The Interactional Accomplishment of Action

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The Interactional Accomplishment of Action

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To my grandparents,
for always asking but never questioning.

Contents

Acknowledgments

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Transcription Conventions

The data in this dissertation consist of 21.5 hours of phone and Skype conversations that were recorded by students at Utrecht University as part of a course assignment in 2011 and 2012. These data were transcribed and the excerpts that were selected for the studies in this dissertation are presented as follows. Every excerpt displays the original Dutch with a word-by-word gloss in italics on the subsequent line. A free translation is provided in boldface on a turn-by-turn basis, unless this would hinder legibility in which case free translations are provided on a line-by-line basis. The following abbreviations were used for the glosses:

ADV	Adverb
INT	Interjection
PL	Plural
PRT	Particle
SG	Singular
TAG	Tag particle

Both the original Dutch and the free English translation make use of transcription conventions that represent not just what the participants say, but also give an approximation of how the talk was produced. The conventions used were developed by Jefferson (2004; see also Hepburn & Bolden, 2013) and should be understood as follow:

(1.0) Numbers between parentheses represent seconds of silence, that is, time in which none of the participants make an audible contribution. Silences between turns are written on a separate line; silences within turns are written in the turn.

(.)	A silence of less than 200ms, also known as a *beat* of silence.
turn1= =turn2	Turn 2 is latched onto turn 1; there is no silence between the two turns
tur[n1 [turn2	Turns 1 and 2 are produced in overlap. The left square bracket marks the point of overlap onset.
turn1] tur]n2	Turns 1 and 2 are produced in overlap. The right square bracket marks the point where overlap ends.
tcu1<tcu2	The smaller than sign in between two turn-constructional units signifies a *left-push* or *abrupt-join*; the speaker pre-empts the point of transition relevance.
tcu.	A period marks a point of prosodic completion with a boundary pitch that falls to low in the speaker's range.
tcu,	A comma marks a point of prosodic completion with a boundary pitch that rises to the middle of the speaker's range.
tcu?	A question mark marks a point of prosodic completion with a boundary pitch that rises to high in the speaker's range.
tcu;	A semicolon marks a point of prosodic completion with a boundary pitch that falls to the middle of the speaker's range.
tcu_	An underscore marks a point of prosodic completion with a flat boundary pitch.
↑	An upwards pointing arrow marks an upstep in the speaker's pitch that lasts no longer than one syllable.
↓	A downwards pointing arrow marks a downstep in the speaker's pitch that lasts no longer than one syllable.
stre::tch	Colons signify that the preceding vowel or syllable is held longer than what would be considered normal.
stress	Underlined data is pronounced with audible stress or emphasis.
pi:tch	An underlined vowel followed by a colon that is not underlined signifies a pitch that rises and falls during the production of the vowel.
pi:tch	A vowel followed by an underlined colon signifies a pitch that rises throughout the production of the vowel.
LOUD	Data written in capitals is produced relatively loud.
°soft°	Data written between degree signs is produced relatively soft; multiple degree signs °° mean that the data is barely audible.

^high^	Data in between two carets is produced high in the speaker's pitch range.
>talk<	Talk between two inward pointing smaller than and larger than signs is contracted; it is produced relatively fast.
<talk>	Talk between two outward pointing smaller than and larger than signs is elongated; it is produced relatively slowly.
tal-	A hyphen signifies a cut-off in mid-production, typically audible as a glottal stop.
.hh	An *h* or series of *h*s preceded by a period represents an audible inbreath. Each *h* denotes about 200ms.
hh	A free-standing *h* or series of free-standing *h*s represents an audible outbreath.
ha hi hu	Various laughter tokens.
t(h)alk	An *h* between parentheses in a word means that the word is produced laughing.
#talk#	Talk in between number signs is produced with creaky voice.
£talk£	Talk in between two pound symbols is produced with smiley voice; the speaker is audibly smiling while speaking.
((sniffs))	Anything in double parentheses is a comment, typically a characterization of a sound that cannot be represented otherwise.
( )	Empty space between two parentheses signifies that the speaker said something but it is not hearable what. More space means more talk.
(talk)	Talk in between two parentheses signifies that it is not clear what the speaker said and only an attempt could be made at transcription.
(talk/talk)	Talk in between two parentheses and separated by a slash signifies that it is not clear what the speaker said; the slash separates two ways the data could be heard.

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

> This whole book is but a draught – nay but the draught of a draught. Oh, Time, Strength, Cash, and Patience!
>
> Herman Melville, *Moby Dick*

1.1 A problem of action formation

Social action has long been recognized to be the heart of human communication; when in conversation, people are not primarily concerned with conveying meaning or information, but with doing actions (Austin, 1962; Schegloff, 1995). Even when they are conveying information such as when they are telling news or answering requests for information, people are concerned with those activities first. In order to understand the inner workings of social interaction we thus need to investigate how actions are brought off, what Schegloff (2007, p. xiv) calls the *action-formation problem*:

> How are the resources of the language, the body, the environment of the interaction, and position *in* the interaction fashioned into

> conformations designed to be, and to be recognizable by recipients as, particular actions – actions like requesting, inviting, granting, complaining, agreeing, telling, noticing, rejecting, and so on – in a class of unknown size?

This dissertation aims to address this problem by focusing on a very small subset of all possible actions: requests for confirmation that are implemented with declarative word order—or *Declarative Questions* in vernacular terms.[1] The problem can be characterized as follows. Well over 80% of the world's languages—781 out of 955 sampled languages—seem to have a specific sentence type for asking polar questions: a polar interrogative or yes/no interrogative. This sentence type can be designed with a question particle ($N = 585$), special verb morphology ($N = 164$), a combination of the two ($N = 15$), a specific word order ($N = 13$), or absence of a morpheme that indicates the clause is declarative ($N = 4$) (Dryer, 2013). Conventional wisdom goes that in these languages the polar interrogative is the default sentence type for asking polar questions, indeed that polar interrogatives in a sense are polar questions (see Quirk, Greenbaum, Leech, & Svartvik, 1985; Sadock, 1974; Sadock & Zwicky, 1985; Sadock, 2012).

Yet researchers have shown recurrently that in various languages that have polar interrogative syntax speakers will frequently, if not most of the time, use declarative word order to ask polar questions (e.g., Beun, 1989b; Freed, 1994; Huddleston, 1994; Stivers, Enfield, & Levinson, 2010). Consider for example the following two English utterances, the first a declarative, the second a polar interrogative (examples inspired by Collavin, 2011, p. 380):

(1) The door is shut.

(2) Is the door shut?

Despite their difference in word order, both (1) and (2) can be used to ask a polar question, to have the recipient (dis)confirm that the door is shut. We are thus presented with a puzzle. If languages—or more accurately, speakers of a language—have a specific sentence type for asking polar questions, why

[1] The label *question* is not as straightforward as it may seem: *question* is a commonsense term, not a technical one (Schegloff, 1984), and so it is not clear which actions are and which are not (declarative) questions. In this dissertation, I will use (*declarative*) *question* when discussing research in which the authors also use this term. But in my analyses I use more specific terminology, such as *request for information/confirmation* for *polar question*, and *declarative yes/no-type initiating action* or *yes/no declarative* (YND) (see G. Raymond, 2010a) for *declarative question*.

do they still use the declarative word order, the word order that is supposed to be used for assertions (see Sadock, 1974; Sadock & Zwicky, 1985; Sadock, 2012)? Or to use the terminology proposed in Schegloff's definition: if polar questions are made recognizable with the polar interrogative, how do recipients understand an utterance with declarative word order as a polar question?

1.2 Interaction as social action

Historically, the main field that has concerned itself with speech is philosophy. It has been well over sixty years since John Austin (1962) delivered his William James Lectures at Harvard University[2] in which he caused a paradigm shift in the philosophy of language by positing that speakers in social interaction are not concerned with making statements about the world that have some truth value. He argued that it is in fact generally impossible to even ascribe a truth value to most utterances that people produce. Language according to Austin is not about describing the world in a way that can be considered right or wrong, it is about *doing things*, speech acts to be specific. And those speech acts can be performed successfully or unsuccessfully—felicitously or infelicitously. These ideas led to the development of a new field in the philosophy of language in which action instead of truth value featured centrally: Speech Act Theory (hereafter, SAT) (Searle, 1969; Sbisà & Turner, 2013).

Around the same time Austin revolutionized the philosophy of language, a no less important paradigm shift took place in sociology. Harvey Sacks, who was inspired by Garfinkel's ethnomethodology (Garfinkel, 1967) and Goffman's postulate that face-to-face interaction is worthy of investigation in its own right (e.g., Goffman, 1955), began, in collaboration with Emanuel Schegloff, to investigate the moment-by-moment behavior of participants in various speech-exchange systems. One of Sacks' most far-reaching observations was that talk is ordered at very detailed levels of the interaction (see Schegloff's introduction to Sacks, 1995). It meant for the study of everyday interaction that no seemingly small detail could a priori be ruled out as having relevance for the participants in their organization and understanding of the interaction. The systematic study of talk-in-interaction that Sacks developed in collaboration with Schegloff from this observation came to be known as Conversation Analysis (hereafter, CA) (e.g., Sidnell & Stivers, 2013).

Although both SAT and CA investigate how actions in talk-in-interaction are produced and made recognizable, the methods differ fundamentally in their

[2]The lectures were delivered in 1955 and published posthumously in 1962.

theoretical assumptions, data, and evidence. One crucial difference between the two is that SAT as it was developed by Searle (1969) argues that actions are constituted by their *felicity conditions*. That is, SAT takes a single utterance and argues that it implements an action if the speaker has fulfilled the preconditions for that action. For example, speakers will have successfully asked a question when they lack the requested information, want to know the information, believe that the hearer possesses that information, believe that the hearer is willing to provide that information, and so forth. CA rejects this approach as inherently unsatisfactory. While a speaker by requesting information will be seen to reveal a lack of information, that revelation is an effect of implementing the request for information (see Sidnell & Enfield, 2012, 2014 on the distinction between action and effect; see also Levinson, 2013). Instead an utterance will be analyzed as implementing a question if (i) it is treated by the recipient as a question and (ii) if that uptake by the recipient is not subsequently contradicted by the speaker (Koole, 2015; Robinson, 2014; Schegloff, 1992). While felicity conditions have to be assumed to be omni-relevant, CA is interested in the verbal and embodied practices that participants use, moment by moment, to maintain an intersubjective understanding (see Schegloff's introduction in Sacks, 1995, p. xxvi; see also Enfield, 2013; Levinson, 2013; Schegloff, 1996a; Sidnell, 2013, 2014).

An additional assumption that distinguishes at least parts of SAT from CA is the Literal Force Hypothesis (LFH) (see Gazdar, 1981; Levinson, 1983):[3] the assumption that the major sentence types of a language have the illocutionairy force that is conventionally associated with them.[4] Consider again the examples given earlier:

(1) The door is shut.

(2) Is the door shut?

The approaches within SAT that embrace the LFH take the position that while both utterances have the same propositional content, they differ in their

[3]Gazdar (1981, p. 74) introduces a *literal meaning hypothesis*, but this term is amended by Levinson (1983). This change is likely made in light of the distinction many linguists and language philosophers make between the meaning of a sentence—its semantic content—and its illocutionary force (i.a., Frege, 1918/1956; Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969).

[4]An additional problem with the LFH is that there is no consensus on what the major sentence types are. Quirk et al. (1985) take there to be four for English: (1) declarative, (2) interrogative, (3) imperative, and (4) exclamative. Sadock and Zwicky (1985) and Levinson (1983) on the other hand treat the exclamative as a minor sentence type. If speakers rely on a form-function relationship, it is crucial to know how many such relationships there are.

illocutionairy or literal force (Collavin, 2011): (1) as it is a declarative has declarative force, while (2) as a polar interrogative has interrogative force.

That is not to say that these utterances cannot be used for other actions than making assertions or asking questions respectively, but it is not what they are designed to literally do. This means that under the LFH, when (1) is used as a question it still has declarative force, but it also has an additional, implied force: it is used to do an *indirect* speech act, a speech act where the literal force is somehow inadequate given the context.[5]

The problem with this approach according to Levinson (1983) is that most utterances would be indirect speech acts, and there does not seem to be a reason under the LFH account why this would have to be the case. An explanation has been sought in politeness, where being indirect will be understood as being polite (P. Brown & Levinson, 1987), but that would just lead us to ask why direct actions are impolite. Moreover, it is unclear how using (1) as an indirect speech act would contribute to asking a polite question. As will become clear in section 1.3 and the rest of this dissertation, participants have different concerns when designing polar questions.

CA takes a completely different perspective: When analyzing utterances we have to separate the form of the utterance from its function. That is, there is no one-to-one relation where a specific grammatical form will have a specific, invariant function that is encoded into that form (e.g., Curl, 2006; Curl & Drew, 2008; Huddleston, 1994; Levinson, 1983; Schegloff, 1984; T. Walker, 2014; G. Walker, 2017a). As Schegloff explains in the introduction to Sacks' lectures:

> The upshot of Sacks' analysis is to reject as inadequate the view that linguistic items determine the meaning or the force of an action, and to insist instead that the cultural, sequential or interactional status of the objects employed in the utterance shape the interaction of the linguistic item. (Sacks, 1995, p. xxxviii)

So all we can say is that (1) has declarative word order and (2) has polar interrogative word order.[6]

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[5]SAT distinguishes between conventional and conversational, or Gricean, implicatures. Gordon and Lakoff (1971/1975) argue that speakers who either stated or questioned one of the felicity conditions would perform the act that is conventionally associated with that felicity condition. Searle (1975) on the other hand deals with indirect speech acts based on Grice's theory of implicature (Grice, 1975). Any indirect speech act violates on of Grice's conversational maxims, but given that the speaker will be seen to be cooperative, the implied speech act can be derived from the context. For a more extensive discussion of both theories, see Levinson (1983).

[6]The strict distinction between form and function is rarely realized in practice, as is evidenced

Because CA rejects the notion of literal meaning, it is also impossible to say what actions (1) and (2) are used for without knowing what preceded them in the interaction and what followed. Since participants in talk-in-interaction understand utterances in their (sequential) context, the action of an utterance in vacuo is simply undetermined (Wittgenstein, 1958). Utterance (2) could be understood by a recipient as doing a question, but also as a challenge or a display of disbelief, whereas (1) might be a statement, but could also be a question or a warning.[7] As analysts, we can only know what action either utterance is used to do, by studying how it is taken up (Sacks, Schegloff, & Jefferson, 1974; Schegloff, 1988b).

Note that by dropping the assumptions of literal meaning and literal force, our puzzle does not simply go away, it just takes on a different form. Instead of having to explain how declarative utterances can be understood as doing questioning, the problem becomes how any utterance gets to do questioning (Levinson, 1983; Schegloff, 1984). Given that speakers can use both declarative and polar interrogative word order to ask polar questions, the question is in which contexts do speakers use which sentence type and what do they achieve by choosing a certain type in a certain context.

This chapter

In the rest of this chapter I first discuss the methods that are used in this dissertation: Conversation Analysis and Interactional Linguistics. I provide a brief overview of the central methodological principles of CA: how participants organize turn taking and its procedural approach to intersubjectivity. These concepts serve as crucial background information not only for the analyses presented in this dissertation, but also for the discussions of the various other approaches to action formation. I subsequently summarize how CA has contributed to linguistic theory and how linguistics in turn contributes to our understanding of social interaction, focusing again on the aspect of turn taking, but also on the issue of how linguistic structures are understood to be used in the processes of action formation and action ascription. I show that instead of treating linguistic structure as invariant and similarly having an invariant meaning,

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by the recurrent need for reminders (e.g., T. Walker, 2014; G. Walker, 2017a). Although CA does not assume that sentence types have a literal force, researchers rarely if ever take the position that both (1) and (2) require equal explanation as to how they are understood to be doing questioning (but see Schegloff, 1984).

[7] 'The way is shut. It was made by those who are Dead, and the Dead keep it, until the time comes. The way is shut.' (J.R.R. Tolkien, The Return of the King).

turns are designed to deal with local exigencies of the interaction (Mazeland, 2013), making linguistic structure not given and invariant, but emerging and even emergent (Hopper, 1987).

Following this methodological background, I discuss four approaches to the action-formation problem of what are called declarative questions or declarative requests for confirmation. All four approaches reject the LFH in a strict sense; that is, they do not presuppose that the major sentence types of a language have a literal force that determines action. But they resolve the action formation problem in different ways.

First I discuss an approach proposed by Beun (1989b). His analysis, which is grounded in Speech Act Theory, argues that in order to distinguish between declarative assertions and declarative questions participants rely on a combination of linguistic and contextual features that help to determine who is the Expert on the expressed proposition. If these features reveal that the recipient is the Expert, the declarative utterance will be understood as a question. An utterance that lacks these features can still be understood as a question if in its context of use it cannot be understood as an assertion. That is, each utterance has a preferred interpretation that can be overruled depending on where and when it is used.

The advantage of this approach is that it relies on recordings of actual conversations and its findings are thus partly grounded in participants' observable behavior. It does, however, argue for an amended version of the LFH which, as I will argue, is not feasible considering the innumerable number of actions that participants do.

Second I discuss two approaches from formal semantics: Gunlogson (2001, 2008) proposes that depending on who has what she calls *implicit authority* a declarative will be understood as a statement or a declarative question; Farkas and Roelofsen (2017) on the other hand argue that sentence types have an informative and inquisitive content (see Ciardelli, Groenendijk, & Roelofsen, 2013), and that utterances that have inquisitive content will be understood as (biased) questions.

While both can account for a broad range of cases, like Beun's proposal they cannot account for the plethora of actions we find in conversation. The proposed analyses only work for the ideal language user conceived by Chomsky (1965), where any deviation would simply have to be accounted for with some pragmatic condition. I argue therefore that these proposals could be better appreciated, if they were understood not as (universal) grammars of sentence types, but as positionally sensitive grammars (see Schegloff, 1996c).

Finally I discuss a recent proposal from CA by Heritage (2012a). In this

proposal participants distinguish between utterances that request and convey information based on their respective epistemic rights; who has primary rights to know about the addressed information. If the information falls in the domain of the speaker, an utterance will be understood as conveying information, whereas if it falls in the domain of the recipient, the utterance will be understood as requesting information/confirmation. Although this analysis has been embraced by many scholars in CA, there have been some recent criticisms (see Lynch & Macbeth, 2016a) which I briefly discuss as they pertain to the action-formation problem.

1.3 Conversation Analytic Method

This dissertation has as its aim to describe and account for how people in everyday life make use of a specific linguistic practices to understand each other and make themselves understood. It deals, in other words, with the methods by which participants make themselves *accountable* (see Garfinkel, 1967, 1968/1974). CA was developed in the 1960s to deal specifically with these issues, to develop a method of investigating actual events of daily life in a formal way (Sacks, 1984). But while language is indispensable for most forms of social interaction, it was not of itself an object of study. CA's findings, however, have had a significant impact on our understanding not just of language use, but of linguistic structure as well. So much so that over the past twenty years the investigation of linguistics in conversation has come to be a field in its own right: Interactional Linguistics (hereafter, IL). And indeed, studies in this field have shown that linguistic structure and language use cannot be as easily distinguished as some principal linguistic theories suggest.

What Sacks (1995) recurrently showed in his lectures, indeed, what he set out to show, is that in order to study, describe, and understand the norms and structures of talk-in-interaction, we do not need to first understand the mental grammar of the participants (cf. Chomsky, 1964); the "reality" of language is in fact not too complex to be described (cf. Chomsky, 1957). While it is true that conversation is rife with what one could call distractions, shifts of attentions, and errors (Chomsky, 1965, p. 3f.), these aspects of talk-in-interaction are as Sacks points out worth studying in their own right because they are in fact done in a highly organized manner.[8] In fact, while linguistic

[8] I do not take Chomsky's perspective here to mean that he considered linguistic performance a "trash bin" (cf. Drew, Walker, & Ogden, 2013), merely that he underestimated the degree to which performance, or talk-in-interaction, has its own order.

theories founded in Chomsky's generative approach have struggled to show underlying universalities to language (Evans & Levinson, 2009), CA and IL have shown that there are what could be called pragmatic universals, that is, interactional problems that are solved by different cultures through similar means. See for example Dingemanse et al. (2015) on universal principles of repair or Heritage (2016) on cross-linguistic regularities in the use of what are called change-of-state tokens.

In this section I first provide an introduction to CA's most central findings, and how its way of looking at talk-in-interaction allows for a unique, systematic study of language in social interaction. In doing so I motivate why this approach is suited for the questions addressed in this dissertation. I subsequently address the issues of intersubjectivity and common ground a bit more at length as they are central to the analyses in this dissertation as well as some alternative approaches that will be discussed in chapter 1.4. In closing I provide a brief overview of IL and its import for this dissertation.

1.3.1 Adjacency pairs and turn taking

CA has since its inception in the 1960s become one of the central methods for the study of social interaction. Although CA has its roots in sociology via Harold Garfinkel and Erving Goffman, and initially focused on everyday conversation (Sacks et al., 1974), it has since become an important method in various other scientific fields such as anthropology, linguistics, and psychology (see Stivers & Sidnell, 2013), and it is now also being used to study other speech-exchange systems, such as medical interaction, meetings, and interviews (see Heritage & Clayman, 2010). This broadening scope has been paramount to various real-world applications, such as preventing overprescription of antibiotics (Stivers, 2005b, 2005c, 2007), streamlining and increasing the efficacy of emergency calls (Koole & Verberg, 2017), and improving communication training (Stokoe, 2011, 2014).

In this section I discuss how CA's foundational findings in describing the "procedural infrastructure of interaction" (Schegloff, 1992, p. 1299) make possible a systematic study of talk-in-interaction. The central concepts are (i) that talk is largely organized through *adjacency pairs*—or more precisely *adjacency relationships* of which adjacency pairs are a special kind (Schegloff, 1988a, p. 113)—where some specific first action makes *conditionally relevant* a type-fitting second, and (ii) that talk is organized through a simple turn-taking system that minimizes both silences between and overlap of turns.

Already in his lectures Sacks (1995) talked about conversation as being

organized through pairs of actions. His observation was that utterances are not produced independently from one another, but that they are highly organized; a first seeking a second and seconds being produced in response to something that was hearably first. This notion was formalized as the adjacency pair:

> Adjacency pairs consist of sequences which properly have the following features: (1) two utterance length, (2) adjacent positioning of component utterances, (3) different speakers producing each utterance. (Schegloff & Sacks, 1973, p. 295)

This may seem like a rather roundabout way of stating that actions come in pairs: a first pair part (hereafter, FPP) and a second pair part (hereafter, SPP)—for example greetings and return-greetings, questions and answers, requests and grantings, and so forth. But by formalizing adjacency pairs in this manner Schegloff and Sacks (1973) opened conversation up to a manner of scientific inquiry that was simply not available before. By taking the adjacency relationship and particularly the adjacency pair as a basic unit of interaction researchers can show how participants build an interactional structure through those pairs of actions, and how coherence is achieved by an orientation to what is called "the base pairs" (Schegloff, 1990, 2007). It also makes deviations from this structure understandable not as simple statistical variations of a pattern, but as meaningful practices for the participants.

Take for example the second part of the definition: adjacent positioning of component utterances. The phrasing means that one utterance has to be provided after the other—SPPs follow FPPs—but not immediately after: things can intervene without breaking the adjacency relationship. When a recipient of an FPP subsequently produces a turn that is not recognizable as an SPP, it will generally be understood as delaying production of that SPP, and it will be "examined for its import, for what understanding should be accorded it" (Schegloff, 2007, p. 15). In other words, once a speaker has produced an FPP, anything the recipient does will be understood in relation to the adjacency pair that has been set in motion. For example, a recipient can be seen to initiate repair, signaling a problem with hearing or understanding the FPP.[9] Similarly, participants can produce sequences of talk that are subordinate to a base pair before the FPP—pre-expansion (Schegloff, 1980; Terasaki, 1976/2004)—or after the SPP—post-expansion (Davidson, 1984). And these expansions themselves are often also pair-organized (Schegloff, 1988a, 2007).

[9] An alternative option is a side-sequence (Jefferson, 1972) which can intervene in a larger activity or a parenthetical sequence (Mazeland, 2007) which can halt the ongoing production of a turn.

These adjacency pairs do not arise accidentally of course, and neither is providing the SPP optional. By implementing a specific type of FPP a speaker makes *conditionally relevant* an SPP (Schegloff, 1968). Upon completion of some first action the addressed recipient should normatively provide a type-fitting response. If that response is not forthcoming, that is, if the recipient takes too long in providing uptake, the absence of a response is noticeable and will be understood as the relevant non-production of the projected uptake. Although there is no fixed time limit for when a silence is understood as relevant non-production, the cut-off point has been found to lie around 700ms (Kendrick & Torreira, 2015), but it is contingent on the situation and the speed of the conversation. If conversationalists are involved in some other activity than just conversation, silences longer than 700ms may be unproblematic, but if turns are produced in quick succession a silence of 300ms may be understood as too long.

In addition to the adjacency relationship and conditional relevance, we need another pillar through which participants build up the structure of interaction: after the completion of each turn participants have to solve the problem of "who speaks next." It should be obvious that participants generally talk one after another, that silences between turns and overlap of turns are infrequent and short-lived (Stivers et al., 2009 showed that this holds in a variety of cultures), and that participants accomplish all this without having to agree in advance who can say what at which point in the conversation (Sacks et al., 1974, p. 700).

Sacks et al. (1974) showed that participants solve all these problems with a very simple turn-taking system that not only accounts for how turns are allocated moment-by-moment, but also how they are constructed. Any turn is built using a limited set of linguistic resources that are language specific. These unit-types need to meet the criterion of projectability, meaning that through these unit-types recipients can project the point at which the turn will come to possible completion. Additionally any turn can, but need not, contain a turn-allocation component, a component with which the speaker selects a specific recipient to speak next. Such a component can be obvious, like the action instantiated—when speakers in dyadic conversation produces an FPP, they thereby select the recipient to provide an SPP—or an address term, but it can also be more subtle such as gaze (e.g., Auer, 2017; Lerner, 2003; Rossano, 2013). These two components—turn-construction and turn-allocation—combined with the following set of rules give the turn-taking system for conversation:

(1) For any turn, at the initial transition-relevance place of an

initial turn-constructional unit:

(a) If the turn-so-far is so constructed as to involve the use a 'current speaker selects next' technique, then the party so selected has the right and is obliged to take next turn to speak; no others have such rights or obligations, and transfer occurs at that place.

(b) If the turn-so-far is so constructed as not to involve the use of a 'current speaker selects next' technique, then self-selection for next speakership may, but need not, be instituted; first starter acquires rights to a turn, and transfer occurs at that place.

(c) If the turn-so-far is so constructed as not to involve the use of a 'current speaker selects next' technique, then current speaker may, but need not continue, unless another self-selects.

(2) If, at the initial transition-relevance place of an initial turn-constructional unit, neither 1a or 1b has operated, and, following the provision of 1c, current speaker has not continued, then the rule-set a–c re-applies at the next transition-relevance place, and recursively at each next transition-relevance place, until transfer is effected. (Sacks et al., 1974, p. 704)

The rules are presented in order of occurrence, meaning that current speaker has the primary right to select the next speaker. Only when current speaker has not selected a next speaker do other participants get a chance to select themselves as speakers. This has the effect that speakers generally are only attributed one turn-constructional unit at a time, that is, they are allowed to produce one recognizably complete turn before speaker transfer can and usually should occur. Only if no other participants selects themselves to be the next speaker does current speaker get rights to continue.

Clearly this is not an exhaustive nor a deterministic description of turn taking in conversation. Speakers of a possibly complete turn can and do continue in violation of the *rules*, just as recipients will sometimes self-select in an environment where speaker-transition was not made relevant or where another participant has been selected as next speaker. Furthermore, speakers can be allowed to produce more than one turn-constructional component before transfer is possible and relevant, that is, the system can be temporarily suspended. But the system is treated as normative, that is, participants hold each other

accountable for adhering to it. At the same time they continuously re-establish it with every successful transfer of speakership.

With this system in place, we are also provided a "proof procedure for the analysis of turns" (Sacks et al., 1974, p. 728). When speakers produce an FPP, they select by conditional relevance a next speaker to provide a type-fitting response. Next-speakers will therefore be understood to be providing that type-fitting response. In other words, by providing a certain type of response, next-speakers displays their understanding of the type of adjacency pair that was initiated by the first-speaker and thus their understanding of the action produced by that first speaker. In fact each turn at talk is understood in relation to its prior, adjacent turn, unless it is designed as not to be so understood (Schegloff, 1988a). Producing an utterance subsequently to another utterance, that is, *next positioning* an utterance, is a primary means for making it understood as related to that prior utterance (Jefferson, 1978, fn. 8).

