow of information in a text and the attention of the listener (...) as it is guided through the text”.

In our data, causal *wo*-constructions appear in different positions: They can precede the main clause (initial *wo*-clauses) and they can follow the main clause (final *wo*-clauses).¹² Depending upon their sequential positioning (initial or final), *wo*-constructions show different interactive functions and, thus, must be understood as constructions in their own right.

2.1.1 Initial *wo*-clauses

Initial *wo*-constructions are generally used as framing devices and provide the reason or background for the following activity (e.g. for uttering the following suggestion, for asking the following question, etc.).

Looking at various initial *wo*-clauses we can observe a transition from temporal uses of *wo* (expressing the temporal co-occurrence or sequence of two events or situations) to causal ones.

In the following example, the connector *wo* is used to indicate a temporal relationship between two events. At the same time, a causal inference between the presented events is detectable.

A, the caller to a radio-phone-in program, tells the psychologist about her problems with her husband and reconstructs a quarrel they have recently had:

(4) EHEPROBLEME/MARRIAGE PROBLEMS (Radio-Phone-In)

- 262 A: hat er sich vor mich hingestellt, hat
has he himself in front of me stood has
 gelacht,
laughed
 then he stood up in front of me, and laughed,
 → 263 und wo ich das einmal geSEHN hab,
and where I that once seen have
 and when I saw that,
 264 dann hab ich en ganz großen radio geNOMMn,
then have I a very big radio taken
 I took a very big radio,
 265 und hab- ziemlich ausfällig bin ich dann
and hav- rather abusive am I then
 gewesen,
been
 and- I got rather abusive,
 266 und hab gesagt so und so,
and have said so and so
 and said this and that,
 267 und hab den ganzen radio hingeschmissen.
and have the whole radio thrown down
 and threw the radio on the floor.

In line 263, A provides an initial *wo*-construction, indicating the pivotal moment which led to the reaction described in line 264f.: *dann hab ich en ganz großen radio geNOMMn, und hab- ziemlich ausfällig bin ich dann gewesen*, ‘I took a very big radio and- I got rather abusive and said this and that, and threw the radio on the floor’. Thus, *wo* specifies the moment in which the speaker saw her husband laughing at her. Besides this temporal interpretation, a causal interpretation can be inferred: The speaker’s seeing her husband laughing at her is the reason why she got ‘rather abusive (...) and threw the radio’. If two events are presented as co-occurring or overlapping in time, one can be interpreted as causing the other to occur. Thus, we have an example situated at the borderline between a temporal and a causal interpretation. Speaker A displays the interactive function in using the *wo*-clause to indicate what led her to throw the radio on the floor.

In the following examples, the temporal meaning of the *wo*-construction is fading or even blocked out entirely.

The next segment with an initial *wo*-clause stems from a public discussion about children starting school in Germany.

(5) SCHULDISKUSSION/DISCUSSION ABOUT SCHOOLING

- 43 Eva: find ich EI:ntlich auch.
find I actually too
 I think so too actually.
- 44 (0.5)
- 45 Ina: wo wir grad (mal)übers- eh über
where we just(once)about- eh about
 EINSchulung sprechen, (-)
starting school speak
 since we are just now talking about children starting school,
 (-)
- 46 ähm w- wie siehst DU des denn (.)
ähm h- how see you this ((PRT.))
 ehm w- what do you think (.)
- 47 (zum) punkt ALter?
(about) point age
 (about) the age factor?

The *wo*-clause *wo wir grad (mal) übers- eh über EINSchulung sprechen*, ‘since we are just now talking about children starting school’, provides the frame for the following utterances and at the same time ties back to the preceding discourse. With the *wo*-clause, which is prosodically non-integrated and displays its own intonation contour, Ina produces a slight topic shift from organizational details to the aspect of “best age for children to start schooling”. The information provided in this initial *wo*-clause is interactionally “given” and, thus, represents presupposed background information. This kind of “pragmatic backgrounding” (Auer 1998) is iconically supported in the syntax: the *wo*-constructions show subordinate word order; i.e. final positioning of the finite verb.

In the next segment – taken from an interaction between roommates – Kaja and Till are involved in a heated discussion about household duties, when Kaja asks Till if he has plans to move out:

(6) WG/ROOMMATES

- 139 Kaja: eh ja vielleischt andre PLÄne, (.)
 eh well perhaps other plans
 eh well perhaps other plans, (.)
- 140 was so AUSzieh'n (oder=so) angeht
 what so moving out (or so) concerns
 concerning moving out (for example)
 (.)[vielleicht?]
 [perhaps]
- 141 Till: [hm]
- 142 (0.5)
- 143 Till: also (.) wo du=s so geNAU wissen
 well where you=it so exactly know
 [willst;
 [want
 well (.) since you want to know it [precisely;]
- 144 Kaja: [ja (schon)]
 [yes (PRT)]
 [well (yeah)]
- 145 Till: NEIN. hab [ich nich.]
 no have [I not]
 no I have [no such plans.]
- 146 Kaja: [(dacht)]
 [(thought)]

Again the initial *wo*-clause ties back to the previous discourse and at the same time it provides the reason and frame for the following statement: *NEIN. hab ich nich.*, ‘no. I have no such plans’. With the initial *wo*-construction, Till introduces the grounds upon which he bases performing the following activity. Again, the situation referred to in the *wo*-clause has the status of presupposed information.

Initial *wo*-clauses (which resemble initial *wenn* ‘if’- or *da* ‘since’-clauses)¹³ contribute to discourse cohesion: They indicate on what grounds or against what background assumptions the speaker performs the subsequent activity; i.e. they present the framework for material to follow and, more concretely, the reason for the activity to come.

2.1.1.2 Final *wo*-clauses

In considering final *wo*-clauses, we can also observe a gradual transition from temporal to causal meaning.

In the following example the connector *wo* can be interpreted as introducing a temporal adverbial clause. However, a causal inference is also possible.

Ulla is telling Sara about an acquaintance who has been looking for a husband and had written many personal ads, when finally, one candidate responded. Ulla then quotes parts of the candidate's letter (Ulla and Sara speak in their local dialect variety; i.e. in Swabian):

(7) HEIRATSANZEIGE/PERSONAL AD

- 26 Ulla: ond wenn sie ihm <<p> schreibe dät,>
and if she him <<p> write would>
 and if she <<p> answered his letter>
- 27 <<behaucht, p> s'dürfdet JO:: net
 <<aspirated, p> it might ((PRT)) not
 seine eltern erfah [re] hahahahaha]
his parents kno [w> hahahahaha]
 <<aspirated, p> his parents weren't supposed to find out>
 about [it> hahahahaha]
- 28 Sara: [<<f> hahahahaha>]
 [<<f> hahahahaha>]
- 29 Ulla: [i han müsse] ↑LACHe wo i die
 [I have must] laugh where I the
 sache glese han.
thing read
 [I had to] laugh when I read that
- 30 Sara: [<<f> hihihhi>]
 [<<f> heeheehee>]

In line 29 Ulla describes two events ("she had to laugh" and "she read the letter") as occurring simultaneously. Thus, a temporal interpretation is dominant here. The final *wo*-construction *wo i die sache glese han*. 'when I read that', which is prosodically integrated into the intonation contour of the preceding main clause, connects one action (reading the letter) to another event (laughing). The temporal overlap of the two events – reading the letter and laughing – again invites a possible causal inference: Her reading the letter can be interpreted as the reason for her laughing.¹⁴

Causal inferences arising from temporally overlapping situations are rather common in the development of grammatical markers (Abraham 1976; Traugott & König 1991), and there are many instances of connectors in various languages that have undergone a change from temporal to causal inferences (e.g. *weil*, *da*, *since*); the temporal inference itself is often derived from an original spatial interpretation.¹⁵ In the case of German *weil* 'because' and *da* 'as' and English *since*, causal inferencing has become conventionalized.

In the following *wo*-constructions the causal function gradually takes over; i.e. it is more evident and a temporal interpretation is blocked altogether.

The next example is taken from an interaction between two friends (Ela and Ina). Ina has just come back from a job interview, which has turned out to be rather frustrating. In the following segment she criticizes that the employers interviewed 50 candidates for only 12 positions:

(8) ELA-INA

- 55 Ina: daß se dann FÜNFzig für ZWÖLF stellen
that they then fifty for twelve positions
 antanzen lassen.
dance up let
 that they would let fifty ((applicants)) turn up to fill twelve
 positions.
- 56 kann man des ja mit
can one this ((PRT)) with
 (gutachten)und=so wirklich aus(-) sondern.
(evaluation) and=so really pre(-)select
 one could of course have preselected with (evaluations) and
 such things.
- 57 ja. [wer] kommt.
yes [who] comes
 yes. [who] is interviewed.
- 58 Ela: [hm]
- 59 Ina: brauchen se nicht fünfzig leute EINladen.
need they not fifty people invite
 al[so]
 we[ll]
 (they) need not invite fifty people. we[ll]
- 60 Ela: [ja.] des stimmt.
[yeah] that holds true
 [yeah.] that's right.
- 61 Ina: also EH wo mer so wenig geld
well especially where we so little money
 ham.
have-PL3rd
 especially since we have so little money.
- 62 i find des unGLAUB [lich.]
I find this unbeliev [able]
- 63 Ela: [hihi ja] ja.
[hehe yes] yes
- 64 Ina: <<f, ↑> ich find des ↑↓UN::GLAUB[LICH Ela.>]
 <<f, ↑> I find this ↑↓unbeliev[able Ela>]
- 65 Ela: [hihihi] ja
[hehehe] yeah
 hehehe yeah he
 hehehe yeah he
- 66 Ina: dies geld für mich hättet se
this money for me [would-have] they
 sich oifach sparen könne.
themselves simply save can-PL3rd
 they could just have saved the money they spent on me.

In line 59 Ina indignantly concludes that the employers should not have invited fifty job applicants: *brauchen se nicht fünfzig leute EINladen*. ‘they need not invite fifty people’. This assessment forms a complete syntactic construction and a TCU of its own. As there is no immediate recipient reaction following, Ina starts to go on. Her *al[so]* ‘we[ll]’ is then overlapped with Ela’s agreement: [*ja.*] *des stimmt*. ‘[yeah] that’s right’. Ina adds a *wo*-construction as a “post-completion extension” (Ford 1993:129) and provides material with which to back her affectively loaded complaint: *also EH wo mer so wenig geld ham*. ‘especially where/since we have so little money’. The focussed particle *EH* ‘especially’ is used to substantiate this evidence. In contrast to Ina’s complaint (lines 62 and 64), which is prosodically marked by local and global increases in volume, high register, lengthenings and falling-rising intonation contours, the prosodic gestalt of the *wo*-utterance is rather backgrounded. In line 66 Ina reconfirms the causal relation between the *wo*-utterance and the preceding complaint once again: *dies geld für mich hättet se sich oifach sparen könne*. ‘they could just have saved the money they spent on me’. In this *wo*-construction the causal function is the dominant one, and the utterance now presupposes “since we have so little money, one should not invite fifty people to be interviewed”. Thus, the *wo*-construction is used to account for her earlier indignation.

In the following sequence, Ulla, Sara and Rolf are talking about animals which are eaten by some people in China. Ulla emphasizes that she could not eat insects:

(9) INSEKTEN/INSECTS

- 41 Ulla: <<p> nee also so sache könnt i NET
<<p> no well such things could I not
esse;>
eat>
<<p> no I couldn’t eat such things;>
- 42 [inSEKte.]
[insects]
- 43 Sara: [hmm]
[hmm]
- 44 Rolf: hahhh
hahhh
- 45 Ulla: wo i sowieso so ANGSCHT han davor;
where I anyways such fear have of-them
especially because I am so afraid of them;
- 46 <<negierend> hm=eh.>
<<negating> hm=eh>
no.
- 47 Rolf: <<all> also bei inSEKte bin i mer
<<all> well concerning insects am I myself
net hundertprozentig sicher,>
not one-hundred-percent sure>
<<all> well with insects I am also not a hundred percent
sure,>

- 48 <<all> ob I=s schaffe würd;>
 <<all> if I=it manage would>
 <<all> whether I could manage it;>

After Ulla (line 41) has stated with some disgust that she could not eat insects, she provides an account for this affectively loaded statement. Again, the *wo*-construction represents a post-completion extension: it is added to a syntactically, semantically, and prosodically completed construction. As Ford (1993: 129) argues, speakers tend to provide accounts for a previous statement when the reciprocity of the previous utterance is in doubt; i.e. when the speaker does not get the expected response. In both cases, (8) and (9), the speakers' affectively loaded statements only prompt minimal reactions. These rather reserved and downgrading reactions seem to evoke the speakers' accounts. Whereas in (8) the temporal meaning still shimmers through, in (9) a temporal interpretation is obstructed – due to the fact that the *wo*-turn offers a generic statement in present tense (and not a sequence of events).

In ALCOHOL we already observed another final *wo*-clause, which was used to explain the preceding advice:

(2) ALKOHOL/ALCOHOL (notes taken during a conversation)

- 1 Anna: trink lieber nix,
 drink better nothing
 better not drink anything,
 → 2 wo du so erkältet bisch.
 where you so caught a cold are
 since you have such a bad cold.

In (8) as well as in (9) and (2) speakers use causal *wo*-constructions to account for their preceding communicative activities, such as conclusions, complaints, assessments, advice, etc.¹⁶ Thus, the causal relation between the preceding main clause and the *wo*-construction is rather loose and operates (mainly) in the speech act domain.¹⁷ Furthermore, the situations and events referred to in the causal *wo*-utterances are presented as evident or given, and, thus, as “presupposed background assumptions” (Auer 1998: 293): In (2) the speaker refers to the fact that her co-participant has a cold; in (8) Ina refers to the fact that the German state has little or no money, and in (9) Ulla treats the fact that she is afraid of insects as evident and unquestionable. Often the presupposed status of the information in the *wo*-clause and, thus, its pragmatic back-grounding is supported by prosodic means; i.e. the TCU with the *wo*-clause is often prosodically unmarked – in contrast to the affectively loaded environment. Thus, interactants make use of final *wo*-clauses to back preceding activities and statements – especially in cases in which recipients' reactions to these preceding activities are not sufficient or even indicative of upcoming disagreement.

Some of the few German reference grammars addressing causal uses of *wo* stress the fact that these *wo*-constructions obligatorily include the modal particle *doch* (Heidolph et al. 1984: 801; Weinrich 1993: 763; Zifonun, Hoffmann, & Strecker

1997:2299). Our data, however, demonstrate that in spoken German *doch* is not obligatory for causal *wo*-constructions.

Neither the initially positioned *wo*-clause obligatorily includes *doch*:

(5) SCHULDISKUSSION/DISCUSSION ABOUT SCHOOLING

45 Ina: wo wir grad (mal) übers- eh über EINSchulung
sprechen, (-)

(6) WG/ROOMMATES

143 Till: also (.) wo du=s so geNAU wissen [willst;]

nor do final *wo*-clauses:

(2) ALKOHOL/ALCOHOL

2 Anna: wo du so erkältet bisch.

(8) ELA-INA

61 Ina: also EH wo mer so wenig geld ham.

(9) INSEKTEN/INSECTS

45 Ulla: wo i sowieso so ANGSCHT han davor;

Most of the *wo*-constructions, however, show other particles, such as *EH*, *so* and *sowieso* which not only contextualize an affective stance but are also used to substantiate the evidence of the presented accounts.

To summarize the formal and functional characteristics of causal *wo*-constructions:

1. Initial and final *wo*-clauses are used for particular interactional functions: Initial *wo*-clauses contribute to discourse orientation and are used as framing devices for the following activity. Often they introduce (slight) topic shifts or a refocusing of the ongoing conversation. Final *wo*-clauses are used to provide accounts for preceding affectively loaded assessments, conclusions, complaints, advice, questions, etc. Often these accounts are prompted by recipients' missing or downgrading reactions; i.e. speakers add *wo*-clauses providing already evident information to back their preceding assessments, advice, complaints etc., in cases in which the recipients' reactions are somewhat dispreferred or do not provide the expected co-alignment.
2. The event or situation referred to in the initial as well as final *wo*-clause is presented as 'given' (i.e. interactionally shared knowledge) and evident. It is treated as background information, which is normally not reactivated in the following sequences.¹⁸ This 'pragmatic backgrounding' of the information provided in the *wo*-utterance is sometimes substantiated by prosodic downgrading.
3. Contrary to statements in various reference grammars based on invented or written *wo*-constructions, the use of the modal particle *doch* is obligatory neither in initial nor in final causal *wo*-constructions. Instead, participants in spoken interaction often make use of other particles (such as *so*, *eh*, *sowieso*) to back the validity of their statements.

In our data, *doch* in combination with causal *wo*-constructions is used mainly in e-mail communication, as in the following example:

(10) SCHOKI/HOT CHOCOLATE (E-MAIL)

Nana, dass gegen Dich jemand integriert
Well that against you someone integrates
 That someone might integrate against you

<mann, bin ich heut wieder witzisch>,
 <man am I today again funny>
 <gosh, I am so funny again today>,

das kann man sich ja kaum vorstellen,
that can one oneself (PRT) hardly imagine
 no one would believe that

→ wo Du doch so a Nette bist. ;-)
where you (PRT) such a nice-one are ;-)
 since you are such a nice girl. ;-)

Naja, wie sähe es denn aus wenn
Well, however, how would see it (PRT) like if
 Well, however, how would it look if

ich Donnerstag Nachmittag oder Freitag
I Thursday afternoon or Friday

Lust auf Café und oder Schoki kriegen würde???

feel like coffee and or hot-chocolate get would

I felt like having some coffee and or hot chocolate on Thursday afternoon
 or Friday???

The modal particle *doch* functions here to mark the presented fact as already evident, and to reactivate shared knowledge.¹⁹ The predominant use of the modal particle *doch* in e-mails might be attributed to the fact that e-mail communication is more oriented to written, normative language use.

The present study of causal uses of *wo*-constructions reveals that initial and final *wo*-clauses – seeming grammatical alternatives – do have different usage profiles: Initial *wo*-constructions are employed as discourse-structuring devices, framing the following activities, whereas final *wo*-constructions are used to provide accounts for preceding statements, suggestions, complaints, advice, etc. These two types of causal *wo*-constructions, which have been widely accepted as equivalents in function and meaning turn out not to be simply equivalents, but independent constructions with particular interactional functions and, thus, have to be treated as separate constructions employed for different interactional tasks.

2.2 Concessive *wo*-constructions

Besides causal *wo*-constructions, we also find cases in which *wo*-constructions are to be interpreted as providing a concessive relation.

2.2.1 Initial *wo*-clauses

In our data we have only one case of an initial concessive *wo*-construction and this example stems from an overheard conversation.²⁰ Annie had mentioned to her mother a number of times that she wanted to go out to meet a friend that afternoon, but she had kept on postponing her leaving. When she finally puts on her coat to go, her mother (Ulla) comments:

(11) REGNEN/RAIN (notes taken during a conversation)

→ Ulla: jetzt wo=s REGnet (.) gehsch du LO:S!
now where=it rains (.) leave you
now that/although it's raining (.) you decide to leave!

The second part of the *wo*-construction – *gehsch du LO:S!* ‘you decide to leave!’ – is presented as contrary to the expectation raised in the *wo*-part ‘it is raining.’ The concessive construction expresses – as König and van der Auwera (1988: 107) point out – that there is a “relationship of ‘normal incompatibility’ or dissonance between the two component propositions” (i.e. between “it is raining” and “you decide to leave”). As in the case with certain causal uses of *wo*, the concessive *wo*-clause here still retains part of its temporal meaning in the sense of “at the very moment it starts raining, you decide to leave”, even though the dissonance between the two events is pragmatically more relevant than their temporal co-occurrence. With the initial *wo*-construction, Ulla refers to the evident fact that it is raining and thus frames her following astonished statement. Thus, the initial *wo*-clause – like initial causal *wo*-clauses – indicates on what grounds or against what background assumptions the speaker is performing the following action.

2.2.2 Final *wo*-clauses

In (3) we could already observe a final concessive *wo*-construction. The *wo*-clause is added as post-completion extension (Ford 1993: 129) to a syntactically, semantically, and prosodically completed construction:

(3) KUCHEN/CAKE

43 Lea: du du verLÄSST uns schon.
you you leave us already
you you are leaving us already.
 44 <<lamentierend> oh:::
 <<lamenting voice> oh>
 45 Tim: hm [(muss)]
hm [(must)]
 → 46 Lea: <<lamentierend> [wo] ich SO: nen
 <<lamenting voice> [where] I such a
 SCHÖ:nen KU:chn für dich gebackn hab.>
beautiful cake for you baked have>
 <<lamenting voice> [although/even though] I have
 baked such a beautiful cake for you.>

Lea expresses her regret about Tim's plans to leave so soon (line 43). The following exclamation marker *oh:::* uttered in a lamenting voice, affectively supports her stance towards his plans; at the same time, the exaggerated, prolonged *oh:::* indicates a somewhat playful mood. In line 45 Tim insists that he must leave and does not join the playful modality. Overlapping with his serious account, Lea adds the *wo*-clause mentioning in a lamenting voice that she has baked a beautiful cake for him. Lea's lamenting *wo*-utterance contextualizes her regret and emphasizes a deviation from her expectation. Thus, the added *wo*-clause invites the inference that the two facts ("Tim's leaving" and "her having baked a cake for him") are in conflict and "are instances of situations that do not normally go together" (König 1994:681).

In the following transcript segment, Antje and Philip talk about the possibility of Philip doing a practical training semester:

(12) FACHHOCHSCHULE/POLYTECHNICAL INSTITUTE

- 75 Philip: (do hab I echt koi)
(there have I really no)
 (I really don't want)
- 76 i glaub des mit=em praxissemester,
I believe this with=the
practical-training-semester
 I think concerning the practical training semester,
- 77 des isch oifach-
this is simply
 it's just-
- 78 weisch des isch zu kurzfrischtig=
know=you this is too shortterm
 you know it's just too late=
- 79 Antje: =<<f> ja jetzt ↑FRO:G mol bevor du sagsch,>
 <<f> yeah now ask just before you say>
 =<<f> now just go and ↑ask before you say,>
- 80 <<all, f> du- d- du sagsch des emmer
 <<all, f> you y- you say this always
 soviel,>
so-much
 <<all, f> you- y- you always keep on saying,>
- 81 <<all, f> wo du no: gar net WEISCH,>
 <<all, f> where you (PRT) at-all not know>
 <<all, f> where you don't even know,>
- 82 [(jetzt) würd i mi er]kundige=
 [(now) would I myself in]quire
 [(now) I would in]quire=
- 83 Philip: =[(ja gut)]auf jedefall des kann i scho:
 [(yeah good)] in any case this can I (PRT)
 mache.
 do
 =[(well okay)] that's right I can do that.

84 natürlich i- (-) aber=
 of course I- (-) but

Starting in line 79, Antje suggests in a reproachful voice²¹ that Philip first inquire before maintaining that he has no chance of getting a placement for a practical training semester. Antje asserts two facts (“Philip keeps on saying that he has no chance” and “he does not even know yet for certain whether he has a chance”) against the background of the assumption that these two do not normally go together: “if one does not yet know for sure, one should not insist that one has no chance”. Antje’s reproachful voice (indicated by an increase in volume, an increase in tempo and focus on the verb) contextualizes a deviation from expected, normal behavior. As in (11) and (3), the concessive *wo*-construction is realized here without the modal particle *doch*. Thus, contrary to the claims of some reference grammars that concessive *wo*-constructions have to include the modal particle *doch*,²² our examples reveal that this is not the case in spoken German.

Parallel to causal *wo*-constructions, in concessive *wo*-clauses, we can also observe a gradual shift from the mentioning of temporal co-occurring events or situations to the signaling of a general incompatibility between two situations, and thus, to concessive inferences. This gradual transition from temporal inferences to concessive ones is not surprising, as one of the major sources in the development of concessive connectors are expressions whose original or at least earlier meaning was “concomitance” or “cooccurrence” (Traugott & König 1991:199; Günthner 2001). Whereas in (11) (*jetzt wo=s REGnet (.) gehsch du LO:S!*) the temporal relationship is still present, in (3) and (12) the concessive interpretation is the predominant one.

Concessive *wo*-utterances prove to be connected to certain communicative activities: they are used mainly in activities and communicative genres indicating surprise, reproach, astonishment, indignation, or complaint. This is not surprising, since these are actions expressing deviations from normal expectations.

The following sequence is taken from a radio-phone-in interaction. The topic is “foreigners in Germany”:

(13) AUSLÄNDER/FOREIGNERS (Radio-Phone-In)

- 120 H: wenn ich bei uns im sommer total verMUMMde
 when I at us in summer totally wrapped-up
 (.) h' menschen- (-)
 (.) h' people (-)
 when I see people here in the summer- (-)
- 121 h' herUmlaufen sehe,
 h' walk-around see
 who walk around completely wrapped up in clothes,
- 122 ich habe bewußt MENSchen gesagt,
 I have deliberately people said
 I deliberately said people,

- 123 weil man ja n- weil man nischt WEISS,
because one (PRT) n- because one not know
because you well n- you never know,
- 124 wer daRUNter STECKT,
who behind hidden
who's hidden underneath,
- 125 kommt mir der gedANke,
comes me the thought
then the thought comes to my mind,
- 126 <<f> mit we- mit welschem RESCHT->
<<f> with wh- with what right>
<<f> what>
- 127 <<f> erLAUBT es ih:nen,>
<<f> allows it them>
<<f> gives them the right>
- 128 <<f> so herUM zu laufen;>
<<f> so around to walk>
<<f> to walk around like that;>
- 129 wo es ja bei uns ein verMUMMungsverbot
where it (PRT) at us a covering-ban
gibt.
exists
although we have a law requiring people to keep their faces
uncovered.
- 130 P: h' h' hi h' hi
h' h' hee h' hee
- 131 H: <<f> aber geNAU die:se LEUte (.)werden
<<f> but exactly these people (.) will
einem mitteleu- euroPÄer,>
a middleeu- european>
<<f> but exactly the same people (.) might have a person from
central europe,>
- 132 der sisch in ih:rem land SO kleidet wie
who himself in their country so dresses like
er es geWOHNT is,
he it used is
if he dressed according to his own customs in their country,
- 133 vielleicht (.) verHAFTen lassen.
perhaps (.) arrest let
perhaps (.) have him arrested.

Starting in line 126, the speaker is quoting the question he keeps asking himself whenever he sees people from foreign countries walking around according to the customs of their own culture: *mit we- mit welschem RESCHT- erLAUBT es ih:nen, so herUM zu laufen*; 'what gives them the right to walk around like that'. Then he adds the reason why he asks himself this question: In Germany there is a law prohibiting people from covering their face: *wo es ja bei uns ein verMUMMungsverbot gibt*. 'we have a law re-

quiring people to keep their faces uncovered'. This rhetorical question has a concessive element, as two situations "they walk around with their faces covered" and "we have a law requiring people to keep their faces uncovered" are presented which are not normally assumed to co-occur. In this example *wo* occurs together with the modal particle *ja*, which contextualizes the presented information as given and obvious (Thurmair 1989: 104ff.).

To summarize the formal and functional characteristics of concessive *wo*-constructions:

1. Our data reveal that concessive *wo*-constructions are preferably used in the sequential environment of certain communicative activities, such as reproaches, complaints, astonished questions, etc. In these activities, speakers question a behavior or event as deviant and not compatible with normal expectations. Consequently, it is not surprising that concessive *wo*-utterances tend to appear in emphatically marked sequences and are often accompanied by prosodic signals of indignation, hyperbolic expressions, affectionally loaded particles, intensifiers, etc. Furthermore, concessive *wo*-utterances are generally postpositioned; i.e. they are added as 'post-completion-extensions' (Ford 1993). This preference for final concessive *wo*-clauses is in accordance with observations concerning other concessive clauses in spoken German (Günthner 1999b).
2. As in the case of causal *wo*-constructions, the event presented in the concessive *wo*-clause is portrayed as given and evident. The information provided in the syntactically subordinate *wo*-clause is backgrounded and not asserted, and it is not generally reactivated in the following sequences.
3. Our examples of concessive *wo*-constructions reveal that the use of the modal particle *doch* is not obligatory in concessive *wo*-constructions. As in causal *wo*-constructions, the majority of the uses of *doch* in concessive *wo*-clauses appear in e-mail data. In the following *wo*-clause stemming from an e-mail interaction, the writer uses the modal particle *doch*:

(14) BRAVER JUNGE/GOOD BOY (E-MAIL)

Moin,
Morning
 ich leeeeeebe noch, aber nicht besonders.
I liiiiiiive still but not very well
 I am still alive, but not well.

Irgendwie wird das nicht besser, und das,
Somehow becomes this not better and that
 Somehow this isn't getting any better, and that

→ wo ich doch gestern so brav war!
where I (PRT) yesterday so well-behaved was
 even though/although I was such a good boy yesterday!

3. Multifunctional *wo*-constructions

As our data show, *wo*-constructions can be interpreted as providing an account for the activity performed in the main clause (causal interpretation), or it can be interpreted as providing a fact that stands in contrast to the situation mentioned in the main clause (concessive interpretation). Thus, the questions arise: Does the connector *wo* have causal or concessive meaning potential, or is the particular interpretation derived solely from its situated use in interaction? Do we have an area of overlap between these relations?

In our data, we even find cases in which the *wo*-construction allows for both, a causal *and* a concessive interpretation.

(15) HANDWERKLE/CRAFTSMAN (notes taken during a conversation)

- 1 Ute: mi wunderts,
 me wonders-it
 I am surprised,
 2 dass du des-
 that you this-
 3 dass du SOLche probleme damit hasch,
 that you such problems with-it have
 that you have such problems with it,
 → 4 wo du so gut handwerkle kannsch.
 where you so well making-things can
 since/although you are so good at making things.

The *wo*-utterance in line 4 can be interpreted as introducing a concessive relation, in the sense of ‘I am surprised that you have such problems with it, although you are such a good craftsman’, implying that “if one is a good craftsman, one normally does not have such problems”. With the concessive *wo*-construction, Ute asserts that her co-participant has these problems and that he is a good craftsman – against the background that situations like these are incompatible and do not normally go together. At the same time, we can infer a causal relationship between the *wo*-clause and the preceding main clause (lines 1–2). The two possible interpretations, however, are located on different levels: Whereas the concessive reading relates to the general incompatibility between the two facts presented (“to be a good craftsman” and “to have problems with it”), the causal interpretation refers to the reason why the speaker is surprised that her co-participant is having such problems.²³ Once we look at the interactive work the *wo*-clause does, we realize that in both cases it is used to provide an account for the preceding communicative action.

So far, we have only discussed *wo*-constructions uttered by a single speaker. However, in everyday interactions *wo*-constructions can also appear as the collaborative productions of a number of different speakers.²⁴

In the next extract, Anna and Otto are talking about a German class for foreign students. Anna expresses her annoyance with the teacher who has changed the time schedule without asking the students whether they can come at the new time:

(16) DEUTSCHKURS/GERMAN CLASS

- 34 Anna: und verschie:bt einfach den U:nterricht. hm.
and postpones simply the classes hm
 and simply postpones her class. hm.
- 35 UN.VER.SCHÄ:MT.
outrageous
- 36 Otto: wo die leut noch dafür beZAHlen.
where the people (PRT) for-it pay
 since/although the participants are paying for it.
- 37 s=das ist un↑↓GLAUBlich.
s=this is unbelievable
 that's un↑↓believable.

After Anna expresses her indignation about the postponing of the German language class (line 34), Otto adds his *wo*-clause *wo die leut noch dafür beZAHlen*. ‘since/although the participants are paying for it’. By connecting a *wo*-clause to the prior speaker’s turn, Otto establishes his status as “co-teller” (Ford 1993:124ff.; Günthner 1996a) and reanalyzes the preceding clause as the main clause for his subordinated *wo*-clause with final positioning of the finite verb *beZAHlen*. This co-construction demonstrates that speakers treat *wo*-constructions as well-established schemata which can be instantiated collaboratively. By stating that the participants have to pay for the class, Otto provides a further – even more striking – reason for the outrageous action of the teacher in rescheduling her class and thus aligns himself with Anna in her indignation. Again, the information provided in the clause is interactively known and thus presented as an already evident fact. The *wo*-clause can trigger a concessive interpretation, in the sense of “she simply reschedules her class, although the participants are paying for it” (implying: normally it is the case that if participants pay, one cannot simply reschedule classes without the participants’ agreement). At the same time it can also trigger a causal interpretation, in the sense of “it is outrageous, because the participants even have to pay for it”. Again, the two interpretations are located on different levels: In the case of a concessive interpretation, the incompatibility between the two situations “rescheduling the class without asking the participants” and “the need to pay for the class” is stressed; whereas in case of a causal interpretation, the speaker (Otto) provides an account for the indignation.

The seemingly surprising overlap between causal and concessive interpretations – in considering the interactive functions of *wo*-constructions – is grounded in the interactive work *wo*-constructions are doing in everyday interactions: Speakers use them as resources to provide accounts, which – due to world knowledge, contextual aspects, communicative activities, etc. – can be interpreted as being in alignment with the presented activity/fact (causality) or in contrast with it (concessivity). Thus, the observation that *wo*-constructions are often used in affectively loaded sequences is not

surprising: Especially in contexts with face-threatening activities (such as reproaches, complaints, advice, affectively loaded assessments, etc.), *wo*-constructions turn out to be important devices with which to back these activities by claiming common ground and introducing evidence.

4. Conclusion

The data support the claim that the meaning and functions of *wo*-constructions are neither static nor fully determined, but *wo*-constructions have a broad functionality, which can invite particular inferences depending upon the context at hand. In cases in which a *wo*-clause introduces temporally co-occurring (or partially temporal overlapping) events, this co-occurrence can either be reinterpreted as cause-effect-relation, or it can be seen as contrary to expectation.²⁵ What the various uses of *wo*-constructions have in common, is their interactive function: Participants use *wo*-clauses to provide evident, presupposed material, which is treated as factual and interactionally backgrounded. The concrete interpretation of a particular *wo*-construction, however, is contextually contingent and cannot be pressed into fixed categories provided by traditional grammar.²⁶

Thus, this study of *wo*-constructions in German conversations supports the view that meanings and functions are deeply connected to language use. As Schegloff, Ochs and Thompson (1996:40) make it clear:

The meaning of any single grammatical construction is interactionally contingent, built over interactional time in accordance with the interactional actualities. Meaning lies not with the speaker nor the addressee nor the utterance alone (...) but rather with the interactional past, current and projected next moment.

Notes

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1. Cf. Günthner (2003).
2. Cf. Ochs, Schegloff and Thompson (1996); Linell (1998) and Ford, Fox and Thompson (2002).
3. Cf. Auer (2002).
4. Luckmann (1988); Bergmann and Luckmann (1995); Günthner and Knoblauch (1995); Günthner (2000).
5. Following Thompson (2002:3) I am using the term “constructions” to refer to “conventionalized recurring sequences of forms (...) with open slots”; this definition of a construction as

“a sequence of forms that is used frequently” is usage-based and empirical as “it depends on frequency to determine both conventionality and recurrence”.

6. Cf. Günthner (2000) for a “practice based approach to grammar”.
7. For the transcription conventions see Selting et al. (1998).
8. Cf. also Pasch (1999: 139–140) on causal and concessive uses of *wo*.
9. Cf. König (1991) and König and Siemund (2000).
10. Cf. Günthner (2002).
11. Thanks to Jörg Bückler and Markus Thumm for giving me their samples of e-mails.
12. In our data, we even have one example of an inserted causal *wo*-clause:

UMZUG/MOVE (Gesprächsnotiz/notes taken during a conversation)

- 1 Karl: könntest du (-)
could you
 → 2 wo du grad hier bist
where you just here are
 3 mal sagen,
just say
 4 wo ich das bild aufhängen soll?
where I the picture hang up shall
 Karl: Could you – since you are here right now – tell me where to put up this picture?

The inserted *wo*-clause here functions as a parenthesis and forms the discursive frame for the ongoing activity.

13. Cf. Günthner (1999a).
14. Temporal uses of *wo* – as in this extract – are mainly used in our Southern German data.
15. Cf. Traugott and König (1991: 195).
16. Cf. Zifonun, Hoffmann and Strecker (1997) who talk about the ‘modus-commenting’ (“moduskommentierend”) function of causal *wo*-constructions.
17. Causal *wo*-constructions tend to operate on non-content levels; i.e. in the speech act domain or epistemic domain (Sweetser 1990). The reason for this preference might be the presuppositional status of the information in the *wo*-clause. It is, as Dancygier and Sweetser (2000: 131) suggest, in the non-content domains that it is often most useful to indicate on what grounds or against what background assumptions the speaker is performing the present action, drawing the present conclusion or addressing the present topic.
18. This, however, does not imply that recipients cannot question the validity of the seeming fact. The backgrounded information given in the *wo*-utterance can also become interactively foregrounded in the turns that follow:

DE BUBI/THE LITTLE BOY

- 1 Lizzi: [i KANN] des ja deiner kuSine gIsela net antun,
[I can] this ((PRT)) to-your cousin gisela not do
[I can] not do this to your cousin gisela,
 2 de bubI NICHT mitzubringe,
the little boy not bring along
and not bring the little boy along,
 → 3 wo die SO für den schwärmt.
where she so for him raves-about
since she is so crazy about him.

- 4 Emil: he(.)für wen schwärmt=n die NO:,
well(.)about whom raves she PRT
 well (.) who is she not crazy about,
 5 für de Väter,
about the father
 about the father,
 6 für de Bubi;
about the little boy
 about the little boy;
 7 (1.0)
 8 Lizzi: DES hat se <<all> selber- mal zu mir gsagt.>
this has she <<all> self- once to me said>
 that's what she <<all> herself- once told me.>

In the *wo*-utterance, Lizzi provides the reason why she has to take the little boy along. Although Lizzi presents the information that Gisela is crazy about the little boy as a given fact, Emil questions this in such a way that Lizzi (in lines 8ff.) feels obliged to provide the basis for her knowledge.

19. Cf. Thurmair (1989:112) on the use of the modal particle *doch*. Cf. also Pasch (1999:145) on the use of *doch* in *wo*-clauses.

20. This example shows that concessive *wo*-clauses are not restricted to final positioning, as some reference grammars claim (cf. Zifonun, Hoffmann, & Strecker 1997:2313).

21. For prosodic features of a reproachful voice in German cf. Günthner (1996b).

22. Cf. Heidolph et al. (1984:801); Weinrich (1993:763); Zifonun, Hoffmann and Strecker (1997:2312).

23. The causal relation, thus, operates in the speech act domain (Sweetser 1990). This is also the reason why *wo* can often be substituted by *weil* with second positioning of the finite verb (i.e. *weil* with “main clause” order). (In general, causal relations operating in the speech act domain are expressed by *weil* plus “main clause” order; Günthner 1996.)

24. Cf. Ford (1993) for collaborative adverbial clauses in English conversations; Günthner (1996) for collaborative causal (*weil*) and concessive (*obwohl*) clauses in German.

25. Even the fact that a single connector like *wo* can synchronically be used to indicate causal and concessive functions is no exception. There are various temporal connectors which, for a certain period, functioned as causal as well as concessive connectors, such as *weil* in German and *while* in English. Whereas in the case of *weil* the causal inference has become the main interpretation, in the case of the English cognate *while* the inference of surprise due to the overlap in time and thus, adversativity or concessivity has become conventionalized (Traugott & König 1991:201). This fluctuation of temporally used subjunctors between causality and concessivity is also described by Abraham (1976:55). For further details cf. Günthner (2002).

26. Thus, as the use of *wo* is not inherently causal nor concessive, it is not surprising that *wo*-constructions are neither fully interchangeable with *weil*- (“because”) nor with *obwohl*- (“although”) constructions. When examined in natural interactions, (causal and concessive) *wo*-constructions turn out to reveal different constraints of usage from *weil*- and *obwohl*-constructions; cf. Günthner (2002).

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Interactional and sequential configurations informing request format selection in children's speech

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Young children deploy a variety of grammatical constructions in making their requests. Here I focus on one such construction, 'Can you... ', tracing its pattern of use within video recordings made of one child when five years old. In addition, comparisons are made with other request constructions which occur in similar circumstances and with constructions which operate in quite different circumstances. The analysis suggests that 'Can you... ' has an affiliation with a distinctive interactional and sequential environment, one in which the child has a basis for expecting that what she is asking her recipient to do is a departure from the line of action projectable by her recipient. Analysis of turn initial 'please', which often accompanies 'Can you... ' requests, further supports these claims. The paper demonstrates the kinds of orderliness which can be revealed by incorporating local interactional and sequential detail into the analysis of a grammatical construction.

1. Introduction

Children's requests are a good site for exploring the connections between grammar and interaction. In most languages there is sharp grammatical differentiation of a range of ways for making requests – for example, normal English speaking children at about the age of 4 can employ imperative, declarative or interrogative ways of doing this. Furthermore, these request constructions are frequently used, so it is straightforward to assemble a corpus of material which allows their comparative examination. If, then, our concern is to explore connections between interaction and this kind of grammaticalization, then surely we must be able to discover them here.

In general the literature on child language has tackled this issue in different ways at different stages of the child's development. The notion that interactional functions are systematically associated with different forms of communication has seemed most attractive to those investigating the emerging language of very young children, at the one word at a time stage of development or the earlier protoword stage, and it is here

also that we find most effort to embed analysis within examination of the details of actual interactional practices (e.g. Carter 1978; Bruner 1983; Wootton 1989). Once proper grammar comes into play then a greater variety of strategy emerges with regard to making connections between language structure and functionality (for overview see Budwig 1995: Chapter 1). For example, some have leaned on ways of thinking about language as organised around event schemes, focusing especially on the various perspectives which speakers take on events and the ways in which these are organised around prototypical patterns – ways of thinking which are congenial to some branches of psychology (e.g. Tomasello 1998). Budwig notes that often within such approaches “the assumption is that language is representing the child’s view of the world and not that it is used as a tool of social action” (1995: 11). However, there remain a variety of studies which have sought to take the social action dimension more seriously, to ground the analysis of linguistic forms within examination of interaction practices. Of particular concern to us here are those studies which have sought to do so in the context of requesting, a domain that for some time has attracted many child language researchers of a more interactional bent.

Speech act analysis and sociolinguistics shaped most of such research in the 1970s and 1980s. Garvey’s (1975) analysis of requests among three and five year olds examined them within the conversation sequences in which they occurred, and began to identify orderly properties of those sequences. But the examination of the requests themselves was shaped by speech act analysis, the crux revolving around a search for evidence bearing on whether the children oriented to the felicity conditions posited by such analysis, and whether this awareness informed the design and workings of requests. Some supportive evidence was found on both these fronts. For example, many ‘indirect’ requests (e.g. *Can you put that down*) could be seen as achieving their identifiability as requests through questioning a felicity condition. While such speech act analysis continued to inform various strands of empirical work (e.g. Bruner 1983), three features have contributed to a waning of interest in this approach. First, central predictions relating to speech act analysis have not been supported – for example, comprehension studies have shown that it is not the case that young children find indirect requests more complex to understand than direct ones (Shatz 1978). Second, theoretical critique (e.g. Levinson 1983) identified various conceptual limitations to the approach. And third, further empirical work by sociolinguists shifted attention to a variety of social parameters correlated with request differentiation.

The parameters in question concerned features like who the child was speaking to (e.g. mother/father/older or younger child/stranger), the degree of formality of the occasion, whether or not the request was intrusive on other people’s rights, obligations or possessions, and so on (see Becker 1982 for useful overview). While a recognition of the role played by such factors is not incompatible with speech act analysis it nevertheless refocused attention on the empirical variability of request forms and the need to develop approaches which could account for such variation. The implication of this sociolinguistic approach was that the child operated with a checklist model of request production – they checked the current social and situational variables and then

chose the request form from a body of stored knowledge which matched forms to arrays of variables. However, during the 1980s various problematics emerged within this approach. Gordon and Ervin-Tripp recognise that such a checklist model “attributes no power of inference or construction to the child. In such a model, a request is hardly more than a ritual incantation that is produced according to a simple formula” (1984: 311). At the same time it seemed that more subtle, and less measurable, variables played a part in request selection, things like whether the child had a basis for assuming the co-operation of the person to whom the request was being made. Finding ways of tracking the relevance of such matters for the child, together with tracking the relevance for the child, on each specific occasion, of parameters like who the child was speaking to, other people's rights and entitlements etc (if, indeed, those are of relevance to the child), poses issues which this tradition is ill-equipped to deal with. Its strengths have been more in the correlational and content analytic modes of enquiry rather than in tracing the ongoing dynamics of conversation sequences.

Modes of enquiry which give priority to examining how turns at talk are shaped by, and for, the sequences in which they occur have been most thoroughly developed within conversation analysis, indeed one of the impetuses to this research strategy was precisely to deal with the issues concerning ‘relevance’ which have been posed immediately above (Schegloff 1991). Various research within conversation analysis has addressed both the shaping of turns and sequences within the domain of children's requests (Goodwin 1990; Schegloff 1989; Wootton 1981), though related forms of enquiry have also emerged from proximate traditions which, in turn, have been partially shaped by conversation analysis (especially Gerhardt 1990, 1991). At the ages of concern to us here, roughly 2–6 years, what continues to be an open question is whether, working in this way, it is possible to discover any orderly connection between the grammatical form in which requests are made and the sequences in which they occur, whether grammar is an integral part of the interactional work achieved through these turns. In Wootton (1997) I demonstrate, within longitudinal recordings made of one child, that this does indeed appear to be the case, that, when due allowance is made for different types of request sequence, forms like imperatives have a distinctive connection with very particular types of interaction environment, and that the child's selection of request appears to be systematically sensitive to patterns of accountable alignment taken up in preceding talk and action.

In this chapter I propose to take these observations further through examination of one of the request formats that I discussed in my book – ‘Can you...’, which I take to be a construction composed of these specific words with a slot into which various classes of item can fit. There, my focus was on the child's use of this construction at around 3 years old. Here I examine its usage when this child was aged 5;6. Six hours of video recordings were made of her at this age, recordings in which the main participants were the child and her parents. During these recordings she used the ‘Can you...’ request format on 12 occasions and it is these which are the principal focus of this analysis. In addition, reference will be made to both other request forms which are used at this age, and to data on longitudinal recordings made at earlier ages. First, I

shall demonstrate the characteristic type of interaction environment inhabited by the 'Can you...' construction. Second, I compare the child's use of this construction with other constructions which are used in what may seem to be similar circumstances. Third, I illustrate types of environment in which this construction does not occur. Fourth, I make some observations about the turn initial 'please' that often accompanies the child's 'Can you...' requests. In short, this proposes to be a demonstration of the kinds of orderliness which may be findable if one delves into the interactional detail surrounding the use of a grammatical construction.

2. 'Can you...' constructions at age five

Examination of the use of 'Can you...' (henceforth CY) constructions when the child is aged 5;6 reveals that they are used in rather particular kinds of interaction environment. In general they occur where the child, when making the request, has a basis for supposing that what she is asking the recipient to do is a departure from the line of action projectable by her recipient. When she makes the request one can usually identify within the details of the local events a basis for the child to suppose that what she is asking for is discrepant with what the parent has a basis for then expecting to take place. In this section I shall support this claim by examining three extracts containing CY constructions, all of which occur in a specialised interactional environment that contains the majority of these constructions at this age. Here, the child herself was going to engage in some act but for various reasons chooses not to do so. In these circumstances, where her recipient had a basis for expecting the child to do something, the child uses a CY construction to ask the parent to do the act instead of her.

This phenomenon is clearly illustrated in extract (#)1. The child decides that she is going to take off the kilt which she is wearing, and gets down from the table to do so. Immediately prior to the beginning of the extract it is clear that she is having difficulty in doing this herself, so, as a solution to the problem, at line 1 she asks her mother, who has throughout been sitting close-by, to take the kilt off for her, to perform the action instead of her.

(1) 13/4/87/VII 12:06/5465

Child and her mother are seated at the dining table; M is encouraging Ch to eat up her tea, but Ch states that she now wants to change out of the kilt that she is wearing. She gets down from the table, just off camera. There is an 11 second pause, during which M looks at Ch and there is much sound of exertion from Ch:

- 1 Ch: Please can you [undo it? ((+ walks around the table
2 [towards M, still trying to undo the
3 [catch on the kilt
4 M: [((nods))
5 M: Mm.

((then Ch continues walking to M, who then undoes the kilt))

In #2 we find that the child has set herself the task of drawing (in chalk) the Turkish flag, a flag which has a moon and star superimposed on a green base. The expectation that she is to be the drawer of the flag has been established about a minute and a half prior to the beginning of #2, when there was a discussion between her and me, her father, as to which flag she was going to draw and whether it was best to draw the base or the moon/star first. She then rubs out her first attempt and starts again, but in the sequence leading up to and included within #2 nothing is said, prior to line 14, which runs contrary to the expectation that she herself will draw the various components of the flag. I am clearly being treated as, and treating myself as, having a participation status in the child's ongoing production, most obviously through assessing the product of her work at lines 3–6. But her CY request at lines 14–15 – *Please can you draw the=.hh (.) draw the star please* – in which she turns to look at my face in the inbreath, then looks back to the book from which she is copying after the *s* in *star*, is the first occasion on which she has broached the possibility of my doing any part of the drawing instead of her.

(2) 11/4/1987/IV 48:55/4555

Child is standing next to a dining table drawing the flags of different countries in chalk on a slate; for the most part her father stands close by, watching. It is decided that the flag of Turkey will be done next, and that the base will be coloured in first prior to the moon and star being superimposed. After starting to superimpose a yellow moon/star she rubs this out; she then works on the green base until the transcript begins:

1 Ch: Gree:n? (0.6) A::n:d >what next<=(),
 2 ((puts chalk down after saying 'green'))
 3 F: (Oh) you can do more green than that can't
 4 you=it's ti:ny little flag that one. ((F
 5 bends down towards slate at *can't*; Ch then
 6 picks up chalk and resumes work on slate))
 7 Ch: No: tha- that's in the li:ne.((+working at
 8 slate still))
 9 (2.1)
 10 F: It's what?(0.5)[On the li:ne.
 11 Ch: [(Mm)((she also stops chalking))
 12 Ch: (It isn't).hh No:w.
 13 (1.6)
 14 Ch: Please can you draw the=.hh (.) draw the
 15 s::tar please.
 16 F: The ↑sta:r.((then takes his hand out of his
 17 pocket in preparation for engaging in drawing))
 18 Ch: Mm:.=and the moo:n.
 19 F: But yours was very goo:d you know.=th' you

- 20 di:d. ((F's hand on chalk is stilled at the begin-
ning
21 of 19; he starts to use chalk on the word *know*))

In #3 the relevant interactional details are a little less obvious and require more careful unpicking. Here the child and myself are acting on the assumption that she is to get some potato rings from the kitchen. The child follows me into the kitchen, riding her bike, and at line 1 makes it clear which receptacle she would like the potato rings to be put in. Although this is off camera it seems clear enough that when she says *Thankyou* at line 3 she is acknowledging my putting the rings into some receptacle for her, possibly even acknowledging its receipt into her own hands – though it is not necessarily clear that the receptacle was the one that she nominated in line 1. At that stage, then, line 3, the rings are in a receptacle and the child is still sitting on her bike. So when the child says *Please can you carry them back*, the CY construction, at line 5, she is asking if I can carry the receptacle plus its contents back into the adjacent room that we have both recently left. I respond to her request by saying *What?*, and she replies to this by saying *Cos I have to ri:de.=on the bi:ke*. She clearly feels she cannot both ride her bike into the adjacent room and carry her bowl of potato rings at the same time.

(3) 11/4/1987/VI 31:54/5992

Having seen her mother snacking on potato rings, the child says she would like to have some for herself. F goes to the kitchen, off camera, to get her some, and Ch follows him, riding her bike:

- 1 Ch: I want the potato rings kept in the:re please.
2 F: Ah:: we::ll (getting out of there)
3 Ch: Thankyou.
4 (2.8)
5 Ch: Please can you carry them back.
6 F: What?
7 Ch: Cos I have to ri:de.=on the bi:ke.
8 F: Oh[:.
9 Ch: [Do:nt eat any=I'm watching you.
10 F: Mm: I'll try not to.

An important feature of repair initiators such as 'Pardon' and 'What' is that they leave undisclosed the nature of the problem that the speaker is having with the prior turn, and in practice a variety of turn types can be deployed by next speaker in response to them. Some such turns treat the producer of the 'what/pardon' as having not heard the prior turn, such an analysis being revealed through the repetition of the turn which preceded the 'what/pardon'. But in other cases, as here, other kinds of difficulty can be oriented to (see also Drew 1997). Rather than treat my *What* (line 6) as arising from not hearing what was said, *Cos I have to ri:de.=on the bi:ke* (line 7) treats the *What* as questioning in some way why she, the child, is not taking the bowl through herself. This is conveyed through her answer at line 7 being constructed as a response to a

'why' question (*Cos I...*), and through her provision within that answer of an activity, riding the bike, which is recognisable as preventing her engagement in other activity – the 'other activity' in question here obviously being *her* carrying of the bowl with the potato rings in it. Note especially how the child's response treats the parent, when saying *What*, as having some basis for not expecting the activity to have unfolded in the way she now wants, he is being treated as having a basis for expecting her to carry the bowl through rather than him. In this way she recognises that in asking for her father to carry the rings through, at line 5, she is requesting a departure from what at about line 4 would have appeared to be the projectable shape of subsequent actions. And in doing this she recognises that the request itself was constructed so as to enact a departure from what at that point was a projectable next action, her taking the bowl through rather than him. As it was her action of taking the bowl through which was projectable then the departure broached through her CY construction involves him now doing the action instead of, or on behalf of, her. There is this kind of internal evidence, then, that for the child the CY serves to broach this kind of solution to the predicament she finds herself in.

Extracts 1–3 have shown how it is possible to identify, across sequences having rather different shapes, a certain kind of interactional commonality that is associated with the child's use of CY constructions at age 5;6. Specifically, in this subset, what the child is asking the parent to do is evidently a departure from what the parent was expecting because, in these cases, the act in question was something the child could have been expected to do rather than the parent/recipient. In deploying her CY request the child is doing so in an environment in which such an expectation is accountably present.

3. Comparison with alternative techniques for solving problems

There is a variety of further ways, and further forms of evidence, through which this line of argument can be extended. One way is to compare the operation of CY requests with the operation of different request formats which appear to be used in what are apparently similar circumstances. If CYs, as appears to be the case so far, operate in a distinctive way then we should be able to trace this distinctiveness even when comparing them with other requests which appear to operate in such similar circumstances. Such a contrast is made slightly more complex by the fact that in these respects not all CYs are of a piece. Some, such as those in #s 1–3, are designed to resolve a problem that the child is evidently having, to resolve it by asking the recipient to perform the action instead of the child. Others, yet to be illustrated, are not tied in this way to problems that the child is evidently having. In order to engage in further comparative analysis it is most sensible to compare subsets such as those in #s 1–3 with non-CY requests which operate in seemingly similar circumstances. The results now to be reported emerge from such analysis, from scanning the whole corpus at age 5;6 for other

kinds of request occurring in this kind of circumstance, and comparing them with CYs of the kind that occur in #s 1–3.

Initially, I'll examine two instances which contain examples of how the child can use alternative request forms to handle problems with which she is confronted. In #4 the child is drawing on her slate (with chalks) and at line 1 is clearly dissatisfied with the end product – *Oh I've done that wrong*. What she wants to do is rub it out but she doesn't have by her a cloth suitable for this purpose. To resolve this she then asks me to get her a cloth – *please can I have a wet cloth*. In #5 she is finding difficulty in eating some partially wrapped food that she is holding in her hands – *I can't get this very easily* (line 6). Her request at line 8, *I'd like it in a bowl*, identifies a solution, having it in a bowl, but in a way that seeks assistance from me in implementing this solution, and which is recognised as such in my reply at lines 10–11.

(4) 11/4/87/IV 0:37/3150

Child is chalking on her slate at the dining table, working on her own while F clears the table. After announcing that something she has done on the board 'doesn't matter', which involves a brief interchange with F, there is then a short pause before she says:

1 Ch: Oh: I've done that wrong=please can I have
 2 a wet cloth? ((as she says this she gets down
 3 from the table to pick up a paper tissue that
 4 has just fallen to the floor))
 5 F: Yes. ((then he moves towards kitchen))
 6 ((16 second pause, in which Ch follows F
 7 into the kitchen, to get cloth))
 8 Ch: Thankyou. ((then returns to the table and
 9 wipes her slate with the cloth))

(5) 13/4/87/II 0:38/604

Child is sitting on her bike in the dining area, holding some food (partly in a wrapper) that she is eating, with some evident difficulty; her father is adjusting the camera. The sense of F's initial remark, as he moves away from the camera, is not clear, but it does not concern the food that Ch is eating:

1 F: No:w (.) we'll put thee[uhm
 2 Ch: [Mm: ((still trying
 3 to eat the food that she is holding, then
 4 takes it from her mouth and looks at it))
 5 (0.8)
 6 Ch: I can't get this very easily.
 7 F: Can't you?=(bending to look at food))
 8 Ch: =I [would like it in a bowl
 9 F: [Shall I- ((+ puts his hands to the food))
 10 F: Okay well I'll put it- I'll give it you in
 11 a spoon if ye like. ((taking the food from
 12 Ch and moving away))

I want to make two points about #s 4 and 5 in comparison with #s 1–3. First, in them there is no evidence of the participants acting as though the actions being requested by the child, fetching the wet cloth and arranging for the food to be placed in a bowl, were to have been, or should have been, actions taken by the child herself. Whereas in #3, for example, the child displays, in ways that I have described, an awareness that taking the potato rings into the other room was an action that she could have been expected to do herself, there is no evidence of such an orientation to fetching the cloth or the bowl in extracts 4 and 5; these are not actions which she treats as ones which she herself could have been expected to undertake. What this highlights, therefore, is the significance within #s 1–3 of the fact that what the CY is being used to propose is a transfer of an activity from the child to the parent, to request that the parent do something instead of, or on behalf of, her. It is this kind of solution which seems germane to the class of solutions proposed by the subset of CY requests, like #s 1–3, which are designed to handle problems, and which differentiates them from instances like #s 4 and 5.

The second point is simply an observation about the differential design of the sequential configurations of these different modes of orienting to problems. In #s 4 and 5 the request itself is preceded by a statement of the problem for which the subsequent request proposes a solution – in #4 at line 1 *Oh I've done that wrong* precedes the immediately following request; in #5 at line 6 *I can't get this very easily* precedes the request at line 8. Consequently, the subsequent requests appear touched off by these problem formulations. Such immediately preceding problem formulations are not found in those CY requests dealing with problems, like those in #s 1–3. In #3, at line 7, the child does give some formulation of her problem by saying *Cos I have to ride on the bike*, but this is only after the request has been made and is specifically touched off by the clarification request at line 6. So, although the CY request constructions which deal with problems recognisably emerge from an interactional scenario in which the child is having problems with some course of action these problems remain more implicit than those oriented to in #s 4 and 5.

The wider search through the corpus of data at age 5;6 did, however, reveal one instance in which it was evidently the case that the child was deploying an alternative request form to handle a problem that she was unable to handle herself, to ask the recipient to perform an action instead of her doing it. This instance is presented below as #6.

(6) 13/4/87/V 6:59/4676

Child and her father are in the kitchen discussing what she is having for breakfast. There is no white bread, and she says she doesn't like brown bread:

- 1 F: Are you not having breakfast then.
 2 Ch: ((nods slowly)) I'm on(.h)ly having, (1.5)
 3 o:ne bit of brea:d and I'm going to put it
 4 [on.
 5 F: [I can't hear what you're saying,(.) Can
 6 you [tell me again?

7 Ch: [I:'m going to make my ow:n sandwich.

.
.
.

((preparations are then made for Ch to do this, standing on a stool by the sideboard in the kitchen. She starts to butter her bread, and while engaged in this says to F, who is nearby:))

8 Ch: I would like you to do the butter bit plea:se.=

9 F: Yea:h it looks a bit ha:rd that butter doesn't

10 it=

11 Ch: =Yea:h.

Here it has been earlier established that the child herself is going to make a sandwich – at line 7 she says *I'm going to make my o:wn sandwich*. In the course of implementing this plan she runs into difficulty in putting butter on the bread, difficulty which is evident on the video and which is also documented at line 9, which contains my analysis of the nature of this difficulty, *it looks a bit hard that butter doesn't it*. As in #s 1–3, there is an obvious available basis for the participants to suppose that the activity which the child is asking me to do at line 8, buttering the bread, is one that she had been going to do herself. In asking *I would like you to do the butter bit please* she is transparently changing her mind about how to proceed, asking me to do this instead of her, in an environment where she has accountable problems in doing it herself. To this extent the non-CY request design at line 8 appears to be deployed to do parallel work to that enacted by the CYs in #s 1–3.

At this level of analysis, then, this incident suggests that we might be unwise to expect some neat and exclusive relationship between a request form, such as a CY, and the nature of the task that it seeks to manage – even where, as I have been doing here, we confine our analysis of the form in question to a subset dealing with what seems to be a particular interactional task. But further observations relating to #6 are also instructive with regard to this issue. While it is true that at line 8 the child is asking me to do something she was originally planning to do herself it is also true that the act in question, buttering the bread, was an action that could have been expected of the adult rather than the child. The key point here is not just that we, as adults, can recognise this possibility, but that the child herself orients to just this expectation in the organization of her earlier relevant talk. From the way in which she announces her intention of making her sandwich herself, at lines 2–3 and 7, it is clear that for her this is a departure from what could be otherwise expected in these circumstances – *I'm going to make my ow:n sandwich* (line 7). So in important ways this extract is also unlike what takes place in #s 1–3: in asking me to do the buttering at line 8 she is asking me to do something that she has already treated as a matter that I could have been expected to do, whereas in #s 1–3 the recipient is being asked to do something which is not projectable in this way from earlier talk. Consequently, the contrast with #6 serves to highlight the salience of this parameter within #s 1–3: the fact that when

she uses a CY then what she is asking of the parent is not something that the parent is being treated as having a basis for expecting to occur. And, in these ways, it is still possible to claim that the subset of CYs which occur in #s 1–3 operate in a distinctive interactional environment.

4. Alternative modes of requesting and their sequential environments

There are also further comparative and distributional ways of extending the analysis of CY requests at this age, 5;6. If it is the case that CYs are deployed to handle sequential alignments in which the recipient is asked to perform actions which are in some sense departures from lines of action which were accountably projectable up until that moment, then it should follow that they are not used for doing request-like work of a different kind. At this point I want to illustrate two of these different kinds of work which CYs are *not* deployed to do, types of alignment *not* characteristic of CY designs. This analysis again arises from a broader inspection of all the requests used by the child at age 5;6, and the claims made here concerning the absence of CY forms apply to all the child's CY requests at this age, not just the subset exemplified in #s 1–3 on which I have been mainly focusing so far.

4.1 Consistent alignments

Instead of proposing a departure from projectable action many requests are constructed so as to be consistent with projectable alignments. Here I'll present two examples of non-CY request constructions that appear to operate in this way. The first occurs in #7, which is the continuation of #3, discussed earlier, in which the child asks the parent to carry some potato rings into an adjacent room.

(7) 11/4/1987/VI 31:54/5992

Continues from #(3) above. The father is about to carry the bowl of potato rings into the adjacent room:

10 Ch: [Do:nt eat any=I'm watching you.
 11 F: Mm: I'll try not to.
 12 (0.5)
 13 Ch: Mm
 14 (0.5)
 15 Ch: Well make sure you don't.
 16 ((F walks into the adjacent room holding the
 17 bowl of potato rings))
 18 Ch: No::. ((F then pauses and turns towards Ch))
 18 (5.5)
 19 F: ((holding dish close to table surface))
 20 Do you want me to put them on the table.
 21 Ch: Yes please

- 22 F: Right
 23 Ch: M(hh)m
 24 (2.5) ((Ch goes to table, takes a potato
 25 ring, then looks towards F's face))
 26 Ch: Open your mouth. ((+ points towards F's
 27 mouth with a long stick she holds in her right
 28 hand; then gives prolonged gaze to F's mouth))

Our focus here is the request used at line 26, where the child issues an order to me, *Open your mouth*, simultaneously pointing towards my mouth with a long stick, and then carefully scrutinising the contents of the mouth. It seems clear enough that in saying and doing this she is checking on whether or not I have heeded her earlier injunctions (at lines 10 and 15) not to eat any of her potato rings in the course of carrying them into the room for her. It is constructed as compatible with, and furthering, those concerns which were expressed in those earlier injunctions. In this sense the order *Open your mouth* is shaped as consistent with earlier accountable alignments within the sequence. Note that here, as well as in the other non-CY cases that I discuss, the non-use of the CY is more significant by virtue of the fact that a CY would form a relevant alternative to the request design actually employed: at line 26 'Can you open your mouth' would clearly have been a relevant hypothetical alternative to *Open your mouth*. But, to reiterate, the selection of one or other of these forms appears to be conditioned by the shape of those differential understandings which become evident within the preceding interaction.

In #8 the focal request is *Let's open i:t* at line 18, *it* referring to the door leading from the room into the backyard. When looking through the glass of the door, the child's older sister, at line 1, raises the question of the whereabouts of a dog ornament that used to stand outside in the yard. At lines 7 and 8 she tries the door handle, saying *Is this open* – thus exhibiting an interest in going out into the yard. At line 13 I point out where the key to the door is, in this way attempting to facilitate the action that the sister has shown an interest in. In this sequential environment, in which the other parties have mooted and explored the possibility of going out, the child deploys the focal request, *Let's open i:t* (line 18), a request which is clearly designed to encourage her sister to engage in the action in question. Here, then, the request is built so as to be concordant with the emerging shape of the local activity, and with alignments which have been taken up to this activity by those present.

(8) 11/4/87/III 2:35/3120

Child and her older sister (OS) look out through the glass door of the dining room into the outside yard. The *doggy thing* is an ornament that used to be in the yard:

- 1 OS: Where's that doggy thing=has it go:ne.
 2 F: Ye::s=
 3 OS: =Yeah,=
 4 F: =hhh
 5 Ch: It bro:ke.

6 F: Mm
 7 OS: ((moves her hand to handle of glass door))
 8 Is this open ((now trying handle of door))
 9 (.)
 10 OS: No,
 11 F: Not at the moment
 12 OS: No:.
 13 F: The key is on here if you want to open it
 14 ((OS turns towards F during this turn))
 15 (.)
 16 F: By that uhm:: ((OS moves towards the place
 17 being indicated))
 18 Ch: Let's o:pen i::t.((moving towards OS))

These two examples, then, illustrate one type of job which CY request designs are not deployed to do. Distributional evidence of the kind just presented suggests that other request forms, illustrated in #s 7 and 8, can be used to suggest lines of action which are compatible with the accountable unfolding trajectory of the scenes in which they occur. Within my corpus of recordings CY requests are not found to be engaged in parallel forms of work.

4.2 Oppositional alignments

The second type of job that CY constructions are not used to do is to enact opposition towards some existing alignment. CY request designs have been characterised as proposing a departure from what could have been expected to occur, but they are not departures of a kind in which the child decides to act in opposition to what could be expected to occur – in #3, for example, when the child said at line 5 *Please can you carry them back*, referring to the bowl of potato rings, she did not appear to have accountable grounds, when making this request, for believing the parent to be opposed to what she wanted. Requests can, however, be used to engage in oppositional business, and here I'll again illustrate this with two examples. Within my corpus at this age CY constructions are not used for this purpose (though note also the later discussion of line 13 of #11, the case which most approximates such an occurrence), so this constitutes a further distributional restriction on their use.

In extract 9 the child's mother is engaging her in conversation while she, the child, is drawing. Her mother is making enquiries about the park that the child and her father have visited that afternoon, Rowntree park. It becomes apparent that these enquiries are irksome to the child, especially through her reply *Just things*, at line 3, and her vocal gesture of exasperation, *T(hh)* at line 6. On finding her mother to be pursuing an answer to her original question, through herself providing the candidate answer *Roundabout?* at line 7, the child then attempts to terminate her mother's line of enquiry by quietly saying *Be quiet* at line 8. Then, when her mother risks further pursuit, *O::r swings?* at line 11, the child says *I said be quiet please:*, at line 12. Our focus

here is on the two requests at lines 8 and 12 where it seems clear-cut that these child turns are being used in opposition to the line of enquiry that her mother is trying to get underway.

(9) 11/4/87/V 0:15/4721

Child's mother has recently come home, and, while Ch stands drawing at a table, using her right hand – rh below, lh for left hand – M sits by her asking her about what she has been doing that afternoon. It has been established that Ch and F went to Rowntree park:

- 1 M: And what is there at this park ((Ch draws vigorously))
 2 (0.9)
 3 Ch: Just things, ((then sharply lifts her rh before moving the chalk to a bowl))
 4
 5 M: What sort of things.
 6 Ch: [T(hh) ((+sharply draws her rh back towards herself))
 7 M: [Roundabout?
 8 Ch: °Be quiet°(((+ lh gesture towards M; then picks up chalk with lh))
 9
 10 (1.1) ((Ch resumes chalking))
 11 M: O::r swings?
 12 Ch: I said be quiet plea:se ((throws her chalk into receptacle on the word *quiet*))
 13

Another kind of oppositional activity occurs at line 12 of #10. Here, the child and myself are just finishing a 'sword' fight and her mother and I are steering things towards her going to bed. At line 7 the child volunteers to put away her own 'sword', which in reality is a length of cane – I::: *will put it ba:ck*. I then say *Oka:y you put them both back for me then*, referring of course to both my sword as well as hers. She rejects this request by saying *No you put your's back*, thus asking me to do precisely what I've just asked of her.

(10) 11/4/1987/V 21:51/5258

Mother and father are trying to terminate a mock swordfight between child and F. 'Battle Cat' is a cartoon character who figured in a TV programme at that time:

- 1 F: Have another [go tomorrow
 2 Ch: [()
 3 M: Come on Battle Cat.(.)In that [bed.
 4 Ch: [Mm(hh he)
 5 F: That's it. (.) Thankyou. ((receiving sword from Ch))
 6 (0.5)
 7 Ch: I::: will put it back.((taking her sword back from F as she says this))
 8

- 9 F: Oka:y. You put them both back for me
 10 [then.
 11 M: [(Ye::s)
 12 Ch: [No you put your's back.
 13 F: Allright.

The child's focal requests in #s 9 and 10 are, therefore, being used to suggest lines of action which would run contrary to lines of action which are recognisably favoured by the person to whom the request is being made. Within my corpus CY requests are not used for such purposes, so this establishes a further restriction on the circumstances in which the CY form is selected.

5. The incorporation of 'please'

Within the CY requests presented above from recordings of the child made when she was aged 5;6 one word that is frequently included is 'please' – *Please can you undo it* (#1, line 1); *Please can you draw th- (.) draw the star please* (#2, lines 14–15); *Please can you carry them back* (#3, line 5). Ten of the twelve CYs occurring at this age include this word, and in all these cases the word is placed in initial turn position – except the one in #2, where it occurs in both turn initial and final position. By comparison with other request formats this rate of inclusion marks out CY requests as having some special affinity with the word 'please', and in this section I will consider the import of this, focusing especially on the turn initial use of this word, and taking into account parallel usage of this word on recordings at earlier ages.

The turn initial positioning of a 'please' within young children's requests is particularly associated with pleading, pleading for the reversal of recipient unwillingness to grant a request in a sequential position in which some evidence of this unwillingness has been made available to the child. The clearest cut cases of these occur immediately after the rejection of a child request by the parent, and can consist of a turn made up of the word 'please' alone, or in combination with an elliptical version of the earlier request that has been rejected. Characteristically the word 'please' is articulated in a way that makes apparent its plead-like properties – notably through sound suspensions and pitch changes (on these various matters see Wootton 1984). From the age of 4;3 onwards, the age at which turn initial 'pleases' were first spontaneously incorporated into her CY requests, this child is capable of articulating her turn initial 'please' so as to give the request a plead-like quality, as is shown in line 13 of #11.

(11) 4;3/II V 0:52/2532

Child and her mother sit side-by-side at a table, with drawing. After watching Ch for a while M starts to move papers on the table:

- 1 Ch: But look what I:'ve do:ne. ((+ leans back from page))
 2 M: ↑Mm ye:s ↓ve:ry goo:d. ((then M moves a table mat

- 3 away that is immediately in front of her))
 4 (3.8)
 5 M: Now can I dra:w a picture here? ((+ she lifts and
 6 moves another pad from in front of her and puts
 7 her hand on a piece of paper on the other side of
 8 the table. On the word a Ch glances to what M is
 9 doing, then gazes back at her own page. Then M
 10 moves the blank piece of paper towards herself;
 11 Ch glances at her doing this, then back to her
 12 drawing, saying:))
 13 Ch: Oh: ↑plea::s:e (0.8) ↓Can you wa:tch me.
 14 ((with *oh please* she moves her pen into her rh,
 15 then her rh to the page on which she is drawing;
 16 by *Can* she is drawing and M has abandoned her own
 17 preparations and is looking at what Ch is
 drawing))
 18 M: ((coughs)) Ye:s.

Here, the CY (at line 13) is not deployed in a place where the recipient has overtly made it plain that she is opposed to what the child wants. Nevertheless, it is clear that in that sequential position what the child is asking for is in tension with what her mother is then showing signs of preferring. In several ways the child's mother has been showing an interest in doing some drawing herself: first, by clearing a space on the table in front of herself (lines 2–3); second, by saying to her daughter *Now can I draw a picture here* (line 5); third, by then placing a blank piece of paper in front of herself (lines 6–10). In responding to her mother's request and preparatory actions with *Oh plea::se (0.8) can you watch me* (line 13) the child orients more to the preparatory actions, which are taken to indicate that her mother is already implementing her plans to draw. Through articulating the 'please' as a plead the child is publicly acknowledging/exposing that what she now wants is in tension with what the parent is in the course of getting underway.

It is also evident from age 4;3 onwards that a turn initial 'please' can be deployed in similar sequential environments without being articulated as a plead, without, that is, officially acting as though the recipient needs persuading out of doing something so as to go along with what the child wants. This can be evident not just in CY requests but also in other types of request which can be prefaced by 'please', as illustrated in #s 12 and 13.

(12) 4;3/I III 12:51/3042

Child and her mother are sitting side-by-side at a table, jointly colouring in a picture with felt pens. They have just been discussing whether, at school, Ch is given pre-drawn pictures for her to colour in (like this one) or whether she has blank pages. M has just asked Ch what she drew on 'Friday'. Ch stops drawing, gazes away from the page and sucks the end of her pen while thinking up her answer; M continues colouring in:

- 1 Ch: Can't remember=((+ gazes back at page and sees M
2 moving her pen to a different position on the
page))
3 M: =°Mm?°
4 Ch: Mum (.) Please don't put that on the:re
5 ((at *please* Ch moves her lh to edge of page, to
6 then orient the page more in her direction; her
7 lh pushes against M's right arm, which holds her
8 pen. On feeling this pressure M withdraws her pen
9 off the page, towards herself. By the end of line
10 5 Ch is looking at the re-oriented page and M
11 holding her pen in the air, away from the page))
12 M: Oh: okay.
- (13) 11/4/87/I 9:02/568

Father is preparing food off camera in the kitchen. Child has just been told that he has an avocado pear there and that it has been cut in half. Ch is in the dining area, holding her blanket:

- 1 F: Are you going to um: sit up at the table
2 now for your avocado? ((+ Ch puts her
3 blanket down in the later part of this turn))
4 Ch: Mm: ((+walks towards her bike, then mounts it))
5 (2.1)
6 Ch: Yes. ((then pedals away from kitchen entrance))
7 (5.0)
8 F: (want um:) (1.0) Are you going to cut it
9 up yourself,
10 (1.0)
11 F: Or would you like me to get it all out of
12 the skin for you.
13 (3.1)
14 Ch: ((coughs)) I'll cut it u:p [((coughs))
15 F: [Right.
16 (6.1) ((Ch cycles around))
17 Ch: Please can I have it on your tra:y.
18 (2.0)
19 F: No: >(we're going to eat at)the< table Alice.
20 Ch: Oh:.

In #12 the child and her mother are sitting by each other, jointly colouring in a picture. On seeing her mother starting to colour in a part of the page the child, at line 4, deploys a turn with an initial 'please' to curtail what her mother is doing – *Mum (.) Please don't put that on there*. Here, there is every sense that the child is treating herself, especially through the expectation of compliance conveyed through her accompanying non-verbal behaviour (lines 5–7), as having a warrant for being in charge of the proceedings. The 'please' simply appears to mark the discrepancy between the parent's current and projected line of activity and what the child now wants her to do. In #13

at lines 1–5 the child and her father have agreed that she is going to sit at the table in order to eat her avocado pear. When the child says *Please can I have it on your tray* (line 17) this is treated by her father, at line 19, as proposing an alteration to the prior arrangement of her eating at the table, and in her next turn the child does not question this interpretation being placed on her request. This being the case it seems evident that the turn initial ‘please’, together with its accompanying request, are placed in a position where the alignment of the recipient is forecastable as in tension with what is being asked for.

My earlier analysis and discussion of CY requests at age 5;6 has revealed them to have an affinity with a particular interaction environment, one in which a basis is available to the child for supposing that what she is asking for is discrepant with what, for her recipient, is the currently projectable shape of the sequence. Thus, in #s 1, 2 and 3 the child’s CY request seeks to transfer to the parent an action which, in each case, the parent could have expected the child to be going on to do for herself, this expectation being oriented to by the child in ways which I have sought to explicate in the analysis. Parallel forms of evidence are available for the majority of those CYs making up our corpus at age 5;6. This being so then the basis for the high frequency of turn initial ‘pleases’ within this CY collection is also now evident. Their occurrence is fitted to the projectable discrepancies which are endemic to the sequences in which CYs are placed. The inclusion of this type of ‘please’ is a means through which the child displays her recognition of the discrepancy between what she is asking for and what was projectable for her recipient. And, given what has been independently established above about the operation of turn initial ‘pleases’, the fact that they occur so frequently in this environment further supports the lines of analysis which have been put forward concerning the characteristic interactional environments of CYs.

Two final qualifications. First, in making these arguments about the operation of turn initial ‘please’ I do not mean to claim that they orient to the same order of discrepancy across all the various request forms to which they can be attached and in their various contexts of use. When they are used with other kinds of (non-CY) turn, as in #s 12 and 13, different kinds of problem configuration, which await detailed examination, may be implicated. And even within my discussion of the CY data it has become apparent that the differential prosodic shapes of the ‘please’ in question can display differential interactional orientations on the part of the participants (compare especially the discussion above of line 13 in #11 with that concerning the CYs in #s 1–3).

The second point concerns the minority of CYs at age 5;6 in which the kinds of sequential evidence to which we have been alluding so far, both with regard to the CYs themselves and/or the turn initial ‘pleases’ which often accompany them, is not readily available. Take #14.

(14) April 13 1987 VII 5:41 (5315)

About 20 seconds before this extract begins M brings through two plates of food, one for Ch and one for herself. These are both placed on the opposite side of a table at which Ch is sitting. Ch is already eating bread, and there is

brief discussion of Ch's preference for white bread. There is then mention of the Ch's carer, the *she* in line 1, who can only eat white bread:

- 1 M: ...cos she can eat white bread can't she
 2 (1.0)
 3 Ch: Not bro::wn.
 4 (0.5)
 5 ((during this pause M takes her first mouthful of
 6 food))
 7 M: No : :. ((looking down at her food))
 8 Ch: Please can you: .hh give me some-.h very
 9 very very very cold water?
 10 M: Yes (.) Come around here and sit on your (.)
 11 chair ((in the later part of this turn M adjusts
 12 the chair by Ch's plate of food, both of which
 13 are on the other side of the table from the Ch;
 14 then M gets up to fetch the water))

Here there is no evidence of the child herself trying but failing to obtain a drink of water prior to her asking for it, at lines 8–9. One might still argue that the initial 'please' in this turn marks a discrepancy between what the parent is being asked to do and what is projectable for the parent at that time. For example, it could be claimed that there exists an obvious discrepancy between the parent going to fetch the child some cold water and continuing the meal that has only just been started (at line 5). But in this loose sense of 'discrepancy' many requests could be deemed as occurring in similar circumstances: that is, there are many requests made to parents in which, in effect, the parent is being asked to curtail their current activity in order to do something for the child. Deprived of direct evidence which demonstrates that the child is here specifically orienting to what the parent could have been expecting to occur, evidence of the kind discussed in #s 1–3 and 11, all that can be argued is that what has been revealed about CYs and initial 'pleases' confers on the linguistic design of lines 8–9 the capacity to bring into play the interactional parameters that have played a demonstrable role in my analysis. In effect, we are forced to recognise that such selections of linguistic form can act, in themselves, and in a local activity array that is not incompatible with them, so as to instantiate and create a mode of interactional orientation. In drawing up the detailed evidence bearing on this capacity, however, the most useful strategy has been to focus analysis on those tokens which occur within sequential contexts where there is more ample evidence concerning participant orientations. It is, therefore, these rather than cases like #14 which have proven the most analytically productive.

6. General remarks

The analysis presented in this chapter has revolved around one linguistic construction used for making requests, 'Can you...'. This is one of a number of request formats in

frequent use by children from about the age of three onwards, though in my analysis I have focused mainly on one child's usage at age 5;6. Through various forms of investigation I hope to have shown that when the child uses this construction she, in effect, indexes a distinctive interaction configuration. Examination of CY requests themselves, of contrastive request designs engaged in similar – though discriminable – business, of the sequential environments in which CYs do not occur and of the frequently included turn initial 'please' all suggest that CYs are deployed where the recipient is being treated as having a basis for expecting a course of events to unfold in a different way to what they are now being requested to do. It seems likely therefore that the existence of this and other request designs serves to differentiate the domain of request activity in highly systematic ways, that the sedimented and recurrent use of such constructions is grounded in the systematic part they play in the coding of human practices. The scope of what I've said does not, of course, amount to a compelling overall case for this (though see also Wootton 1997), and it does not even touch on issues concerning similarities and differences among children, even with regard to the one language, English, being acquired by the child who has been the subject of this analysis. But it does demonstrate the kinds of orderliness which may be found to exist at this interactional level and the gains that can emerge from enquiry engaged at this level.

There are various reasons why this order of systematicity has been overlooked in the analysis of children's requests, and more broadly within discussion of children's language. A main one is that even among those most favourably disposed towards taking on board the role of social factors in language use there has been a selective focus on the role played by the child's possession of certain kinds of knowledge, knowledge like whether the person the child is speaking to is older or younger than herself, whether the actions being engaged in are routine or non-routine and so on. What has gone uninvestigated within most of this is the array of detail pertaining to the actual sequential contexts in which requests occur, by which I mean the specifics of what the various parties orient to as being of relevance and significance on any given occasion. Sometimes the analysis of these specifics does reveal the child to be orienting to what may be transcontextual knowledge which she brings with her to the occasion. Take, for example, the request in #3. When the child, at line 7, says *Cos I have to ride on the bike* she is in effect answering the question 'Why can't you carry the potato rings through yourself', thus implicating a basis for treating the parent as orienting to such an expectation. Within the immediately prior interaction there has been no overt allusion to this expectation, so the child's assumption that the parent could have such an expectation, here and now, as well as being touched off by the parent's *What* at line 6, may also rely on knowledge which she imports to the interaction, knowledge concerning classes of things that she can or cannot be expected to do herself. In this sense, analysis can require us to recognise the contribution of knowledge which the child brings with her to the interaction, and in this sense we do not want to exclude as necessarily irrelevant the kinds of knowledge which have been highlighted by those engaged in other forms of enquiry, such as sociolinguistics and speech act analysis – even though in many cases such knowledge will be entirely irrelevant by virtue of not being oriented to by

the participants. But in most cases what is demonstrably most pertinent is the specific type of alignment which is taken up earlier within the sequences in question. In #1, for example, a key feature is the fact that the child has earlier decided to try to do the act, taking off her kilt, herself, while in #2 it is the child's earlier attempts to do her drawing herself. It is only by focusing on the potential significance of all such interactional detail that the demonstrable relevance of such matters, to the participants, can come to be recognised.

Perhaps one feature which has sustained the underinvestigation of such aspects in the domain of children's requests is the notion, even assumption, that many requests are sequence initial objects, that they occur out of the blue, the only features of potential relevance being things like inherent properties of the request being broached or the type of hearer being spoken to. And presumably it is some parallel notion of context detachment which in part accounts both for the attractiveness of requests to mainstream pragmatics and for the kinds of problem and solution bearing on linguistic form and context that have emerged from that tradition. This kind of assumption is not just deeply misleading, but acting on it, as though the kinds of specific connection that the request has with preceding interactional events is of only marginal import, has deprived such enquiry of access to parameters which may turn out to be of great significance in understanding request construction and selection.

I've referred above to request designs as differentiating the request domain in systematic ways, ways which fit them to handling distinctive configurations of circumstance, configurations which it is possible to identify through the kind of analysis which has been presented. With regard to the CY forms on which I have concentrated the salient parameter is whether the child has a basis for expecting her recipient to have some alternative expectation as to how the sequence is going to unfold. This formulation of the connection between grammatical forms and interactional practices rests uneasily alongside other ways of linking the design of utterances to interactional considerations. One such popular approach is the theory of politeness put forward by Brown and Levinson (1978, and for application within functional linguistics Givon 1990: Chapter 18). Here the principal parameter bearing on requests is the requester's supposed orientation to the avoidance of placing impositions on their recipient with regard to their freedom to act. In this way the requester takes account of the 'negative face' of their recipient, and various strategies (such as the use of question forms in which to make requests) can be deployed to this end. The analysis of children's requests along the lines I have presented poses several issues for such a model. First, it is difficult to see how such a model can predict the specific circumstances of use which, both here and elsewhere (Gerhardt 1990; Wootton 1997) have been demonstrably connected to the use of specific request constructions. Second, such a model revolves centrally around speaker inference skills which rely on them being able to make estimates of the degree of imposition being placed on their recipient. But children's request forms, from the age of about two years onwards, become internally differentiated prior to them having the capacity to employ such inference skills. This suggests that the genesis of such differentiation is linked to interactional parameters of a different kind than

those which play such a central role in politeness models. What the child comes to take into account are varying sequential alignments which have an accountable bearing on the state of the interaction at that time, and the repertoire of request forms offers systematic ways of incorporating ongoing analyses of these alignments. Third, if it is the case that request forms have this intimate connection with distinctive forms of circumstance, that their usability is bound up with their capacity to differentiate interactional circumstances in these ways, then the parameters of politeness theory will simply become redundant with regard to their explanatory power.

Although my interest in CY forms sprung in part from an interest in the workings of this form at an earlier age, a full developmental account of how such a form transitions through time, in the course of childhood, is beyond the scope of this chapter. Some elements of this account are now in place. The analysis lays out the functional picture regarding the operation of this form at age 5;6, a picture which then permits comparison and contrast over time, and observations have also been made about one important developmental change found in the years immediately preceding this, namely the incorporation of turn initial 'please'. And, in general terms, it is clear enough that in approaching the transitions which take place centre stage has to be given to a consideration of how these transitions intersect with, and are fostered by, the dynamics of interactional configurations. Of course, much psychological theorising would see such transitions as conditioned by mental modules and their timetables of maturation. The alternative possibility, which needs much further exploration, and which I have argued for in more detail elsewhere (Wootton 1997), would see interactional configurations themselves, analysed at the kind of level exemplified in this chapter, as a key conditioner of the child's emerging inferential apparatus.

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Language as social action

A study of how senior citizens request assistance with practical tasks in the Swedish home help service

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This conversation analytic study examines the linguistic and social organization of requests occurring in interactions between senior citizens and home help providers. The data consist of videorecordings of naturally occurring visits from the Swedish home help service, and the analyses focus on how the senior citizen enlists the home help provider's assistance with practical tasks. Requesting can be implemented through imperatives, questions, and statements. I suggest that syntactic choice reveals the senior citizen's orientation toward her entitlement to the requested task within the institutional context of caregiving. Whether a statement is interpreted as a request or not can be a negotiated matter. The senior citizens use accounts that present the requested task as rational and legitimate. Finally, I suggest that the visual orientation of the interactants and the sequential organization of troubles-tellings may shape the organization of requests in the home help data.

1. Introduction

Research on requests and related actions have a long tradition in linguistics, anthropology, and sociology. Utterances that accomplish requesting illuminate the interface between language and social action (cf. Goodwin 1990:70). This study examines the activity of requests in the Swedish home help service.¹ The home help service is a government program that offers assistance to elderly or disabled persons who are unable to manage on their own. The data are drawn from recordings of interactions between home help providers and senior citizens (mostly women). The home help provider visits the home of the senior citizen to assist her with personal care, hygiene, cooking, cleaning, and other household tasks. The arrowed turn in example (1) shows a request from the home help service data.²

- (1) The senior citizen (SC) is sitting on a board placed across the edges of the bathtub. She has a big towel across her shoulders and is drying herself while

the home help provider (HH) is drying up water with a rag that she moves across the floor with her foot. [VD2:1]

- 01 HH: °(U) dä:r(hh).°
there
- 02 (0.4)
- 03 → SC: Du får no torka
You may PRT dry
 You should probably
 (x)(y)
- 04 me på ry[:ggen.
me on the back
dry my back
- 05 HH: [Ja:: a ska göra de(h).
Yes I will do that
- 06 (14.0) ((HH dries SC vigorously with a towel))
 (z)
- 07 SC: °Tack° tack så dä:r,=
Thanks thanks so there
 Thanks that's good
- 07 HH: =>Mm:.< ((motherese))
 (x) HH moves toward SC.
 (y) HH puts her hands on the towel on SC's shoulders and starts drying her.
 (z) SC leans her head toward HH.

A native speaker of Swedish may feel that there is no need to support the claim that the utterance in lines 3–4 constitutes a request. As socialized members of Swedish culture, we have learned to recognize turns like lines 3–4 as requests. However, I want to examine requesting as a sequentially implemented social activity rather than as an individual speech act. The social perspective requires us to move beyond a speaker-centered analysis, one based on our cultural intuitions about how we think requests are typically made, to an examination of how they are treated by the participants in the interaction in which they were produced. In the example at hand, the home help provider organizes her non-vocal and vocal activities in ways that demonstrate that she has understood the senior citizen's turn in lines 3–4 as a request. She starts to move toward the senior citizen just after the senior citizen has uttered the first syllable of the verb *torka* 'dry'.

In an investigation of overlap onset in conversations in American and British English, Jefferson (1983) suggests that recipients may orient to the adequacy rather than the completeness of a prior turn.³ A turn in progress is recognition adequate when what is being said within and through it has been made perfectly available even though the turn has not been brought to completion (Jefferson 1983:2). The notion of recognition adequacy can be applied to the placement of the home help provider's shift in orientation during the utterance in lines 3–4 in example (1). The home help provider begins to move when the senior citizen's turn is recognition adequate as a request for

assistance. The precise onset of her shift in orientation shows that she is inspecting the senior citizen's ongoing talk for places where it is relevant to respond through actions or words. The home help provider then begins to dry the senior citizen with the towel. This may make the subsequent promise to undertake the requested task *Ja:: a ska göra de(h)* 'Yes I will do that', seem redundant. However, the promise registers the senior citizen's specification that she wants help with drying her back in particular (and not other parts of her body). The senior citizen's expression of gratitude in line 7 is placed in third position – after the second pair part in the request sequence. Schegloff and Sacks (1973) and Schegloff (1992) have shown that third position is a strategic place for the achievement of intersubjectivity. Third position provides a slot where a speaker can ratify or reject a coparticipant's displayed interpretation of a prior turn. In this example, the senior citizen's expression of gratitude ratifies the home help provider's interpretation of line 3 as a request. In this short spate of talk we thus have evidence that the senior citizen's utterance in lines 3–4 was produced, intended, and understood as a request for assistance.

The analysis in this chapter focuses exclusively on how senior citizens request assistance from the home help provider. It was typical for the data that the request was initiated by the senior citizen rather than by the home help provider. About two-thirds of all the requesting activity in the data was implemented by the senior citizen (Lindström & Bagerius 2002). These sequences are interesting because they highlight the institutional character of the interactions. When the senior citizen requests help, she can underscore the home help provider's institutional role as a helping hand in the home. Requesting sequences show how the institutional context of caregiving is "talked into being" (Heritage 1984:290).

Requests and directives have been studied in other health care settings such as medical consultations (Sorjonen 1997, 1998; West 1990). The home help visits provide an interesting contrast to medical consultations. As in doctor-patient interactions, there are knowledge asymmetries between the interactants. However, in the home help data it is typically the care recipient rather than the institutional representative who claims superior knowledge of the task at hand. This is exemplified in sequences in which the senior citizen gives detailed instructions to the home help provider about how a particular task such as frying a slice of black pudding or cleaning out a cast iron pan should be done.

This study focuses on the linguistic and social organization of turns where requesting occurs. The chapter is organized as follows. First, I will discuss findings from previous CA research on requests and directives. I will then describe how I recorded the home help data and built the collection of requesting activities. This will be followed by a presentation of my findings.

2. Requests, directives, and the study of preference and social organization

It is hard to trace the intellectual lineage of the early CA work on requests, directives, and related actions. Schegloff (1979) and Levinson (1983) are frequently cited as providing support for the argument that requests are dispreferred. However, Schegloff (1979) gave Harvey Sacks credit for the idea that offers are structurally preferred as a way of getting transfers accomplished, and Levinson (1983) acknowledged debt to published and unpublished work by several researchers including Paul Drew, John Heritage, and Emanuel Schegloff in his extensive discussion of pre-requests and requests. It should also be noted that neither Schegloff (1979) nor Levinson (1983) centered on requests as a phenomenon in its own right. Schegloff's study focused on identification and recognition in telephone conversation openings. His observations about requests and pre-requests were tentative, and were presented as an aside to the main focus of the chapter. Levinson's discussion of pre-requests and requests was both part of a presentation of CA, and was levelled as a critique of speech act theory.

The occurrence of pre-request sequences supports the argument that requests are dispreferred. Instead of making a request, a speaker can make a pre-request which, if the sequence runs off in the preferred way, may be responded to with an offer. Schegloff (1979) argued that pre-requests are distinct from other kinds of pre-sequences such as pre-invitations, in that they are not used to avoid a particular second pair part but rather to avoid a first pair part, the request itself. Unlike pre-invitations, the preferred way of responding to a pre-request is not to make a go-ahead response but to obviate the need for the request altogether by making an offer. Preference thus operates across the entire sequence rather than on a particular response type. An example is shown in extract (2), in which A makes a pre-request in line 1 which is responded to with an offer by B in line 2.

(2) Sacks (1992 [1967]: 691)

01 A: What are those, cigars?
 02 B: Yeah. You want one?
 03 A: Sure.

Levinson (1983: 356–364) analyzed pre-requests and requests. He proposed that turns that might be analyzed as indirect speech acts in speech act theory are better captured by the CA notion of preference and pre-sequence. Levinson gives over 20 examples of pre-requests and requests in his chapter. The arrowed lines in examples (3) and (4) show two examples of pre-requests.

(3) Example from Sinclair (1976: 68), cited in Levinson (1983: 362). Arrow added.

01 → S: Can I have two pints of Abbot and a grapefruit
 02 and a whisky?
 03 H: Sure ((turns to get))
 04 ((later)) There you are ...

(4) Example from Sinclair (1976:60), cited in Levinson (1983:361). Arrow added.

01 → S: Have you got Embassy Gold please?
 02 H: Yes dear ((provides))

The analysis that these examples are pre-requests rather than requests can be questioned on several grounds. First of all, and in contrast with example (2), the response in both these examples is not an offer but instead a granting of the request. Furthermore, the sequences seem to be drawn from a service encounter.⁴ S appears to be the customer and H the service provider. This institutional context creates a normative expectation for hearing the customer's utterances as requests. That the requested items are fully specified through the mention of brand names ("Abbott" and "Embassy Gold") also contributes to an interpretation of the turns as requests rather than pre-requests.⁵ To offer goods or services is a key task for many institutions. The institutional task orientation provides a motivation for the service provider to hear the client's utterances as potential requests. For this reason, it seems apt to take the institutional context into account in the analysis of sequences where requests occur.

More recent work on requests and directives has linked them to social organization and social development. M. H. Goodwin (1990) examined how directives were used among children in an African-American neighborhood. She relied on audio recordings. Goodwin argued that directives provide a means for coordinating action and constituting social relevances, and she found that directives were used differently among boys and girls. The boys used directives to create differential hierarchical relationships, while the girls used them in task-oriented activities. Furthermore, the girls tended to formulate the directives in ways that downplayed differences in social status. Anthony Wootton (1997) studied requests in videorecorded data of interactions between a toddler named Amy and her parents. Wootton used requesting as a lens for exploring children's social and cognitive development. There are parallels between Wootton's data and the home help data. Like the senior citizens in the home help study, Amy has a complementary relationship with her parents, in that she requires their assistance to achieve ordinary tasks. Many of Amy's requests concern what Wootton calls supportive actions, such as assistance in getting out of a high chair. The senior citizens' requests in my materials also concern supportive actions. Although Wootton reports some "distressing incidents" the interactional environment seems cooperative. Amy's parents are accommodating toward their daughter, and they rarely refuse her requests. Refusals are also rare in the home help visits that I have recorded. So far I have not come across any examples in my recordings where the home help provider refuses to comply with the senior citizen's requests, and I have only two examples where the home help provider expresses reluctance to undertake the requested activity. Wootton argued that the ability to formulate a request is central to the communicative armory of the child. This argument is relevant for the elderly as well. Once an individual has lost the ability to formulate a request, she has lost an important resource for shaping her immediate social environment. Like Goodwin and Wootton, I explore how the act of requesting helps constitute social relationships and social contexts, and in particular,

how the institutional context of caregiving is highlighted or downplayed in requesting sequences.

3. Data and sampling

The data are drawn from videorecordings of 34 visits in which a home help provider visits an elderly person to help her with personal hygiene, household chores, cooking, and cleaning. The care recipients in the study are primarily women over 70 years of age.⁶ Some of them have minor hearing problems, but none are diagnosed with dementia. The visits were not arranged for the purpose of the project. I met with the participants before the day of the recording to introduce myself, describe the research project, and show them the camera. That I had met with the participants beforehand and had showed them the recording equipment made them orient less to me and the camera during the actual recording. The data was collected in accordance with the ethical guidelines established by the Swedish Research Council, and it was also approved by the Council's ethics committee. Personal names and references to places have been changed to pseudonyms in the transcripts.

The collection that forms the basis for this chapter consists of 143 candidate sequences in which the senior citizen verbally enlists the home help provider's assistance with some practical task. The requested tasks are diverse such as watering a flower, fetching a glass of juice, putting on a sweater, adjusting a necklace, feeding a dog, or removing a dead rat from a rat trap. I do not have examples in which the senior citizen requests assistance with tasks that clearly lie outside the legitimate work responsibilities of the home help provider. The collection was drawn from 17 home help visits involving 8 senior citizens and 10 home help providers, and spans a total of 13 hours. The individual visits ranged in length from 17 minutes to 1 hour and 17 minutes.

4. Analysis

First, I will show that requesting is implemented through a variety of syntactic structures including imperatives, questions, and statements. Second, I will examine accounts in request sequences.

4.1 The syntactic design of requests in the home help service

The requests in the home help data were accomplished through imperatives, questions, and statements. Focusing first on imperatives and syntactic questions, I will argue that in choosing one structure over another, the senior citizen reveals her expectation that she is institutionally entitled to request assistance with the task at hand. The arrowed line in example (5) shows a request that is formulated as an imperative.

- (5) A is the researcher who is making the recording. [IIB6:1]
- 04 SC: Heh heh heh heh [heh heh
 05 HH: [↑Heh heh .hhh↑
 06 (0.6)
 07 A: ↑Hej hej↑ (.) >nu e ja me här ida
hi hi now am I along here today
 igen.<
again
 Hello hello (.) now I'm here again
 08 (1.6)
 09 SC: [Jass:å?
PRT
 Oh really
 10 HH: [HEH (0.2) heh heh [heh heh heh heh .hh
 11 A: [Ja:i(hh)? (0.2) .hhh
Yes
 12 (0.4)
 13 HH: Ja:ii?
Yes
 14 (1.8)
 15 HH: [(Nu) ställer ja-
(Now) put I-
 (x) (y)
 16 → SC: [(Ja) stäng- stäng den där dörrn,
(Yes) clo- close that there door
 (Yes) clo- close that door there
 17 A: [Aa: ,
Yes
 18 HH: Aa de [ska ja göra,
Yes that will I do
 Yes I'll do that
 19 A: [()
 20 (8.0) ((HH closes the door.))
 21 SC: [(↑Ja:ii:i ↑)
Yes
 (x) SC points toward the open inner door.
 (y) HH starts to walk towards door.

The sequence is taken from the very beginning of a morning visit. I had turned on the videocamera outside the house, and the home help provider and I had just entered through the kitchen door. In line 16, the senior citizen makes the request, (*Ja*) *stäng-stäng den där dörrn* '(Yes) clo- close that door there'. This request may be directed to me, as I was the last one walking through the door. I begin to respond verbally in line 17. However, since I was carrying the camera, I was unable to immediately comply and the home help provider offers to undertake the requested task in line 18, and she then closes the door in line 20. Example (6) shows a request that is formulated

as a declarative sentence with a modal verb denoting obligation and necessity, which amounts to the same thing as an imperative with respect to interpretation.

- (6) SC is sitting by the kitchen table eating. In line 11, A, who is filming, completes an explanation as to why she does not speak much. Martina is the home help provider. [VC1:1]

- 01 SC: ↑Hur går de för dej ↑ då:ɛ
How goes it for you then
 How are you doing now
- 02 (1.6)
- 03 A: ↑Jo de går↑ bra heh he[h .hh
PRT it goes well heh he[h .hh
 Well it's fine
- 04 SC: [Får du in skärpan.
Get you in focus
 Can you get it focused
- 05 A: Ja:då.
YesPRT
 Oh yes
- 06 HH: () [() [()
- 07 SC: [heh heh
- 08 A: [>Därför att de e (0.2)
Therefore that it is
 Since it is (0.2)
- 09 t- fullt up å sköta de här så [att
t- full up to handle this here so that
 hard to handle all this
- 10 SC: [Ja::.
Yes
- 11 A: ja (0.2) e pratar int' s' my(h)ck.he: [:
I e talk n't s' much
 I (0.2) eh don't talk that much
- 12 SC: [Ja
I
- 13 förstår de,
understand that
- 14 (1.8)
- 15 → SC: Martina du måste ge mej nånting å
Martina you must give me something to
 dricka
drink
- 16 → ja e så törsti så. ((strained voice))
I'm so thirsty so
 I'm so thirsty
- 17 (0.6)

- 18 HH: Va: vill du ha vatten?
 What want you have water
 What do you want water
- 19 SC: Ja:ɛ ((strained voice))
 Yes
- 20 (3.6)
- 21 SC: (°Oj då,°)
 PRT then
 oops
- 22 (18.0) ((the kitchen faucet is running))
- 23 SC: Tack ska du ha.
 Thanks shall you have
 Thank you
- 24 ((HH approaches SC with a glass))

This is also a morning visit. The senior citizen is sitting at the kitchen table in her bathrobe, and the home help provider is about to help her take a shower. The senior citizen has just asked me about the recording (lines 1–13). The home help provider is not in the camera frame until around line 23, but she appears to be standing by the kitchen sink when the senior citizen makes the request in line 15–16.⁷ The address term in the beginning of line 15 may indicate that the senior citizen now shifts the intended reciprocity of her talk from me to the home help provider (Martina). The modal verb *måste* ‘must’ might be used to convey that the requested task is one that the senior citizen clearly is entitled to within the institutional context of caregiving. Or, rather, in formulating the request in this way, the senior citizen constitutes the task at hand as one that she is entitled to request. These sequences may also involve an element of complaint. This is particularly relevant to example (6), where the request is delivered in a strained or “whiny” voice.

Requests in the home help data could also be formulated as questions. In contrast with imperatives, and what may be taken as their paraphrases, these open up the possibility that the senior citizen may not be entitled to request assistance with the task at hand. Examples (7) and (8) show requests formulated as questions. Example (7) was recorded in the same home as example (5) but it involves a different home help provider. The request is in lines 4–5 and line 7. To make this example accessible to readers who do not know Swedish, I must comment on the structure of the turn. The pronoun *du:* ↑ ‘you’ in line 4 is part of the summons *Hör du:* ↑ ‘Listen you’. The pronoun thus does not function as a syntactic subject for the ensuing part of the turn. That the request is separated from the summons by a hesitation, *eh*, and a pause, provides further evidence for this point. The request itself is formulated as a subjectless question. The syntactically full version would have been *hinner du vattna*. The home help provider’s answer in line 6 suggests that the spoken syntax is unproblematic for the interactants.

- (7) SC refers to a wood-burning stove in line 1. [IIB5:1:1.0]
- 01 HH: JAG FÅR VÄRMA MIG PÅ SPIsen
I may warm myself on the stove
 I'll have to warm myself by the stove
- 02 lite gran[n hh]
 a *little bit*
 a bit
- 03 SC: [Ja:]
 Yes
- 04 → ↑gör de (0.4) Hör du:: ↑ eh (1.0)
 do that Listen you
 hinner (.)
 have time
 do that listen eh (1.0) do you have the time (.)
- 05 → <vattna två blommer åt mej (dä)/(där) i=
 water two flowers for me (the/there) in
 to water two flowers for me (the/there) in
- 06 HH: =Javis[st,]
 Yes sure
 Of course
- 07 SC: [i] take.
 in the ceiling
 by the ceiling
- 08 HH: Ja:: (0.4) ja vattnar runt
 Yes (0.4) I will water around
- 09 lite granna då
 a little bit then

Like example (5), this is taken from the beginning of a visit. The home help provider is warming her hands on the wood-burning stove. Caring for plants is a legitimate activity for the senior citizen to ask of the home help. Nonetheless, the senior citizen formulates this request in a way that does not take for granted that she is indeed entitled to request help with watering her plants. What I am referring to here is that the senior citizen asks whether the home help provider has the time to water two flowers. Another request formulated as a question is shown in example (8).

- (8) Pega (mentioned in line 5) is SC's registered nurse. She is also HH's manager. SC is sitting at the kitchen table. HH has just applied lotion on SC's feet. [VC1:1]

- 01 HH: (°s°) ↑där, ↑
 so there
 that's that
- 02 (9.6)
- 03 HH: >Vill du ha> tofflerna;
 Want you have the slippers
 Do you want the slippers

- 04 (0.6)
(x)
- 05 → SC: Mm ja: tack .hhh <Sa hon inte> Pega
Mm yes thank you said she not Pega
Yes please didn't she say Pega
- 06 → nånting att du skulle schu- smörja på
anything that you should schu- oil on
knä: ɛ
the knee
anything that you should schu- put cream on the knee
- 07 (1.0)
- 08 HH: ↑Nä men de kan ja ↑göra.=
No but that can I do
No but I can do that
- (x) HH takes the slippers off the tray on the senior citizen's walker.

The home help provider has just applied lotion on the senior citizen's feet, and there is evidence that the home help provider is bringing this task to a close. She makes a verbal acknowledgment that implicates closure in line 1 ($^{\circ}s^{\circ}$)↑*där*, ↑ 'that's that' and she asks whether the senior citizen wants her slippers (line 3). The senior citizen confirms the home help provider's question with *Mm ja: tack* 'Yes please' in line 5. This unit is produced as one turn constructional unit (TCU). The interactional import of different Swedish response tokens has not been fully investigated. My intuition is that the turn-initial *Mm* in this example may mark some resistance to the activity engaged in with the prior turn. The nature of the resistance is elaborated in the second TCU, where the senior citizen asks a question that shows that she does not consider the previous task complete. She asks whether Pega, the senior citizen's nurse and the manager of this home help district, has not asked the home help provider to apply lotion on the senior citizen's knees. The question includes a negative observation *sa hon inte> Pega nånting* 'didn't she say Pega anything'. Focusing on American data, Schegloff (1988) has shown that a negative observation can be used to make a complaint. This analysis seems relevant for this example, in that the senior citizen can be heard to imply that Pega ought to have told the home help provider to put cream on her knees. Furthermore the question specifically addresses entitlement by questioning whether instructions were given by the manager of the home help district. The home help provider replies in line 8 with ↑*nä* 'no' to the question whether she has been instructed to apply lotion to the knees. The answer is immediately followed by an offer *men de kan ja* ↑*göra* 'but I can do that'. The home help provider thus formulates this task as a favor rather than as one that she is institutionally required to provide.

In formulating a request as an imperative, the senior citizen claims that she is entitled to enlist the home help provider's assistance with the task at hand. In using the question format in contrast, the senior citizen displays an orientation to the possibility that the task falls outside the realm of activities that she is entitled to request within

the institutional context of caregiving. I will now move to the third syntactic format used in request sequences, namely, statements.

Statements could also be treated as requests in the home help visits. This was shown in example (1) which is reproduced below.

- (1) The senior citizen (SC) is sitting on a board placed across the edges of the bathtub. She has a big towel across her shoulders and is drying herself while the home help provider (HH) is drying up water with a rag that she moves across the floor with her foot. [VD2:1]

01 HH: °(U) dä:r(hh).°
there
 02 (0.4)
 03 → SC: Du får no torka
You may PRT dry
You should probably
 (x)(y)
 04 me på ry[:ggen.
me on the back
dry my back
 05 HH: [Ja:: a ska göra de(h).
Yes I will do that
 (x) HH moves toward SC.
 (y) HH puts her hands on the towel on SC's shoulders and starts drying her.

As I discussed in my earlier analysis of this example, the senior citizen's statement in lines 3–4 is both produced and understood as a request. In other cases, a statement could be treated as a request even though there was evidence in the data that it may not have been produced to be understood as a request. This is shown in example (10). The person who makes the request is the elderly husband of the care recipient. He is identified as (M) in the transcript. M and his wife are having breakfast. The home help provider is washing the dishes by hand. M has just walked up to the counter beside the sink and is rummaging through the kitchen drawers.

- (10) Astrid (mentioned in line 1) is M's wife. M and Astrid are about to eat breakfast. M is leaning with one hand on his walker while rummaging through the kitchen drawers to the left of HH who is doing the dishes. [IID2:1]

01 HH: (Jaha:) ha Astrid sovi lugnt i natt då
PRT has Astrid slept calmly lastnight then
 (Right) did Astrid sleep peacefully last night then
 02 elleç
or
 03 (1.2)
 04 → M: Ja letar efter en (.) osthyvel,
I search after a cheeseslicer
 I am looking for a (.) cheese slicer

05 (1.0)
 06 HH: En osthyvel,
 A cheeseslicer
 07 ((HH seems to search through the dishes)) (3.0)
 08 → HH: Den komme här den.
 That comes here that ((HH is washing))
 09 (0.2)
 10 M: Va, ((M stops searching through the drawer))
 What
 11 (0.6)
 12 HH: Du kan få en här. ((HH is still washing))
 You can have one here
 13 (0.2)
 14 M: Ja de e bra,
 Yes it is good
 Yeah that's good
 15 (16) ((HH washes, rinses, and dries the cheese slicer.))
 16 HH: S:å:¿= ((HH hands the cheese slicer to M.))
 So
 There
 17 M: =Tack.
 Thanks

In line 1, the home help provider asks M whether his spouse slept well. Instead of replying, M states that he is looking for a cheese slicer (line 4). This statement can both be heard as an explanation for rummaging through the drawer and as an account for not replying to the home help provider's question. The home help provider's subsequent verbal and nonverbal activities suggest that he hears the senior citizen's turn in line 4 as a request. The home help provider repeats the word *osthyvel* 'cheese slicer' in line 6 while he starts searching through the dishes. He then promises to deliver the cheese slicer in lines 8 and 12. Finally he hands it over to the senior citizen in line 16. There are indications in this sequence that the turn was not designed to be heard as a request. M continues his own search through the drawers until line 10, and he receives the home help provider's promise to provide the cheese slicer with a repair initiation (line 10). This example thus illustrates that requests are not unilaterally produced as intended speech acts, but can be products of a negotiation between social actors. Another example of how this negotiation can materialize is shown in example (11).

- (11) The senior citizen and the home help provider are in the kitchen. The senior citizen is drying her hair with a hairdryer while the home help provider cleans the kitchen. The word *citronflaska* in line 1 refers to a plastic container with lemon extract. The container is shaped like a lemon. [IIIA1:1]

01 SC:De står en citronflaska därinne : (0.2)
 It stands a lemonbottle therein
 There is a lemon extract bottle in there (0.2)

- 02 i dörren däruppe men ja får inte upp den,
in the door thereup but I get not up it
 in the door up there but I can not open it
- 03 HH: Mm:?
Mm
- 04 (0.2)
- 05 SC: (Se) om du e
(See) if you are
 (See) if you have
- 06 [stark (i fingrarna),
strong (in the fingers)
 (strong hands)
- 07 HH: [.hh De ska ja hjälpa dej me se
That will I help you with see
 I'll help you with that
- 08 (.)
- 09 de går bra de hh. (.) .h[h:
that goes well that
 no problem (.)
- 10 SC: [Ser du den
See you it
 Do you see it
- 11 (.)
- 12 SC: högst upp,
highest up
 up on top

In lines 1–2, the senior citizen first tells the home help provider where the lemon extract bottle can be found. She then goes on to tell the home help provider that she is unable to open the bottle. Specifying the location of the bottle, coupled with the senior citizen's assertion of her own inability to open it, allows this statement to be interpreted as a request. As mentioned earlier, the home help provider is supposed to assist with tasks that the senior citizen is unable to manage on her own. The requested action is presented as just such a task in this example. Verbally there is minimal uptake from the home help provider. However, the video shows that she finishes up her ongoing activity of wiping down the sink, and turns toward the refrigerator. The senior citizen continues with a question (*Se) om du e [stark (i fingrarna)*). The question literally translates into something like '(See) if you are strong (in the fingers)' and may be idiomatically rendered as 'if your hands are strong'. In addition to describing her own inability to accomplish the requested task, the senior citizen has now alluded to the home help provider's ability and strength. The question is responded to with an offer to help by the home help provider in lines 7 and 9.

Requests can be implemented through imperatives, questions, and statements. Imperative structures may be heard to underscore that the senior citizen is entitled to the requested task, while questions reveal that the senior citizen does not view the task as one that she has the right to request within the institutional context of caregiv-

ing. Finally, requests formulated as statements underscore that whether an utterance is to be understood as a request or not can be a negotiated matter. Focusing further on the linguistic structure of requesting sequences, I will show how accounts are used to articulate the grounds for the requests. Like imperatives, these accounts underscore that the senior citizen is institutionally entitled to assistance.

4.2 Accounts in request sequences: articulating the grounds for being entitled to assistance

In the home help data it was quite common for the senior citizen to include accounts in requesting sequences. This is shown in example (12).

(12) In the bedroom. HH is putting on SC's sandals which have velcro straps.

[IIIB1:1]

- 01 SC: .hh Men nu: passar han bara opp.
But now attends he only up
 But now he only attends to others
- 02 HH: Ja:~,
Yes
- 03 (1.0)
- 04 HH: °Just de.°
Just it
That's it
- 05 (2.6) ((HH takes the other sandal))
 (x)
- 06 → SC: .hh Trycker du till den ↑där ja e
Press you to it there I am
 Will you press that one I'm
- 07 → så himla rädd att .hh (när)/(nä) den dä-
so very afraid that when /no it the-
 so terribly frightened that when/no that one
- 08 där ja. pt .hh|h
there yes
- 09 → HH: [Att den åker av.
That it goes off
 That it comes off
- 10 → SC: Ja:[: för då: ligger ja på golvet.
Yes for then lie I on the floor
 Yes cause then I'll be flat on the floor
- 11 HH: [Mm:~
Mm
- 12 HH: Mm:~
Mm
- 13 (.)

- 14 HH: (Så)där
so there
 That's it
- 15 SC: Ta:ck.
Thank you
- 16 (2.0)
 (x) SC "points" with the other foot. HH starts to adjust the front strap.
 (y) HH presses the back strap.

The home help provider is helping the senior citizen to put on her sandals. The senior citizen wants the home help provider to adjust a velcro strap on her sandal. She says *.hh trycker du till den ↑där ja e. så himla rädd att .hh (när)/(nä) den dä- där ja. pt .hh[h 'will you press that one I'm so terribly frightened that when/no that one there yes'*. The home help provider collaboratively completes the account with *att den åker av* 'that it comes off' thus constructing the request itself as reasonable. Although the senior citizens accepts the account with a turn-initial affirmative response token, she does not fully align with the home help provider's depiction, as she goes on to provide a much more dramatic version of the possible consequences of not adhering to the request, by stating that she could end up 'flat on the floor'. Accounts in the environment of requests are not unique to the home help data. They are also discussed in the aforementioned study by Goodwin. Like the senior citizens in my study, the girls in Goodwin's study seemed to use accounts to demonstrate that the request is reasonable. In the home help materials, the accounts often offered versions that portray the senior citizen as vulnerable. That vulnerability can be a delicate issue is shown in example (13).

(13) SC refers to a wood-burning stove in line 1. [IIB5:1:1.0]

- 01 HH: JAG FÅR VÄRMA MIG PÅ SPIsen
I may warm myself on the stove
 lite gran[n hh]
a little bit
 I'll have to warm myself a bit by the stove
- 02 SC: [Ja:]
Yes
- 03 → ↑gör de (0.4) Hör du:↑ eh (1.0) hinner (.)
do that Listen you have time
 do that listen eh (1.0) do you have the time (.)
- 04 → <vattna två blommer åt mej (dä)/(där) i=
water two flowers for me (the/there) in
 to water two flowers for me (the/there) in
- 05 HH: =Javis[st,]
Yes sure
 Of course

- 06 SC: [i] take.
in the ceiling
 by the ceiling
- 07 HH: Ja: (0.4) ja vattnar runt lite granna
Yes (0.4) I will water around a little bit
- 08 → då så slipper du gå: då;
then so be spared you walking then
 so you won't have to walk then
- 09 ((rubbing hands))
- 10 → SC: Ja: ((creaky)) ja ja kan gå annars men=
Ja: yes I can walk otherwise but
Well I can walk otherwise see but
- 11 HH: ((snuffle))
- 12 SC: =men ja når inte åt s[erru].
but I reach not at see you
 but I don't reach see
- 13 HH: [Nä: ↑var har du
No where have you
No where do you have
- 14 vatten↑kannan (står då);
the watering can (standing then)
 the watering can then

As discussed earlier, the senior citizen makes a request in lines 3–4 and line 6. In granting the request, the home help provider formulates the requested task as reasonable by providing an account *Ja: (0.4) ja vattnar runt lite granna då så slipper du gå: då;* ‘Yes (0.4) I will water around a little bit so you won’t have to walk then’. The account itself implies that it would be too cumbersome for the senior citizen to water the flowers. The senior citizen self-selects in line 10 to reject this account by insisting that she is indeed able to walk, but cannot reach the flowers. It is thus not age and fragility but height that hinders the senior citizen from undertaking the task that she is requesting from the home help provider. The senior citizen is in other words specifically dismissing the idea that she is physically weak and vulnerable.

5. Requests and social organization

Having explored the linguistic organization of requests and the occurrence of accounts in requesting sequences, I will now point to two factors that may shape the organization of requesting in my data. The first factor involves visual orientation and mutual attention. In the home help materials that I have examined, the senior citizen is much less mobile than the home help provider. The typical scenario is that the senior citizen is sitting down while the home help provider is occupied with some practical task, such as cleaning or cooking, that requires her to move about in the room. There is some evidence that the senior citizen tries to time her requests in a way that does not

interfere with the home help provider's ongoing work. For example, in (1) the senior citizen did not initiate the request until the home help provider had finished drying the bathroom floor. The fact that the home help provider is typically already engaged in some task can present a problem for the senior citizen, in that she must get the home help provider to shift her attention from her ongoing activity to the new requested task. Requests formulated as statements may be used as a tool to accomplish this shift in attention and work.