So it is in the next turn that participants reveal to each other how they understand one another, and it is there that we can find evidence for our analysis of the action that a turn is used to implement. This notion is central to the various analyses in this dissertation. In the next turn recipients display their understanding of a prior declarative yes/no-type initiating actions as for example a request for confirmation or an invitation to tell (see chapters 2 and 3); they distinguish between turns that are doing now-understanding and turns that are aimed at resolving knowledge discrepancies (see chapters 4 and 5); and they display their understanding of an answer as either informative or a proposal (see chapter 6). In all these cases the next turn thus provides evidence for our analysis of the action implemented in the prior.

1.3.2 Intersubjectivity in interaction

In the previous section I discussed the mechanics through which participants coordinate their actions. In this section I show that through these mechanics participants solve a problem that particularly sociology and philosophy have wrestled with for a long time: the problem of intersubjectivity. Simply put, the problem is as follows: Two or more participants need to coordinate their actions without being able to directly access each other's intentions and understandings: "[a recipient] knows merely that fragment of the [speaker's] action which has become manifest to him, namely, the performed act observed by him or the past phases of the still ongoing action" (Schutz, 1962, p. 24). This limitation clearly is central to any theory that has as its aims to provide an explanation of social interaction. As Schegloff (1992, p. 1296) explains: "without systematic

provision for a world known and held in common by some collectivity of persons, one has not a misunderstood world, but no conjoint reality at all." But no two individuals will ever have identical experiences or perspectives of anything, so how can two people rely on shared experiences or shared assumptions? We need a provision for a world held in common, when there can never be such a world.

Part of the explanation has to be sought in how participants in social interaction make themselves understood. They achieve this not only through language, but also rely on the context (consider again Schegloff's definition of the action-formation problem in section 1.1): any turn-at-talk will be designed and understood in relation to when, where, and by whom it is produced. Participants thus rely on what is often called the *common ground* they have with their co-participants (Stalnaker, 1978).

Understanding how participants build up and use the common ground is thus part and parcel to understanding action formation. In this section I discuss a prominent theory developed by Clark (1996) of how participants manage their common ground. Clark argues that because common ground is crucial for social interaction, an account of social interaction cannot rely on an intuitive appeal to the context. Instead we need a *proper theory* of common ground. While the theory Clark provides does allow for a more grounded analysis of action formation, I argue that it does not actually preclude an intuitive appeal to the context, and in fact that it still relies on commonsense assumptions about how participants manage their common ground.

Subsequently I discuss the procedural nature of intersubjectivity as it is applied and understood in CA (Schegloff, 1992). While there is clear overlap with Clark's approach as should become clear from the respective discussions, the focus in CA is not on how participants base their common ground in for example assumptions about communities and shared experience, but instead on how intersubjectivity is managed and grounded in the local sequential structure of the interaction.

Context and Common Ground

Clark (1996) is concerned with what participants in social interaction know and assume the other participants know and assume. Any action is designed for a specific participant or set of participants (Sacks et al., 1974, p. 727), and so speakers routinely make appeals to what they perceive as their common ground. Furthermore, interaction, as Clark understands it, is aimed at expanding the common ground; indeed, he argues that the size and shape of the common

ground of two participants reflects the intimacy of their relationship (Clark, 1996, p. 115): The more expansive the common ground, the more intimate the relationship. The question then is how is common ground brought about, and how is it managed in talk-in-interaction.

There are two fundamental points that Clark (1996) makes in his approach. He first provides a formal definition of common ground, which shows how common ground is established and managed in interaction. Subsequently he distinguishes between two types of bases on which participants make their assumptions about the common ground. I discuss them in the same order.

Common ground for Clark (1996) is a reflexive concept. This means that it is not enough that each participant has access to the same piece of information, but that they also know that each of them has access to that same piece of information. In addition, this reflexive knowledge requires a shared basis that indicates the same information to all participants; it is the assumed shared basis that justifies the assumption that some belief is part of the common ground. This has as an important implication that common ground need not be established through interaction. Two people can assume that given a certain shared basis, which invariably has to be assumed to be a shared basis, they have a shared belief and that shared belief is thus part of their common ground.

Consider the following situation. If my father and I are sitting at Wimbledon Center Court watching Federer play Nadal, we are presented with the same visual basis on which to make assumptions about what the other sees. So we can say that the belief that we are watching Federer play Nadal is part of our common ground.

But consider that the other 15,000 spectators have the same visual basis, and we would not want to argue that we have the same common ground, or a common ground at all, with all these other spectators. We merely share a basis based on which we could of course build a reflexive common ground. The difference is partly that my father and I are watching *together*; it is an activity in which we both participate and we are aware that this participation is shared. We are undoubtedly also aware of the rest of the crowd, but not as individual spectators. Our watching is therefore not a shared activity (see Sidnell, 2014).

Common ground is, however, not as simple as that. My father and I may be looking at the same thing, but that does not mean we can assume we see the same thing. I may see Federer dominating Nadal by playing the best tennis of his career, whereas my father may see an injured Nadal struggling to keep up. We are presented with the same visual basis, which serves as evidence both for our understanding that (a) we are watching Federer play Nadal and (b) we are watching Federer dominate Nadal or Nadal struggling respectively. But

while the visual basis may be strong evidence for (a) it can be relatively weak evidence for (b). So while we would probably say that (a) is almost certainly part of our common ground—tennis fans as we both are—we may be relatively uncertain about whether (b) is indeed part of our common ground.

The second aspect of Clark's discussion deals with how participants in talk-in-interaction come to a shared basis. He argues that common ground can have two types of bases: (i) the cultural community the participants belong to, what he calls "communal common ground"; and (ii) the direct personal experiences participants have had, what he calls "personal common ground" (Clark, 1996, p. 100ff.).

Community as a basis for common ground relies on the stratification humans make of society. We all belong to a vast set of different communities, and each one comes with assumptions about what other members of that community ought to know. In addition, we have knowledge of communities we do not belong to and assumptions about what people who do belong to those communities know. Similarly, we have assumptions about what people who do not belong to our communities would know of them. Based on the communities we and others belong to, we make assumptions about what they might know.

The personal common ground is of a different nature. It is based on the experiences that people share with one another: what people see and do together. It is the personal common ground that according to Clark defines the relationship between people. Two people who belong to the same communities do not need to be acquainted in any way. But the more they do together and learn about each other—that is, the more they increase their personal common ground—the closer they become.

Although Clark's formalization of the common ground seems a useful step, and the distinction between communal and personal seems a beneficial one, it is unclear how it achieves its goal: namely, to constrain our analyses. For any conversational contribution, Clark (1996, p.221) argues that participants work actively to ground it: 'to establish it as part of the common ground well enough for practical purposes.' But this does not mean that participants specify how they come to an understanding of an action. It merely means that for any utterance the recipient will have to provide positive evidence that it was adequately heard and understood. Depending on the type of contribution, the typical way of doing so is by simply providing a relevant next; completing the joint project. The successful completion of a joint project is the basis for adding that joint project to the common ground, but whatever assumptions the participants rely on while constructing their joint project is still under the surface of the interaction.

Clark takes issue with an undefined context, because then one basis for a mutual belief is as good as the other. With no formal constraints on the context, any explanation is mere speculation. Under Clark's proposal, we cannot simply appeal to the context, but we would have to point out some specific element in the context that participants use as the basis for their mutual beliefs: a common community or a shared experience for example.

And in fact in current CA work this is common practice: in discussions of data, researchers generally provide a minimal ethnography of the participants and the situation, inherently claiming that this is relevant for the participants' understanding of the interaction. But the relevance of this ethnography is not discovered by the researchers through some formal procedure. It is in fact based on a commonsense understanding of what in the context the participants orient to. While this analysis should subsequently be grounded in the participants' observable behavior, we can only make a reasonable appeal based on our own commonsense understandings of the interaction—unless of course they make explicit what aspect of the context they are appealing to.

For any turn-at-talk, the basis could be prior talk in the same conversation, it could be some prior shared experience, it could be communal knowledge, and so on. We cannot know on what basis participants make assumptions about their mutual beliefs. In fact, we don't know what the participants consider their common ground to be, beyond what they treat as shared in the interaction. The bases and reflexive understandings may be the mental representation of the common ground, but we have no way of verifying this, or deriving our analysis from it.

So for our analysis of the moment-by-moment understandings that are established through interaction, an intuitive notion seems as good as Clark's *proper theory*. Some specification is required, but that specification is still a matter of plausibility.

Procedural intersubjectivity

The previous section showed how Clark (1996) attempts to capture the bases that people use to ground their mutual beliefs on which they rely in interaction. But since interaction is required to build a common ground, it tells us nothing about how interaction itself is possible. We have what looks like a vicious circle: we ground our mutual beliefs through interaction, but we require at least some common ground, some mutual beliefs to be able to interact in the first place. Although Clark demonstrates how incorrect assumptions can be repaired as soon as they come to light, whereby we could revise the common ground, we

of course would then require the repair mechanism to be part of the common ground.

Speakers design their actions in a way that they can be understood by their recipient, and similarly recipients ascribe actions to utterances based on the assumption that that utterance was designed in a way that it could be understood by them. This requires intersubjectivity, and so understanding how intersubjectivity works is anterior (see Schegloff, 1992); its existence cannot simply be assumed if one is to understand how action formation and action ascription work:

> The question how a *scientific* interpretation of human action is possible can be resolved only if an adequate answer is first given to the question how man, in the natural attitude of daily life and common sense, can understand another's action at all. (Schutz, 1964, p. 20f.)

The view taken in CA can be traced back primarily to Schutz (1962) and Garfinkel (1952, 1967). Schutz treated intersubjectivity as a problem that is routinely solved in interaction by the participants assuming a "reciprocity of perspectives": (i) each has his or her own unique perspective, but those perspectives are interchangeable—person A's perspective would be the same as person B's if A were in B's position; and (ii) those differences in perspective are irrelevant until proven otherwise (Schutz, 1962, p. 11ff.). For Schutz, intersubjectivity is thus never guaranteed by some external factor like socialization in a common culture, but it has to be continuously assumed and negotiated (see Heritage, 1984b).[10] Garfinkel (1952, 1967) in turn built on these ideas, focusing on the importance of temporality that Schutz introduced in the study of intersubjectivity: "The appropriate image of a common understanding is (...) an operation rather than a common intersection of overlapping sets" (Garfinkel, 1967, p. 30).

The importance of this *procedural* nature of intersubjectivity was most clearly shown by Schegloff (1992) who argued that participants do not deal with *a* problem of intersubjectivity, but a recurrent *situated intersubjectivity*: "particular aspects of particular bits of conduct that compose the warp and weft of ordinary social life provide occasions and resources for understanding, which can also issue in problematic understandings" (Schegloff, 1992, p. 1299). As was discussed in section 1.3.1, the turn-taking system of interaction provides

[10]Seemingly independent of Schutz, Rommetveit (1974, p. 86) takes the same perspective when he states that "intersubjectivity has to be taken for granted in order to be achieved."

the participants with a proof procedure (Sacks et al., 1974): by producing a FPP speakers make conditionally relevant a type-fitting next action and the recipient's next utterance will be understood in light of this projection. Because recipients will display their understanding of the turn to which they addresses themselves—the action it implements, the social relationship it presupposes, its point of completion, and so forth—there is an opportunity for the speaker to address any perceived misunderstandings (Schegloff, 1992).

The *repair space* as Schegloff (1992; see also Schegloff, 2000) describes it provides for the following structure. At any transition-relevance place, the recipient of some turn (T1)—I will hereafter refer to the speaker of T1 as Speaker A and the recipient of T1 as Speaker B—has an opportunity to convey that he or she did not fully hear or understand that turn. By foregoing this opportunity, by not initiating repair, Speaker B tacitly conveys a belief that he or she understood A's turn. Furthermore, because of the adjacency relationship, B's subsequent response (T2) will display how B understood T1, thereby inherently providing A with evidence of how B understood T1. At the point where B's turn reaches possible completion, the system works in the same way. By not initiating repair, A tacitly conveys that he or she understood T2. And in the subsequent turn (T3) A will display an understanding of T2.

A now has evidence of how B understood T1 and B has evidence of how A understood T2. But B has no evidence that the understanding displayed in T2 of T1 is indeed adequate. But the system inherently provides for that. By not initiating repair participants tacitly convey that there is no repairable. Given that A has evidence of how B understood T2, there has been an opportunity for A to initiate repair had that understanding been somehow inadequate. So by not initiating repair A not only conveys that he or she adequately understood T2, but also that B displayed an adequate understanding of T1. In other words, by not initiating repair, both participants orient to a shared assumption of intersubjectivity: They treat their understanding as adequate and adequately shared (see Robinson, 2014).[11] The repair space can be schematically visualized as follows:

T1	A:	Q1		
T2	B:	A1	NTRI (*T*1)	
T3	A:	Q2	NTRI (*T*2)	Repair 3d (*T*1)

[11] A could after T2 also have explicitly ratified B's understanding by providing some sequence-closing third (Schegloff, 2007; see also Heritage, 2018; Houtkoop-Steenstra, 1985; Jefferson & Schenkein, 1977; Kevoe-Feldman & Robinson, 2012; Kevoe-Feldman, 2015; Koole, 2015; Schegloff, 1992; Tsui, 1989).

T4	B:	A2	NTRI ($T3$)	Repair 3d ($T2$)	Repair 4th ($T1$)
T5	A:	Q3	NTRI ($T4$)	Repair 3d ($T3$)	Repair 4th ($T2$)
T6	B:	A3	NTRI ($T5$)	Repair 3d ($T4$)	Repair 4th ($T3$, 1)

(Schegloff, 1992, p. 1327)

As this schema shows as long as repair is not initiated participants will continue under the assumption that they understand and are understood, that is, that intersubjectivity has been maintained. Only when repair is initiated is progressivity halted and do the participants have to work at re-establishing intersubjectivity.[12] The procedural approach to intersubjectivity saves the participants from the vicious circle of having to re-confirm that T1 was adequately understood, by confirming that T2 displayed an adequate understanding of T1, that T3 displayed an adequate understanding of T2 and that T2 thus displayed an adequate understanding of T1, etc. ad infinitum. People in their daily lives are not concerned with getting definitive proof; they look for evidence that is adequate for practical purposes:

> We may just take for granted that man can understand his fellowman and his actions and that he can communicate with others because he assumes they understand his action; also, that this mutual understanding has certain limits but is sufficient for many practical purposes.(Schutz, 1962, p. 16; see also Garfinkel, 1967)

Of course, such a method of bilateral assumptions is not fool proof, but it is remarkably efficient. Rarely do speakers initiate repair after next turn, that is, in third position. Repair in fourth position, or what is sometimes called post-sequence repair (Ekberg, 2012; Wong, 2000), is even more rare (see also chapter 4 in this dissertation). This may be in part because once the structurally provided for opportunities for repair have come and gone, there has to be a good reason to go back to fix a problem. Once a sequence has been successfully completed, the assumption of intersubjectivity has been interactionally validated. If at some later point one of the participants realizes that there was a misunderstanding in some earlier sequence, fixing it would mean halting the progressivity of an ongoing, possibly completely unrelated activity (see Stivers & Robinson, 2006

[12]Of course, they still rely on the same mechanism of repair. But participants proceed under the assumption that this is indeed the case, and so some level of intersubjectivity is maintained. A true and complete breakdown of intersubjectivity, if such a thing exists, can inherently never be repaired. It would require that some or all of the participant are not even aware of the other as a person attempting to engage in coordinated action.

on the preference for progressivity in interaction). Seeing as the sequence came off unproblematically even with the misunderstanding, there is no "need" to initiate repair.[13] The other side of the story is that most problems are simply resolved by the point that a slot for repair after next turn, let alone fourth position repair, comes along (Schegloff, 1992, 2000).

This discussion shows that repair after next turn is indeed as Schegloff (1992) says in the title of his article "the last structurally provided defense of intersubjectivity in conversation" and that intersubjectivity is procedural. By recognizing that intersubjectivity is procedural in nature, it should be clear that we cannot use notions such as the "literal meaning" of an utterance as a basis for describing how participants make their actions understood and accountable. Such a concept presupposes an invariant and objective meaning of an utterance that will inherently be shared by fluent speakers of a language; it puts the onus of intersubjectivity back on socialization in a common culture. Consider instead that any turn-at-talk is produced in a larger sequence of actions and is therefore inherently "context-shaped": Participants understand their interlocutors' turns-at-talk and design their own so as to be understood in relation to not only the immediate prior turn, but the larger sequential structure in which those turns are embedded (Heritage, 1984b, p. 242). Both the process of action formation and that of action ascription thus rest on the reciprocal assumption that the action as it is formed by a particular speaker will be understood by its orientation to the recipient to whom it is addressed (Sacks et al., 1974, p. 727).

1.3.3 Interactional Linguistics

In the previous sections I have focused how CA approaches the organization of interaction. But so far I have not discussed how this pertains to language and linguistic structure. Although CA is concerned with the practices participants use to make their actions in talk-in-interaction recognizable and accountable (Levinson, 2013; Mazeland, 2013; Schegloff, 2007; Sidnell, 2013), language was initially not a topic of study in and of itself (Fox, Thompson, Ford, & Couper-Kuhlen, 2013). CA belonged first and foremost to the field of sociology, and the study of language was limited to linguistics. But it should be obvious that we cannot have one without the other; that is, language is one of the, if not the central tool with which participants communicate. To understand talk-in-interaction we cannot but study language.

[13] Of course, what is considered needed is up to the interactants, and talk is not organized by orientation to some formal logical rules and procedures.

Less obvious may be that language and interaction constitute a two-way street. Linguistics has since the Chomskyan revolution often been thought of as modular, with the study of linguistic structure and linguistic meaning—syntax, semantics, phonetics, and so forth—being wholly distinct from the study of language use—pragmatics. Going back to Humbholdt and de Saussure, Chomsky (1965) argued that we need to distinguish between *competence*, what a speaker knows of the language, and *performance*, the actual use of the language. And for Chomsky this was a one way street: competence was needed for performance, but was not influenced by it. That is, we learn language through interaction, but that interaction does not affect the structure of the language. Performance should in fact be ignored, since it is influenced by more than just competence and is open to such nuisances as repair:

> Linguistic theory is concerned primarily with an ideal speaker-listener, in a completely homogeneous speech-community, who knows its language perfectly and is unaffected by such grammatically irrelevant conditions as memory limitations, distractions, shifts of attention and interests, and error (random or characteristic) in applying his knowledge of the language in actual performance. (....)
>
> Observed use of language or hypothesized dispositions to respond, habits, and so on, may provide evidence as to the nature of this mental reality, but surely cannot constitute the actual subject matter of linguistics, if this is to be a serious discipline. (Chomsky, 1965, p. 3f.)

But if we are to take the importance of temporality and reflexivity in interaction seriously, such an approach to linguistic structure is fundamentally flawed (Auer, 2009; Hopper, 1988). It assumes that linguistic structure is largely invariant, and that once fully acquired it is fixed in the mind of the speaker. Language is in this view distinct from the world, a completely independent object that can be investigated in isolation of extra-linguistic factors. But language is part and parcel to social interaction, indeed, conversation is the natural home of language (Sacks et al., 1974): Language shapes and is shaped by conversation (Couper-Kuhlen & Selting, 2001). The structuralist view of language as a set of forms independent from the real world is as Linell (2005) puts it the result of a Written Language Bias (see also Rommetveit, 1988).

That is not to deny that speakers design their utterances through structural means; for an action to be recognizable, its design should be understandable

by the recipient. Speakers within a community will thus inherently use the same linguistic practices to generate their actions. As Sacks (1995, p. 226) argued: "A culture is an apparatus for generating recognizable actions; if the same procedures are used for generating as for detecting, that is perhaps as simple a solution to the problem of recognizability as is formulatable." But that does not mean that speakers in a community have a uniform, mental grammar. Instead they use their prior linguistic experiences to generate new utterances: "the collective sum of actual speakers' experiences (...) is (...) the basis for the creation of new utterances without determining their structures" (Auer & Pfänder, 2011, p. 4). The result is that speakers rely on what could be called a cultural grammar.[14] But this grammar is a communal grammar, meaning that it is not in the mind of the speaker, but that it is continuously being reshaped and reconfirmed by participants in interaction. Grammar is therefore never finished, but always emergent (Hopper, 1987, 2011, 2012).

The study of linguistic structure in interaction has come to be known as Interactional Linguistics (Couper-Kuhlen & Selting, 2001, see Fox et al., 2013 for an overview). Although IL is strongly associated with CA, and the points of interest and study often overlap, the two can be considered distinct. CA focuses on the social organization of interaction, whereas IL is aimed primarily at furthering our understanding of language and linguistic structure by studying how they emerge and are used in social interaction (Ford, 2010).

Consider for example the turn-taking system for conversation (Sacks et al., 1974). It provides for a conversation with limited overlap and silence, but to do so successfully participants need to be able to project when a turn will reach possible completion. Linguistic structures such as syntax and prosody are a partial solution to that problem (Ford & Thompson, 1996; Fox, 2001; Huiskes, 2010; Schegloff, 1996c; Selting, 2000; Steensig, 2001; Tanaka, 1999): by producing turns in a consistent structural manner, the end of a turn becomes projectable, which allows for smooth turn transition.[15] Additional proof for such an analysis is found in cases where participants break with the normal projectability that language provides. For example, when speakers move to produce more than one turn-constructional unit in an environment where they are only granted room for one, various linguistic tools are used to annul the

[14]It stands to reason that humans from different cultures confronted with the same interactional problems, will devise similar solutions, resulting in the appearance of a universal grammar.

[15]In addition to form, one needs to consider action. That is, a turn needs to reach syntactic, prosodic, and pragmatic completion, and these aspects are considered together as a sort of gestalt (Ford & Thompson, 1996; Selting, 2000; T. Walker, 2017).

normal, projectable transition point (Local & Kelly, 1986; Local & Walker, 2004, 2012; Schegloff, 1982; G. Walker, 2017a).

But linguistic structure is not used just to manage turn taking. Much of the work in IL investigates how actions are constructed in specific sequential positions; the action-formation problem is one of its central points of research. See for example Fox and Heinemann (2016) on how lexico-syntactic and sequential aspects can be considered together in the doing of requests; Benjamin and Walker (2013) on how recipients use high-rise fall repetitions to claim that the prior turn is in need of correction; or Couper-Kuhlen (2014) on how grammar provides cues for whether an action under construction is a proposal, request, offer, or suggestion.

In this line of inquiry it is important to consider that linguistic structures are not simply retrieved from a mental grammar and implemented in interaction under some series of pragmatic constraints, but that actions can be said to have their own positionally-sensitive grammar (Schegloff, 1996c). This notion is crucial to the analyses presented in this dissertation. Although I deal with what may seem to be readily given syntactic units—primarily declarative and interrogative sentence types—these are not considered invariant units generated by a mental grammar, nor do they come with a fixed meaning independent of their environment of use. Their design and the actions they implement are adapted to a specific sequential environment (see Deppermann, 2011a): they are for example responsive to an informing (see particularly chapters 2 and 5), or follow closure of some other activity (see chapter 3). Furthermore, my analyses reconfirm that utterances are designed to deal with the local exigencies of the interaction (see particularly chapter 6; see also Mazeland, 2013).

Treating language as an isolated system thus inherently leads to an inadequate understanding of both language and the interactional organization in which it is used, because language is never isolated from its use. Hopper (2011, p. 32f.) drives this point home by comparing language to jazz music, arguing that musicians rely on themes they learned through training or listening to other music. This metaphor is very apt indeed. For any form of musical improvisation—not just jazz, but also for example blues—musicians rely not just on the music they have heard before, but also on their knowledge of musical scales in a certain key, and what are called *licks*, fixed—what might be called grammaticalized—series of notes.

Just as musicians do not need an a priori musical grammar to generate new and unique melodies, but can instead rely on prior experience and a limited set of constructions, so too do speakers not need an a priori linguistic grammar to produce language. And just as musicians adapts their improvised music to

that of their fellow musicians, both what they play and the rhythm at which they play it, so too do speakers continuously adapt their speech production to the local context, both their interlocutors and the sequential environment. Like music, language is the product of creativity in using recognizable patterns.

Discussion

In these sections I discussed the methods of Conversation Analysis and Interactional Linguistics, and showed how they are used by participants to achieve an understanding in and of social organization, linguistic structure, and most importantly for this dissertation, action formation. Following Schutz (1962) and Schegloff (1992), I argued that intersubjectivity—that is, a world held in common—is anterior to these problems, but that it is provided for by the procedures that participants use in talk-in-interaction. Similarly, linguistic structure is not a priori given, but emerges in and through interaction (Hopper, 1987, 1988, 2012)—it shapes and is shaped by conversation (Couper-Kuhlen & Selting, 2001)—in order to deal with the various interactional problems that participants need to address in order to coordinate their actions and make talk-in-interaction possible (Mazeland, 2013).

1.4 Previous work

Researchers from various fields have long recognized that interrogative syntax is neither necessary nor adequate to implement requests for information; declarative questions have long been known to be part of the interactional repertoire of Western languages like English, Dutch, and German.[16] Given the initial assumption that syntax was supposed to have a literal force, the explanation for how these declarative questions came to be made recognizable and understood as questions was sought in their prosody: they were thought to have a rising boundary pitch. But this assumption too has been frequently shown to be inadequate (Geluykens, 1987, 1988; Beun, 1989b; Couper-Kuhlen, 2012; Seuren, Huiskes, & Koole, 2015; Strömbergsson, Edlund, & House, 2012). So if the grammatical features of a turn cannot account for its questioning status, how then can they be so understood?

In the following sections I discuss four approaches to this problem: one based in Speech Act Theory, two in Formal Semantics, and one in Conversation

[16] I use *Western* not as a synonym for *Western Germanic* but to reflect the initial focus of linguists and language philosophers on the languages of their own Western cultures.

Analysis. Note that while all four approach the problem from a different angle, they deal with roughly the same problem. It should thus perhaps come as no surprise that while the methods differ, some of the answers they provide do not. In addition to discussing how the findings of these approaches relate to the analyses presented in this dissertation, I discuss the implications of these similarities, suggesting that it could point to a possible reconciliation of the various methods.

1.4.1 Preferred interpretations

In his dissertation titled *The Recognition of Declarative Questions in Information Dialogues* Beun (1989b, p. 1f.) presents a series of studies that were aimed at understanding "how listeners in natural dialogues identify the question function of a DQ [Declarative Question] and which information is conveyed if a declarative form is used instead of an interrogative." His focus is thus both on action formation, what a speaker does by using a declarative, and action ascription, how a recipient comes to understand a declarative as a question. Although his framework is Speech Act Theory, his studies are not just philosophical or theoretical, but largely experimental, and rely on recordings of actual, albeit not completely naturally occurring, interaction.

The corpus used by Beun consists of a series of recordings of telephone conversations between the Schiphol Information Desk and people seeking information on such issues as plane arrival or departure times, flight numbers, or traveling options to the airport (Beun, 1985). The recordings are, however, experimental in nature: the callers are not actual service seekers, but participants in a study. The service provider is trained in the job though, making the interaction at least partly natural. From these conversations, Beun selected all Declarative Questions according to the following definition (Beun, 1989b, p. 23f.):

(3) An Utterance U is a declarative question if:
   a. The sentence type of the sentence expressed by U is declarative (or if the sentence is elliptical the sentence type is at least non-interrogative and non-imperative).
   b. The utterance U, uttered by S [Speaker], is about a topic on which S believes that H [Hearer] is the expert.
   c. S believes that S and H mutually believe that H is the expert on the topic.

From the Declarative Questions that were collected according to this definition, cases that had what were considered clear question markers were removed: cases for example with a rising boundary pitch; cases with turn-final particles such as *hè*, and *toch* (see Enfield, Brown, & de Ruiter, 2012; Foolen, 1994); and cases where the speaker in the design of the question conveyed who was considered expert through formulations such as *you said*. The final corpus was used in a series of experiments, aimed at finding out what it was in their turn design that made these utterances understood as questions.

Findings

In the first experiment (see also Beun, 1989a) the questions were cut from the recording and presented to participants who had to decide whether it was a question or not, or whether it was an answer or not. This experiment suggested that various aspects of turn design, such as specific particles or self-repair, could help make an utterance understood as a question. These features were removed from the utterances, and used in a second study where participants again had to decide whether or not the utterance was a question, or whether or not it was an answer. The findings suggest that conjunctions like *en* ('and') and *dus* ('so'), as well as turn-initial *oh* help make an utterance understandable as a question and not an answer.

By removing the potential question features that were uncovered in the first two experiments, certain aspects of the prosody were inherently also cut out. In order to compensate for this shortcoming, a follow-up study was done in which the questions were presented in written form (see also Beun, 1990b). In this case particles like *toch* were included. The findings were again the same: *en*, *dus*, and *oh*, as well as *toch* significantly contributed to making an utterance understood by the participants as a question.

The explanation Beun gives is two-fold. Particles like *en* and *dus* conjoin two utterances, but the participants knew that these particles had to be turn-initial. That is, they were not used by one speaker to link two parts of one turn together, for example two parts of an answer, but they were used to show how the turn relates to the prior talk. A particle like *dus* formulates an inference from the prior talk by the other speaker, and so according to Beun indicates that the interlocutor is the expert on the topic, and hence that the turn is a question, not an answer (see condition (b) of his definition). Particles like *oh* and *toch* on the other hand signal surprise or conflicting beliefs, and so turns that contain these particles are understood as requests for clarification.[17]

[17]Chapter 4 of this dissertation presents a study of *oh*-prefaced declaratives, showing that

In addition to investigating the linguistic factors that contributed to participants' understanding of declarative questions as questions, Beun studied how context could contribute (see also Beun, 1990a). In order to explore this issue, he selected eighteen dialogues of which he presented participants with two written versions: the original and one with a slightly modified sequential context. Participants then had to say whether they preferred a declarative or interrogative question given the context, and how certain they thought the speakers who asked the questions were. While Beun found a strong relation between perceived knowledgeability and syntactic format, this was not one-to-one. He found that declaratives are preferred when the questioned information is given in the context, but that with for example negative interrogatives this no longer applies: a negative declarative is preferred over a negative interrogative even if the speaker is not perceived to have strong beliefs on the addressed issue.

Based on these experimental findings, Beun proposes (see also Beun, 1994) that the function of an utterance as either an assertion or a question depends on what he calls the *function structure* which consists of various turn design features of the utterance: sentence type, particles, and prosody.[18] According to Beun, the function structure is a function that applies to propositions and which generates a communicative act. Any combination of feature values will generate a function structure with a preferred interpretation. If on the basis of the context this preferred interpretation is ruled out, the recipient will understand the utterance to be doing the less preferred action. For example, if a speaker produces an utterance with declarative syntax and no linguistic question features, the preferred interpretation will be that of an assertion. If, however, it can be proved in the context that the speaker does not intend to let the hearer know something, the utterance will be understood as a question.[19]

Discussion

Beun's approach to the puzzle of declarative questions is interesting from an interactional perspective, because he works with recordings of actual talk-in-interaction. These may be experimental, but as recent discussions in CA

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they are indeed used as questions, in the sense that they make confirmation relevant. However, I argue that they are used to do now-understanding.

[18]For prosody he only considers the boundary pitch of an utterance (see G. Walker, 2017a).

[19]The list of interpretations is not limited to two possibilities. If an utterance can subsequently be shown to not be a question, the recipient will move on to the following possible interpretation on the list.

have suggested, that does not mean the data is unnatural (de Ruiter & Albert, 2017; Kendrick, 2017, see also Stivers, 2015). Whereas Schegloff (1988b) has argued that SAT is inherently irreconcilable with CA, because SAT takes single, context-free utterances as its unit of analysis, Beun also considers the context, and actually makes it a specific issue of investigation. His findings about the role of turn-initial lexical and non-lexical items such as *dus*, *en* and *oh* in the design Declarative Questions have indeed been confirmed in recent work (Seuren et al., 2015).

Having people from outside the interaction judge the interactional function is also not necessarily problematic. Beun does not offer the findings based on their action ascriptions as evidence of what an action is doing for the participants in the interaction, but as an initial step to explore what might be the relevant linguistic factors for making an utterance into a question, and what is achieved with those questions. There are however some important criticisms to make.

One crucial problem is that participants in the experiments had to choose whether an utterance was or was not a question, and whether an utterance was or was not answer. This does ignore the sequential import for participants' understanding of interaction (Schegloff, 1988a, 1988b, 1996b, see also Sacks et al., 1974; Schegloff & Sacks, 1973). When confronted with an utterance, any recipient will be aware of what came before that utterance. If the recipient has just asked a question in the turn before the speaker's turn, the issue of whether the speaker's turn is a question or an answer will not arise. It will be understood as responding to that question.[20] The manner by which the participants in the experiment came to their action ascription is thus fundamentally different from how participants in talk-in-interaction come to their action ascriptions.

It is also hard to see how his conclusions can be reconciled with CA. Beun (1989a, p. 125) suggests that CA and SAT are not competing approaches but should be supplementary. But the way he formalizes action formation and ascription is fundamentally different from how CA views this problem. For one, it presupposes that an utterance can only be used to do one action, but utterances can do a multitude of things (Enfield, 2013; Levinson, 2013; Schegloff, 1988b; Sidnell & Enfield, 2014; Sidnell, 2017a). Second, the broad range of linguistic and embodied practices that people use to design their actions would mean there is an exponentially larger combination of feature values and thus function structures for which speakers would need to remember their

[20]There is always the option that the speaker is initiating repair on the recipient's preceding turn (Benjamin, 2013; Dingemanse et al., 2015; Schegloff, Jefferson, & Sacks, 1977), but that is a very different distinction than the one proposed by Beun.

preferred interpretation as well as their less preferred interpretations and their respective orders. Third, as Schegloff (2007) points out in his definition of the action-formation problem, the size of the class of actions is unknown, and seeing that participants can perform such actions as *confirming allusions* (Schegloff, 1996a) we can assume it is a pretty large set.

That is not to say that Beun's approach is completely distinct from anything we find in CA. Recent studies have suggested that recipients use the various practices with which speakers design their utterances to infer what type of response is being projected (e.g., Sidnell & Enfield, 2014; Sidnell, 2017a, see also chapter 5 of this dissertation). So instead of going through a list of preferred interpretations, recipients can immediately infer what a speaker is doing; Enfield (2013) calls such a combination of practices that implements a very specific action a *praction*. The list of possible interpretations is also very limited, because in a certain sequential context, there is only a limited number of moves that speakers can make that would be considered coherent; their utterance will be understood in light of the prior talk (Schegloff & Sacks, 1973; Sacks et al., 1974).

The problem it seems is the assumption underlying the methodology. By viewing language through the lens of SAT, Beun treats action ascription as a matter of ascribing mental states—intentions—and attempts to capture that process in a formal system. As he says himself, he proposes "an extended version of the literal force hypothesis" (Beun, 1989b, p. 118), but only for cases where the context supports that literal force—that is, the preferred interpretation. But as I discussed in section 1.2, the LFH is not well-suited to deal with actual talk-in-interaction (Levinson, 1983; Schegloff, 1988b). Formalization is a logical approach if one wants to teach a computer how to interact with people, but it does not consider how human participants achieve a local understanding of their actions. It is thus hard to see how, other than his observations about turn design, Beun's findings could be integrated into a CA method.

1.4.2 Semantics of sentence types

In line with Gazdar's (1981) idea of dropping the LFH, we find a series of approaches in formal semantics that investigate the relation between linguistic form, semantic meaning, and pragmatic function. A few of these approaches deal specifically with the distinction between declaratives and interrogatives, as well as action formation and ascription, albeit indirectly: Gunlogson (2001, 2008) proposes an analysis that relies on a commitment-based discourse, and Farkas and Roelofsen (2017) propose an analysis grounded in Inquisitive Se-

mantics (Ciardelli et al., 2013).

Although the proposal by Farkas and Roelofsen (2017) has broader descriptive and explanatory adequacy—it accounts for a broader range of phenomena and generally gives more accurate predictions (see Chomsky, 1965)—I will discuss both approaches. Partly because Farkas and Roelofsen (2017) rely on the commitment-based discourse proposed by Gunlogson (2001), but also because in a few cases Farkas and Roelofsen's proposal makes predictions that Gunlogson correctly rules out.

While these approaches may strike conversation analysts as deeply flawed for their methodological assumptions (see the discussion in section 1.4.2 below), I discuss these theories for two reasons. First, they address research questions very similar to the ones addressed in this dissertation, and in a way they could be said to simplify the issue of action formation and ascription: a semantic interpretation should facilitate any pragmatic interpretation. Second, discussing these theories allows for a comparison with a CA approach that, as should become clear in section 1.4.3, has surprising similarities considering these methodological differences. I argue in fact that the ideas discussed here could serve to further develop an interactional grammar.

I first discuss the proposals by Gunlogson (2001, 2008) and by Farkas and Roelofsen (2017), and then discuss how they fare when applied to conversational data. In closing I argue that these approaches could be seen as possible grammars in the spirit of Schegloff's (1996c) proposal for multiple positionally-sensitive grammars.

Commitment-based discourse

In her dissertation, Gunlogson (2001) addresses the following, by now familiar, issue. Given that the same declarative sentence can be used both to make assertions and ask questions, what semantics do these sentences need if we cannot assume a shared semantics that is simply resolved differently in the context? That is, what are the conventional discourse effects, or what is the force (Frege, 1918/1956), that these sentences have? Gunlogson introduces this problem using the following minimal pair, (4) having a final rising pitch, and (5) having a final falling:

(4) It is raining?

(5) It is raining.

Gunlogson states that while (4) is the more natural question due to its rising boundary pitch, pitch alone cannot account for its questioning function, since (5) can also be used to question. An analysis of this minimal pair should therefore account for why (4) is the more natural question, without excluding (5) as a potential question. The conventional discourse effects of the respective sentences thus cannot include pragmatics, but should make certain pragmatic interpretations more straightforward.

The import of Gunlogson's analysis is thus primarily for the formation side of the action-formation problem that this dissertation is concerned with: what the circumstances are in which speakers (can) use declarative syntax with either rising or falling boundary pitch to make relevant confirmation, and how such a choice affects the discourse context. But inherently she also deals with action ascription: how recipients respond if one format is chosen instead of another in a specific context.

Gunlogson's account for how these two sentences differ relies on her approach to the discourse context of the interaction. Following Stalnaker (1978), Gunlogson (2001, p. 43) takes the discourse context to be the ordered pair of a set of possible worlds in which the beliefs of the participants are true—the commitment sets (cs) of the participants:

(6) Let a discourse context $C_{\{A,B\}}$ be $< cs_A, cs_B >$ where:
A and B are discourse participants
   a. cs_A of $C_{\{A,B\}}$ = {w ∈ W: the propositions representing A's public beliefs are all true of w}
   b. cs_B of $C_{\{A,B\}}$ = {w ∈ W: the propositions representing B's public beliefs are all true of w}

While the definition makes reference to public beliefs, the discourse context is not limited to the propositional content of contributions made in the interaction. Gunlogson assumes a context in which participants rely on a far broader set mutual background assumptions, very similar to how Clark (1996) defines the common ground (see section 1.3.2), but that is not pertinent to her discussion.

The solution Gunlogson (2001, p. 36) derives from this definition is, however, somewhat unsatisfactory. She argues that "rising declaratives commit the Addressee to the proposition expressed, whereas falling declaratives commit the Speaker." This means that by producing a sentence like in (4), the Speaker

adds the propositional content, $\mathcal{P}$, of (5) to cs_{Addr}. By producing a sentence like (5) on the other hand, the Speakers adds its propositional content to cs_{Spkr} (Gunlogson, 2001, p. 52).

Clearly an issue is how a speaker can commit an addressee to some proposition, and it is an issue Gunlogson (2001) leaves unresolved. In a more recent paper, Gunlogson (2008) takes a significantly different approach, while limiting her scope to what she calls Initiating Declarative Questions, that is, declarative questions that are not directly relating to prior talk. She still relies on the notion of commitment sets (see Hamblin, 1971), but she adds the concept of *source sets* (ss). A participant can, but need not be, a source for a proposition. This means that for any proposition added to a commitment set, a speaker may also add that proposition to his or her source set.

This extension of the model allows for a very simple distinction between the prototypical statement[21] and the prototypical question. Statements are normally done with declaratives; with a declarative the speakers adds the proposition φ to both his or her commitment set, cs_{Spkr}, and source set, ss_{Spkr}. Questions on the other hand are normally done with polar interrogatives; with a polar interrogative the speaker makes no changes to either set, but signals a dependency with respect to either φ or $\neg\varphi$. After an answer has been provided, the addressee adds either φ or $\neg\varphi$ to both cs_{Addr} and ss_{Addr}, and by acknowledging the answer the speaker will thus add either φ or $\neg\varphi$ to cs_{Spkr} but not to ss_{Spkr}.

This definition obviously leads to a new problem: there is no inherent difference between declaratives that are used as statements and declaratives that are used as questions. In both cases the speakers adds φ to both cs_{Spkr} and ss_{Spkr}. In order to resolve this Gunlogson (2008, p. 125) introduces the notions of *implicit source* and *implicit authority*:

(7) An agent α is an *implicit source* for φ iff:
   a. α is not committed to φ; and
   b. It is inferable in the discourse context that if α commits to φ, α will be a source for φ.

(8) An agent α is *implicitly authoritative* with respect to φ iff α is an implicit source for both φ and $\neg\varphi$.

This definition means that when neither participant is yet committed to either φ or $\neg\varphi$, but it is clear from the context which participant is going to be

[21] Gunlogson (2008, fn. 15) uses *statement* instead of *assertion*, as the latter is frequently used in semantics to refer to joint commitments, not individual commitments.

or would be the source for φ or $\neg\varphi$, that person—here called α—is implicitly authoritative.

Note that this definition does not yet distinguish between declarative statements and declarative questions; in fact it does not even distinguish between declaratives and interrogatives: Using a polar interrogative treats the addressee as implicitly authoritative. For declarative questions specifically, we need an additional criterion: *contingent commitment* (Gunlogson, 2008, p. 128). A declarative will be understood to be doing questioning if the speaker's commitment is contingent on subsequent confirmation by the more authoritative addressee:

(9) A discourse move μ committing an agent α to φ is *contingent* upon ratification by an agent β, $\alpha \neq \beta$, if:
   a. β is implicitly authoritative with respect to φ at the time of μ
   b. It is inferable in the discourse context that $\alpha's$ commitment to φ will be withdrawn unless the discourse move immediately succeeding μ has the effect of committing β to φ as a source

An interesting effect of this definition is that rising and falling declaratives no longer differ from one another: they have the same semantic interpretation and the same semantic content. In her dissertation Gunlogson (2001) aimed for a semantics that treated rising declaratives as more similar to polar interrogatives than to falling declaratives. Now the semantics of rising and falling declaratives are the same, whereas that of polar interrogatives is very different. That is not to say that rising and falling declaratives are identical. There are discourse contexts where a falling declarative would be infelicitous while a rising would be acceptable; falling declaratives are only allowed in a subset of the contexts that allow rising declaratives, and those can in turn be used only in a subset of the contexts that allow polar interrogatives.

Rising intonation in this proposal explicitly marks the utterance as contingent, meaning that by using a rise the speaker conveys to the addressee that his or her commitment to φ depends on subsequent ratification of that commitment. Pitch only has a facilitating role, not a semantic one. The function of a declarative as doing questioning thus depends on the participants' understanding of the context. A falling declarative can only be used as a question when it is clear that the recipient has implicit authority, a rising declarative on the other hand requires less strict conditions, because it facilitates the understanding of the action as a contingent one.

To sum up: Gunlogson (2001, 2008) proposes that with declaratives the speakers adds the proposition to his commitment set and his source set. De-

pending on the context, either the speaker or the addressee will be mutually understood to have implicit authority on the issue raised. If the speaker has authority, the declarative will be understood as a statement. If on the other hand the addressee has implicit authority and the speaker's commitment is understood to be dependent on the addressee's ratification, the declarative will be understood as a question. A rising intonation facilitates this understanding, which means that rising declaratives can be used as questions in more ambiguous contexts in which it need not be clear who has implicit authority.

Inquisitive Semantics

Farkas and Roelofsen (2017) are like Gunlogson (2001, 2008) interested in how different grammatical formats can be used to ask questions. The focus of their analysis is thus also on action formation; action ascription is dealt with only tangentially. Farkas and Roelofsen (2017) take sentence types to consist of both syntax and boundary pitch. The explanatory scope of their proposal is however far broader than that of Gunlogson (2001, 2008): The analysis is not focused on one specific grammatical format, but on declaratives, polar interrogatives, and tag interrogatives, and each with rising and falling intonation. An additional distinction is that where Gunlogson (2008) requires each sentence type to have a different convention of use, Farkas and Roelofsen (2017) propose that all sentence types have the same basic convention of use, but can have an additional convention of use depending on the specific sentence type: some forms are more optimal than other in their *economy of form* and the degree to which they insure *communicative success*. I provide a somewhat simplified overview of their proposal in this section.

Farkas and Roelofsen (2017) focus on two levels of analysis: (i) the semantic interpretation, which takes the meaning and composition of the words of an utterance and gives the semantic content; and (ii) the convention of use, which takes the semantic content of an utterance and gives its conventional discourse effects. While they do also discuss some pragmatic discourse effects, those are not the focus of the paper.

For the semantic interpretation of an utterance, Farkas and Roelofsen (2017, p. 257ff.) assume that there are two kinds of *clause type markers*: DEC/INT, which is given by the syntax of a clause; and CLOSED/OPEN, which is given by the boundary pitch, CLOSED being final falling pitch and OPEN final rising. A clause that is either INT, OPEN, or both is inquisitive, whereas a clause that is both DEC and CLOSED is informative. This means that only falling declaratives have an informative semantics, while rising declaratives, tag interrogatives, and

polar interrogatives have an inquisitive semantics.

This does not mean that all inquisitive sentence types are equivalent: some are optimal, or unmarked, whereas others are marked. Since there is only one type of informative sentence type, the falling declarative, it is inherently an optimal form. For inquisitive sentence types, however, there are five forms: rising and falling polar interrogatives, rising and falling tag interrogatives, and rising declaratives. Given the condition of *economy of form*, tag interrogatives are more marked than polar interrogatives, because they have a more complex form. Rising declaratives are also more marked than polar interrogatives, because the latter are better at insuring *communicative success*: they provide the addressee with two cues that they are inquisitive, while rising declaratives have only one.[22] This results in the following classification (Farkas & Roelofsen, 2017, p. 265):

(10) *Markedness classification*
   a. Optimal, unmarked forms:
      - falling declaratives
      - polar interrogatives
   b. Marked forms:
      - rising declaratives
      - tag interrogatives

For the discourse effects of an utterance, Farkas and Roelofsen (2017, p. 265ff.) propose that there is one basic convention of use that applies to all sentence types. But marked sentence types get an additional, special effect that is connected to the specific sentence type used. For this special effect, they introduce the concept of *evidence*, whose value depends on the sentence type: [zero, low, moderate, high].

The basic conventional discourse effect is taken from inquisitive semantics (Ciardelli et al., 2013). Unlike traditional semantic approaches that follow Stalnaker (1978), inquisitive semantics treat a proposition $\mathcal{P}$ of a sentence φ not as a set of possible worlds, but as a set of *information states* that consist of an informative and inquisitive content that support the sentence and that are modeled as a set of possible worlds. By producing a sentence φ, a speaker steers

[22]Since falling polar interrogatives and rising declaratives seem equivalent in this sense—both provide only one cue—one would expect that both are more marked than rising polar interrogatives. Farkas and Roelofsen (2017) skip over this issue: They provide a clear argument why rising polar interrogatives are less marked than rising declaratives, but say nothing on rising declaratives vis-a-vis falling polar interrogatives. Most likely syntax is assumed to take priority over prosody.

the conversation towards a context in which the expressed state s is supported, that is, where the participants agree that the actual world, w_a, is a member of s. Secondly, the speaker commits him-/herself to the claim that w_a is a member of some element in $[\![\varphi]\!]$, the proposition expressed by φ (Farkas & Roelofsen, 2017, p. 265f.):

(11) **Basic convention of use**
If a discourse participant x utters a declarative or interrogative sentence φ, the discourse context is affected as follows:
(a) The proposition expressed by φ, $[\![\varphi]\!]$, is added to the **table**
(b) The informative content of φ, $\bigcup[\![\varphi]\!]$, is added to **commitments**(x).

By uttering a falling declarative sentence the speaker adds α to his or her commitment set and puts $\{\alpha\}^{\downarrow}$, the proposition expressed by the sentence, on the table, thereby steering the conversation to a context where both participants mutually agree that w_a is in α. Since the speaker is already committed to this state, the recipient simply needs to provide some form of acknowledgment, thereby also adding α to his or her commitment set.

By uttering a polar interrogative the speaker also commits to the informative content of the proposition expressed by that utterance. But as the sentence is a polar interrogative, that proposition takes a different form: $\{\alpha, \bar{\alpha}\}^{\downarrow}$. The informative content in this case is equal to all possible worlds, W, so the speaker simply commits to a state in which w_a is part of W, which is trivially informative. The speaker also puts the proposition expressed by that utterance on the table, steering the conversation toward a context where both participants agree that w_a is either part of α or $\bar{\alpha}$. The speaker is thus neutral with respect to which is true, and the addressee has to provide a response that helps settle this issue.

The marked sentence types have the same basic convention of use. This means that the marked inquisitive sentence types all express the proposition $\{\alpha, \bar{\alpha}\}^{\downarrow}$. By producing an utterance that has either of those marked sentence types the speaker thus steers the conversation toward a context where w_a is part of either α or $\bar{\alpha}$ and conveys the trivial information that w_a is contained in W.

In addition, there is a special effect whereby the speaker adds the *evidence possibility* for α to his or her evidence list **evidence**(x). For a rising declarative, this takes the form of $\langle\alpha, [\text{zero, low}]\rangle$, for a rising tag interrogative it is $\langle\alpha, [\text{low, moderate}]\rangle$ and for a falling tag interrogative it is $\langle\alpha, [\text{high}]\rangle$. Simply put, the speaker shows he or she has some evidence for the highlighted possibility, α, and the level of evidence depends on the sentence type. Rising

declaratives are used when the speaker has little to no evidence, rising tag interrogatives when the speaker has some or a lot of evidence, and falling tag interrogatives when the speaker has a lot of evidence.

Farkas and Roelofsen (2017) take this approach because it has some advantages in real-life discourse. Consider a teacher using a rising declarative to implement an echo question, or reversed polarity question (Koshik, 2002, 2005), to show to a student that the provided answer was not correct. In the approach proposed by Gunlogson (2008) the teacher would be making a contingent commitment to the expressed proposition. So not only is the student considered to have authority, but the teacher would also be committing to the wrong answer should the student confirm the wrong answer that was formulated in the echo question.[23] By taking a rising declarative as an inquisitive sentence type, this problem is averted. The teacher simply highlights the answer provided by the student, and adds $\langle \alpha, [\text{zero}] \rangle$ to his or her evidence list. The student can then infer that his or her answer was wrong, since the teacher would otherwise be asking a superfluous question.

To sum up: Farkas and Roelofsen (2017) propose that a sentence type can be informative or inquisitive, and that it can be marked or unmarked. All sentence types receive the same basic conventional discourse effect in which the speaker conveys the information expressed by the proposition, and steers the conversation towards a context in which both participants are committed to a state that supports the expressed proposition. Marked sentence type have an additional discourse effect that models that the speaker also has evidence for the highlighted proposition, or sentence radical, ranging from zero to high.

Discussion

Neither the proposal by Gunlogson (2001, 2008) nor the one by Farkas and Roelofsen (2017) deal with action formation and ascription as these are understood in CA. Nevertheless, both methods are aimed at modeling the semantics of linguistic structure in a way that supports the various pragmatic functions that these structures are used for. Given that structures like declaratives or rising boundary pitch do not have a one-to-one correspondence to certain actions, they attempt to understand what role these structures do play. I first show how these proposals could be applied, arguing that in their current state they fall short of providing a exhaustive explanation. In the next section, I then discuss

[23] This analysis is actually incorrect. The teacher's echo question is not an initiating declarative question and so Gunlogson's analysis does not apply. This does show that her approach is rather limited.

how these methods could be combined with CA to further our understanding of grammar in interaction.

An important starting point of both approaches is that they take syntax and prosody to make distinct contributions to the meaning of an utterance and that this meaning does not correspond one-to-one to certain actions. There are forms and there are actions, and while certain forms are frequently used to implement certain actions, that does not mean those forms do those actions. Any association between form and function is a result of certain underlying factors. So any form can be used for any action, but due to their semantic interpretation or conventional discourse effects, some forms may be more natural for some actions than for others.

Take for example the following excerpt:

(12) [MidWest 2.4] (Heritage, 2012a, p. 8)

1	DOC:	Are you married?
2		(.)
3	PAT:	No.
4		(.)
5	DOC:	You're divorced (°cur[rently,°)
6	PAT:	[Mmhm,

The physician's turn in line 1 is understood by the patient as a polar question, which she reveals by disconfirming in line 3. But why is it understood as a question? One account is of course that the physician uses a polar interrogative. But without the LFH that is merely an observation, not an explanation. What makes the physician use a polar interrogative to make his utterance accountable as a question, and as this particular question at this point in the interaction? And consequently what changes that in line 5 a declarative is the format chosen by the physician?

Gunlogson (2008) and Farkas and Roelofsen (2017) provide different explanations. For the polar interrogative Gunlogson (2008) would argue that by using a polar interrogative the physician conveys that he cannot be the source for this information and thus that the patient has to be the source, which means that he treats the patient as implicitly authoritative with regard to her marital status. Under the approach by Farkas and Roelofsen (2017) the physician puts the proposition expressed by the utterance on the table. Since it is a polar interrogative, this proposition has an inquisitive content of two alternatives which requires a response from the patient in which she commits to either being married or not.

The subsequent declarative does not fall under Gunlogson's (2008) framework as it is not an initiating declarative question. Farkas and Roelofsen (2017) on the other hand have no such limitation. Although the transcript is not entirely clear, it seems to be a rising declarative, which means that it functions as a question for the same reason the polar interrogative did. But it has the additional effect that the physician conveys that he has weak evidence for the patient being divorced. Indeed, the patient has only said she is not married, which means she could simply never have married or she could be a widow. So the rising declarative is the format that we would expect based on the proposal by Farkas and Roelofsen (2017) and indeed their proposal explains why the physician would choose a rising declarative here and not say a polar interrogative—that would suggest he is completely neutral—or a tag interrogative—the physician should not just assume that the patient is divorced simply because she is not married.

But an obvious shortcoming of both proposals, as well as of course of similar proposals in semantics, is that they do not ground their analysis in recordings of actual conversation. It is a point that is particularly noteworthy since Gunlogson (2001) and Farkas and Roelofsen (2017) suggest their approaches are empirical. While they use data *from the wild*, these data are not recorded and therefore cannot be subjected to re-examination nor to critical re-analysis. In effect the data are no longer the brief burst of talk produced in everyday life, but they consist of the written record of that burst of speech and the subjective judgments of the researchers about which alternatives would or would not have been felicitous in a given context. But such an approach to a phenomenon like language use is fundamentally problematic. As was pointed out by Sacks, by relying on their own judgments, the researchers inherently limit their potential understanding of the phenomenon they study:

> If a researcher uses hypotheticalized or hypotheticalized-typicalized versions of the world, then, however rich his imagination is, he is constrained by reference to what an audience, an audience of professionals, can accept as reasonable. That is to say, theorizing in that fashion has as one boundary on it that only those things can be offered which pass under some notion of believability. (Sacks, 1995, volume II, p. 419)

Actions are not a clearly defined set but, as Schegloff (2007) points out, they constitute a class of unknown size. And so we cannot limit our study to the language we ourselves, our friends, colleagues, and relatives produce and

judge to be adequate. To quote Sacks (1995, volume II, p. 420) again: "From close looking at the world you can find things that we couldn't, by imagination, assert were there." Consider for example such a phenomenon that one would only find by taking a close look at actual interaction: a topic proffer (Schegloff, 2007). Topic proffers are recurrently implemented with what would could be categorized as declarative questions. Take the following example:

(13) Stolen, 2:18-25 (Schegloff, 2007, p. 176)

```
1   Mar:     But Ile:ne probably (0.8) is either at the
2            airport er waiting tuh hear fr'm eess
3            (0.7)
4   Ton:     O:kay.
5   Mar: ->  .hhhh So: yer ba:ck.
6   Ton: ->  Yah.
7            (1.0)
8   Mar: ->  I see. So you'll- you'll hear fr'm im,
```

After closing an arrangement-making sequence in lines 1–4, Marsha proffers a new topic in line 5. Her utterance has declarative word order, and is understood by Tony as making relevant confirmation. It is for all intents and purposes a question for these participants. Initially it seems unproblematic for the analysis proposed by Gunlogson (2008): the question is discourse-initial, but it should be clear for the participants involved that Marsha's commitment about Tony's whereabouts is dependent on Tony's confirmation, a contingency that could be said to be marked with turn-initial *so*. In other words, Tony is implicitly authoritative and Marsha asks a contingent question.