The second factor that may affect the organization of requesting activities in my data is related to the telling of troubles. As I mentioned earlier, many of the accounts in my materials involved the senior citizen presenting herself as vulnerable. Consider example (14).

(14) SC has just eaten lunch. [VC1:1]

- 01 SC: pt Nu ska ja fortsätta me de här
Now shall I continue with this here
 Now I'll continue with what I've
- 02 som ja har på servetten här,
that I have on the napkin here
 got here on the napkin
- 03 HH: Ja:ɿ (0.8) behöver du mer vatt:en tror du,
Yes need you more water think you
Yes (0.8) do you think you need more water
- 04 (1.0)
- 05 SC: N_a: (hh).
No
 (0.6)
- 06 HH: De går (va) (1.2) Ja bäddar:ɿ
It goes what I will make the bed
 It's OK isn't it (1.2) I'll make the bed
- 07 (0.8)
- 08 SC: J_a: tack.
Yes please
- 09 (1.2)
- 10 HH: °Ja den här ska ()° ((whispering))
Yes this here shall
Yes this one'll ()
- 11 (8.6)
- 12 → SC: pt Så lägger du på bara filten eh
So lay you on only the blanket eh
 Just put on the blanket
- 13 → inge överkast Ka- eh M[artina,
no bedspread Ka- eh Martina
- 14 HH: [N_a:ɿ
 No
- 15 (1.0)

- 17 → SC: För ja blir väl (hh) sängliggandes idag
For I become PRT lying in bed today
 Cause it feels as if I'll probably be bedridden today,
- 18 → tycker ja de känns,
think I it feels
 I think
- 19 (3.0)
- 20 HH: Vila upp dej inför imorron.
Rest up yourself for tomorrow
 Rest up for tomorrow
- 21 (0.8)
- 22 SC: Va sa döꝀ
What said you
 What did you say
- 23 (0.6)
- 24 HH: Får vila upp dej inför imorron
Have to rest up yourself for tomorrow
 You have to rest up for tomorrow when
- 25 när vi ska hanlaꝀ
when we will shop
 we'll go shopping

The senior citizen is in the kitchen, while the home help provider is straightening up the bedroom, which is located behind the kitchen and partially within the senior citizen's visual range. The request is made in lines 13–14, *pt så lägger du på bara filten eh inge överkast Ka- eh Martina* 'just put on the blanket no bedspread Ka- eh Martina'. In Swedish *nä* 'no' is heard as an aligning response to this negatively framed utterance (cf. Trine Heinemann this volume). The senior citizen continues with a post-positioned account in lines 17–18, *för ja blir väl (hh) sänliggandes idag tycker ja de känns* 'cause it feels as if I'll probably be bedridden today I think'. I argued earlier that these accounts present the request as reasonable within the context of caregiving. Additionally, I think they may be used as a ticket to initiate a troubles-telling. As Jefferson (1980) has shown, a troubles telling can be initiated in a way that leaves it up to the recipient to follow up the telling or not. To initiate a troubles-telling as an account to a request rather than as a first position telling may be an innocuous thing, in that the telling need only be developed if the recipient follows up on the trouble. In the example at hand, the home help provider continues on a note that is much more positive than the one introduced by the senior citizen, as she suggests that the upcoming shopping trip provides a good reason to rest. She can thus be heard to be thwarting the senior citizen's incipient troubles-telling.

6. Conclusion

The study presents results from an on-going investigation of requests within the Swedish home help service. I reviewed early CA research on requests, directives, and the study of preference and social organization. I have shown that requests are accomplished through a variety of syntactic structures. The choice between imperatives and questions can be linked to contextual factors, e.g. entitlement. Statements underscore that requests can be negotiated. The senior citizens use accounts to indicate that the requested task is reasonable within the context of caregiving. Finally, I have identified two distinct factors, the visual orientation of the interactants and the organization of troubles-tellings, as potentially salient for the organization of requests.

The data for this chapter does not constitute a random sample of visits in the Swedish home help service. My intuition from negotiating access with the home help providers and the senior citizens is that the home help providers who chose to participate tended to be fairly confident in their professional role and that the senior citizens who agreed to have recordings made in their home on the whole were fairly satisfied with the help rendered by the home help service. Nonetheless, as the recordings are based on naturally occurring visits rather than ones arranged for the purposes of research, they give some insight into the everyday life of senior citizens and home help providers. The analysis of requests suggests that the senior citizen's entitlement to assistance is not settled once and for all in the interview between the social worker and the senior citizen when the assistance is initially granted. Rather my analysis suggests that entitlement is oriented to and made relevant by the senior citizens and the home help providers within the micro-moments of caregiving.

Notes

1. I would like to thank Maria Egbert, Trine Heinemann, Tanya Stivers, Kerstin Thelander, and the editors of this volume for comments on earlier versions of the manuscript. The chapter is one of several investigations within the project *Language and social action: A comparative study of affiliation and disaffiliation across national communities and institutional contexts* (financed by the Swedish Council for Working Life and Social Research and the Swedish Research Council).
2. The data is transcribed according to the CA conventions described in Ochs, Schegloff, and Thompson (1996). The code that identifies the segments from the home help data specifies the home help district, the senior citizen, the home help provider, and whether it is the first, second or third recorded visit between these two interactants. Example (1) is taken from district *V* and involves senior citizen *D* and home help provider *2*. It is taken from the first recording of these two interactants.
3. Jefferson does not give a systematic description of the data that provided the basis for this research report. The examples she shows are drawn from British and American telephone and face-to-face interactions. Unlike the examples examined in this chapter, there is no analysis of non-vocal activities such as body movement and eye gaze. One explanation for this might be that there was no video recording of the face-to-face interactions.

4. Levinson does not describe the data in the chapter, but the reference for the example is a diploma dissertation on the sociolinguistic significance of the form of requests used in service encounters (Sinclair 1976).
5. This point was brought to my attention by Auli Hakulinen.
6. Most of the women lived alone. However, in a few visits a spouse was present and in one of the examples analyzed in this chapter, the spouse is the one who makes the request.
7. The request is followed by an account in line 16 *ja e så törsti så* 'I'm so thirsty'. This phenomenon will be discussed later.

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PART II

Lexico-semantic resources in conversation

The interactional generation of exaggerated versions in conversations

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This paper focuses on lexis in ordinary conversational interaction; more specifically, it addresses the matter of *lexical selection* in turn design. An investigation of cases in which speakers initially produce a version, or claim or description, and then subsequently produce a second, modified version, reveals rather plainly a basic principle involved in word selection and turn design. Speakers select descriptive terms so as to fit some specific contingencies associated with the sequential environment in which the description is produced. This principle of word selection in turn construction is particularly apparent in the cases reviewed here, in which speakers produce a version which turns out either to have been inaccurate in some fashion, or exaggerated. Whether the subsequent modified version is produced ‘voluntarily’, as a continuation of the turn in which the first version was produced, or is done in response to (prompted by) the recipient’s evident scepticism, we can see the practices involved in fitting a version – through word selection – to the contingencies of its sequential environment exposed in a particularly transparent manner.

1. Introduction

Turns at talk in conversation, and in any other form of spoken interaction, are designed to enable speakers to be understood by their co-participants in the way in which they wish to be understood. Talk is meaningful in so far as speakers design their turns so as to be recognisable as doing the kind of action they mean to do. So *turn design* is at the heart of how we mean what we say, what we communicate, in interaction. A speaker designs a turn, in the sense of selecting what will go in that turn, in two quite distinct respects: first, by selecting what action the turn will be designed to perform; and second, by selecting the details of the verbal constructions through which that action is to be accomplished. Thus ‘turn design’ refers to the construction of a turn-at-talk to perform or manage some particular action, by selecting from among a range of linguistic elements or components, including lexis, syntactic and grammatical features, phonetic and prosodic aspects, and (in face-to-face interaction) gaze, posture, bodily orienta-

tion and the like. The focus of this chapter is the lexical selections which speakers make in expressing what they have to say.

This report arises from an investigation into occasions when speakers first claim something – that they have done something, or that something happened: however, it will turn out subsequently that their original claims were ‘falsely’ exaggerated in some respect, and that what the speakers claimed happened did not (quite) happen, or what they claimed to have done they did not (quite) do.¹ Thus quite commonly we find a pattern of exaggeration and modification or ‘retraction’; which raises the question of how speakers come to make exaggerated claims in the first place, exaggeration being a matter of lexical selection. And that is the question I will be addressing here.

To begin with, though, it will be worth reviewing two bases, which might almost be regarded as principles, underlying lexical selection. The first is the matter of the relative precision with which speakers describe or report events and the like; the second is that descriptions are fitted to their action environments, or the action they are constructed to perform. I will briefly outline each of these, because they are directly germane to the question at hand, concerning exaggeration.

2. Precision, and action

When speakers say what they mean to say, they do so in part through a kind of precision of expression. We know, of course, that ‘precision’ is relative, which Schegloff so well captured in his account of how describing ‘place’ is relative to whom we are speaking and the interactional context in which the description is produced.

Were I now to formulate where my notes are, it would be correct to say that they are: right in front of me, next to the telephone, on the desk, in my office, in the office, in Room 213, in Lewisohn Hall, on campus, at school, at Columbia, in Morningside Heights, on the upper West Side, in Manhattan, in New York City, in New York State, in the Northeast, on the Eastern Seaboard, in the United States, etc. Each of these terms could in some sense be correct (if that is where my notes are), were its relevance provided for. (Schegloff 1972: 81)

Hence selecting one from among these descriptions turns on such considerations as to whom one is speaking; where that recipient is located relative to the speaker (in the building, in the city, out of town etc.); and what the speaker understands the recipient to know, including mutual and prior knowledge – and why, after all, the speaker is telling the recipient where he/she is. These considerations are part of the *recipient design* of turns at talk in general, and of descriptions in particular.² If you’re giving your location when ordering a cab, neither “in New York city” nor “in my office” is likely to be successful, because neither is sufficiently precise for the purpose in hand. Hence the aptness of a description involves its being precise (enough) in particular interactional circumstances.

So on the one hand precision is therefore relative to interactional context; on the other, participants in talk orient to *precisely* what is said. The following extract illustrates just how finely tuned responses can be to precisely the information in what someone has said. This is from a telephone call in which a young woman, living away from home, at university, has called her mother; to save her daughter's money, Lesley has called her back.

(1) [Holt:X(C):2:1:4:2]

- 1 Kate: `lɔ,
2 (0.4)
3 Les: .hhh I thought you were the police we had a bu:rglar
4 las' ni:ght
5 (.)
6 Kate: 2 → ↑Reaally. Did['e ↑take anything.
7 Les: [.hhh
8 (0.2)
9 Les: .h NO:..hh Uh:m (0.3) You see. ↑we were in bed

Notice that Kate's response in line 6 to Lesley's news (lines 3/4) does not presuppose that something was actually stolen; in asking *Did he take anything?* rather than *What's been taken?* or *What did he take?*, her response leaves open whether anything has actually been stolen. In this respect it is very precisely fitted to Lesley's announcement that they had a burglar – and not that they've been burgled (i.e. Lesley does not say *We had a burglary last night*). Kate displays in her response her understanding of the very precise way in which her mother has phrased her description of the incident.³ Through her lexical selection of specifically *burglar*, and not a *burglary*, Lesley has adumbrated precisely what Kate's response is alert to, the possibility that nothing was taken, which Lesley confirms in her final turn shown. This illustrates how precisely some informing can be calibrated in the detail of what is reported (not implying more than that someone broke into the house); and how precisely that state of affairs is understood in the response.

Relative precision is, therefore, one basis underlying lexical selection. Another follows from the ways in which a description is selected not only for a certain recipient, but also for the interactional activity in which participants are engaged. This connection between description and activity is illustrated in the following two excerpts, both from a telephone conversation in which Mark and Deena are talking about Deena's daughter's forthcoming wedding, to which Mark and his wife have been invited. Deena lives in south east England, Mark in the south west, about 180 miles away.

(#2a) [Holt:M88:2:4:2]

- 1 Dee: Well uh[m (.) we hope[you're going t'co:me
2 Mar: [.p.t.klk [.p.lak
3 Mar: .tlak Oh ye:s
4 Dee: Oh indeed are[you that's lovely
5 Mar: [.h h h h h h h
6 (0.4)

7 Dee: So: are you going to go ↓back that night or d'you want
 8 (.) a bunk bed or something
 9 Mar: [nNo we'll go back thank you
 10 + very much it's not very far
 11 (.)
 12 Dee: Are you su:re becuz we're not having anybody to stay
 13 here I mean we (.) we c- (.) we could accomoda[te you:=
 14 Mar [.hhhhhh
 15 Dee: =uh:[m
 16 Mar: + [n:No:: (.) no it's alright it's not (.) not
 17 + particu'rly fa:r a couple of hours 'n we're home again.

(#2b) [Holt:M88:2:4:8]

1 Mar: uh why: I ra:ng wz that we were beginning to get other:
 2 (0.4) uh:m: invitations 'n things round 'n we j's tryin'
 3 to plan:: the holidays be:cz Gordon is (.) probably
 4 going away to Fra:nce sometime, .hh[hhhhh
 5 Dee: [() ye:s,
 6 Mar: A::n:d uh::m: (.) .t.hhh we:: (.) last ↑year we had 'n
 7 invitation: to a friend's wedding .hhhhh I: wz telling
 8 Dwa:yne: an' u- (0.3) we were al-[we-
 9 (.)
 10 Mar: booked up it wz away it wz back in: uh:m Buckin'mshire.
 11 .hhhhh a::n:d uh:: we'd booked up.h we- (0.5) to: uh: g-
 12 (.) go 'n stay with s'm other frien:ds over the weeken'
 13 + 'cause it's some distance you know .hhhhh ah::m: (0.3)
 14 an' on the Thursdee night- (0.2) was it the Frid'night
 15 I think before the wedding yes Thursdee night it was,
 16 like late Thursdee night we 'ad a telephone call t'say
 17 it wz all o:ff.

When in #2a Mark declines Deena's invitation to stay over on the night of the wedding (starting line 9), he gives as the reason that *it's not very far* and *it's not (.) not particu'rly fa:r a couple of hours 'n we're home again*. (lines 10 and 16/17). Later he explains that he's called to make sure that the wedding is still 'on', because recently they were let down when another wedding to which they were going was cancelled at the last minute, only after they had made arrangements to stay over with friends, *cause it's some d_istance you know* (#2b line 13). That wedding was to have been in Buckinghamshire (line 10), a county situated somewhat between those in which Deena and Mark live; that is, in terms of miles, it's less than the distance which in #2a Mark described as *not very far*. So both *not very far* in #2a and *it's some d_istance* in #2b (note also his describing the wedding as *back in Buckinghamshire*) are descriptions produced in connection with arrangements to stay over for a night.

The former, however, is produced as an account for *declining an invitation* to stay over, the latter for his *complaining* about their having made arrangements to stay over and then having been let down. The geographical distances described as *not very far* and *some distance* are not to be judged against any 'objective' measure of assessing ac-

curacy in judging distance, say miles. These descriptions are *interactionally* relative; that is, they are selected in relation to the activities – declining an invitation, and complaining – in the service of which they are mobilised.

These two ‘principles’, of relative precision and fitting a description to the activity being conducted, are the immediate backdrop against which we can view descriptions which turn out not to have been quite correct.

3. Initial and subsequent ‘corrected’ versions

What is so striking about Mark’s descriptions in the previous excerpts is that they afford us a rare opportunity to compare different versions of the ‘same’ thing (though of course ‘same’ has to be qualified here; however, the direction of difference, as it were, only highlights the contrast, since the shorter distance is described in terms representing a larger measure, *some distance*). The contrast between his two versions throws into relief the work – the lexical selection – involved in constructing a description, and how that selection is related to interactional context. This opportunity to contrast two different versions, by the same speaker, of some ‘same’ something, is therefore almost a methodological device through which the work of constructing a description is exposed. However, there are instances to be found quite commonly in conversational data in which the lexical selection involved in constructing a description is similarly transparent, though the (methodological) device here is associated with a speaker’s production of two contiguous versions, the first of which turns out not to have been quite correct. In these cases a speaker first produces a version and then immediately continues by adding another unit (a turn increment) in which they somewhat revise the initial version – resulting in a rather characteristic ‘double’ pattern of response in which, after an initial ‘strong’ version, the speaker continues and elaborates, in the course of which he/she produces a revised ‘weaker’ version. Here are two examples.

(#3) [NB:VII] (Emma is apologising for her husband having kept Margy’s husband’s power tool longer than he should)

1 Edn: I:’m sorr[y about that=
 2 Mar: [nn
 3 Edn: =[da:[:uh ↑I didn’gee that-]
 4 Mar: + [.hhh[Oo:[::[::hhhe didn:]::need it e-hm-mmm.=
 5 Mar: + =.hhhh He jist need’d it fer that one thing Emma,=
 6 Mar: .
 7 .
 8 .
 9 Mar: Ih wz jist one a’ tho:se things et nyou, yihknow=cuz he-
 10 I::: bet hasn’ used it since .hhhh Fa:ll(f) nyouknow=

(#4) [NB:II:2:9] (Talking about Nancy’s ex-husband, Roul)

1 Emm: No one heard a wo:rd hah,
 2 Nan: >Not a word,<

3 (0.2)
 4 Nan: Hah ah,
 5 (0.2)
 6 Nan: n:Not (.) not a word,h
 7 (.)
 8 Nan: + Not et all, except Roul's mother gotta call .hhhhhh
 9 (0.3) °I think it wuss:: (0.3) th'Mondee er the Tue:sdai
 10 after Mother's Da:y,

In #3 Margy first claims that *he didn't need it* (the power tool) (line 4), but then in her latched continuation goes on to modify that, *he just need'd it for that one thing* (line 5). Similarly in #4 Nancy's first version *not at all* (which is a version of *not a word*) is subsequently revised to *except Roul's mother got a call* (line 8). The initial strong versions (*didn't need it*, *not a word/at all*) are fitted to the particular contingencies and requirements of their sequential positions. So in #3 Margy's claim that her husband *didn't need* the power tool is fitted to dismissing Emma's apology as unnecessary. An acceptance of Emma's apology, along the lines of *Oh that's alright*, would amount to agreeing that a fault had been committed; however dismissing it as she does here (and note that the character of line 4 as dismissing the apology as unnecessary is enhanced by its being done in overlap with Emma's continuation of her apology, in line 3) indicates that no fault attached to Emma or her husband. And in #4 Nancy's initial version, *not at all* (line 8), conforms to the preference to agree (Pomerantz 1984) (or more strictly, since she has already responded and confirmed in lines 2, 4 and 6, continues to agree) with Emma's enquiry in line 1. It is fitted to Emma's enquiry in so far as the grammatical form of that enquiry, {statement} + {question token}, suggests very strongly the expected or 'preferred' answer, in a way which would not have been indicated by a more open form of the enquiry (such as *Has anyone/have you heard from Roul?*). In this respect the strength of Nancy's confirmation matches the strength of expectation which the form of Emma's enquiry conveys.

The ways in which speakers fit their initial and subsequently rescinded responses in order to match the preference expectations mobilised by a prior question or enquiry is well illustrated in Raymond's account of how *yes/no* type interrogatives are answered (Raymond 2000). In the course of explicating how recipients can choose between answers which conform or do not conform to the kind of response projected by the enquiry, he shows that recipients have to deal with complex contingencies when the enquiries they answer contain multiple and crosscutting preferences. The following is a case in point.

(#5) [TG:7:15]

1 Bee: ...°(So anyway) 'hh Hey do you see v- (0.3) fat ol'
 2 Vivian anymouh?
 3 Ava: No, hardly, en if we do:, y'know, I jus' say hello
 4 quick'n, .hh y'know, jus' pass each othuh in th [e hall.]
 5 Bee: [Is she]
 6 still hangin aroun (with) Bo:nny?

Ava initially responds to Bee's enquiry by claiming that she does not *see fat old Vivian anymore* (*No*, line 3); but then modifies that claim first by adding *hardly*, and then proceeding to describe how she occasionally sees and speaks to her (lines 3/4). Once again, that subsequent modified version/retraction is built so as to preserve the essential correctness of her initial claim, through the by now familiar means of minimising the distance between the initial and subsequent versions (*hardly* being less than *sometimes*, for instance; and *if we do;... I jus' say hello quick*, and *... jus' pass each othuh. . .*). But of principal interest here is how Ava came first to answer *No*. Raymond considers the multiple expectations which Bee's enquiry generates (Raymond 2000: 196–198). This enquiry proffers a new topic (*.hh Hey. . .*), and as such would normally be built for, and expect, confirmation as the preferred response by the recipient, since confirmation would promote the topic which has been initiated. But Raymond shows that there are other features of the design of Bee's enquiry which set up alternative expectations about what the response will/should be.

The inclusion of the negative polarity item, 'anymore', makes this first pair part more complex... Specifically, while the action Bee launches prefers a 'yes' (or claim of access), her use of 'anymore' makes the utterance she uses to deliver it anticipate a 'no' (or claim of no access). The resulting first pair part has what Schegloff... calls 'crosscutting' preferences. Further complicating this sequence, the repair from 'Vivian' to 'fat ol' Vivian' invokes a putatively shared negative evaluation of Vivian which further undermines the expectation that Ava would be in regular contact with her. (Raymond 2000: 196–197)

Faced with these cross-cutting preferences, Ava chooses first to align with the negative expectations which have been conveyed through Bee's inclusion of *anymore*, and her depiction of their mutual acquaintance as *fat ol' Vivian*; so that the *No* with which Ava begins her response in line 3 is shaped by the particular and complex expectations which are mobilised by the specific (grammatical and lexical) form of Bee's enquiry. Once again, then, an initial, strong and as it turns out 'false' version is produced in order to fit with one set of contingencies associated with that sequential slot: thereafter, Ava is 'free' to deal with another contingency, responding to the preference mobilised by Bee's proffering a new topic, by confirming – at least partially (*hardly*) and with an account which indicates that "While she may literally see Vivian, Ava does not socialize with her, as *yes* may have conveyed" (Raymond 2000: 199).⁴

I described these turns as having a characteristic 'double' pattern of response, in which the speaker continues after her initial version immediately to modify that in a subsequent version. This is reflected in a detail which is worth highlighting: there are clear indications that the speakers mean to continue their turns after their initial responses/versions, in the latching between lines 4 and 5 in #3, showing that Margy rushed through from the first unit to the next without any gap; and the slightly rising intonation with which the initial versions are delivered in #'s 4 and 5 (*No*, and *Not et all*, respectively: the rising intonation is indicated by the comma). In other instances the speaker's determination to continue is evident in the collisions which can result when

the recipient takes the opportunity provided by an apparently complete unit to begin their next turn, whilst the first speaker continues, now in overlap with the recipient. In this next case the overlap is only brief: Lesley's family have been away skiing, and now they're back she's doing their washing – Foster's comment about their *falling over a few times* being relevant to how much washing she has to do.

(#6) [Holt:2:1:2] (Lesley's family have been away over Easter, skiing. Now they've returned and she's doing their washing)

1 Fos: I expect they've fallen over a few times. .hhh[h
 2 Les: [Oh ↓yes.
 3 1 → Yes'n we had °um: o:ne° (1.3) leg (0.4) in plaster?
 4 Fos: 0[h:--
 5 Les: 2 → [Not- not mun- one'v ou:rs but uh one a'the party

In fitting her initial response strongly to confirm Foster's expectation regarding their having fallen over, Lesley adds, *a propos* of falling over, that *we had °um: o:ne° (1.3) leg (0.4) in plaster?*, a formulation which is fitted directly to their talking about her family, protermed with *they* in line 1. However, this is of course susceptible to being heard as claiming that one of her family has returned with a leg in plaster.⁵ She subsequently retracts, and corrects, her reference to *we* when, in line 5, she explains that she is referring to *one of the party* (not one of her family). This revision/correction begins in overlap with the beginning of Foster's response to Lesley's news (see the overlap between lines 4 and 5), Foster evidently having understood her to mean one of her family. Hence Lesley pursues her retraction despite the recipient having begun to speak.

The overlap in #6 is relatively brief: Foster cuts off his response and gives way to Lesley. However in some cases the speaker's resolve to continue with the second component, retracting the initial version – or modifying its strength – results in more extensive overlap and competition for the turn, as in the following example. Emma has called in part to thank Margy for a luncheon party which she gave recently, and has been complimenting Margy about the party – about her friends, and now about the table (lines 1–6). Turning these compliments aside somewhat, Margy acknowledges that she had to be away from the table a lot (line 11).

(#7) [NB:VII:6]

1 Emm: .hhYou do evrything so beauif'lly end yer table wz
 2 so byoo-I told Bud I said honestly. .hhhhh ih wz jis:t
 3 deli:ghtful t'come down there that day en mee[t these]
 4 Mar: [W e :ll]
 5 (.)
 6 Emm: [ga:ls] 'n:]
 7 Mar: [I :.] jist] wz so:- tickled thetchu di:d,B'[t uh] .hh=
 8 Emm: [°Mmm]
 9 Mar: =I like tuh do that stu:ff en u-[I he-]=
 10 Emm: [°Ya h]=
 11 Mar: =I:: s-I: be-I knew I hedtuh be away fm the table a lot
 12 b't- .hhh wir all frie:nds'n you guy[s didn't ca]:re,=

- 13 Emm: [That's ri:ght]
 14 Mar: 1 → =En uh-.h-.h it's jis stuff I haftuh do fer [° Larry,]
 15 Emm: [°Ye::ah.]
 16 Emm: I [know en y[er do] in real good ar[ntche.]
 17 Mar: 2 → [.t.hhh [E : n] [I : ']m jis:so
 18 2 → delighted I c'n do it Emma cz if:I didn'do it we'd
 19 haftuh hire it do:ne,

As an account for being away from the table, and hence possibly neglecting her responsibilities as host, Margy explains that she was away from the table to deal with *stuff I have to do for Larry* (line 14). From all that we know about accounts (e.g. Heritage 1988), this is the appropriate way to construct an account in this position. She is giving an account for her having left her guests from time to time. Such an account is, and ought to be, constructed as a constraint – as something which she *has* to do. So her account is constructed in terms of doing something which prevented her being with them (it turns out this was bookkeeping associated with her husband's, Larry's, business). Her initial version is, then, an account fitted to the sequence in which it was produced, and to the action she's doing in that sequence (accounting for why she couldn't be with them the whole time, as might be expected of a host).

However, characterizing what she was away from the table doing as something she *has to do* is susceptible to being heard as indicating that it was something she would have preferred not to do. That's generally the way such 'constraint' accounts work: it's not that the speaker would rather do the thing that prevents her accepting an invitation, for instance: accepting the invitation is what a speaker indicates she would prefer to do, had it not been for whatever else has to be done. Now this appears to cast what she did for Larry as something she might rather not have done (and this sense of her rather not doing it is enhanced by her having used *haftuh* rather than *had to*, conveying that this is a recurrent obligation and by virtue of that, a recurrent 'imposition'). This implication – and perhaps the minor disloyalty which seems to attend it – is what Margy retracts in her subsequent version. This is not done in response to any 'scepticism' on Emma's part: rather it is done as an attempted continuation of her initial version/account, whilst Emma continues to compliment her (and her husband) on how well they are doing (lines 15–16). Margy begins this continuation and subsequent version in slight overlap with Emma's compliment (i.e. the overlap between lines 16 and 17). At this point (after Margy's *Larry*, and Emma's *Ye::ah*. in lines 14 and 15 respectively) there is a bit of a tussle over which of them will secure the turn. Emma continues (line 16), whilst Margy (at the beginning of line 17) does an inbreath, a first attempt to continue; then she adds a conjunctive *E:n*, and finally continues in overlap (in last item onset) with Emma (remainder line 17).⁶ In her retraction she casts what she did/does for Larry as something which, specifically, she is *delighted* to do (lines 17–18). So again, the slot in which she produced her initial version required an account, one which, moreover, should be constructed as a constraint which prevented her from looking after her guests as fully as she ought. Her account is appropriately fitted to the action she's producing (accounting for being away) in that slot. Thereafter, she deals

with the ‘disloyal’ implications of that account, by producing a different version, which specifically modifies the *have to* in her initial account. In the overlap between them (lines 16–17) Margy attempts, unsuccessfully at first, to continue, but finds herself in competition with Emma’s responding to her initial version.

Reviewing these examples, it is clear that in each case the speaker continues her turn in such a way as to modify or even correct the version she gave initially. So that in #3 he *didn’t need it* is followed by *he just needed it*; through the repetition of these elements in her initial version, and switching the polarity from the negative to positive, Margy achieves a degree of direct contrast between her initial and subsequent versions, a contrast which frames and highlights the work of revising her initial claim. In her subsequent version in #6, *delighted I can do it*, Margy also repeats elements of her initial version (*stuff I have to do*) which, combined with proterming *stuff*, and changing the modality from *have to* to *can*, likewise manage the work of revising her initial version. The contrast in #4 is achieved simply through Nancy’s remarking on an exception to what had been an ‘extreme’ version *not a word* and *not at all* (I discuss extreme versions below); whilst in #6 Lesley’s subsequent version is marked explicitly as a clarification/correction of her initial version (*we’ve had one*) through repetition again, and particularly the negator (*not one of ours*). The direct contrast in each case between the subsequent version in the turn continuation, and the preceding initial version, treats that initial version as having been not quite accurate.

The key point to highlight here is that an initial version, with its ‘inaccuracy’ of expression, was constructed to fit specifically with the interactional environment in which it was produced. A version (of events etc.) is in part at least a lexical selection: in selecting *didn’t need*, *not at all*, *we had*, *haftuh do*, speakers are finely tuning these versions to certain sequential contingencies – but in doing so, they select words/versions which are not quite accurate. They subsequently, and immediately – without any prompting from the recipient – continue their turns so as to adjust or modify the claim being made, and in some fashion make it more accurate. Hence in this ‘double’ response pattern, a speaker recognises that the version he/she initially produced, and produced for ‘good’ interactional reasons, was not quite right in some respect.

4. The interactional generation of exaggerated versions

This principal of fitting a claim or description to its sequential or interactional environment becomes even more transparent in instances in conversation in which a speaker makes a claim which subsequently – in response to indications of the recipient’s scepticism – turns out to have been overstated, exaggerated. The following are two such examples:

- (#8) [Holt 289:1-2] (Talking about a Scottish island from which Sarah has just returned, from a holiday)

1 Les: .hhh but there’s some beautiful walks aren’t

2 the::[re
 3 Sar: [0:h yes (.) well we've done all the peaks.
 4 (0.4)
 5 Les: Oh ye:s
 6 (0.5)
 7 Sar: A::h
 8 (0.5)
 9 Sar: We couldn't do two because you need ropes and that
 10 Les: Ye[:s.
 11 Sar: [It's a climbers spot

(#9) [Holt:2:15:4-5] [UK] (Referring to the daughters of a mutual friend)

1 Les: Only: one is outstandingly clever wuh- an:' the
 2 other- .hh an: 'Rebecca didn't get t'college,°
 3 (0.4)
 4 Joy: Didn't ↓she;
 5 Les: Well she got in the end she scraped into a buh-
 6 business management,

These examples illustrate a pattern which I have reported elsewhere (Drew 2003), and will not repeat here except to highlight some of the key salient features of this pattern. First, whereas in previous examples speakers constructed a subsequent version as a continuation of the *same turn* in which the initial claim was made, here the subsequent version is produced in a later, next turn. Second, the speaker's subsequent version in each case reveals the initial version to have been 'falsely' exaggerated – Sarah and her family did not do all the peaks, as she first claims; and Rebecca did get to college. Third, there is nothing intrinsically exaggerated about these initial versions: it is only through the subsequent versions that it appears that the initial versions were exaggerated. Fourth, the recipient in each case, respectively Lesley and Joyce, do not fully endorse the speaker's initial version: there are indications, from their responses (silence, minimal acknowledgements, elliptical interrogative repeats etc.), that recipients may not completely believe, and may be sceptical about, the initial claim. Fifth, speakers construct their subsequent versions as contrasting with what was originally claimed or reported, through the kind of repetition and switching polarity and modality which we saw in earlier examples. They thereby frame the work of redoing and revising their initial claims. Sixth, however, they construct those subsequent versions to be *more precise* than the original claim. Hence for example in #8 Sarah's account that they *couldn't do two* (line 9) formulates these as *exceptions*, leaving the original claim to *have done all the peaks* (line 3) as essentially correct. Similarly in #9 Lesley constructs an account of Rebecca getting into college which preserves as essentially correct her initial claim that she is not outstandingly clever and didn't get to college (she only scraped in, and then only into the academic bargain basement). Thus speakers back down from the strength of what they claimed originally, not from its essential truth.

These properties of the sequences associated with subsequent revisions of versions revealed to have been exaggerations are more fully explored in Drew (2003); there are many points of contact between that account and Couper-Kuhlen and Thompson's in-

vestigation of ‘concessive’ sequences in conversation (this volume). But my focus here is not the sequence which unfolds after such “exaggerated” versions,⁷ but on the matter of how those versions come to be produced in the first place. One notable feature of these claims which come to be exposed as exaggerations is that they are strong, extreme or dramatic claims. Sarah claims in #8 to have done *all* the peaks, and in #9 Lesley’s claim that *Rebecca didn’t get to college* is categorical, constructed in the simple indicative mood. Other examples are these:

(#10) San: () like it .hh I’ve never been to one yet,

(#11) Emm: I haven’t had a piece a’mea:t.

(#12) Lar: I’ve c’mpl:etely forgott’n what I said to you,

All the peaks in #8, and *never been to one*, *haven’t had a piece of meat* and *completely forgotten* in #10–12 are all plainly constructions which employ an extreme case of what they describe (Pomerantz 1986). Alternatively, as in #9, the claims may be stated categorically, unhedged or unmitigated by any qualifiers. Finally they may report events which are intrinsically dramatic.

(#13) Lis: I think I’ve broken me ankle

So in each case the original versions contain recognisably strong or dramatic claims. And this is, of course, once again a matter of lexical selection in the design of turns in which these claims are made: speakers are selecting *all the peaks*, not *some* or *most of...*; *never been to one* and not *haven’t been...*; *haven’t had a piece...* instead of *any*; *completely forgotten*, not *forgotten*; and *broken my ankle*, not *hurt my ankle*.

The ‘inconsistency’ illustrated in #2a/b, discussed in the introduction, involved terms which are relative. Skip’s formulation *not very far* in #2a refers to a distance which is further, in miles, than the distance which he describes as *some distance* in #2b. We saw how those relative terms were fitted to the different *action environments* in which each description is produced. That is to say, the descriptions are shaped by what the speaker is doing with those descriptions, in each case – in the first instance, declining an offer, and mildly complaining in the second (which is entirely congruent with Schegloff’s explication of *far* and *near* as “formulations of place chosen with an orientation to topic”, Schegloff 1972: 113). The different descriptions are constructed in the service of the actions of which they are a part: the different actions create different descriptive contingencies, which are managed by compressing the distance in #2a and stretching it in #2b – illustrating how a description is fitted to the action for which it is mobilised.

This connection between the formulation of a version and the action which it is mobilised to perform can be further illustrated, and refined, by considering circumstances in which speakers likewise first produce one version, and subsequently another and different version of the ‘same’ thing. These examples occur in the *How are you?* enquiries which follow the greetings exchanges in telephone calls.

(#14) [Holt:U88:1:4:1]

- 1 Gor: How are you.
 2 (0.5)
 3 Dan: 1 → I['m okay
 4 Gor: [.tplk
 5 (.)
 6 Gor: .pk Good,
 7 (0.5)
 8 Dan: 2 → Actually I'm not but (.) the(h)re we go:=

(#15) [Holt:X(C)85:1:1:1]

- 1 Les: My turn to ring I thin[k.
 2 Mum: [That's ri↑:ght ye↑:s
 3 Les: .hhh How's your han:↑:d?
 4 (.)
 5 Mum: 1 → ↑Uh::: ↑getting on quite we:ll,
 6 (0.5)
 7 Mum: 2 → ↑Actually it wz still so painf'1 I went t'see the doctor
 8 at beginning'v this wee:k a[n-
 9 Les: [Qh
 10 (.)
 11 Mum: He says it'll take ↑weeks.

In each case the recipient of a *How are you?* enquiry⁸ responds in conventionalised positive terms, conforming, as Jefferson (1980) notes, to the 'no trouble' response appropriate in answer to such enquiries (see also Sacks 1975). But although positive, they are the downgraded response forms (*okay* and *quite well* respectively) which Jefferson showed are premonitory of that person telling about some trouble they have. That is, such downgraded forms (downgraded from more positive replies such as *Good*, *Fine* etc.) are used to be consistent with 'no problem' formulations, whilst simultaneously adumbrating that not everything is indeed fine. Jefferson demonstrates that following such downgraded forms of response, troubles may, but need not, emerge subsequently in the talk. In these examples, however, the troubles which each response adumbrates do not take long to surface. After Gordon's brief response to her initial account of how she is in #14, Dana reveals (line 8) that she's not okay; and in #15 Mum promptly retracts her *getting on quite well*, replacing that with a much less optimistic account of her progress (lines 7–8), even before Lesley (whose initial enquiry in line 3 was, of course, mindful of a possible problem) has responded. Note that each subsequent version/retraction is marked as contrasting with their initial claim to be *getting on quite well* and *okay*, through the turn initial component *actually* (Clift 2001).

Two points can be drawn from what happens in #'s 14 and 15, which will inform our analysis of the production of versions which are subsequently retracted. First, the initial versions in response to *How are you?* are fitted to the requirements of that slot. They are sequentially appropriate versions: that slot – a response to *How are you?* – conventionally requires not merely a response, but a certain (i.e. positive) form of a response. So the action or response is fitted to its sequential environment. However,

when that slot is past, a new sequential environment is created in next turn/position, one in which the speaker is absolved from whatever conventions might have applied to the slot in which the prior turn was produced. Thus there are constraints, of a sort, on what can (appropriately) go in that slot (i.e. in response to *How are you?*); but those constraints apply to that sequential position only – thereafter the environment changes, and with it so do the interactional contingencies.

The second point is that this is a sequential slot to which normative requirements attach (to do a positive ‘no trouble’ response), making it necessary – if the recipient does have trouble to report – for a recipient to make a claim which will turn out not to be quite correct. For instance in #15 Mum claims that her hand is *getting on quite well*, though it subsequently transpires that it hasn’t – it’s been so painful that she’s been to the doctor about it. And in #14 Dana claims to be *okay*, which she straightaway disclaims in her next turn. One might say that whatever may happen to be the case, the slot (in #15 Mum’s response to Lesley’s enquiry) requires that a certain kind of version should be offered, whether or not that version happens to be accurate, and whether or not it will subsequently be retracted. The demands of such a slot – a response to the enquiry *How are you?* – are pretty clear. Indeed they have been described as conventionalised specifically because they are so clear, almost formalised,⁹ probably even at some conscious level enshrined in the culture.¹⁰

Such examples, including the formulations *not very far* and *some distance* used when declining an offer and complaining about being let down, are reminders not only that versions are indexical expressions designed to be fitted to their interactional contexts, where that context is most proximately the prior turn(s): they also – and for our purposes, most crucially – demonstrate, first, that descriptions are shaped by the *action* sequence in which they are produced, and second, that ‘conforming’ to the requirements of or constraints imposed by a prior speaker’s prior action can result in claims which turn out not to be correct, and which are rescinded. So a version of *how far* depends not simply on some generalised sense of interactional context, but specifically on what a speaker is doing, in response to the prior speaker’s action (as in declining the prior speaker’s offer). Furthermore, the consequences of fitting a description to the sequential slot in which it is produced, and the action ‘required’ in that slot (as when answering the standardised *How are you?* enquiry in openings), may be that speakers produce versions which are not quite accurate: they are designed with a view to what should appropriately be done or go in a particular action slot, rather than to verisimilitude. With these points in mind, we can review the cases under investigation here of overstated or exaggerated claims, to see what sequential context generated such claims or versions.

The claim in #16 by Lisa that she thinks she’s broken her ankle (line 10) is revealed to have been an exaggeration when subsequently she modifies and weakens that to *sprained* (line 22). This excerpt occurs when they are arranging that Lisa (who runs dog kennels) will come over the next day to return Ilene’s bitch Kizzy. They are trying to find a time when Ilene will be at home. She has mentioned one or two commitments

she has: it's beginning to look difficult, and now Ilene mentions another commitment, some voluntary work she does in a hospital.

(#16) [Heritage:1:3:4]

- 1 Lis: .h Oh don't worry abou:t that if we came we'd leave her
 2 en o: .
 3 (0.3)
 4 Ile: Oh well no we:h one'v us'd be here anywa:y,↓
 5 (0.4)
 6 Ile: No cz I'd like t'see ↓you: .
 7 Lis: ↓Yes.
 8 Ile: A:nd um then I've just got tih go tih the hospital
 9 trolley, .hh uh: fro:[m two:
 10 Lis: [I think I've broken me a:nkle.
 11 Ile: ((nasal)) °Oh:: w't'v you do:ne,°
 12 (0.2)
 13 Lis: We:ll I fell down the step- eh e-haa ↑as (.) a matter of
 14 fact it wasn' any'ing tih do with Kizzy, .hhhh I: came
 15 ou:t of the bah:throom en down those two little steps in
 16 (the[hall]) 'n kicked meself on my a:nkle.
 17 Ile: [Mm::,
 18 Ile: *Oh:.[() .
 19 Lis: [↑Very badly[e n I -] [I t h : o u]:ght=
 20 Ile: [It's proba'ly[a ↓brui:se]
 21 Ile: =°Yeh,°=
 22 Lis: =↑No it's ↑(not I think it'll be sprained)

Lisa's announcement or report about her ankle (line 10) is evidently touched off by Ilene's reference to *hospital trolley* (line 8).¹¹ The description of a relatively dramatic injury (*a broken ankle*) is commensurate with 'hospital'. And the sense of its being commensurate is important, because to report lesser injuries in such a slot, after the reference to *hospital*, might seem perverse – in the sense that Lisa's introduction of the topic of her injury would otherwise seem simply to be unconnected and interruptive, rather than being touched off. Whilst it may be difficult to specify those injuries which are and which are not 'commensurate with' *hospital*, nevertheless it is fairly plain that an announcement that she had *kicked myself on the ankle* (line 16)¹² is insufficiently newsworthy to be reportable at this point, in this position, in relation to what the other has said about *hospital*. In other words, to be announceable – specifically in this slot, after Ilene has mentioned *hospital*, and moreover when Ilene is coming to a point which is particularly salient for their arrangement – requires that an injury be characterised as relatively 'serious'. For this to work as a touched off topic, it is not of course necessary to have suffered an injury etc. which actually required hospital treatment: it is necessary only that the injury is recognisable as the kind of thing that might need hospital attention.

So that Lisa's claim that *I think I've broken my ankle* is fitted to the action she's doing – announcing something as a touched off topic – in the particular sequential position in which she's doing that. The fact that the announcement is touched off by

a reference to *hospital* sets a kind of constraint on what may be newsworthy, what can appropriately be announced, in that position. Thus one can see how Lisa constructs a version of her injury which is fitted to the particular sequential environment in which she makes this announcement.

The same principle illustrated in #16, of fitting the claim or description to the particular ‘requirements’ of the action sequence in which the claim is being made, applies equally to Lesley’s claim in #9 above that a friend’s daughter did not get into college. Although the *type* of action involved (in #9 a disagreement, and in #16 an announcement) is different in each case, the principle of fitting the claim to its interactional environment can be discerned also in Lesley’s disagreement in #9, reproduced below in its fuller context in #17. Here Lesley is disagreeing with Joyce, initially with Joyce’s assessment that their friend is *clever mentally* (line 1; they have been talking previously about how clever their friend is with her hands, making her family’s clothes and so on).

(#17) [Holt:2:15:4-5] (Expansion of #9)

- 1 Joy: =eh Well surely she’s clever ↓mentally isn’t s[he
 2 Les: [Oh I
 3 don’t know’bout ↑that, I mean uh I don’t think it’s all
 4 that difficult really
 5 (0.4)
 6 Joy: What.
 7 (0.5)
 8 Les: If you’ve got- if you got the schooling an’ the
 9 back↑grou:nd ih-uh (.) ()-
 10 (0.4)
 11 Joy: Oh[no(h)o perhaps that’s what it is I don’t know
 12 Les: [()
 13 Les: ↓No[: : : ,]
 14 Joy: [()]Oh well I don’t ↓know though I d- I should
 15 imagine she is clever her children’r clever aren’t they,
 16 .hhhh yih know I[mean]
 17 Les: [NO:~:]↑: no they’re not. Only: one is
 18 + outstandingly clever wuh- an:’ the other- .hh
 19 + an:’°Rebecca didn’t get t’college,°

After Lesley’s initial disagreement in lines 2–4, and subsequent elaboration (lines 8–9), Joyce then pursues her assessment of their friend’s likely cleverness, stating as supporting evidence that *her children are clever* (line 15). Without tracing in detail the moves each makes between Lesley’s initial disagreement in lines 2–4, and Joyce’s disagreement with Lesley in lines 14–16,¹³ it is reasonably clear that neither is entirely letting go of their position regarding their friend’s cleverness, and that they have in effect ‘upped the ante’. At this point, in line 17, Lesley further pursues and escalates the disagreement through very strongly contesting Joyce’s claim that the children are smart: the extent to which she has escalated the strength of her disagreement is evident in its being strongly marked – lexically, through the outright negative tokens, and direct rejection of Joyce’s statement; and prosodically (through being produced high in her pitch range, higher

in pitch than the preceding talk and much louder than the surrounding talk). So it is in this environment, in pursuing her disagreement, and doing so in a strongly marked form, that Lesley produces her rebuttal of Joyce's claim that *her children are clever*. Her rebuttal is designed to be equal to the strength of her (escalated) disagreement. Thus the completeness and strength of her rejection in line 17 (NO::↑ : *no they're not.*) is matched by her claim that one of the children did not even get into college – where the fact that both children are at college (i.e. university) would hardly be commensurate with or support her claim, *contra* Joyce, that they are not clever.

In a similar fashion, Sarah's claim to have *done all the peaks* in #8 (again, reproduced in its fuller context in #18) is fitted to the sequential position in which she makes it, and to the action she is undertaking in that position.

(#18) [Holt 289:1-2] (Expansion of #8: Sarah and her family have just returned from holiday on the Isle of Arran, which Lesley has said is her daughter's favourite stamping ground)

1 Les: the:y stay in uh various hotels and they wa::lk .hhh
 2 Sar: Oh I ↑see she's a walker as we:ll.
 3 Les: Yes and she's brought me back some lovely photographs
 4 of it I really feel I know that island very well.
 5 (.)
 6 Sar: Well there's not a lot of it to know there's only
 7 fifty five miles of it all round [the perimeter
 8 Les: [.hhh but there's some
 9 beautiful walks aren't the::[re
 10 Sar: + [O:h yes (.) well we've done
 11 all the peaks.

Sarah is agreeing, and agreeing strongly, with Lesley about there being *beautiful walks* on this island (line 8). *Doing all the peaks* (line 10) seems to demonstrate how she knows there are beautiful walks. However, there is more going on here concerning Sarah's having firsthand knowledge of the island, and Lesley not. The extract begins with Lesley reporting that her daughter walks when she stays there. In her subsequent turn (lines 3–4) Lesley does not immediately pick up the implication of Sarah's *as well* (line 2), implying that she (i.e. Sarah) also is a walker. Instead Lesley stays focused on her daughter, and how well she (Lesley) feels she knows the island because of the photographs her daughter has taken. Sarah's response in lines 6–7 seems to diminish Lesley's rather vicarious knowledge of the island, by a counter-assertion relying on her firsthand knowledge. Now Lesley's assessment of there being *some beautiful walks* on the island is done as a form of enquiry (lines 8–9), which (at last) treats Sarah as an informant with firsthand experience: she's asking for confirmation from someone who has actually been there (Sarah), rather than seen photographs or heard reports from her daughter (herself). In response Sarah takes the opportunity to convey, in no uncertain terms, just how extensive her knowledge of the island is: this she does through the manner in which she confirms that there are some beautiful walks, prefacing her confirmation with *Oh* (on *Oh* in struggles over claims to knowledge, see Heritage 2002);

and of course in the strength of her claim to have *done all the peaks*, and hence knowing by having walked over it all. So her claim, which subsequently turns out to be exaggerated, is fitted to a number of interactional tasks and concerns which coalesce in this slot, tasks which are associated with an evident struggle over knowledge about the island – agreeing with Lesley; very decidedly confirming, in response to Lesley’s having informed Sarah that there are some beautiful walks (her informing in line 8 being only slightly mitigated by the tag *aren’t there*, line 9); and displaying the extent of her first-hand knowledge – in this respect the upgrade from Lesley’s *some...walks* to Sarah’s *all the peaks* appears especially pertinent.

One further example may be sufficient to establish the way in which the initial versions are being ‘exaggerated’ in order to fit with the sequential environments in which they are produced, and the actions being done in those environments. In #19 Sandra claims initially *never to have been* to a disco club. This arises when she and Becky are talking about their friends/house mates going to a local club that night (lines 1–8).

(#19) [Drew:St:1] (‘Silks’ is a local disco club)

- 1 Bec: We were all talking about going out t- Silks
 2 tonight’cause everyone’s got the day off tomorrow?
 3 San: Are you- cz my house is all going t- Silks tonight?=
 4 Bec: =Really
 5 San: Yea:h E[mma un Ces um Ge-
 6 Bec: [Bet it’s gonner be absolutely pa:cked thought
 7 isn’t it.
 8 San: Yeah and Ces has been ra:iding my war:drobe. So: hh[h
 9 Bec: [.hhh
 10 Are you going.
 11 San: No::,
 12 Bec: ↑Why::
 13 San: I don’t know hhh hu hu .hhh I dunno it’s not really me
 14 Bec: Mw:rh
 15 San: + () like it .hh I’ve never been to one yet,
 16 Bec: You ↑HAven’t.
 17 San: No
 18 Bec: Not even t’Ziggys
 19 San: Nope (.) I’ve bin twi- no () a bin twi:ce at home to:: a
 20 place called Tu:bes which is really rubbi:sh and then I’ve
 21 been once to a place in () Stamford called erm: (.)
 22 Crystals (.) which i:s o::kay: <b- n- Olivers> sorry Olivers
 23 (.) which is okay:() but nothi:ng special,

In response to her enquiry in line 10, Sandra tells Becky that she isn’t going; and when Becky pursues this with an expression of evident surprise at why she wouldn’t go (line 12), Sandra explains that *it’s not really me* – which she supports by adding that *I’ve never been to one yet* (line 15). Thus her declining to go on the grounds that *it’s not really me* is made the more credible by her claiming never to have been to such a place; and of course this also detaches her reasons for not going this evening from anything which might relate to this particular occasion. In this way her claim that she’s never

been to one yet is fitted to a sequence in which her friend has responded to her declining to go (in line 11) with manifest surprise: Sandra matches the strength of that surprise¹⁴ with an account which seems incontrovertible.

Without going into other cases in the same detail, it emerges that these strong, dramatic or perhaps exaggerated claims arise from, or are fitted to, the contingencies of the particular sequential environment in which they are produced, and to the contingencies of the action sequences within those environments. They are constructed to 'work' in terms of the 'requirements' of the slots in which they are done.¹⁵ The 'weaker' versions to which they subsequently retreat would not have done the job. They would not have accomplished, in a coherent fashion, the work of reporting, disagreeing, confirming/agreeing, giving an account etc. in the particular positions in which they construct those actions (e.g. in #16, reporting her injury as a touched-off announcement). So these (over)-strong versions are fitted to the slot in which speakers are announcing, disagreeing confirming etc.; where we can see that speakers are dealing, through these claims, with the exigencies which have arisen in the immediate (prior) sequential environment. Speakers produce versions which are fitted to their sequential moments. When the moment is past, so too is the 'requirement' for that strong version: the speaker can retreat to a 'weaker' version (just as, having answered the enquiry *How are you?* in the conventionalised 'no problem' fashion, a speaker is then free, in a subsequent slot, to say how they really are).

5. Conclusion

In understanding the phenomenon described above, one theme emerges as being the key to how it is that speakers come in the first place to make the 'falsely' exaggerated claims which they subsequently retract. Their exaggerated quality lies in the particular strength of the initial claims which are made (bearing in mind that retractions are designed to maintain the essential correctness of those initial claims, it is the strength rather than the substance of those claims which is retracted). And the strength of these claims – their extreme, categorical or dramatic quality – arises from the sequential environment in which they are produced. In each case it is the *sequential* fit which the speaker seeks to achieve between their current turn (the one in which the over-strong claim is made) and the prior turn(s). In a sense, then, the production of what will turn out to have been exaggerated versions throws into relief the fundamental ways in which lexical selection is related to sequential position, and the interactional contingencies attendant on a given sequential position.

It has now become almost a commonplace, largely through the cumulative work in conversation analysis, that the most proximate context for a turn at talk is its sequential context, notably the prior turn and the sequence of actions to which it contributes. In study after study we see how a turn at talk is shaped, in all aspects of its production (including such levels of linguistic production as lexis, grammar, phonetics and prosody), by what came before. Most significantly, what a speaker is doing in a turn

can only be understood in terms of the sequence of actions (prior actions, and those which it may project) of which it is a part. The phenomenon we have been examining here shows that in order to produce an appropriate next action fitted to the contingencies mobilized by a prior turn/action, a speaker may construct a description or claim a version which is exaggerated. The selection of a description in a given slot is made in consideration of the comprehensibility (accountability, rationality etc.) of saying *this now, here*; if the description or version should turn out to be not quite correct, its *essential* correctness stands as sufficient warrant for its having been stated. In this way, the *possible* or recognisable correctness of a version highlights analytically the way in which participants can and do orient to the correctness, or otherwise, of descriptions. Through their (generally implied) scepticism, recipients may withhold endorsing a version; whilst the revision which a speaker produces, either in response to a recipient's scepticism or right away after producing an initial version, reveals the practices for having produced in the first place an exaggerated claim. We have seen that participants in talk-in-interaction (lexically) design their descriptions so as to fit the interactional contingencies of saying/doing something following a specific prior turn; however, in their subsequent 'backdowns' and revisions, the practices involved in that 'fitting' are exposed in a particularly transparent manner.

Notes

1. For a report of this larger enquiry, see Drew (2003).
2. On the matter of recipient design, specifically in connection with an analysis of the practices for selecting appropriate descriptions (of persons) from among those available, see Sacks and Schegloff (1979) and Schegloff (1972). And for further explication of the non-equivalence of possibly correct descriptions, but ones which are, in their contexts, not equally 'right' or apposite, see Sacks (1992a: 740–744).
3. This exemplifies what Heritage, paraphrasing Garfinkel, refers to as the symmetry between the production and interpretation of conduct, both of which are the "accountable products of a common set of methods or procedures" (Heritage 1984:241).
4. Raymond's point that Ava *chooses* which set of preferences to align with initially, is highlighted in the following instances involving retractions which resemble Ava's in #5. In these cases, though, the speakers disconfirm what the prior speakers claimed or asked. Just before the first extract Dee has asked Connie for a date: she agreed, and now the question is when?

[G:II:2:15]

Con: ..I work,hhh a number o:f nights Dee I've tried tuh keep it down to a minimu:m [a::n' uh .hhh[it
 Dee: [Yeah. [Cz I know a lotta times I call around this time
 en, (0.3) da:mn yer ou:t.
 Con: → .t.hhhh No it's because u-we:ll?'v course sometimes I probably a:m out.
 But most th'time I have been working,

Connie's disconfirmation that she's *out*, and her subsequent explanation that generally she's working reveals that she's treating *out* as meaning *out having fun*, rather than simply *not at*

home. Connie chooses, then, to disconfirm that she's out having fun, then subsequently retracts that in line 5/6, *sometimes I probably am out*. In the next example, the recipient, Jane, likewise chooses to disconfirm she has a key, thereby endorsing Ilene's offer in line 2 to leave her a key.

[Heritage:01:18:1]

Ile: So eez geing tih have a cup'v soup with hu:hr u-the:ahr:. .hh So if ↑you come eqvuh ah'll ↑put the key unduhneath th'ma:t. .hh Haa- you've ↑got a ↓k:ey though haven't you ↓

Jan: → No ah hav'nt ah don't think ah hah:ve,h .hh Well I HAVE somewheahr but I dun't know wher it is it's (.) I-I-a (.) I ws just on my way out I w'd be gratef'l if you put it unduh th' doh 'n (.) then ah'll look fer it w'n I git back=

5. On exactly related issues concerning such 'summative' terms, and the occasioned scope or meaning that they can be construed as having, see Sacks (1975:63).
6. This detail about Margy's successive attempts in line 17 to continue her turn from line 14, and her 'competition' with Emma for the turn space at this point, is given in case it should be supposed that Margy's *I'm just so delighted...* at the end of line 17 is said in response to Emma's compliment and *you're doing real good aren't you*. The fit between Margy's turn in lines 17–18 and Emma's compliment is happenstance: it is evident from Margy's inbreath and the conjunction in line 17 that she was trying to continue.
7. "Exaggerated" in quotation marks in order to emphasise that they were not intrinsically exaggerated, but came to be revealed as such when, after recipient's non-endorsement, speaker revises the claim to back down from its strength.
8. For an account of the organization of call openings, and the part played in that organization, see Schegloff (1986). And for further on the elision of the *How are you?* exchanges in certain kinds of calls, see Drew and Chilton (2000).
9. A newspaper recently reported what has long been a conventional wisdom, that a bore is "Someone who when asked how he is tells you". This sentiment is one which, as Sacks mentions (Sacks 1975:76–77; and Sacks 1992a:560–562), is enshrined in books about etiquette.
10. This is related to Shapin's (1994) sense of there being normative criteria for truth, and for tolerance of departures from strict or objective accuracy: departures from truth may be allowed, indeed required, in certain sequential positions/slots, here in response to *how are you?* Hence sequential position, and the action environment in which a description is produced, become key 'criteria' in how far a description is expected to meet 'objective' standards of truth.
11. On touched-off topics, see Sacks (1992b:88–90, 291–302). Note, with respect to Lisa's claim being touched off, that she starts speaking in overlap with Ilene's explanation about doing the hospital trolley, at a point when she's about to say something about the time at which she'll be doing that (*from* in line 9) – which is after all quite germane to the arrangement they are trying to make. Note also that the fact Lisa announces such an apparently dramatic injury, one which might surely affect her mobility, only when Ilene happens to mention *hospital* – and did not mention it earlier in the call, perhaps even at the beginning – may be grounds for Ilene's evident scepticism.
12. Even here, Lisa describes what she did as *fell down* the step, rather than some less dramatic mischance such as *tripped*.

13. Joyce's 'open' form of repair initiation, *What*, in line 6, foreshadows the disagreement on Joyce's part which it delays but which is subsequently explicit in line 14. On open class repairs in disagreement and disaffiliation, see Drew (1997).
14. That strength being conveyed in the prosodic features of *Why*, notably the increased pitch and elongation of the word: again see Selting (1996) on the prosody of marked forms (surprise, astonishment) of repair initiation.
15. This echoes Jefferson's observations about how glosses of troubles may, when unpackaged, be found to have been inaccurate. "What seemed to be going on, then, was selective detailing/glossing to *best support the case being built*. But one feature of the glosses was that, upon their occurrence, they seemed to constitute perfectly adequate narrative/descriptive components. They didn't, upon their occurrence, strike me as inaccuracies, inadequacies, lies and so on. But once – however it came about – the gloss was 'unpacked' and its constituent details exposed, one could see that, and how, *the gloss had been deployed for the case being built*." (Jefferson 1985:436. My emphasis.)

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A linguistic practice for retracting overstatements

‘Concessive Repair’*

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Our paper describes a two-part constructional schema which English conversationalists deploy for the retraction of their own overstatements and exaggerations. The schema invokes a ‘stronger than/weaker than’ scale, which allows speakers to concede exceptions but at the same time preserve the essence of their initial description. As a construction, Concessive Repair is so well-entrenched that the second part is often omitted or co-produced. Although the practice occurs in the same sequential locations as classical repair, it shows a preference for next position. In contrast to other ways of backing down, Concessive Repair makes an explicit display of the reasons for revising a prior formulation and by displaying rationality, accomplishes ‘being accountable’.

1. Introduction

In a recent study of falsehoods and retractions, Drew (2002) documents how speakers on occasion find it necessary to construct descriptions or claims which, strictly speaking, are not ‘true’ but are required by the contingencies of the sequential moment to be strong and dramatic versions of ‘the facts’. Upon their production such overstatements or exaggerations may go unnoticed on the conversational surface. Alternatively recipients may register them skeptically by withholding full endorsement or failing to concur in next turn. But whether overstatements are registered as such or not, their producers often find it expedient to retract or weaken the initial version in subsequent talk. This is the conversational task with which we are concerned here.

Our paper describes one way in which English conversationalists handle the job of retracting their own overstatements and exaggerations. Although the practice we identify is not the only means available for backing down from a strong or extreme formulation, it is patterned and can be described as a two-part constructional schema. This pattern, as we shall show, in effect ‘grammaticizes’ those retractions which Drew describes as being “constructed as exceptions, leaving the initial version as essentially

correct” (2002:38). Since the practice is repair-like and has much in common with what we have described in earlier work as conversational concession (Couper-Kuhlen & Thompson 2000), we shall refer to it as ‘Concessive Repair’.

The clearest examples of overstatement in conversation involve what Pomerantz (1986) has termed ‘extreme case formulations’ – unmitigated, categorical claims about what is or is not the case in the world. Extreme case formulations are mobilized to do adversarial work in complaining, accusing, justifying and defending: they accomplish this by anticipating and countering potentially unsympathetic hearings. As Pomerantz shows, recipients may on occasion challenge the status of an extreme case formulation (and the claim it is being used to warrant), leading to a reformulation of the description and a weakening of the claim. Her example of this is the following (the excerpt comes from a call to a Suicide Prevention Center in which the caller admits to having a gun at home and provides the following account for it):

(1) Pomerantz (1986:226)

- 1 → Caller: Mm hm, It- u- Everyone doe:s don’t they?
 2 (1.7)
 3 Desk: Yah ee- e_-ah:: ih You have a forty fi:ve and it’s
 4 loaded.
 5 Caller: Mm:mm,
 6 Desk: A:nd uh (0.4) I suppose maybe everyone in:hh evrywuh-
 7 in Burnside Park has one I don’t kno:w,
 8 (0.7)
 9 ⇒ Caller: Well no: but I mean- (0.2) a lot of people have guns
 10 Desk: Oh su:[re,
 11 ⇒ Caller: [I mean it’s not- (.) [unusual.
 12 Desk: [I s::- I: see.

The expression ‘everyone’ in line 1 makes this an extreme case formulation. When challenged by Desk in lines 3–4 and 6–7, the caller responds (lines 9 and 11) in a way described by Pomerantz as “disclaiming the contrastive status” (1986:226). This could be thought of as a lay description of the practice we wish to explore here.

In Pomerantz’s understanding, extreme case formulations are recognizable on production as exaggerations because they involve extreme expressions such as *every*, *all*, *none*, *best*, *least*, *always*, *absolutely*, etc. Edwards (2000), however, rightly points out that any unqualified statement can be taken as ‘logically’ absolute, even though it may lack an overt marker of semantic extremity (2000:349). In everyday conversation, many (according to Edwards, most) objectively extreme descriptions are not retracted at all but are allowed to stand. On the other hand, even objectively non-extreme descriptions may be subsequently retracted if they are challenged or if speakers wish to forestall a potential challenge to them (2000:369). The notion of ‘overstatement’ as we use it here encompasses both these categories: objective exaggerations, i.e. semantically extreme statements, as well as those statements which are treated as in need of qualification by recipients and speakers. In the following we first examine retractions of objective extreme case formulations with the Concessive Repair format, and then

consider instances which do not involve a recognizable-on-production overstatement but which are oriented to by the recipient as needing retraction and ultimately lead to speakers invoking Concessive Repair.

2. The practice

In this part of the paper the term 'Overstatement' is reserved for clear instances of extreme case formulations. Extract (2) from a telephone conversation between two cousins, Deena and Mark, contains a prototypical example from our materials.¹ Deena has been talking about how expensive her daughter Melinda's wedding is going to be and Mark has sympathized. Mark now proposes to close down this part of the conversation by generalizing that children are worth the money which parents invest in them.

(2) Holt:May 88:2:4

- 1 Mar: .hhhh ↑we:ll (.) I dunno I we view the f:.....:act
 2 that your kids're your assets really
 3 an' we'd rather spend our money on our kids
 4 than [waste it]=
 5 Dee: [That is]=
 6 =[exactly h o w I]
 7 Mar: =[on ourselves or anlything else[.hhh hhhh
 8 Dee: [That is exactly
 9 Dee: what we said I said to Dwayne as long as we've got a
 10 bit of [money to- (.) you know as ↑long as we've got=
 11 =e-(.)nough money that if we want anythin::g at
 12 our time of life (0.4) we c'n ↓buy it. ↓
 13 Mar: .tYe:s.
 14 (0.4)
 15 Dee: I-: said but no:: I said that (.) you know I said=
 16 =that the children (0.8) uh you know I mea{n (0.5)
 17 =let them have it. I mean if they've go- if they're
 18 → sensible an' they both are they're both very ↓goo:d.
 19 (0.4)
 20 ⇒ a Dee: I mean Melinda is inclined to spend more than she's
 21 ⇒ a got but
 22 Mar: ehh ↑hnh[hnh [.hhhhh
 23 ⇒ b Dee: [she:s toned[down a ↓lot. You know[she:s=
 24 Mar: [Mm:,
 25 Dee: =realized the price of thi-:ngs (0.4) getting married=

In the turn following Mark's summary assessment that one's money is better spent on one's children than on oneself (lines 1–7), Deena concurs *That is exactly what we said* (lines 8–9), adding two conditions: *as long as we've got a bit of money to-...* (lines 9–12), and *if they're sensible* (lines 17–18). She then observes that her own children are sensible, i.e. *they're both very good* (line 18). Deena's description of her children

as *very good* is a categorical claim devoid of hedging or mitigation and qualifies as an Overstatement in the sense in which we are using the term here.

In the event, Deena's claim is not only an extreme case formulation, it is also hearably a bit of self-praise, which may account for the silence now ensuing in the conversation (line 19). Since Mark could have come in and seconded Deena's assessment here, his silence at this point is hearable as a withholding which may foreshadow doubt or potential disagreement. Deena now begins to adjust her prior claim by first conceding that Melinda may not quite live up to a high fiscal standard (*I mean Melinda IS inclined to spend more than she's got*, lines 20–21), but then claiming that her daughter's spending behavior has nevertheless improved *she's toned down a lot* (line 23) and *she's realized the price of things* (lines 23 & 25). In this way Deena is able to revise her extreme formulation without backing down completely from the position initially taken. Her revised version in fact preserves the essence of the original assessment, because it stresses improvement and thus still implies that her children are 'good', but it weakens the degree to which this quality is claimed to apply.

Figure 1 shows in schematic form the pattern which Deena employs:

<i>Overstatement</i>	they're both very good
(a) <i>Concession</i>	I mean Melinda is inclined to spend more than she's got
(b) <i>Revised statement</i>	but she's toned down a lot she's realized the price of things

Figure 1. Schematic form of the Concessive Repair practice (extract 2)

As Figure 1 shows, the pattern employed here involves a compound turn-constructural format (Lerner 1996) consisting of two parts, (a) a concession, which grants that the prior description or claim may be partially unjustified, and contrasting with this (b) a revised formulation, which proposes a weaker version of the original description. The two parts are typically linked by *but*.² This format is used to retract Overstatements or extreme case formulations in same-speaker prior turns or turn-units. As in extract (1), it is found especially in environments of negotiation, when disagreement has surfaced in the interaction or is in the air.³

3. The collection

We have collected a set of 68 instances of this pattern from a wide variety of American and British English conversations, both face-to-face and on the telephone. Included are Part One of the Corpus of Spoken American English (Du Bois 2000), the Holt corpus of British telephone calls and the Newport Beach collection of American telephone calls. The latter two corpora were transcribed by Gail Jefferson and we have retained her transcriptions but standardized spelling for ease of reading.

4. Formal subtypes

There are two formal ways in which Concessive Repair is carried out in our materials. In one, the Overstatement is a claim formulated in the affirmative, as in Extract 1. In the other, the overstated claim is in the negative (to be discussed later).

4.1 Affirmatively formulated Overstatements

When Concessive Repair is used to retract an affirmative Overstatement as in (2) *they're both very good*, the concession (a) is negative or counterasserts a negative implication⁴ – as in *Melinda IS inclined to spend more than she's got*, which denies the implication that Melinda never spends more money than she has got – and may be prefaced by *I mean*; the revised statement (b) is affirmative like the Overstatement itself, e.g. *she's toned down a lot, she's realized the price of things*.

Consider another example, as in extract (3). Nancy has been telling her friend Emma about her psychology class at the night school she has been attending. Emma has displayed some skepticism about the seriousness of the students there, and where the fragment begins, proclaims loudly, *I think some of these kids need a good job though too... Get out'n do a little work* (lines 4–7). At this Nancy launches into a defense of her fellow classmates.

(3) NB II:2 R:6

- 4 Emm: [I THINK SOM]E of these kids need a good JO:B
 5 though too:
 6 (0.5)
 7 Emm: Get ou:t'n: do a little wor:k.
 8 (.)
 9 Nan: Well of course ↑all the kids in this: p'ticular class
 10 you know,h are ei:ther full time stud'nts or they work
 11 during th'day en go to school at ni:ght,
 12 Emm: °M[m h m ,°]
 13 Nan: [Lot'v'm w]ork par'ti:me u- [a:nd
 14 Emm: [°Mm h[m,°
 15 Nan: [go: part day and
 16 part ni:ght? .hhhhh uh::m
 17 Emm: They're not real kookie then.=
 18 Nan: =Sev'ral of th'm are married,h
 19 ↑Oh no:h (.)
 20 Nan: No:, hah-ah The[y may u-l]ook like
 21 Emm: [°Mm:mmh°]
 22 → Nan: Youknow. I mean w[e have a]couple of real long hai:rs
 23 Emm: [M m hm,]
 24 Nan: in.hhhhh
 25 ⇒ ab Nan: Not real long hairs but longhairs in the cl-
 26 my he:ll. (.) Mister Bra:dley. The teacher, youknow
 27 ha:s this (.) .hhh l:Lincolnesque bea:rd.,hh .hhh

28 thet he wea:rs `n::d a:nd ahm
 29 (1.2)
 30 Nan: .tch I don't think he's tryin to: (0.2) create any,h
 31 particular:,h .hhh image? at all? I don't kno:w I have
 32 always thought that he wz a very,h .hhh in:secure:,h
 33 extrove(h)ert,h type of pers[on you kn o w?]

Nancy's defense of her classmates involves stressing that they are either full-time students or already working part-time, which constructs them as serious and mature students. Emma shows signs of ratifying this when she tentatively concludes *They're not real kookie then* (line 17), 'kookie' being a slang term for 'weird'. To this Nancy emphatically agrees,⁵ going on to concede that they may *look* kookie, but strongly projecting that they really are not. As an illustration of how they may be taken to look kookie, she adds *we have a couple of real long hairs* (line 22). It is the intensified descriptor *real long* which we are focussing on here as an extreme case formulation.

Real long hairs is well suited in its extremity to back up the point that Nancy's fellow students may look weird, but at the same time it risks compromising the more general argument that Nancy wishes to make, namely that her fellow classmates are hard-working, serious students. She resolves this dilemma by first conceding that there is a sense in which her description does not hold, and then producing a revised weaker version of it which does hold. Here too, as in (2), we find an affirmatively phrased Overstatement, *we have a couple of real long hairs*, which is retracted with a negatively worded concession, *not real long hairs*, and then revised with an affirmative reformulation, *longhairs*. Schematically:

Overstatement	we have a couple of real long hairs
(a) Concession	not real long hairs
(b) Revised statement	but longhairs in the cl-

Figure 2. Schematic form of the Concessive Repair practice (extract 3)

Extracts (4) and (5) contain similar instances of affirmative Overstatements retracted with negative concessions and affirmative restatements. In (4), Robin, a primary-school substitute teacher, has been complaining to her friend and co-teacher Leslie about the problems she is currently having at school.

(4) Holt:May88:1:5

1 Les: e↑You're at home now youre:lf aren't you?
 2 Rob: Oh yes I[am.
 3 Les: [Ye:s yes: yes.
 4 Rob: Ye[h!
 5 Les: [Hm.t.h[hhhh
 6 Rob: [I'm looking- yes. I'm jus:t so glad it's an
 7 → in service training ↓day tomorrow so I c'n switch off.
 8 ⇒ ab Well. Not really switch off but you know. Rel[ax. ↓

9 Les: [.hhh [↑ (Why)
 10 I find they're quite hard wo:rk somet(hh)ime[s hheh]
 11 ↑ha ha↑
 12 Rob: [↑heh h]a↑

When Robin claims that she is looking forward to an in-service training day so she can *switch off* (line 7), she uses a phrase which in this context could be considered extreme: as a follow-up to a series of complaints about the size of her class, the unruliness of the children and the unhelpfulness of the other teachers, Robin is giving yet another (upgraded) expression here of her exasperation by suggesting that she needs to get it all off her mind. Yet at the same time *switch off* has connotations of not paying attention to the training. This behavior would hardly be compatible with the ethos of a professional teacher who is receiving in-service training. To back down from her Overstatement Robin deploys the Concessive Repair pattern, first conceding that she does not mean *really switch off*. She then produces a revised weaker formulation of what she means: *relax* (line 8), a more positive word which lacks the connotations of inattentiveness. Since Leslie in fact subsequently remarks (in overlap) that teaching training sessions are actually *quite hard work* (line 10), implying that 'switching off' might not be an adequate reaction to an in-service training day, Robin's reformulation, anticipating a challenge, turns out *ex post facto* to have been well motivated.

<i>Overstatement</i>	I can switch off
(a) <i>Concession</i>	well not really switch off
(b) <i>Revised description</i>	but you know relax

Figure 3. Schematic form of the Concessive Repair practice (extract 4)

In extract (5) Emma has been wondering where she can buy some rattan furniture (furniture made from the stems of tropical Asian palm trees), and now thinks of a store where she might be able to find it. Her sister Lottie, who knows the area much better than she does, identifies the store as Grant's.

(5) NBIV:13:R:7

9 Emm: .t.hhe:ahhh And I ↑wonder u-no I couldn't find it in
 10 that ↑junk (.) place *up th*ere b*y wu- th*et wh*ere
 11 w*e: (.) g*ot CA:NV*'s'n st*uff they g*ot that (.)
 12 TE:NTS 'n everything no I don't think it w*d °be in
 13 th*e:re,°
 14 (0.3)
 15 Emm: You know that one in Costa Mesa that's got ↑a::ll that
 16 .hhhh.hh.hhhhh A:MMUNITION AND STUFF AROUND IT,hhhh
 17 Lot: Oh: Gra:nt's.
 18 Emm: Yeah.
 19 → Lot: No: I [don't think so, they juss: (.) they just have=
 20 Emm: [No.

21 → Lot: =w- war sur: [plus °m]::°=
 22 Emm: [°Ye:ah°]
 23 ⇒ a Lot: =I mea:n: ih they of course no[t all of] it but:
 24 Emm: [°No::°]
 25 (.)
 26 Lot: But I don't think they'd have any in there .h h

Lottie not only knows the area, she also presents herself as knowing whether or not Grant's would have rattan furniture. Her judgment is a categorical no, supported by the warrant *they just have war surplus* (lines 19–21). In its exclusivity this is an extreme case formulation, which – although ratified by Emma (line 23) – may be seen to need some revision due to its factual vulnerability.⁶ Lottie proceeds to back down from her claim by conceding that some of what Grant's has may not be war surplus (*of course not all of it*, line 23), but then strongly projecting (cf. the dangling *but*) that most of it is. This allows her to maintain the thrust of her point that the store carries the sort of merchandise which is not likely to include rattan (*But I don't think they'd have any in there*, line 26).

Overstatement	they just have war surplus
(a) Concession	of course not all of it
(b) Revised description	but (most of it)

Figure 4. Schematic form of the Concessive Repair practice (extract 5)

4.2 Negatively formulated Overstatement

If the Overstatement which a speaker wishes to retract is negative, then the concession (a) is usually affirmative, typically has contrastive stress and is often prefaced by *well*. The revised description or its implication (b) is negative like the Overstatement.

Extract (6) provides an example. Robin has been complaining to Leslie about how hard it is to keep her class quiet. Together they have been commiserating about two other teachers at their school and how unhelpful they have been.

(6) Holt:May 88:1:5

1 Rob: = Ye:s. you[know you'd go]out your way to help someb'dy=
 2 Les: [Y e : s .]
 3 Rob: ='n 'n you find you're doing it a:ll.
 4 Les: [.hhhhh That's right.
 5 → An' and also: I found th't I got no::: u-help from the
 6 ⇒ a assistants, well: they were ↓willing to help↓ but
 7 ⇒ b .hhh eh as ↑soon as any chance of anybody,
 8 ⇒ b grabbing 'n assista[nt,
 9 Rob: [Yes
 10 ⇒ b Les: .hhh eh:m: n-you know who grabbed them::.

- 11 (0.3)
 12 Rob: u- Frih- uh:: Freddie Masters.
 13 Les: Ye:s:.
 14 Rob: I: find her I get to the sta:ge where I: I: come out'v
 15 staff room cz I feel like saying to her .hhh (0.2) if
 16 you don't wanna put anything into teaching, then why
 17 don't you get out.=
 18 Les: =That's ri:ght,

When Robin complains that her past efforts to help at school have resulted in her doing all the work, Leslie agrees and chimes in with a further complaint: she herself got *no help from the assistants*. This is the negative Overstatement we are concerned with here.

Arguably, the strength of Leslie's complaint about the school assistants must be appreciated in relation to its position in this troubles talk sequence (Jefferson 1988). As a second complaint following a strong first complaint by Robin, it must be equally strong in order to come off as affiliative. Thus its sequential position dictates that Leslie's complaint must be strong. Yet, getting no help from someone can have rather severe moral implications, which Leslie is manifestly anxious to avoid. She subsequently proceeds to back down by conceding *well, THEY were willing to help* (line 6), and then providing a revised weaker version, formulated as a guessing game: *as soon as any chance of anybody grabbing an assistant, you know who grabbed them* (lines 7–10). The guessing-game format is cleverly designed so that Leslie will not have to mention Freddie Masters' name herself, which would amount to being openly critical of her. At the same time it provides a slot for her interlocutor to correctly 'fill in the blank'. The negative Overstatement *I got no help from the assistants* is thus retracted with a partial concession in the affirmative *THEY were willing to help* and a weaker (jointly constructed) negative claim implying 'Freddie Masters prevented them from helping'.

<i>Overstatement</i>	I got no help from the assistants (<i>Implied</i> → they were unwilling to help)
(a) <i>Concession</i>	well <u>THEY</u> were willing to help
(b) <i>Revised statement</i>	but Freddie Masters grabbed them

Figure 5. Schematic form of the Concessive Repair practice (extract 6)

Extracts (7) and (8) also contain negative Overstatements with affirmative concessions and negative restatements. In extract (7) Lottie is advising Emma to eat a meat-free diet. Emma now accepts this advice and reflects that she has not eaten much meat recently anyway.

(7) NBIV:13:R:10

- 1 Lot: I: 'd uh leave o:ff the mea:t.
 2 Emm: °I think I ↑wi:ll.° I haven't hadda pie:ce of mea:t
 3 since I been down here.
 4 (.)

- 5 Emm: I don't thi:nk except °whe:n° we eat out
 6 ↑No ah didn't have any when I ate out with you:.
 7 (1.0)
 8 Emm: .t [.h °Wuh-°]
 9 Lot: [No y o u] hadda bowl of sou:p,
 10 Emm: .t nYe:ah,
 11 (0.2)
 12 → Emm: I haven't had a piece of mea:t.
 13 (1.0)
 14 Emm: Over at Bill's I had ta:cos Mondee ni:i:ght
 15 ⇒ ab little bit of mea:t the*:re. B't not much.
 16 Lot: Why don't you [try it'n s[ee that] mi:ght h]elp it.=
 17 Emm: [.schnff [°Think I] wi:ll.°]

In summarizing her recent eating habits, Emma first employs a categorical negative *I haven't had a piece of meat* (line 12). This formulation is followed by a one-second pause, a point at which Lottie might reasonably be expected to come in with a confirming second. The fact that she does not may encourage Emma to re-work her claim. This she does by conceding that she did have a little bit of meat in some tacos earlier that week: *little bit of meat there*, but that it was not *much* (line 15). In this way Emma can preserve her claim that she has not eaten meat recently, although it is no longer made as exclusively as before.

<i>Overstatement</i>	I haven't had a piece of meat
(a) <i>Concession</i>	I had a little bit of meat in tacos on Monday
(b) <i>Revised description</i>	but not much

Figure 6. Schematic form of the Concessive Repair practice (extract 7)

In extract (8), Joyce and Leslie are trying to agree on whether a mutual friend of theirs is 'clever', and Joyce presents as evidence in her favour that this friend's CHILDREN are clever.

(8) Holt:2:15

- 1 Joy: |Oh well I don't `know though I d- I should imagine
 2 she is clever her children'r clever aren't they,
 3 .hhhh you know I[mean]
 4 Les: [NO::]^: no they're not. Only: one is
 5 outst`andingly clever wuh- an:' the other- .hh
 6 → an:'°Rebecca didn't get t'college,°
 7 (0.4)
 8 Joy: Didn't `she:,
 9 ⇒ a Les: Well she got in the end she scraped into a buh-
 10 ⇒ a business managament course, but she [didn't-
 11 Joy: [o:h:
 12 Les: and I've taught them.

Leslie, who is of the opinion that their friend is not clever, counters that *Rebecca* (one of the children) *didn't get to college* (line 6). The categorical exclusivity of this claim is provided for in part by its sequential location. Since Joyce has been holding her stand on their friend's cleverness, Leslie must produce stronger and stronger evidence in order to convince her of the contrary. Leslie's denial is receipted by Joyce with a pause followed by a partial repeat using inversion and upwards intonation, conveying some skepticism (line 8). Leslie now begins to back down by conceding *well she got in the end she scraped into a business management course* (lines 9–10), followed by the beginning of a revised weaker formulation, *but she didn't-*. The revised claim is cut off when Joyce receipts the information proffered so far with *oh* (line 11).⁷

<i>Overstatement</i>	Rebecca didn't get to college
(a) <i>Concession</i>	well in the end she scraped into a business management course
(b) <i>Revised statement</i>	but she didn't- (get into a 'real college' easily)

Figure 7. Schematic form of the Concessive Repair practice (extract 8)

What we have seen so far, then, is that Concessive Repair can be done as a way of backing down from Overstatements or extreme case formulations which are phrased either affirmatively or negatively. In each case the concession has polarity which is opposite to that of the Overstatement, and the revised statement has the same polarity as that of the Overstatement.

4.3 Non-extreme statements

Before examining some further features of this practice, we would like to show now that Concessive Repair is often found in environments where the claim ultimately modified is not, upon its production, an extreme case formulation, but is treated as needing qualification either by its speaker or by its recipient. Let us consider an example. In extract (9), Joyce has been describing to Leslie a 'gorgeous random modern sweater' which she has just designed and made. She now exclaims about how much she enjoyed doing it.

(9) Holt:2:15/1

1 Joy: I, I love designin:g [e-e sweate]rs,
 2 Les: [Oh: .]
 3 (0.3)
 4 Joy: L[ove it.
 5 → Les: [How clever I wish I could knit,
 6 (0.7)
 7 Joy: .p[Can't y o u]kni:t,]
 8 ⇒ ab Les: [I m'n I ke-]I Well]I kni:t yes but I: don't enjoy
 9 it an' .hh wuh- once I've started I've got to finish
 10 you see hih heh [uh uh uh]* uh:] .hhh

Leslie's response to Joyce's rather exuberant claim in line 1 contains first a compliment: *How clever*, and then a self-derogatory assessment of her own talents: *I wish I could knit* (line 5), implying that she herself cannot knit. This in itself is not necessarily an extreme description. However, Joyce responds to it much as in (8), by first withholding an affiliative response and then challenging its implication with *can't you knit* (line 7). This query functions somewhat like a 'next-turn-repair-initiator' and implies that Joyce thinks Leslie *can* knit. In lines 8–9, Leslie now addresses this implication, agreeing that she can knit, thus backing down from the implication of her original wish, but going on to say that she does not enjoy it. Not enjoying knitting is a weaker version of the claim initially implied: it means that for all practical purposes Leslie *doesn't* knit. In other words, although she knows how to knit, she does not engage in the activity. Just as with the extreme case formulations, then, we see a speaker making use of the Concessive Repair practice to back down from (the implication of) an earlier statement with a concession and to propose a modified weaker claim.

Statement	I wish I could knit (<i>Implied</i> : → I can't knit)
(a) Concession	well I knit yes
(b) Revised description	but I don't enjoy it

Figure 8. Schematic form of the Concessive Repair practice (extract 9)

A similar case can be seen in extract (10), where Robin and Leslie have been talking about some of their students at school, in particular ones they describe as 'trouble-makers'. In the fragment here Robin relaunches the topic after an interlude by mentioning another student, whose name she cannot remember but whom she characterizes as 'a pain', meaning 'troublesome'.

(10) Holt:May 88:1:5/8

- 1 → Rob: I found ↑Who was the other ↓one who is a pai:n
 2 (0.6)
 3 ⇒ a ↑Uh:m: ↑↑not a ↓pain Matt Patterson.
 4 (0.2)
 5 ⇒ a Uh:m not a pai:n
 6 (0.3)
 7 ⇒ b but obviously anxious to get on: a[n' ()]
 8 Les: [Oh: ↓yes:..]
 9 =Funny little bo:y,
 10 Rob: Yes.
 11 Les: An' Mum's a bit odd too:.

By asking *who was the other one who was a pain* (line 1), Robin presupposes that she has a student in mind who is a 'pain'. However, no response is immediately forthcoming from Leslie, which could imply that she does not know who is meant but could also suggest that there is a problem with the descriptor 'a pain'. In the event, Robin retracts the implication of her question with the negative *not a pain* (line 3). She now suddenly

remembers the name of the student herself, *Matt Patterson*. All the more concerned to avoid unwanted implications, she repeats the denial *not a pain* in line 5, and then in line 7 replaces the implication that Matt Patterson is a pain with the milder description that he is *obviously anxious to get on*.

Once again we have a formulation which is not in itself an overstatement, but in the context of lack of uptake by next speaker, is treated by its producer as in need of re-working. Here too Robin appeals to the Concessive Repair format, as represented schematically below:

<i>Statement</i>	who was the other one who's a pain? (<i>Implied</i> : → one of the students is a pain)
(a) <i>Concession</i>	Matt Patterson is not a pain
(b) <i>Revised description</i>	but obviously anxious to get on

Figure 9. Schematic form of the Concessive Repair practice (extract 10)

We take these examples to demonstrate that extreme case formulations are not the only contexts that call forth the use of the Concessive Repair format. Instead participants may appeal to it whenever they find themselves needing to retract a claim that could lead to an inappropriate inference or to a potential disagreement.

5. Further features of the practice

We turn now to a discussion of further characteristic features of the Concessive Repair practice and discuss what contribution these features make to this specific format for backing down.

5.1 Scalarity

In the preceding section we saw that the Concessive Repair pattern is characterized by a specific polarity relation with respect to the overstatement: the first (concessive) part of the pattern has opposite polarity from that of the overstatement it is being used to retract; the second (revised) part of the pattern has the same polarity as the overstatement. We now wish to explore another feature of the pattern, one which is both semantic and pragmatic in nature.

The Concessive Repair pattern appears to rely on an implicit linear scale, or ordered set of terms which stand in a 'stronger than'/'weaker than' relation to one another. Scales in language have been recognized by a number of linguists and pragmatists as playing a crucial role in conversational implicature and argumentation (Horn 1972; Fauconnier 1975; Gazdar 1979; Anscombe & Ducrot 1983; Horn 1984, 1989; Hirschberg 1985; Kay 1997; Israel 1998; Levinson 2000; Ariel 2004). As Schwenter

(1999) notes, scales can be of at least three different kinds: (a) semantic, where the terms are ordered by logical entailment (e.g. <all, most, many, a few>; *All the invited guests came* entails *Most of the invited guests came*); (b) pragmatic, where the entailment is not logical but depends on default assumptions (e.g. *Mary got an A in her hardest class* implicates *Mary got an A in her easiest class*); (c) rhetorical, with ‘values’ being ranked not according to entailment but according to their strength for the speaker’s rhetorical purpose. The scales we find in Concessive Repair appear to belong to the first two categories.

Equally relevant to our point here is the fact that scales have been shown to play a significant role in lexico-grammatical constructions: e.g. in *at least* constructions (Horn 1972, 1989),⁸ in *let alone* constructions (Fillmore et al. 1988), and in *in fact* constructions (Matsumoto 1997; Schwenter & Traugott 2000). Our conversational data reveal Concessive Repair to be yet another construction – heretofore unnoticed – in which scalarity figures prominently. As we shall see, Concessive Repairs show scales at work in everyday interaction;⁹ they recast implicature as projection in real-time talk.

5.1.1 Scales for retracting affirmative statements and overstatements

Let us turn to a concrete example to see how scales are relevant to Concessive Repair.¹⁰ Consider (3) again:

(3′) Fragment of (3)

22 → Nan: Youknow. I mean w[e have a]couple of real long hairrs
 23 Emm: [M m hm,]
 24 Nan: in.hhhhh
 25 ⇒ ab Nan: Not real long hairs but longhairs in the cl-

Nancy’s overstatement *we have a couple of real long hairs* is retracted with a conceding component *not real long hairs*, which in turn is contrastively linked by *but* to the revised component *longhairs*. If we now consider the relation between the two ‘values’ which are being contrasted with each other, we discover that they form a scale ordered as <real long, long> according to a metric ‘is_longer_than’, such that *real long* is understood to be longer than *long*. When retracting an overstatement with the Concessive Repair pattern, the speaker invokes this scale by denying the stronger value (*not really long hairs*), while contrastively affirming the weaker one: *but longhairs*.

Something similar happens in (5):

(5′) Fragment of (5)

19 → Lot: No: I [don’t think so, they juss: (.) they just have=
 20 Emm: [No.
 21 → Lot: =w-war sur: [plus °m]::°=
 22 Emm: [°Ye:ah°]
 23 ⇒ a Lot: =I mea:n: ih they of course no[t all of] it but:

The statement which Emma wishes to retract is *they just have war surplus*. She first concedes *not all of it* but then goes on to (incipiently) contrast this with something she

wishes to affirm. Because the scale she is invoking here is a conventional semantic one <*all, most*> based on the metric 'is_more_than', her recipient (and we) can surmise that she is about to revise her description to the weaker term 'most'. When speakers appeal to a conventional semantic scale such as this one in retracting with Concessive Repair, the second component is often so strongly projected that it need not be produced in full. We return to this point in §5.2 below.

On other occasions the terms of the scale are constructed in a more ad hoc fashion. In other words, they are recipient-designed, fitted pragmatically to the contingencies of the situation. This is the case, for instance, in (4), where Robin wishes to retract her description of what she intends to do on the next in-service training day, namely *switch off*. She first concedes that she does not mean the stronger term: *not really switch off* but then affirms that she means the weaker one: *relax*. The scale here is <switch off, relax> ordered on a metric approximating 'is_more inattentive_than'.¹¹ Note that the scale itself is occasioned by the nature of the overstatement (it arguably has something to do with inattentiveness) and the stronger term *switch off* is explicitly introduced there. Yet given this stronger term, there is no way to predict what the weaker term will be, only that it will indeed be weaker. Alternatives such as 'have a break' or 'be a student myself' are equally as plausible. A similarly ad-hoc scale is invoked in (10) with <a pain, anxious to get on>, ordered on a metric of 'is_more troublesome_than'. Given the strong term 'a pain', we can only predict that the contrasting term will be weaker. 'A little annoying' or 'pesky' would be equally good candidates.

In the scales examined so far, the uppermost term has been an extreme expression actually used in the overstatement. Yet this is not invariably so. The overstatement can give rise to an implication which in turn provides for the strong term of the scale. This is what happens in (2), for instance. Deena's description of her children as *both very good*, when applied to behavior with money (as the context calls for in extract (2)), yields a strong implication, namely that they do not spend more money than they have got. Deena subsequently treats this implication, particularly its categorical nature, as in need of some revision. In order to qualify it, she denies that the strong version holds for her daughter: 'it is not the case that Melinda does not spend more money than she has got' or *Melinda is inclined to spend more than she's got*. But she goes on to contrastively affirm that the weaker version does hold: *she's toned down a lot/she's realized the price of things getting married*. The scale Deena uses is <spend more than one has got, tone down/realize the price of things> ordered on a metric of 'is_more irresponsible with money_than'.¹² This scale is mobilized in the service of backing down from an undesired implication which follows from Deena's original description.¹³

In sum, we could represent the Concessive Repair pattern for retracting affirmative statements and overstatements schematically as follows:

Table 1. Constructional schema for Concessive Repair practice

(Affirmative statement or overstatement to be retracted)

(well) Neg	(a)	but (I mean) Aff	(b)
	<P _j		P _i >
	↑	↓	↑
SCALAR RELATIONSHIP (P _j is 'stronger' than P _i) on a semantic/pragmatic metric			

The practice of Concessive Repair with affirmative statements and overstatements entails first denying the validity of the stronger term (this is the concession) and then contrastively asserting the validity of the weaker term (this amounts to reasserting a modified version of the original). The essence of the original description is preserved but it is now (re)affirmed in more moderate form.

5.1.2 Scales for retracting negative statements and overstatements

With negative statements and overstatements, the Concessive Repair pattern is basically the reverse of that for affirmative ones. Let us look at a concrete case: extract (7), for instance.

(7') Fragment of (7)

12 → Emm: I haven't had a piece of mea:t.
 13 (1.0)
 14 Emm: Over at Bill's I had ta:cos Mondee ni:ght
 15 ⇒ ab little bit of mea:t the*:re. B't not much.

Emma appeals to a conventional semantic scale of quantity in retracting her claim *I haven't had a piece of meat*. The scale is <much, a little bit> ordered on a metric of 'is_more_than' and she proceeds by asserting the weaker value on this scale: (*I had a little bit of meat there*, which amounts to a concession, while contrastively denying the validity of the stronger one: *but not much*).

Likewise, in extract (6):

(6') Fragment of (6)

5 → Les: An' and also: I found th't I got no:: u-help from the
 6 ⇒ a assistants, well: they were ↓willing to help↓ but
 7 ⇒ b .hhhh eh as ↑soon as any chance of anybody,
 8 ⇒ b grabbing 'n assista[nt,
 9 Rob: [Yes
 10 ⇒ b Les: .hhhh eh:m: n-you know who grabbed them::.

Here Leslie appeals to a pragmatic scale in retracting the overstatement that she got *no help from the assistants*. This statement could be taken as implying 'They were unwilling to help', a claim which she now undertakes to revise. The scale she uses is <able to help, willing to help> ordered according to a metric of 'is_more_helpful_than'.¹⁴ She

concedes that the weaker value holds: *THEY were willing to help*, but implies that the stronger value does not ('they were unable to help') by claiming that someone else grabbed them.¹⁵

On occasion, the scales which speakers employ for Concessive Repair, rather than being constructed around an extreme term explicitly mentioned in the overstatement itself, invoke hierarchies by using terms or expressions from a lower level of categorization than that found in the overstatement. Extract (9) presents an instance of Concessive Repair invoking a hierarchically constituted scale:

(9') Fragment of (9)

5 → Les: [How clever I wish I could knit,
6 (0.7)
7 Joy: .p[Can't y o u]kni:t,]
8 ⇒ ab Les: [I m'n I ke-]I Well]I kni:t yes but I: don't enjoy
9 it

Leslie's statement *I wish I could knit* strongly implies the categorically negative claim 'I cannot knit'. When challenged on this by Joyce, Leslie subsequently begins to back down from this implication. She does so by invoking a scale constituted by different senses or ways of 'doing' something: <enjoy, know how to>. These terms are linearly ordered on a metric approximating 'is_more desirable_than'.¹⁶ Leslie now asserts that the weaker value holds, while contrastively denying that the stronger value does. She is thus able to preserve the thrust of her argument, although it has undergone some fine-tuning in the process.¹⁷

Finally, let us note the fact that two scales are used concomitantly in (8), when Leslie backs down from her rhetorically extreme claim *Rebecca didn't get to college*.

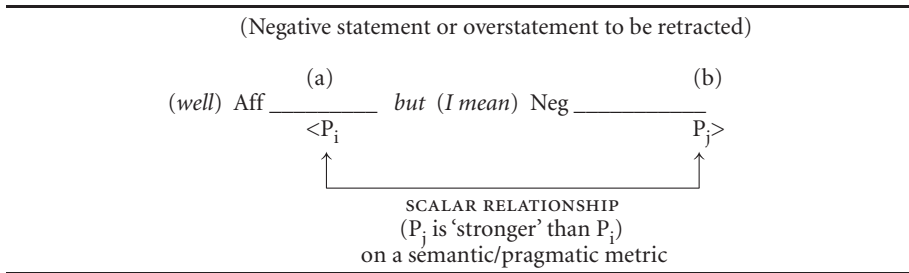
(8') Fragment of (8)

6 → Les: an:°Rebecca didn't get t'college,°
7 (0.4)
8 Joy: Didn't ~she:,
9 ⇒ a Les: Well she got in the end she scraped into a buh-
10 ⇒ a business management course, but she [didn't-

The first scale plays off the expression *get to* and is constituted by different ways of getting into college. The weaker term, whose validity Leslie concedes, is *scrape into*. The stronger term which she wishes to deny is not produced, but we can surmise that it might be something like 'sail into' or 'take college X by storm'. Let us use the more general term 'get in easily' as a cover term for such options. The scale is thus <'get in easily', scrape into>. These terms are ordered according to a metric 'is a sign of_greater cleverness_than'. When Leslie concedes the lower end (*well she scraped into...*), she contrastively projects a denial of the stronger end (*but she didn't...*).

The second scale invoked in Leslie's retraction of *Rebecca didn't get to college* in (8) is built on the expression *college*. This scale constructs an order among different types of higher education, with the weaker value on the metric 'is_a greater sign of cleverness_than' being 'business management course'. What the higher value on this

Table 2. Constructional schema for Concessive Repair practice



scale is can only be surmised, but it is clearly something which contrasts sharply with ‘business management course’. Let us call it ‘real college’ for short. The scale can thus be assumed to be \langle ‘real college’, business management course \rangle . Leslie concedes that the weaker value holds, but – as with the first scale – she foregoes denying the stronger value. As we discuss below, this can only happen because the first component of the pattern is strongly projective of what its second part might possibly be.

Table 2 schematizes our findings for negatively formulated statements and overstatements.

To summarize, the practice of Concessive Repair with negative statements and overstatements entails first asserting the weaker value (P_i), i.e. making a concession, and then contrastively denying the stronger value (P_j), thus reaffirming a more moderate version of the initial negative statement. Here too, the essence of the original can be preserved, although exceptions have been acknowledged to exist.

The fact that we can represent the Concessive Repair practice as in Tables 1 and 2 suggests that it is indeed construction-like, with some aspects which are fixed (e.g. bipartiteness, polarity, contrastivity) and others which are ‘free’ (e.g. the blanks labeled (a) and (b) in Tables 1 and 2). The ‘free’ lexical choices are in turn constrained by a relation of scalarity. We submit that this Concessive Repair construction has emerged from the common interactional task of retracting overstatements and other challengeable statements in conversation and that as a recurrent practice it has sedimented or ‘grammaticized’ into the lexico-grammatical pattern shown above (Hopper 1987, 1998).

5.2 Projectability

As we have noted at a number of points in our discussion, the revised, weaker part of the Concessive Repair format is so strongly projected by the format itself that it is often left implicit. This is the case regardless of whether the second component is asserting a weaker scalar term (i.e. revising an initially affirmative statement) or denying a stronger scalar term (i.e. revising an initially negative statement). There are two pieces of evidence which support our claim that the second part of the Concessive Repair format (b) is strongly projected.

First, part (b) may be anticipated and produced by a co-participant. Extract (11) provides an example of this. In this conversation Nancy has positioned herself as a troubles teller by talking about problems with her estranged husband. Her friend Emma has responded as troubles recipient by displaying affiliation. Where the fragment starts, Emma begins to move out of troubles talk by giving Nancy some advice:

- (11) NBII:2:R:12
- 1 Emm: You keep your nose clea:n,
 2 Nan: Oh [I-] 'n-]
 3 Emm: [You'll] work] out a[l r i ght]
 4 Nan: [° ↑Ye:ah.°]
 5 Nan: °I intend to.°
 6 Emm: You just keep goin ↓straight
 7 Nan: °I a:m.°
 8 → Emm: [Y'got any(b) frie:nd boyfrie:nds? or any°thing
 9 → [goin:g [steady'r:°]
 10 → Nan: [Oh:: [° ↓h*ell n]*o.° ↓
 11 → Emm: °Nothin°
 12 (0.3)
 13 ⇒ a Nan: .t Oh I've gotta lot'v (0.2) frie:nds,=
 14 ⇒ b Emm: =But n[othin'you're] dating.
 15 → Nan: [But n o:]
 16 → Nan: .hhhh Oh hu-E:mma ↓I: don't wanna get↓ I=
 17 → Emm: =↓Y[eh ((compressed))
 18 → Nan: [just am: not emotion'llly:
 19 (0.2)
 20 → Emm: °Mm-mm[:.°
 21 → Nan: [I: don't wanna get invo:lved (...)

As a follow-up to the advice that Nancy should *keep (her) nose clean* (line 1) and *keep going straight* (line 6), Emma inquires in line 8 if Nancy has *any friend boyfriends or anything*. This Nancy denies adamantly, with an extreme case formulation *Oh hell no* (line 10). Emma's response *Nothin* (line 11), however, suggests that she may think Nancy has no male friends at all. Following a noticeable pause (line 12), Nancy now begins to back down from her categorical no. She concedes that she has *a lot of friends* (line 13), delivered with stretching and a heavily implicative pitch accent on *friends*. Because this concession is so strongly projective of what her revised statement will be, Emma can now display affiliation by offering the candidate revision herself: *nothin*'

Overstatement	Oh hell no (Implied → I have no boyfriends)
(a) Concession	I've got a lot of friends
(b) Revised description	but nothing you're dating

Figure 10. Schematic form of the Concessive Repair practice (extract 11)

you're dating (line 14). Nancy confirms Emma's co-completion in overlap, and goes on to strongly assert her desire not to get involved.

The scale we suggest that Nancy and Emma are invoking is triggered by the expression *boyfriends* and is constituted by types of male friends: <boys to date, boys who are friends>, with these terms being ordered according to a metric approximating 'is_a sign of greater involvement_than'. And we argue that it is largely because of this invoked scale that part (b) of the pattern can remain unspoken or off record, or, as here, can be co-completed by another.¹⁸ Many of our examples of Concessive Repair exhibit this same influence of the invoked scales on the projectability of part (b).

For our second piece of evidence, showing that part (b), although not produced, is nevertheless understood, we turn back to extract (8). Recall that following Leslie's statement *Rebecca didn't get to college*, she concedes *well she got in the end she scraped into a business management course*, and then begins to deny something stronger: *but she didn't* - . We noted that the revised formulation is never actually produced in full. It is here that we see evidence for our point that both speakers are orienting to the Concessive Repair format, and that part (b) of the format, the revised formulation, may be so strongly projected that it need not be actually produced, although it is still 'understood'. At line 11 Joyce does not wait for Leslie to complete the format before coming in, and the way she comes in displays an understanding not only of the concession but also of the revised claim, which has not yet been uttered. At the very moment when it is clear what format is underway (after Leslie's production of *but she*), Joyce comes in with *oh*, a change-of-state token (Heritage 1984) displaying her understanding of Leslie's projected revision, namely that Rebecca did not get into a 'real college' easily. If we recall the scales for example (8), <'real college', business management course> and <'get in easily', scrape in>, we see that Leslie's deployment of two pragmatic scales in the Concessive Repair format as she backs down from her overstatement is part of what allows the projection of her restatement. This example shows how the Concessive Repair practice has become sedimented as a construction, the (a) part so strongly projecting the (b) part that other participants can anticipate and/or guess the weaker formulation. At the same time it underlines the fact that implicative semantic and pragmatic scales such as those underlying Concessive Repair create *projectability* in interaction. The first part of the bipartite construction, upon its production, makes it possible to predict what the second part will be in real time. Implicatures are thus one linguistic device for projecting in interaction.

So far we have examined two specific features of Concessive Repair in detail: scalarity, where we have shown that speakers invoke semantic and pragmatic scales as a way to frame Concessive Repair, and projectability, where we have shown that the construction is so well-entrenched that the revised claim can often be anticipated, as evidenced by its frequent co-production or its omission. The third feature of Concessive Repair we would like to register is its sequential implicativeness.

We note that the sequential implicativeness of the revised statement arises from the fact that what is at issue in all these extracts is the action that the extreme case statement or overstatement is performing in the sequence. In terms of Rhetorical Structure Theory, the concession (part a) could be seen as providing rhetorical support for the revised version (part b) (Mann & Thompson 1987; Thompson 1987). In this sense Concessive Repair is reminiscent of the ‘show concessives’ which Antaki and Wetherell (1999) describe. Interactionally the sequential implicativeness of the second part of the construction underlines its function as repair: the device temporarily suspends sequential progressivity in order to do reparative work on a vulnerable claim or its wording. Once a more suitable version has been produced, the action potential of the original becomes relevant again – and its sequential implicativeness resumes.

5.4 Sequential location and interactional motivation

We noted above that the Concessive Repair format has features in common with repair as discussed in the Conversation Analysis literature. The most salient of these features is the fact that it occurs in the same five sequential locations as repair in general has been shown to occur in English conversation. As we shall see, each of these locations involves a different sequential relationship between the overstatement and the initiation of the Concessive Repair format. The sequential locations in which Concessive Repair is found in our data are:

- a. In next turn following a Next Turn Repair Initiator (NTRI)
- b. In next turn after a co-participant has taken a ‘trouble-revealing’ but non-repair-initiating turn (cf. ‘third position’ repair)
- c. In next turn after a co-participant has taken a ‘non-trouble-revealing’ turn (cf. ‘third turn’ repair)
- d. Following a pause in the transition space after the TCU containing the repairable
- e. In the same turn as the repairable with no pause

Let us briefly illustrate each of these sequential positions.

a. In next turn following a Next Turn Repair Initiator (NTRI)

Sometimes the Concessive Repair format is clearly prompted by an NTRI or NTRI-like turn (Schegloff et al. 1977). Example (8) above, where Leslie and Robin are trying to agree on their friend’s daughter’s ‘cleverness’, offers an instance of this. We can see that it is IN RESPONSE TO Joyce’s *didn’t she* in line 8 that Leslie begins to back down (lines 9–10), admitting that their friend’s daughter did get into a business management course. Joyce’s *didn’t she* is not a ‘classic’ NTRI, as discussed in Schegloff et al. (1977), in that there is no evidence in this strip of talk that Joyce has had any trouble hearing or understanding what Leslie has said. Strictly speaking, *didn’t she* is a ‘newsmark’: it singles out an aspect of the prior turn as worthy of further topical development. But sequentially, and this is our point, it has the same effect as an NTRI: it foreshadows potential disagreement and thus appears to ‘prompt’ Leslie to revise her claim.

Here is an example of third turn Concessive Repair from our database. This exchange comes right after that in (9): recall that Leslie and Joyce have been talking about knitting sweaters.¹⁹

(13) Holt 2:15/1

- 1 Joy: [Oh: I]d-uh e]njoy it that's my t:rouble, [.tch
 2 Les: [Ye:::s-
 3 Joy: I just love i:t. Bu[t °(any))
 4 Les: [Oh: I wish I cou:l[d,
 5 → Joy: [.tch I wish I
 6 was clever at nee:dlewo:rk,
 7 (.)
 8 → Les: Y[e : :[:s.
 9 → Joy: [.hh [Well I mean u-I am: uh at uh at embroidery:
 10 Les: Ye:s.
 11 ⇒ a Joy: I c'n do embroidery an' t:apestry an:' so on but um
 12 ⇒ b .p.hh I'm not clever at uhm: dressmaking.
 13 (.)
 14 Les: No:.
 15 Joy: That's what I wish I could do, oh I w:ish I was
 16 clever at that,

Reciprocating Leslie's self-derogatory *I wish I could knit* (see excerpt 9), Joyce now produces a deprecatory remark about herself: *I wish I was clever at needlework* (lines 5–6), strongly implying that she is *not* clever at needlework. Just as with third position repair, this statement is followed by a co-participant's turn. However, unlike Foster's *Oh::* in example (7), which suggests that Foster has drawn an inference that was unintended by Leslie, Leslie's response in line 8 of extract (13) does not indicate 'trouble'. On the other hand, her noticeably lengthened *ye:::s* could suggest affiliation with Joyce's self-deprecation (see also Jefferson 2002). In the face of this possible 'agreement' to the suggestion that she lacks needlework talent, Joyce hastens (in overlap) to embark upon Concessive Repair, which has the effect of clarifying that she is good at at least *some* kinds of needlework. She concedes that she is good at embroidery and tapestry (lines 9 & 11), and then contrasts this with a modified claim that keeps some of the flavor of her original self-deprecation: she is not good at *dressmaking* (line 12).

d. Following a pause in the transition space after the unit containing the repairable

In this type of Concessive Repair, the retraction is done in the transition space, after a pause, following the unit with the overstatement. For an example we can return to extract (10), where Robin is trying to recall the name of one of her students whom she characterizes as a *pain*.

Following Robin's *who was the other one who is a pain* (line 1), a 0.6-second pause ensues, a transition space where Leslie could take a turn but does not. We note that it is here that Robin begins her retraction.

e. In the same turn as the repairable with no pause

Finally, Concessive Repair can be done before the turn with the overstatement has ended and before a transition space has ensued. An example can be found in (6) above, where Leslie and Robin are discussing the difficulty of getting assistance in their classrooms. Leslie's extreme case formulation, with an unequivocal negative *no help* (line 5), is retracted before the end of that multi-unit turn in progress (as suggested by the lack of pause after *assistants* in line 6).

Concessive Repair thus occurs in the same sequential locations as 'classic' repair has been shown to occur. Considering this distribution, the question that arises is what might motivate speakers to embark on Concessive Repair. In other words, do we always find evidence of speakers' initiating Concessive Repair in the face of another's display of misapprehension or disagreement? To determine this, we examined the distribution of instances of Concessive Repair in each of these sequential locations. In a collection of 69 extracts featuring Concessive Repair, we found the following distribution:

Table 3. Frequency of occurrence of Concessive Repair in each sequential location

a. after NTRI	5
b. third position	5
c. third turn	17
d. in transition space, after pause	15
e. in same turn, no pause	18
f. other	<u>9</u>
	69

As Table 3 shows, the largest number of concessive repairs (18) occurs in location (e), in the same turn as the overstatement and without a pause. We might take this as confirmation of the 'preference for self-correction' discussed at length by Schegloff et al. (1977) and Schegloff (1997).²⁰ Moreover, we might see evidence here that speakers initiate Concessive Repair without being 'prompted' by anything in the interaction more often than they initiate Concessive Repair in response to some indication of potential trouble or misapprehension on the part of the interlocutor(s).

We do not take this position, however, for three reasons. First, we note that the number of concessive repairs in our data occurring in the same turn as the overstatement, without a pause, is still a relatively small percentage of the total (18/69, or 26%). Second, it is obvious that there are almost as many concessive repairs in categories (c) and (d) as in category (e), so no conclusion should be drawn on the basis of 18 being the largest number. Third, when we examine the 18 instances of Concessive Repair done in the same turn and without a pause, we find that the nature of the data we have does not allow us to conclude unequivocally that the concessive repairs were not 'prompted'. About half of these instances are from non-video-taped face-to-face interactions, where we cannot know for sure what body movements might have been at work to foreshadow or allow the speaker to anticipate 'trouble'. What we can say is that in 42/69, or 60%, of our cases (categories a–d), Concessive Repair is carried out

in *next position* following some (possible) response from a co-participant rather than in the same turn as the overstatement and without a pause.

One implication of this is that Concessive Repair may be a special type of repair which works somewhat differently from 'classic' repair, as analyzed by Schegloff et al. (1977) and Schegloff (1992, 1997). 'Classic' repair, which shows a preference for 'self-correction', is indeed a 'correction' pattern, involving talk which is deemed 'mis-speaking' in some respect; essentially, an element treated as 'misspoken' is 'replaced' by an appropriate one. As we have just seen, with Concessive Repair, on the other hand, there seems to be a clear preference for next-position rather than for same-turn retraction (cf. Schegloff et al. 1977 and Schegloff 1997). Why? We suggest that this is because Concessive Repair involves treating prior talk as overstated rather than 'mis-spoken'. That is, it is mobilized when alignment must be negotiated, and this kind of repair need only happen in the face of an actual, potential, or imagined judgment by a recipient which runs counter to a speaker's own claim or description. Thus it is not surprising that the preference for self-repair is missing. In other words, Concessive Repair seems to happen much more frequently in the face of evidence of such an unwanted contrary judgment, and the format which speakers choose allows them to adjust their description and/or claim to the potential judgment without having to 'replace' it or abandon their position altogether.

6. Interactional pay-off of the practice

Clearly there are other ways to back down from a statement or an overstatement in talk which do not involve concession. Some of the ones we have noticed involve phrases such as: *I take it back* or *I didn't mean that!* Like Concessive Repair, these draw attention to the back-down. Yet they do not necessarily invoke a scale or concede anything. For instance, in (14) Brad, an audio salesman, is presenting the case for purchasing a brand of recording equipment which he refers to as *K111*.

(14) Tapedeck 17 (transcription according to Du Bois et al. 1993)

- 1 Brad: (H) so the kay one eleven w=ould be set up for that=.
- 2 Tammy: [hunh].
- 3 Brad: [(H)] any of the other,
- 4 um=,
- 5 cassette decks here,
- 6 Tammy: m[hm].
- 7 → Brad: [(H)] (TSK) the kay one eleven has it too.
- 8 ⇒ [I take-] --
- 9 Tammy: [hunh].
- 10 Brad: I- --
- 11 ⇒ I take it back.
- 12 Tammy: ... huh.

Brad initially makes the strong claim that *the K111 has it too* (line 7), meaning a capability for stereo recording, but in the next unit he immediately begins to retract this claim. To do so he produces the phrase *I take-*, in overlap with Tammy in line 8, and then the full phrase in the clear *I- I take it back* in line 11.

Another way to back down from a statement or overstatement in talk is to produce a more restricted formulation of it, either unprefaced or introduced by a phrase like *or at least*, in turn continuation or sequence expansion. This device also accomplishes backing down, and it increases the likelihood of agreement, but it does not make the grounds for backing down explicit. Unlike Concessive Repair, it does not specifically mention exceptions. There is no linear scale invoked with two terms ordered according to a 'stronger_than' metric, nor is a weaker value asserted/acknowledged and then contrasted with the denial of a stronger value (or vice versa) on the same linear scale. To see this, let us look briefly at (15), reported in Walker (2001). Here H first says *people don't go to Germany*; she then revises this to *or at least English people don't go to Germany*, adding *on holiday*. After a 0.3-second pause, H then makes another back-down from that categorical statement with *generally*. Her turn thus ultimately becomes *at least English people don't go to Germany on holiday generally*.

(15) Walker 2001:49

- 1 → H: yeah cos people don't go to Germany
 2 ⇒ or at least English people
 3 → don't go to Germany on holiday
 4 (0.3)
 5 ⇒ generally:

In this example there are two statements/overstatements which are retracted: *people* and *don't go to Germany on holiday*. Hierarchically lower values (or more restricted terms) for each of these are invoked, namely a kind of person (*English people*) and a degree of generality (*generally*). Yet it is only these more restricted terms whose validity is reasserted. There is no contrast with other, stronger terms on the same linear scale whose validity is denied.²¹

So (14) and (15) illustrate two ways of backing down without using the Concessive Repair practice; neither of these involves conceding or asserting the validity of a weaker term on a linearly organized scale. In (14) Brad announces his retraction metalinguistically, and in (15) H simply offers two successive weaker formulations of her original statement without contrastively denying stronger ones.

The format in (15), like Concessive Repair, affords the producer of a statement or overstatement the possibility of softening a claim, making it more reasonable and therefore more acceptable. But the pay-off with Concessive Repair is that it specifies the exceptions to a claim or description and thus displays the speaker's grounds for retracting or qualifying it. In this sense Concessive Repair invokes reasoning practices in the service of accountability. It 'fine-tunes' that part of the formulation which is extreme by making potential exceptions explicit and conceding their viability. In doing so, it also coincidentally provides speakers with an opportunity to 'dress up' or 'color'

the conceded part for added rhetorical effect. In example (8), for instance, Leslie gets in some 'barbs' about Rebecca's lack of cleverness by referring to her 'scraping in' to a 'business management course' rather than getting into a real college easily. By acknowledging that there are grounds for doubting the formulation in its extremity, the practice of Concessive Repair makes an explicit display of the reasons for revising a prior formulation and, by displaying rationality, does 'being accountable'.²² It may be for this reason that Concessive Repair is especially useful when it is sequential constraints which have imposed the necessity of a strong statement, stronger than otherwise warranted by 'the facts'.

7. Conclusions

Concessive Repair is a practice used to back down from a challengeable statement or overstatement. It deploys a bipartite construction whose parts stand in a polar relation to one another and whose terms are positioned relationally on a scale of stronger than/weaker than. By appealing to such a scale, the speaker can deny the validity of a stronger term, while at the same time asserting that of a weaker term or, vice versa, can concede the validity of a weaker value, while at the same time contrastively denying the validity of a stronger value on the scale. Thus the essence of an original affirmative or negative claim can be preserved. The scales appealed to in Concessive Repair can be semantic or pragmatic in nature. The latter are constructed in an ad hoc fashion and display various kinds of recipient design. We have argued that the Concessive Repair practice is construction-like, representing a routinized version of a rhetorical practice, and that it illustrates the well-known phenomenon of a constructional format emerging from interactional needs (Bybee 2002; Hopper 1987, 1988, 1998). Because of its constructional properties, the first component of Concessive Repair, on its production, projects roughly what the second component will be. This explains why the modified or revised version of an original statement or overstatement can be left implicit or made available for joint turn construction.

We have argued that Concessive Repair is repair-like because of the sequential implicativeness of its second component. It is this component which (re)asserts a modified or weakened description and which is therefore relevant for subsequent talk. Concessive Repair is also repair-like because it occurs in exactly the same sequential locations as 'classic' repair. However, in contrast to classic repair, which shows a preference for same-turn correction, Concessive Repair shows a preference for next position. This suggests that it is highly interactional: it is invoked when speakers wish to respond to actual, foreshadowed or imagined challenges by an interlocutor to what they have said or implied. For this reason Concessive Repair appears to be more closely related to the negotiation of affiliation than to 'correction'.

With the practice of Concessive Repair, speakers concede that they may have overstated their case, but that the thrust of their utterance, though modified to a weaker formulation, still holds. As opposed to simply backing down with no concession at all,

by using the Concessive Repair format, speakers (1) make explicit the exceptions to their original statement or overstatement and thus their grounds for backing down, and (2) display that they are being accountable. Concessive Repair thus contributes to furthering credibility, rationality and agreement in environments where other contingencies may have dictated overly strong wording.