But that would skip over an important feature. They have just talked about their son moving back to Tony, as he was staying with Marsha while Tony was away. In other words, Marsha's commitment cannot possibly be dependent on Tony's subsequent ratification; she can be understood to already know that Tony is back, and so her utterance should in no way be considered questioning.

An argument could be made either (a) that Marsha's utterance is in some way not discourse-initial or is directly related to prior talk, or (b) that it is not doing questioning and so falls outside the scope of Gunlogson's proposal. But if Marsha's turn is not discourse-initial, what is considered discourse-initial becomes undefined and open to ad-hoc stipulations. This would clearly be undesirable in any semantic theory, because then anything goes. Similarly, from the data we have to understand Marsha's turn as doing questioning: Tony confirms and there is no evidence that contradicts such an analysis.

So claiming that Marsha is not doing questioning would either also be an ad hoc stipulation, or would require us to ignore the actual participants'

understanding of their own actions. But if our linguistic theory is not about what language does and means for the people who use it, then we have no actual theory of language. So at the very least Gunlogson's theory needs refinement.

The example does fit the proposal by Farkas and Roelofsen (2017): since Marsha can be taken to know that Tony is back, a falling declarative is precisely what we would expect. Alternative formats like a rising declarative or tag interrogative would suggest that she has evidence, but is not yet sure. So this topic proffer seems fine.

But consider a different type of action, again one that is not discussed by either Gunlogson (2001, 2008) or Farkas and Roelofsen (2017): second assessments that are implemented with a tag interrogative. In the following example two friends, Vera and Jenny, are talking on the phone. Vera's son, daughter-in-law, and grandchildren came to visit, but because Vera was not home, they stayed at Jenny's first. The excerpt is taken from a stretch of talk in which they are talking about one of the grandchildren. My focus is on line 35.

(14) [Rahman:14:1–2] (G. Raymond & Heritage, 2006, p. 697)

33	Ver:	f→	=[Mindju 'eez good] Jenny, 'e wz mischeevious
34		f→	but w-'e wz good.
35	Jen:	g→	Oo 'e wz beautiful here [wuz↑n't'ee.=
36	Ver:		[↓Yes.

Vera in line 33–34 gives a positive assessment of her grandchild, to which Jenny responds with a similarly positive assessment. The design of her turn, however, is not what we would expect under the proposal by Farkas and Roelofsen (2017). Jenny talks about how the child behaved at her place; she does not just have evidence for that, in this conversation she is the only one who can possibly know how Vera's grandchild behaved at her place. While her utterance is not exactly neutral, we would have to argue that she is not committing to whether or not the child was beautiful, but that she leaves open both options and relies on Vera, who was not even there, to commit either way.

In other words, under the proposal by Farkas and Roelofsen (2017) Jenny's turn is not informative, it is inquisitive with a strong bias. But that is not in line with the actual context the participants are in. Vera is in no position to resolve the issue of whether or not her grandchild was beautiful, yet we would have to argue that she resolves the issue in line 36. As with the prior case, the only way to address this incongruence is by stipulating that in this particular case Jenny behaves as if she is not fully knowledgeable and relies on Vera to

confirm, as they are talking about Vera's grandchildren. But such stipulations mean anything goes, because we can always stipulate that in some discourse context for those participants it is not about actual evidence, but about how they position themselves. So this example shows that Farkas and Roelofson's analysis also requires refinement if it is to account for the meaning of linguistic structures.

A convergence of methods

From a CA standpoint both approaches are inherently problematic. They rely on a distinction between three levels of analysis: (1) the meaning of the words and the way they are put together, their *semantic content*; (2) the meaning of the sentence types, their *conventional discourse effects*; and (3) the intentions of the speaker, their *pragmatic discourse effects*. In other words, any sentence will have a fixed meaning that may get interpreted differently in different situations. But participants in social interaction are concerned with action first, not the meaning of an utterance (Heritage, 1984b, p. 139). Moreover, literal meaning as it would have to be assumed for these approaches is already context-bound, so no sentence will ever have a context-free meaning (Rommetveit, 1988). The fact that both Gunlogson (2001, 2008) and Farkas and Roelofsen (2017) include the boundary pitch in their sentence types, only exacerbates those issues (see T. Walker, 2014).[24]

More importantly, they assume that linguistic structure and meaning take primacy over action. The meaning that is ascribed to the linguistic structures is independent from the actions that those structures are used for. Farkas and Roelofsen (2017) even propose an analysis where structures have universal meanings, meaning both within the same language as well as cross-linguistically. But since language is used to implement action, so is its structure. This is why Schegloff (1996c, p. 110) argues that "one does not have "a grammar" for sentences (...) one has a range of grammatical resources," and he goes on to note that:

> Rather than starting with propositional forms and overlaying action operators, our primary characterizations need to capture the action(s) embodied in a burst of language. (...) There is every reason to suspect that grammar for talk implementing action is quite

[24]Note though that a formal semantic approach that desires cross-linguistic explanatory adequacy needs to include more than syntax in sentence type, as many of the world's languages do not distinguish between interrogatives and declaratives morphosyntactically, but may do so prosodically (Dryer, 2013).

> different from grammar for talk expressing propositions. That we may not yet have much of a clue as to what such grammar(s) look(s) like does not change the suspicion, but may encourage a sort of reaching that promotes the possibility of grammars rather than *a* grammar. (Schegloff, 1996c, p. 113)

We should thus not assume one underlying grammar and build a semantic analysis on it, and we should definitely not look for such a grammar to have cross-linguistic implications. Instead we should consider that "language is first and foremost a tool for [implementing actions in] interaction (Couper-Kuhlen & Selting, 2001); language is not a discrete dimension of human cognition but is used in service of the originally embodied actions that it has come to augment and refine (see Tomasello, 2003, 2008). As conversation is "the natural home of speech" (Sacks et al., 1974, fn. 1), we would expect that the design of language is shaped both by and for the actions and functions that participants concern themselves with in conversation (see also Couper-Kuhlen & Selting, 2001; Ogden, 2006).

That is not to say the approach used by Gunlogson (2001, 2008) and Farkas and Roelofsen (2017) is misguided; the explanatory adequacy of their models, even if they deal with limited and constructed evidence, shows that they could very well have merit. But instead of interpreting them as universal semantic theories, we should consider their value as particular grammars for particular sets of actions.

In fact, Gunlogson (2008) could be said to be developing just that. Her interest is in Initiating Declarative Questions; that is, questions that are implemented in a specific position in the overall structural organization of interaction. She is thus developing a grammar for specific actions—questions—in a specific sequential position. Indeed, her analysis relies on a crude version of the adjacency pair (Gunlogson, 2008, p. 128):

(15) A discourse move μ by an agent α is *contingent* upon a discourse condition δ if:
   a. δ does not obtain at the time of μ
   b. It is inferable in the discourse context that the update effected by μ is to be retained only if δ obtains the discourse move immediately succeeding μ

The effect of any contingent discourse move, be it a declarative question or some other type of action, depends for its success on affiliation by another

participant. These discourse moves thus in a way project a next move by another participant, that is, such contingent discourse moves are FPPs. And while the criterion that such a next move has to be produced immediately is too strong—various actions can be inserted after an FPP—this is also recognized by Gunlogson (2008, fn. 18), who suggests that that demand can be relaxed. There is thus a clear convergence of methods here, and CA scholars would do well not to dismiss these findings out of hand, just because they are not grounded in strict CA principles.

Similarly, CA can learn a lot from the proposal by Farkas and Roelofsen (2017). The primary problem with the tag interrogative example is that it implements an assessment, not a request for information. It would seem that for assessments a tag interrogative is not used in the same way as it is for a request for information/confirmation. If we restrict the analysis by Farkas and Roelofsen (2017) to a smaller set of actions, if we start with action and not linguistic structure, it might gain us one of the grammars that Schegloff (1996c) suggests could be out there.

Formal linguistic methods such as these can provide us an understanding not so much of how participants in interaction make their actions accountable (Garfinkel, 1967), but why they do it in this particular way at this particular moment. It is part of the action-formation problem that CA has only sporadically concerned itself with, but it is obviously a question that is worth asking if we want a complete understanding of language.

1.4.3 Conversation Analysis

The final approach I discuss comes from the method applied in this dissertation: Conversation Analysis. Although CA has always been concerned with social action, and requests for information have received plenty of attention (e.g., Freed & Ehrlich, 2010; Koshik, 2005; G. Raymond, 2003; Stivers et al., 2010), how utterances come to be designed and understood as requests for information is an issue that has remained somewhat understudied until recently (but see Freed, 1994; Labov, 1970; Pomerantz, 1980; Schegloff, 1984). This is particularly surprising since CA has for decades shown that requests for information are part and parcel to institutional interaction. Whether it's news interviews (Clayman & Heritage, 2002a), press conferences (Clayman & Heritage, 2002b; Clayman, Elliott, Heritage, & Beckett, 2012; Heritage & Clayman, 2013), visits to a physician (Heritage, 2010; G. Raymond, 2010a; Robinson & Heritage, 2006), courtroom examinations (Atkinson & Drew, 1979; Sidnell, 2010), or any of a plethora of other institutional environments: they are almost all organized

largely through requests for information.[25] Understanding how this works would thus indeed seem to be foundational to an adequate description of these speech-exchange systems and an understanding of conversation in general (Heritage, 2012a). It is a problem that is obviously central to the field, as Schegloff (2007) also points out, but not one that is easily addressed.

A solution was recently suggested by Heritage (2012a; see also Heritage, 2013b, 2013a) who in a special issue of the journal *Research on Language and Social Interaction* argues, not unlike Beun (1989b) and Gunlogson (2008), that relative knowledgeability plays a large role. Although his proposal was initially embraced—Sidnell (2012, p. 59) in his response even wonders "how did we ever get along without this?"—it has recently become the focal point of some debate (Lynch & Macbeth, 2016a). In this section I will first present Heritage's proposal as it relates to the action-formation problem, and subsequently briefly address the current state of the debate. In closing I will discuss how his proposal is incorporated in this dissertation.

Epistemic Status and Epistemic Stance

The problem as it is presented by Heritage (2012a) is similar to Beun (1989b), Gunlogson (2001), and Farkas and Roelofsen (2017): If turn design cannot provide a definitive answer to the question of how participants distinguish between a turn that conveys and a turn that requests information, what then do participants use? His concern is thus not just with what makes a declarative turn understood as a request for information, but what makes any turn-at-talk understood as a request for information. Heritage seeks the answer in what he calls "the epistemic status" of the participants:

> When there is consensus about who has primary access to a targeted element of knowledge or information, that is, who has primary epistemic status, then this takes precedence over morphosyntax and intonation as resources for determining whether a turn at talk conveys or requests information. (Heritage, 2012a, p. 3)

This definition should not be understood simply as a precondition such as one might find in SAT. Heritage (2012a) is not concerned with stating conditions under which a request for information will or will not be felicitous. Instead

[25] Some speech exchange systems, such as emergency calls, may be said to revolve around a request for help. But even then the call-taker relies on a series of requests for information to determine whether help needs to be sent.

he argues that participants have epistemic domains (see Stivers, Mondada, & Steensig, 2011; see also Kamio, 1997; Labov, 1970; Labov & Fanshel, 1977; Pomerantz, 1980), personal areas of expertise, and these domains come with various rights and responsibilities (see Stivers et al., 2011). Most important among these for the action-formation problem is relative epistemic access. If the speaker is understood to have more access to some addressed piece of information—for example by being more knowledgeable or by having more authority—that speaker will generally be understood to be conveying information. And vice versa, if the recipient is understood to have primary epistemic status, the speaker will be understood to be requesting information.

This might seem to leave linguistics out in the cold. If differences between linguistic structure have no import on action formation, why then do participants design their turns in grammatically different ways? Heritage (2012a) argues that morphosyntax and prosody are primarily used to express what he calls "epistemic stance". Whereas epistemic status is stable and treated as more or less given, stance is a local expression of a speaker's epistemic position. It is used to fine-tune the "epistemic gradient" between the speaker who is in a relatively unknowing position ($K-$) and the recipient who is in a relatively knowing position ($K+$). Consider the following three sentences (Heritage, 2012a, p. 6):

(16) Are you married?

(17) You're married, aren't you?

(18) You're married.

In each sentence the recipient has primary epistemic access and so when uttered each will be understood to be doing requesting information, but each indexes a different epistemic gradient. The speaker takes a more knowing stance in (18) than in (17), which in turn indexes a more knowing stance than (16). This can be visualized as in figure 1.1 (Heritage, 2012a, p. 7).

In general epistemic stance and epistemic status will be in alignment, meaning that a speaker lacking knowledge on some piece of information will take an unknowing stance, whereas speakers who already have a pretty good idea will take a relatively knowing stance. But stance can be used in a broader fashion. Speakers can use it to manage social relationships. G. Raymond (2010a) for example finds that health visitors in the UK will use a knowing epistemic stance to request confirmation and to treat a survey question as merely bureaucratic, whereas they can use an unknowing stance to request an actual answer and

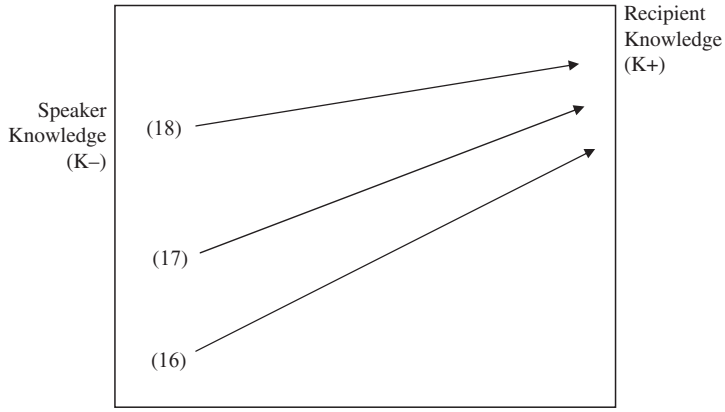


Figure 1.1: Epistemic stance of (16)–(18) represented in terms of epistemic gradient

thereby show a sincere interest in the mother. Similarly Heritage and Raymond (2005) find that in conversation, participants may take a more or less knowing stance, not because they are more or less knowing, but to deal with locally arising social exigencies. Additionally, congruence and incongruence between status and stance can be utilized to design actions; taking an unknowing stance when one is clearly in the know can be a means of doing challenging: for example, when a speaker who can clearly see what the recipient is doing asks *What are you doing?* (Drew, 2012).

The import of epistemic status in action formation is perhaps made most clear in those cases where a turn turns out to be truly ambiguous; that is, its uptake shows that it can in good faith be understood in one of two ways. Consider the following example where the speaker in lines 3–4 produces a declaratively formatted turn which is initially understood by the recipient to be the preface to a question but which is later understood to have possibly been a question itself:

(19) [CNN Sate of the Nation 22nd March 2010: 8:56 EST]
Conversation prior to the Congressional vote on health care reform (Heritage, 2012a, p. 11)

1	Blitzer:		.hh Kevin Madden you're- you're watching all of this and
2			uh you are a Republican strategist.
3		->	Right now uh you realized of course the Democrats are
4		->	going to win.
5			(1.0)

6	Madden:	->	Right.
7			(.)
8	Blitzer:		So [then what.
9	Madden:	->	[Yes. (0.2) Oh are you asking me or telling me.
10	Blitzer:		On this- on this issue of health care reform.....

The ambiguity arises here because while, as Heritage (2012a) points out, it was indeed clear that the Democrats were going to win the vote, Blitzer formulates his turn to address something that falls squarely in Madden's epistemic domain: what Madden may or may not realize. Possibly because the result of the vote was so obvious, Madden initially understands Blitzer to be simply making an assertion, building up to a question, but later realizes—indexed with *oh* (Heritage, 1984a)—that Blitzer's turn could also be doing asking.

And not only declaratives are susceptible to be heard as both conveying and requesting information. Consider the following example:

(20) [KR:2] (Terasaki, 1976/2004, p. 202)

1	Mom:		Daddy 'n I have t- both go in different
2			directions, en I wanna talk t'you about where I'm
3			going (t'night).
4	Rus:		(Mkay,)
5	Gar:		Is it about u:s?
6	Mom:		(Uh) huh,
7	Rus:		<I know where yer goin,
8	Mom:		Wh^ere.
9	Rus:		To thuh eh (eight grade)=
10	Mom:		=Yeah. Right.
11	Mom:	->	Do you know who's going to that meeting?
12	Rus:		Who.
13	Mom:		I don't kno:w.
14			(0.2)
15	Rus:		.hh Oh::. Prob'ly .h Missiz Mc Owen ('n Dad said)
16			prob'ly Missiz Cadry and some of the teachers

Mom's turn in line 11 is initially treated by Russ as a pre-announcement, that is, preliminary to the doing of an actual announcement (see Terasaki, 1976/2004). By using the same question word as Mom, *who*, he provides her the opportunity to tell him who's going (Schegloff, 1988b). But as it turns out, Mom was not doing a pre-announcement, but requesting information (or possibly doing a pre-request), as she makes clear in line 13 by saying that she does not know. In other words, she is not a knowing participant who has

something to tell to Russ, but an unknowing participant, who wants Russ to provide her with information. Russ acknowledges this repair initiation with *oh*, and goes on to provide an answer.

What is thus crucial in this sequence is whether Mom can be seen to setting herself up to convey information or is requesting information. The design of her turn can apparently be used for both. As Terasaki (1976/2004) points out, Russ has just presented Mom with a riddle in line 7, and her turn in line 11 can therefore be understood as a return-riddle; this is indeed how Russ takes it up. But through his first riddle Russ has presented himself as knowledgeable on his mother's plans, and this seems to be what she is orienting to by requesting information (Heritage, 2012a). The sequential context thus provides different means of understanding line 11, and this ambiguity is only resolved when Russ has attributed the right status to Mom as either more or less knowledgeable than he is. While her turn design can definitely provide clues—had she said "Who's going to that meeting" her turn would no doubt be understood as a request for information, instead Russ now relies on its potential idiomatic function as a pre-announcement—to adequately grasp what action Mom is doing, to understand the relevance of her turn design, Russ cannot rely on turn design alone.

These examples show that the design of a turn is interpreted by its recipient in relation to the action that turn is understood to be doing. There is thus something of a two-way street between turn design and action ascription. Participants have to rely at least partly on the design of a turn to grasp what action a speaker may be doing: language is after all to a large extent the tool with which speakers implement social actions. A recipient cannot understand a speaker to be doing requesting information completely independent from how that request is implemented. But at the same time language alone cannot provide a complete answer, it can at best help guide the recipient given the specific sequential environment and social context. It is only once an action has been ascribed to a turn that the full import of its design can be adequately grasped. Turns are built incrementally and recipients are thereby consistently provided with opportunities to revise their projections of what action the speaker is implementing.

To sum up: Heritage (2012a) takes a fundamentally different view of the action-formation problem when it comes to turns that either convey or request information. Where prior research assumed that linguistic structure is the most important contributor, Heritage argues that participants rely on the socio-epistemic context: what they assume they and their interlocutors know and have a right to know. This, he argues, is in fact why many languages do

not have polar interrogative morphosyntax.[26] In this way linguistic structure is freed up for doing other things, such as "navigating the epistemic landscape" (Heritage & Raymond, 2012) or mobilizing response (Heritage, 2013a; Stivers & Rossano, 2010).

Epistemics as a hidden interactional order

The proposal by Heritage (2012a)—or proposals, as he also argued for the importance of epistemics for sequence organization (Heritage, 2012b)—is as Drew (2012) puts it a summary of a research agenda that was stimulated by Heritage and Raymond (2005) and G. Raymond and Heritage (2006). While there are of course discussions about knowledge in interaction to be found in lots of prior work, it is only since those two papers that epistemics has gained a central role in much conversation analytic inquiry. As Drew also points out, this agenda had become incredibly influential: "The stream of articles (...) is already proof of the importance and generativeness of what Heritage has been presenting and publishing on epistemics" (Drew, 2012, p. 61f.).

But despite its influence on contemporary CA research—or precisely because of it—the incorporation of epistemics in CA studies is not without its critics. In a special issue of the journal *Discourse Studies* (Lynch & Macbeth, 2016a), a series of articles was published that had as its aim to give what the authors in this special issue call the Epistemics Program the critical attention it was due (Lynch & Macbeth, 2016b, p. 494). As the analytic scope of epistemics is rather broad, ranging from action formation and ascription to sequence organization and recipient design, so too do the papers in this special issue deal with a whole range of analytic factors. As I am concerned primarily with action formation in this dissertation, I will limit my discussion to the response by Lindwall, Lymer, and Ivarsson (2016) and its uptake (Heritage, 2018; Lymer,

[26] While many languages indeed lack interrogative morphosyntax, the far majority—well over 80%—of the world's languages do have polar interrogative morphosyntax (Dryer, 2013). So Heritage makes a rather sweeping claim. Given the basic communicative functions posited by Tomasello (2008, p. 83ff.)—Requesting, Informing, and Sharing—linguistic structure may have arisen precisely to deal with action formation, but evolved to deal with the changing complexities of social relations, changes that were made possible by language. As Sidnell (2012) points out and Heritage (2013b) also acknowledges, there are plenty of languages where evidentiality is grammaticalized (de Haan, 2013), in other words where epistemic status and not just stance needs to be expressed (although Heritage (2013b, p. 393) argues, at least for Japanese (see Hayano, 2011), that this is still an expression of epistemic stance). The degree to which epistemics are "a deeply indigenous feature of human interaction" (Heritage, 2013b, p. 392) and its import for linguistic structure have so far not been adequately studied and are thus a prime field for future research.

Lindwall, & Ivarsson, 2017), as Lindwall et al. (2016, p. 501) focus on the question of "whether the empirical demonstrations really show that epistemic status is a fundamental and unavoidable component of the production and recognition of social actions."

Lindwall et al. (2016) take issue not with the problem that Heritage (2012a) investigates—the action-formation problem—but the way in which they perceive that Heritage approaches it. First, they align with the position that turn design alone cannot provide an adequate explanation for action formation, but they argue that Heritage has no consideration for the role of sequence. As mentioned in the previous section, Heritage (2012a, p. 3) argues that epistemic status takes priority over linguistic features of turn design, but Lindwall et al. (2016, fn. 4) point out that Schegloff (2007, p. xiv) gives a broader selection of possibly relevant criteria, such as the position in the sequence and the environment of the interaction (see Schegloff's definition in section 1.1). The result of this limitation they argue is that Heritage is primarily concerned with single turns, comparable to speech-act theorists, which is a step back because one of the benefits of CA's sequential analysis is that by freeing analysts from the prison of single utterances, we get a more complete picture of action formation.

The second issue Lindwall et al. (2016) raise deals with the recognizability of epistemic status. They argue contrary to Heritage's claims about the straightforward way in which participants deal with epistemic status, it is not clear how they prioritize one aspect of the environmental and epistemic context over another. And if it is unclear how participants come to their understanding, so too is it for the analysts: "The access, rights, entitlements and so on are established and presupposed state of affairs in virtually any conversation. However, there are few clues how we, as overhearing analysts, are to ground *our* claims to recognize these matters" (Lindwall et al., 2016, p 506).[27]

Third, they point out that epistemic status is severely limited in its use. Consider that Heritage (2012a) was concerned with how participants can distinguish between actions that request and convey information, and obviously those are not the only types of actions that participants do. Consider line 5 in the following example where Shelley asks what could be called a rhetorical question:

(21) Debbie and Shelley (Heritage, 2012a, p. 23)

[27]The problem they raise is thus very similar to Clark's (1996) objection to the commonsense approach to Common Ground. But it is not just a problem for Heritage (2012a), Schegloff (2007) similarly includes the environment as a possibly relevant feature for action formation, and it is similarly unclear how he would prioritize one aspect of the environment over another.

1	Shelley:		So: I mean it's not becuz he's- he's- I mean it's not
2			becuz he:'s not going it's becuz (0.5) his money's
3			not ¿ (0.5) funding me.
4	Debbie:		Okay¿
5	Shelley:	->	So an' ↑when other time have I ever [done that?
6	Debbie:		[.hhh well I'm jus say:in'
7			it jus seems ou- you base a lot of things on-on guy:s.
8			(.) I do'know:, it just- a couple times I don- I don-
9			.hh it's not a big deal.

According to Heritage (2012a), because Shelley has epistemic primacy—her utterance deals with her own prior behavior—her turn is not understood by Debbie as information seeking, but as challenging, complaining, protesting, or something or this kind. Debbie also treats it as one of the latter by backing down, first with *I'm jus say:in'*, subsequently mitigating *It jus seems*, and finally her claim that *It just a couple times* and that *It's not a big deal*. But, as Lindwall et al. (2016, p. 512) point out, epistemic status does not explain why Debbie understands Shelley's turn as a challenge-type action, only why she does not understand it as requesting information. They surmise that Debbie has to rely on its turn design and sequential environment, but if that's the case, she no longer would need to figure out whether or not Shelley is requesting information as a separate issue. Furthermore, they argue based on earlier parts of the conversation where Shelley produces a similar turn and actually gets an answer, that it's not necessary true that she has epistemic primacy.

Based on Heritage's (2018) response to the special issue, it seems that much of the critique by Lindwall et al. (2016) is based on a misunderstanding of his proposal—although in a subsequent response Lymer et al. (2017) argue that there are clear differences between the proposal made in Heritage (2012a) and (2018). Heritage (2018) argues that the data show that sequence is given its rightful place. In the cases presented in Heritage (2012a, 2013b, 2013c) epistemic status can frequently be grasped from preceding talk, and this is in fact what the participants orient to. It it thus not a valid objection to say that "epistemic status is established and managed sequentially" (Heritage, 2018, p. 28). Recognizability is not primarily a concern, but is indeed frequently out there in the preceding sequence.

Their disagreement on the use of epistemic status also rests on a misunderstanding of the goal of Heritage's proposal. It is not the case that in examples like (21) Debbie deals with epistemic status first before moving to a correct understanding of Shelley's action. Consideration for status is only part of the action-ascription process: "The recognition of whether one is being asked or

told something is *part of the process by which one produces and understands a wide variety of action types* (...) prior to framing a response" (Heritage, 2018, p. 32). While epistemics are thus omnirelevant—which as (Heritage, 2018) argues should come as no surprise since many actions such as requests and offers are implemented with questions as vehicles (see Schegloff, 2007)—they are not omni-determinate. Participants have due consideration for all aspects that may be pertinent to action formation.

The point of discussion is thus whether epistemic status is necessary for the process of action formation. Lindwall et al. (2016) argue that if status can be grasped from the sequence, it is not a notion that adds anything to our analytic toolbox. Indeed, they fear it places a heavy burden on what they perceive to be ad hoc stipulations, resulting in less rigorous analyses. But as Heritage argues, participants rely specifically on epistemic status and so it is an important additional tool: "Part of the recognition of an action will arise from deciding how what is being talked about is positioned relative to the epistemic domains of the speakers" (Heritage, 2018, p. 32).

Discussion

As I have already discussed some of the responses to the role of epistemics for action formation in the previous section, I will provide only a short discussion here, focusing on how it relates to the proposals discussed in sections 1.4.1 and 1.4.2, before explaining how epistemics is used and understood in this dissertation.

Based on the brief summary presented of Heritage's (2012a, 2013b, 2013c) proposal we can see obvious similarities with those by Beun (1989b) and Gunlogson (2008).[28] Beun (1989b) posits that for an utterance to be a declarative question, the hearer needs to be reciprocally understood to be the Expert, and similarly Gunlogson (2008) argues that for any utterance, not just one with declarative word order, to be a question the recipient needs to be recognized as

[28]Farkas and Roelofsen (2017, p. 278) take a completely different perspective: they argue that "epistemic authority" cannot explain various of their cases. As they do not cite particular work, it is unclear whether they are critiquing epistemics as it is used in CA, or Gunlogson's (2008) implicit authoritativeness. While they do talk about "assumed knowledgeability", which suggest they take issue with CA's take on epistemics, they seem concerned only with epistemic stance as it is encoded in the design of turns, not epistemic status. Furthermore they rule out epistemic authority as a possible account for action formation because it would make some cases felicitous when they should not be. But CA, like participants in the conversation themselves, is not concerned with whether or not an action is felicitous. Since it is unclear whether they misunderstand CA or deal with an entirely different theory altogether, I leave their critique aside.

implicitly authoritative.