Notes

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1. See Section 3 below for a description of our data base.
2. As we shall show below, the second part may be only projected but not produced.
3. Mori (1999) identifies a similar environment for retracting exaggerations in Japanese.
4. This involves the use of a contrastively stressed positive operator or auxiliary (Gussenhoven 1984), such as *IS* in this example.
5. As a categorical negative delivered with considerable emphasis, Nancy's *oh no* (line 19) is itself an extreme case formulation which is retracted (incipiently) in line 20. We return below to the Concessive Repair format which is used here.
6. As Edwards points out, only one counterexample suffices to refute extreme claims formulated with *nothing, nobody, never, always*. For this reason they are 'factually brittle' (2000: 352).
7. Just as in (5), the revised weaker formulation here is not actually produced in full.
8. Horn uses *at least* constructions, among others, as a test for scalar expressions: scalar expressions permit saying 'At least P_i , if not P_j ' and ' P_j , or at least P_i ', where P_j is stronger than P_i (1989: 234).
9. They thus involve a kind of 'lay' semantics along the lines of what Deppermann (this volume) describes.
10. The following discussion is indebted to Hirschberg's (1985) treatment of scalar implicature.
11. Alternatively the metric could be conceptualized as 'is_less attentive_than'.
12. Alternatively, the metric could be conceptualized as 'is_less responsible with money_than'.
13. Extract (12), presented below, provides another instance of the implication of a statement, rather than the statement itself, being retracted. The statement is *we had one leg in plaster*. In following talk it is not this statement which Leslie backs down from but rather the implication which this statement might give rise to, namely that it was one of her family who broke their leg. The scale is <one of ours, one of the party> and the metric which pragmatically orders these expressions is something like 'is_more cause for immediate concern_than'. By denying the stronger value on the scale, *not one of ours*, while contrastively affirming the weaker value, *one of the party*, Leslie is able to remedy Foster's (incipient) misapprehension without having to abandon her original description.

14. The 'logic' here is that if the assistants were able to help, it would normally be assumed that they were willing to, but if they were willing to help it cannot be assumed that they were necessarily able to.
15. As Heritage points out, a claim of inability to do something is perceived as rendering the actor less morally 'at fault' than a claim of unwillingness (1988: 136).
16. The 'logic' of this scale is that if one enjoys doing something, one clearly knows how to do it, but that knowing how to do something does not necessarily mean that one enjoys it.
17. Extract (13), presented below, provides another instance of this. Joyce embarks on a qualification of her statement *I wish I was clever at needlework*, which implies 'I am not clever at needlework'. To do so, she appeals to a scale of 'values' constituted by different types of needlework. The scale is <dressmaking, embroidery/tapestry>, with 'dressmaking' being 'stronger' on a metric of 'is_more demanding (of cleverness)_than' and 'embroidery' and 'tapestry' being weaker, *pari passu*. (Needless to say, not everyone would order these kinds of 'needlework' this way – a reminder, if one were needed, that we are dealing with pragmatically constructed scales.) See example (11) in Section 5.2 below, which contains another case of retraction involving a scale constituted hierarchically via 'types'.
18. For further examples of projected but unexpressed weaker formulations, see extract (3) line 20, extract (5) and extract (8).
19. We are grateful to Emanuel Schegloff for valuable discussion of the sequential properties of this extract.
20. Indeed, Mori (1999) suggests just this for Japanese, citing "speakers' orientation towards incorporating self-qualifying within the current turn" (459), though she does not give any quantitative support for it. Further research might shed light on whether this is indeed a difference between Japanese and English conversationalists.
21. It is true that scales can be constructed as follows: <people, English people> and <go to Germany on holiday, generally go to Germany on holiday>. This is what allows the use of the phrase *at least*, which attaches to the weaker term. However, the members of these scales are not found on the same level of categorization but on different levels: 'English people' is a kind of 'people'; 'generally go to Germany' is a specification of 'go to Germany' in terms of universality. Such scales give rise to implicatures but they are not like the ones used in Concessive Repair. The latter are linear and involve terms on the same level of categorization.
22. We are grateful to John Heritage (p.c.) for suggesting this motivation.

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Conversational interpretation of lexical items and conversational contrasting*

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One major issue in the accomplishment of contrasts in conversation is lexical choice of items which carry the semantic load of the two states of affair which are represented as being opposed to one another. These items or expressions are co-selected to be understood as being contrastively related to each other. In this paper, it is argued that the activity of contrasting itself provides them with a specific local opposite meaning which they would not obtain in other contexts. Practices of contrasting are thus seen as an example of conversational activities which creatively and systematically affect situated meanings. Based on data from various genres, such as meetings, mediation sessions and conversations, the paper discusses two practices of contrasting, their sequential construction and their interpretative effects. It is concluded that the interpretative effects of conversational contrasting rest on the sequential deployment of linguistic resources and on the cognitive procedures of frame-based interpretation and constructing a maximally contrastive interpretation for the co-selected expressions.

1. Introduction

Contrast is one of the most fundamental semantic relations between lexical items. While lexical semantics conceives of contrasts as structural sense relations which hold context-free, ethnomethodology, conversation analysis and interactional linguistics are interested in how contrasts are achieved in discourse by participants' work. Research so far has mainly focused on the sequential organization of contrasts, their prosody and their discursive functions and inferential properties. Another major issue in the accomplishment of contrasts in conversation is lexical choice – the choice of words and phrases which are contrasted and which carry the semantic load of the two states of affair that are represented as being opposed to one another. These items, however, are only rarely related to one another in terms of lexico-semantic contrast (such as *small* vs. *large*; *buy* vs. *sell*). But how does lexical choice then relate to activities of contrasting? In this paper, I argue that activities of contrasting often affect the currently relevant interpretation of the contrasted lexical items. It can provide them with a lo-

cal meaning which they would not obtain in other contexts. To be more specific, the activity of contrasting suggests an interpretation of the contrasted words as local opposites. This most prominently involves that semantic and inferential properties which are locally contingent on the first of the contrasted items are negated or corrected by the second one. Contrasting thus focuses on and defocuses specific semantic aspects, it instructs the selection among and the inference to local interpretations, and it leads to the ad hoc construction of local taxonomic relations. In this way, activities of contrasting can provide lexical items with a local meaning which, by repeated, routine use, may be strongly associated with them. It can become part of their meaning potential and can therefore also be deployed in other, non-contrastive contexts of use. After a short review of research on contrasts and contrasting (Section 2) and a note on data and method (Section 3), I will discuss two practices of conversational contrasting which differ in their sequential and functional organization as well as in aspects of their semantic impact on the contrasted words (Sections 4 and 5). Building on these analyses, I will claim that there are two interpretive strategies which participants use for the local specification of word-meanings by activities of contrasting: frame-based interpretation and maximization of contrast (Section 6).

2. Approaches to contrasting

Contrast is one of the main topics of structural lexical semantics (e.g. Cruse 1986; Lyons 1977). It is studied as one paradigmatic property of the relation between lexical items as such. The relation of contrast holds for any two lexical items which can be mapped onto a common semantic dimension and which

- simply exclude one another (incompatibility: *Monday* vs. *Tuesday*);
- inhabit polar positions on a dimensional scale ((polar) antonymy: *hot* vs. *cold*);
- divide a common dimension into two sections and negatively imply one another (complementarity: *dead* vs. *alive*);
- denote states or processes which are spatially or temporally opposed to one another (perspectival conversion: *before* vs. *after*), reciprocal actions or roles in action sequences (e.g. *buy* vs. *sell*), or opposing directions and actions (directional conversion: *come* vs. *go*; restitutives: *gain* vs. *waste*).

Although some structuralists concede that there may be some “contextual modulation” (Cruse 1986: 51ff.), which modifies the meaning of an item, the specification of meaning in contexts of use is no essential concern for them and is not systematically accounted for in their semantic models. The lexicon is conceived of as an inventory of static, context-free relations. Accordingly, contrast is a sense-relation between decontextualized items. Structuralists do not ask what conversationalists themselves mark and treat as contrasting. Activities of contrasting and their interpretation in real interactional contexts are not considered as the proper object of semantic study. Consequently, effects of discursive activities on the semantics of individual lexical items are

not taken into account. Therefore, this view cannot provide for systematic origins of polysemy and semantic change.¹

Studies in syntax and text linguistics inquire into contrast as a relation which holds between propositions. It is expressed by clauses or sentences (e.g. Rudolph 1996), or, more generally, exists between segments of texts (Mann & Thompson 1992). Although most studies focus on the propositional level, contrasts can also be established on the epistemic or speech act level (Sweetser 1990), and even on the textual level. In syntactic, text and interactional linguistic studies, definitions of contrast range from very restrictive conceptions to a notion of 'contrast' as a super-category for a variety of more specific relations (see e.g. Mann & Thompson 1992; Rudolph 1996).

In this paper, a rather broad conception of 'contrast' as a cover-term will be adopted: Following Barth-Weingarten (2003:39), "contrast is understood here as a general term for all kinds of relations which in some way express an opposition between items of one sort or another." This definition neither unduly restricts the size of discursive segments to be contrasted nor makes any premature suppositions about linguistic means, the level and semantic features of the contrast. This wide definition of 'contrast' includes more specific concepts that are well known:

- Adversativity: In its dialogical realization, adversativity is prototypically realized by a first speaker making a claim which a second speaker straightforwardly objects to (ex.: A: "People told me you were at home." B: "But not at that time.")
- Neutral contrast does not involve a preference for one part of the contrasted items, but "two items are said to be in contrast if they are comprehended to be the same in many respects, comprehended as differing in a few respects, compared with respect to one or more of these differences" (Mann & Thompson 1992:37; ex.: A: "Yesterday, I knew the whole book by heart, but when they asked me, I didn't remember anything.")
- Concession as a discursive-pragmatic relation is prototypically realized according to a tripartite 'Cardinal Concessive Schema' with a first speaker making a claim X which, in contrast to adversativity and neutral contrast, a second speaker first concedes (X') and then counters with Y (Couper-Kuhlen & Thompson 2000; Barth-Weingarten 2003; ex.: A: "Yesterday was a real downer." B: "That's true, but you have to learn to put up with such things."). The concession may involve an irrelevant or a potential obstacle to the validity of a claim, "negated causality" (König & Siemund 2000), i.e. a cause-effect-relation does not hold in the specific case, or a restriction of the validity or generality of a statement (Günthner 2000).
- Antithesis: In contradistinction to other contrastive relations, antithesis involves the negation of X which is contrasted with the affirmation of Y (Thompson & Mann 1987). The Cardinal Antithesis Schema thus consists of a first speaker making some claim X which a second speaker denies and supplants with a counterclaim Y (ex.: A: "You have slandered me!" B: "No. It was you who slandered me!").

Interactional linguistics is not only concerned with aspects of formal sequential organization and linguistic marking, but also with interactional functions and conse-

quences. Ford (2000, 2001) showed that in interaction, a variety of (adversative and antithetic) contrasts are treated as being in need of explanation, solution or correction. As an exception to this, she refers to cases of trouble-telling and authority-based interaction where such a treatment was not wished or not granted. Barth-Weingarten (2003: Ch. 5) concludes that concession in interaction may operate on the ideational, interpersonal and textual level. Thus, it not only serves to increase the acceptability of a counter-move, but even more often establishes grounds for a disruptive (interrupting, topic changing etc.) move.

In conversation analysis (CA) and ethnomethodology, contrasts or contrast structures are regarded as a routine practice for the rhetorical organization of descriptions (Edwards 1997). There are, however, only few studies which explicitly focused on contrasts. The forms and uses of contrasts identified are rather varied, though. Smith (1978) has shown how contrast structures are used to account for a person's categorization as 'mentally ill'. Here, contrasts are made up by deviations from norms of adequate behaviour and from action preferences established by the teller. Atkinson's (1984) analyses of political oratory reveal how contrasts are designed as clap traps. These contrasts mainly rely on patterns of repetition and variation, both syntactically and prosodically. Drew (1992) investigated contrasting descriptions in courtroom-examinations. He shows how lawyer and witness select competing categorizations of the same events or behaviours. These contrasts are used as other-corrections and designed to make available competing inferences regarding motives, responsibility and guilt of the actors in question. Building on these analyses, Edwards (1997 and 1998) highlights the rhetoric, situated and pragmatic design of contrasts in text and talk, especially in competitive or argumentative contexts. He claims that contrast structures are "not just a matter of deploying ready-made conceptual resources that are built into semantic categories, but something people can do flexibly and inventively, for just about any set of objects or events" (Edwards 1997:237). The thrust of Edwards' quote runs counter lexico-semantic conceptions of interactional meaning: He sees the activity of presenting things as contrasting as primary and as independent of lexical contrasts. Contrast structures in discourse neither depend on lexical givens nor do they reflect brute, naturalistic (or experiential) facts. It is rather a pragmatically designed rhetoric move to organize things into binary contrasts and to present them as (the relevant, the only possible etc.) alternatives. Edwards' pragmatic approach contrasts with authors who, in the framework of traditional semantics, have claimed that "semantic opposition" (Lakoff 1971) of minimally two pairs of corresponding lexical items in X and Y may be the source of the contrast between X and Y (see also Longacre 1983:83). Lakoff's illustrative sentence *John is rich but Bill is poor* for example involves a pair of incompatibles (*John* vs. *Bill*) and a pair of polar antonyms (*rich* vs. *poor*). In this approach, semantic opposition is regarded as a lexical fact which exists prior to and independently of discourse and is used as a resource to build a textual (propositional) opposition.

Lexical contrasts are not necessary to achieve discursive contrasts, although there are subtypes which involve semantic opposition, one being neutral contrast (see above). If a discursive contrast, however, crucially rests on a contrast between two (or

more) corresponding lexical items, it is (at least tacitly) assumed that their contrastivity is lexically driven, i.e., that it is given beforehand by a context-free structural relation of the items. Their contrastivity would thus only be used in talk-in-interaction, but not established by talk-in-interaction itself. In this paper, however, I intend to show that the latter case is pervasive: It is by activities of contrasting that conversationalists provide pairs of lexical items or phrases with a situated, semantically contrastive interpretation which they would not obtain in isolation, i.e. without being part of the discursively achieved contrast structure. It will be shown that these situated meanings may sometimes clearly differ from established lexical meanings. The latter, however, need, at least to some extent, to be seen as sedimentations of frequent activities of contrasting of particular lexical items in discourse.

As this selective overview of the literature already suggests, contrasting is no homogeneous practice: Linguistic marking, sequential organization, interactional function, level of contrast and the exact discourse-pragmatic relation of the stretches of talk that are contrasted with one another are quite manifold. It will not come as a surprise that practices of contrasting also differ in terms of how the local interpretation of contrasted items is affected by the activity. After a short note on my data and the method of analysis (Section 3), I will discuss two different practices of contrasting which can provide contrasted lexical items (or phrases) with a specific, situated interpretation: One is “correcting a prior categorization” (Section 4), the other is “warranting a deviation-categorization” (Section 5). These two practices differ in their linguistic realizations, sequential and functional organization, and, what matters most here, they also involve different interpretive devices to establish the situated meaning of the contrasted items. At the same time, however, it will be shown that there are still more general interpretive strategies which are shared by both practices (Section 6).

3. Data and method

My study on contrasts is based on a corpus covering a range of interactional situations: five leisure time conversations among adolescents, one family dinner table conversation, one planning session for a radio show, three mediation sessions, one biographical interview and four political lectures with discussion in public places. Thirty instances of interactionally achieved contrasts were analyzed in detail. The sequential analysis proceeded in a conversation analytic manner, with special emphasis on the following issues:

- How is a contrast achieved and displayed (syntactically, prosodically)?
- How is it sequentially organized? When and by whom is the contrast established? How is it reacted to?
- Which words or phrases are contrasted?
- How does the contrast affect the local interpretation of the contrasted items and how are they semantically related to each other?

- Is there specific background knowledge contextualized which is relevant for the understanding of the contrast?
- What is the function of the contrast in the interactional sequence?

Since this study specifically deals with the effects of conversational activities on the local interpretation of words and phrases, issues of semantic structure and conversational inference gained major importance. It therefore became necessary to introduce some cognitive concepts, namely ‘background knowledge’, ‘frame-based expectation’ and ‘maxims of interpretation’, to account for the details of the local use and interpretation of contrasts.

4. Corrective contrast: Exposing and correcting a prior interpretation

Disaffiliative reactions, such as disagreement, objection or other-correction, pertain to a variety of things made relevant by a prior speaker’s turn, e.g. propositional content, opinions/assessments, lexical choice, compliance with a projected course of joint or next speaker’s action etc. Disaffiliation can be specifically directed to a prior speaker’s use of a specific word (or phrase): Next speaker displays that s/he does not accept prior speaker’s interpretation of the word as locally adequate. Here is an example from a meeting of adolescents planning a broadcast-show and discussing its contents.² Ken proposes that the group should play music for half an hour; Michaela objects that the music should not be played in one piece:³

(1) halbe stunde (broadcast meeting)

- 01 ++ Ke: Ich würd ma sagen so **halbe stunde** mUsik
I would say play about half an hour of
- 02 auflegen-
music-
- 03 → Mi: <<ff> ja aber **net am ganzen stück.**>
 <<ff> *yes but not in one piece.>*
- 04 Ma: ((laughs))
- 05 → Mi: [**zwsch=durch auch-** (.) weißt schon
[in between also- (.) you know
- 06 (was ich mein)]
(what I mean)]
- 07 Ra: [NEE::;]
 [NO::;]
- 08 Ke: [EIJÄ äh ja () nich so-]
 [well aye () not so-]
- 09 → Mi: also **AUFgeteilt** irgendwie, (.)
I mean split up somehow, (.)

After a short agreement token, Michaela refuses a potential interpretation of Ken’s proposal (line 2): The music should not be played in one piece. In what follows, she clar-

ifies her objection by formulating the interpretation of Ken's proposal that she would accept: There had to come something (i.e. talk) in-between (line 5), that is, the music had to be split up (*aufgeteilt*, line 9). There is thus the contrast between a (potential) continuative interpretation of *halbe stunde* ('half an hour'), which Michaela rejects, and a discontinuative interpretation, which she favours. Ken immediately shows in line 8 that he accepts the discontinuative interpretation. So, the contrast achieves two different interpretations of *halbe stunde*:

- a. Exposure: The contrast exposes a possible interpretation of *halbe stunde* as it was used by the prior speaker Ken. Michaela points to the fact that *halbe stunde* may have a continuative interpretation which is not acceptable from her point of view. The contrasted phrase *net am ganzen stück* ('not in one piece') negates (inferential) aspects of a possible interpretation of *halbe stunde* as used by Ken. This is, *net am ganzen stück* makes aspects of the interpretation of *halbe stunde* explicit which Ken did not formulate, but which Michaela attributes to Ken's (possible) interpretation. By rejecting a possible interpretation made available by his turn, Michaela suggests two alternative inferences: Either Ken must have had the interpretation she objects to, or he has failed to be as precise as necessary and thus risked a potential misunderstanding because of ambiguity or vagueness.
- b. Correction: The contrasted item *net am ganzen stück* supplants Ken's possible continuative interpretation of *halbe stunde* – which Michaela does not accept – with a discontinuative interpretation (which she prefers).

In a corrective contrast-sequence, then, the adequacy⁴ of the use and the semantics of a word in a prior speaker's turn is at issue. A second speaker expresses his/her rejection by contrasting the prior speaker's formulation (FO) with a second formulation (CO) which in some aspect opposes to FO. Thus, the basic schema is a dialogically achieved contrast structure:

- S1: FO
S2: (FO) *but* CO

4.1 Asymmetric contrast of perspectives and nested interpretation

The corrective contrast objects to the adequacy of a prior speaker's formulation by multiplying its interpretations. There are three interpretations of the formulation at issue which are involved in a dialogical corrective contrast:

- a. Prior speaker's own interpretation of FO in his/her own turn. In (1), Ken's own interpretation of *halbe stunde* might be continuative as well as discontinuative.
- b. Next speaker's interpretation of how prior speaker has or might have interpreted FO, that is, next speaker's exposure of a (possible) interpretation of FO. In (1), Michaela exposes the possible continuative interpretation of *halbe stunde*.

- c. Next speaker's corrective interpretation of FO, that is, next speaker introduces a contrasting interpretation which s/he proposes to be more adequate. In (1), the next speaker favours the discontinuative interpretation of *halbe stunde* by rejecting the continuative interpretation (*aber net am ganzen stück*; 'but not in one piece').

(a) and (b) must be kept apart, because (b) is not a direct, but a nested representation: Next speaker's exposition of prior speaker's interpretation of FO may not be accepted by him/her as a correct rendering of his/her intentions. This phenomenon is well-known from arguments. In excerpt (1), Ken accepts the correction (line 8) and seems to concede that he could have been understood as meaning a continuative interpretation of *halbe stunde*. Formulating a corrective contrast to a prior speaker's formulation is not only a way of (re-)specifying its meaning; it is also a way of expressing a (supposed) contrast of participants' perspectives. The activity of contrasting here creates two discursively relevant mental spaces (cf. Fauconnier 1985) which contain different readings of the target formulation – next speaker's own interpretation and his/her alter-representation of prior speaker's interpretation. These two interpretations are asymmetrically ordered with respect to the interactional process and to their evaluation. While the alter-representation reveals a backward looking, context-bound (Heritage 1995) understanding of the prior turn, which is denied, next speaker's own interpretation is a forward looking, context-renewing (Heritage 1995) interpretation, which is presented as the preferred basis for further talk. The inquiry into the semantic workings of the corrective contrast shows that the adversative or concessive relation 'FO *but* CO' essentially hides an antithetic relation 'Not FO as understood by prior speaker *but* FO as understood by next speaker' and thus an asymmetric ordering of conflicting perspectives.

I will present some further cases to provide an impression of the generality of corrective contrasts. Excerpt (2) is from an argument between mediator and proponent in a mediation session.⁵ The mediator claims that the proponent had complained that her opponent's daughter threw stones at clothes hanging in their common yard. The proponent denies to have made this complaint. Excerpt (2) starts with the mediator insisting on the truth of his quote by referring to the official record of the complaint. The proponent then tries to resolve the conflict and claims that the child threw stones, but did not hit clothes.

(2) schmeißt [Mediation; IDS-Mannheim 'Schlichtung' 3001/02]

- 01 Med: da ham sie awwer AUCH- (.)
there you have also- (.)
 02 angegebe wie die TOCHter der Antragsgegnerin auf
declared how the daughter of the opponent on
 03 dem <<len, überdeutlich prononciert> gemeINSamen
the <<len, overarticulate> common
 04 wäschetrockenplatz einen stein auf die wäsche
laundry drying ground

- 05 ++ die dort hI:ng **war:f**.> (--)
cast a stone at the clothes hanging there.> (--)
- 06 Pro: ja des is SO' (-)
well it is like this (-)
- 07 do is=n gArde- (.)
there is a garden- (.)
- 08 un vielleicht=n HALwe meder
and maybe half a meter
- 09 fonge die wÄschseile o:.(-)
starts the clothes-line. (-)
- 10 ++ also steht se im garde drin un **!SCHMEIßT!**- (--)
so she stands in the garden and throws- (--)
- 11 n halwe meder weit-(-)
half a meter- (-)
- 12 → awwer sie hot **nEt getroffe**.
but she did not hit the clothes.
- 13 Med: =ah do [muss se ja fascht trEffe.
 =uh so [she cannot but hit.
- 14 Pro: [so is des bei uns.
 [that's how it is at our place.

The mediator confronts the proponent with a contradiction: Before the excerpt starts, the proponent denied a fact which she previously had declared to be true (cf. lines 1–5). The proponent tries to resolve this (alleged) contradiction by a narrative contrast which is designed to make explicit the semantics of *warf* ('cast', line 5) as cited by the mediator: Using present tense and deictics which are rooted in the narrated situation, the proponent re-stages the process of the child throwing stones. What matters most to her defense and the semantics of *warf/schmeißt*⁶ ('cast'/'throws') is that she narrates three successive steps of the action:

- the source: the child starts the action of throwing the stone (line 10);
- the path: the stone flies half a meter (line 11);
- the goal: the stone misses the goal (line 12).

By making explicit that the stone did not reach its goal, this iconically designed narrative fragment achieves

- an exposure of the proponent's meaning: The proponent exposes that the mediator obviously assumes that the proponent meant an accomplishment-interpretation, i.e. *warf* ('cast') implies 'reached its goal';
- the correction of the accomplishment-interpretation by a mere activity-interpretation,⁷ i.e. *warf/schmeißt* ('cast'/'throws') for the proponent only means 'throwing something with the intention of striking a goal'. The activity-interpretation of *schmeißt* ('throws') is also highlighted by the elision of the prepositional object *auf die wäsche* ('at the clothes'), which the mediator used in line 4. Since the goal of the action is omitted, the description focuses on the activity itself. So, it also avoids the local ambiguity between a directional interpretation of the preposi-

tional phrase ('toward the clothes') and an achievement interpretation ('hit the clothes').

The corrective interpretation operates as an interpretation limiter which explicitly denies a semantic feature which the mediator includes in his (local) default interpretation auf *warf/schmeißt* ('cast'/'throws'). The narrative contrast, marked by *awwer* ('but', line 12), concedes that there is the expectation of an achievement-interpretation of *warf/schmeißt* ('cast'/'throws'). This achievement-interpretation, which the proponent attributes to the mediator, and her correcting interpretation are iconically displayed as she contrasts *schmeißt* ('throws') with the (unexpected) outcome *hat nEt getroffe* ('did not hit', line 12). The mediator reacts to this statement with a display of scepticism (line 13): He judges the failure to hit the clothes as most unlikely, and thus reinforces his expectation that the meaning of *warf/schmeißt* ('cast'/'throws') (in this context) implies 'hits the intended target'. Again, the contrast simultaneously works to expose implicit features of the meaning of a prior speaker's formulation and to replace them with next speaker's own corrective interpretation.

The corrective contrast is not restricted to adversative and concessive sequences, it can also be realized by preferential or antithetic constructions. Excerpt (3), which is from the same mediation session as excerpt (2), is an instance of a preferential contrast. The proponent had strongly complained that her opponent's children were rude. In turn, the opponent reproaches the proponent to slander her children in front of her neighbours.

(3) *frech* [Mediation; IDS-Mannheim 'Schlichtung' 3001/02]

- 01 Opp: *gege meine kinner lass isch mer net rumhetze.*
I won't have anyone slandering my children.
- 02 (-)
- 03 Pro: *sie hawwe e freschs mädl des wisse sie*
you have an insolent girl you know that
- 04 *ge!NAU!*
very well
- 05 Opp: *!↑ALLE! kinner sin frisch. (.)*
all children are insolent. (.)
- 06 *liewer hab isch e fresches kind wie e krankes*
I'd rather have an insolent child than a sick
- 07 *kind.*
child.

Excerpt (3) contains two corrective contrasts. The first one is:

- 03 ++ Pro: **sie hawwe** e freschs mädl des wisse sie
you have an insolent girl you know that
- 04 *ge!NAU!*
very well
- 05 → Opp: **!↑ ALLE!** kinner **sin** frisch. (.)
all children are insolent. (.)

The opponent counters the proponent's reproach by despecifying the semantics of *frech* ('insolent'). The opponent does not deny the proponent's assertion regarding her children, but she refuses its moral import as a reproach. She does so by choosing a contrasting referential set ('your girl' vs. 'all children') to which she applies the epithet *frech* ('insolent'). While the proponent categorizes the opponent's child as a member of the subset of insolent children (which implicitly are opposed to well-bred children), the opponent categorizes all children as insolent. Since her formulation eliminates the alternative set of 'well-bred children', which the proponent made relevant by singling out the opponent's daughter, the categorization *frech* loses its distinctive moral semantics and maybe also its distinctive descriptive power. The contrastive widening of the (locally relevant) extension of *frech* thus operates as a semantic correction of the proponent's semantics of *frech*. The correction does not only affect the denotational, but also the moral meaning of the word. It should be noted that in this case the contrast does not alter the meaning of the contrasted words itself: The quantificational contrast⁸ between 'you have an insolent girl' and 'all children are insolent' instead indirectly affects the meaning of the word *frech* which the contrasted quantities are attributed to. So, part of its meaning is altered by its collocational context, i.e. by the attribution of *frech* to referential sets which contrast in quantity (i.e. 'one' vs. 'all').

In the same argument sequence, the opponent uses a second contrast to elaborate further on the revaluation of *frech* ('insolent'):

- 03 ++ S1: sie hawwe e **freschs** mädl des wisse sie
 you have an insolent girl you know that
 04 ge!NAU!
 very well
 05 ++ S2: !↑ALLE! kinner sin fresch. (.)
 !↑ALL! children are insolent. (.)
 06 → S2: liewer hab isch e **fresches** kind wie e **krankes**
 I'd rather have an insolent child than a sick
 07 kind.
 child.

As she tries to keep up her countering position, the opponent, in line 6, resumes the proponent's categorization of her child as *frech* and establishes a preferential contrast between *frech* and *krank* ('sick') with respect to her child. In traditional semantic terms, both predicates would not be regarded as mutually exclusive, but as causally, logically, and semantically unrelated. Consequently, the attribution of one of them to a referent would neither preclude nor project the applicability of the other to the same referent. The preferential contrast, however, does not only express a preference for *frech* ('insolent') over *krank* ('sick'). It suggests an alternative or even the need for a choice between the two states 'having an insolent child' and 'having a sick child': Both words are constructed as a locally relevant set of complementaries. Now, contrasted with *krank* ('sick'), *frech* ('insolent') obtains a positive semantics, because the contrast highlights possibly relevant interpretations, such as 'vivid', 'healthy', 'self-reliant'. These interpretations were not available in the proponent's original context in line 1, where

frech was the upshot of her reproach that the opponent had failed to raise her children properly. In sum, we can trace a passage of the alteration and revaluation of the semantics of *frech* in this sequence. It proceeds by three steps, all of which crucially rely on contrast structures:

- a. S1 (line 3): *frech* is used derogatively and is distinctively attributed to the opponent's daughter; it means 'bad mannered, not well-bred';
- b. S2 (line 5): *frech* is contrastively attributed to children in general; this accomplishes a semantic despecification by extensional widening and gives *frech* a morally indifferent value;
- c. S2 (line 6): *frech* is contrastively preferred over *krank* ('sick'); *frech* obtains a positive valuation and means 'vivid, healthy, self-reliant etc.'

4.2 Inferential bases and interactive functions of the corrective contrast

All cases of corrective contrast we have considered involve a disagreement between the participants on the local adequacy of a formulation as a descriptive device. In most cases, prior speaker uses the formulation as adequate from his/her point of view. Next speaker then corrects the semantics of the word, because in his/her opinion, prior speaker implied a specific meaning, which s/he expresses by the contrast. Next speaker judges this implicit meaning, which s/he attributes to prior speaker's use of the formulation, as locally inadequate. Therefore s/he refuses the use of the formulation in the way the prior speaker did. The contrast thus rests on inferential reasoning which, schematically, runs as follows:

- S1: formulation is adequate;
 S2: formulation as used by S1 is not adequate,
 because formulation as used by S1 implies a meaning which is not adequate.⁹

This inferential structure is essentially argumentative: Next speaker treats the inadequacy of the inference which s/he draws from prior speaker's use of the word as a reason for the refusal of prior speaker's interpretation.

Corrective contrasts are used to express disaffiliation with a prior speaker's categorization by indicating an account for the disaffiliation. The corrective contrast is a reflexive move, because it accomplishes an activity – a disaffiliating turn – by simultaneously providing grounds for that activity. Corrective contrasts are most prominently used as a means of making disaffiliation accountable by performing a self-explicating disaffiliative action. They may but need not be followed by further explanations or clarifications (excerpt (1) is an example). Corrective contrasts not only oppose a prior turn, but they offer an alternative formulation. Therefore, they do not only decline a projected course of action, but suggest an alternative, or they point to a problem which has to be solved before the previously established joint project can be pursued further.

This repair-like and reflexive character makes them a potentially productive means of managing interactional disalignment and lack of intersubjectivity.

5. Explicative contrast: Warranting a deviation categorization

Corrective contrasts are achieved by a next speaker relating back to a prior speaker's turn. Other practices of contrasting are accomplished by only one speaker. One of them are explicative contrasts. In an explicative contrast, a contrast between two words or phrases is used to explain the local meaning of a third word or phrase and to warrant the relevance and adequacy of the categorization which is accomplished by the use of the third word. Here is an example from a conversation among adolescents. Before excerpt (4) starts, Denis had just told a story about a boy called Vito, who tries to take advantage of others. Now Bernd produces a second story about Vito that aligns with the upshot of the first: Vito is greedy and exploits his friends.¹⁰

(4) für geld (Youth hostel)

- 01 DC Be: das is mal widder TYPisch vito **für geld**.
that is TYPical of vito for money.
- 02 da hätt isch ihn eigentlich wieder GRAD. (--)
I would JUST have him. (--)
- 03 ROsenmontag ja? (.)
MONday before lent right? (.)
- 04 erzählt er uns die ganze zeit- (.)
he tells all of us again and again- (.)
- 05 das hat er FÜNF mal gesagt
he has said that FIVE times
- 06 wie GEIL man mit denen- (.)
how FAT you can- (.)
- 07 ++ ähm guten **PARTy machen** kann; (.)
erm have a good PARTY with them; (.)
- 08 Fr: ja.
yes.
- 09 → Be: und dann **RIppt** er die voll **ab**.
and then he really RIPS them off.
- 10 Fr: darauf hab isch
also last time I
- 11 [ihn auch das letzte mal drauf
[talked to him about that
- 12 De: [was hat er denn gemacht?
[what did he do then?
- 13 Fr: [angesprochen.
[last time.
- 14 → Be: [**RIppt** er die voll ab. (-)
[he really RIPS them off. (-)

15 ehy das war so hart.
aye it was so hard.

In line 1, Bernd formulates the upshot of the preceding story by categorizing Vito as *für geld*, meaning '(greedy) for money'. Bernd then produces a second story fragment that consists of two contrasting action descriptions: Vito often claimed that he had a good party with some other boys (*guten party machen*, line 7), whereas later he ripped them off (*rippt ab*, line 9).¹¹ The contrast provides for the upshot of the story fragment and is commented with indignation by Frank and Denis (lines 10–13).

Sequentially, the contrast is delivered as a warrant and simultaneously as a local semantic clarification of the initial categorization *für geld* in line 1. The basic schema is thus:

S1: deviation categorization is warranted and semantically explained by
FO *but* CO

5.1 The deviation categorization and the contrast as display of the violation of an expectation

There is a systematic asymmetry between the two categorizations which are co-selected to construct this type of contrast. The first categorization (here: 'have a party') is positive. This is made clear by explicit positive evaluations (*guten* ('good'), *GEIL* ('fat')). Having a party with someone establishes a scenario of shared fun, common activity, and solidarity. The second categorization *rippt ab* ('rips off') is negative. It is, however, not only intrinsically negative, but what is more interesting, in its sequential environment it is specifically to be heard as a violation of an expectation or a norm that was established by the preceding categorization: to rip the people off with whom you have a party does not fit the scenario of togetherness and solidarity. Bernd's and Frank's indignant comments and repetitions seem precisely to be directed at this violation of a social norm.

The contrasting action descriptions, thus, are a warrant for the relevance and for the adequacy of the initial categorization *für geld* ('greedy for money', line 1): Someone who acts inconsistently like this is aptly categorized as being 'greedy for money'. It belongs to a type of category I will refer to as 'deviation-categorization'. By a deviation-categorization the speaker indicates that a referent violates a norm or frustrates an expectation that is currently relevant. Deviation categories most importantly include social categories. Examples are nouns such as 'poser' (see excerpt (5)), 'exploiter', 'liar' and their verbal and adjectival variants (cf. Smith 1978: 'mentally ill'). Other deviation categories such as 'broken' (excerpt (8)), 'rancid' or 'old-fashioned' denote objects or abstract entities.

The contrast, however, is not only presented as a warrant. It also functions as a semantic clarification of the local meaning of the deviation-categorization: The contrast instructs the hearer how to specifically interpret the deviation-categorization in

its interactional environment. Typically, the contrast provides for a referential or extensional specification by describing contrasting actions, states of affair or properties. This specification is often accomplished by some narrative structure which orders the contrasting actions (etc.) in a sequence. As the contrast is a subset of possible contrasts which could serve as a warrant for the deviation-categorization, it does not just specify its reference. It also rules out intensional aspects which the word or phrase may have in other contexts, but does not have in its current use. E.g., 'greedy for money' could imply that a person thus categorized tries to deceive others in order to get their money; this, however, is an interpretation which is not made relevant (although not necessarily excluded) by the explicative contrast in (4).

The following cases provide further examples of the semantic effects and the uses of explicative contrasts. Excerpt (5) is from an interaction among adolescents. Denis and Chris talk about another peer-group member (Markus) who had just been 'dissed', i.e. (more or less) playfully insulted by a peer (cf. Deppermann & Schmidt 2001). Denis and Chris ridicule Markus as a *poser* ('poser', line 1), i.e. someone who pretends to be cool and unaffected by being 'dissed'.

(5) *poser* (Youth center)

- 01 DC Chr: its its (.) jetzt is er wieder de **POser** heha;
now now (.) now he's the poser again hehe;
- 02 Den: =kuck ma de markus der sitzt dahinten, (-)
=uh look at markus sitting over there, (-)
- 03 der sitzt <<all> im=moment> grad da- (.)
at the moment he's sitting there just- (.)
- 04 wie SÜleyman oder so, (.)
like suleyman or so, (.)
- 05 SS: ((laughter))
- 06 Fab: <<meckerndes Lachen> hehehehehe
 <<bleating laughter> hahahahaha
- 07 ? : [= <<dim> schei:ße; >
 [= *shi:t;*
- 08 Chr: [= <<all> de su:leyman immer im wohnwagen ne? (.)
 [= *su:leyman always in the caravan uh? (.)*
- 09 und wie der gemeint hat- (-)
and how he claimed- (-)
- 10 ++ ich **verTRA:G fünf** [**beer**,]> (.)
I can take five [beers,]> (.)
- 11 ? : [äh?]
 [ah?]
- 12 Chr: <<meckerndes Lachen> hehehA, > (-)
 <<bleating laughter> hahahU, > (-)
- 13 → und deNACH im Wohnwagen **lag und=n**.
and then he lay down in the caravan.

Denis takes a first step of the elaboration of the local semantics of the deviation categorization *poser* by comparing Markus to another member of the peer-group, Suleyman.

He is a peripheral, low-status member of the peer-group and is regarded as a braggard. He is thus introduced with a metonymic specification of *poser*. Starting with line 8, Chris confirms this analogy by telling an episode which attests to Suleyman being a poser. He claimed to be able to take five beers (*vertrag fünf bier*, line 10), which would be a display of masculinity. This announcement contrasts sharply with the outcome of the consumption: Suleyman lay down in the caravan (*lag und=n*, line 13), that is, he was “too weak”. This result frustrates the expectation which Suleyman’s commissive announcement had established, and so the sequence warrants the deviation-categorization *poser*. Since the contrast of claim and reality refers to Suleyman, it is an explication of *poser* – which refers to Markus – by way of an evocative analogy. It highlights semantic aspects such as ‘bragging’, ‘weakness’, ‘incredible and easy to be discovered façade’. Interpretations of *poser* that would be salient in other contexts are not supported (such as ‘type of heavy-metal freak’, ‘overdressed’).

In excerpt (6), a contrast is constructed in order to account for two different deviation-categorizations. The segment is from a biographical research interview. The interviewee talks about how he felt when he came to West Germany (FRG) in the 1980s as an immigrant from the former German Democratic Republic (GDR). He complains that he was rejected by his West German age-mates (‘here’) because of his clothing which did not comply with youth cultural fashion standards.

(6) von einem anderen stern (Biographical interview)

- 01 IE: un HIER war das natürlich ganz KRASS.
and here of course it was very blatant.
- 02 als AUSländer, (.)
as a foreigner, (.)
- 03 DC dann ANgezogen wie von einem anderen STERN.
then dressed like from another planet.
- 04 IR: ((laughs))
- 05 IE: also ich bin mit SIEBziger JAHre
I mean I wore
- 06 ++ **clogs** rumgelaufen, (-)
clogs in a seventies style, (-)
- 07 und das mit DREIzehn
and that being thirteen years old in
- 08 neunzehnhundertFÜNfundachtzig,
nineteeneightyfive,
- 09 IR: ((laughs))
- 10 IE: wo die Anderen schon langsam ANgefangen
while the others already started
- 11 → haben **MARKen** zu gucken. (-)
to look for brands. (-)
- 12 und DIE:sel gab es damals noch nicht
and diesel didn’t exist then
- 13 aber es war halt marco POlo oder,
but it was just marco polo or,
- 14 IR: BEnetton.

- 15 IE: benetton.
 16 BEnetton oder marco PO:lo. (-)
benetton or marco polo. (-)
 17 also ich habe BILder von mir gesehen
I mean I have seen pictures of me
 18 also- (.) hh
I mean- (.) hh
 19 IR: ((laughs aloud))
 20 IE: <<lachend> also ich verSTEH
 <<laughing> I mean I understand
 21 DC dass sie mich **AUSgegrenzt** haben.>
that they excluded me.>

In line 3, the interviewee describes his former dress as like from another planet (*angezogen wie von einem anderen stern*). This is a visual metaphor for deviation. In what follows, he clarifies this categorization by saying that he wore *clogs* (lines 5f.), which was an old-fashioned style (*siebziger jahre*, ‘seventies style’) at that time. He contrasts this with the preference for *marken* (‘brands’, line 11f.), that is, with clothing made by youth-culturally valued producers which adolescents in Germany preferred at that time (*neunzehnhundertfünfundachtzig*, ‘1985’, line 8). The contrast with respect to a set of categories for clothing (‘clogs’ vs. ‘brands’) thus is co-selected with a contrast of temporal categories (‘seventies’ vs. ‘1985’). In contradistinction to excerpts (4), (5) and (7), however, the explicative contrast does not rest on a temporal ordering of contrasted events or actions. Here, it is a majority norm which is established by *marken* (‘brands’) and frustrated by *clogs*. This frustration provides for a comic incongruence which is acknowledged by the story recipient’s laughter (line 9). After the interviewee has collaborated with the interviewer in producing examples for brands, he concludes that this contrast was a sufficient reason for Western German boys to exclude him (*ausgegrenzt*, line 21). The two deviation-categorizations stand in different relations to the explicative contrast:

- a. The contrast provides for an extensional and metonymic semantic clarification of the initial deviation-categorization *angezogen wie von einem anderen stern* (‘dressed like from another planet’, line 1). This formulaic and metaphorical description is explicated by the contrast of prototypical items (*clogs*) or properties (*brands*) which stand metonymically for conflicting styles of dressing.
- b. The concluding deviation-categorization *ausgegrenzt* (‘excluded’, line 21) is not semantically explicated by the contrast:¹² It does not provide a specification as to how, where and when exclusion was done and what kind of exclusion is meant. The contrast, however, provides a reason for the activity of excluding. So, the contrast does not explain the categorization *ausgegrenzt* (‘excluded’). Rather, it enhances its intelligibility, but only in an argumentative, not in a semantic, dimension.

5.2 Projection and restriction of the interpretation of the contrast by a prior deviation-categorization

Explicative contrasts are not only employed to warrant the deviation-categorization. Simultaneously, they specify its local semantic interpretation. In the cases presented, the deviation-category itself is introduced prior to the contrast. However, there are also cases in which a deviation category is presented as a concluding upshot (cf. (6)), and cases in which the contrast is designed to suggest an inference to a deviation-categorization which is not explicitly formulated. The practice of warranting a deviation-categorization is always accomplished by one speaker in a multi-unit turn, which is often projected from its outset. The contrast can therefore be said to be often planned in advance as a narrative device.¹³ It is primarily used as a building block of other genres that are at the same time descriptive and morally implicative, such as gossiping, blaming, or complaining. While the contrast provides for the descriptive core of states, events or actions that warrant a deviation-categorization, the deviation-categorization itself is presented as its moral upshot in the story preface or in its conclusion. When it is used in a preface which calls for further narrative elaboration, it projects the kind of violations, problems etc. to be told and which the contrast must be understood as being an instance of. The deviation-categorization thus acts as an interpretive restriction which constrains the possible interpretation of the contrasted items.

For example, in (6), the deviation-categorization *angezogen wie von einem anderen stern* ('dressed like from another planet', line 3) projects an explication of how the teller's clothes differed from his age-mates. This projection also constrains the interpretation of *clogs* which is used for the teller's own dress – it is projected as being peculiar, negatively valued and inadequate. If the speaker had formulated another preface, *clogs* could also have been interpreted as reflecting innovation, individuality or health orientation as compared to *marken* ('brands').

In (5), the deviation-categorization *poser* (line 1), constrains the interpretation of the contrast, because it pre-establishes an explanation for the contrast between the announcement *ich vertrag fünf bier* ('I can take five beers') and the result of the consumption *lag und=n* ('he lay down'). Given the initial categorization *poser*, the claim to be able to take five beers is clearly to be interpreted as bragging. This restriction would not necessarily be in order, if, e.g., the protagonist had been categorized as 'ill' in the outset.

Explicative contrasts thus serve as a (referential) explication of a deviation-categorization which itself acts as a constraint for the interpretation of the contrast. It does so because it either has an intrinsically contrastive semantics (such as 'poser', 'broken'), which makes contrast strongly expectable, or because it projects a problem, deviation, etc. Since the deviation-categorization and the contrasted categorizations constitute a local set of categories which are to be understood as coherently co-selected, they reciprocally constrain and specify each other's local interpretation. That is, the hearer will select the interpretations for each of them according to the supposition

that the contrasted items explicate the meaning of the deviation-categorization. The latter in turn restricts the possible interpretations of the contrasted items.

5.3 Interactional functions of the explicative contrast

Although explicative contrasts are realized by descriptions, they clearly have an argumentative function and they carry intrinsic evaluations. As such, they differ from the contrasts that Ford (2000, 2001) studied: In her data, contrasts were treated as objects in need of explanation or solution. Just on the contrary, explicative contrasts serve as explanations for the use of a deviation-categorization which establishes a complaint etc. This is most obvious when a contrast is delivered only after a disaffiliative hearer's response to a deviation-categorization. In these cases the contrast is interactionally occasioned and not part of a planned explication of a deviation-categorization. Excerpt (7) is a case in question: A child complains that she cannot play the computer game 'Harry Potter', because the computer mouse is *kaputt* ('broken', deviation-categorization in line 2). Her mother, however, does not align with this assertion and seems to account for the trouble by the child's incompetence to handle the computer correctly: She suggests that the child asks a classmate how to play the game. In lines 8–9, the child insists on her initial categorization *kaputt* ('broken') by warranting it with the contrast between her knowledge about the correct handling of the computer and her lack of success.

(7) *kaputt* (Dinner table conversation)

- 01 Ch: das harry potter spiel GE:HT wieder NICHT. (.)
the harry potter game again does not work. (.)
- 02 DC IMmer- (-) immer ist die MAU:S **kaPUTT**. (.)
always- (-) always the mouse is broken. (.)
- 03 Mo: du kannst doch den A- (.) ANdy anRUFen; (-)
you can call up A- (.) Andy; (-)
- 04 der hat dir doch SCHON mal erklärt
he already once explained to you
- 05 WIE das geht. (.)
how it works. (.)
- 06 der weiß es be[STIMMT.
he knows [for sure.
- 07 Ch: [NEIN NEIN- (-)
[no no- (-)
- 08 ++ ich **WEIß wie es geht**- (.)
I know how it works- (.)
- 09 → <<all> aber es> **GE::HT nicht**.
but it doesn't work.
- 10 (1,0)
- 11 Mo: ja:- (.) dann kann ma nichts machen.
well- (.) then you can't do anything.

In excerpt (7), there is an interesting fusion of argumentative and semantic concerns which points to the moral implicativity and possibly intrinsic argumentative semantics of deviation-categorizations. The child had first warranted her deviation-categorization *kaputt* ('broken', line 2) by only referring to the fact that the computer did not work (line 1). The mother's disaffiliative uptake (lines 3–6) points to the fact that a computer does not work may depend on other causes, such as wrong handling. Consequently, the child uses the contrast between correct handling (implicated by *ich WEIß wie es geht*, 'I know how it works', line 8) and (unexpected) malfunction (*GEHT nicht*, 'doesn't work', line 9) as a refined warrant which is designed to counter the mother's objection because it denies incorrect handling as the cause for the malfunction of the computer. The child makes it explicit that *kaputt* ('broken') has an argumentative meaning: Its assertive use does not only state the observation about a state of affairs ('something doesn't work'), but it additionally requires a diagnosis of an internal cause for this state ('something doesn't work because of an internal defect'). Although this internal cause is not explicitly asserted, it is strongly implicated by the child's denial of wrong handling which I see as the only contextually salient alternative explanation. The semantic explication therefore serves as an argumentative account and simultaneously points to the causal semantic structure of the deviation-categorization *kaputt* ('broken'): It not only diagnoses a functional state, but also locates the cause for this state in the object it is attributed to.

To fulfill the function of warranting the deviation-categorization, it is most important to select and combine facts in exactly the way the contrast does: One part of the contrast would not be sufficient, and the function of the contrast would be blocked, if the speaker left open the possibility of further facts that could provide for a normalizing account of the contrasting facts.¹⁴ So, the explanatory or argumentative value of the contrast needs to be plausible and obvious for its recipients, and the speaker has to take care not to provide for additional descriptions which could serve as a competing explanation that in turn would undermine the deviation-categorization.

6. Two general interpretive strategies for contrast structures

Sections 4 and 5 discussed the specific sequential, functional and semantic properties of two practices of contrasting and their impacts on the local interpretation of the words or phrases from which the contrast is built. Still, we have not yet addressed another main issue: How can participants understand words to be local opposites, although there is no common lexical paradigm they are part of? In what follows, I will claim that there are two general strategies for the interpretation of the contrasted items. These are frame-based interpretation and maximization of contrast. These two strategies help to provide the contrasted items with an oppositional meaning, which also specifies their local interpretation in a more comprehensive sense. The use of these two strategies is pervasive with any kind of discursive contrast and seems to be independent of the specific practice of contrasting.

6.1 Frame-based interpretation

Only in some cases of antithesis, discursive contrasts are made up of items which stand to each other in a lexical opposition in the traditional sense (like 'hot' vs. 'cold', 'come' vs. 'go' etc.). In most cases, there is a pragmatic opposition within a frame:¹⁵ The first item contextualizes a frame of associated expectations which are violated by the contrasted second item. These expectations are systematically tied to the category which is locally made relevant by the first item. The discursive contrast introduces a fact which violates or frustrates some of the expectations that are locally operative because of the first categorization. There are different kinds of expectations which can be frustrated by the contrast.

- a. There may be a violation of social norms, such as the violation of an expectation of solidarity and reciprocity in (4), or the deviation from standards of fashion in (6).
- b. There may be a violation of causal consequences that can be expected given the antecedents stated. In (2), the action of throwing stones made expectable that they reach their target; however, they did not. Another example of a causal expectation is (7): the correct handling of a device allows for the expectation that the device will work, but here it does not.

In all of these cases, the contrasted words or phrases are not opposed to one another "as such", but with regard to social, instrumental, causal etc. regularities that are contextualized to be locally operative. These background expectations are constitutive of the existence and the intelligibility of the contrast. If they are neither shared nor recoverable, a contrast will not arise for the hearer. Many contrasts are located in temporally ordered frames, i.e. scripts (Schank & Abelson 1977), which represent a normal course of action or process. This is the case in (2), (4), (5), (7): the first part of the contrast describes an action or a state of affairs that makes strongly expectable a future state or action which is not realized by the second part. So, there is often a second axis of co-selection, namely a temporal axis, which systematically combines a temporal sequence of events with the co-selected contrasting items.

Frame-based interpretation does not only provide for the pragmatic opposition between the contrasted categorizations. It also supplies the background knowledge which is necessary to bridge a gap between the facts expressed by the first categorization and those which the contrasting second one represents. For example, in (7), the contrast between *ich weiß wie es geht* ('I know how it works', line 8) and *es geht nicht* ('it doesn't work', line 9) needs the bridging assumption (Clark & Haviland 1977) that the speaker not only knew how to handle the computer correctly, but that she actually did so. Only on this condition, the failure of the computer to work correctly is a relevant frustration of the expectation contextualized by 'I know how it works'. In such cases, the tacit reconstruction and acceptance of such assumptions is decisive for recognizing a contrast. It would not arise, if they were denied or if a competing explanation for the co-occurrence of the first and the second categorization was proposed.

The background knowledge which is required to grasp the contrasting interpretations can be culturally specific. In (3), line 6, the preferential contrast between *frech* ('insolent') and *krank* ('sick') relies on a folk psychological theory. It says that a child will become sick if exposed to a restrictive education which (only) aims at preventing the child from being insolent. This folk theory has it that there is a conditional and genetic relation between *frech* ('insolent') and *krank* ('sick'): If a child is not allowed to be insolent, then it will become sick. The folk theory gives an account for the systematics of why and how *frech* and *krank* are contrastively related to one another. This account cannot be gleaned from the interactional sequence itself, it must be supplied by the hearer in order to reconstruct its coherence. Moreover, appeal to this background knowledge is necessary in order to select the right semantic interpretation for the contrasted items. In the context of their contrast and on the basis of the folk psychological theory,

- a. *frech* means 'vivid, clever, self-reliant etc.' – and not 'disobedient', 'uneducated', or 'rude' which was its locally relevant semantics, when *frech* was used before by the prior speaker in line 1 in the same extract;
- b. *krank* here has to be specified as 'psychologically ill' – and not 'physically ill', 'lying in bed' or 'insane' which it can mean in other contexts.

Another example of how interpretations of contrasted items might depend on a complex frame is (6). *Clogs* (line 6) and *marken* ('brands', line 11) do not routinely make up a contrast because any clog can have a brand as its property.¹⁶ Here, however, wearing clogs is contrasted with wearing brands. Together with the information given about historical and cultural context ('1985', line 8; adolescents in West Germany, lines 1–2, 10–11), the recipient can construct a frame of youth-cultural fashion preferences, which allows to fix the local interpretation of *clogs* and *marken* ('brands'):

- a. 'Brands' occupy the slot of fashionable objects or product-properties. They do not denote a formal product-property which just any brand would be an instance of. Instead, the hearer is forced to construct an autohyponymous interpretation: *marken* here specifically means 'prestigious in-brands'. This autohyponymous interpretation is further clarified by the examples of relevant brands (*diesel*, *benetton*, *marco polo*), which the participants collaboratively construct in lines 12–16.
- b. With respect to the frame of youth-cultural fashion preferences, clogs are not only out of fashion, but further specified as old-fashioned (*siebziger jahre*, 'seventies', line 5). *Clogs* can thus be understood as a metonym for 'old-fashioned clothing' and as carrying some additional, more vaguely associated features like 'poor', 'ugly', 'uninformed'. Interpretations of *clogs* appropriate to other contexts are irrelevant ('healthy'), or at least defocused ('kind of shoe').

These examples show that the local interpretation of words in conversation can essentially depend on ethnographic, historical and other cultural knowledge. Its relevance may be contextualized by linguistic cues with varying degrees of definiteness (cf. Gumperz 1982).

In sum, the inference to a frame is essential for the reconstruction of the local semantics of the contrasted items. Background knowledge is required in order to understand how and why the second part is pragmatically opposed to the first. Specifically, a frame can

- a. be contextualized by one part of the contrast and involve an expectation that is frustrated by the other part,
- b. supply bridging assumptions that are necessary to conceive of the elements contrasted as being systematically and contrastively related,
- c. relate both parts of the contrast to each other in an explanatory structure,
- d. consist of background knowledge that is generally operative for (a stretch of) a conversation and that informs the participants' situated reasoning on which the local semantics of the contrasted items may rely.

6.2 Maximization of contrast

Although background knowledge constrains and suggests possible interpretations of contrasted words or phrases, it is not sensitive to the particular fact that they are used as part of a contrast which the speaker produces to be understood as such. So, in (3) the folk psychological theory can supply an explanation of how *frech* ('insolent') and *krank* ('sick') might be genetically related to each other (see Section 6.1), but it does not necessarily fix an opposing interpretation of the items. Rather, it seems that the hearer must first recognize the speaker's intention to construct a maximally contrasting interpretation of the items. Maximization of contrast in this case involves several dimensions of meaning:

- a. an antonymic evaluation: *frech* ('insolent') is positively valued, *krank* ('sick') negatively;
- b. the supposition of incompatibility or even complementarity: 'insolent' seems to imply 'not sick', 'not insolent' seems to imply 'sick'; maybe the speaker even implies that a bi-conditional relation holds, i.e., being 'insolent' and being 'not sick' imply one another;
- c. it establishes a negative causal link between the categorizations;
- d. it instructs the search for interpretations of both items which maximize such semantic aspects that can be understood as being opposed to each other, such as *frech* implies 'healthy', while *krank* implies 'inactive'.

'Maximization' thus means that the hearer is instructed to watch out for and adopt contrasting aspects of meaning as part of the locally relevant interpretation of the contrasted items, while possibly common or unrelated aspects of meaning are defocused as currently irrelevant or even as locally invalid. *Frech* ('insolent') vs. *krank* ('sick'), for instance, could in other contexts both be evaluated as negative characteristics, which are dispreferred and should be fought by parents, and they could even be positively

related to one another by a competing folk psychological theory that sees sickness as a just punishment for being insolent.¹⁷

Contrasted items affect one another reciprocally in their interpretation, i.e., their specific local interpretations mutually depend on each other.¹⁸ In fact, the hearer first needs to recognize that the speaker intends to convey an asymmetric evaluative contrast in order to choose the right folk psychological frame within which s/he can interpret *frech* and *krank*. If s/he did not recognize that a contrast was intended, there may be quite different ways to relate the items to each other, and some of them would entail very different interpretations for them.

A similar reasoning that maximizes the contrast is necessary for a correct understanding of most of the examples discussed, e.g.:

- In (6), *und=n liegen* ('to lie down') needs to be specified as 'loss of self-control and bad physical condition', for this is exactly the opposite of 'unimpeded self-control and physical condition' which was implied by the contrasting claim *ich vertrag fünf bier* ('I can take five beers').
- In (7), *clogs* and *marken* ('brands') have to be understood as polar antonyms with respect to a scale of 'being fashionable'. This in turn forces *clogs* into a metonymic interpretation and *marken* into an autohyponymic sense (cf. Section 6.1).

In general, we can posit a 'maxim of the maximization of contrast': If the hearer recognizes that the speaker intends to contrast two words, then s/he interprets them so as to maximize their contrast in meaning. I will briefly comment on parts of this formulation:

The reference to the recognition of the speaker's intention is most central because it instructs the hearer to look for cues that can be used to constitute or contextualize a contrast.¹⁹ Once this intention is recognized, the hearer will not only recognize that the contrasted items somehow do not fit together, but s/he realizes that they are systematically co-selected in order to convey a deliberate contrast to an expectation. The instruction to maximize the contrast implies that the hearer should maximize the ways in which they are contrastively relevant to each other. This involves that the contrasted words or phrases are related to one another with respect to a common frame, that the hearer actively looks for motivational, instrumental, causal etc. links which can explain the co-occurrence of the contrasted states, and that s/he does not assume the existence of unstated facts which would eliminate the contrast. Finally, the appeal to maximize the contrast in meaning instructs the hearer to look for common semantic dimensions on which the two items can be located as inhabiting opposing (polar, complementary etc.) positions. This preference for maximizing contrasts in meaning is reflected by the fact that the contrasting items are routinely associated with an asymmetric evaluation, that is, if contextually suitable, one of them is interpreted as being positive, the other as being negative.

The maxim guides the selection, foregrounding and construction of local interpretations for the contrasted items among the range of otherwise contextually and lexically possible interpretations. Other interpretations which would be possible, but

which focus on common or unrelated semantic properties, are disfavoured. Instead, the maxim works as a heuristics which instructs the hearer to construct new meanings that have not been associated before with one of the words (phrases) or even both of them.

The maxim of maximizing the contrast is reminiscent of Sacks' (1972) hearer's maxim for the co-selection of categorizations. Sacks' maxim instructs the hearer to interpret subsequent categorizations consistently as belonging to the same membership categorization device (MCD) as a first one (if possible). Sacks' maxim has a number of interpretive consequences that parallel those of the maxim of maximizing the contrast, namely, the maximization of coherence between categorizations, the supposition of a systematic choice by the speaker and the incorporation into a common frame.²⁰

The maxim of the maximization of the contrast is also a corollary of the second Gricean maxim of quantity: "Don't make your contribution more informative than is required" (Grice 1975) in its interpretation by Levinson (2000: 112ff.), who calls it the "Principle of Informativeness". It instructs the hearer to interpret an utterance as specific as possible, that is, as maximally fulfilling the speaker's communicative intention as reconstructed by the hearer. This principle makes the hearer suppose that stereotypical, frame-based knowledge can be used in order to amend, enrich, disambiguate, and connect the speaker's descriptions in order to maximize coherence. It also suggests that there are no unstated facts which would thwart the reconstructed intentional upshot.

7. Conclusion

Contrasting in conversation is not one homogeneous practice. In my paper, I have focused on two variants that differ in their ways of providing contrasted words with a specific local interpretation: Correcting a prior categorization and warranting a deviation-categorization. Furthermore, I have tried to show that there are two general strategies of interpreting contrasted lexical items as semantically contrasting needed in order to arrive at a contrastive local interpretation: Frame-based interpretation and maximization of contrast. These strategies are applied regardless of the specific kind of practice by which the contrast is accomplished. Speakers use conversational activities and background knowledge to construct locally specific interpretations of lexical items. I tried to show that and – at least in some basic ways – how both sources of interpretation are needed and made relevant by each other in order to achieve local semantic interpretations.²¹ This study is thus an empirically backed plea for the integration of conversation analytic and cognitive approaches in the study of interactional linguistics, especially for concerns of semantics and meaning construction.

As to the relation of lexical and conversational structure, this study reveals that locally relevant semantic contrasts may be accomplished ad hoc by activities of contrasting. Looking ahead, it also suggests that conversational contrasting may have its effects on lexical structure, at least in the long run: Lexical contrasts might ultimately rely on conversational contrasts that have been used routinely. A pervasive, repeated,

routine use of conversational contrasts may provide lexical items with an interpretation which becomes available “out of context”, that is, independent of the activity of contrasting.²² The lexical item may then be said to incorporate the meaning potential which was supplied by instances of discursive contrasting as a salient possibility of interpretation, that is, it somehow absorbs its opposite as the relevant frame of interpretation as a meaning potential. This can be used in other contexts without the need to be re-instated by manifest contrasts. Further studies on the history of the contrasting use and the meaning of lexical items will be necessary to show whether this genetic hypothesis about semantic change holds. If it turns out to be right, the interactional linguistic claim that routine interactional activities petrify as linguistic structure would also be given a basis in the realm of semantics.

Notes

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1. Sweetser (1990) also states these two shortcomings of structuralist semantics from a cognitive-pragmatic viewpoint.
2. In most of the following examples the participants use Southern German dialects. For the transcription conventions used here see Selting et al. (1998).
3. In the transcripts, first parts of contrasting formulations are marked by ++, while second parts are indicated by arrows (→).
4. The vagueness of “adequacy” is intentional, because there may be very different matters at issue, such as truth, evaluation, applicability, precision of prior speaker’s formulation.
5. Excerpts (2) and (3) are data from the corpus “Schlichtungsgespräche” (‘Mediation sessions’) of the Institut für Deutsche Sprache (Institute for German Language, Mannheim/Germany).
6. The German verbs *werfen* and *schmeißen* are denotationally perfectly synonymous when used as a predicate taking the direct object *stein* (‘stone’). The use of *schmeißen*, however, is restricted to orality. It may be that the reformulation of *warf* (line 5) as *schmeißt* (line 10) serves to adumbrate a semantic difference and thus is not merely a paraphrase. However, the semantic correction only becomes evident as the proponent negates the expected result of the action in line 12.
7. The distinction between accomplishment- and activity-interpretation is made by Pustejovsky (1995: 12).
8. Note that a contrastive accent is put most emphatically on *!ALLE!* (‘all’), thus stressing the quantificational contrast.
9. The inferential structure is slightly different in the case of the preferential contrast *frech* (‘insolent’) vs. *krank* (‘sick’) in excerpt (3). Here, the participants do not disagree whether *frech* is an adequate attribution to the opponent’s daughter. Rather, they disagree on its evaluation: While the proponent evaluates *frech* negatively, the opponent uses the contrast with *krank* to point to the inference that *frech* has to be evaluated positively.
10. The deviation categorization is indicated by ‘DC’ in the transcripts.

11. It turns out later that this refers to the fact that Vito consumed large quantities of the other boys' drugs.
12. It is only explained later in the interview.
13. I found only one case in which a contrast warranting a deviation-categorization was produced by two speakers. However, in that specific case, the second speaker was only bringing out a contrast in the clear that had already been adumbrated by the first speaker. Such a case can be understood as an eminent display of shared knowledge and shared attitudes towards a person or an object.
14. This could be shown for all cases discussed. For instance, in (5), other causes than Suleyman's consumption of beer may have made him lie down in the caravan; or in (7), the mouse might not have been branched correctly etc.
15. The notion 'frame' (Fillmore 1982, 1985; Barsalou 1992) is used here as a cover term that encompasses different models of knowledge structures which have been claimed to account for inferential processes of situated understanding. Among them are concepts like 'frame', 'schema', 'scenario' and 'script'. For the present concerns, differences in notation, internal structure, representational format, inferential procedures etc. between these models are of minor importance. It has to be noted, however, that frames here are not regarded as fixed knowledge structures which are invariably associated with a specific word. Rather, they are conceived of as context-dependent structures, which can be flexibly adapted to contextual information, may be reworked and constructed on the spot (cf. Barsalou 1992) and are subject to processes of spreading activation (Herrmann et al. 1996).
16. In a representation of the standard-meaning of *clogs*, 'brand' would be an 'is a'-slot, which would be instantiated differently for clogs from different producers.
17. Moreover, to be insolent can be considered as a kind of social illness, or physically sick children can be said to be less insolent, etc.
18. This is different with cases like (2), where *nicht getroffen* ('did not hit') does affect *schmeißt* ('throws'), but in turn is not affected by the latter.
19. This should not be mistaken as a plea for a mentalist stance of analysis or even as a supposition that the hearer could inspect the speaker's intentions. The emphasis on the requirement to recognize the speaker's intention points to the fact that the hearer needs to ascribe an intention to the speaker in order to understand his/her turns as intelligible and purposive contributions to a conversation and that s/he does so by interpreting the speaker's public activities in terms of intentional actions.
20. The notion of 'MCD' can be accommodated to the concept of 'frame'. In its collection-like, taxonomic and paradigmatic character, however, it is more restricted than other kinds of frames, which also allow for causal, instrumental, moral, rational, etc. links between their elements and which explicitly focus on the inferential (default-)reasoning connections between their elements.
21. In fact, "activities" cannot be recognized as such without bringing relevant background knowledge to the fore, whereas the relevant knowledge needs to be cued and validated by ongoing conversational activities.
22. The interpretation of *frech* ('insolent') seems to be a case in question: Its opposition to *krank* ('sick') meanwhile is "routinely relevant" and exploited in a variety of uses, where there is no manifest contrast.

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Form and function of ‘first verbs’ in talk-in-interaction

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‘First verbs’ are introduced and briefly discussed by Sacks (1992) as a linguistic resource for the projection of a multi-unit turn, i.e., a turn consisting of more than one turn-constructional unit (TCU). According to Sacks, ‘first verbs’ project another TCU that has to do with the failure of the event described in the TCU containing the ‘first verb’ and can be, for example, an account for that failure. The present study examines more extensively the form and function of ‘first verbs’ in everyday English talk-in-interaction, trying to provide initial answers to the following questions: (i) What verbs or verb-forms constitute the group of ‘first verbs’? (ii) What are their characteristic morpho-syntactic, lexico-semantic, and pragmatic features? (iii) What trajectory do they project for the following talk? (iv) How is that projection resolved? (v) In what kinds of sequential environments do ‘first verbs’ occur? (vi) What can ‘first verbs’ be used to do interactionally? It will be argued that the group of ‘first verbs’ consists of a limited number of verbs which are characterized by certain morpho-syntactic, lexico-semantic and pragmatic features and which share the two basic functions of pragmatically projecting further talk and evoking a counterfactual alternative world. Furthermore, ‘first verbs’ are shown to be a lexical resource for the organization of conversation which speakers exploit in highly context-sensitive ways for a range of interactional purposes in different sequential environments.

1. Introduction¹

The notion of ‘first verbs’ was introduced by Sacks (1992), who uses the term to describe verbs, or rather verb-forms, such as *wanted*, as in *she wanted to go in the main entrance*. He calls these ‘first verbs’ because they indicate that “sequentially for this sentence [nowadays we would say *turn*, S.S.-W.] another clause [nowadays we would say *turn-constructional unit* or *TCU*, S.S.-W.] with another verb will come” (Sacks 1992:181). Sacks goes on to say that the TCU containing the ‘first verb’ not only indicates that another TCU will follow, but also that that following TCU will involve a failure. In his example, the TCU following *she wanted to go in the main entrance* is *and they would not let her go in*, which describes and accounts for her failure to go in.

Translated into more modern terminology, we would say then that ‘first verbs’ are a linguistic resource for the projection of a multi-unit turn. What is projected by the ‘first verb’ is another TCU that has to do with the failure of the event described in the TCU containing the ‘first verb’ and can be, for example, an account for that failure (Sacks 1992: 182).

In this study, I examine more closely and systematically the form and function of ‘first verbs’ in everyday English talk-in-interaction. More specifically, I pursue the following questions: (i) What verbs or verb-forms constitute the group of ‘first verbs’? (ii) What are their characteristic morpho-syntactic, lexico-semantic, and pragmatic features? (iii) What trajectory do they project for the following talk? (iv) How is that projection resolved? (v) In what kinds of sequential environments do ‘first verbs’ occur? (vi) What can ‘first verbs’ be used to do interactionally?

2. What are ‘first verbs’ as discussed by Sacks (1992)?

In his lectures, Sacks (1992) comments only very briefly on what he terms ‘first verbs’, discussing just the following example of *wanted to* as a ‘first verb’, which is embedded in a storytelling sequence:²

(1) Main entrance [Sacks 1992: 180]

- 1 E: An’ there was two p’leece cars across the
 2 ⇒ street, anleh- colored lady WAN’TUH go in the
 3 main entrance there where the silver is an’ all
 4 the [(gifts an’ things,)
 5 J: [Yeah,
 6 E: And they wouldn’ let’er go in,

In reading the following comments by Sacks about this example, please bear in mind that they were formulated in 1970, i.e., before the seminal article by Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson (1974) on the organization of turn-taking was written. This is important because we find the ideas, but not yet the terminology that we know from the turn-taking article. It seems reasonable to assume that when Sacks (1992) uses the terms *clause* and *sentence* he means what Sacks et al. (1974) refer to as the *turn-constructural unit* (TCU) and the *turn*, respectively.

Let me just note another type of organization; it has nothing much to do with stories but is present here: “A colored lady wanted to go in the main entrance.” The term ‘wanted to’ is an instance of a class of terms I call ‘*first verbs*.’ By that I mean, it having been used, it says that sequentially for this sentence another clause with another verb will come. That is, ‘wanted to’ is not used unless you’re going to say something like ‘and they stopped her’ or ‘they tried to stop her.’ It’s not, then, just a ‘first verb’ but one that will indicate that she failed, i.e., it tells that when the next clause comes it will involve that she failed. [...] And you don’t get “she wanted to go in and she walked to the door and she went in.” It’s just not done. If

the lady got into the store with no problem it might simply be reported “and there was this colored lady going into the store.” (Sacks 1992:181)

It is important to note here that by ‘first verbs’ Sacks does not mean what might be considered ‘first verbs’ in a linguistic sense, namely auxiliary verbs or catenative verbs, which are “first” in that they do not occur as the only verb in a sentence, but are followed by another full verb or by a non-finite clausal complement, thus being the first in a sequence of verbs (see, e.g., Palmer 1987 on auxiliary and catenative verbs). So Sacks does not call *wanted to* a ‘first verb’ because grammatically it requires a clausal complement such as *go in the main entrance*, where *go* would be the ‘second verb’ so to speak. Rather, what he means is that the whole utterance *she wanted to go in the main entrance* will necessarily be followed by another clause (or better: TCU) with another finite verb, such as *and they wouldn’t let her go in*, although this is not grammatically required. Sacks goes on to say that:

‘First verbs’ have their interest in this kind of general problem: A problem for parties talking in conversation is how they go about signalling that some utterance that they’re producing will or will not be complete on its ‘first possible completion,’ which is relevant to telling the other that they should or should not be prepared to start talking on a first possible completion, where by ‘first possible completion’ I mean completion of a first possible sentence. If there is a rule, as I argue there is, that says ‘First possible completion can be treated as actual completion,’ then it’s a problem for parties to produce multi-clause sentences. It’s a problem that they solve by indicating within the first clause of their intendedly multi-clause sentence that this is but the first clause, that a second clause will follow. A way to do that is to use in the first clause a ‘first verb,’ to indicate that more follows, that this is just a clause not a sentence. And it’s not particularly a syntactic phenomenon because, e.g., “A colored lady wanted to go in the main entrance” is a perfectly good sentence. But hearers know that ‘wanted to’ is going to be followed by something else, e.g., an account of her failure to get in. (Sacks 1992:182)

The problem of producing what Sacks calls “multi-clause sentences”, which are nowadays referred to as “multi-unit turns”, i.e., turns consisting of more than one TCU, has been addressed among others by Schegloff (1982) and Selting (2000). Both Schegloff and Selting show that speakers use a range of devices for projecting further talk beyond a single TCU and, thus, for achieving a multi-unit turn (Schegloff 1982:75ff.; Selting 2000:504ff.). Selting distinguishes (i) compound syntactic, (ii) lexico-semantic or pragmatic, (iii) activity-type specific, and (iv) prosodic devices for the projection of a multi-unit turn. As Sacks points out in the above quote, in the case of ‘first verbs’ we are not dealing with syntactic or grammatical projection of more-to-come. Rather, the projection achieved by ‘first verbs’ seems to be an instance of what Selting (2000) calls *lexico-semantic* or *pragmatic projection* and what Ford (2001) calls *pragmatic* or *action projection*, where a first TCU projects further talk not grammatically or prosodically, but rather based on recurrent turn formats, action combinations, or rhetorical combinations, which make specific semantic or pragmatic relations expectable and often,

but not necessarily, involve the use of particular lexical expressions. We will return to this issue in more detail in Section 4.

To summarize Sacks' ideas about 'first verbs' in more modern terminology, we might say then that (i) 'first verbs' are a resource for the projection of multi-unit turns, (ii) TCUs built with 'first verbs' project further talk that has to do with the failure of the event described in the TCU containing the 'first verb', and (iii) this is an instance of pragmatic projection.³

3. What verbs or verb-forms constitute the group of 'first verbs,' and what are their characteristic morpho-syntactic, lexico-semantic, and pragmatic features?

Taking Sacks (1992) as a starting point, I built a collection of examples of verbs that behave in the way he describes it for *wanted to*, i.e., verbs that make relevant further talk having to do with the failure or non-occurrence of the event described in the TCU containing that verb.

My data consist of approximately 11 hours of informal American English face-to-face and telephone conversations among family and friends, with the exception of one conversation, which comes from a loan meeting at a bank. In the data, I found a total of 60 instances of 'first verbs'. These form the basis for the findings and observations reported in the remainder of this paper.

The speakers in my data use the following verb-forms as 'first verbs': *wanted to*, *was/were going to*, *was/were supposed to*, *thought/was thinking*, *tried/was trying*, *could have*, and *should have*.⁴

One example of each of these verbs can be found in the following conversational excerpts. I have marked the relevant lines, i.e., the TCU containing the 'first verb' as well as the projected talk, with arrows. The 'first verb' itself is additionally highlighted by the use of capital letters.⁵

(2) Took off with Tobias** [sbc005:6]

- 1 PAM: I bit my tongue the other day,
 2 because remember,
 3 .. you said to Deven,
 4 well,
 5 I really want to spend time with you?
 6 DAR: Yeah?
 7 PAM: And then we went to the Chalk .. Fair,
 8 and then he took off with Tobias?
 9 DAR: The Chop Fair?
 10 PAM: The Chalk.
 11 DAR: [Oh,
 12 PAM: [The Chalk Fair].
 13 DAR: .. unhunh]?

14 PAM: (H) And he took off with Tobias?
 15 DAR: Yeah?
 16 PAM: ... Is that,
 17 that,
 18 ⇒ .. that .. I WANTED to say with him well your dad
 wanted to spend time with you today.
 19 ⇒ ... And why did you run off.
 20 ⇒ ... (TSK) And I didn't,
 21 ⇒ because I remembered,
 22 ⇒ ... (H) that my mother tried to guilt me the
 same way.

(3) New factory radio** [sbc006:1]

1 ALI: Hector's radio=,
 2 with --
 3 I- it was bro=ken,
 4 ⇒ we WERE GONNA s- --
 5 ⇒ take it out and send it back to the factory,
 6 ⇒ to get a new factory,
 7 ⇒ .. (H) radio,
 8 ⇒ we never got a chance,
 9 ⇒ because,
 10 ⇒ the back window was broken,
 11 ⇒ and they stole <X it X>.
 12 ⇒ ... The radio.

(4) Death in the family* [NBII:1:R:1]

1 EMM: Bud's gon'play go:lf now up Riverside
 2 he's js leavin'
 3 (0.2)
 4 LOT: Oh:.
 5 (0.5)
 6 ⇒ EMM: So: Kathern' Harry WERE SPOZE TUH come down
 7 ⇒ las'night but there wz a death'n the fam'ly
 8 ⇒ so they couldn'come so Bud's as'd Bill tuh play
 9 with the comp'ny deal so I guess he c'n play
 10 with im so
 11 LOT: Oh:: goo::d.

(5) Technical nitty-gritty** [sbc014:15f]

1 JIM: .. I think it would be good for (H) .. the five or
 six of us,
 2 (H) to,
 3 ... to have Galino down here,
 4 (H) can kind of explain what products,
 5 ... we can offer from the bank side,
 6 JOE: ... Hm.
 7 JIM: Matt needs to know that,

8 and .. and we all need to know that,
 9 (H) and then,
 10 ... we can figure out how Matt's,
 11 ... the products that LCL's gonna offer will plug
 into that.
 12 ... And it's --
 13 ⇒ ... I WAS THINKING OF sending Matt up there for a
 week,
 14 ⇒ (H) but,
 15 ⇒ (H) ... you know he's up there a week,
 16 ⇒ he's gonna learn a lot of very technical ..
 information,
 17 ⇒ such as like those section four-fifteen (H) Xses.
 18 ⇒ .. That .. @that I was talking about.
 19 ⇒ (H) You really don't need to know the (H) the
 technical (H) ...
 20 ⇒ nitty-gritty ... about it,
 21 ⇒ .. because,
 22 ⇒ ... that's what Bankers Systems does.
 23 ⇒ [They] take care of the nitty-gritty,
 24 JOE: [Hm].
 25 JIM: So,
 26 (H) it's gonna be less expensive,
 27 .. to have ... Galino come here,
 28 ... instead of one person going up to .. to
 Minnesota for a week,
 29 ... and then trying to bring back the information,
 30 ... we're gonna have Galino come down here for
 a day,

(6) Line was busy* [SBL:2:1:3:R:2]

1 CLA: hhh Okay hh Uh d'you wanna do me a favor'n if
 2 yuh ha:ve time ca:ll uh hhh Dorothy Al:exander
 3 for me 'n ask 'er if she wants tuh go:~?
 4 JO: O[kay if s]h[e
 5 ⇒ CLA: [hh hhhh] [I TRIED dih get'er but uh:: th-the
 6 ⇒ li:ne wz bus[y.
 7 JO: [Yeh. Ah ha [ho
 8 CLA: [t hhhhh[h
 9 JO: [We:ll I'll try
 10 to get'er,
 11 CLA: 'tlk Well I:'ll c-ah'll call'er layder but n-ah:
 12 I diss thought maybe eh:m p hhh you might be
 13 call'n duh see if: uh h[e w'z] hh
 14 JO: [Yeah w]ell ah:'ll ah:'ll
 15 ca:ll u-he:r bec:ause if she goes then I c'n go
 16 en if she doesn't go: why then u- hhhh ah'm ou:t
 17 of luck ez far ez transper:tation goe:s,

to may express plan, expectation, or obligation. As we will see in Section 3.3 below, *thought* is also quite versatile in this respect.

3.2 Past-time reference

'First verbs' consistently have past-time reference. Morpho-syntactically, this simply means for most verbs that they occur in the past-tense form – most frequently the simple past, but occasionally also the progressive form. The modal verbs are an exception, since their past-tense forms (*could*, *should*) are not used to express past time for the most part, but, instead, have developed into separate modals with different epistemic and deontic meanings than their present-tense counterparts (*can*, *shall*); past-time marking is therefore achieved by combining the modals with the auxiliary *have* (Givón 1993:173f.).

The fact that 'first verbs' always have past-time reference indicates that it is not the uninflected verb in general (e.g., *want* or *be going to*), but only a specific form of the verb that can function as a 'first verb' in conversation.

3.3 Verbal/clausal complement

All 'first verbs' have in common that they take a verbal or clausal complement which describes the event or action that was intended/planned/expected/attempted/possible/advisable to be done. For most of the verbs, this is a non-finite complement (as in all of the examples above), either infinitival or participial, depending upon the grammatical requirements of the respective verbs. Only *thought* sticks out from the group of verbs in that it can take both non-finite complements (as in example (5)) and finite complement clauses. It turns out, however, that the types of finite clauses that the 'first verb' *thought* appears with are restricted to ones that mark the event or action coded in the complement clause as future with respect to the time reference of *thought*. This future-marking can be achieved either by *would* (as in *I thought I'd go down last night but I was pooped out*, expressing an intention or plan), or by *was/were going to* (as in *I thought we were going to eat at the tables*, expressing an expectation).

3.4 Counterfactual implication

The use of a 'first verb' always involves the implication that the event or action described in the complement did not or will not take place although it was intended/planned/expected/attempted/possible/advisable.⁷

For the modal verbs, this counterfactual implication has been pointed to by several scholars (among others Coates 1983; Givón 1993; and Palmer 1987). As Givón puts it, "With four of the modals – 'might', 'could', 'would' and 'should' – the combination with 'have' imparts not only a sense of past, but also a negative or counter-fact sense" (Givón 1993:175). Leech (1971) also mentions the counterfactual implication for *be*

going to: "With the Past Tense, indeed, the usual interpretation is that fulfillment did not take place" (Leech 1971:57).

It is important to note that this counterfactual implication is – with the possible exception of *could have* and *should have* – not part of the semantics of 'first verbs'. From a purely semantic perspective, verbs such as *wanted*, *was/were going to*, and *tried* leave it open whether the event described in the complement did or did not take place, i.e., to put it in Karttunen's (1971) terms, they are "non-implicative".

Karttunen makes a semantic distinction between implicative, negative implicative, and non-implicative verbs. Implicative verbs such as *manage*, *remember*, and *happen* semantically imply that the event described in the complement did take place, i.e., *I managed/remembered/happened to come on time* implies that I came on time. Negative implicatives, a sub-category of implicative verbs including verbs such as *forget* and *fail*, semantically imply that the event described in the complement did not take place, i.e., *I forgot/failed to come on time* carries the implication that I did not come on time. Finally, the semantics of non-implicative verbs such as *want*, *try*, and *intend* imply neither success nor failure of the event described in the complement, i.e., *I wanted/tried/intended to come on time* does not make any claim about whether or not I actually came on time.

As the majority of 'first verbs' are semantically non-implicative, the counterfactual implication that I find to be characteristic of 'first verbs' is for the most part not a semantic but a pragmatic feature, i.e., the counterfactual implication does not result from the semantics of the 'first verb', but rather from the situated use of the verb in its specific context.⁸ The term "implication" as I use it here should therefore not be understood in a strictly semantic sense.

I would like to argue that the counterfactual implication can be explained as a result of the fact that 'first verbs' are a resource for the evocation of an alternative world in the context of counterfactual conditional talk, as Couper-Kuhlen (1999) shows in her study on varieties of conditionals in discourse. Couper-Kuhlen conceptualizes conditional talk as:

discourse in which (i) an alternative world is evoked and (ii) located temporally prior to, concurrent with and/or posterior to the moment of speaking or in universal time, (iii) in which at least one event or state of affairs is treated as contingent upon another event or state of affairs, and (iv) towards which the speaker takes a modal stance with respect to likelihood or desirability.

(Couper-Kuhlen 1999:98)

Without using the term 'first verbs', Couper-Kuhlen discusses constructions containing 'first verbs' such as *was going to* and *thought* as practices for doing counterfactual conditional talk, i.e., as ways of talking about contingencies in past alternative worlds.

Applying Couper-Kuhlen's line of argumentation to excerpt (3), for instance, we could say that Alina, by using the 'first verb' *were gonna*, evokes a past alternative world in which she and her husband take the broken radio out of the car and send it back to the factory, and she treats this event as contingent upon the condition of the radio not being stolen. Both the condition (the radio not being stolen) and the consequent

(sending the radio back to the factory) are presented as counterfactual (as we know, the radio *was* in fact stolen and they did *not* send it back to the factory). So this example could easily be paraphrased with a counterfactual *if-then* construction: *If the radio had not been stolen, we would have taken it out and sent it back to the factory*. The same line of reasoning can also be applied to the other examples above.

In this kind of conditional talk, the (TCU containing the) ‘first verb’ plays the key role in evoking the alternative world, while it is the following talk that provides the condition, thus establishing the contingency relation necessary for conditional talk (cf. Couper-Kuhlen 1999: 94, Note 13).

While, in the great majority of my examples, the ‘first verb’ is indeed used to evoke a *past* alternative world, example (5) shows that ‘first verbs’ can also be used to evoke *future* alternative worlds. In this fragment, Jim is talking about a future meeting between members of the bank and a business partner called Galino, who, as Jim has already announced several minutes prior to this excerpt, is expected to come down from Minnesota for a day. At the beginning of the excerpt, Jim returns to the topic of the meeting, strongly advocating the plan of having Galino come down. In line 13, he introduces an alternative arrangement, using the ‘first verb’ *was thinking of* to evoke a future alternative world in which he sends Matt up to Minnesota for a week, rather than Galino coming down for a day. In the following talk, he provides reasons against doing this, thus establishing the contingency relation necessary for conditional talk.

Just like the past alternative worlds evoked by ‘first verbs’, the future alternative world evoked here is treated as highly unlikely, if not counterfactual, as Jim has already announced prior to this excerpt that the decision has been made to have Galino come down. Further evidence for this can be found in lines 28–30, where Jim clearly gives up the possibility of sending Matt to Minnesota and restates his intention of having Galino come down.

We could say then that ‘first verbs’ are a resource for evoking (past and future) alternative worlds, which are treated as counterfactual or at least highly unlikely, resulting in the counterfactual implication characteristic of ‘first verbs’.

3.5 Delimitation of ‘first-verb uses’ from ‘non-first-verb uses’

Not surprisingly, the verbs listed above as ‘first verbs’ are not ‘first verbs’ in all of their uses. As already mentioned in Section 3.2, one of the defining features of ‘first verbs’ is their past-time reference, meaning that any forms of the verb that do not fulfill this condition cannot be ‘first verbs’. But even the past-tense forms of these verbs can be used in a wide range of other ‘non-first-verb’ ways. Therefore, rather than speaking of ‘first verbs’, it would be more accurate to distinguish ‘first-verb uses’ from ‘non-first-verb uses’ of these verbs, my hypothesis being that ‘first-verb uses’ are characterized by the above features, while ‘non-first-verb uses’ lack at least one of these features.

As it is beyond the scope of this paper to give a comprehensive overview of the various ‘non-first-verb uses’ of each of the verbs, I will just give a few examples for illustration. (The relevant ‘non-first verbs’ are italicized.)

(9) Huge waves* [NB:III.1R:6f]

- 1 TED: No it's been real clea:r'n (.) nthe water uz
 2 been .hh terrible b't,
 3 FRA: Oh I [read that] 'n the paper last night,=
 4 TED: [.hhhhhhhh]
 5 FRA: =They said they've been huge wa:ves. 'n
 6 they[jus'res]cue]
 7 TED: [.t oh:] Go:d.hh Over the pie:r, hHuh?=
 8 FRA: =Oh Go:::d.
 9 (.)
 10 TED: Excep'tihday i:t's-t-'calm'down I guess ih wz a
 11 sto:rm out et[sea,
 12 FRA: [Yea:h they said thet it wz goh: it
 13 hed gotten nicer but they ed rescued a lo:tta
 14 ⇒ peo:ple en Newport Beach wz spozetih ha:ve (0.3)
 15 huge wa:ves.=
 16 TED: =Oh::- they w'clear over th'pier,

In this excerpt, Fran and Ted are talking on the telephone about the weather at Newport Beach, where Ted is currently staying. Ted provides information based on his first-hand experience, while Fran tells about the information she has gathered from the paper. In this context, Fran's use of *was supposed to* in line 14 is clearly an evidential use, which has the same function as *they said* in lines 5 and 12, namely to mark the information provided as hearsay, i.e., as coming from an external source.

In this use, *was supposed to* is not a 'first verb' because it does not express any of the semantic concepts typically associated with 'first verbs' (cf. Section 3.1), and, moreover, there is no indication that the event described in the complement, i.e., the huge waves, did not occur. On the contrary, Ted confirms that there have indeed been huge waves at Newport Beach. As a result, *was supposed to* does not make any further talk relevant the way 'first verbs' do.

Now consider fragment (10), which contains both a 'first-verb use' and a 'non-first-verb use' of *wanted to*.

(10) Inclined to call you** [Cutie Pie:3]

- 1 JEFF: Well see I%- ,
 2 The reas- --
 3 I have --
 4 (H)= I kinda,
 5 ... (TSK) I wasn't inclined to .. call you?
 6 JILL: Unh[u=nh].
 7 ⇒₁ JEFF: [Because I just wanted to give you and Jill
 your time.
 8 JILL: .. Yeah[2=2].
 9 JEFF: [2You know?
 10 Like I2] felt like,
 11 JILL: ... [3Totally3].

This excerpt comes from a telephone conversation between Edna, who is the caller, and her friend Margy. In line 1, Edna uses *thought* with a finite complement clause containing *would*, expressing her past intention to give Margy a buzz. As she has observably done as she intended, she is not evoking a counterfactual past alternative world, so that we are not dealing with a 'first verb use' here.

This can be contrasted with line 2, where Edna, using *should have*, refers to her past obligation to call Margy sooner. As she has failed to do so, *should have* is a 'first verb', evoking a counterfactual past alternative world and making relevant further talk concerning the failure, which Edna provides in lines 2–3, where she accounts for her failure by saying that the week went by so fast.

These examples of 'non-first-verb uses' show that while formal criteria play a role in distinguishing 'first-verb uses' from 'non-first-verb uses' (in the sense that only verbs in the past-tense form followed by a clausal complement are, in principle, eligible as 'first verbs'), it is ultimately the contextual specifics of the situated talk-in-interaction that determine whether or not we are dealing with a 'first verb', as it can only be ascertained on the basis of the context exactly what semantic concept (intention, expectation, attempt, possibility etc.) the verb is expressing and, more importantly, whether a counterfactual alternative world is being evoked, i.e., whether the action or event described in the complement did or did not take place.

It should be noted that the distinction between 'first-verb uses' and 'non-first-verb uses' is not just an analyst's problem, but is also relevant for the participants themselves. After all, 'first verbs' are only useful and successful as a resource for pragmatic projection if participants can recognize them as such, enabling them to anticipate the trajectory of the following talk. My claim would be that participants also use the features given above as criteria for distinguishing 'first-verb uses' from 'non-first-verb uses'.⁹

4. What trajectory do 'first verbs' project for the following talk, and how is that projection resolved?

4.1 The projection

As stated above, TCUs built with 'first verbs' project further talk concerning the failure or non-occurrence of the event depicted in the clausal complement. In the following, I would like to specify the exact nature of the projected talk and the rhetorical basis for the projection.

In the vast majority of my examples, the talk following the 'first verb' includes an account for the failure or non-occurrence, while the failure/non-occurrence itself can, but need not be made explicit. Regardless of whether the failure is verbalized or not, the use of a 'first verb', due to the counterfactual implication, sets up a contrast between an intention/plan/expectation/etc. and actual fact (namely the failure or non-occurrence of the intended/planned/expected/etc. event), i.e., a contrast between the alternative

world, evoked with the help of the ‘first verb’, and the real world. As Ford (1994, 2000) has shown, certain types of contrasts, especially those involving frustrated expectations, are regularly followed by accounts. She shows that the pattern ‘contrast plus account’ constitutes a recurrent and expectable rhetorical combination, meaning that a contrast or frustrated expectation makes an account, i.e., a causal elaboration, relevant and expectable as the next communicative move. I would argue that the projective force of ‘first verbs’ derives from this recurrent rhetorical combination of ‘contrast plus account’ (which clearly makes it a case of pragmatic projection, cf. Section 2).

So if all potential parts of a ‘first-verb construction’ (which is the term I will henceforth use to refer to the material associated with the ‘first verb’, i.e., the TCU containing the ‘first verb’ as well as the following talk projected by the ‘first verb’) are spelled out, it consists of three components, which I will refer to as FV, NEG, and ACC:

- FV = the TCU containing the ‘first verb’, which expresses a past intention/plan/expectation/etc. and evokes a counterfactual alternative world;
 NEG = the failure/non-occurrence of the intended/planned/expected/etc. action or event, which typically contains a negation;
 ACC = the account for the failure/non-occurrence.

4.2 The patterns of realization

The examples in my collection exhibit considerable variation in the way that the projection of the ‘first verb’ is resolved. We find variation regarding (i) the presence or absence of the three parts, (ii) their ordering, and (iii) the linguistic connectors used (or not used) to link the parts.¹⁰

The following four patterns of realization account for the vast majority of my examples:¹¹

Pattern A: FV *but/and/∅* NEG *because/∅* ACC

In pattern A, all three parts of the ‘first-verb construction’ are made explicit, with NEG preceding ACC. This realization pattern occurs in (2), where we get FV (= *I wanted to say with¹² him ... run off*) and NEG (= *I didn’t*) because ACC (= *I remembered that my mother tried to guilt me the same way*), and in (3), where we get FV (= *we were gonna take it out ... new factory radio*) ∅ NEG (= *we never got a chance*) because ACC (= *the back window was broken and they stole it*).

Pattern B: FV *but/∅* ACC *so/and* NEG

In pattern B, again, all three components are spelled out, however with ACC preceding NEG. This pattern can be found in (4), where we get FV (= *Kathryn and Harry were supposed to come down last night*) but ACC (= *there was a death in the family*) so NEG (= *they couldn’t come*).

Pattern C: FV *but/and/and then/∅* ACC (NEG left implicit)

Pattern C is most frequent in my data and can be found in examples (5)–(8). So for instance in (7), we find FV (= *I probably could've bought it that way*) but ACC (= *I want it to be homemade*). Although NEG is left implicit here, it is not difficult to translate this into a pattern A version with explicit NEG: *I probably could've bought it that way, but I didn't, because I want it to be homemade*.¹³

Pattern D: FV (NEG and ACC left implicit)

Pattern D, where both the failure NEG and the account ACC are not made explicit, is illustrated in the following example:

(12) Answering the phone* [NBII:5:R:1]

- 1 LOT: Hello: , =
 2 EMM: =Are you answering the pho:ne? ((smile voice))
 3 ⇒ LOT: eh hhh .hh I WZ J"S GUNNUH CA:LL YUH eh
 4 [huh] huh]
 5 EMM: [I] JIS] GO:T HE:RE.hh

This is the beginning of a telephone call between Emma, who is the caller, and her friend Lottie. In response to Emma's somewhat unusual self-identification (line 2), Lottie remarks that she was just going to call Emma (line 3). Although Lottie does not produce any further talk concerning her failure to call Emma, we are nevertheless dealing with a 'first-verb use' of *was gonna* here, as it fulfills the criteria set forth in Section 3, expressing Lottie's past intention to call Emma and, thus, evoking an alternative world which is observably counterfactual, as Emma has called Lottie, not vice versa.

4.3 Factors determining speakers' choice of pattern

The fact that speakers use a range of different patterns to realize a 'first-verb construction' raises the question as to what factors may influence speakers' choice of realization pattern. I will now discuss the main principles that seem to be at work here.¹⁴

The ordering of NEG and ACC, in cases where both are made explicit, i.e., in patterns A and B, appears to be determined by considerations of topical coherence, prominence, and sequential implicativeness in that speakers place the information that links up to the current activity/topic of talk and is meant to be more prominent and sequentially implicative in final position.¹⁵

Consider example (2). Prior to this excerpt, Pamela has just told Darryl about the way her mother tried to guilt her as a child, when she wouldn't go bicycling with her father. Then she recounts the episode where she almost behaved the same way towards Darryl's son Deven. She puts her account for not doing as she intended, namely her memory of her mother trying to guilt her the same way (lines 21–22), in final position, as it clearly constitutes the link between the two stories, thus creating coherence.

Very similarly in example (3), Alina has just told her recipient about seeing an interview with a former car radio thief on TV. In the following story about her husband's car radio, it is the fact that the radio was stolen – which functions as the account in the

'first-verb construction' – that creates the connection between the story and prior talk and is therefore placed in final position.

Now contrast this with example (4), where Emma announces to Lottie that her husband Bud is just leaving to play golf (lines 1–2). Lottie receipts this informing with an *oh*, indicating that she has undergone a change of state, i.e., that the information was indeed new to her (Heritage 1984b). In response to this, Emma begins to explain how it came about that Bud is playing golf now, although this was not originally planned (lines 6–10). The 'first-verb construction' is used here to explicate what the original plan was (Kathryn and Harry coming for a visit) and why it was not realized (due to a death in the family). However, the exact nature of the account for the expected visitors' failure to come is not as vital for Emma's explanation as the fact that they did not come, thus giving Bud the time to play golf. In other words, it would not have an influence on the coherence of the talk if the account were something other than a death in the family. By contrast, in examples (2) and (3), a modification of the account would yield problems for the coherence of the talk, as it is the accounts that link up to the prior topic of talk.

Despite differences in the ordering of NEG and ACC, patterns A and B have in common that NEG is made explicit, whereas NEG is not explicitly verbalized in patterns C and D. My data reveal a systematic correlation between the absence of NEG and its being previously known or contextually given. Put differently, NEG is systematically absent when it would be redundant to make it explicit because the failure/non-occurrence is already known to the recipients either due to externally observable evidence or because it has been mentioned in or can be inferred from prior talk.

So for instance in excerpt (5), NEG (i.e., the fact that Jim will not send Matt up to Minnesota for a week) is not verbalized, yet it is clearly implied in Jim's prior announcement of his plan to have Galino come down for a day and is, thus, contextually given (cf. the discussion of this example in 3.4). In excerpt (6), we find a similar situation, where NEG (i.e., Claire's failure to reach Dorothy Alexander) can be inferred from her prior request that Jo call Dorothy and inquire for her whether Dorothy wants to go. For Claire would obviously not be making that request if her own attempt to call Dorothy had been successful and she had had a chance to talk to her herself. In example (7), NEG (i.e., the fact that Marilyn has not bought the fish with the bread crumbs already attached to it) is not only externally observable to the participants, who are cooking together, but it is also directly addressed in Pete's question (lines 1–3). So here NEG is given in both the linguistic and the extra-linguistic context. Finally, in fragment (8), both participants necessarily know by virtue of their identity that Edna did not call Margy sooner, so that NEG need not be made explicit. The same line of reasoning can be applied to example (12).

If the use of patterns C and D (where NEG is absent) correlates systematically with NEG already being known to the recipients, it is not surprising to find that patterns A and B are used when NEG is not yet known to the recipient (as for instance in excerpts (2) and (4)). However, speakers can sometimes also be found to use patterns

A and B in spite of the fact that NEG is already known to the recipients, for example when they want to put special emphasis on NEG, when it is intended to be sequentially implicative, or when the explicit version of NEG is more detailed and elaborate, i.e., richer in content, than an implied version would be. This can be seen in example (3), where *we never got a chance* is clearly richer in content than a mere *we didn't* (i.e., send the radio back to the factory).¹⁶

Pattern D, where not only NEG, but also ACC is left implicit, is only used in cases where both NEG and ACC are known to the recipient because they are given in or obvious from the linguistic or extra-linguistic context. For instance in excerpt (12), although only FV is present, the recipient (and, of course, the analyst) can easily reconstruct a maximally explicit version of Lottie's 'first-verb construction' as being *I was just gonna call you but I didn't because you called me first* (i.e., *before I had a chance to call you*).

Based on my findings concerning (i) the patterns speakers use to realize 'first-verb constructions' and (ii) the principles guiding speakers' choices between these patterns, I would like to argue that while 'first verbs' clearly have projective force, it depends very much on the contextual specifics of what is known and what is given whether or not further talk is really relevant and exactly what that further talk will be. In other words, we are dealing with a context-sensitive form of pragmatic projection.

This means that patterns C and D are in accordance with the relevancies set up by 'first verbs', i.e., they do not constitute violations or deviant cases, as long as the parts of the projection that are left implicit can be filled in by the recipient on the basis of prior knowledge or context. This is corroborated by the fact that the recipients in the respective examples do not treat the absence of NEG and/or ACC as in any way problematic.

My claim is then, that 'first verbs' are best viewed as a resource for pragmatic projection that, on each occasion of its use, is applied in a context-sensitive way, i.e., taking the specifics of that interaction as well as the principle of 'recipient design' into consideration (on the conversation-analytic concept of context-free resources and their context-sensitive applications see Sacks et al. 1974:699 and Hutchby & Wooffitt 1998:35f.; on 'recipient design' see Sacks et al. 1974:727).

4.4 Deviant cases

Given the context-sensitive nature of the projection, all the examples we have seen so far, even the ones in which NEG and/or ACC are absent, can be seen to fulfill the relevancies set up by the 'first verb'. However, I did find instances of "true" deviant cases, in which the account ACC is not provided in the talk following the 'first verb', although it is neither known to the recipient nor given contextually.¹⁷

This situation is most likely to occur when the speaker is simply not in a position to provide an account for the failure of an intended/planned/expected/etc. event because it is beyond his or her realm of responsibility. But even in such cases, speakers can sometimes be found to display their orientation to the relevance of an account, e.g., by

explicitly referring to their inability to provide the account (“I don’t know why”), by speculating about possible accounts, or by giving candidate accounts. Example (13) is a case in point:

(13) Disconnected* [NBII:1:R:3]

- 1 ⇒ EMM: Well I jis TRIED tih getta ca:ll through
 2 ⇒ ah WZ GUNNUH call Nancy: uh Ja:mes
 3 she's (0.2) been comin do:wn here once in
 4 ⇒ awhi:le en I: can't get her number
 5 so I thou:ght (0.2) .hh ah'll call you
 6 ah didn'know wh_ether: (.) uhb uh wz my telephone
 7 wz funny. I couldn't uh: .hh I gotta busy si:gn
 8 all th'ti:me. So,
 9 (0.2)
 9 LOT: From he:r?
 10 EMM: .hh ng-Uh tried tuh get her number
 11 then it's: uh busy.
 12 (.)
 13 EMM: E[n I hang up'n then it's busy when I pick it
 14 u:p.=
 15 LOT: [M-
 16 EMM: =Ah don'know wh_ether'r phone's bih- (.)
 17 di:s-c'nnected'r not they'd tell me I'm su:re.

In this excerpt, Emma, who is the caller, tells Lottie about her past attempt/intention to call Nancy James, using the ‘first verbs’ *tried* and *was gonna* (lines 1–2). After a bit of parenthetical talk, she makes her failure to get Nancy’s number explicit in line 4, yet she is unable to produce an account for this failure. However, in the talk that follows, she comes up with two possible reasons for the failure, (i) her own telephone as a possible source of the trouble (lines 6–14), and (ii) the possibility of Nancy’s phone having been disconnected (lines 16–17). Apparently, she does not consider either possibility to be very likely, however she is at a loss for another explanation. So, although Emma is unable to account for her failure to call Nancy, as it is obviously not within her realm of responsibility, she displays her orientation to the relevance of an account following a ‘first verb’ by speculating about possible accounts.

Other deviant cases in my collection involve speakers not providing an account although they would be in a position to. In these cases, the failure being reported is – or is treated as – a minor, very mundane event, for which there are standard accounts that need not be made explicit, as they are not important or, due to their frequent occurrence, could even be assumed by the recipient. One of these mundane events for which speakers recurrently do not provide accounts is the failure to call somebody, as in the following example:

(14) Lovely Luncheon* [NBVII:1]

- 1 EDN: Oh honey that was a lovely luncheon
 2 ⇒ I SHOULDA ca:lled you s:soo[:ner but I:]=

3 MAR: [((f)) Oh:::]
 4 EDN: =lo:ved it.Ih wz just deli:ghtfu[:l]
 5 MAR: [Well]
 6 I wz glad you (came).

This excerpt comes from the same telephone conversation as fragment (8), Edna being the caller. In the present excerpt, Edna is complimenting Margy on the luncheon she had organized for her friends the week before. Almost parenthetically, she mentions her past obligation to call Margy earlier than she has done, using the 'first verb' *should have* (line 2). Edna's failure to call Margy sooner (NEG) is known to both participants and can therefore be left implicit, whereas the account for this failure is not known to Margy and would normally be relevant at this point. However, not calling a friend sooner is a very commonplace failure, for which there is a standard reason, namely not getting around to it for lack of time. By not providing an alternative account, Edna invites Margy, as it were, to assume this standard reason as the account for her failure to call her sooner. This is confirmed in example (8), which occurs less than a minute later in the conversation, where Edna mentions for the second time that she should have called Margy sooner, this time, however, providing the projected account, which in fact turns out to be the standard account of not having gotten around to it for lack of time (*I don't know where the week went*).

I would argue then that when speakers do not provide the account projected by a 'first verb', although they are in a position to do so, they are treating the failure/non-occurrence as a minor event, not worth elaborating on, thus inviting their recipients to assume a standard account for the failure/non-occurrence.

That recipients really do make such tacit assumptions when the account is absent and cannot be inferred from prior context is nicely illustrated by the next example:

(15) Local news* [SBL:1:1:11:R:2]

1 DIN: Say didju see anything in the paper las'ni:ght
 2 er hear anything on the loc'l radio
 3 hh Ruth Henderson en I drove dow:n: to: h
 4 Ventura yesterda:y.
 5 BEA: Mm hm?
 6 DIN: t hhh En on the way ho:me we sa:w the: (0.5)
 7 most qosh u-awful WRE:ck
 ((20 seconds omitted, during which Dinah describes the
 car wreck, speculating about the details of the accident))
 8 DIN: We were s:-: (.) parked there fer °quite a°
 9 ⇒ whi:le but I WZ GQING TO (.) listen t'the
 10 ⇒ local:: (.) ne:ws'n haven't done it.
 11 ⇒ BEA: No: I haven't had my radio o:n eyther, t hh[hh
 12 ⇒ DIN: [Well]
 13 ⇒ I had my television on but I wz listening to: uh
 14 ⇒ the blast off yih kno:w.
 15 BEA: Mm hm,
 16 (0.4)

- 17 DIN: The uh: ah- a[:stro]nauts,
 18 BEA: [Yeah.]
 19 BEA: Yeah.
 20 DIN: hh A:nd I:, I didn't ever git any lo:c'l new::s.

At the beginning of this excerpt, Dinah asks Bea whether she has seen anything in the paper or heard anything on the radio about a car accident (lines 1–2). She goes on to describe how she and Ruth Henderson drove by the scene of the accident the previous day (lines 3–7). Perhaps in order to explain why she herself does not know whether the accident was on the news, Dinah refers to her past intention and failure to listen to the local news, using the ‘first verb’ *was going to* (lines 9–10). While she makes her failure explicit in line 10, she does not provide an account for the failure. In line 11, Bea responds to Dinah’s question, saying that she has not heard anything about the accident and, as it is common for dispreferred responses, she gives an account for this, namely *I haven’t had my radio on either*. Bea’s use of the word *either* here provides evidence for her tacit assumption that, in the absence of an alternative account, the reason for Dinah’s failure to listen to the local news is the standard account that she did not have her radio on. As it turns out, this assumption is not quite correct or at least not complete, leading Dinah to provide the actual account in lines 12–14.

So although Dinah eventually produces ACC in this example, it must be seen as a deviant case, as she does not produce it within the boundaries of the same turn as FV and NEG, but only in a subsequent turn, which is triggered by Bea’s response.¹⁸

5. In what kinds of sequential environments do ‘first verbs’ occur, and what can they be used to do interactionally?

As explicated above, ‘first verbs’ can be seen to have two basic functions: (i) they pragmatically project further talk, thus serving as a resource for the production of multi-unit turns (Sacks 1992), and (ii) they are a resource for the evocation of past or future counterfactual alternative worlds (Couper-Kuhlen 1999).

In the following, I will show some of the ways in which speakers exploit these basic functions of ‘first verbs’ for different purposes in different sequential environments. Please note, however, that this chapter is not intended to offer an exhaustive list of the sequential environments and interactional functions associated with ‘first verbs’. Rather, I would just like to point out the environments in which I noticed the speakers in my data recurrently using ‘first verbs’ for specific interactional purposes.

5.1 ‘First verbs’ as a resource for storytelling

Interestingly, Sacks begins his discussion of ‘first verbs’ by saying that they have “nothing much to do with stories” (Sacks 1992: 181). While this is true in the sense that ‘first verbs’ are used in a number of other sequential environments as well, it turns out,

however, that storytelling sequences are one of the environments in which 'first verbs' occur quite regularly (e.g., in examples (2) and (3)).

Excerpt (16) exemplifies a particularly interesting way in which the projective force of 'first verbs' can be exploited in storytelling:

(16) La Conversation** [sbc006:7]¹⁹

- 1 ALI: they make arrangements,
 2 for like .. couple weeks later,
 3 ... (TSK) and I wanted to surprise Mom,
 4 and bring over some nice pastries from La
 5 Conversation. (H) So I go into La Conversation,
 6 and I picked out all this stuff for Uncle Arnold.
 7 ⇒ (H) And it WAS just SUPPOSED TO be Mo=m,
 8 ⇒ Ruben,
 9 ⇒ Arnold and Lisabeth.
 10 ⇒ And I WAS GONNA sit down and talk with them and
 11 split. (H) So I'm driving up to the house,
 12 ... and there's a car in front of me,

The topic of the story that Alina is telling here is a lunch that took place at her mother's house. Prior to this excerpt, Alina has reported in detail the difficulties the parties involved had in arranging a date for the lunch. In lines 7–10, Alina leads into the next component of the story, using the 'first verbs' *was supposed to* and *was gonna* to express a past expectation and intention concerning the lunch. In doing this, she exploits the counterfactual implication and the projective force of 'first verbs' to indicate to her recipient what the upcoming segment of the story will be about, namely about the non-occurrence of the expected/intended events and the reasons for this non-occurrence. Alina then provides the projected talk in the course of the story that follows, describing the events that resulted in her not having the peaceful conversation over lunch that she had intended with only the people she had expected.

By using a TCU containing a 'first verb' as a "take-off" for a story or a next component of a story this way, speakers prepare the ground for their story in several ways. Due to the counterfactual implication and the projective force of 'first verbs', speakers provide the recipient with a rough idea of what the story will be about, without giving away the details. Furthermore, even if the projected talk, i.e., the account for the non-occurrence, is not immediately forthcoming, the recipient knows that the story and, thus, the multi-unit turn underway will not be finished until the projection of the 'first verb' has been resolved. This not only guides the recipient in appropriately recognizing the end of the story, but it also makes it possible for the storyteller to insert into the story any amount of talk not directly related to the 'first verb' before actually resolving the projection, without danger of losing the floor.²⁰

Although 'first verbs' typically project locally in the sense that the projection is resolved within the immediately following TCUs, this use of 'first verbs' as a take-off for a story shows nicely that it is also possible for the projection to be more global,

extending across a whole story and perhaps even across inserted unrelated material within the same turn.

5.2 'First verbs' as a resource for justification/explanation

Speakers recurrently employ 'first-verb constructions' when they are providing justification or explanation for a particular course of action they have taken in the past, in the current interaction, or will take in the future.

A nice illustration of this can be found in example (5), where, as already mentioned in Section 3.4, Jim is talking about a future meeting between members of the bank and a business partner called Galino. Approximately five minutes before the fragment given here, Jim has already announced that he has arranged for Galino to come down from Minnesota for the meeting, but that he has not yet set up a date. At the beginning of this excerpt, he returns to the topic of the meeting and begins to justify his plan to have Galino come down. In the course of this justification, he mentions having considered the alternative plan of sending Matt up to Minnesota, using the 'first verb' *was thinking of* (line 13). Jim treats this alternative as highly unlikely or even counterfactual, presenting it as something he no longer considers an option (cf. the discussion in Section 3.4). The account for giving up this plan, which is made relevant by the 'first verb', is then provided in lines 15–23. Finally, in lines 28–30, Jim restates his intention of having Galino come down for the meeting.

We could say then that Jim exploits the function of the 'first verb' of evoking an alternative world in order to shift the focus from the current plan to an alternative plan, only to explicate the reasons for giving up the latter, thereby providing justification for the former. So, on the one hand, we find an account *within* the 'first-verb construction' (namely the account for not sending Matt up to Minnesota), but, on the other hand, the whole 'first-verb construction' is itself part of a larger account or justification for the plan of having Galino come down.

The interactional payoff of using a 'first-verb construction' in this way to justify a course of action is that Jim can present himself as having arrived at a sound and sensible decision after careful consideration of the alternatives. By showing that he has already considered alternative courses of action, he can pre-empt possible objections or alternative suggestions by the recipients, thus making approval of the plan more likely.

While it is a future plan for which the speaker provides justification in (5), excerpt (6) illustrates a speaker using a 'first-verb construction' as a resource in justifying a conversational action taken in the current interaction. Just prior to the excerpt, Claire has informed Jo about the date and time of their meeting at the Girl's Club. In lines 1–3, she then asks Jo to call Dorothy Alexander to find out whether or not she will also be attending the meeting. In overlap with Jo's beginning response, Claire begins to explain her request, referring to her own unsuccessful attempt to call Dorothy. She uses the 'first verb' *tried* to evoke a past alternative world in which she herself calls Dorothy and asks her about her coming to the meeting. Resolving the projection of the 'first verb', she then provides the account for her failure to call Dorothy, namely that the line

was busy (lines 5–6). We could easily imagine a counterfactual conditional paraphrase along the lines of: “If the line hadn’t been busy, I would have called and asked her myself.” Even after Jo has agreed to call Dorothy in lines 9–10, Claire almost takes back her request, saying that she herself will try again later, and continues to provide justification for having made the request (lines 11–13). In response, Jo expresses her agreement to call Dorothy again, explicitly giving an account for why it makes sense for her to make the call (lines 14–17). So here again, as in (5), the ‘first-verb construction’ not only contains an account (ACC, which is the account for Claire’s failure to call Dorothy), but it is also part of a larger account for having made the request.

As Gohl (2000) has shown, it is quite common for speakers to provide accounts following socially sensitive first actions such as requests. By making the request more understandable, these accounts can be seen as working toward a preferred response by the recipient. I would argue that ‘first-verb constructions’ are highly useful resources in the context of such accounts, because they allow the speaker to present herself as having tried or at least considered alternatives to the request (e.g., doing it herself) and to explain why these alternative options were not successful or viable. Moreover, speakers can display their awareness of the socially sensitive nature of the request by presenting it as a last resort, thus making a preferred response more likely.

5.3 ‘First verbs’ as a resource for complaining/criticizing

As shown in Section 4.4, deviant cases in which the account is neither provided nor contextually given often involve the speaker not being in a position to provide the account, because the failure/non-occurrence is beyond his or her realm of responsibility. In my data, this type of deviant case repeatedly occurs in the environment of complaints, with the TCU containing the ‘first verb’ serving as a vehicle for the complaint or criticism about a third party. Consider the following example:

(17) Teresa* [SBL:2:2:3:R:5]

- 1 CHL: Ya:h b't see we waste en awful lot en ah now I
 2 think (.) really I lo:ve T'reesa I didn' mean
 3 ⇒ that. her food wz just outstanding. hhhh B't I:
 4 ⇒ THOUGHT we were going to (.) eat et the tables.
 5 (1.2)
 6 ⇒ CLA: khh Well I did too:.
 7 ⇒ CHL: A:nd (.) ea:t 'n pla:y.
 8 ⇒ CLA: Uh huh, hhh I think she thought thet it wz
 9 ⇒ probably hhh (0.7) easier tuh set it up in
 10 ⇒ the:re u-rather then uh: st- uh: stop yer
 11 ⇒ playing en then have duh set the table.
 12 See w't I mean,=
 13 CHL: =°M-hm°

In this excerpt, Chloe and Claire, two passionate bridge players, are on the telephone talking about a recent game of bridge they played at Teresa’s house. For some time

now, they have been complaining about the general fact that a lot of playing time is wasted as a result of too much chattering and interruptions made for eating. Chloe's specific complaint in this excerpt pertains to the fact that Teresa had set up the food in a separate room instead of having it at the playing tables, which would have given them more time to play, as the players could have played and eaten at the same time, rather than having to interrupt the game in order to eat.

Claire uses the 'first verb' *thought* to express her past expectation that they would eat and play at the tables. As the non-occurrence of this event is known to both participants, NEG need not be made explicit. However, Claire neither provides an account (which, of course, can be explained by the fact that she is not in a position to), nor does she display her orientation to the relevance of an account by offering candidate accounts. By projecting an account on the one hand, but showing no effort to provide it on the other, Claire can be seen to exploit the projective force of the 'first verb' in order to present the state of affairs she is complaining about not only as something she had not expected, but also as something she cannot understand, i.e., as something for which she cannot see any good reasons, since, in her view, there would have been an obvious and far more sensible alternative, namely eating at the tables. The implication of this is a negative evaluation of Teresa, as it suggests that Teresa must be "deviant" in some way, not being able to recognize the obvious advantages and disadvantages of the alternative set-ups.

At first, Claire responds to this complaint by agreeing with Chloe (line 6) and thereby endorsing the implicit negative evaluation of Teresa. However, after Chloe reinforces her complaint with the help of an incremental extension to her prior turn (line 7), Claire responds by explaining what may have been the rationale for Teresa's decision to set the food up in a different room (lines 8–11). In doing this, she can be seen to disagree with Chloe, as she provides a possible account for the state of affairs that Chloe has just presented as difficult to account for. By showing that there may well have been good reasons for Teresa's decision, Claire neutralizes the negative evaluation of Teresa implied in Chloe's complaint.

This example shows that, in connection with the socially sensitive activity of complaining about or criticizing a third party, speakers can exploit the projective force of 'first verbs' in a "negative" way in order to draw attention to the absence of an account. This helps speakers to present the state of affairs they are complaining about as inexplicable and, by implication, the party they are criticizing for this state of affairs as "deviant", without having to make these negative evaluations explicit, though. The obvious advantage is that speakers cannot be held accountable for the criticism in the same way as if they had made it explicit. Moreover, by formulating a complaint in this implicit way, speakers can carefully test whether their recipient will go along with the complaint, leaving room open for negotiation.