Clearly three very different methods—Speech Act Theory, Formal Semantics, and Conversation Analysis—converge on very similar proposals. Heritage's (2012a) proposal, however, offers advantages for an interactional analysis that those by Beun (1989b) and Gunlogson (2008) do not. First, unlike Beun (1989b) who deals with the recognizability of declarative questions only, Heritage proposes a broader theory of requests for information, indeed of the role of knowledge for action formation in general. Where Beun's analysis does prove valuable is, somewhat ironically, in his proposal for a complex function structure. As I argued, we would need a sheer infinite set of possible function structures and orderings of preferred interpretations. But those values can be understood as guiding the participants' grasp of who has primary status, indeed as expressions of that relation. It can help us understand how expertise is indexed in linguistic structures. This is also what Beun aims for: the function structures are supposed to help make clear who is Expert on some issue. All we would need to do is drop the assumption that such functions are in a sense universal and deterministic.

Although Gunlogson (2008) approaches the action formation problem from formal semantics, her analysis takes a dynamic approach to discourse and is thus at least somewhat interactional. She posits contingent actions and relies on implicit authority which needs to be mutually recognized. In a sense she attempts to formalize the adjacency pair as well as epistemic status in a more formal grammar. She does not quite succeed though: contingent actions are a more crude version of the adjacency pair, and implicit authority is somewhat cognitive; although the status as an implicit source must be inferable from the context, context includes an indeterminate set of unspoken and inaccessible assumptions. In fact, it should not be clear from the context who is the source, as that would mean one of the participants is already committed. So sequence is given a place, but not as prominent as in CA.

That is not to say that epistemic status is necessarily the perfect solution to the action formation problem—Heritage (2018, p. 34) says as much: "whether this claim [that epistemic status could always override (...) syntax and intonation as a basis for producing and recognizing assertions and questions] is true or not will probably take quite some time to sort out." I offer two brief points to consider, before formulating how I understand the role of epistemics in interaction in this dissertation.

The first deals with the recognizability of epistemic status. Heritage argues that status is typically a settled matter for the participants, and particularly that "the thoughts, experiences, hopes, and expectations of individuals are treated

as theirs to know and describe" (Heritage, 2012a, p. 6; see also Heritage, 2011). Consider, however, the following extract from a conversation between two sisters. Lisa is doing high school exams and will be going on a trip to Barcelona with her mother after she graduates.

(22) BE1 02:34.1–02:41.3

```
01  Lis     °( [ )°
02  Fle        [°(ga ik)°
                  go I
               [°(will I)°
03             (1.1)
04  Fle -> wat  ga ik dan  doe:n?=
           what go I  then do
           then what will I do:?=
05       -> =ga ik dan  iets      met  papa doen.
            go I  then something with dad  do
           =will I then do something with dad.
06             (1.0)
07  Lis     nee ↑jij hebt dan  nog   gewoon college,
           no   you have then still just   class
           ↑no you will still have class then,
08             (0.3)
09  Fle     °oh°.
           °oh°.
```

In lines 4–5 Fleur asks what she will be doing when Lisa is in Barcelona with their mother, whether she is going to do something with dad. Although one might argue that Fleur has primary rights to know and talk about her own future plans, Lisa treats Fleur's turn as a request for information by answering and explaining why she will not be doing something with dad, and Fleur's subsequent *oh* treats that informative response as adequately dealing with her turn in lines 4–5 (Heritage, 1984a; Schegloff, 2007). So clearly both treat Lisa as having primary rights here to talk about Fleur's future plans, or at least her plans as they relate to Lisa's planned visit to Barcelona.

One can look at this example and argue that for the participants it is at least clear that in this case Lisa has primary rights. That there is nothing salient in the data that confirms this for the analyst is not something Heritage (2018) is concerned with. It is after all a category for the participants and they have no problem with it. Indeed, if we take a look at the talk that precedes this interaction, we can ground the analysis in the participants' behavior. Lisa has not said when she will be going to Barcelona, in fact, Fleur initially displays no recognition of the trip whatsoever. So we can point to evidence in the sequence

that confirms the participants' status—whether that is or is not a useful way of looking at it is, as Lymer et al. (2017) argue, another matter.

This excerpt is not meant to disprove—or prove—that epistemic status plays a part in action formation, but as a cautionary tale. In the special issue on epistemics, Heritage (2012a, 2012c) and some of the responses (Clift, 2012; Drew, 2012) warn that epistemics should not be a go-to resource as that would rob it of its "empirical bite". This example doubly confirms that. If we were to sail blind on the idea that people's plans and experiences are theirs to know and talk about, then we would have a hard time explaining why Fleur's utterance gets treated as a request for information.[29] If instead we keep the importance of sequence in mind and see epistemics not as something more basic than turn-taking or sequence organization (cf. Sidnell, 2012), but as merely part of the process of action formation and ascription, then its value need not be lost.

That is in fact how I take epistemics and its relation to action formation and turn design to have been intended. Any turn-at-talk is designed to deal with the local exigencies of the interaction (Mazeland, 2013). Epistemic status does not transform an utterance that would otherwise be a request for information into an assertion or some other type of action, but it contributes to making an utterance understood as a particular type of action. In cases where relevant, such as requests for information, the design of a turn reflects, among a whole bunch of other stuff, the speaker's view of the relative access he or she and the recipient have to the state of affairs under discussion. By projecting a specific type of response, the speaker conveys his or her view of the relationship the participants have.

So in case of doing a topic proffer (see chapters 2 and 3) a declarative is immediately and unproblematically understood as a topic proffer; conveying information is not part of the picture. The choice for a declarative over an interrogative reflects the speaker's view of the relationship in which he or she knows and is allowed to know something about the recipient. Both formats are used to invite a telling, but with a declarative a speaker claims to know about the preferred news while with an interrogative a speaker leaves the options for both good and bad news open.

It is thus something of a misnomer to say that epistemic status overrides grammar, as grammatical constructions such as interrogative morphosyntax and rising boundary pitch have no invariant inquisitive meaning. Heritage (2013c,

[29] A simple account would be to say that here morphosyntax trumps epistemic status; Heritage (2012a, 2013b, 2013c, 2018) recurrently allows for that possibility. But that would only increase the risk of ad hoc stipulations: as analysts we can always say one or the other is given priority depending on what suits our analysis best, which would completely rob epistemics of any bite.

p. 569) also takes note of this when he says that such concrete meaning would be misplaced given its variability in different contexts. Grammar is just a tool for action formation. What makes forms like declaratives with a falling boundary pitch special is not that they request information or confirmation when they should not, but that they are used in specific social environments for specific interactional functions, as the various chapters in this dissertation attest.

1.5 Contents of this dissertation

At the start of this chapter I presented what could be considered a minimal pair:

(1) The door is shut.

(2) Is the door shut?

Both (1) and (2) can be used to do questioning, and so we cannot account for these functions based on the syntactic format of either. Neither, as was pointed out, can we rely on that other omnipresent action-ascriber: prosody. An utterance can do questioning with interrogative and declarative syntax, and with rising and falling boundary pitch. How then are we to account for the action status of either utterance if they are to be used as questions?

As will be clear by now, we cannot provide such an account without the context of these utterances. Sentences do not do actions, participants do actions, and they do so in an extremely rich context on which they continuously rely. Speakers design their actions to fit the exigencies of the interaction (Mazeland, 2013).

Furthermore, and perhaps more importantly, it is not clear what it means for a speaker to be asking a question. As pointed out by Schegloff (1984, p. 30), *question* is a commonsense category, not a technical one. While we have an intuitive idea what a question is—an action by which an unknowing speaker requests information of a knowing recipient—this cannot possibly cover all the types of actions we would be interested in if we were to study declarative questions. It is deceptively vague, and therefore far too broad: Many actions that look like they are doing questioning, are in fact concerned with some other action, such as inviting, requesting, or proffering a topic (Schegloff, 1984, 2007; Sidnell, 2017a). At the same time it is still too narrow: Declaratives are often used when a speaker could be expected to already know the answer (Heritage,

2012a; G. Raymond, 2010a), and so cannot be requesting information.[30] The very notion of declarative question under this definition would be something of an oxymoron.

So the question as it was put at the start of this chapter—If polar questions are made recognizable with a polar interrogative, how do recipients understand an utterance with declarative word order as a polar question?—is not the right question to ask. The approach in this dissertation is therefore to treat what are commonly considered declarative questions as actions that have a family resemblance (see Wittgenstein, 1958, p. 32). This means that instead of looking for declarative questions as if they were some clear-cut category of action, this dissertation is concerned with utterances in which participants produce first pair parts with declarative word order in which they make relevant a next action in which the recipient's primary concern is to affirm or confirm the state of affairs as formulated by the speaker.[31] This formulation attempts to capture that these actions function as what are traditionally considered polar questions, and to exclude such actions as invitations or requests. Note that this is not, and cannot be an exhaustive definition. It is used merely to guide the selection of the specific phenomena. It would likely be entirely unsuited for any formal coding process in service of statistical analyses.[32]

As we cannot assume the existence of declarative questions, the goal of this dissertation is obviously not to provide an analysis of how declaratives come to implement questions and how those differ from interrogatives. Instead, by considering a small subset of yes/no-type initiating actions with declarative syntax, or YNDs (G. Raymond, 2003, 2010a), and comparing them to similar actions with polar interrogative word order, or YNIs (G. Raymond, 2003, 2010a), I attempt to shed some light on the procedural aspect of action formation and ascription. The major points are that actions are understood in a specific sequential environment and that the action status of an utterance is an interactional accomplishment. In fact, action is always open to (re-)negotiation.

In chapters 2 and 3 I focus on the importance of sequential positioning for the process of action formation and ascription, that is, the sequential understanding of action. First I show that YNDs can be produced, and understood to be

[30] A more fundamental point of critique is that recipients cannot know what speakers knows; they can only assume and infer based on the presented evidence.

[31] State of affairs is not synonymous with propositional content. The latter presupposes a literal, context-independent, and grammar-independent meaning, and as should be clear from this chapter this is not how participants come to an understanding of turns at talk.

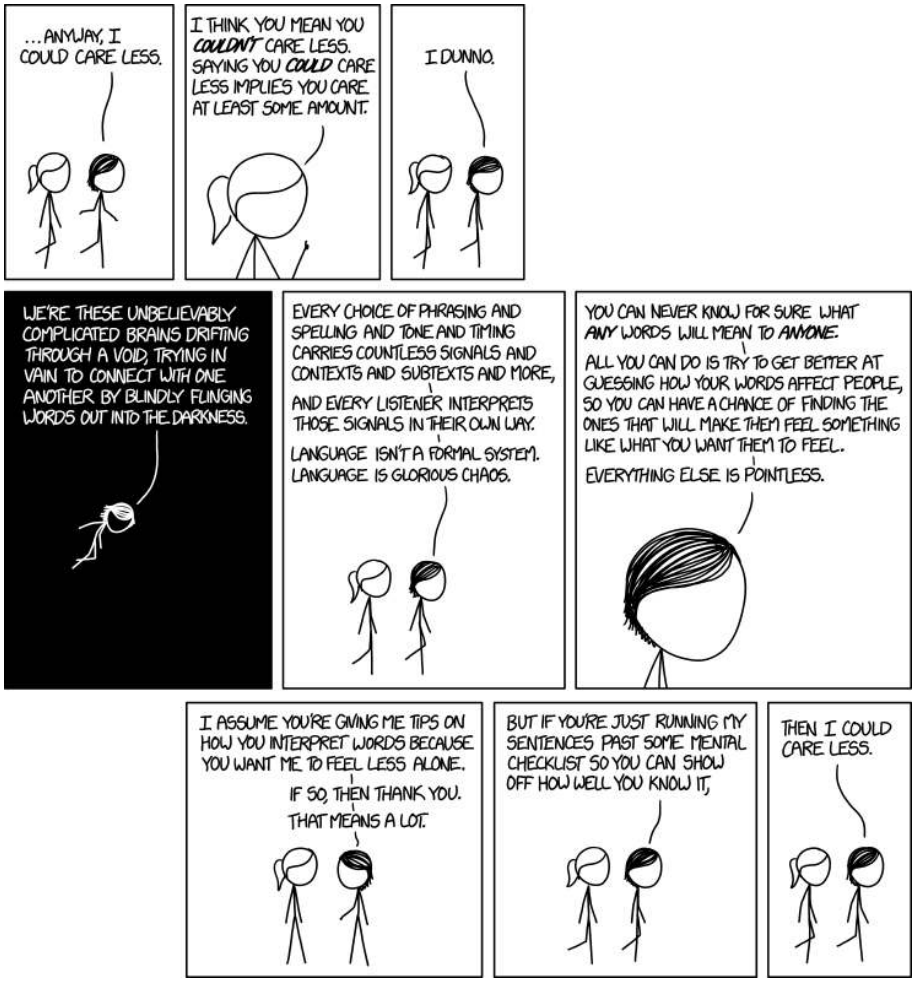
[32] No attempt at establishing its suitability by determining the Kappa coefficient of a sample—that is, intercoder reliability—has been made.

produced, to not just request confirmation or affirmation, but also some form of elaboration. This understanding is not, or at least not exclusively, based on the linguistic design of these YNDs. Indeed YNDs that request confirmation and YNDs that request elaboration do not differ morphosyntactically or prosodically in a clear way, but they differ in their environment of use. In environments of topic attrition where participants have to either start a new activity, re-open a previously closed activity, or move towards conversational closure, YNDs in which the speaker formulates a previously unaddressed matter will be understood to make relevant more than confirmation. That this is attributable to their sequential position and not some aspect of their design is supported by comparing them to YNIs in similarly topic-shift implicative environments. Although these YNIs will be understood to implement a different type of topic proffer—differences in design do of course matter—they will nonetheless also be understood as topic proffers.

In chapters 4 and 5 I focus on the role of grammar in interaction by comparing two specific morphosyntactic practices: *oh*-prefaced YNDs and *oh*-prefaced YNIs. Both practices are understood as addressing a potential breakdown in intersubjectivity, and by being *oh*-prefaced speakers use both to claim that their realization that there was a problem took place then and there and was touched-off by the immediate prior turn (Heritage, 1984a; Jefferson, 1978). But where YNDs are used by speakers to claim that they now understand after having either not understood or misunderstood at some prior point in the conversation, YNIs are used to convey that the prior talk by the interlocutor was not in line with the speaker's prior beliefs. Both therefore project different courses of action: an *oh*-prefaced YND makes relevant only confirmation, but *oh*-prefaced YNIs also invite some form of reconciliatory information.

Finally in chapter 6 I address the procedural nature of action, arguing that action is an interactional accomplishment and that in any adjacent turn recipients can not only display an understanding of the prior turn, but actively ascribe an action to it, possibly even recasting the status of their own prior talk. That is not to say that utterances need to be taken up for them to have implemented an action, but for an utterance to have a function for the participants in the interaction, both participants need to somehow converge on their understanding of it. In general this is entirely unproblematic, and the status of an utterance as a particular type of action is treated as salient. In these cases simply foregoing an opportunity to initiate repair after next turn (see Schegloff, 1992) confirms that it was adequately understood (Robinson, 2014). But action is not given, it is continuously open to negotiation, and therefore has to be accomplished collaboratively. It is through every next turn at talk that participants build and

maintain their architecture of intersubjectivity (Heritage, 1984b; Rommetveit, 1976).



I literally could care less.

Image courtesy of xkcd.com

CHAPTER 2

Confirmation or elaboration: what do yes/no declaratives want?[1]

Abstract

Recent analyses have argued that when requests for confirmation are implemented with declarative word order, they are closure-implicative due to the relatively knowing stance indexed with the declarative. This paper demonstrates, however, that in some cases participants show an orientation to both confirmation and elaboration as a relevant next action. By comparing requests for confirmation that are closure-implicative to those that are expansion-implicative, it is argued that in addition to epistemic stance, participants also orient to the lexical design features and sequential placement of these declarative yes/no-type initiating actions to determine the relevant type of response. Data are in Dutch with English translations.

Keywords: Information requests, Confirmation request, Epistemics, Action-Formation.

2.1 Introduction

Requests for information and confirmation have for a long time been a major hurdle for researches dealing with the action-formation problem (Levinson,

[1]This chapter is a slightly modified version of a paper that was published as Seuren, L.M. & Huiskes, M. (2017) Confirmation or elaboration: what do yes/no declaratives want? *Research on Language and Social Interaction*, *50*(2), 188–205.

2013; Schegloff, 2007). While a one-to-one relation between the linguistic form of an utterance and the action it implements would be highly preferable, it is clear that for information requests such a relation does not exist (Paardekooper, 1968; Sadock & Zwicky, 1985; Schegloff, 1984). In particular, while some languages like English and Dutch have an interrogative word order that is considered the prototypical format for an information request, the declarative order (or default order) is also frequently used to do inquiries (Labov, 1970; Stivers & Rossano, 2010). The response to these declarative inquiries typically consists of yes/no-type tokens, (dis)agree tokens, (partial) repetitions, or even a combination of some of these features depending on the grammar of the language (Sadock & Zwicky, 1985).

Recent work in conversation analysis has begun to address this issue. Heritage has shown in his seminal paper on the role of knowledge for interaction, that when participants distinguish between actions that provide or request information, they orient primarily to their respective rights to know and talk about the information addressed: their epistemic status (Heritage, 2012a). An utterance, be it interrogative or declarative, is treated as requesting information when all participants attribute epistemic primacy to the addressee. Declarative word order is used to index the speaker's epistemic stance. That is, with a declarative inquiry a speaker claims to be relatively knowledgeable about the addressed information compared to when s/he would have used an interrogative.

That is not to say that the linguistic design of a turn—for example, morphosyntax or intonation—has no role to play in action formation. It is precisely because declaratives index a certain epistemic stance that they can be used for particular action types (Seuren et al., 2015). In fact, both Lee (2015) for Korean and Park (2012) for English argue that declaratives, or morphosyntactically unmarked questions, have very different sequential implications than interrogatives, and that because of these sequential implications, interrogatives are used to launch a larger sequence, whereas declaratives are used to launch what Schegloff (2007, chapter 9) calls sequence-closing sequences (see also G. Raymond, 2010a).

Our aim in this paper is three-fold. First, we will show that while YNDs do indeed request confirmation, they can also create an environment in which the interlocutor can provide additional talk, and in fact when that talk is not provided, it can be pursued.

Second, we will argue that YNDs that project only confirmation and YNDs that also project some form of elaboration can be distinguished based on their sequential and epistemic context. Mere confirmation is treated as the relevant response when the YND returns to a prior action, that is, requests confirmation

of some belief or understanding that has already been established or made highly salient earlier in the interaction. Elaboration, on the other hand, is treated as a relevant response when the YND requests confirmation of a belief or understanding that has not been addressed.

Finally, we will show that YNDs can be oriented to different types of elaboration and that this is made recognizable, at least partly, by their turn design and sequential position. Our analysis is focused on Dutch, but we will suggest in our discussion that English has similar practices.

2.1.1 Questions in Dutch

Lee's and Park's findings are in line with Englert's (2010) for Dutch, a language that is structurally very similar to English. In typical Dutch declarative clauses the subject is clause-initial and immediately followed by the finite verb. Unlike English, however, inversion of subject and verb is in Dutch an insufficient condition for a clause to be considered a yes/no-type interrogative. A clause is considered a yes/no-type interrogative when (a) the subject follows the finite verb and (b) the finite verb is clause-initial. Dutch has these two conditions, because in declarative clauses other constituents than the subject can be clause-initial. For example, a clause such as *Morgen ga ik werken* ("lit. Tomorrow go I work"/ "I go to work tomorrow") is still a declarative even though the subject *ik* follows the finite verb *ga*.

As an example consider excerpt (1), where Jane responds with just a confirming *ja* to Lisa's turn in line 1. Note that although the subject in Lisa's utterance, *het* ("it"), is not clause-initial, her utterance is in fact considered to be declarative because the adverb *dan* ("then") precedes the finite verb *zou* ("should").

(1) GR2–03:40.6–04:10.2 [A][2]

```
01  Lis     =>dus dan  zou    het begin augustus een keer
               so  then should it  start August   a   time
02          kunnen<;
            could
            =>so then it would be possible at the beginning
            of august<;
03          (1.0)
04  Jan     JA
            YEAH
```

[2]All pauses, except the ones in excerpt 3, were computer timed. This means that they are measured as slightly longer when compared to conventional counting techniques in which a counting phrase such as one Mississippi, two Mississippi is used (Kendrick & Torreira, 2015).

```
05          (0.4)
06  Lis     ja
            yeah
```

Lisa and Jane have been trying to make arrangements to get together during the summer, but this has proven difficult as each is on vacation when the other is available. Lisa offers a suggestion in lines 1–2, speculating that they could get together at the start of August. By using the conjunction *dus* ("so") and the adverb *dan* ("then") she shows that her suggestion is based on prior talk, and in this way she claims relative certainty that August is indeed a viable option. The final-falling intonation of her turn is also frequently associated with indexing certainty (see Couper-Kuhlen, 2012). Yet Jane has primary rights to talk about when she is going to be available (Heritage, 2012a, 2013b; Heritage & Raymond, 2005). Both participants orient to this epistemic status by treating confirmation as the relevant next action: Jane by providing the confirmation particle *ja*[3] and Lisa by acknowledging it and treating it as expected, also with *ja*.

Englert (2010) reports two main action types that are associated with what she calls *declarative questions* in Dutch: confirmation requests and initiation of repair. Surveying a corpus of Dutch informal telephone conversations, however, we found that there are plenty of cases in Dutch where declaratives receive a more elaborate response than just confirmation. And on occasion, when elaboration is not forthcoming, speakers will pursue it, showing that the elaboration is noticeably absent.

2.2 Data & Method

The corpus used in this study consists of a little over 10.5 hours of spontaneous interaction in Dutch.[4] These are 103 separate conversations: 97 audio-taped telephone conversations and 6 videotaped face-to-face conversations (the excerpts are marked respectively with [A] and [V]). The number of participants in the videotaped conversations ranges from two to seven, and all conversations are between family members and/or friends who gathered for the purpose of conversation. All participants signed informed consent forms, allowing use of

[3]The rather lengthy gap of 1.0 seconds might be a result of Jane checking her diary whether she is indeed available early August.

[4]The corpus used in this dissertation consists of 21.5hrs of recordings in total, but for some studies only parts of it were used. For studying rare practices data were gathered from the entire corpus to get enough material, bur for more common practices such as discussed in this chapter, a smaller collection was sufficient to provide an exhaustive analysis.

the data for research purposes. The data have accordingly been anonymized, meaning that all proper names used in this paper are pseudonyms. The conversations have been transcribed according to the conventions of Jefferson (2004).

From these conversations we selected all requests for confirmation that had declarative word order, so-called yes/no declaratives (YNDs) (G. Raymond, 2010a). These are declarative utterances that address information that falls in the addressee's epistemic domain and therefore project confirmation, typically in the form of a yes/no-type response particle (Labov, 1970).

As our focus was on the type of response that was made conditionally relevant, we excluded all sequences where the addressee did not conform to the constraints set in the YND (see Hayano, 2013), for example, by providing a transformative response (Stivers & Hayashi, 2010). We thus only considered YNDs that received a type-conforming response (G. Raymond, 2003). Furthermore, we also excluded all sequences that contained a dispreferred response, as these are by their dispreferred nature accountable and thus frequently receive some form of elaboration, even when it has not been made relevant by the YND. The final collection that was used for the analysis in this paper consists of 125 YNDs that receive a type-conforming, preferred response.

These 125 sequences were first split up into two collections based on the response that was provided. One collection contained all responses that consisted of only a yes/no-type particle, the second collection contained all other responses. We then considered the action that was implemented with these more elaborate responses and found that 30 responses were primarily used to do confirming: in these 30 cases, the additional TCUs consisted of such things as epistemic modifiers (e.g., *geloof ik* / "I believe"), vocatives (e.g., *jongen* / "man"), or (partial) repeats of the first pair part (see Stivers, 2005a). Because these responses were designed to do just confirming, we added these 30 cases to the first collection. The resulting collection of cases where the response was designed to only confirm consisted of 66 cases; the collection of cases where the response contained some form of elaboration consisted of 59 cases.

Finally, we analyzed the turn-final intonation of each YND to see if there was a relation between the turn-final pitch movement and action. As can be seen from the results in table 2.1, the type of response—(a) *confirmation* or (b) confirmation plus elaboration, what we call *confirmation+*—does not depend on whether the turn-final intonation of the sequence-initiating YND was rising, flat, or falling.[5] While this is not to say that prosody plays no role in our

[5]Earlier research argued that participants distinguish between declarative assertions and

Table 2.1
Frequency of response types in relation to the turn-final intonation of the YND

	Turn-final intonation of YND (first-pair part)						
Response type	Rising		Flat		Falling		Total
Confirmation	13	(20%)	5	(8%)	48	(73%)	66
Confirmation+	11	(19%)	5	(8%)	43	(73%)	59

data, at least turn-final pitch does not seem to be an a priori relevant factor in distinguishing between YNDs that make relevant only confirmation, and YNDs that also project elaboration. Instead, prosody likely plays a role at the level of individual activities (Couper-Kuhlen, 2012).

We will first discuss the first set of cases where responses were used to implement confirmation. To keep the contrast clear, we will discuss cases where confirmation was done with only a yes/no-type particle. We will argue that YNDs that make relevant these minimal confirming responses are done in specific sequential positions where they typically address information that has already been interactionally established or is highly salient based on the prior talk. We will then show that YNDs that project elaboration are done in different sequential positions, and convey a prior belief, that is, claim epistemic access to a domain of the interlocutor to which the speaker has not been given access in the conversation so far (Turner, 2012).

2.3 YNDs that get a simple yes/no response

In this section we will discuss some examples of YNDs where confirmation is treated as an adequate next action. We selected cases where confirmation is implemented with only a yes/no-type particle, so it is done with the most minimal linguistic means available. In each case the addressed information clearly falls within the epistemic domain of the addressee (Heritage, 2012a; Stivers & Rossano, 2010), and the information of which confirmation is requested has already been interactionally established or can be easily inferred from the prior

questions in Dutch using only the turn-final pitch movement (Haan, 2002). It should be clear, however, from table 1 that Dutch has no turn-final questioning intonation (Seuren et al., 2015; T. Walker, 2014).

talk. The speaker can thus be held accountable for claiming a shallow epistemic gradient (Heritage, 2010; Stivers et al., 2011). The requests for confirmation in this section are thus instances of prototypical YNDs (G. Raymond, 2010a). That does not, however, mean that all actions are completely identical. We will distinguish between two types of requests for confirmation based on the sequential environment in which they are produced: in the closing section of the conversation or at the end of a larger sequence.

In the following excerpt the YND is produced when the participants are recognizably moving towards closure of the conversation (Schegloff & Sacks, 1973). The excerpt also serves as an example of a prototypical sequence initiated by a YND: confirmation simply by means of a polar response particle is treated as a relevant next action. The YND (in lines 5 and 6) formulates an agreement that was made a few minutes earlier in the conversation (data not shown), and the speaker uses specific lexical items to show that she holds the information to be true and that she bases her knowledge on prior talk. The excerpt is from the end of a telephone conversation in which Loes has called Karel, her boyfriend. Earlier in the conversation, Loes had asked whether Karel could come over on Friday for her mother's birthday. He had, however, already made plans to play soccer with his friends. Because he had to come on Saturday anyway, they agreed that he will sleep at her place on Friday.

(2) BM–09:26.4–09:38.9 [A]

```
01  Loe     .hh hEE maar ik zie je ↑morgen,
                hey but  I  see you tomorrow
             .hh hEY but I'll see you ↑tomorrow,
02           we houden effe contact?
             we keep just touch
             we'll keep in touch?
03           (0.7)
04  Kar      ↓ja. (.) °pr[ima°.]
              yeah     fine
             ↓yeah. (.)°f[ine°.]
05  Loe ->                [  wan]t e::h dan  kom  je  ↑dus  nadat
                             because    then come you  thus after
06      ->   je  met  de  jongens bent geweest.
             you with the guys    have gone
                           [becau]se e::h ↑so then you'll come
             after you've been out with the guys.
07           (0.7)
08  Kar      ↓j:a.
              yeah
             ↓y:eah.
09           (0.2)
```

```
10  Loe    oké  gezellig.=.h geef ik ↑dat [ook  effe] door
           okay lovely       give I   that also just  through
11         aan me ouders;
           to my parents
           okay lovely.=.h I'll pass ↑that [ also   ] along
           to my parents;
12  Kar                                   [(      )]
                                           [(      )]
13         (1.0)
14  Kar    ↑oke:. leu:k.
            okay  neat
           ↑oka:y. nea:t.
```

Loes articulates their plans to meet the next day and proposes that they keep in touch in lines 1–2 with which Karel agrees.[6] They thereby collaboratively move towards closure of the conversation (Schegloff & Sacks, 1973). In this conversation-closing sequence, Loes uses a YND in lines 5–6 requesting Karel to confirm that he will come over after he has gone out with the guys—that is, on Friday after he has played soccer. Karel only provides a confirming response particle ja, which Loes accepts as an adequate next action both with her sequence-closing third in line 10, and by saying that she will provide that information to her parents.