5.4 'First verbs' as a resource for counter-suggestions

In response to a co-participant's suggestion or announcement of plans, speakers in my data regularly use TCUs containing 'first verbs' in order to make a counter-suggestion. These 'first-verb uses' constitute another type of deviant case (not discussed in Section 4.4), in which ACC can be inferred from prior context, but NEG is neither made explicit nor contextually given. Consider example (18):

- (18) Ceviche with the leftovers** [sbc003:2]
- 1 ROY: What you oughta do though Mar,
 2 ... [cook] all the fish.
 3 MAR: [Hm].
 4 ROY: .. Cause --
 5 .. well,
 6 we won't use it,
 7 .. if you don't cook it.
 8 ... [Now].
 9 ⇒ MAR: [Well I WAS GONNA] make ceviche with the
 leftovers.
 10 ROY: Oh alright,
 11 .. that sounds good.

Marilyn, Roy, and Pete are cooking together. Marilyn is in the process of preparing the fish. As there is more fish than the three of them can eat, Marilyn has just asked the others how much fish they think they will eat, so that she knows how much of it to cook. In response, Roy suggests to Marilyn to cook all the fish in any case, arguing that they will not use it if it is not cooked (lines 1–7). Marilyn, in turn, makes the counter-suggestion to make ceviche (a dish of marinated raw fish) with the leftovers rather than cooking it all (line 9). By using the 'first verb' *was gonna* to make this counter-suggestion, Marilyn presents it as a past intention or plan that she had prior to Roy's suggestion.²¹ At the same time, Marilyn treats this future alternative world evoked with the help of the 'first verb' as highly unlikely, almost suggesting that she is willing to give up her original plan in the light of Roy's suggestion ("I was going to make ceviche with the leftovers but now I won't because you have just suggested otherwise"). While ACC is contextually given (the reason for Marilyn's possible change of plan being Roy's suggestion), NEG, however, is not made explicit, nor can it be inferred from the context. By not making NEG explicit, but only implying it, Marilyn leaves it open for negotiation whether or not she will make ceviche with the leftovers. However, no extended negotiation sequence ensues, as Roy immediately accepts Marilyn's counter-suggestion (lines 10–11). Other possible outcomes of the negotiation (e.g., agreement to compromise or rejection of the counter-suggestion) are also attested in my data.

What makes 'first verbs' such a useful resource for making counter-suggestions? Counter-suggestions clearly constitute a dispreferred response to a first speaker's suggestion, as they do not go along with the suggestion, but instead propose a different course of action.²² Due to their disaffiliative nature, dispreferred responses generally

pose a threat to the face of the first speaker. Second speakers have been shown to try to minimize disagreement and face-threat by using specific features of turn design in the production of their dispreferred response, e.g., prefaces, delay, accounts, etc. (Heritage 1984a:265ff.; Pomerantz 1984).

I would argue that ‘first verbs’ are a resource for making counter-suggestions in a way that minimizes face-threat. ‘First verbs’ allow speakers to display their acknowledgement and appreciation of the previous speaker’s suggestion by packaging their counter-suggestion as a past intention or plan and implying its likely non-occurrence (NEG). At the same time, by only implying NEG, they leave it open for negotiation whether or not that past plan will be realized or not.

6. Concluding remarks

The present study has shown that the group of ‘first verbs’ consists of a limited number of verbs that are characterized by certain morpho-syntactic, lexico-semantic, and pragmatic features and share the basic functions of pragmatically projecting further talk and evoking a counterfactual alternative world.

I have argued that speakers’ use of ‘first verbs’ as a resource for pragmatic projection is highly context-sensitive in that it depends on the contextual specifics of what is known and what is given whether or not further talk is relevant and, if so, exactly what that further talk will be.

Furthermore, we have seen that speakers employ ‘first verbs’ in a range of sequential environments for different interactional purposes, exploiting the projective force of the ‘first verb’ both “positively” (e.g., in storytelling sequences, where the ‘first verb’ indicates to the recipient what type of talk will follow) and “negatively” (e.g., in the context of complaints, where speakers highlight the absence of the projected account). The latter uses constitute deviant cases, as the projection of the ‘first verb’ is not resolved. These “negative” exploitations of the projective force of ‘first verbs’ are particularly interesting, as they allow speakers to create implications or invite inferences without having to make them explicit. As we have seen, this is extremely useful for handling socially sensitive activities, such as complaining, criticizing, or making counter-suggestions, in an implicit, less face-threatening way.

While many questions still remain to be explored, I hope to have provided some insight into the functioning of ‘first verbs’ as a lexical resource for the organization of conversation.

Notes

1. The work reported in this paper was carried out in conjunction with the project “Kausale, konditionale und konzessive Verknüpfungen: Variation und Entwicklung im englischen und deutschen Lexikon,” funded by the German Science Foundation (DFG) as part of the Sonder-

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2. The only verb besides *wanted to* that Sacks mentions as being a 'first verb' is *thought*. However, he does not illustrate it with any conversational example.

3. It does not become entirely clear from Sacks' discussion whether he considers it a defining feature for a 'first verb' that the projected talk have to do with the failure of the event described in the TCU containing the 'first verb'. Sacks could also be understood to mean that any verb that projects a further TCU is a 'first verb', irrespective of the type of talk following. In that case, 'first verbs' followed by talk about the failure of the event (such as *wanted to*) would be but one sub-type of 'first verbs'. As Sacks is not clear on this and in order to avoid being too inclusive, I have decided to work with the more narrow understanding, treating the failure of the event as a critical feature of 'first verbs'.

4. While the 'first verbs' listed here are all affirmative, I did find a few examples of negative 'first verbs'. However, as I cannot make any reliable claims about negative 'first verbs' based on the small number of examples found and, therefore, it cannot be ruled out that they behave differently than their affirmative counterparts, I have limited this study to affirmative 'first verbs'.

5. Excerpts marked with one asterisk * follow the transcription conventions developed by Gail Jefferson, which can be found, e.g., in Hutchby and Wooffitt (1998:vi–vii and 77–85). Excerpts marked with two asterisks ** follow the transcription conventions described in Du Bois et al. (1993). In this system, each numbered line of the transcript corresponds to one intonation unit. In the excerpts given, you will therefore find lines that are not numbered, indicating that they belong to the same intonation unit as the previous line.

6. While I do not want to add it to the list of defining features, it should be pointed out that my data reveal an overwhelming skewing in regard to the subjects of 'first verbs'. Most often, 'first verbs' occur with first person subjects, somewhat less frequently with third person subjects (pronouns and full noun phrases), and not at all with second person subjects. This may very well have to do with the semantics of 'first verbs', as it is more usual for speakers to talk about their own intentions, expectations etc. than about those of their co-participants.

7. Sacks implicitly refers to this counterfactual implication when he says "That is, 'wanted to' is not used unless you're going to say something like 'and they stopped her' or 'they tried to stop her.' It's not, then, just a 'first verb' but one that will indicate that she failed, i.e., it tells that when the next clause comes it will involve that she failed. [...] And you don't get "she wanted to go in and she walked to the door and she went in." It's just not done. If the lady got into the store with no problem it might simply be reported "and there was this colored lady going into the store."" (Sacks 1992:181).

8. A very similar point is made by Karttunen, who briefly discusses the fact that verbs such as *want* and *try*, despite their non-implicativeness, are commonly understood to involve failure, unless they are followed by an explicit statement to the contrary. He demonstrates that these verbs clearly do not qualify as negative implicative verbs and argues that this apparent negative implication is not of a semantic nature, but can be explained pragmatically with the help of Grice's conversational maxims (Karttunen 1971:353, Note 12).

9. A further possibility, which I have not yet been able to pursue but which seems promising, is that 'first-verb uses' and 'non-first-verb uses' of a given verb may also differ systematically in their phonetic and/or prosodic realization. If so, this would afford interactants and analysts additional criteria for making the distinction.
10. Couper-Kuhlen and Thompson (2000) describe the same parameters of variation for the tripartite 'Cardinal Concessive schema'.
11. I have ordered the patterns according to the number of parts explicitly verbalized, starting from the most explicit patterns. This ordering does not reflect the frequency of the individual patterns.
12. I assume what Pamela means here is not *say with him*, but *say to him*.
13. It is interesting that the account ACC is most commonly introduced by *but* in pattern C and is, thus, presented as being in contrast with FV, although the relation of contrast actually holds between FV and NEG, with ACC being causally related to NEG. A similar point is made by Couper-Kuhlen (1999:94, Note 13).
14. I will only be talking about the principles guiding speakers' choices in regard to two parameters of variation, namely absence/presence of the three parts and the ordering of the three parts, not, however, about variation regarding the linguistic connectors used.
15. This is a general principle that also applies for instance to concessive patterns (cf. Couper-Kuhlen & Thompson 2000).
16. It is not quite clear whether or not NEG is already known to the recipient in this example, as it comes close to the beginning of the recording. However, this does not make any difference for the point illustrated here.
17. For lack of a better term, I have chosen to call these examples 'deviant cases' because they deviate from the conversational rule established in the previous section, i.e., that 'first verbs' are followed by accounts unless the account has already been provided in or can be inferred unequivocally from the prior linguistic or extra-linguistic context. However, as will be seen, a closer analysis of these "deviant" cases reveals that the apparent deviation is in fact systematically produced and, therefore, by no means an actual violation of a conversational rule, but rather a highly context-sensitive use of 'first verbs'. Although the 'deviant cases' discussed in this section as well as instances of Pattern D (as discussed in the previous section) constitute context-sensitive uses of 'first verbs' in which the account ACC is missing, I find it necessary to distinguish the two because they differ in important ways. In what I call 'deviant cases', the missing account is not provided contextually and, moreover, participants can often be seen to orient to the absence of the account either by making explicit their inability to provide the relevant account or by drawing certain inferences in regard to the missing account. By contrast, the missing account in Pattern D is provided contextually, can, thus, easily be filled in by the recipients and is therefore not specifically oriented to.
18. Why do we have to consider such an example deviant if the projected account is produced in a later turn? As mentioned in Section 2, pragmatic projection is one solution to the problem of producing a multi-unit turn, i.e., it is a way of projecting further talk beyond the current TCU, thus rendering the upcoming transition-relevance place (TRP) inoperative and enabling speakers to produce – and recipients to anticipate – at least one more TCU before turn completion (Selting 2000; Ford 2001). In order to fulfill the relevancies set up by a 'first verb', the projected talk must therefore follow within the same (multi-unit) turn. As Ford (2001) demonstrates for the 'negation plus elaboration' pattern, where negation pragmatically projects further

elaboration within the same turn, the projected talk is treated as relevantly absent when it is not immediately forthcoming, often leading recipients to actively pursue the elaboration. So even cases in which the projected talk is eventually produced in a later turn must be considered deviant, as pragmatic projection has to do with the production of multi-unit turns.

19. "La Conversation" is the name of a shop.

20. It is quite apparent that, when used as a take-off for a story or a next component of a story, TCUs built with 'first verbs' function very similarly to story prefaces, whose primary functions have been described as (i) aligning recipients and (ii) indicating to the recipient what kind of story it will be (Hutchby & Wooffitt 1998: 134ff.).

21. Marilyn *has* in fact already announced her intention to make ceviche with the leftover fish about 20 seconds prior to this excerpt. However, as is quite clear from the interaction that follows, Roy was not listening at that point, so that for him Marilyn's suggestion in line 9 of this excerpt is new.

22. The fact that the speakers in my data consistently preface their counter-suggestions with *well* provides evidence for their dispreferred status.

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Notes on disaligning ‘yes but’ initiated utterances in German and Danish conversations

Two construction types for dispreferred responses

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This article investigates ‘yes but’ initiated utterances in German and Danish conversations. The investigated utterances perform rejecting and disagreeing actions and they all occur in a specific sequential environment, namely, after suggestions, assessments and assertions with a clear action preference for acceptance and agreement. It is found that utterances which begin with an integrated ‘yes but’ token are constructed as “no fault” accounts and show little orientation to social problematicity, whereas utterances initiated with separated ‘yes but’ involve more socially problematic rejections and disagreements. Possible deviant cases, in which integrated ‘yes but’ tokens perform seemingly socially problematic actions, are examined, and it is found that sequential placement and turn design features, other than the form of the ‘yes but’ token itself, are decisive in such cases. These findings hold for both the German and the Danish data sets, but the article also touches on possible language differences in the use of the ‘yes’ and ‘but’ tokens. The investigation is a contribution to the study of connectors in spoken language and to the study of the social organisation of disalignment and dispreference in interaction.

1. Introduction

This article investigates a specific use of ‘but’ initiated utterances in German and Danish conversations, namely, utterances which are initiated with a ‘but’ token and which perform a disaligning action.¹ It turns out that such utterances in our German and Danish data almost invariably have an acknowledgement token before the ‘but’. In German the tokens are usually *ja* (‘yes’) + *aber* (‘but’), in Danish the tokens can be versions of *ja* or *jo* (‘yes’) or *nej* (‘no’) + *men* (‘but’). We call such utterances ‘yes but’ constructions.

The utterances we investigate all occur after turns which call for agreement or acceptance. The ‘yes but’ constructions do disagreement or rejection and they, thus, implement dispreferred responsive actions (Pomerantz 1984a; Sacks 1987). The ‘yes but’ constructions are also disaligning because they oppose or distance themselves from the projects of the prior speaker. This investigation is a contribution to a larger, ongoing study of aligning and disaligning actions and their linguistic and interactional shape in different languages and settings.²

The study will show two different construction types for disaligning ‘yes but’ constructions. One contains clear marking that the action performed is dispreferred, the other does not. The construction type containing dispreference marking will be called complex, and the one without is termed the simple type. The differences in turn design reflect differences in the social properties of the disaligning actions carried out. In the simple type they are less socially problematic than in the complex type. The shape of the ‘yes but’ tokens themselves – what we call the ‘yes but’ format – reflects the differences in type to a certain degree. We find that the two types and the logic pertaining to their use are the same across data types and across the two language corpora that we investigate. One difference we have found, however, reflects a difference in the response token inventory in the two languages.

Apart from being an attempt to unravel a little of the intricacies involved in performing disaligning actions, we also see our study as a contribution to studies on the use of connectors or conjunctions in talk-in-interaction, e.g., Mazeland and Huiskes (2001) and Rudolph (1996:282ff.), which focus on ‘but’ in different languages, but also Asmuß (2000, 2002); Broe (2003); Clift (1999); Couper-Kuhlen (1996); Couper-Kuhlen and Thompson (2000); Ford (1993); Ford and Mori (1994); Günthner (1996, 1999); Heinemann (2003, this volume); Jefferson (1983); and Steensig (1998), who study other utterance-initial connectors and conjunctions in their sequential context.

The rest of the introductory section will introduce the two different construction types through showing some examples. The second section will examine the simple construction type, the third will examine the complex type, the fourth will look at some deviant cases, the fifth section deals with possible language differences, and the sixth is a conclusion.

1.1 The phenomenon

The first two extracts show an example of each of the types of utterances we have examined.³

Extract (1) comes from a video recording of four students who are sitting round a table chatting in a break at school. The participants are discussing C’s problems in getting a flat. An *I/S thing* refers to a way of purchasing a flat where one buys a share in it:

- (1) *I/S thing*. Danish, face-to-face [KCstart 2000.10:64-68]
- 1 D: [Der var altså oss en sådan [en i] es: (.) t_{ing},=
 [there was PRT also a such [an I/] S (.) thing,=
 [there was also a such [an I/] S (.) thing,⁴
- 2 C: [Så:, [khrm]
 [so:,
- 3 → C: =[Jamen jeg ka ikk købe,
 [yes_but I can] not buy,
- 4 A: [Hm↓m;]
- 5 (0.7)
- 6 D: h[nɔ:,]
 [(oh)]
- 7 C: [Har ikk noget] o' betale me'=
 [have not anyt]hing to pay with

In line 1, D mentions buying a share in a flat as a solution to C's problems. In this context the utterance is heard as a suggestion that C should consider this possibility and, as such, it calls for acceptance from C. C's response in line 3 rejects the suggestion as relevant to C by introducing an insurmountable obstacle to the solution which D has suggested, namely that C cannot buy. D's response in line 6 is a minimal version of *nå* (a change-of-state token, Femø Nielsen 2002; Heritage 1984a) and thus a third position receipt.⁵

The 'yes but' construction, thus, performs a dispreferred responsive action (Levinson 1983:332–339; Pomerantz 1984a; Sacks 1987) in the sense that acceptance is called for, but rejection is produced. The rejection is accomplished through the account in line 7 which informs D about something which she did not know before and which makes the suggested solution impossible; namely that some resources (money) are not available. It, thus, claims access to knowledge which the prior speaker did not have and in this way it uses a correction and an updating of D's knowledge as a basis for rejecting D's suggestion.

We note that the rejecting turn (line 3) begins with *Jamen*, i.e., *ja* ('yes') and *men* ('but') pronounced as one item. We shall refer to such instances as the integrated version of the 'yes but' token. The whole 'yes but' initiated utterance is produced in a fluent and unmitigated manner and the turn follows right after the suggestion; they are "latched". In other words, apart from the 'but' token, there is nothing in the turn design which suggests that this turn is problematic or dispreferred. It, thus, implements a dispreferred action, a rejection, but in a format which does not show any of the design features normally associated with dispreference, such as delays, hesitation markers, prefaces or accounts (Levinson 1983:334).

Extract (2) comes from a videorecording made in the back premises of a second hand shop. Three elderly ladies, who all work as volunteers in the shop, are sitting round a little table drinking coffee, eating cake and talking. A has just asked B if she has had a blood test in connection with some health problems B has had. In lines 1–4, B accounts for not having taken the bloodtest:

(2) *Blood test*. Danish, face-to-face [Genbrugs:mov2:15]

- 1 B: O' så tænkte jeg Nu: du ble'en så
and then thought I no:w you grown so
 and then I thought no:w you've grown so
- 2 gammel du har aldrig fået taget en
old you have never had taken a
 old you have never had a bloodtest
- 3 blodprøve >hvorfør i alverden ska du så i
blood test >why on earth should you then at
 taken >why on earth should you then do it at
- 4 din alder, < .hhhh
your age, < .hhhh
 (0.7)
- 6 → A: Jo:o, m[en altså]å Det e::r=
yea:h b[ut PRT] it i::s
 yea:h, b[ut y'know] it i:s
- 7 B: [Min alder.]
[my age.]
- 8 A: =.hh [Der] ka- De ka se meget i=
.hh [the]re can- they can see a_lot in
 .hh [it] can- they can see a lot in
- 9 B: [.hh]
- 10 A: =e[n blod]pr[øve];
a[blood]te[st];
- 11 B: [.hh] [J:am'n det er da ikk noget
 [.hh] [y:es_but that is PRT not something
 [.hh] [y:es but that is certainly not
- 12 få det å vi'e,
to get that to know,
 something one would like to know about,

B's account for not having taken the blood test ends with a rhetorical question, 'why on earth should you then at your age' (lines 3–4). In line 5 there is a 0.7 second silence, and then, in lines 6, 8 and 10, A produces a disagreeing turn which argues that a blood test is relevant because it can give a lot of information. This turn is initiated with 'yes but'. In lines 11–12 B produces a counter-argument and, thus, shows that she has heard A's 'yes but' initiated turn as disagreeing.

The design of the 'yes but' construction in extract (2), lines 6, 8 and 10, differs from the integrated 'yes but' construction in extract (1) on a number of issues. Firstly, the 'yes but' turn in extract (2) is delayed. Secondly, the 'yes' token in line 6, *Jo:o*, is prolonged and has two pulses, and the two tokens 'yes' and 'but' are pronounced as separate items. This is an instance of what we have called a *non-integrated* version of 'yes but'. Thirdly, this is followed by a particle, *altså*, which is often used in disaligning or disjunctive turns. And finally, there is (lines 6 and 8) a series of restarts and hesitations before the disaligning argument is produced (lines 8 and 10). The 'yes but'

construction thus contains a series of design features associated with dispreference (Levinson 1983: 334).

The argument made in the turn (lines 8–10) consists of a general postulate which undermines B's age-based arguments for not taking the blood test by stressing the general value of such a test. B has argued for dispositions she has made about her own life and behaviour, and, by disputing this, A can be seen (and is seen by B in her response in lines 11–12) to directly challenge the rationality of B's behaviour. Whereas in extract (1) the rejecting turn informed and updated about something relevant to the speaker's behaviour, the opposing turn in extract (2) disputes and challenges accounts for the prior speaker's behaviour. This is a more socially problematic action than the one performed with the 'yes but' construction in extract (1).

The two extracts shown above share some features which are characteristic of all the extracts in our collection: They begin with an acknowledgement token ('yes') which is followed by a conjunction ('but'). They address the immediately prior utterance,⁶ and they disalign with or distance themselves from that prior utterance.

The 'yes but' constructions in extracts (1) and (2) also differ from each other in important ways. One contains an integrated 'yes but', it follows right after the prior turn, and the 'yes but' turn is fluent and unmitigated. The action performed by the turn is a rejection, it follows a suggestion and the rejection is done by correcting and updating the prior speaker's knowledge. We call this the *simple* construction type.

In the other instance the 'yes' and 'but' tokens are non-integrated, the turn is delayed, and there are disfluencies in the turn. The action performed is a counter-assertion, a challenge. It comes after an assertion, which it disputes and opposes by casting doubt on the rationale in it. This is an instance of the *complex* construction type.

The differences in turn design in the 'yes but' constructions (simple and complex construction types) seem to relate rather robustly to the types of action being performed. In section two and three we shall explore the logic of these differences, in section four we will look in more detail at some deviant cases, and in section five we will deal with aspects of language differences. But first we shall introduce the background of the investigation and the data base.

1.2 Background and data

Initially, we set out to investigate the use of utterances initiated with 'but' in German and Danish. We quickly decided to focus solely on 'but' initiated utterances which do some sort of disaligning or disaffiliative work. This means that we have not investigated 'but'-initiated utterances which do not disalign with or oppose anything in the prior speaker's utterance. There are very many such instances in our data; some seem to do "skip-connecting", as described for the Danish [*nej*] + [*men*] ('no + but') construction by Heinemann (2003: 285–413), and others resemble the Dutch resuming 'but' described by Mazeland and Huijckes (2001). Such instances have been excluded from our investigation.

Table 1. Distribution of ‘yes but’ format types in the data sets

Format	Danish		German		both data bases	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
integrated ‘yes but’	26	35.6	10	43.5	36	37.5
non-integrated ‘yes but’	47	64.4	13	56.5	60	62.5
<i>total</i>	73	100.0	23	100.0	96	100.0

Our investigation is comparative in that it is based on a data base of German and Danish interactions. We have attempted to spot language differences, but it turns out that our main findings hold true for the data in both languages. We do, however, in Section 5 consider two aspects which are specific to Danish and German respectively.

Our data come from a variety of settings and have been collected for different purposes. All of them are “naturalistic” in the sense that the events recorded are real events and not something made for the camera or the microphone. There are video taped everyday conversations, meetings, and TV debates, and there are audio taped everyday telephone conversations, radio phone-in conversations, and help-line telephone calls. Furthermore, there is a small subset of audio taped face-to-face counselling talk.

We have searched through our data for all instances which possibly evidence the phenomena as described above. We have made dataruns on approximately 11.5 hours of Danish and 12 hours of German data. In our collection we have 140 Danish and 53 German instances of disaligning ‘yes-but’ initiated utterances. Working through all of these instances, we found that only a smaller number of them met the criteria which grew out of our data work and which form the data base for the present article: The ‘yes but’ constructions had to occur in “second position” after an action which clearly called for acceptance and/or agreement (i.e., there had to be a clear action preference), and the disaligning utterances had to begin with a version of ‘yes’ or ‘no’ + ‘but’. The very few instances which began with just a ‘but’ and the more numerous cases which had something different and/or something more than a ‘yes’ or ‘no’ before the ‘but’, were not included in this investigation. This left us with a data base of 96 instances (73 Danish and 23 German ones). The distribution of the ‘yes but’ format types in the data sets is presented in Table 1.

The number of instances of the possible phenomena differs among the settings in our corpus. There are more instances of ‘yes but’ initiated utterances in our broadcast data than in the everyday, non-public, interactions. This is, we believe, due to the fact that the broadcast data contain more argumentative talk than the non-public data. As there are more broadcast data in the Danish dataset, this might be a reason why we found considerably more Danish instances than German ones. In Section 5, we consider further reasons for differences regarding the format and the amount of instances in the two languages.

2. The simple construction type and its use

In this section we take a closer look at what we have called the simple construction type. We will show an extract from each language and arrive at some generalisations about the relationship between this construction type and its functions.

The first extract in this section is from our German data. It is from a video taped dinner table conversation. The participants are discussing S's prospects of getting a job in Asia. J has argued that there are good job prospects and S has maintained that the chances are better in J's line of work.

(3) *English teacher*. German, face-to-face [Englischlehrer:25-32]

- 1 J: ach nee:: wenn ich jetzt zum beispiel schau
oh no:: if I now for instance look
2 was jetzt grade .hhh in:: asien was- (.)
what now just .hhh in:: Asia what- (.)
3 wer da alles lehrer wird.
who there all teacher becomes.
the kind of people that become teachers there.
4 → L: ja=aber susi is gar nicht leh[rer].
yes=but Susi is at_all not t[eacher].
yes=but Susi is not a teacher [at all.
5 S: [bin ja keine
[am PRT no
6 lehr[erin.
teac[her_female.
I am [no teacher.
7 J: [ja ist doch egal,
[yes is PRT unimportant,
[yes doesn't matter,
8 ich mein die [spricht die SPRACHE[:.
I mean she [speaks the language[:.
9 L: [>ha ha ha ha ha< ha ha (*oh ja)
(oh yeah)

In the first turn in lines 1–3, J disagrees (*ach nee*: 'oh no') with S, and J elaborates his point of view by stating that everybody can become a teacher in Asia. This stance-taking utterance calls for acceptance. L responds in line 4 with a 'yes but' initiated utterance which opposes J's point of view by pointing to a fact which makes J's point irrelevant to S. 'Susi is not at teacher at all', i.e., she has not got the qualifications required. J's reaction in lines 7–8 shows that he sees the 'yes but' utterance as having undermined his prior argument in that he now counters it frontally by saying that 'it doesn't matter' and then goes on to argue why his point is still valid.⁷

The disagreement expressed in the 'yes but' construction is done by stressing the items that are wrongly assumed, namely, the relevance of J's point for a specific person (Susi) and the fact that she is not a teacher. The format of the 'yes but' token is an

integrated one (*ja=aber*). It comes right after the turn with which it disagrees and the ‘yes but’ construction contains no delays, hesitations or other dispreference markers, i.e., it is an instance of the simple construction type. The utterance makes no claim that this is something J should have known. In contrast to this, the next opposing utterance, by S (lines 5–6), contains a *ja*, which is a particle that claims and appeals to mutual knowledge (Rosengren 1984:227). We do not know whether J already knew that S was not a teacher, but we can see that the disaligning ‘yes but’ construction is “innocent” with respect to this point, in making no claims about what J should or could have known.

In this case, then, we have a ‘yes but’-initiated disagreeing turn of the simple construction type. Even though disagreement may be seen as a potentially socially problematic thing to do, in this case it is done “innocently” in that it presents the grounds for disagreeing as a matter of having the right information.

Extract (4) comes from a Danish radio phone-in programme where people call in to talk about their problems. L is the host, K is the caller. K has the problem that she is a single mother with a baby and she feels lonely and isolated because she has to look after her child all the time. Before this extract, K has turned down several of L’s suggestions about what she could do. Now, L presents yet another solution to K’s problem:

(4) *Place the kid*. Danish, radio phone-in [Natteravnen:Katja 4:04]

- 1 L: Jam’ ku du ikk øh placere: øh ungen der
yes_b’t could you not uh place: uh kid_the there
yes b’t couldn’t you uh place: uh that kid
- 2 hos øh dine forældre eller et eller andet,=
at uh your parents or one or other,
at uh your parents or something,
- 3 → K: =.h Jam’ min mor hun bor i udlandet.
.h yes_b’t my mother she lives in abroad_the.
.h yes b’t my mother she lives abroad.
- 4 L: °N_a:::;°
o:::h;
- 5 K: °(N)a:::,°=
(o::h,/yea::h,)
- 6 L: =.hh H_va så >m- Er der< ikk en veninde
.hh what then >w- is there< not a friend_female
.hh what then >w- isn’t< there a friend
- 7 der kan ta ↓ø::h .hh mogungen der
who can take u::h .hh brat_the there
who can take u::h the brat

The suggestion in lines 1–2 is that K places the child at her parents.’⁸ This suggestion calls for acceptance as a next action. In line 3, however, K rejects the suggestion with a ‘yes but’ initiated utterance, by giving an explanation why the suggested solution is not possible. In line 4, L receipts the rejection. This proposes that the sequence is over

and this is confirmed in lines 6–8 in which L proceeds to suggesting a new solution to the problem.

The rejecting turn begins with *Jam'*, i.e. an integrated token with *ja* ('yes') and a contracted version of *men* ('but') where only the *m* sound is left. The rejection is latched on to the suggestion and it is pronounced fluently, i.e., it is in the simple construction type format. The rejection is done through pointing to something which makes the suggested solution impossible to carry out; as in extract (1) the proposed "resource" (here, the mother) is not available. This is something which L could not have known and there is no claim, either, that he should have.

2.1 A possible logic of simple disaligning 'yes but' constructions

In going through our collection of instances, we have singled out a simple type of disaligning 'yes but' utterances. This type is exemplified in extracts (1), (3) and (4) above. The following points characterize these instances:

1. They are responses to suggestions and stance-taking activities such as assertions, claims and assessments, after which acceptance or agreement is the preferred response.
2. The two tokens 'yes' and 'but' are pronounced as one item, a format which we call integrated.
3. The disaligning utterances come right after the utterances which they respond to.
4. They contain no hesitation markers or mitigating expressions.
5. They perform the rejections or disagreements by pointing to a lack of knowledge behind the suggestions or points of view that prior speakers have put forward.
6. This lack of knowledge is "innocent"; it is not presented as something that prior speakers should have known or are responsible for.
7. The disaligning utterances perform dispreferred actions in that the projects or opinions of the prior utterances are rejected totally, and first speakers must either cancel their projects or they have to make efforts to reestablish them.

The social logic behind the simple type of disaligning 'yes but' constructions seems to be that if a disaligning utterance presents a fact which can account for non-acceptance and which focuses on an understandable ("non-accountable") lack of knowledge on behalf of the prior speaker, then it can be done in an "unmarked" manner, i.e., without delays, hesitations or mitigating formulations (see Heritage 1984b:266–269; Levinson 1983:332–339; Pomerantz 1984a).

In this way the disaligning turns avoid putting any blame on prior speakers. They focus on something that is socially acceptable: a lack of resources or qualifications, or the fact that something proposed in the first turn has already been tried and did not work. The accounts inherent in the simple type 'yes but' constructions are based on inability or inapplicability, i.e., they have a "no fault quality" (Heritage 1984b:271–272).

3. The complex construction type and its use

Many cases in our data differ from the simple construction type described in Section 2. They seem more complex, both in their turn design, including the shape of the ‘yes but’ components, and in the actions they perform. Typically, the disaligning actions carried out in the ‘yes but’ utterances of this type appeal to moral norms and/or are based on personal preferences.

Extract (2) in the introduction is an example of the complex type. We argued above that the ‘yes but’ speaker disagreed with the prior speaker and that the disaligning turn addressed a potentially morally problematic lack of knowledge, something which prior speaker ought to have known. We also argued that participants showed an orientation to the possible problematicity of the disagreement. The disaligning turn was delayed in relation to the prior. The ‘yes but’ format was non-integrated, and the ‘yes’ was prolonged. Besides, there were numerous restarts and hesitation markers in the ‘yes but’ initiated turn. Cases, in which the “more disaligning” nature of the action in the ‘yes but’ turn goes hand in hand with a more complex turn design, are abundant in our data.

We shall look at two examples of this in this section. The first one comes from a conversation in which participants from two cooperating television teams are discussing whether they have to name their sponsor at the end of each programme or not. The word *plakette* (‘sign’) in line 2 refers to a sign with the name of the sponsor on it which they are required to show at the end of the programmes. S has just implied that she has never thought of taking this requirement seriously because the sponsor requires so many things. P’s first turn opposes this:

(5) *little sign*. German, face-to-face [plakette]

- 1 P: ich glaub da is an jeder geschichte noch
I believe there is at every story also
 I believe that there is a little sign
- 2 ne kleine: (.) plakette drängeklebt.
a little: (.) sign sticking_to.
 sticking to every story.
- 3 (1.3)
- 4 → S: m j:a.
hm y:eah.
- 5 → (0.7)
- 6 → S: aber (.) ich hab das bei uns im programm nie
but (.) I have this at ours in_the programme never
 but (.) I have never seen it in our programme
- 7 gesehn dass wir das irgendwie [ranhängen [müssn.
seen that we it somehow [hang_up [must.
 that we have to show that some[how in th[e end.
- 8 P: [nein [nein
 [no [no

9 nein.
 no.

P's turn in lines 1–2 is a piece of information which taken at face value just calls for a news receipt registering the relevance of the information. But the information partly opposes what S has implied earlier, namely, that the requirement cannot be taken seriously. As such it calls for acceptance, and such an acceptance would in turn require that S revises her prior views. After P's turn there is a 1.3 second pause (line 3), and then S in lines 4–7 produces a disagreeing turn initiated with 'yes but'. S begins with an acknowledgement token *m j:a* in line 4. The acknowledgement token consists of a short *m* sound and a *j:a* with prolonged initial sound and falling intonation. This token "sounds hesitating" and may already by itself indicate upcoming disagreement (there are to our knowledge no descriptions of the prosody of turn-initial acknowledgement tokens in German, but it resembles the 'curled' *ja* described for Swedish interaction by Lindström (1999:140–172), which precedes and projects disaligning moves). Before *aber* ('but') is produced there is another pause (0.7 seconds) in line 5 and after *aber* follows a micropause. The format of 'yes but' is thus a non-integrated one. The way S opposes P's statement is that she casts doubt on P's claim that the sign is to be attached to 'every story' (line 1), by saying that she has never seen such a requirement in their programme (line 6). As the parties work within the same framework, this is not just a question of updating P's knowledge. S disputes P's claim by implying that it cannot be the way P says it is. In this way S challenges P's prior utterance by questioning its correctness and adequacy. The disaligning 'yes but' utterance in this extract, thus, performs a more socially problematic action than in the instances of the simple type; it not only neutrally updates the other speaker's knowledge, but it blames the other speaker for not having, or using, the necessary knowledge adequately.

Here we have, thus, a delayed response in which the acknowledgement token stands on its own and has a form which may already project upcoming disagreement. The utterance accomplishes a more confrontative or potentially problematic type of action than the rejections or disagreements which were made in 'yes but' utterances of the simple type.

The next extract is another example of the more complex type in the Danish corpus. It comes from the same conversation as extract (4):

(6) *Grandmother*. Danish radio phone-in [Natteravn: Katja:302]

- 1 L: Ku du ikk s_ø :ge (0.4) i avisen efter en
 could you not loo:k (0.4) in newspaper_the for a
 couldn't you loo:k (0.4) in the newspaper for a
- 2 b_edstemor eller n_ede i: øh i_rma elle:r.
 grandmother or down in: uh ((name of shop)) o:r.
- 3 >E_t eller andet.< Hva der nu ligger d'er. i*kk=
 >one or other.< what there now lies there. PRT
 >something.< whatever lies there. Right

- 4 → K: =Jo:. (.) M' je:g bare så: Altså *a:* Nu Efter man
 yea:h. b't I: just so PRT a: now after one
 yea:h. b't I'm just so well a: now after you've
- 5 har været i u es a, Så: man lidt paranoid, og man
 has been in USA the:n one a_bit paranoid, and one
 been in USA then you are a bit paranoid, and you
- 6 har set no(h)gen pr(h)ogrammer om folk de:r;
 has seen so(h)me pr(h)ogrammes about people who:;
 have seen so(h)me pr(h)ogrammes about people who;;
- 7 (0.3)
- 8 L: ja:. .hhh Men [så tag]
 ye:s. .hhh but [then take]
- 9 K: [°der gør >alt] m[uligt ikk<°]
 [who do >all]po[ssible PRT<]
 [who do >all kinds] o[f things ri]ght<
- 10 L: [g:odt] me'=
 [g:ood] with
 [a:good num]ber of
- 11 =samtale:r o' så måske be' om o' snakke me' nogen
 intervieu:ws and then maybe ask about to talk with
 intervieu:ws and then maybe ask to talk with some

In lines 1–3, the radio host L makes a suggestion about how the caller K can get somebody to look after her baby. It has acceptance as its preferred response. The suggestion reaches recognizable completion already in line 2 after *bedstemor* ('grandmother'), it is then expanded with another possible place to look for a 'grandmother' in line 2 ('or down in ((name of shop)')) to which is appended a prolonged *eller* ('or') with falling intonation. This particle is frequently used at the end of proposals or requests – and often in cases in which acceptance turns out to be problematic (see Lindström 1999: 54–103 for an analysis of the use of a similar particle in Swedish talk-in-interaction). Line 3 contains three further expansions which all seem to reoccasion the relevance of a response. We see this as a pursuit of response (Pomerantz 1984b), made as a reaction to the fact that the response does not occur at the first (or second) possible completion. In other words, we argue that the response is delayed. The response comes in lines 4–6 (and line 9). It is a rejection of the suggestion which is made via an account why K is 'paranoid'. This account is based on K's personal history (she has been to USA) and her personal sentiments ('then you are a little paranoid').

The rejecting turn is introduced with a 'yes' token (*Jo:*) in line 4 which has falling intonation.⁹ After this comes a brief break in phonation, and then follows a contracted 'but' (*M'*). This is a non-integrated version of 'yes but'. The account itself has a number of restarts and hesitations in the beginning. The first words are probably on their way to becoming 'I am just so: paranoid', but the utterance is then changed into a less personal (with the general pronoun *man* ('one') instead of *jeg* ('I')) and more backgrounded telling. Later on (line 6) laughter is interspersed and the formulation of what

K is afraid of is spoken silently and quickly. All of this indicates that K sees this as a problematic account.

To sum up, we have observed that 'yes but' utterances that use moral standards (e.g. what one "ought to know") or personal sentiments as a basis for the disalignment that they accomplish are often introduced with non-integrated 'yes but'. Such turns are almost always delayed and contain hesitation markers, pauses and self-repairs.

3.1 A possible logic of complex disaligning 'yes but' constructions

The following points characterize the complex type of disaligning 'yes but' initiated utterances.

1. They occur in the same sequential environment as the simple type constructions, e.g. as responses to suggestions and stance-taking utterances which have acceptance and/or agreement as their preferred responses.
2. They have a non-integrated 'yes but' format. This means that the 'yes' and the 'but' part are pronounced as separate items, sometimes including a pause between the two items. The non-integrated format includes a marked pronunciation, where the 'yes' part is prolonged and/or stressed.
3. The disaligning utterances are delayed.
4. The acknowledgement token and/or the visual behaviour in connection with it often projects disalignment.
5. The disaligning utterances contain features like hesitation markers, pauses, restarts, cut-offs, and mitigating expressions.
6. Instead of addressing the prior speaker's lack of knowledge by updating it, the disaligning utterance opposes something the other speaker has assessed, stated, suggested or claimed. The opposition focuses on a moral conflict or a difference in personal views or sentiments between the speakers. In this way the complex type utterances are more conflictive and consequently more dispreferred than the simple cases.

The difference in degree or type of dispreference between the simple and complex utterances is reflected in the fact that the complex type often contains markers of dispreference: delays, hesitations, restarts, and mitigating expressions (Heritage 1984b:266–269; Levinson 1983:332–339; Pomerantz 1984a; Sacks 1987). But it is also reflected in the 'yes but' format itself, with the tendency that the tokens are separated and that the 'yes' token is more prominent in the complex type cases. It is possible to see the more independent 'yes' token as part of an "agreement component" in a disagreeing turn (Pomerantz 1984a:72–77) or an acceptance component in a rejecting turn.

We, thus, see the complex type as orienting to the dispreference of the response. And the difference in the 'yes but' format, including the relative weight given to the acknowledgement token in it, reflects this orientation.

4. Integrated ‘yes but’ in socially problematic utterances

In Section 2 we found that integrated ‘yes but’ constructions performed rejections and disagreements in a “no fault” manner. There are, however, cases of integrated ‘yes but’ utterances in environments in which we would have expected (according to our analysis in Section 3) to find non-integrated utterances: These are cases in which the actions seem to be socially problematic in the sense that they orient to moral norms or personal preferences. Still, the ‘yes but’ format used in them is integrated.

We have investigated these apparently deviant cases and found that sequential placement is decisive for determining which actions these integrated ‘yes but’ utterances perform. The instances can be subdivided into two main groups: integrated ‘yes but’ utterances that are delayed, and integrated ‘yes but’ utterances that are not delayed but that are part of an ongoing disagreement sequence.

4.1 Delayed integrated ‘yes but’ utterances

As mentioned above, the correspondence between a non-integrated ‘yes but’ format and actions which are socially problematic is not consistent. We have a number of cases in which integrated ‘yes but’ initiated utterances are problematic in much the same way as in the non-integrated cases discussed in Section 3. What these cases have in common is that the disaligning turn is delayed. We will argue that the delays mark the ‘yes but’ utterances as problematic. Moreover, the speakers in these cases use additional resources to perform the socially problematic action. These resources include some of the resources we saw in the complex type cases, i.e., restarts, hesitation markers and mitigating expressions.

The first example of this comes from our German data, the same conversation as in extract (5). Here too, the participants are discussing the problem that their sponsor wants them to say explicitly in their TV programmes that they are sponsored by the agency in question.

(7) *normal programme*. German, face-to-face [langes ding]

- 1 S: letztlich: hab ich mir überlegt, .hh- ob ihr
in the end have I myself thought, .hh- if you_PL
 actually I have been thinking, whether you
- 2 so: den grossen tenor macht (.) Angst vor
PRT the big focus make (.) anxiety of
 like focus on (.) being afraid of
- 3 euroregion, [warum?
euroregion, [why?
- 4 P: [m*:.
 5 P: hm[:.
 6 S: [.h und wir machn so=n beitrag (.) >was
[.h and we make such=a contribution (.) >what
 [.h and we make a film (.) what

- 7 *ist* überhaupt die *eu*roregion< das *weiss*
is PRT *the euroregion*< *this knows*
 is the euroregion actually
- 8 *ja* *keiner*.
 PRT *no_one*.
 nobody really knows.
- 9 P: *hm*!.
- 10 (0.6)
- 11 P: *das* wär (1.1) .hh n[e *gute* *verteilung* *glaub* ich.
this were [*good division believe I*.
 this would be (1.1) .hh a [*good division, I believe*.
- 12 S: [**ne*,
 [*PRT*
 [*right*
- 13 (0.4)
- 14 P: *ja*!.
- ye*[*ah*.
- 15 → K: [*.hh* [*ja*.⇒*aber* das< *haben* wir (0.3) *g*- ↓*also in*=
 [*.hh* [*yes*.⇒*but this*< *have* we (0.3) *j*- ↓PRT *in*
 [*.hh* [*yes*.⇒*but this*< *we have* (0.3) *j*- *y*'know *in*
- 16 I: [*ja*.
 [*yeah*.
- 17 K: =*unserem* *norma*len *sendung*. ↑*das* *haben* wir *ja*
 our normal programme. ↑*this have* we PRT
 our normal programme. we have actually
- 18 *gerade* *gemacht*; also ein *langes* ding.
 just done; PRT *a long thing*.
 just done this; well a long film.

In lines 1 to 8, S (German team) makes a suggestion concerning a film for the joint Danish-German TV programme. After this, P (Danish team) produces a series of acknowledging and accepting utterances; first, he uses an acknowledgement token in line 9, followed by a 0.6 second pause, then he produces an agreeing assessment in line 11 and, after another pause, he once again acknowledges in line 14. During this, his teammate K remains silent. In line 15, K takes over and rejects S's suggestion by pointing out that the Danes just recently made such a film. This implies that S's prior suggestion is irrelevant as the suggested film would not be new to the Danish viewers. The particle *ja*, line 17, appeals to common knowledge, and the specification in line 18 upgrades the weightiness of the contribution that the Danish team has already made. Consequently, this is not a "no fault" account; rather, it implies that S (and P) should have had access to the knowledge which, in K's opinion, renders the suggestion irrelevant.

The 'yes but' utterance is delayed in relation to the suggestion in lines 1–3 and 6–8 which it rejects. Regarding 'yes but', we can see that the two tokens are integrated, *ja*.⇒*aber*. We note, though, that there is emphasis and the final intonation on 'yes', so 'yes but' is not produced in a completely unmarked way. The utterance contains a pause and a cut off in line 15 and a restart in line 17.

The next extract is a somewhat similar Danish example. It comes from the same video recording as extract (1) above. At this point, the participants are discussing a TV reality show, “The Robinson Expedition”, and the first turn is part of C’s argument that the TV viewers cannot really know if what they see is authentic or staged:

(8) *Turned around on TV*. Danish face-to-face [KCMov 20:44]

- 1 C: Men de:t jo oss det der me' igen, Hvordan ka
but it_is PRT also that there with PRT, how can
 But there's also this thing again, how can
- 2 man få sådan noget vendt om på teve
one get such a_thing turned around on TV
 they turn things around on TV
- 3 uden a'
without that
 without
- 4 (0.8) ((B nods))
- 5 → A: [.hhh Jamen igen så °sp-° tror jeg nu nok
[.hhh yes_but PRT then as- believe I now PRT
[.hhh yes but then again I as- do believe
 ((A quickly shakes head and makes gesture))
- 6 at de:t rigtig nok det vi ser. Altså selvfø lgelig
that it_is right PRT that we see. PRT of_course
 that it's true enough what we see. well of course
- 7 Man vanner sig jo hurtig ti' der går
one gets_used oneself PRT quickly to there go
 they get used to the cameras going
- 8 kameraerne, oss fordi det total adskilt.
cameras_the, also because it totally separated.
 there, also because it's totally separated.
- 9 C: m:m,

Before this extract, C has been describing the absurdity in the situation on the island where the TV show is shot. On the one hand, the contestants in the show live a primitive life having to survive without supplies, and, on the other hand, the crew who shoots the show lives beside them and has access to all modern commodities. C's statement in lines 1–3 is an assertion which calls for agreement and we can see on the video that C gets some indication of agreement from one other participant, B, who nods to C during the 0.8 second pause in line 4. A, however, does not respond visually at all during the pause. When she starts speaking, in line 5, she shakes her head and makes a dismissive gesture. Here, she objects in a 'yes but' initiated utterance challenging C's conception of reality: C does not believe what they see, A does. The potential social problematicity of doing this is displayed in the fact that A uses mitigating expressions (*tror jeg nu nok*, 'I do believe', line 5, and *nok*, 'enough', line 6), she uses two accounts to support her viewpoint (lines 7 and 8), and she uses the particle *jo* which marks her version of reality as something that the others ought to know about.

The 'yes but' format in line 5 is delayed and it is an integrated one. It contains no special prosodic marking. It is, however, followed by a particle, *igen* (roughly, 'again'), which marks the turn as yet another argument (cf. C's use of the same particle in line 1). The utterance further contains a cut off and a restart in line 5.

In the above two extracts we have seen that integrated 'yes but' initiated utterances can be used to reject suggestions or disagree with assessments in ways that invoke social problematicity. In these cases the disaligning utterances were delayed. They also contained restarts, hesitations, and mitigating expressions. So, the sequential placement and the use of the above mentioned resources show orientation to social problematicity. These design features, rather than the 'yes but' format as such, are decisive for the action performed.

4.2 Integrated 'yes but' utterances in disagreement sequences

This section treats a different type of instances in which integrated 'yes but' utterances perform seemingly socially problematic actions. In contrast to the cases described in Section 4.1, these utterances are not delayed. They appear in sequences where a disagreement between the speakers has already been established (cf. Kotthoff 1993).

The first example of this is from the German television programme meetings (like extracts (5) and (7) above). Again, the participants are discussing the role of their sponsor (*die*, 'they', line 1), which is an agency financed by the European Union.

(9) *first impression*. German, face-to-face [augenschein]

- 1 S: ausserdem (.) seh ich das auch nicht ein.=das
apart-from-that (.) understand I that also not.=this
apart-from-that (.) I don't agree with that either.=
- 2 ist freier journalismus den wir betreibn;=ich
is free journalism which we pursue;=I
 =what we are pursuing is free journalism;=I am not
- 3 lass mich auch von europa nicht kaufen.
let myself also from europe not buy.
 willing to get bought by Europe.
- ((22 lines omitted))
- 4 P: die ham ja auch nicht versucht, irgendwie
they have PRT also not tried, somehow
 they have you know not tried either, somehow
- 5 redaktionell einfluss ↓ä: zu gewinnen.=
programme influence uh: to win.
 to achieve any influence on the programme.
- 6 =n[e?
 P[RT?
 r[ight?
- 7 → S: [ja=aber das is doch der augenschein der da:
[yes=but it is PRT the eye_impression which there:
[yes=but it is actually the first impression which

- 8 wichtig i[st.
 important [is.
 is importa[nt.
- 9 P: [genau.
 [exactly.
- 10 (0.6)
- 11 P: °ja.°
 °yeah.°

In lines 1 to 3, S establishes a disagreement with P, by pointing out that she is not willing to accept the fact that their sponsor wants to force them to end each programme by explicitly mentioning the sponsor. She strengthens her argument by pointing to the freedom of the press and that getting money will not make any difference to her. After this, there is a 22 lines long sequence (omitted here), in which two of the four participants joke about how rich they could become if they actually accepted a bribe from the sponsor. In lines 4 to 6, P takes over and formulates a counter-argument to S: the sponsor has never made any effort to influence the programme. At this point of the sequence, a disagreement or an exchange of opposing views between two of the speakers is established. In lines 7 and 8, S produces another opposing statement, this time using a ‘yes but’ format. S opposes P’s statement by pointing out that P’s point of view is irrelevant as it is only the first impression that counts for the TV viewers, namely the mere fact that the programme is sponsored and that it is, therefore, likely that the viewers will conclude that the information given in the programme is biased.

The ‘yes but’ format of the disaligning utterance is an integrated one, and the utterance does not show any further signs of dispreference. Yet, the disaligning utterance does not just correct or update a lack of knowledge in the prior utterance; it clearly opposes the prior by presenting another point of view. The particle *doch* (‘actually’, line 7) is often used in argumentative talk, and it stresses that S insists on her point.

The next extract also contains an integrated ‘yes but’ in a clearly “problematic” disagreement sequence. It comes from the same video recording as extract (2) and the turn which we focus on here comes right after the disagreement which we considered in our analysis of extract (2) (lines 1–5).

- (10) *Blood test*. Danish, face-to-face [Genbrugs:mov2:15]
- 1 A: Jo:◌◌, m[en alts]å De◌t e::r=
 yea:h b[ut PRT] it i::s
 yea:h b[ut y’know] it i::s
- 2 B: [Min alder.]
 [my age.]
- 3 A: =.hh [De◌r] ka- De ka se meget i=
 .hh [the]re can- they can see a_lot in
 .hh [it] can- they can see a lot in
- 4 B: [.hh]

- 5 A: =e[n blod]pr[øve;
 a[blood]te[st;
6 → B: [.hh] [J:am'n det er da ikk noget=
 [.hh] [y:es_but that is PRT not something
 [.hh] [y:es but that is certainly not
7 =a' fâ det å vi'e,
 to get that to know,
 something one would like to know about,
8 (0.6)
9 A: (J) [*â:â::rh*]
 PRT[]
 (we[:e:ll]]
10 B: [ENten >er man< ↑RA]sk er man ikk ↓rask. ikkë,
 [either is one fit] is one not fit. PRT
 [either you are fit] or you're not fit. right,

In line 6, B counters A's disagreeing turn by stating that the information which a blood test can give is not 'something one would like to know about'. This is done with an integrated 'yes but' (*J:am'n*) initiating a turn which contains no dispreference marking and which appeals to both norms and personal preference. A responds to that with a "grudging" token, (*J)â:â::rh*, in line 9. It is difficult to make out precisely what token this is, but to a native ear there is no doubt that it is doing non-acceptance and resisting B's prior turn.

Here again we see a 'yes but' utterance with an integrated format and without any dispreference markers. As in extract (9) above, this happens in an environment where disagreement has already been established. To disagree in this environment seems to be less problematic than in sequences where disagreement has not yet been introduced. Such sequences may be "assertoric sequences" in Coulter's (1990:185–191) sense, where the preference for agreement is laxed when a disagreement is already in the air.

In this section we have looked at cases which seemed to deviate from the logic we established in Section 2, namely, that integrated 'yes but' initiated utterances were used to do disaligning actions in a "no fault" manner. It turned out that sequential placement was central in these cases. Either the disaligning turns were delayed and contained other design features which indicated their social problematicity, or they occurred in sequences in which disagreement had already been established. The accounts given in Section 4.1 and 4.2 cover all the instances in our data sets which deviate from the logic established in Section 2.

We have seen that integrated 'yes but' is used in disaligning utterances in three types of environment: (1) to do "no fault" type rejections and disagreements, (2) to perform socially problematic actions in sequences in which delays and other design features mark the problematicity, or (3) to do disagreements in situations where the preference for agreement is laxed and disagreeing, therefore, is less socially problematic.

5. Language differences

As stated in the introductory section, we did not find any language differences between the Danish and German data regarding the design and social functions of the ‘yes but’ construction. We did, however, find differences concerning the amount of instances in the Danish and German data. Moreover, we found a variant in the acknowledgement token in the Danish ‘yes but’ construction which performs a specific action. We could not find any equivalent of this in the German data.

5.1 Differences in the number of instances

Even though we made dataruns on approximately the same amount of Danish and German data (11.5 hours of Danish vs. 12 hours of German), we found considerably more instances of the described phenomenon in the Danish than in the German data (73 Danish vs. 23 German). As stated in Section 1.2, this might be due to the fact that there is more argumentative talk in the Danish data set than in the German one. Another aspect which could contribute to this distribution concerns the different syntactic possibilities for the placement of ‘but’ in German and Danish. The German conjunction *aber* (‘but’) can be syntactically more flexibly positioned than the Danish equivalent. Whereas the Danish conjunction ‘but’ (like in English) has to be placed TCU-initially, the German version can also be placed TCU-internally:

(11) *Conditions*. German, face-to-face [Bedingungen]

P: ja da hätte aber auch jemand ä: nach=
Yes there had but also someone uh: about
 Yes but someone should have enquired uh: about
 =fragen solln. damals. finde ich.
asked should. at_that_time. think I.
 this. at that time. I think.

The turn is initiated by an acknowledgement token (*ja*). The acknowledgement token, however, is not followed directly by *aber* (‘but’). Instead, *aber* is placed later in the TCU. We made a datarun on approximately 6 hours of German data and found only very few instances of turn-internal *aber* (‘but’) in disaligning utterances. So this syntactical possibility does not account for the difference in the frequencies between the German and Danish examples.

5.2 A special feature of Danish ‘yes’ tokens in ‘yes but’ utterances

There is a special version of the Danish ‘yes’ token which is frequently used in ‘yes but’ utterances of the complex type, the token *jo*. Danish has two ‘yes’ tokens, *ja* and *jo*. The differences between these tokens (and *nej* (‘no’) used as an acknowledgement token) have recently been analysed in detail by Heinemann (2003, this volume). Generally, *ja* is the acknowledgement token used after positively formulated utterances, *nej* is

used to acknowledge negatively formulated utterances, and *jo* is used in dispreferred responses to negatively formulated utterances.

We have seen instances of *jo* before *men* ('but') used in this way in extracts (2) and (6) above. In extract (2) the disaligning *jo men* initiated utterance follows a rhetorical question, 'why on earth should you then at your age' (lines 3–4). This question implicates a negative formulation ('you should not at your age'). In extract (6) the *jo men* utterance follows a suggestion, formulated as a negatively polarised question, 'could you not look...?' (lines 1–3). Thus, *jo* can be used in dispreferred responses to both negatively formulated utterances and to utterances with negative implications. This is a general feature in the Danish data set and it seems to correspond with what Heinemann has found in her studies.

We have not examined this in any depth, but we note that *jo* is used in 'yes but' utterances which are delayed or show other marks of dispreference in their turn design and which perform socially problematic actions.

6. Concluding remarks

In the first phases of our work on disaligning 'yes but' initiated utterances (Asmuß & Steensig 2001), we focused on the fact that many of them did not directly oppose the prior utterances; rather they challenged the relevance of something which was implied in the prior one(s). This is certainly true of many utterances and could very well be one of the reasons why people choose 'yes but' initiated utterances instead of other resources which are available in the languages for doing rejections and disagreements. However, this perspective could not account for the differences in the 'yes but' format. We were interested in explaining why 'yes but' in the two languages is sometimes produced as one token and sometimes as two separate tokens.

We decided to focus on the 'yes but' utterances which are clearly performing dispreferred actions in second position, i.e., after turns which call for, or prefer, a specific type of response. And we started looking more closely at the actions performed in the 'yes but' utterances themselves.¹⁰

We found that in this particular environment there seems to be a rather sharp division of labour between what we have called simple and complex construction types. The complex type 'yes but' utterances have clear markers of dispreference, including a use of non-integrated 'yes but'. They are used in performing disaligning actions which are socially problematic. In our data, these actions involve opposing the views and moral standards of the other party or appealing to personal values or feelings. The simple type utterances have an integrated 'yes but' format and they contain no clear markers of dispreference. However, they are used to perform dispreferred actions. In our data, this happens in two types of sequential environment: Firstly, when a disaligning action can be done by just informing the first speaker about something which he or she could not have known. Secondly, it is used to accomplish more socially problematic disaligning actions (typically doing disagreement) in cases where disagreement

and opposing views have already surfaced in the interaction. In such cases, it would seem that the preference for agreement is laxed.

In the literature on ‘yes but’ initiated utterances, ‘yes but’ is generally treated as two separate items performing different actions: ‘Yes’ marks approval, agreement (often “token agreement”) or coherence with the prior, and ‘but’ performs the opposing, disagreeing or refocusing action (Koerfer 1979:26; Rosengren 1984; Rudolph 1996:282; Zifonun et al. 1997:276, 372, 2407). The less integrated the ‘yes but’ format is, the stronger is the new focus established in the ‘yes but’ utterances (Kallmeyer & Schmitt n.d.:68).

Our findings confirm the tendency that non-integrated ‘yes but’ is used to perform more disaligning actions. We do not, however, see this as merely a question of the linguistic format of ‘yes but’. Instead, we have focused on how sequential features and turn design contribute to the creation of meaning in context.

We see our observations as a contribution to a more nuanced view of the social organisation of disalignment and dispreference in interaction. There are conditions where disalignment is less dispreferred or, at least, less marked than in others. This has to do with the social norms and relations which are being constructed and negotiated in interaction: It is socially less problematic to reject something by correcting another participant’s knowledge than to reject something or to disagree if this involves questioning the other party’s moral standards, personal opinions or judgment, or if it means revealing contestable inner motives.

We have not examined how disaligning ‘yes but’ utterances are used in non-second position and we have not examined cases where something comes between ‘yes’ and ‘but’. We must also note that our data comprise a limited range of settings and only two, relatively closely related languages. Aspects of prosody, internal syntax and the physical actions performed in connection with ‘yes but’ utterances should also be investigated in more depth than we have been able to do here. We hope, though, that the present study can be a contribution to a more nuanced picture of how particular aspects of language are used to perform specific actions.

Notes

1. Earlier versions of this article and of data used in it have been presented at numerous occasions, among others, The International Conference on Conversation Analysis, Copenhagen, 2001, the Institute for the German Language, Mannheim, 2001, The Second European Conference on Interactional Linguistics, Helsinki, 2002, the Colloquium for Linguistic Research in Communication at the University of Potsdam, 2002, *Movin* (Danish research network for Micro-analysis of Verbal Interaction) data sessions in Aarhus and Odense 2001–2003, lectures given at Dept. of Linguistics, University of Aarhus 2001–2002, Institute of Business Communication and Information Science, University of Southern Denmark, and Department of Finnish, Helsinki University. The editors of this volume have given extensive and very useful suggestions. We are very grateful for the comments and suggestions we have received. We have made ample use of

them. The authors, who have contributed evenly to the article, are, of course, solely responsible for the end result.