Loes designs her YND in line 5–6 to show that she is in a relatively knowing position. She prefaces the turn with *dan* ("then"), which in this case does not have a temporal but a summative function. Furthermore, she uses the adverb *dus* ("thus"), which, while frequently used to mark some understanding as inferred from prior talk (see Heritage & Watson, 1979), is used here more generally to treat the formulated agreement as mutually known. Furthermore, Loes' turn has a final falling pitch contour, which, at least here in the case of yes/no-type inquiry, also seems to index that Loes is relatively certain (Couper-Kuhlen, 2012). These turn constructional features are in line with the sequential placement of the YND: Loes requests confirmation after she and Karel have already discussed and agreed on the formulated plan. She is not adding anything new to the interaction, but simply requesting confirmation on their earlier agreement. Confirming is thus all that Karel needs to do. The declarative syntax, the various lexical items, the final falling intonation, and the minimal response all show an orientation by both interactants to a shallow epistemic

[6]Loes implements her proposal also with declarative word order, and Karel's response consists of more than a yes/no-type particle. However, the action implemented with the YND is a remote request: Karel's turn is in fact a minimal way of committing to a remote request (Houtkoop-Steenstra, 1985; Lindström, 2017).

gradient.

In the following two excerpts ((3) and (4)) we see two more examples of confirmation requests where a yes/no-type particle is treated as an adequate response. In both cases the YND is designed as a reformulation of a request for information or itemized news enquiry (Button & Casey, 1985) that was implemented earlier with a yes/no-type interrogative. The speaker is thus recognizably returning to the start of the sequence or topic (Schegloff, 2007, p. 184). Both YNDs are thus produced in different sequential environments from the one in (2): the YNDs in (3) and (4) are done as part of an ongoing sequence, whereas the YND in (2) returns to an already closed sequence.

Excerpt (3) is from a telephone conversation between a mother and son. The son is enrolled in a boarding school and they have discussed some mundane aspects of life, such as his homework. The YND we are interested in here is in line 15. Directly preceding excerpt (3) Jan has asked when he can come aboard his parents' boat, and Jan closes that topic with a sequence-closing third in line 1. In line 2 the mother then uses interrogative syntax to ask whether Jan was on time for the train the day prior to the conversation. The mother treats the following—affirmative—answer as requiring some elaboration by responding with *jah* ("yeah") with a slight rising pitch and asking whether the distance to the station was not very far (both in line 5). After a brief discussion of the distance to the station, the mother in line 29 readdresses the issue of whether Jan was on time, but this time with declarative instead of interrogative syntax. In line 30 Jan responds to this question with a simple type-conforming answer (*j:a:h*).

(3) HMSC/294/328 [A]

```
01  Jan    okay.=
           okay.=
02  Mot    =was  je  op tijd gistere   voor de  tre↑in:?
            were you on time yesterday for  the train
           =were you on time yesterday for the tra↑in:?
03         (0.6)
04  Jan    e:h: ja↓::h. >°jajah.°=
                yeah      yeahyeah
           e:h: yea↓::h. >°yeahyeah.°=
05  Mot    =j↑ah was 't nie zo ve↑r:
            yeah was it not so far
           =y↑eah it wasn't that fa↑r:
06         (0.4)
07  Jan    neu↓:. 'k geloof  dat  het dertig
           no      I believe that it  thirty
           no. I think it was about thirty
```

```
08          kilometer ↓was. °↓f<toch nog wel.
            kilometer  was      PRT  yet still
            kilometers. °↓f<yet still
09          (.)
10  Mot     t↑och ↓nog:
            PRT    still
            y↑et ↓still
..          [15 lines omitted]
26  Mot     ja↑:
            yeah
            yea↑:h
27          (0.3)
28  Jan     (jah)°↓ja
             yeah yeah
            (yeah) °↓yeah
29  Mot ->  maar je  was  in ieder geval wel ↓°op tijd.
            but  you were in any   case  ADV   on time
            but you were ↓°on time at least.
30  Jan     j:a:h
            yeah
            y:ea:h
31          (.)
32  Mot     oké.
            okay
            okay.
33          (0.2)
34  Jan     jah?
            yeah
            yeah?
35  Mot     nouh, verder  heb  ik geen    bijzonder(s).
            well  further have I  nothing remarkable
            well, I've got nothing else remarkable to tell.
```

The mother's YND in line 29 is recognizably designed as a return to her sequence-initiating action from line 2. Not only does the YND address the same issue—whether Jan was on time for the train—but it recycles most of its lexical design (see Schegloff, 2007, 2011). Furthermore, through *maar* ("but"), *in ieder geval* ("anyway"), and *wel*[7] her YND is designed to convey that Jan's being on time was the primary locus of the preceding talk. With in ieder geval she treats the immediate prior talk about the distance to the train station as subordinate to Jan being on time (see Ferrara, 1997 on the dismissive *anyway*). This contrast is emphasized by *wel* (Hogeweg, 2009) and *maar*. That is, without *wel* the

[7]Untranslatable adverb. It functions as a sort of polar opposite of niet ("not"). In English this is typically communicated by emphasizing the finite verb: "but you WERE on time for the train" (Hogeweg, 2009; C. W. Raymond, 2016).

turn would still convey the mother's understanding that Jan was on time; *wel* is used to show that based on the prior talk this was not necessarily expectable. Finally, *maar* is used as a sequential conjunction: it shows that the mother is "is resuming an activity that was abandoned in the talk that led up to [the prior turn]" (Mazeland & Huiskes, 2001, p. 144). In other words, *maar* marks that the speaker is returning to a sequence from which the participants had moved away.

The turn-constructional features of the utterance in line 29 work together to initiate closure: by marking the utterance as a return to the main point (using *maar* and *in ieder geval*) and claiming a relatively knowing position with the YND and the turn-final falling intonation (Heritage, 2012a; G. Raymond, 2010a), the mother shows that she considers her information request, implemented with a yes/no-type interrogative in line 2, adequately addressed. The mother is recognizably returning to the start of the sequence, treating any further talk on the topic as no longer relevant. She thereby launches a sequence-closing sequence (Schegloff, 2007). Jan collaborates by doing only a minimal confirmation in line 16, which is received with a sequence-closing *oké* ("okay").

Excerpt (4) shows a similar situation in which a YND readdresses an issue that was introduced in the conversation by means of an interrogative request for information, and gets a simple type-conforming answer. The conversation takes place between a young boy (Stewie), his grandparents (Bonnie and Chris), and another man (Brian). For the past minute, Stewie has been talking about his vacation with his parents in a very enthusiastic manner following an invitation to tell by Bonnie (*was 't leuk* ("was it fun")—data not shown). In lines 3–5, Bonnie summarizes Stewie's narrative. In lines 4 and 7, Stewie produces a minimal confirmation.

(4) CE2608/444/456 [V]

```
01  Ste     mjah.
             myeah.
02           (0.6)
03  Bon ->   du:s 't was wel 'n hEele mooie vakAntie [die ]
             so   it was ADV  a very  nice  vacation  that
             so it was a vEry nice vacation [that ]
04  Ste                                              [j:a,]
                                                      yeah
                                                [y:eah]
05  Bon ->   jullie gehad hebbe.
             you.PL had   have
             you've had.
```

```
06          (1.12)
07  Ste     ja,
            yeah
            yeah,
08          (0.3)
09  Bon     hmm
            hmm
10          (0.3)
11  Bon?    ((kucht))
            ((coughs))
12          (0.7)
13  Bri     ja  't   weer    dat  is 'n- 'n toch wel
            yeah the weather that is        PRT  ADV
14          behoorlijk [daar
            decent      there
            yeah the weather is pretty decent over [there
15  Chr                [ja
                        yeah
                                                   [yeah
```

As in the previous excerpt, the YND is designed as a return to the start of the topic, changing the syntax from interrogative to declarative. And here too the YND gets a minimal type-conforming response that is followed by a sequence-closing third (*hmm*, in line 9), after which topic transition is possible. After a 1.0s lapse (lines 10–12) Brian provides a general assessment about the weather over there which does not develop the topic beyond anything that was already said by Stewie, and it is only minimally acknowledged.

But while Bonnie's YND also constitutes a move towards sequence closure, it does so in a different way from the mother's YND in the previous excerpt. Bonnie prefaces her YND with *dus* ("so"), and thereby shows that she is formulating the prior talk (Heritage & Watson, 1979), and continuing an ongoing sequence. Compare this with the mother's YND that was prefaced with *maar* to signal resumption of an abandoned sequence. Bonnie also assesses Stewie's vacation from his own perspective: he and his parents must have enjoyed the vacation. Such a summary-assessment has been shown to be closure-implicative (Drew & Holt, 1998; Jefferson, 1984), and this is indeed the way Stewie treats this particular turn: he only produces a minimal response.

So the means in (3) and (4) are different: Jan's mother uses *maar* to show that she was resuming an abandoned sequences, whereas Bonnie uses *dus* to show that she is providing a summary-assessment of the immediate prior talk. The goal of both YNDs, however, is the same: Bonnie's YND is the first pair part of a sequence-closing sequence, just like the mother's YND. Both return to the start of the sequence, using declarative syntax instead of interrogative to

address the same issue, and both treat confirmation by means of a yes/no-type particle as the relevant next action. These YNDs thus share a set of distinct features and constitute a specific practice for requesting confirmation.

In this section, we discussed three examples of YNDs that only get a confirming, type-conforming response. The analysis presented here is in line with Lee's (2015) finding that because a declarative encodes a shallow epistemic gradient, a knowing position, it requests only confirmation. But there is more to the story apart from encoding of an epistemic stance: they all return to an earlier part of the conversation; either a sequence that has already been closed as in (2), or the start of the same topic or sequence as in (3) and (4). And it is precisely because these YNDs re-address a prior turn that they request only confirmation. In this way the speaker also behaves in line with his epistemic responsibilities (Stivers et al., 2011) which we will demonstrate further in the next section, by showing that YNDs that do not re-address a prior turn make relevant more than confirmation, or at least actively create an opportunity for the recipient to provide additional talk.

2.4 YNDs that elicit more than confirmation

In the previous section we discussed YNDs that make relevant only confirmation as a next action. We argued that this is not just because these YNDs index a shallow epistemic gradient (Lee, 2015; Park, 2012), but also because they were also designed to recognizably return to a prior action (Schegloff, 2007). In this section we will show YNDs that elicit more than confirmation. By elicit we mean that the speaker has not requested this elaboration in a way that makes him/her accountable for having done so (Sidnell, 2017b). This is similar to how a my-side telling seeks an account without requesting one (Pomerantz, 1980) or how demonstrating a problem is not asking for help, but can be a step towards recruitment (Kendrick & Drew, 2016).

The YNDs in this section bear some similarities to the cases we discussed in the previous section: they address recipient-oriented events, index a knowing stance, and make relevant confirmation. There are, however, crucial differences: (i) in each case the speaker addresses a recipient-oriented event that has not been discussed in the conversation so far and cannot be inferred from the preceding talk, and so (ii) the YNDs in this section are not designed as a return to a prior action. In fact, as we will show, they frequently launch entire new sequences, although this is certainly not true for all cases.

We will begin our analysis by showing two YNDs that are oriented towards

a very specific type of elaboration: one an explanation (5), the other an account (6).[8] Although in both cases the speaker seems to make use of at least some design features to make clear that more than confirmation is being sought, they also rely heavily on the sequential environment.

Consider the following case in which the speaker formulates a prior belief about the recipient that contradicts what the recipient has just said. The recipient should confirm the prior belief and explain why there is no actual conflict. The excerpt is from a conversation between two friends, Francine and Hayley. Francine has been telling about the previous evening, when she went to watch the final of the national soccer championship on a big screen in the city. Later that night the winning team was greeted by fans, among them Francine, as they arrived in town via a street called De Singel. Before the team's homecoming, Francine went to a few clubs. She recounts the events in chronological order: she has already said she had watched the match, and she is in the middle of listing the clubs she had visited, but she has not said in this exchange that she also had gone to the Singel.[9]

(5) GL1–01:07.3–01:30.1 [A]

```
01  Fra     en  toen gingen we naa:r; (.) ↑molly:,
            and then went   we to          Molly
            and then we went to (.) ↑molly:,
02          (0.6)
03          .h en  toen gingen we naa:r; (.) ↑paddy:s,=
               and then went   we to          Paddys
            .h and then we went to (.) ↑paddy's
04          =en  daarna     ben ik nog  uitgeweest bij aspen;=
             and afterwards am  I still went.out   at  Aspen
            and then I went out at aspen
05          =dus (.) °ik heb [°(wel)°°
             so       I have   ADV
            so (.) °I have [°(ADV)°°
06  Hay                      [>oh je  bent ook  nog
                               oh you are  also still
07      -> uitgeweest<;=maar >je  bent toch ook  nog<
            went.out     but   you are  PRT  also still
```

[8]Explanations and accounts are near synonymous, but we distinguish between the two in the following way: an explanation is aimed at resolving some understanding problem, whereas an account provides the reason for some behavior.

[9]We have left *toch* untranslated. In its position here, in the middle of a clause, there is no simple English translation. It is typically used in what Foolen (1994) calls a *drieslag* ("three strikes"). One speaker takes a position, which is subsequently challenged by the recipient. After that challenge, the speaker repeats his position, this time using the particle toch to show that s/he is sticking to a position that has been challenged.

```
08      -> naar de  ↑singel gewee:st;
           to   the  Singel went
                        [>oh you went out as well<;=but >you
           toch[7] also went< to the ↑singel;
09         (0.5)
10  Fra    .hh ja   maar ik ging om (.) elf- half elf
              yeah but  I  went at          half eleven
11         ↓weheg,
            gone
           .hh yeah but I left at (.) eleven- ten thirty,
12         (0.9)
13  Hay    dat  noem ik niet ↑uitgaa:n.
           that call I  not   going.out
           I don't call that ↑going out.
14         (0.9)
15  Fra    nee: najah
           no   well
           no: well
```

In line 4 Francine introduces Aspen, a large nightclub, by saying that she went out (*uitgeweest*).[10] That Francine went out is treated as news by Hayley in lines 6–7: she repeats part of Francine's prior turn prefaced with *oh* (Maynard, 1997). In her subsequent turn, which is the turn we are interested in, she checks whether Francine went to the Singel, which Francine confirms. Francine elaborates briefly by explaining that she left at half past ten. Hayley then challenges Francine's use of the term *uitgaan*, which to her means does not mean leaving at ten thirty; that's too early.

Both from the sequential position in which Hayley produces her YND in lines 7–8 and from its design, it becomes clear that she is seeking more than just confirmation. She responds to Francine's telling by formulating specifically what she did not know, treating a part of Francine's telling as news which Francine has not designed as such: Francine has been listing clubs, but Hayley calls attention to Francine having gone out. So she has already displayed that might be interested in more than just confirmation. Hayley's following TCU should be understood in relation to this: she checks whether Francine went to the Singel, having just learned that she went out. By using both the particle *toch* and the conjunction *maar* ("but") she shows that she considers the two incompatible: with *toch* she treats Francine attending the homecoming as a

[10]The precise meaning of *uitgaan* depends on the context. It is frequently used in a way similar to *clubbing* in English, where it means frequenting more than one club, although it could also mean visiting a single club. And Francine, in fact, seems to use it for the specific nightclub she went to, Aspen. Its vagueness actually is the source of Hayley's problem as can be seen in her turn in line 13.

prior belief—she did display this belief earlier in the talk—that has somehow been challenged (Foolen, 1994), and with *maar* she projects that her TCU in lines 7–8 is contrastive. Hayley thus treats Francine's prior turn as somehow contradicting her prior belief, and this provides Francine with the opportunity, and possibly even the obligation, to rectify the situation. In the very next turn Francine complies by not just confirming, but also providing an explanation for how she could do both.

The problem as it turns out is what it means to go out. After Francine has confirmed that she went to the homecoming and explained that she left Aspen at half past ten, Hayley states that she would not call that—that is, leaving at half past ten—going out.

Like the cases we discussed in the previous section, Hayley's use of a YND conveys her commitment to the belief she formulates: she takes a relatively knowing stance. But she is not just looking for confirmation of something she already suspects. Hayley has not designed her turn as a return to a prior action, but to convey that a prior belief has been challenged by the prior talk and in this way she seeks more than confirmation: she requests an explanation for the perceived contradiction between the news that Francine provides and her own prior beliefs.

The following case also shows a speaker who uses a YND to claim epistemic access to a recipient's domain, but does not return to a prior action. And here too the speaker elicits more than confirmation: in this case an account. In excerpt (6), Wendy and Melanie are on the phone. They have been talking about Wendy's upcoming exams and a trip they are planning to take together. Wendy closes the latter topic in line 1 with a sequence-closing *oké*. She then says that there was something else she wanted to ask in line 2, demonstrating that she considers the prior topic finished and that there is room for topic transition. After failing to remember in line 6, she initiates a new topic in line 8 by mentioning that Melanie is not coming home the next weekend using a YND. Melanie confirms with a type-conforming *nee*, and after a 0.5s pause, continues with an account for why she is not coming home the following weekend.

(6) BN1–03:17.3–03:37.9 [A]

```
01  Wen    #oké:::h#.=
            okay
           #oka:::yh#.=
02         =en  wat  wilde  ik nou ook  alweer nog   meer?
            and what wanted I  now also again  still more
           =and what else did I want to?
03         (.) vragen?
```

```
                ask
            (.) ask?
04          e:::hm,
            e:::hm,
05          (1.9)
06          °↓ah (.) ik weet het niet meer°.
              ah     I  know it  not  anymore
            °↓ah (.) I can't remember°.
07          (0.9)
08      -> maar je  komt dus dit  weekend niet thuis;
            but  you come so  this weekend not  home
            but so you're not coming home this weekend;
09          (0.8)
10  Mel     nee:.
            no:.
11          (0.5)
12          nee ik heb e::h een borrel met  allemaal oud
            no  I  have    a   drinks with all      former
13          huisgenootjes,
            housemates
            no I'm having e::h drinks with a bunch of former
            housemates,
14          (0.2)
15  Wen     °ja°
            °yeah°
16  Mel     en  ik moet    zondag gewoon ↓hockeye:n,
            and I  have.to Sunday just    play.hockey
            and I have to play hockey on sunday.
17          (0.5)
18  Wen     °oh[ja.° ]
             oh.yeah
            °oh[right.°]
18  Mel        [°dus°] (0.2) e::hm >ja   dat  is een beetje
                 so                yeah that is a   bit
19          onhandig<    om heen en  weer  te gaan.=
            inconvenient to back and forth to go
               [  °so° ] (0.2) e::hm >yeah that's a bit
            inconvenient< to go back and forth.=
```

Wendy and Melanie have not discussed Melanie's plans for the weekend in this specific conversation. Nonetheless, Wendy uses *dus* ("so") in the design of her YND, with which she treats it as previously mentioned or talked about that Melanie is not coming home. Crucially, she claims in this way that while Melanie's plans for the weekend may fall in Melanie's epistemic domain, it is a domain to which Wendy also has access. She shows that she knows—that is, she does knowing—when her claim of epistemic access has not been licensed

in the prior talk (see Turner, 2012). By doing so in an environment that is topic-shift implicative Wendy elicits more than just a type-conforming *nee*. But not just any type of elaboration will suffice. Notice that Wendy formulates a negative action, something Melanie is not going to do. This is similar to what Schegloff (1988a, p. 120) calls "a noticing of a negative event." Schegloff, however, discussed noticings where the speaker had visible access and this is not one such case: Wendy formulates an event that is not going to happen. But the practice still works in a similar way: Wendy formulates behaviour that is in some way deviant from what can be expected—although not necessarily a *failure*: Wendy later says that without Melanie she'll be able to study better (data not shown)—thereby eliciting an account for that behaviour. So both the sequential position of Wendy's YND and its design project that Melanie should do more than confirm.

In the previous two cases, the type of response that was sought was partly made clear through the design of the first pair part: in (5) Hayley uses *toch* to index a conflict between Francine's prior talk and her own beliefs, and in (6) Wendy formulates a negative event for which Melanie bears responsibility. The next case is different: in it the speaker simply formulates an action that the recipient is going to perform. This is still understood by the recipient as not just making relevant confirmation, but also as creating an environment to provide additional talk. We will argue that the recipient understands the YND in this way, because the YND is produced following closure of a prior topic. Like in excerpt (6), the speaker has addressed a recipient-related topic in an environment that is topic-shift implicative, thereby not just initiating a new sequence, but a new topic as well (see Button & Casey, 1985; Schegloff, 2007). But unlike excerpt (6), the YND does not project a specific type of elaboration.

Diane has been telling about an upcoming training camp of her rowing team for which she is going to Venice, where she will also have some time to explore the city. After some reciprocal assessments, Susan provides a closing assessment in line 1 (*chill* is frequently used in Dutch talk-in-interaction as an assessment, especially by young adults, and means something like *relaxed* or *nice*). She then moves on to a new topic in lines 5–6 using a YND: Diane's plans to go for a run with her brother. As in the previous case, the knowledge claim that is made with the YND has not been licensed in prior talk; Diana has so far not told Susan that she is going for a run with her brother, and yet Susan treats it as known.

(7) KS1–06:44.8–07:12.3 [A]

```
01  Sus    .HH o:h maar wel chill (zeg)
```

```
                oh  but  ADV chill  say
           .HH oh but that's chill
02         (.)
03         .h (.) MAAR [ehm]
                      but
           .h (.) but [ehm]
04  Dia                [(hm] mm)
                      [(hm] mm)
04         (0.4)
05  Sus -> jIJ gaat dus  zo          hardlo[pen m]et je
           you go   thus in.a.moment running    with your
06      -> broer?
           brother
           so you're going for a [run   w]ith your brother
           in a moment?
07  Dia                                    [#ja:#]
                                             yeah
                                    [#yea:h#]
08         (0.8)
09         j(h)a hu .Hh
           yeah
           y(h)eah hu .Hh
10         (0.2)
11         best ↑grappigh: huhu: .H
           quite funny
           kinda funny huhu .H
12         >moet    alleen even kijken want<   ik heb  hier
            have.to only   just see    because I  have here
13         echt<  totAAl  geen:, hardloopkleren  ofzo.
           really totally no     running.clothes or.something
           >just have to see< because I really have no
           running clothes here or something.
14         (.)
15         (moet    eens kijken) of #we <er#gens  ↑ie:ts
            have.to just see     if  we  somewhere something
16         (.)
17         hebben>, .hh #maar# denk het ↑wel
           have        but think it  ADV.
           (have to see) if #we <some#where have something
           else>, .hh but think so.
```

The initial response by Diane in line 9 is slightly delayed, possibly because she had already provided confirmation in line 7, but she subsequently does more than confirm: she provides an assessment in line 11 and says that she has no appropriate clothes (lines 12–17). How Diane confirms in line 9 projects that she is going to produce more than just the response particle: she says *ja* in a laughing way and follows with a laughter token (*hu*) and a loud inbreath.

It is thus clear from her confirmation that she takes Susan's YND not just as a request for confirmation, but as an invitation to tell, that is, as a topic proffer. Although her initial uptake in line 9 provides only confirmation, its design still shows that Diane embraces the topic and thus does a preferred next action (see Schegloff, 2007).

Unlike excerpts (5) and (6), there seems to be nothing in the turn design of Susan's YND that makes it recognizable as projecting more than just confirmation. She simply formulates something Diane is going to do, treating it as known with the YND and as previously talked about with *dus*. In other words, she simply claims knowledge about a recipient-oriented event. But this is precisely how topic proffers work: Susan offers a topic to Diane without actively launching or developing it by (i) addressing a recipient-oriented event after a prior topic has been closed, (ii) formulating what she already claims to know, and (iii) not returning to a prior action (Schegloff, 2007, p. 170; see also Button & Casey, 1985). The function of a topic proffer, at least when implemented with a YND, is thus primarily grounded in its sequential placement.

Although topic proffers do not necessarily request elaboration through linguistic means, participants do orient to these YNDs as projecting more than confirmation. Consider the following excerpt where the topic is not taken up by the recipient. In the subsequent talk both participants show through their actions that confirmation alone was not what the speaker was after: some form of elaboration is pursued and resisted, and thus treated as noticeably absent.

Prior to the data shown, there is an extensive sequence in which Marie has been complaining about a project she has to do, a complaint Anne treats as unjustified. After some discussion, Marie says that it is generally not fun to have to do things when you do not support them, broadening her complaint beyond her specific situation. This seems to constitute a move towards topical closure (see Drew & Holt, 1998). Anne minimally confirms in line 2, and Marie herself only produces a *maar ja* ('but yeah'), showing that she is not going to develop her complaint any further.

(8) DK2–12:09.5–12:27.4 [A]

```
01  Mar     maar ja: .hhh [(   )]
            but  yeah
            but yea:h .hhh [(   )]
02  Ann                   [na:h  ] das    waa:r.=
                           well    that's true
                          [we:ll] that's true:.=
03       -> =en eh ↑morgen   heb  je  met  jan ↑klaas nog
              and   tomorrow have you with Jan  Klaas yet
```

```
04      -> je   afspraak?
           your date
           =and eh tomorrow you have your date with
           jan klaas?
05          (0.4)
06  Mar     >jA<
            yeah
           >yEAH<
07          (1.7)
08  Ann     o:ké; [   j]A  is ook  gezellig.=
           okay      yeah is also fun
           o:kay; [  y]EAH is also fun.=
09  Mar           [(ja)]
10          =>ja   ja   ja<. [ d]a- da- £dat  weet ik niet£,
             yeah yeah yeah             that know I  not
           =>yeah yeah yeah<. [   t]ha- tha- £that I don't
           know£,
11  Ann                     [ja]
                              [yeah]
12  Mar     £dat  zie ik wel£. ghuhu
            that see I  ADV
           £I'll wait and see£. ghuhu
13          (0.2)
14  Mar?    .h
15          (0.3)
16  Ann     nou  ja  ↑goed dat  zou   gezellig kunnen
           well yeah fine that could fun      can
17          zi[jn.
           be
           well yeah ↑fine that could be fun
18  Mar       [£het [zou gezellig kunnen worden ja£.
               it   could fun    can    become  yeah
             [£it [could maybe become] fun yeah£.
19  Ann             [   °(<         >)°    ]
20  Mar     ghuhaha[ha
21  Ann            [°ja°
                    yeah
                   [°yeah°
22          (.)
23  Mar     .H #ja#. .H nee.
               yeah    no
           .H #yeah#. .H no.
```

First note that the YND in lines 3–4 is produced in a sequential environment similar to the one in excerpts (6) and (7). In lines 1–2, both Marie and Anne produce turns that do not expand the preceding sequence and instead move towards closure (Schegloff, 2007). At that point, Anne produces a YND to

which Marie responds in line 6 with a simple confirmation (*ja*).

In the subsequent talk, however, Anne shows that she was in fact looking for more than confirmation. First there is a 1.7 second silence after Marie's initial response. By not continuing her turn, Marie shows her orientation that Anne should speak next, whereas Anne, by keeping silent, shows her orientation that it is in fact Marie who should continue. When no elaboration is forthcoming, Anne provides what could be interpreted as a sequence-closing third: an *oké* with an assessment. But the design of her assessment does not constitute a closing move: (i) the *oké* and the assessment each have their own intonation contour, (ii) the assessment is prefaced by the polar response particle *ja*, and (iii) the assessment is almost fully clausal instead of consisting of just the relevant adjective (compare with Loes's *oké gezellig* in line 14 of excerpt (2)). Rather than moving towards sequence closure, Anne's turn provides the terms along which Marie can provide further talk: she does another attempt at launching the topic, treating Marie's minimal confirmation as a dispreferred response, as resisting the proffered topic. Marie also treats Anne's assessment as a second try, but her uptake is again dispreferred. With her multiple saying she actively resists the line of inquiry that Anne continues with her assessment (Stivers, 2004). Furthermore by refusing to commit to the assessment in lines 10 and 12 she demonstrates her unwillingness to talk on the matter. Despite all this, Anne again probes for elaboration in line 16–17, but Marie resists yet again. After this third failed attempt at getting Marie to talk about her planned date, both move towards sequence closure.

Notice that Anne attempts to establish a new topic in a very specific environment: not just following possible sequence closure, but following a troubles-telling. As was noted by Jefferson (1984) participants have a hard time keeping a conversation going after a troubles-telling and thus frequently move into closings. But Jefferson also noted that one way to keep the conversation alive is for the recipient of the troubles-telling, in this case Anne, to recognizably launch a new, other-attentive topic. And this is precisely what Anne does, and a for Marie potentially positive topic to boot.

Here we clearly see that Anne's YND in lines 3–4 was done as a topic proffer, but one that is not embraced by Marie (see Schegloff, 2007). By responding with just the response particle *ja*, that is, by designing her turn to be minimal, Marie demonstrates her unwillingness to produce more talk on the topic (Button & Casey, 1985; Schegloff, 2007). Furthermore, by producing a very short *ja*, Marie might actually show that she is not going to produce more talk in an environment in which more talk is relevant (G. Raymond, 2010b).

In excerpts (6)–(8) a YND is produced in a position where topic transition

is relevant. That is, if the prior topic stays closed, the participants will either have to move to a new topic or towards conversational closure (see Button & Casey, 1988). By producing a YND that does not return to a prior action but instead recognizably launches a new sequence by addressing a new issue, the speaker invites the co-interactant to not just confirm, but to provide more talk. In case of (6), this additional talk should take the form of an account, which is made recognizable through the design of the YND, whereas in (7) and (8) the recipient simply has to demonstrate a willingness to talk on the topic by doing what Schegloff (2007, p. 171) calls an expanded response. In these two cases the YNDs function as a topic proffer.

In this section we have argued that participants use declarative utterances in which they claim access to a domain of the recipient to do more than request confirmation: they seek elaboration. The difference between the YNDs in this and the previous section is not in their morphosyntactic design. Instead, while the YNDs in the previous section were all designed to recognizably return to a prior action and formulated some inference or upshot of the prior talk, the YNDs in this section addressed beliefs or understandings that, while also recipient-related, had not yet been discussed in the prior talk.

Because their morphosyntactic design does not differ from YNDs that request only confirmation, we would not wish to argue that these YNDs request elaboration, that is, that the recipient has a normative obligation for providing elaboration and can be sanctioned for not doing so. For example, simply because in excerpt (7) Diane provides more than confirmation, the elaboration was not necessarily requested. Moreover, as was also argued by Schegloff (2007) and Button and Casey (1985), and as have we shown again in excerpt (8): resistance to a topic proffer is done through a confirmation, that is, by providing what seems like the preferred next action. But as we also showed: in such cases participants can and do treat elaboration as noticeably absent. So instead of recognizably requesting elaboration, these recipient-oriented YNDs create an environment in which the recipient can volunteer additional talk, meaning that the speaker is not accountable for requesting that elaboration, and neither is the recipient accountable when s/he does not provide it (Sidnell, 2017b).

The question is then why do participants not make their action recognizable as requesting elaboration through the turn design. That is, why do participants create an environment in which elaboration is relevant, but it is made to look like it is volunteered instead of requested. For example in excerpt (8), Anne could have asked if Marie is looking forward to her date if that is what she is interested in. One possibility is that these YNDs address delicate topics, and that a YND is the prime way to request elaboration without accountably doing so.

This was particularly clear in excerpt (8) where Anne and Marie had to move out of a troubles-telling, and similarly asking for accounts and explanations could very well be delicate actions. Such an analysis would also be in line with some my-side tellings discussed by Pomerantz (1980) and Schegloff's (1988a) noticing where a speaker formulates some behaviour by the recipient s/he observed, and is thus claiming access to the recipient's experiences that has in no way been licenced by the recipient. There are cases like (7), however, where it is not clear why the topic, in this case running, would be delicate to the participants. Clearly further work is still required.

2.5 Discussion

Earlier work on declarative yes/no-type initiating actions (YNDs), or declarative questions in more vernacular terms, has argued that they make relevant only confirmation, and that they do so because of the epistemic stance they index: a declarative is used to convey confidence in the formulated belief or understanding (Lee, 2015; Park, 2012; G. Raymond, 2003, 2010a). In Dutch, however, confirmation is not always enough. Focusing only on YNDs that receive a type-conforming (G. Raymond, 2003), preferred response, we found that almost half of 125 YNDs in our corpus get some form of elaboration. In fact, in some cases where elaboration is not provided as a next action, it is treated as noticeably absent and pursued.

In order to explain these findings, we have investigated the differences between YNDs that receive only confirmation and those that receive a more elaborate response. While these two types of YNDs cannot be distinguished based on their morphosyntactic design, they do differ in both their sequential placement and epistemic context.

YNDs that implement simple requests for confirmation formulate a belief or understanding that has already been discussed and established (excerpts (2)–(4)), or is at least highly salient (excerpt (1)). When launching a sequence-closing sequence, for example, we find that they recognizably return to the action with which the sequence or topic was launched by recycling large parts of its turn design, but change the syntax from interrogative to declarative (see Schegloff, 2007). This recycling is in fact what makes these YNDs so suitable for launching a sequence-closing sequence. By returning to the start of the topic or sequence and claiming a knowing position, the speaker conveys that that initial action—for example, an itemized news enquiry (Button & Casey, 1985)—has been adequately addressed. Further elaboration of the topic is

therefore no longer needed, and confirmation is a way for the recipient to go along with this closing move.

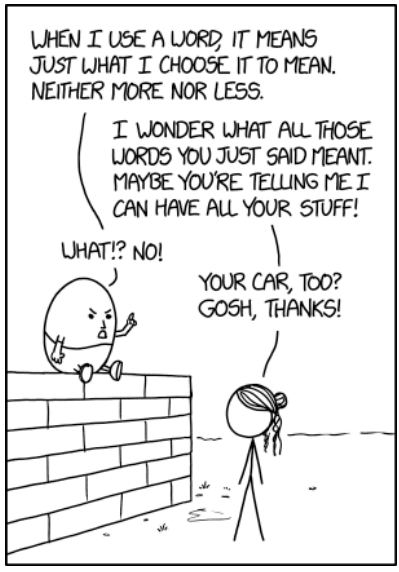
YNDs that seek more than confirmation on the other hand formulate a belief or understanding that has neither been addressed, nor made salient in the prior talk. In other words, the speaker formulates a recipient-oriented prior belief or understanding, and thereby claims access to a domain of the recipient when that access has not been licenced in the ongoing interaction (see Turner, 2012). The type of elaboration that a speaker elicits varies and in the case of topic proffers no specific elaboration is even being sought: the primary aim of a topic proffer is to establish a topic of talk, and the recipient simply has to display a willingness to talk on whatever topic has been proffered. But embracing a topic means doing more than confirming. In fact, as was demonstrated by Button and Casey (1985), itemized news enquiries that simply offer a recipient-oriented topic can elicit the telling of news. And so while the primary task of topic proffers may be different from YNDs that elicit a specific type of elaboration, they still need to be dealt with through some expanded response.

We have shown in this paper that when YNDs request confirmation, they can also create an opportunity for the recipient to provide some form of elaboration, and in fact, when that elaboration is not provided it can be pursued. Furthermore, we have shown two ways in which participants distinguish between YNDs that request only confirmation and YNDs that also elicit some form of elaboration. First, confirmation is treated as adequate when a speaker recognizably returns to a prior action and thus formulates a belief or understanding that has already been established or made highly salient in the prior talk. Elaboration is sought when speakers address a prior recipient-oriented belief that has not been locally addressed. Second, confirmation-oriented YNDs are produced in and create different sequential environments. They recognizably return to a prior, sequence-initiating action, thereby projecting sequence closure. Elaboration-oriented YNDs on the other hand set up a contrast with prior talk, or come in a position where topic transition is relevant, after closure of a prior sequence and topic.

2.6 Conclusion

Our analysis has shown that although participants do orient to the relatively knowing epistemic stance indexed with declarative yes/no-type initiating actions (Heritage, 2012a; Lee, 2015; Park, 2012; G. Raymond, 2003, 2010a), the response recipients provide can only partly be accounted for with the epistemic

stance alone. Based on these findings, we have suggested, following Sidnell (2017b), a direction in which the action-formation problem (Schegloff, 2007) can be further explored. Accountability is at the heart of this line of research. Participants have various means of achieving an interactional goal. In some cases, possibly most cases, they pursue these goals in a way that makes them accountable for having done so, but sometimes they are more circumspect. How and why participants manage to avoid accountability is a question that bears further investigation. Achieving some interactional outcome without the risk of being held accountable for pursuing that outcome is not just reserved to politicians: it is useful for and applied by all participants in talk-in-interaction.



You're saying that the responsibility for avoiding miscommunication lies entirely with the listener, not the speaker, which explains why you haven't been able to convince anyone to help you down from that wall.

Image courtesy of xkcd.com

CHAPTER 3

Getting into topic talk: a classification of topic proffers

3.1 Moving into topical talk

The previous chapter has shown that sequence plays an important rule in the process of action formation and ascription. YNDs in which the speaker formulates a belief or understanding derived from prior talk are oriented to as simple requests for (re-)confirmation. These YNDs are produced either to propose closure of some larger activity or to move back into an activity, after which another action can be produced that would otherwise be disjunctive from the ongoing talk.

Alternatively speakers can formulate a belief or understanding that has previously not been addressed, nor made salient. In that way speakers make clear that they are seeking not just confirmation, but also some form of elaboration. These YNDs can be used to challenge a prior turn or launch a new topic. While these two actions differ from each other in their turn design—challenging YNDs often have turn-initial *maar* and/or turn-medial *toch*—sequential position also plays an important role: challenging actions are next-positioned to the action they address, whereas topic-initiating actions are produced after (a proposal for) activity closure. These YNDs also differ in the type of elaboration they invite and receive: challenging YNDs are used to elicit explanations or accounts, wheres topic proffers provide the recipient with an opportunity to produce a telling.

Of these three categories of YNDs, topic proffers are the least understood. Schegloff (2007) provides a rough description, but provides few details of how topic proffers come to be designed and understood *as* topic proffers. It is also unclear how they are distinct from what Button and Casey (1985) called Itemized News Enquiries. Schegloff (2007, p. 169f.) argues that topic proffers differ in that they (i) offer a topic to the recipient (ii) without actively launching that topic. But Button and Casey (1984, p. 185) say that itemized news enquiries, being a type of topic nomination, "may present a possible topic initial to be talked to. *The current speaker does not talk to that topic in the turns but provides for the next speaker to develop the topic* [emphasis added]." So both with topic proffers and itemized news enquiries speakers merely provide recipients with a topic on which they can produce more talk.

Not only is it unclear what characterizes topic proffers as a distinct type of action, little is known about their turn design. Schegloff (2007, p. 170) states that they can be implemented with *wh*-interrogatives, yes/no-type interrogatives, and declaratives. What a speaker achieves by choosing either format is unclear. From Button and Casey (1985) it is also clear that not all topic-initiating actions are equal; there are different types of topics speakers can address and these are brought up through different means. But again, what these means are and how they show what type of topic proffer the speaker instantiates is left unspecified.

In this chapter I aim to further our understanding of how participants move into topic talk, by focusing on two grammatical formats: declaratives and yes/no-type interrogatives. Both make relevant confirmation, but they are used in different sequential environments and differ in how they characterize the social relationship between the participants (G. Raymond, 2010a). This chapter does not investigate how the linguistic design of topic proffers might contribute to these utterances being understand as such. As was shown in the prior chapter, the function of topic proffers is not grounded in their turn design, but in their sequential placement.

3.1.1 Coherence in interaction

One of the most basic observations about conversational interaction is that people do not just produce talk; they make their contributions coherent, both with their own talk and that of their interlocutor(s) (Sacks et al., 1974; Goffman, 1983; Chafe, 1994). The manner in which this coherence is achieved has often been sought in the concept of (*discourse*) *topic*,[1] that which the participants

[1] As I am not interested in the linguistic concept of topic vis-a-vis the focus of a sentence, or the topic of a single sentence, I will simply use topic to mean the more conventional discourse

talk about. Participants make their contributions coherent by addressing the same topic as that of the prior turn(s).

While such an analysis may make intuitive sense (Chafe, 1994, p. 121), the evidence that participants use topics to achieve coherence is less than stellar (Schegloff, 1990). One of the main problems is that topic is hard to define as an analytical concept (G. Brown & Yule, 1983; Korolija & Linell, 1996; Riou, 2015). That is not to say that attempts have not been made. Scholars have formalized topic in terms of for example propositions (Ochs Keenan & Schieffelin, 1975) or referents (Geluykens, 1993). But such analyses rely on the analyst's interpretation of what would be the central focus (G. Brown & Yule, 1983; McLaughlin, 1984), and can at best help in determining what might be topics.

For similar reasons cognitive approaches to topic are inherently problematic. The topic as an "aggregate of thoughts" (Chafe, 2015) or "center of cognitive focus" (Riou, 2015) requires an analyst's interpretation of what participants are thinking about. But the participants themselves can for their understanding of their co-participant's behavior only ever rely on that observable behavior itself. Their behavior may of course evidence and be an index of what they are focusing on, but this interactional focus cannot, should not, and need not be treated as corresponding to their cognitive focus. In order to understand how they achieve coherence in talk, we as analysts should also rely exclusively on the observable behavior, not the thoughts and intentions that may or may not be behind that behavior (Schegloff, 1996a)

So the concept of topic is already a major analytical obstacle. Capturing the topic of some stretch of talk is also tricky because participants rarely formulate what they consider the topic to be—and when they do, speakers do specific work by formulating the topic in a specific manner (Heritage & Watson, 1980). Moreover topics tend to shade from one into the next (Bergmann, 1990; Crow, 1983; Hobbs, 1990; Jefferson, 1984; Sacks, 1995; Schegloff & Sacks, 1973), making it often unclear whether the participants are talking about one or multiple topics. The result of this is that the level of inter-coder reliability in marking the boundaries between topics is often pretty low (e.g., Riou, 2015; McLaughlin, 1984; Crow, 1983), and it is not necessarily clear if these are topic boundaries or more general activity boundaries (see Schegloff, 1990). Indeed, analyses such as those by Riou (in press, 2017) have a good level of intercoder reliability, but because topic is assumed to be relevant for each turn at talk, every move that looks like topic shading and any change in activity tends to be

topic.

coded as a new topic, without evidence that the participants actually perceive such a change themselves.

An additional problem with many approaches is that they attempt to establish what the topic of a stretch of talk is ex post facto by taking that stretch as a whole. But topics are co-constructed in interaction; they are negotiated and re-established with each turn at talk (Button & Casey, 1984, 1985, 1988; Howe, 1991; Geluykens, 1993; Riou, 2015; Mondada, 2001; Goffman, 1983). This means that when we treat topic as the end product of a series of utterances, we come to treat conversation as a coherent text whose structure was a priori planned by the participants. Such an approach ignores the local contingencies that participants deal with on a turn-by-turn basis (Schegloff & Sacks, 1973; Sacks et al., 1974).

3.1.2 Topic boundaries

The various problems with using topic as an analytical concept have led many researchers to investigate not how coherence is achieved through topics, but how topics get launched and closed. Instead of focusing on what the topic is, research is aimed at describing how participants do topic talk. Researchers have focused on various aspects of topic-initiating actions. One group of researchers has investigated the relation between the topic and the participants: is it self-oriented, other-oriented, we-oriented, encyclopedic, or setting-oriented (Svennevig, 2000; Maynard, 1980; Maynard & Zimmerman, 1984). Others have focused on the sequential and linguistics practices that are used to launch topics and organize topic talk (Button & Casey, 1984, 1985, 1988; Schegloff, 2007; Geluykens, 1993; Riou, 2015, in press; Jefferson, 1984, 1993). Others again have dealt primarily with how speakers make clear that a topic shift is coming (Howe, 1991; Fraser, 2009).

Despite this body of work, our understanding of how topics get started is still very limited. For example, Schegloff (2007, p. 170-171) argues (i) that topic proffers are recurrently recipient-oriented, (ii) are often implemented with yes/no-type interrogatives, and (iii) that dispreferred responses are designed to be minimal, whereas preferred responses are expansion-implicative. But all question-type actions, not just topic proffers, treat the recipient as the one with authority on the subject (Heritage, 2012a). Furthermore, as Schegloff (2007) notes as well, topic proffers can also be implemented with *wh*-interrogatives and declaratives. And minimality of the response is also not an adequate criterion, because the recipient can reject a topic by demonstrating a lack of access, thereby producing a turn that is not designed to be minimal.

The aim of this chapter is to move towards a more concrete understanding of how topic matters to conversational participants. To achieve this I focus on topic proffers of past and future events, thereby adding to Button and Casey's (1985) work on ongoing events. I argue that topic proffers are implemented with one of three practices. First I show that speakers can presuppose that the recipient has news to tell, and reveal a belief of what that news will be. I call these Other's-News Announcements. Second, I show that speakers can presuppose that there is news, without claiming to already know what the news will be. I call these News Requests. Third, I show that speakers can implement what I call an Agnostic News Inquiry. With these inquiries speakers do not presuppose that the recipient has news to tell, but simply provide a topic on which there might be news.

3.2 Data

The data used in this chapter consist of the 21.5hrs of recorded phone conversations that were discussed in chapter 2, section 2.2 on page 66. As I used strict selection criteria for determining which cases would be studied, it was necessary to gather data from the entire corpus to develop an analysis.

Following Button and Casey (1984, 1988) I initially looked for topic-initiating inquiries in two sequential environments where participants either had to (re-)launch a new activity or move towards conversational closure. Environments, in order words, where sequence-initiating, expansion-implicative actions would be necessary to sustain the interaction. As I was interested in topic proffers, I only considered those inquiries in which the nominated topic was clearly recipient-oriented, meaning I excluded inquiries that were recognizable as pre-tellings or pre-announcements; for example, *Heb ik je nog verteld dat* . . . ("Have I told you that . . . ") (Terasaki, 1976/2004; Schegloff, 2007).

First, I considered the first inquiry after the opening sequence of the call (see Schegloff, 1968), what Schegloff (1986) calls the "anchor position" (see also Couper-Kuhlen, 2001a). This is the position for a first topic to get launched. I take a somewhat different view of this position though. Schegloff (1986, p. 116) characterizes the anchor position as the first position after an exchange of *how are you*s, but most conversations in my data were launched with only a reciprocal greeting sequence (see table 3.1). I therefore treated the first pair part of an adjacency pair with which the participants recognizably moved out of opening as the anchor position.

Second, I considered inquiries that were asked in environments that were

Table 3.1
Frequencies of conversational openings

Structure	Frequency	
Greetings only	144	(61.5%)
Reciprocal 'how are you'	45	(19.2%)
Non-reciprocal 'how are you'	41	(18.5%)
Summons-Answer only	4	(1.7%)

recognizably closure-implicative. That means I looked at inquiries following extended silences (Maynard, 1980; Hoey, 2015; Sacks et al., 1974; Couper-Kuhlen, 2004); minimal uptake or recipient commentary (Jefferson, 1993; Svennevig, 2000); (summary) assessments (Goodwin & Goodwin, 1987, 1992; Stivers, 2008; Jefferson, 1993), summary-formulations (Schegloff, 2011; Heritage & Watson, 1980; see also chapter 2) repetitions, generalizations or reformulations (Svennevig, 2000); figurative expressions (Drew & Holt, 1998); shared laughter (Holt, 2010); and closing-implicative particles like *oké* ('okay') (Beach, 1993; Schegloff & Sacks, 1973) and stand-alone *dus* ('so') (Local & Walker, 2005; G. Raymond, 2004).

I also included inquiries that were designed to recognizably launch a new activity. Speakers achieve this either by using a misplacement marker (see Schegloff & Sacks, 1973) or using the preamble of a turn to either formulate the new topic as in (1) or foreshadow that the speaker will launch a reciprocal topic as in (2) (Maynard & Zimmerman, 1984; Svennevig, 2000):

(1) GB2–02:46.1–03:02.1

```
01  Egb -> en  je  ↑knie dan. heeft die  het een beetje
           and your knee then has  that it  a   little
02         gister   gehouden of_
           yesterday kept    or
           and what about your knee. did it hold up a bit
           yesterday or_
```

(2) BN1–01:05.2–02:06.5

```
01  Sus -> [hee] en  ↑jij; e:::h >was het nog leuk bij
            hey  and  you.SG     was it  yet fun  at
02         de  bock<.
           the Bock
           [hey] and you; e:::h >was it fun at the bock<.
```

From the resulting selection I removed one case where the quality of the recording was insufficient. The final selection consisted of 98 topic proffers: 23 Other's-News Announcements, 35 News Requests, and 40 Agnostic News Inquiries.

3.3 Topic-initiating actions

The aim of this chapter is to begin exploring the various practices that participants in talk-in-interaction use to implement topic proffers of past or future events. I understand topic proffers here in a very broad sense: any initiating action in which the speaker nominates a recipient-oriented topic (Schegloff, 2007; Button & Casey, 1985) as a means of launching topic talk. The projected response is for the recipient to embrace the topic by providing news, a telling, or in a general sense bring the speaker up-to-date on past or future events or experiences.

I argue that all 98 topic proffers in my collection can be categorized as follows. Speakers can use practices in which they presuppose that the recipient has news to tell. If speakers make such a presupposition they can implement either what I call an Other's-News Announcement or a News Request. If speakers do not presuppose that there is news to tell, they implement what I call an Agnostic News Inquiry.

First I discuss Other's-News Announcements. These are topic proffers that are recurrently, although not exclusively, implemented with declarative word order—21 out of 23 cases. When dealing with a past event, the speaker "headlines" (see Button & Casey, 1985, p. 21) some recipient-oriented news, thereby inviting the recipient to provide the news. With upcoming activities on the other hand, speaker formulate that activity thereby inviting the recipient to talk about their plans for it.

Subsequently I discuss News Requests. These are topic proffers that are almost exclusively implemented with polar interrogative word order—34 out of 35 cases. The speaker provides a candidate assessment of a past or upcoming activity of the recipient, thereby inviting the recipient to confirm and elaborate on that assessment.

Finally I discuss Agnostic News Inquiries. Like News Requests they are implemented with polar interrogatives, but instead of providing a candidate assessment, the speaker inquires whether the recipient has done or will do some activity. In cases of a preferred response, the recipient should provide a report of the activity.

3.3.1 Other's-News Announcements

I begin my analysis by discussing what I call Other's-News Announcements. This is a type of topic proffer in which speakers demonstrate knowledge of a recipient-oriented event either by providing the headline of a past event, or by formulating a recipient's upcoming event. In doing so speakers invite the recipient to confirm and elaborate.

First, consider a prototypical case of an Other's-News Announcement of a past event. Prior to extract (3) Johan has been telling about an upcoming trip to Amsterdam. After both have done a pass (Schegloff & Sacks, 1973, p. 304) Aron repeats in line 2 that Johan will have to get up early using a soft voice, thereby orienting to sequence closure. He then moves to a new topic, articulating that he heard that Johan schooled[2] Jacco, a mutual friend. Johan embraces the topic by confirming emphatically in line 7, and telling the details.

(3) MK1–06:15.6–06:43.7

```
01  Aro     .hhh
02  Joh     jaha,=
            yea:h,=
03  Aro     °(al) (.) al      zo vroeg ↑opstaan°,
              already already so early  get.up
            °(already) (.) already get up ↑so early°,
04        -> en  ik heb  gehoord dat  je  jacco les    hebt
          -> and I  have heard   that you Jacco lesson have
05          gegeven_
            given
            and I heard that you schooled jacco_
06          (0.4)
07  Joh     jaha en  heel hard.=ik heb e::h (0.2) .hhh vijf één
            yeah and very hard  I  have               five one
08          met >poolen verslagen<,
            with pool   beat
            yeaheah and big time.=I have e::h (0.2) .hhh beat
            him >playing pool< by five one,
09          (0.3)
10  Aro     nice,
            nice,
11          (1.0)
12  Joh     en  ook  nog: vier één met ↑darten.=dat  was wel:
            and also yet  four one with darts   that was ADV
```

[2] *Les hebt gegeven* translates more literally to 'taught a lesson'. It is translated as 'schooled', however, since what is conveyed here is not so much punishment, but humiliation, and 'schooled' when used as slang conveys precisely that (see Urban Dictionary entry for *schooled*: https://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=schooled).

```
13          verbazingwekkend.
            surprising
            and also by four one at darts.=that was surprising.
```

In line 4 Aron formulates a partial report of a past event, thereby suggesting that there is more to tell, that is, he headlines recipient-oriented news (Button & Casey, 1985). By providing a partial report, Aron both reveals his belief that Johan has news to tell while also claiming to know what the news is, at the least the main thrust of the news.

Aron provides this partial report after possible sequence closure, meaning that in order to keep the conversation going, Aron will have to use his turn to launch a new activity or re-open the previous one (Button & Casey, 1988). Both practices he uses—articulating a partial report and doing so after possible sequence closure—make his turn recognizable as not just requesting confirmation, but as a topic proffer: Johan should respond by providing a telling (Schegloff, 2007). Johan also treats Aron's turn as a topic proffer by first emphatically confirming in line 7, saying he beat Jacco resoundingly, and immediately elaborating. He embraces the topic (Schegloff, 2007).

As the news is Johan's to know and tell, Aron encroaches on Johan's epistemic domain (Stivers & Rossano, 2010). By formulating his proffer as hearsay (Pomerantz, 1980)—*ik heb gehoord dat* . . . ("I heard that . . . ")—Aron deals with this breach: he knows because he was told by a third party. But formulating his knowledge as hearsay is not just a way for Aron to license his knowing stance: it is a way of licensing the topic in general. Aron need not have been told by Johan that he was planning to hang out with Jacco. The event may even have been unplanned. If Johan did not tell Aron that he planned to hang out with Jacco, Aron is accountable for knowing about it. This means that even had Aron taken a relatively unknowing stance with an interrogative—for example, by asking *Did you have fun playing pool with Jacco?*—he may still have needed to show how he knew that Aron played pool with Jacco. Hearsay thus not only licenses his knowing epistemic stance, but also his knowing about the event at all and thus his topic proffer.[3]

[3]Goffman (1983, p. 31) proposes that this is a general interactional problem that participants have to deal with. He gives as an example that two friends may go to see the same movie independently of each other. If they see each other at the theater, they can simply ask the next day what the other thought of the movie. But if the seeing was not reciprocal, then they will have to do some interactional work first. One has to state first that he or she saw the other at the theater, before asking what the other thought of the film. Formulations such as *I heard that* are thus not only used to mitigate a knowing stance, but as an evidential (Chafe, 1986; Kärkkäinen, 2006).

We find evidence for this analysis by studying cases where speakers do not use a hearsay formulation in their topic proffer. Consider for example excerpt (4). Mark is completing a reciprocal *how are you* sequence lines 1–3, saying that despite being busy he cannot complain. After a 1.2s silence, Klizan proffers a new topic in lines 5–6: Mark losing his wallet.

(4) DK1–00:20.7–00:37.6

```
01  Mar     een beetje druk #maar e:h#
            a   bit    busy  but
            a bit busy #but e:h#
02          (0.6)
03          nou:.=mag ↑niet klagen.
            well  may  not  complain
            well:.=can't complain.
04          (1.2)
05  Kli ->  e:h mAAr: e:h je  was je (.) portemo↑nEE:
                but       you was your   wallet
06      ->  verloren offe[::h
            lost     or
            e:h bUt e:h you had (.) lost your wallet
            or e:[::h
07  Mar                  [.hr hrm
08          (0.2)
09          ja:  klopt. (.) .h was e:h afgelope::n
            yeah right         was     last
10          vrijdag? (0.5) was ik in de  STAD,
            Friday         was I  in the city
            yeah that's right. (.) .h was e:h last
            Friday? (0.5) I was in the CITY,
11           (0.3)
12          wA:n[t
            because
            be:cau[se
13  Kli         [vrijdag de  DERtiende  ook  nog hè
                 Friday  the thirteenth also PRT TAG
                  [friday the THIRteenth too right
```

Klizan's topic proffer is similar to Aron's in (3): it conveys a belief that Mark has news to tell, as well as a headline of what that news is. He invites Mark to tell about a topic, by showing what he already knows about it. But unlike Aron, Klizan does not use a hearsay formulation to show how he knows that Mark lost his wallet. Instead he begins his turn with *maar* ("but"), which functions as a sequential conjunction (Mazeland & Huiskes, 2001): it resumes talk that was abandoned earlier, in this case talk from a prior conversation.[4] By

[4] *Maar* can also be used as a locally contrastive conjunction. Mark's assertion that the can't

using *maar* in this way and no other practices to convey how he knows, Johan implies that he knows because Mark told him that he lost his wallet, and he interactionally assumes that Mark will remember this.