2. We are involved in a European project running from 2003–2006, supported by the European Science Foundation, which investigates aligning and disaligning utterances in interaction across languages and social settings.
3. For reasons of space we use only one of our two languages, namely Danish, in the introductory section. In the analysis sections instances from both languages will be presented and discussed.
4. In the glossing line, PRT stands for particle. We have used this under small words which are difficult to translate.
5. That this is really so can be seen also from the participants' visual behavior: In line 6, D makes her response token while still looking at C and then moves away her gaze from C (disengages), C looks at D long enough to see her reaction, and having noted this, she begins moving her gaze away while she continues her elaboration in line 7.
6. This can explicitly be seen in instances where a speaker redesigns his turn with a 'yes but' format due to the fact that an acknowledgement of the prior turn becomes relevant in the course of the sequence. In this way the described extracts differ from skip-connecting uses of 'but'.
7. This is one of the places where we have utterances performing functions very similar to the ones which our 'yes but' constructions do, but in another format. Such alternative formats will not be examined in this paper.
8. We are aware that also this utterance is initiated with a 'yes but'. In this case it has more of a "skip-connecting" function in relation to the prior; so this is not an instance of the issue we are examining here.
9. Danish has two 'yes' tokens, *ja* and *jo*. They have different distributions and sequential implications (see Heinemann this volume). Their distribution in connection to 'yes but' utterances in Danish is addressed in Section 5 below.
10. This decision was very much inspired by comments offered to us at datasessions and other presentations, see Note 1.

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Where grammar and interaction meet

The preference for matched polarity in responsive turns in Danish*

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This paper focuses on the use of the Danish negative response particle *nej* ‘no’ and its use in ordinary interaction. I demonstrate how this negative particle is typically used as an interactionally preferred response to prior negatively framed utterances, implementing, for instance, agreement, affiliation, or acknowledgement rather than being used as a marker of dispreference, as is often indicated in the literature. Hence, I argue that in Danish there is a strong connection between grammar and polarity on the one hand, and interactional preference on the other, so that interactional preference is typically achieved through mirroring the polarity of a prior turn in the response. I further demonstrate that this grammatical preference for mirrored polarity in Danish is so strong that a ‘special’ positive response particle *jo* ‘yes2’ rather than *ja* ‘yes1’ is deployed in orientation to this pattern when negatively framed utterances, for whatever reason, receive a positive response. To conclude, I discuss how findings from other languages indicate that this pattern may not be particular to Danish, though the strength with which polarity is oriented to across languages appear to differ to various extents.

1. Introduction

Negative response particles such as the English *no* are frequently associated with the implementation of dispreferred actions such as rejections, disconfirmations, and disagreements. This is the case in the CA-literature as well as by lay persons.¹ This association is presumably based on cases such as the Danish example (1), in which Ester disconfirms Fie’s prior turn, the question of whether their sister Lis goes to bed at seven o’clock. The disconfirmation is directly stated through the production of the negative response particle *nej* ‘no’.

- (1) Fie and Ester are sisters in late middle age. Lis, a third sister has been staying with Ester during a family celebration. [TH/M2/2/Ester & Fie I/Neg105]

01 E: Lis var jo ikk' te' [å' få me' (
Lis wasn't you know possible to bring along (
02 F: [nej hun var ikk'
no she wasn't
03 E:)]
04 F: mobil] nej
mobile no
05 E: HuneH Når klokken den er syv så gider
She eh, When it's seven o'clock she can't be
06 hun ikk' mer'
bothered anymore
07 F: St. [Er hun] så gået i seng
St. Has she then gone to bed
08 E: [(Om aftenen)]
(In the evening)
09 → E: .hhh Ne[j. Jeg] holdt hende oppe te'
.hhh No. I kept her up till it was
10 F: [nå:h]
o:h
11 E: klokken var elleve halvtolv
eleven half past eleven

Based on similar examples in English, Pomerantz (1984) draws a direct parallel between the American English *no* and the implementation of dispreferred actions, by describing *no* as a “stated disagreement component” (Pomerantz 1984:86). The use of the Danish negative response particle *nej* in the example above clearly indicates that in Danish the negative particle is also used as a dispreferred response.

The negative response particle produced by Krista in example (2), line 10, however, can clearly not be accounted for as a component used for implementing a dispreferred action. On the contrary, Krista strongly agrees with Fie's observation that 'being your own person is alright' – and she does this specifically through the production of a negative response particle in turn-initial position.

- (2) About Krista's daughter-in-law, Natalie. [TH/M2/1/Fie & Krista I/Neg36]

01 K: Ah hun er sgu ås' sød Natalie=
Yes she bloody well is sweet as well Natalie=
02 F: =Jahm' det a' hun [da]
=Yes but of course she is
03 K: [Ja] en dejlig pige
Yes a lovely girl
04 F: .jerh. [Ja]
.yeah. Yes
05 K: [()] Men ås' sig selv al'så
() But her own person as well you know

- 06 F: Jerh.
Yeah.
- 07 K: Helt bestemt.=
Quite definitely.=
- 08 F: Jerh, men det gør [da heller ikk' noget]
Yeah, but that do [PRT neither not some]
Yeah, but that doesn't matter either
- 09 K: [()]
- 10 → K: Nej det gør det da ikk'.
No it surely doesn't.

Cases such as example (2) indicate that one cannot maintain an understanding of the lexical negative item *nej* 'no' as being a representative or marker of dispreference, in general. The example however is not an abnormality. Rather, it is the norm that the negative response particle in Danish is produced to implement preferred actions such as agreement, confirmation, or acceptance. In contrast, cases such as example (1) are much less frequent: in a Danish corpus of more than 150 telephone conversations, from a collection of about 600 *nej*'s, only 8% are used for dispreferred actions such as, for instance, disagreement, disconfirmation and rejection. Hence, in this study I argue against viewing negative response particles as "stated disagreement components" – or indeed, as markers of dispreference, at least in Danish. Instead I demonstrate that in Danish interaction there is a grammatical preference for having a response mirror the polarity of the prior turn, so that in general the preferred response to any type of negatively framed utterance – statements as well as questions, will be negatively framed, typically initiated through the production of the negative response particle *nej* 'no'. In contrast, positively framed responses are in this context dispreferred. I will further demonstrate that the negative polarity of a prior turn in Danish interaction is so strongly oriented to by participants that when the grammatical preference for mirrored polarity and the interactional preference for agreement clash, responding speakers will nevertheless orient to the negative framing of the prior turn, displaying this orientation through their choice of a marked variant of the positive response particle. Based on these empirical observations, I will conclude that in real language-in-use there is no one-to-one mapping between the polarity of a response particle and the type of action it implements. Instead, the type of action implemented by both negative and positive response particles is dependent on the polar/grammatical format of the prior turn. As a result, then, preference organisation will be demonstrated to be tightly bound, not only to context but to grammar and lexical choices as well.

2. Background

Linguistic research on the relationship between the polar format of an utterance (or sentence) and its corresponding response have focussed mainly on grammatical questions (interrogatives) and their answers (e.g., Buring & Gunlogson 2000; van Rooy

& Šafářová 2003). Of special interest for them has been how to account for the fact that both positive and negative responses can embody agreeing answers to negative interrogatives (e.g. Bolinger 1957 and Quirk et al. 1985).

Similarly, typological studies in which languages are classified according to the kinds of answering systems they deploy (e.g., Pope 1973:111–133 and Sadock & Zwicky 1985) have concentrated on cases where a question is constructed as an interrogative. These studies have been especially interested in the ways in which an answer agrees or disagrees with the assumptions encoded in a question. Sadock and Zwicky (1985) present a typology of answering systems, dividing languages into three main groups with respect to ways in which short answers to polar questions can be given. First, there are yes-no languages like English (and most other Indo-European languages), which have the particle *yes* for a positive answer and the particle *no* for a negative answer. Second, there are languages such as Japanese that deploy what is called an agree/disagree system. In such languages a positive particle is used when the answer agrees with the polarity of the question, whether positive or negative, and a negative particle is used when the answer disagrees with the polarity of the question. Third, there are also languages such as Welsh, which have no special answer words at all, but rather have an echo system in which short responses to interrogatives are given by repeating the verb of the question.

Sadock and Zwicky further note that negative interrogatives are ambiguous in that they can be understood in two ways. The interrogative ‘Isn’t it raining?’, for instance, can be used to ask whether it is true that it is not raining, but it can also indicate that the speaker guesses that it is indeed raining. The negative interrogative can in this way be biased towards either a ‘no’- or a ‘yes’-response (see also Bolinger 1957, for a similar discussion on the conduciveness of yes/no questions). This bias should, in languages with a yes-no answer system, according to Sadock and Zwicky, further complicate the interpretation of a simple positive answer, a ‘yes’-response, so that: “It could either be interpreted as a positive response to the question itself (‘Yes, it is not raining’) or as agreement with the speaker’s guess (‘Yes, you’re right; it is raining’)” (Sadock & Zwicky 1985:190). They then observe that to resolve this potential ambiguity, many languages provide a special positive answer that is used to signal that a positive answer to the negatively biased question is being given. German is one of the languages that provides such a special positive answer, *doch* instead of *ja*, and when the German equivalent to ‘Isn’t it raining?’, ‘Regnet es nicht?’ gets the answer ‘Doch’, this can only mean that it is raining, independently of whether this was indicated to be the expectation or guess of the prior speaker or not (Jerry Sadock, p.c.).

As discussed by, for instance, Sorjonen (2001a), typological treatments such as Sadock and Zwicky present a very rough outline of the various types of answer systems found in languages, based on information available in reference grammars and on native-speaker intuitions. Interactional factors are absent from such studies, but when studying conversational data it becomes apparent:

That ‘yes’ and ‘no’ are not the only choices available for a speaker to respond to a yes/no question (see Raymond 2002 on English).

That there are other ways of posing a yes/no question than as a grammatical interrogative; for instance, through the use of tags and intonational features (see Sorjonen 2001b on Finnish and Heritage 2002 on English).

That 'yes' and 'no' are not just used as answers to questions, but also as responses to statements (see Jefferson 2002 and Gardner 2001 for English).

This paper, which is a revised and abbreviated version of earlier work (Heinemann 2003:51–195) is an empirical study of positive and, in particular, negative answers in naturally occurring Danish interaction, based on the methodology of Conversation Analysis. As such, it builds upon the observations made by Sadock and Zwicky, by describing the answer system of one language that uses the yes-no answer system. Typologically, Danish belongs to the group of languages that uses the yes-no answer system, and is furthermore one of those languages that have two different positive particles, *ja* 'yes1' and *jo* 'yes2', used in very different linguistic contexts, as will be described below. Rather than focus only on grammatical questions (interrogatives) and their corresponding responses, in this paper I include 'yes' and 'no' responses to questions that are not interrogatives, as well as to other types of utterances. In this way, observations made by Sadock and Zwicky are further developed to demonstrate that in Danish, the polar format of an utterance constrains the polar format of a corresponding answer, so that negatively framed utterances are typically responded to with a negative response (particle), and vice versa for positively framed utterances. By looking at a variation of negatively framed utterances in particular, the current study also demonstrates that the existence of a marked or special positive response particle such as the Danish *jo* 'yes2' cannot be accounted for in the way suggested by Sadock and Zwicky, that is, as a positive response that dissolves ambiguity of understanding. Rather, it will be demonstrated that the special positive response particle *jo* is deployed as a 'yes'-response not only to negative interrogatives, but also to other types of negatively framed utterances that cannot be said to be ambiguous. Hence, I will argue that the special positive response particle serves as a way in which to mark that the utterance responded to was negatively framed.

That the polar format of an utterance may constrain the format of a response and establish a grammatical locus of preference has been noted in previous CA research. Schegloff (1995), for instance, observes that preference can be grounded either in the course of action of an utterance or in the design of this utterance, for instance, its grammatical format. Pre-requests such as 'You're not going downtown, are you?', according to him have a turn format that is grammatically aligned for a 'no'-response, though the action (a pre-request) carries a preference for a 'yes'-response. Similarly, Raymond (2002) observes that the polarity of an utterance such as 'You can't give me a ride home can you?' prefers or anticipates a 'no'-response, though the action embodied, a request, prefers a granting or 'yes'-response.

Neither Raymond nor Schegloff elaborate any further on this notion of grammatical preference, but what is evident from their (invented) examples is that although a negative response is grammatically preferred or anticipated, such a response in both of the cases above embodies an interactionally dispreferred action of disconfirmation

or rejection, respectively. This correspondence between negative responses and interactional dispreference is frequently exemplified and discussed in conversation analytic studies (see, for instance, Pomerantz 1984; Ford 2001; Goodwin et al. 2002). This is so in particular in the area of preference organisation, where dispreferred responses are predominantly exemplified through negation, as in the following case taken from Sacks (1987) (for other cases, see Levinson 1983:335; Pomerantz 1984:71 and Lindström 1999:35).

(3) Sacks (1987),(2), p. 57

A: Well is this really whatchu wanted?

B: Uh ... not originally? NO. But it's uh ... promotion?

Here, B's negatively framed response is dispreferred in that it embodies a disconfirmation of A's question.

Based on cases such as these, it is perhaps easy to get the impression that negative responses *systematically* implement dispreferred actions such as disagreement, rejection, or disconfirmation, whereas positive responses implement the preferred alternative. Certainly this impression is reflected and oriented to in several interactional studies, where the dispreference of negative responses is oriented to as a general or even normative feature of interaction. This view is neatly captured by the following quote from Lindström (1999) who describes the curled *ja* 'yes' in Swedish, demonstrating that this positive particle can project disagreement (a dispreferred action) when produced with specific prosodic features. Comparing this to a study of Norwegian by Svennevig (1997), Lindström notes that

... Svennevig showed that the affirmative response token *ja* can be used to accomplish other activities than confirming the prior turn or affiliating with the other party. Similarly, the negating response token does not necessarily disconfirm or disaffiliate. (Lindström 1999:31; my emphasis)

Other studies such as Goodwin et al. (2002), Kaufmann (2002), and Ford (2001) more directly discuss the dispreference of negative responses. Goodwin et al. (2002) focus on the turn initial tokens of disagreeing turns and among the tokens they describe include negatives such as the English *no*. Ford (2001) describes how turns that are initiated with negation expressing disaffiliation or disagreement with the prior talk are typically followed by elaboration of some sort, in orientation to the dispreferred nature of the negation. Similarly, Kaufmann (2002) demonstrates how negative items that express disagreement with the prior speaker's turn are commonly prosodically de-emphasised and contracted, presumably in an attempt to minimise the face threatening features of an otherwise dispreferred action. In these studies we thus find strong evidence for the association of negation with dispreference, at least in English.

However, both Ford and Kaufmann note that negation can also be deployed to express preferred actions of affiliation or agreement. Both find that these cases contrast with those where negation is dispreferred, so that preferred negation is typically not followed by elaboration (in the case of Ford 2001), and is much more likely to be

prosodically prominent (in the case of Kaufmann 2002). Although neither Ford nor Kaufmann discuss preferred negation to a great extent, the examples they do provide indicate that this regularly occurs as a response to a prior negatively framed utterance, as in the following two cases.

(4) Ford (2001), (18), p. 68

01 T: You certainly don't need the entire mirror,
 02 because as he stands here, (.)Does he need
 03 this part of the mirror to see his feet.
 03 → Jake: [No.
 05 → Bee: [No.=
 06 → Sila: =No.
 07 T: No. (0.4) >Just< think about it.

Here, the teacher has asserted that one does not need the entire mirror, hence displaying that he anticipates a negative response. Thus, when the students produce their negative particles, they are in effect agreeing with what the teacher has just said, by mirroring the polarity of his turn *You certainly don't need the entire mirror* in their responses. Similarly, in the following case taken from Kaufmann (2002), a negative response is preferred, in that it agrees with the prior speaker's turn, again by mirroring the negative polarity of that turn.

(5) Kaufmann (2002), (2), p. 1482

01 B: but you don't 'have Swindon on your little
 02 map Do you
 03 → M: no I don't have Swindon on my map
 04 That's true.

These cases suggest that negative responses are not invariably dispreferred, but rather that their status is dependent on the polar format of the utterances to which they are responsive. Further evidence for this can be found in studies of the use of response particles (or tokens) in various languages. Though many studies of response particles focus only on positive particles (for instance, Gardner 2001; Sorjonen 2001b), some at the same time note that negative response particles may be used in a similar fashion to that of their positive equivalent when the turn responded to is negatively framed. Green-Vänttinen (2001), in her extensive study of response particles in Finland-Swedish, demonstrates that *nä/ne* 'no' can be used as a continuer and acknowledgement token when responding to negatively framed utterances. Lindström (1999) also provides examples of the negative response particle *nej* 'no' being used for acknowledgement of a negatively framed utterance in Swedish, as in the following case.

(6) Lindström (1999), 1:13, Clothes line [GRU:6:B], p. 36

02 R: .hh Va gör du då,
 .hh *What are you doing then*
 03 (0.8)

- 04 M: Inget särski:lt hh, ((breathy))
Nothing special hh
- 05 → R: Nehej .hh vet du va ja frå- ville
Nehej .hh know you what I as- wanted
 No .hh listen I ask- wanted

In addition, Müller (1996) demonstrates that the Italian *no* ‘no’ can be used as a continuer in response to negatively framed utterances in that language.

Other studies in other languages focus more directly on the relationship between the polarity of an utterance and its corresponding response. Mazeland (1990) explicitly states that, contrary to assumptions, the negative response particle *ne* ‘no’ in Dutch can be used as a response token in line with its positive equivalents. He further notes that although a positive token can be used as an acknowledgement marker or a continuer in response to negatively framed utterances, such unmatched uses are not treated by participants as a flawless display of recipient alignment, but are rather oriented to as “revealing a subtle type of disalignment” Mazeland (1990: 262).

Finally, Jefferson (2002) dedicates an entire study to the English negative response particle *no* when used as a response to negatively framed utterances. She demonstrates how this use of *no* differs across various British English and American English speaker communities: in everyday conversation, British English speakers (or ‘civilians’, Jefferson 2002: 1350) may use negative responses both for affiliation and for acknowledgement when responding to negatively framed utterances. In contrast, British English doctors and American civilians reserve the negative token *no* for affiliation, whereas acknowledgement of a negatively framed utterance is done through a positive token. Finally, American doctors do not appear to use negative tokens as a response to negatively framed utterances at all. Thus, as in the case of Dutch, Italian, Swedish, and Finland-Swedish, there is also evidence that in English, for at least some speakers and some activities, the negative framing of an utterance can establish a preference for a ‘no’-response.

In a wider perspective, we now have strong indications that users in several languages orient to a grammatical constraint or preference for having negatively framed utterances responded to with negative responses. As is evident from Jefferson’s study, the extent to which this is done across activities may differ from language to language and across speaker communities. In the current study I demonstrate how in one language, Danish, ‘civilian’ speakers participating in everyday telephone conversations systematically orient to the negative framing of an utterance as constraining the possible format of a response to being one which is also negatively framed. This is so across a large variety of activities, ranging from continuation-marking, acknowledgement, and confirmation to affiliation and agreement. I further demonstrate how this grammatical constraint of having the negative polarity of an utterance reflected in the response is oriented to in Danish, even when a negatively framed utterance for one reason or another receives a ‘yes’-response. In such cases, the special positive particle *jo* ‘yes2’ rather than *ja* ‘yes1’ is deployed, so as to mark the negative framing of the turn responded to. Hence, I will argue that, in Danish, the grammatical preference for

having the negative polarity of an utterance reflected in the response is very strong, in that it is oriented to at all points in interaction. To conclude, I will compare these findings with what we know about other languages, as discussed above, and discuss some implications that the findings for Danish may have for these languages.

3. The preference for negative responses in Danish

In the data for this study, negative responses were most frequently (in more than 75% of all cases) used as interactionally preferred responses to prior negatively framed utterances.² Typically, such negative responses consist of or are initiated by the negative response particle *nej* ‘no’.³ The preferred actions embodied or projected by this particle range from agreement and affiliation across confirmation to acknowledgement and continuation marking, thus covering a variety of preferred actions in a similar – if not identical – manner to that of its positive equivalent *ja* ‘yes!’. For instance, in the following four examples, the only differences between the negative and the positive response particle are their polarity and the polarity of the turn to which they are responding. In all cases, the response initiated by a response particle is interactionally preferred: in examples (7) and (8) by embodying agreement, and in examples (9) and (10) by embodying affiliation.⁴

- (7) Fie has been describing the local weather as mixed, including a heatwave, cold weather and rain. [TH/S2/14/Ulrikke & Fie/Neg195]

01 F: Det' *ikk'* dårligt A[l'så der': der' godt
It's not bad You know there's there's nice

02 → U: [Nej Ba- Bare der kommer
[Nej On- Only there comes
No On- As long as there's

03 F: vej'r te' alle]
weather for everybody

04 U: noget sol] i mid[ten]
some sun] in mi[ddle
some sun in between

05 F: [Ja]
Yes

In this example Fie sums up her description of the local weather with a (downgraded) positive evaluation in line 1. Her evaluation is negatively framed, due to the presence of the negative marker *ikk'* ‘not’. By initiating her response with the negative response particle *nej* ‘no’ in line 2, Ulrikke accepts this evaluation, subsequently producing a second turn component *Bare der kommer noget sol i midten* ‘As long as there’s some sun in between’, through which she displays her understanding of what kind of criteria the evaluation is based on, and hence agreeing with the evaluation.

Similarly, in example (8), Ester expresses her agreement with Fie, but in this case the turn responded to is positively framed, as is the response.

- (8) Fie's son has just bought some paint to use on the new figurines given to him for his birthday by Ester. [TH/M2/43/Fie & Ester/Pos11]

01 F: Jah. .hhh å' nu har han al'så maling. Å'
Yes. .hhh and now you know he's got paint. And
 02 jeg ka' godt sige dig det ta'r lang tid
I tell you, it takes a long time
 03 å' få malet de de[r figurer]
to get those figurines painted
 04 → E: [Ja det g]ør det
[Yes that d]oes it
 Yes it does
 05 F: Ja. det gør det
Yes it does

In lines 2–3 Fie asserts that her son will take a long time painting some figurines for a role playing game. The assertion is constructed as if it is providing new information to Ester, through the *jeg ka' godt sige dig* 'I tell you'. Rather than respond to this assertion as an informing statement, Ester, who has experience with role playing equipment from her grandchildren, responds with a strongly agreeing utterance in line 4. In contrast to the example above, the agreeing response is in this case initiated with the positive response particle *ja* 'yes1', in orientation to the positive framing of Fie's assertion. In the same fashion, both negative and positive responses can embody affiliating actions, such as expressing sympathy with the prior speaker, as in the following two examples. Again, whether a positive or a negative format is used for the preferred action of affiliation is dependent on the polar format of the prior speaker's turn.

- (9) Krista has enquired about Jens' wellbeing and, having gotten a less than enthusiastic response, has initiated more talk from Jens about his situation. [TH/S2/140 Krista & Fie II/Neg526]

01 J: jeg' jo blevet hjemmegående [ikk']
I've become a house husband right
 02 K: [jah]
Yes
 03 J: å' det': å' jeg' jeg' simpelthen så
and that's and I'm I'm simply so
 04 stresset. Det ka' jeg ikk' holde te'.
stressed. I can't cope with it.
 05 → K: Nej. Det' sgu ås' synd, du
No. That's a fucking pity as well I bet
 06 bli'r garanteret jagtet rundt.
you're being chased round.

In lines 1–4 Jens accounts for why he isn't feeling at his best because of his current status as unemployed, concluding that this makes him stressed. This latter conclusion *Det ka' jeg ikk' holde te'* 'I can't cope with it' (line 4) is negatively framed due to the presence of the negative marker *ikk'* 'not'. In response to this, Krista expresses her sympathy with Jens by stating that him being stressed (and perhaps unemployed) is a pity, then subsequently displays her understanding of why Jens gets stressed from being unemployed: because his wife is 'chasing him around' i.e. making him do odd jobs around the house. As in the case of agreement in example (7), this highly affiliating and thus interactionally preferred response is initiated through the production of the negative response particle *nej* 'no'. In contrast, in example (10), the turn responded to with an affiliating action is positively framed. Consequently, so is the response.

- (10) Krista has just produced an extended troubles telling about her parents' health and how she barely has time to take care of herself. [TH/M2/2/Krista & Fie/Pos8]

01 K: =Å' så var f- Ås' fordi jeg syn's når nu det
=And then was f- Then because I felt really
02 hele det var så synd for mig ikk' [.hh] De
sorry for myself, right .hh Then
03 F: [Jah]
Yes
04 dage hvor solen så skinnet' (.) [Der] var
the days when the sun shone (.) Then
05 F: [Jah]
Yes
06 K: jeg nødt te' li': å' passe på min solvogn.
I had to take care of my sun bed.
07 → F: Jah. Det ka' jeg godt f[orst]å.
Yes. That can I well under[stan]d.
Yes. I can see that.

Here, Krista is describing how she tries to get some time to herself. In lines 1–6 she states that because she feels sorry for herself, she occasionally treats herself to a lie down in the sun bed. In response to this, Fie, in line 7, states that she understands Krista's need to treat herself to this luxury, strongly affiliating with Krista and her prior turn. And because this turn was positively framed, so is the response which is initiated by the positive response particle *ja* 'yes1'.

The four examples above hence indicate that negative responses do not typically embody dispreferred action when produced in response to negatively framed utterances in Danish, but are instead used in the same way as are positive responses to positively framed utterances.

This pattern becomes even more apparent when considering other types of actions such as confirmation, acknowledgement, and continuation marking. Again, negative responses can embody each of these preferred or fitted actions when produced in response to a prior negatively framed utterance, as in the following three examples.

- (11) Arranging a meeting on the mainland. Tuesdays and Wednesdays the ferry offers a discount on the fare. Jens is married to the manager of the ferry company and always gets a discount. [TH/S2/41/Jens & Martin/Neg302]

01 M: Jeg havde eneh fv- .hh Eneh tanke om at vi
I had aeh fv- .hh Aeh thought that maybe we
 02 ku' gøre det tirsdag eller onsdag e[h- F]or
could do it Tuesday or Wednesday eh-
 03 J: [JAh]
YES
 04 M: det første a' det billigdag .hhh E:hh Det
Firstly because it's the cheap day. .hhh E:hh
 05 betyder måske ikk' så meget for dig
Perhaps that doesn't matter much to you
 06 → J: Ne[jh]
Noh
 07 M: [Men]eh .hh Mene:h Så tænkte jeg på
Buteh .hh Bute:h Then I thought
 08 ateh Om du havde lyst te' vi
thateh If you felt like

Here, Martin, in lines 4–5, states an assumption about a 'B-event' (Labov & Fanshel 1977:100–101) suggesting that whether he and Jens travel on a day with a discount or not does not mean that much to Jens. Statements referring to 'B-events' leave it to the recipient to confirm (or disconfirm) that the assumption displayed was correct, as is done by Jens in line 6. Again, this preferred action of confirmation is done through the production of a negative response, in this case a free-standing *nej* 'no', in orientation to the negative framing of the prior turn. Similarly, in example (12), the production of a negatively framed utterance is acknowledged through a negative response particle *nej*.

- (12) Mathias is describing his progress in a computer game. [TH/S2/19/Mathias & Malte II/Neg250]

01 Mat: Så' jeg i gang med Ved hjælp a'
Then I'm about to With the help of
 02 Barbaro:sa Frederik Barbaro:sa
Barbaro:sa Frederik Barbaro:sa
 03 (.)
 04 Mal: Aldri' h↑ørt om ham
Never h↑eard of him
 05 → Mat: Nej. Han a' faktisk ø:h den næst- Den
Noh. He is actually ø:h the sec- The
 06 sidste romerske kejser overho'det
last Roman emperor at all

Here, Mathias in line 1 initiates a telling of how he has played the historical character Frederik Barbarossa in a computer game. In line 4 Malte states that he does not know who this character is, a statement which in this context can be seen as requesting

further identification of the character referred to. (Mathias' repetition of the referent Barbarossa might in itself imply that he thinks it is possible that Malte is unfamiliar with this character, and the gap in line 3 certainly indicates that recognition of the character is relevant for the continued telling.) The statement is negatively framed and consequently, as in examples (7), (9), and (11), so is the response. In this case, the negative response particle *nej* 'no' is used as an acknowledgement token through which Mathias accepts the production of Malte's statement, subsequently explaining who Frederik Barbarossa is, in lines 5–6. Similarly, in example (13) the negative response particle *nej* is used as a marker of continuation in response to negatively framed utterances or units. Here Ester is the recipient of an extended telling (Goodwin 1986) produced by her sister, Fie. Ester orients to her role as a recipient of a story telling by producing minimal tokens, or continuers, in lines 3, 6, 8, 10, and 13, hence demonstrating that one unit has been received by her and that another is now awaited.

- (13) Fie is describing how she once took a taxi to get to Ester's place because she wasn't certain which way to go. [TH/M2/2/Ester & Fie I/Neg128]
- 01 F: [jah]men jeg har jo ås' prøvet engang
yesbut I have tried once as well you know
- 02 å' der ku' taxachaufføren ikk' finde det=
and there the cab driver couldn't find it=
- 03 → E: =nej=
=no=
- 04 F: =.hh da kørte vi hele: Lyngby rundt
=.hh then we drove round all of Lyngby
- 05 [han ku'] .hh fordi der var ensrettet å'
he could .hh because it was one way street and
- 06 → E: [ja ja]
yes yes
- 07 F: [han] ku' ikk' fin[de] å' han måtte ikk'
he couldn't find and he couldn't
- 08 → E: [jah] [nej]
yes no
- 09 F: køre den ene vej å' den [an]den vej å' så
go one way and the other way and
- 10 → E: [nej]
no
- 11 F: noget .hh å' jeg var jo ikk' så skrap så
stuff .hh and you know I wasn't smart enough, so
- 12 jeg ku': [al'så] li'ssom .hh[h al'så:]
that I could you know sort of .hhh you know
- 13 → E: [nej] [Nogengange ta'r]
no Sometimes you take
- 14 man jo en taxa fordi man ikk' kender vejen=
a cab you know because you don't know the way=
- 15 F: =ja:h. Det ku' jo godt være
=ye:s. That could be a reason

For speakers of languages that don't have negative continuers or acknowledgement tokens it can apparently be difficult to understand the negative response particles in examples such as this, as merely marking continuation rather than expressing, for instance, agreement (Jefferson 2002: 1345). Nevertheless, it should be apparent that in the example above, the telling is not treated as complete until lines 13–14, where Ester produces what may be the point of the telling: that the reason for Fie taking a taxi was that she didn't know the way to Ester's flat, but that this turned out to be pointless as the taxi driver couldn't find the way, either. Furthermore, Ester interchanges between producing negative and positive response particles throughout the telling, depending on whether the unit responded to is negatively or positively framed, thus treating the two particles as doing the same kind of work, that of marking reciprocity while handing the turn back to the teller, Fie.

As noted previously, languages such as Dutch and British English also allow for negative response particles to be used as an acknowledgement token or continuer when following negatively framed utterances. For these languages, Jefferson (2002) and Mazeland (1990) both note that positive response particles may also be used in these contexts, though such non-congruent uses appear to be somewhat marked. In the data for this study, I have found no instances where a positive response particle is used as an acknowledgement token or continuer when following negatively framed utterances, indicating that this is not possible in Danish.⁵

That *nej* 'no' can in Danish be used as a confirmation, acknowledgement token, and continuer in addition to implementing or projecting agreement and affiliation offers further evidence for the suggestion that the negative particle is employed in a parallel fashion to that of the positive response particle *ja* 'yes1', as a preferred and fitted response. The examples in this section have demonstrated that the main difference between the two particles is their distribution in relation to the format of the turn or utterance responded to, with the positive particle being used in response to positively framed utterances, and the negative particle used in response to those utterances that are negatively framed. This pattern should more than indicate that the polar format of an utterance in Danish establishes a locus of what one might term grammatical preference, in the sense that it constrains the format of a corresponding response to being one with the same polarity. In the following, I will provide further evidence for the existence of such a grammatical preference or constraint, by demonstrating that this feature is oriented to so systematically that when a negatively framed utterance for some reason receives a positive response, the marked or special positive response particle *jo* 'yes2' will be deployed instead of the more typical positive response particle *ja* 'yes1' used in examples (8), (10), and (13)).

4. Dispreferred positive responses

If we accept the existence, in Danish, of a grammatical preference for mirrored polarity between an utterance and its corresponding response, then it can be predicted that

responses that are of opposite polarity to that of the prior turn will be not only grammatically but also interactionally dispreferred. This is certainly the case in the following two examples where actions of disagreement and disconfirmation are implemented through the use of positive particles in response to negatively framed utterances (for the opposite pattern, see example (1) above, as well as Heinemann 2003:51–195).

- (14) Talking about a third party, Dorthé, and the fact that she can never keep her houseplants alive. [TH/S2/49/Fie & Ester/pos55]

01 E: sagde hun Nå:h nu ka' jeg se mine blomster
she said O:h now I can see that my flowers
 02 de' helt tørre=Det' da ikk' så
they're all dry=It's surely not so
 03 sært de ikk' gider være her
weird that they can't be bothered to stay here
 04 (.)
 05 F: *Na[h m e n*]
Nyeah but
 06 E: [Al'så det] a' Så'n har det
[PRT it] is Like-this has it
You know it's You know it hasn't
 07 jo ikk' været altid
PRT not been always
always been like that
 08 (.)
 09 → F: Jorvh
Ye:ss
 10 (.)
 11 F: Så'n har det været længe=
It's been like that for a long time=

In this example, Ester, through the production of the negatively framed utterance in lines 6–7, claims that Dorthé has not always mistreated her plants. Fie's initial response to this is a disagreeing 'yes' in line 9. Again, the fact that this is a case of disagreement rather than acknowledgement, may be hard to understand for speakers of languages that have the possibility of acknowledging negatively framed utterances with a positive particle. It should be evident, however, from the sequence in which Fie's response is produced that the *Jorvh* 'yes2' does in fact embody a dispreferred – and specifically disagreeing response. First of all, rather than respond to Ester's assertion immediately, there is a small gap in line 8, a gap which delays Fie's response. As noted by Pomerantz (1984), the incorporation of such delays is a typical feature of disagreeing responses. Second, the positive response particle used by Fie, *jo*, is here stretched and as such slightly hedged, another feature that can be associated with dispreferred responses (Schegloff 1995). Finally, Fie, in line 11, downgrades her initial disagreement, so that rather than claiming that 'things have *always* been like that', she now takes the position that 'it's been like that *for a long time*', a position that does not entirely

exclude Ester's assertion. Again, such downgrading is typical of dispreferred actions (Pomerantz 1984).

Another dispreferred action that can be done through responding with a positive particle to a negatively framed utterance is that of disconfirmation, as in the following example.

- (15) Kisser has suggested that Fie gets Kisser's husband some revue tickets for his birthday. Fie has marked this as problematic and enquired how to get them. [TH/S2/14/Fie & Kisser/jo80]

01 K: [J]eg tænkte på om du kunne slå op
I thought that maybe you could look
 02 på internettet eller et'l'andet å' se
it up on the Internet or something and see
 03 hva' der var der⇒Men det ved jeg
what's there⇒But I don't know if
 04 ikk' om i har nede på arbejdet<
you've got that at work<
 05 (.)
 06 K: Nej det har i ikk' v[el]
Nej that have you(p) not right]
 No you don't, do you?
 07 → F: [J]h
Yes
 08 K: Nåh .hh Men al'så: Ellers ved jeg
Right .hh But you know Other than that,
 09 sgu ikk' rigtigt Fie hva' vi ska'
I don't really know Fie what we can

Here, Kisser suggests that Fie look on the Internet, but in lines 3–4 she notes that there may be an obstacle to doing this: she doesn't know whether Fie has access to the Internet. This is not responded to by Fie, either to confirm or disconfirm her having access to the Internet (see the gap in line 5). Kisser understands this lack of response as projecting a disconfirming response and consequently redesigns her inquiry in line 6 to display the assumption that Fie does in fact not have access. This is done through a negatively framed utterance which, in contrast to Kisser's initial inquiry, is clearly designed to receive a negative response as the confirming, preferred response. But, as in the example above, Fie here produces a positive particle, *jo* 'yes2', and again it embodies a dispreferred response, in this case a disconfirmation.

That positive responses to negatively framed utterances may embody disagreement and disconfirmation, strongly supports the suggestion that there is a preference for mirroring the polarity of a turn in a corresponding response in Danish. Hence, rather than associate negative responses with dispreference and positive responses with preference, we can now see that the interactional implications of negative and positive responses are to a great extent dependent on the polar format of the turn responded to, specifically, whether this turn and its response are congruent with regard to polarity,

or not. If the particle used for responding mirrors the polarity of the turn responded to, then it embodies a preferred action (as in examples (2), (7), (8), (9), (10), (11), (12), and (13)), whereas if the particle – whether positive or negative – has the opposite polarity to that of the turn responded to, then it embodies a dispreferred action (as in examples (1), (14), and (15)).

Furthermore, the choice of the positive particle used for producing a positive but dispreferred response to a negatively framed utterance (as in the two cases above) provides further insight into the relationship between polarity and preference in Danish interaction. As mentioned previously, Danish has two different positive response particles available, *ja* and *jo*. *Ja* ‘yes1’ is typically used as a response or response initiator to positively framed utterances (as demonstrated above in examples (8) and (10)). It is furthermore the positive particle most frequently used and is hence unmarked. In contrast, *jo* ‘yes2’ is what Sadock and Zwicky (1985) term a special or marked positive response particle, only used in certain contexts, one of them being cases such as above (examples (14) and (15)). This use of the marked positive particle is, however, not noted by Sadock and Zwicky, who suggest that special positive particles serve to disambiguate responses to negative interrogatives that may in themselves be ambiguous as to whether they prefer a positive or a negative response. But in the two examples above, the utterances that receive a *jo*-response are not negative interrogatives, nor are they ambiguous. In example (14) for instance, Ester can only be understood as asserting that things haven’t always been in a certain way. Hence her utterance is unambiguous, as is the response produced by Fie, which can only be understood as disagreeing with this assertion. In this case, then, it is hard to find any evidence for having the Danish special positive response particle *jo* ‘yes2’ produced to resolve a potential ambiguity of understanding. Instead, from an interactional perspective, a more appropriate account for the use of *jo* rather than *ja* in the above contexts could be simply that *jo* is a marker of dispreference in Danish, displaying or projecting that a response is in disagreement with the prior speaker’s turn.

Another possible explanation, however, is that the marked or special positive response particle *jo* is produced in orientation not to the interactional preference organisation but rather to the *grammatical* preference established by the negative framing of the turn responded to, so that *jo* is marking that this turn grammatically prefers a ‘no’-response. In the following I will further consolidate this latter possibility by focusing on those types of negatively framed utterances that can be interactionally preferred to receive a ‘yes’-response despite their negative framing: negative interrogatives and statements followed by negative tags.

5. Non-congruent preferences

Negative interrogatives appear to be exceptional grammatical structures⁶ in that they can be designed to either prefer positive or negative answers as the confirming or agreeing response (see Büring & Gunlogson 2000 and Sadock & Zwicky 1985). In linguistic

studies, many different accounts for the fact that negative interrogatives can receive both yes and no answers have been suggested. Approaches based on syntax typically argue that the ambiguity of negative interrogatives has to do with the way in which these constructions (as all other constructions in language) are derived from an underlying base structure, so that the movement of the negative item in relation to the question operator has the effect that at some point each of these items has taken scope over the other (see Han & Romero 2001, for a discussion of various of these accounts.). Approaches based more firmly on semantics argue that negative interrogatives can have either ‘outer’ or ‘inner negation’ (Ladd 1981 and Büring & Gunlogson 2000) and that this is what makes negative interrogatives ambiguous as to whether a ‘yes’- or a ‘no’-response is agreeing with or confirming the question.

From a more interactional perspective, one of the factors determining whether a negative interrogative is designed for a positive or a negative response appears to be based in what kind of knowledge – and how much the speaker producing the negative interrogative has access to. Heritage (2002) demonstrates that negative interrogatives in English are commonly treated as expressing a position or point of view, that is, as making an assessment or assertion, despite their being grammatical questions. Whether a negative interrogative prefers a ‘yes’- or a ‘no’-response appears to be dependent on whether the speaker producing the negative interrogative is displaying an assumption that what is being referred to is or isn’t true. Thus, in the following example, Ester, the speaker producing a negative interrogative, is – through the use of the inference marker *så* ‘then’ – displaying that she has reason to believe that Fie’s daughter is indeed not joining the rest of the family at a birthday celebration.

- (16) This extract is taken from a sequence in which closing of the call has been initiated by Fie. [TH/S2/49/Fie & Ester/Neg633]

01 E: =Hva' så ta'r Tine så ikk' me' jer
 =*What then takes Tine then not with you(p)*
 =*So is Tine not going with you then*

02 (.)

03 F: Hvorhen
 =*Where to*

04 E: Te' fødselsda[g]
 =*To the birthday*

05 → F: [.h]h Nej Hun har ringet te'
 .*hh No She has called*

06 Allan i dag Å' [sag]t a' hun ikk' kommer.
 =*Allan today and told him she's not coming.*

07 E: [Jah]
 =*Yes*

In line 1, Ester inquires whether Fie’s daughter Tine will be going somewhere with the rest of the family. The ‘somewhere’ is left unspecified, and in line 3 Fie requests a specification of this, through her wh-question, ‘where to’. Thus, it is not until Ester has provided a specification of what she was referring to that Fie can respond to Ester’s

question in line 1. Because Ester through *så* ‘then’ has displayed the expectation that Tine will not be going, Fie’s negative response in lines 5–6 is a preferred response, one that confirms that Ester was also right in framing her question negatively.

Responding speakers may of course resist producing the preferred and expected response, as in the following case. Here, Fie, the speaker producing a negative interrogative is, because of the previous talk, expecting a negative response, and has designed her question accordingly. Krista’s response, however, is positive and hence disconfirming.

- (17) Krista has just bought a new dishwasher and Fie is checking the quality, including the noise level. [TH/S2/140/Krista & Fie /Jo56]

01 F: [Å’ den larmer] ikk’.
And it isn’t noisy.

02 K: Nej det ved jeg ikk’ det si’r han
No I don’t know about that he says so

03 men ve’ du
but you know

04 hva’[()]
what ()

05 F: [Har du prøvet- Har du ikk’ prøvet d]en?
Have you tried- Haven’t you tried it?

06 → K: Joh vi prøvet den i går aftes jeg ku’- Der
Yes we tried it yesterday evening, I could- Then

07 var vi ude å’ gå mens den kørte.
we went for a walk while it was running.

Having inquired whether Krista’s new dishwasher is noisy or not and received an uninformative response in which Krista claims not to know (in lines 2–4), Fie assumes that Krista hasn’t tried her new dishwasher yet and displays this overtly through the production of a negative interrogative in line 5 (notice Fie changing from a positive interrogative *Har du prøvet* ‘Have you tried’ to the negative interrogative, a change that in itself suggests that Fie expects a particular response, a ‘no’-response). Krista’s response, however, is a disconfirmation of Fie’s assumption, a dispreferred but positive response, through which she first states that she has indeed tried the dishwasher, then subsequently accounts for why she nevertheless has no knowledge of its noise level. As in examples (14) and (15) above, the positive particle used here is *jo* ‘yes2’, rather than *ja* ‘yes1’.

However, negative interrogatives in Danish can also be designed to display a positive assumption, hence expecting and preferring a corresponding positive response, as in the following two examples.

- (18) From the beginning of the call. [TH/S2/40/Fie & Kisser/Jo3]

01 K: I:h a’ det ikk’ dejligt vejr i dag,
I:h is it not lovely weather today,
 O:h isn’t the weather lovely today,

02 → F: *Joh a' du gal mand >Vi ska' på*
Yes are you(s) mad man >We must on
Yes you bet it is >We're going to

In example (18), Kisser's negative interrogative (in line 1) is at the same time an assertion about the weather, and is as such a positive evaluation designed to be agreed or disagreed with.⁷ (This function of the negative interrogative is particularly evident from the exclamation marker *I:h* in turn initial position.) Fie's strongly agreeing response is consequently positively framed, and is as such congruent with the positive framing of the assertion made by Kisser. Despite this strong preference for a 'yes'-response, the positive particle used by Fie is *jo* 'yes2'. Likewise, in example (19), Ester, through her negative interrogative, displays a positive assumption to be confirmed or disconfirmed by the recipient, Fie. Only a confirmation will make it possible for Ester to continue her suggestion for a solution of how to get money, so clearly a confirmation is not only the positive but also the preferred action. Again, the preferred response, here a confirmation, takes the positive format *jo*.

- (19) Fie's husband is taking Ester, Fie's sister, on a shopping trip to Germany in an area where you can pay with Danish as well as German money. It is also possible to pay with 'Dankort', a Danish debit card but shops charge extra for this, as referred to by Ester in lines 1–2. Neither Fie nor her husband has had time to get any cash out and thus will have to pay with the card unless Ester has enough cash. [TH/S2/49/Fie & Ester/Jo4]

01 E: **Jahm'* Det al'så Det Jeg syn's det'*
**Yesbut* It you know It I think it's a*
 02 *mange penge de ta'r for å' veksle=Men*
lot of money they charge you to exchange
 03 *Men ka' vi ikke:*
=But But can't we:
 04 *(.)*
 05 E: *Har de ikk' nogen me' på færgen,*
Have they not some with on ferry,
Haven't they got some on the ferry,
 06 → F: *Jorv*
Yes
 07 E: *Så ka' jeg måske:h (.) Betale min:*
Then maybe: I can (.) Pay my
 08 E: *billet me': mit dankort,*
ticket with my credit card,

These two examples demonstrate that negative interrogatives can be designed to receive a 'yes'-response as the preferred, agreeing, or confirming option. Nevertheless, when these interactionally preferred responses are in fact produced by the recipient, they are marked through the use of the special positive response particle *jo* 'yes2' rather than *ja* 'yes1'. Clearly, this use cannot be accounted for as being one way in which Danish speakers show their orientation to the interactionally dispreferred na-

ture of a response, as suggested above. Instead, the use of *jo* in the cases above can now be seen to be a direct consequence of the preference for a negative response established by the grammatical format of a negatively framed utterance: as demonstrated in Section 3, negatively framed utterances in grammatical terms prefer a 'no'-response in Danish. A 'no'-response is, however, not always forthcoming, either because a disagreeing or disconfirming response is produced instead (as in examples (14), (15), and (17)), or because the interactional preference is for a 'yes'-response (as in examples (18) and (19)). In either case, the 'yes'-response is done through the production of the marked *jo* rather than *ja*, in orientation to the grammatical dispreference for a positive response. This pattern is even more evident in the following two cases, where the negative framing of an utterance is achieved only through the presence of a negative marker in tag-position. In Danish, tags to positively framed statements can either be full sentential and negatively framed tags as in example (20), or they can consist only of the negative particle, as in example (21).⁸ In either case, such utterances are typically treated as questions to be confirmed (or disconfirmed), with a positive response being the preferred option, despite their negative framing.⁹

- (20) Krista is listing all the things her husband has recently been spending money on. [TH/S2/140/Krista & Fie/jo55]

01 K: =Å' briller. Så har jeg gi'et ham en ny
 =And glasses. Then I've given him a new
 02 opvaskemaskine i fødselsdagsgave Han bli'r
 dish washer for his birthday He gets
 03 så (h)hidsig når jeg s(hh)i(h)er (det)
 so (h)angry when I s(hh)a(h)y (that)
 04 [((laughter))]
 05 F: [Ahm' det var han da glad for var han ikk']
 Nyeahbut surely he was happy about it wasn't he
 06 → K: hahah hah hah johohhhoooh. Johm' jo det'
 hahah hah hah yehehhhehhs. Yes but yes it's
 07 da Jesper der der der sagde a' nu ska' vi
 Jesper who who who said that now we'll
 08 kra- Al'så (.)Det' jo bare å' ta'
 blo- You know (.)It's just about getting
 09 sig sammen
 it together

Here, Fie produces a full sentential negative tag *var han ikk'* after what is initially an assertion about Krista's husband in line 5. The tag rephrases the statement as a question, designed specifically for confirmation by Krista, while still strongly displaying the assumption made by Fie that Jesper was happy about the dishwasher. Thus Fie's turn is designed to receive a 'yes'-response that confirms her displayed assumption as being correct. As with the negative interrogatives in examples (18) and (19), this preferred response is produced in the format of *jo* 'yes2', and, again, this can only be done in orientation to the positive response being grammatically rather than interac-

tionally dispreferred. Similarly, in the following example, a positive and interactionally preferred response of confirmation is created through the production of the marked positive response particle *jo*, rather than *ja*.

- (21) Mathias is describing his achievements in a computer game. [TH/S2/19/ Mathias & Malte/jo70]

01 Mat: Og så a' det jeg ås' har fundet den der del
And then I've also found that part you know
 02 te' deres hydro et'l'andet farms [.h heh] Så
for their hydro whatever farms .h heh So
 03 Mal: [Okay]
Okay
 04 den a' i orden [.hh]
that's done .hh
 05 Mal: [Ja d]et'den der junk ting
Yes it's that junk thing
 06 der ikk',
isn't it,
 07 → Mat: hJoh=
hYes=
 08 Mal: =Den har jeg ås' fundet
=I've found that one as well

Here, Mathias has referred to some item gained in a computer game rather indiscriminately as *den der del* 'that part' in line 1. Malte, another experienced player of computer games, provides in line 5 a slightly better description, *junk ting* 'junk thing'. This identification is then subsequently tagged with the negative marker *ikk*, turning what was a statement into a question or at least a request for confirmation. Mathias in line 7 provides this confirmation through a preferred 'yes'-response, and as in the examples above, this is done through the marked *jo*. Again, the only kind of dispreference that *jo* can be said to be produced in orientation to is the grammatical preference for a negative response, a response that is not delivered because of the interactional preference for a positive response.

When comparing the examples in this section with those in the foregoing one, we can now see that when a negatively framed utterance – of any type – is responded to with a positive response, this response will always be done through the production of the special positive response particle *jo* 'yes2', rather than the otherwise more commonly used *ja* 'yes1'. *Jo* is used both as an interactionally dispreferred response to unambiguous negatively framed statements (as in examples (14) and (15)), as an interactionally preferred response to negatively framed utterances that may be ambiguous, namely negative interrogatives and statements followed by full sentential negatively framed tags (as in examples (18), (19), and (20)), and as an interactionally preferred response to utterances that unambiguously prefer a 'yes'-response but are treated as negatively framed because of the presence of a minimal negative tag (as in example (21)). Consequently, the marked positive response particle *jo* 'yes2' cannot be ac-

counted for as being an answer that serves simply to disambiguate a positive response to a negatively framed utterances as suggested by Sadock and Zwicky (1985). Nor can *jo* be said simply to be a way in which to mark the interactional dispreference of such a response. In fact, the only common trait of all the cases in this and the previous section is that a negatively framed utterance is responded to with a positive particle. This, as noted in Sections 3 and 4, is a breach of the grammatically established preference for having the polarity of a response mirror the polarity of the turn responded to. Hence, we can now see that the marked positive response particle *jo* 'yes2' is used so as to mark that this grammatical preference is not adhered to, that is, that a negatively framed utterance is responded to with a positive response, for whatever reason. One can say, then, that the presence of the special positive response particle *jo* in Danish makes it possible for interactants to orient to the grammatical preference for mirrored polarity, more specifically to the negative framing of a prior turn, at all points in interaction, even when in fact producing a 'yes'-response.

6. Conclusion

In this paper I have demonstrated that in Danish interaction, polar responses are typically congruent with the polarity of the turn responded to, so that negative responses follow negatively framed utterances, whereas positive responses typically follow positively framed utterances. Furthermore, I have demonstrated that when responses are congruent with regard to polarity, they typically embody preferred actions, and that this is the case across actions, including agreement, affiliation and confirmation, as well as acknowledgement and continuation marking. In contrast, when responses are not congruent with the turn responded to, they typically embody dispreferred actions of for instance disconfirmation or disagreement, independently of whether these responses are positive or negative.

From these observations I concluded that in addition to the more general and interactional preference for agreement there is also a strong grammatical preference for having a response mirror the polarity of the turn responded to. It should further have become evident that this grammatical preference in Danish is so strong that it is oriented to at all points, so that even when a positive response follows a negatively framed utterance, the negative framing of this utterance is oriented to through the use of the positive response particle *jo* 'yes2' rather than *ja* 'yes1'.

The basis for this study has been Danish interaction, but the findings may nevertheless be relevant beyond the boundaries of that language. Thus, the findings made here demonstrate that negatively framed utterances form the home-environment for negative responses in Danish; it is here that these responses typically occur, and when doing so they typically embody interactionally as well as grammatically preferred responses. Thus, though negative responses can embody interactionally dispreferred actions, as has been shown for other languages (see Section 2), in Danish this is only the case when a negative response is produced outside its home-environment, as a

response to a positively framed utterance. This leads to the question of whether negatively framed utterances constitute the home-environment for negative responses in other languages as well, and whether negative responses when analysed in this context would in fact prove to typically embody preferred actions in most – if not all – languages. As most prior work on negation has focused on negative responses to positively framed utterances (see Ford 2001; Goodwin et al. 2002; Kaufmann 2002 and Pomerantz 1984) this question has so far been left unanswered – and perhaps even unasked.

Comparing the findings made in this paper for Danish with previous work on negation and preference organisation in other languages, however, suggests the kind of response one would get to such a question. Yes – and no: Studies of negative responses in other languages suggest that there is at least to some extent a connection between the interactional preference for agreement and a grammatical preference for mirrored polarity in most Indo-European languages. The difference between negative responses in British and American English, as outlined by Jefferson (2002), for instance, suggests that if a language has the possibility to use negative acknowledgement tokens (as is the case for British English), then stronger actions such as agreement or affiliation with negatively framed utterances will also be done through a negative response. The pattern in Danish confirms this suggestion, as Danish has negative acknowledgement tokens as well as negatively framed agreeing and affiliating responses.

Danish is, however, stronger even than British English in that it not only allows the use of negative acknowledgement tokens, but in fact limits the way in which a negatively framed utterance can be acknowledged to that of producing a negative response particle. A further way in which Danish is stronger in its orientation to mirrored negative polarity than both British and American English is through its use of the special or marked positive response particle *jo* ‘yes2’, used as an interactionally preferred yet grammatically dispreferred ‘yes’-response. Again, this difference between British English and Danish suggests that if a language marks the negative polarity of a prior turn even in cases where a positive response is produced, then the negative polarity of a prior utterance is consistently oriented to in that language, as is the case in Danish. Thus, if a language has a special positive response used in the ways described above for Danish, it may be predicted also to allow only negative continuers and acknowledgements of negatively framed utterances. This again means that other, stronger actions such as confirmation, affiliation, and agreement are also done by having the negative polarity of an utterance reflected in the response.

As noted by Sadock and Zwicky (1985), there are other languages than Danish that have the use of a special positive response particle. These are Icelandic, German, and French, and to my knowledge also the other Scandinavian languages, Norwegian, Faeroese and Swedish. If these languages use their special positive response in the same way as has been shown for Danish, then the prediction would be that these languages, as in Danish, only allow for negative acknowledgements of negatively framed utterances, and thus also have stronger actions such as confirmation, agree-

ment, and affiliation created through mirroring the negative polarity of an utterance in the response.

Rather than seeing the pattern described for Danish as exceptional, then, I would suggest that the grammatical preference for having the negative polarity of an utterance mirrored in the response is one that is relevant to most, if not all Indo-European languages. I would further suggest that negative responses are typically employed in the service of producing interactionally preferred responsive actions such as, for instance, agreement and confirmation in most, if not all, languages of that group.¹⁰ The question whether this is in fact the case awaits further more detailed investigations of negative responses in individual languages before it can be answered.

Notes

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1. This is noted also by Schegloff (2001) who specifically provides examples where this is not the case.
2. As noted in the introduction to this paper, only about 8% of all negative responses were straightforwardly dispreferred. The remaining 15–17% consist of cases where a negative response follows a positively framed utterance and embodies for instance, disagreement, disconfirmation, repair, or an expression of disbelief, but where these actions, because of their sequential position, are preferred. See Heinemann (2003:95–123), Pomerantz (1984) and Koshik (2002) for a discussion of such cases.
3. See Heinemann (2003:205–234) for a discussion of those negative responses that are not initiated with *nej*.
4. Rather than use the term affiliation to cover all types of preferred actions as, for instance, Heritage (1984a:272–273), I here follow Jefferson (2002) in defining affiliative actions as those through which a speaker offers affiliation with the co-participant through saying 'I feel the same way, I would do the same thing, I know what you mean, I see your point'.
5. The non-occurrence of positive acknowledgement or continuation marking of negatively framed utterances may, however, be a reflection of the type of data used for this study. For British English Jefferson (2002) demonstrates that different speaker communities acknowledge negatively framed utterances differently, and that for instance doctors typically use positive response particles. Though the orientation to polarity in general appears to be stronger in Danish, it may well be that a similar pattern can be found in Danish doctor-patient interactions.
6. Though Koshik (2002) demonstrates that positive interrogatives can also be designed to prefer a negative response, these responses nevertheless embody actions that are normally associated with dispreference, namely disconfirmations.
7. See Heritage (2002) for similar cases in English.

8. Negatively framed statements can be followed by full sentential tags, that are positively framed, or by the positive marker *vel* 'right'. Hence, Danish differs from English, where it is possible to use the same tag, 'right', after both negative and positive statements. This use of different polar tags in Danish may be another indicator of the rather strong orientation to polarity in Danish.

9. These types of 'negative questions' differ from negative interrogatives in that they typically can not receive a negative response as the preferred option. Only when full sentential negatively framed tags are used in post response position did I find cases where *nej* 'no' was treated as the preferred option.

10. I limit this 'prediction' to cover only Indo-European languages as I would expect that languages that have the use of a different answer-system, the agree/disagree system or the echo system may differ drastically from the ones using the yes/no system. See Sadock and Zwicky (1985).

Appendix

Transcription conventions

The symbols used in the transcriptions in this paper belong to the system Gail Jefferson has developed for conversation analytic research in general, with a few additions.

1. Temporal and sequential relationships

[overlap onset
]	overlap ends
=	latched speech
(0.4)	silences, approximately represented in tenths of a second
(.)	micro-pause, less than 2/10 of a second

2. Aspects of speech delivery

.	The punctuation marks are used to indicate intonation. The period indicates a falling, final intonation contour.
?	Similarly, a question mark indicates rising intonation,
,	a comma 'continuing' intonation and the inverted question
¿	mark indicates a rise stronger than the comma but weaker than the question mark.
::	Colons are used to indicate the prolongation or stretching of the sound just preceding. The more colons, the longer the stretching.
-	A hyphen after a word or part of the word indicates a cut-off or self-interruption.
<u>nej</u>	Underlining is used to indicate emphatic stress.
Nej	Upper case indicates loud talk or pitch reset.
°nej°	The degree sign indicates that the talk is markedly softer and lower than the talk around it.
>nej<	Indicates that the talk is markedly faster than the surrounding talk.
*	Indicates 'creaky' voice.
↑↓	The up and down arrows mark sharp rises or falls in pitch.

- hh Audible aspiration is shown by the letter 'h'.
 .hh Indicates an audible inhalation.
 .nej Indicates that the word is said with an inbreath.
 (h) h in brackets within a word indicates aspiration, often laughter.

3. Other markings

- ((cough)) Double parentheses are used to mark the transcriber's description of events, rather than representations.
 (bodel) Words within single parentheses indicates that this is the likely hearing of that word.
 () Empty parentheses indicate that something is being said, but that no hearing can be achieved.

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