These examples—(3) and (4)—show that participants keep track of what they know about their interlocutors, and what their interlocutors know they know. Speakers can license their knowledge claim as in (3) to convey that they have knowledge about their recipient, but that they did not gain that knowledge from that recipient. By not using a hearsay formulation but simply formulating what they know about their recipient, speakers tacitly convey that what they claim to know they were told by that recipient. They can make use of additional linguistic tools to make this more explicit, as Klizan does in (4), but this is not a consistent practice in my data. The design of Other's-News Announcements thus evidences what (Heritage, 2012a, p. 25) calls "an epistemic ticker".[5]

In both cases shown the speaker implements the Other's-News Announcement with declarative word order. This is unsurprising as with Other's-News Announcements speakers claim to know at least part of the news and declaratives are generally used to take a knowing stance (Heritage, 2012a; G. Raymond, 2010a). But I also found two cases where the Other's-News Announcement is implemented with an interrogative yes/no-type initiating action, what G. Raymond (2003) calls a yes/no-type interrogative (YNI). In these cases the YNI is not used to take a less knowing stance (cf. Heritage, 2012a; G. Raymond, 2010a), but to convey for example surprise.

The following excerpt is a case in point. Bart is treasurer for a student organization. When taking over from his predecessor, he noticed that a large sum of cash had gone missing. He is now calling his parents to tell them he has found the money. Prior to the data shown, he has already informed his mother, and he is now talking to his father, Chris. In line 1 Chris is closing talk on Bart's

---

complain is not in line with having lost his wallet, and thus with Klizan's understanding of how Mark must be doing. Klizan, however, does not design his turn as a counterfactual: speakers in Dutch recurrently use the adverb *toch* when designing counterfactuals (Foolen, 1994, see also the discussion in chapter 2). Moreover Klizan uses turn-final *offeh* ("or uh") as an epistemic downgrade (Drake, 2015), also suggesting that he is asking and not challenging (see Heinemann, 2008).

[5]Studies have long shown that starting at a very young age children keep track of what they expect others to know and not know, based on shared audio and visual experiences (e.g., Moll, Carpenter, & Tomasello, 2007, 2014; O'Neill, 1996). In fact, the Social Brain Hypothesis posits that human brain size and our capacity for language evolved to facilitate social grooming with groups that are large relative to other primates (Dunbar, 2003). The capacity to keep track of what we know of others and share with others, which surfaces in social interaction in various ways, thus seems a fundamental aspect of human sociality.

exams and he proffers the new topic with a TCU-initial *maar*. Here *maar* is not used to resume talk that was abandoned earlier, although its function is similar. The missing cash was the reason for call and that has been displaced by other news, namely that Bart passed an exam. With *maar* Chris takes up that reason for call (see also Schegloff, 1986).

(5) KR1–04:42.34–05:31.1

```
01  Chr -> hè  dan e:h haal >je  nog   iets.    =maar wat ho-<
           PRT then   pass  you still something but  what
02       -> eh wat  hoor ik e:h.=^hebben jullie nog   ergens
              what hear I       have   you.PL still somewhere
03       -> geld  gevon[den^?
           money found
           then you'll at least pass something.=but what hea-
           eh what is it that I hear e:h.=^did you find money
           somew[here^?
05  Bar          [ja:  dat  geld  zat gewoon eh dat- omdat
                  yeah that money sat simply        because
06          we: vol- e::h omdat   we die l- (da-) die  kast
            we           because we that         that cabinet
07          zo e::h heen en  weer  hebben geschud zeg maar, .hh
            such   back and forth have   shaken  say so
08          was die  d'r   blijkbaar  d'r   achter gevallen of
            was that there apparently there behind fallen   or
09          uit 't l- uit  de  la:    ofzo.
            from       from the drawer or.something
                 [yea:h that money was simply eh that- because
            we full- e:h because we that d- (th-) shook that
            cabinet back and forth you know, .hh had that
            apparently fallen behind it or out of the d- out
            of the drawer or something.
```

Chris proffers the topic that Bart found the money using a hearsay formulation and a YNI. While he could use the format of his hearsay formulation—*wat hoor ik* ("what do I hear")—to implement an actual request for information—there could be a noise that he cannot identify and Bart might be able to—it is used here as a type of rhetorical question; it displays his surprise at the news. Chris shows this by latching on the actual topic proffer, instead of for example a candidate answer of what he could be hearing.

The proffer itself is implemented with a YNI. But because it is preceded by the hearsay formulation—and because Chris can be expected to have overheard the news—the YNI is not used to take a relatively unknowing stance. Instead Chris treats the news as surprising. Bart shows why it is surprising: they—the *we* in line 6 means him and his father—had turned the cabinet in which they

were supposed to find the money upside down. In other words, they had already done a thorough search and not found it.

This case shows that speakers can use a polar interrogative to implement Other's-News Announcements, even if the declarative is the more conventional format. The word order is thus not necessarily indexical of some epistemic stance. In other words, while speakers tend to use declaratives as those reinforce the knowing stance they take with an Other's-News Announcements, they can use alternative practices in order to deal with the local contingencies of the sequence, in the case of (5) surprise.

In the Other's-News Announcements discussed so far the speaker proffers a past event. The practice works very similarly for upcoming events: by displaying their knowledge of an upcoming recipient-oriented event, speakers invite the recipient to talk about that event. Consider for example excerpt (6). Richelle has been telling Loeka about a mutual friend who has decided to break up with her boyfriend, a development both Richelle and Loeka are very happy about. Loeka re-assesses the news in line 2, before moving to a new topic in lines 3–4: Richelle's date with Lennie later that day.

(6) DV1–04:52.4–05:14.6

```
01  Ric     .pt joa::[h
                 yeah
             .pt yea::[h
02  Loe              [↑jA  jo:h; oh ^↑goed nieuws^;
                       yeah man  oh   good news
                     [↑yEAH ma:n; oh ^↑good news^;
03      -> ^en: (.) vanavond danne::h zie jij lennie weer
            and     tonight  then     see you Lennie again
04      -> ↑toch^? hh
            PRT
           ^an:d (.) tonight thene::h you'll see Lennie again
           ↑right^? hh
05          (0.2)
06  Ric     .H JA   VANMID↑DAG;    ikkeh [ik moet   even m'n]
              yeah this.afternoon I      I have.to just my
07  Loe                                  [      o::h        ]
08  Ric     onderz( )je <afmaken>? m'n theoretisch kader
            research     finish    my  theoretical framework
09          ben ik nu  aan het e:h afmaken;  en  dan  ga
            am  I  now on  it      finishing and then go
10          ik (.) vanmiddag,     want    hij is aan 't
            I      this.afternoon because he  is on  it
11          verhuize::, en  z'n kamertje aan het inrichten
            moving      and his  room    on  it  furnish
12          enzo,    dan  ga 'k 'm  even he[lpen   e]n .hh
```

```
           and.such then go I  him just help    and
13  Loe                                    [oh leu:k]
                                            oh nice
14  Ric    daarna     gaan we uit e:ten, maar ik ben nu
           afterwards go   we for dinner but  I  am  now
15         alweer  zenuwacht(h)i:g om 'm  te ↑zien.
           already nervous        to him to  see
06-15 Ric  .H YEAH THIS AFTER↑NOON; I e:h [I have to just
07  Loe                                   [o::h
    Ric    finish my research? I'm currently finishing my
           theoretical e:h framework; and then I'll go (.)
           this afternoon, because he's moving::, and
           furnishing his room you know, then I'll go just
           he[lp    a]nd .hh afterwards we'll go for dinner,
13  Loe      [oh nice]
    Ric    but I am now already nerv(h)ous to ↑see him.
```

In line 6 Richelle responds enthusiastically to Loeka's topic proffer. Although her uptake does not come immediately, there is barely more than a beat of silence between Loeka's proffer and Richelle's response. Moreover, Richelle's increased loudness and immediate continuation into an actual telling reveal a willingness and even enthusiasm to talk on the topic. Although Loeka responds with *oh* in line 7, which is often used as a sequence-closing third (Heritage, 1984a; Schegloff, 2007), it receipts the embedded correction (Jefferson, 1987) *vanmiddag* ("this afternoon") instead of *vanavond* ("tonight"), not the answer to the proffer.

Loeka implements her topic proffer by formulating an upcoming event using declarative word order and turn-final *toch*, thereby revealing her belief that Richelle will be going on a date and could provide some talk on the matter.[6] While she does not headline news as speakers do when doing an Other's-News Announcement of a past event, she does reveal what she already knows as a means of getting Richelle to provide further talk on the matter.

The issue of how the speaker knows about the recipient is not addressed here, and is in fact never addressed in our data for Other's-News Announcements of upcoming events. But as was shown by Heritage (2012b, example 5), at least in English speakers can use hearsay formulations to show how they know about the recipient's planned activities. And we see no reason why, given a large

[6]Turn-final *toch* has been taken to be part of a tag question (Englert, 2010). I, however, consider it to simply be a turn-final particle, used to lower the speaker's commitment while also conveying that it is a prior belief (see Enfield et al., 2012). One reason is that unlike the English tags—e.g., *isn't it*—it can also be used in the middle of a clause with a similar effect (Foolen, 1994).

enough corpus, we would not find cases for Dutch as well.

I have shown so far that recipients of Other's-News Announcements treat them as topic proffers by not just confirming, but also elaborating. Doing only confirming, a minimal response, would not adequately deal with the first action. In cases where recipients do provide only confirmation, elaboration is pursued; it is treated as noticeably absent (Schegloff, 1968). As an illustration, consider (7).[7] Marie has been complaining to her mother, Anne, about an event she had to organize for her rowing club, an event she thought was nonsense. She moves towards sequence closure in line 2 with *maar ja* and Anne provides an affiliating closing assessment in line 3. She subsequently proffers a new topic: Marie's planned date with Jan Klaas the next day.

(7) DK2–12:09.5–12:27.4

```
01  Ann     ja
            yeah
02          (.)
03  Mar     maar ja: .hhh [(   )]
            but  yeah
            but yea:h .hhh [(   )]
04  Ann                   [na:h  ] das    waa:r.=
                           well    that's true
                           [we:ll] that's true:.=
05      -> =en eh ↑morgen   heb  je  met  jan ↑klaas nog
            and    tomorrow have you with Jan  Klaas still
06      -> je   afspraak?
            your date
            =and eh tomorrow you still have your date with
            jan klaas?
07           (0.4)
08  Mar     >jA<
             yeah
            >yEAH<
09          (1.7)
10  Ann     o:ké; [   j]A  is ook  gezellig.=
            okay      yeah is also fun
            o:kay; [  y]EAH is also fun.=
11  Mar          [(ja)]
12          =>ja   ja   ja<. [ d]a- da- £dat  weet ik niet£,
              yeah yeah yeah             that know I  not
            =>yeah yeah yeah<. [   t]ha- tha- £that I don't
            know£,
13  Ann                    [ja]
                             [yeah]
```

[7] A more extensive discussion of this excerpt is provided in chapter 2.

```
14  Mar    £dat zie ik wel£. ghuhu
            that see I ADV
           £I'll wait and see£. ghuhu
15         (0.2)
16  Mar?   .h
17         (0.3)
18  Ann    nou  ja  ↑goed dat  zou   gezellig kunnen
           well yeah fine that could fun      can
19         zi[jn.
           be
           well yeah fine that could be fun
20  Mar      [£het [zou gezellig kunnen wo]rden ja£.
                it   might fun    can    become  yeah
              [£it [might maybe become] fun yeah£.
21  Ann            [   °(<         >)°    ]
22  Mar    ghuhaha[ha
23  Ann           [°ja°
                   yeah
                  [°yeah°
```

Marie responds in line 8 to Anne's topic proffer with only the response particle *ja*, thereby doing confirmation. This is followed by a hearably long silence of 1.7s. Here Anne orients to Marie as needing to do more; by not taking up Marie's answer, she treats it as incomplete. When she finally receipts Marie's answer in line 10, she goes on to do a second attempt by providing an assessment, but Marie resists yet again. By doing a multiple saying (Stivers, 2004) in line 12 she resists Anne's course of action, and by subsequently saying that she'll have to wait and see, she claims inadequate access to comply with Anne's topic proffer (see Schegloff, 2007). In lines 18–19 Anne provides a third, and what turns out to be final, attempt by providing the same candidate assessment, but this time merely as a possibility. But Marie resists yet again by providing only confirmation.

This case confirms that as Other's-News Announcements are topic proffers, a preferred response consists of more than confirmation. When a recipient does not elaborate, that elaboration is noticeably absent, and can be pursued. It thus also shows that the dispreferred response is one that is designed to be minimal, what Sacks (1995) calls an answer-length response, and that it can be accounted for by claiming a lack of access (Schegloff, 2007).

I have argued in this section that participants can implement topic proffers by doing what I call an Other's-News Announcement, an action with which speakers (i) presuppose that the recipient has news to tell and (ii) claim to know the news. When introducing past events, speakers articulate a description of what the recipient did or a headline of what happened to the recipient, thereby

eliciting a more detailed telling of the news. When introducing upcoming events, speakers articulate a description of the event, thereby eliciting some telling on that event. In both cases speakers elicit a telling by revealing what they already know about a recipient-oriented topic.

3.3.2 News Requests

In the prior section I have shown that when doing an Other's-News Announcement speakers reveal their belief that the recipient has news to tell and claim to know what that news is. But speakers can also presuppose that there is news without claiming prior knowledge about it. That is, speakers only reveal a belief that the recipient has news to tell, not what the news will be. This is routinely, although not exclusively, achieved by using a yes/no-type interrogative with which speakers provide a candidate assessment. Depending on the type of activity being inquired about, this assessment can be one of either enjoyment (e.g., 'did you have fun?') or success (e.g., 'did it work out?'). Or from another perspective: by using a specific type of candidate assessment speakers categorize the activity they inquire about as either leisure or work.

Excerpt (8) is a case in point. Anne and Fabienne have been talking about how great the weather was the previous day. Anne has said that it must have been God's work and Fabienne agrees in line 1 by providing a full repeat with decreased loudness, thereby seemingly orienting to sequence closure. Anne then indeed moves to a new activity, by inquiring whether Fabienne had fun with Timo[8] at a party both she and Fabienne attended.

(8) VS2–01:06.0–01:26.7

```
01  Fab     °('t) kan bijna  niet anders    nee:.°=
              it  can almost not  otherwise no
            °(it)'s almost impossible otherwise no:.°=
02  Ann -> =^en  was 't nog   gezellig met [timo^_
              and was it still fun      with Timo
            =^and did you still have fun with [timo^_
03  Fab                                     [(°echt°)
                                               really
                                             [(really)
04          (1.0)
05  Fab     °ja   hee:l gezellig°. maar hij had dus >de  hele
             yeah very  fun        but  he  had thus the whole
```

[8]Fabienne's relation to Timo is unclear. She quotes herself as accusing him of chasing girls (data not shown), which suggests that he is not her boyfriend, but the use of *gezellig* does suggest to me that there is some romantic interest.

```
06          tijd< (zo'n)  ban:dje in z'n haar: weet je  nog:?=
            time   such.a band    in his hair  know you still
            °yeah ve:ry fun°. but so he had >the whole time<
            (like a ban:d in his hair: do you remember:?=
07  Ann     =.pt O:h ja   ja:? die ↑bloemen. °band°.
                 oh  yeah yeah that flower    band
            =.pt O:h yeah yea:h? that flower. °band°.
08          (0.6)
09  Fab     ja:  en  dat  was dus  van fleur baran:. >maar op
            yeah and that was thus of  Fleur Baran    but  at
10          gegeven moment<, [had ik dus  gezegd van
            given   moment    had I  thus said   like
            yea:h and so it was fleur baran's. >but so at one
            point<, [I had said like
```

Fabienne provides an emphatic confirmation in line 5, providing both a type-conforming (G. Raymond, 2003) *ja* ("yeah") and an upgrade to *heel gezellig* ("much fun") stressing *heel*. She subsequently tells an anecdote about her and Timo from that night, where she asked him for his headband, which she subsequently lost. In her response she thus embraces the topic proffered by Anne, and they continue talking about Timo and the headband for about a minute.

With her candidate assessment Anne reveals her belief that Fabienne spent time with Timo and can provide some talk on the matter. But she does not formulate what that talk might consist of: she uses a YNI to take a unknowing stance (G. Raymond, 2010a; Heritage, 2012a) and uses no other evidential markers that might suggest otherwise (cf. example (5)). She implements what I call a News Request, projecting that there is news to tell, without conveying prior knowledge of what that news will be.

Another way speakers do News Requests is by inquiring whether some planned activity has been—or will be—successfully completed. In the following extract Richelle has just finished telling extensively about her date—this excerpt takes place about two minutes after excerpt (6)—and in lines 3–4 proposes moving to a new topic by inquiring what Loeka is doing. Before Loeka can answer, Richelle does a News Request, asking if Loeka succeeded in making a recording.[9]

(9) DV2–06:55.3–07:13.7

```
01  Ria     =en  wAt  ben jIJ al[lemaal aan het d]oe:n:;
             and what are you all       on  it  doing
```

[9]She is probably asking about one of the recordings Loeka made for the same class for which she recorded this conversation.

```
            =and what have yOU [been up t]o:;
02  Lan                        [   (         )  ]
03  Ria -> is het nog geLUKt  met  het ge↑spREK     opnE:men
           is it  all succeed with the conversation record
04      -> #van e:h#
            of
           did it work out recORding the conversation
           #for e:h#
05  Lan    ↑jA:::; (0.2) ik had met ↑ton nog   een e:h
            yeah         I  had with Ton still a
06         >gesprek      opgenomen enzO:<   en  eerst toen
            conversation recorded  and.such and first then
07         klapte die helemaal   di:ch:t, (.) .HH (.) en
           shut   he  completely closed               and
08         toeh::n WAS >die helemaal< .Hh zEnuwachtig
           then    was  he  completely    nervous
09         gew#orde:n#; en: (.) mAAr het kwam echt   helemaal
           become       and     but  it  came really totally
10         goe:d.
           fine
05-10      ↑yEA:::h; (0.2) I had >recorded a conversation<
           with ton you know< and at first he completey
           shut dow:n, (.) .HH (.) and then he was >totally<
           .Hh nervous; an:d (.) bUt it really worked out
           quite well.
```

Richelle's News Request is syntactically incomplete—that is, she does not produce what might be called a complete clause: Instead she uses a trail-off (Local & Kelly, 1986) *van e:h* ("of e:h"), signaling the relevance of turn transition. Loeka provides a type-conforming response in line 5 and then tells about what happened while making the recording, thereby orienting to Richelle's inquiry as a topic proffer. In her New Request Richelle displays her belief that Loeka was planning to make a recording, but not whether Loeka succeeded. She thus conveys a belief that Loeka has news to tell, but not whether the news is good or bad, that is, what the news will be.

So far I have focused on News Requests of past events, but as with Other's-News Announcements, News Requests are also used for upcoming events. These are implemented in a manner similar to (8) and (9). Consider extract (10). Karel has been telling Loes that his parents only experienced minor damage to their caravan after a storm, which they both positively assess. Karel launches a new topic in line 2, inquiring whether Loes is looking forward to her mother's birthday.

(10) BM1–03:25.2–03:37.7

```
01  Loe     JA: [  ↑NOU:.  ]
             yeah    PRT
             YEA:H [   WELL:.   ]
02  Kar ->      [(heb  je) a]l     zin  in je   moeders
                  have you already desire in your mother's
03      ->  verjaar:dag?
             birthday
              [(are you) al] ready looking forward to your
             mother's birth:day?
04           (0.2)
05  Loe      .Hh JA:h eh e- effe kijken want e::h jij komt
                 yeah       just see    because   you come
06           ook ↑hè  zaterdag. als  ze 't  vier:t.
             also PRT Saturday  when she it celebrates
             .Hh YEA:h eh j- just see because e::h you're also
             coming right on saturday. when she celebrates it.
07           (0.8)
08  Kar      jA >↑tuurlijk<.
             yeah of.course
             yEAH >'fcourse<.
09  Loe      jA leu- nee leu:k inderdaad.=en  ik zat te denken
             yeah    no  fun   indeed     and I  sat to thinking
             yeah fu- no fu:n indeed.=and I was thinking
```

Karel implements his topic proffer in lines 2–3 with a YNI, providing a candidate assessment for Loes to confirm. In this way he reveals a belief that Loes can provide talk on the matter, but not what that talk might be. And indeed, the talk Loes subsequently provides was clearly not projected or anticipated. After confirming that she is looking forward to the birthday (line 5), she verifies that Karel comes to visit on Saturday (lines 5–6), subsequently proposes he actually comes on Friday and spends the night (line 9 and onwards), and then talks about the gift she is planning to buy (data not shown).

In all cases shown, in fact in 34 of 35 cases, the News Request is implemented with a YNI. The one exception can be seen in (11), where the speaker uses a YND. Inge is a bridesmaid for a wedding the following day and responsible for the wedding cake. In lines 1–2 Marjo introduces that topic by inquiring whether it all worked out with the cake. Inge confirms and explains that her parents took care of it, after which some more talk on the topic ensues.

(11) ZV2–03:48.5–04:06.5

```
01  Mar -> o:h lekker.=hee en  die  taart? dat e:h >dat  is
           oh  nice    hey and that cake   that     that is
02      ->  allemaal gelukt<?=
```

```
            all      succeed
            o:h nice.=hey and that cake? that e:h >that all
            worked out<?=
03  Ing     =JA: ↓dat e:h (.) ja   dat e:h dat- m'n ouders
             yeah that        yeah that         my  parents
04          hebben hem gemaakt dus ik ga zometeen    kijken
            have   it  made    so  I  go momentarily see
05          wat  ik e:h
            what I
            =YEA:H that e:h (.) yeah that e:h that- my parents
            made it so I'm going to see in a moment what I e:h
06  Mar     oh dan  kun je  hem ↑leuk gaan [↑make:n;]
            oh then can you it   nice go     make
            oh then you ↑can go and [make it ↑nice];
```

By using a YND Marjo conveys a belief that Inge has new to tell: Whether or not it worked out with the cake. But note that she does not claim to know how it worked out with the cake, that is, she conveys an expectation of what the news will be, not a belief. This distinction is very subtle, and while it may seem stipulative and therefore relevant only to the analyst, there are some signs that it is also of importance for the participants themselves—not in the least because participants can and are allowed to be protective of their epistemic domains (Stivers et al., 2011; Heritage, 2012c, 2018).

First consider Inge's response. Although she uses the positive polarity particle *ja* with increased loudness, she does not seem to be doing confirming. In her elaboration she says that her parents made the cake and that she has to go and see what she still has to do. Marjo also takes this to mean that Inge still has to decorate the cake.[10] In other words, Marjo's question is in a way disconfirmed as she inquired if it all worked out. Inge's *ja* may only be a way to accept the topic, and not to do confirmation.[11]

Second Marjo puts the topic in the preamble of her turn. I have only seven other cases in which the speaker uses the preamble of a turn to introduce the topic and in each case the speaker subsequently takes a relatively unknowing stance in the topic proffer. While this is too limited a sample to generalize about where and when speakers use the preamble, it is clear that the preamble is parasitical on the prior talk, more so than any turn inherently is. Preamble

[10]Inge says that her parents made the cake, which suggests it's done. But she still plans to decorate it (data not shown). The status of the cake is thus not entirely clear, but it seems that Inge's parents made the base for her to decorate.

[11]Dutch *ja* is far more versatile than English *yeah*/*yes*. It is used to do confirming, and can be a type-conforming response, but it is used for a whole range of other actions as well, and even in response to *wh*-interrogatives.

TCUs consist of either phrases or even single lexical items; their actions have to be understood in relation to the ongoing course of action. Here Marjo is inquiring about the wedding day, and resumes that topic after a short interlude. Prefacing her turn with *en* ("and") makes it recognizable as a next item on that agenda (Button & Casey, 1988; Heritage & Sorjonen, 1994).

Both points provide some evidence that Marjo is not doing an Other's-News Announcement in which she already knows that it worked out, but that, for whatever reason, she is confident that Inge is going to provide a confirming response. She thus expects there to be good news, and indeed conveys a strong expectation, but does not claim to know that Inge will provide good news.[12]

In all the cases I have shown so far the recipient responds by bringing the speaker up to date on the requested news, thereby orienting to the YND as a topic proffer and providing the preferred response. But now consider excerpt (12) from the start of a phone conversation. Benthe has called to talk to her sister, but her niece, Hanneke, answers the phone. After reciprocal *how are you*s, the closure of which can be seen in line 1, Benthe provides what looks like a News Request in the anchor position, by asking if Hanneke enjoyed dinner with her grandparents.

(12) GR1–00:21.0-00:28.9

```
01  Ben     =[moo:i zo- ja (.) pr:i:ma.=geweldig,=
               good     yeah  fine    great
             **=[that's good- yeah (.) fi:ne.=great,=**
02      ->  =heb  je: ^↑gister   nog  lekker bij  opa    en
              have you  yesterday still tasty  with grandpa and
03      ->  oma    gegeten^?
            grandma eaten
            **=did you have ^a nice dinner with grandpa and**
            **grandma yesterday^?**
04          (0.5)
05  Han     jA   hoo:r.=
            yeah PRT
            **sure.**
06  Ben     =o:h #mooi zo#. .slh is eh mama  in de ↑buu:rt?
              oh   good so       is   mommy in the neighborhood
            **=o:h #that's good#. .slh is eh mommy aroun:d?**
```

[12]In this light it might be relevant to consider the distinction G. Raymond (2010a) finds between YNIs and YNDs when used by health visitors. Both are used to address issues about which the visitor does not have any knowledge, but while YNIs can be used to show an interest in the mother's well-being, YNDs are used to treat questions as merely part of a form they have to fill in.

If indeed Benthe implements a News Request, it is not embraced by Hanneke who responds with only a confirmation *ja hoor* ('yeah PRT'). Furthermore, this minimal response is not treated as dispreferred by Benthe who responds with an *oh*-prefaced assessment as a move towards sequence closure (Heritage, 1984a; Schegloff, 2007), and she subsequently makes a switchboard request (see Schegloff, 1979). It thus seems that despite her turn being designed as a News Requests and coming in the anchor position, neither participant orients to it as one. In other words, this seems a deviant case.

While I cannot provide a definitive account of this excerpt, there are at least two possible explanations. First, this is not a deviant case. Notice the turn-final *hoor*. This particle is recurrently used in environments that are expansion-implicative as a means of resisting that expansion: "it is heard as declining doing more talk on the topic" (Mazeland & Plug, 2010, p. 184). In other words, Hanneke's use of *hoor* might reveal her understanding of Benthe's inquiry as not just a request for confirmation, but as a topic proffer, but one on which she is not going to provide more talk. This resistance in combination with the 0.5s delay before her answer might be why Benthe does not make a second attempt.

This account is, however, not entirely satisfactory. First, there is no evidence in the data other than our a priori assumptions about *hoor*—although they are supported by prior research—that either participants understands Benthe's inquiry as a topic proffer. In fact, only the 0.5s delay could suggest that Hanneke provides a dispreferred response. But Benthe latches her uptake in line 6, suggesting that nothing dispreferred is going on. Furthermore, in a similar case, Seuren et al. (2015) found that the recipient of a topic proffer did provide a telling after a *ja hoor*. It was argued there that because the *hoor* has falling intonation it is both affiliating and aligning (see Mazeland & Plug, 2010)—the same applies in (12)—and is thus not produced as a means of resisting a topic proffer.

An alternative account might be that utterances have the potential to be treated as topic proffers, but that this is an interactional accomplishment. As Sacks (1995, volume II, p. 567) puts it: "They [topical sequences] blow up out of a pair." Hanneke could have provided some elaboration, but because she did not, she provides Benthe with a choice between doing pursuit and doing closing. Benthe might be moving towards closure here, because she has called for her sister, not her niece. There is of course no way of knowing. Interaction emerges incrementally, turn by turn, and since no utterance has a fixed meaning or a fixed force—indeed as was argued in chapter 2, topic proffers can be done to avoid accountability (see also Sidnell, 2017b)—participants can change their action on the fly, without necessarily being seen to be doing so. Whatever is

going on, cases such as (12) show that plenty more work remains to be done before we have a clear grasp on topic proffers.

I have shown in this section that speakers can implement News Requests as a type of topic proffer in which the speaker reveals a belief that the recipient has news to tell, but does not claim to know what that news will be. These News Requests overwhelmingly take the form of a candidate assessment, but one that is fitted to the type of activity the speaker is inquiring about. The speaker can categorize the activity as one of leisure by using assessment terms like *leuk* or *gezellig*, or as a chore or task that has to be completed by using for example the verb *lukken*. As the speaker does not convey a belief about what the news will be, almost all News Requests are implemented with YNIs, with which the speaker takes a relatively unknowing stance towards the candidate assessment.

3.3.3 Agnostic News Inquiries

In the previous two sections I have shown that speakers when doing a topic proffer can presuppose that the recipient has news to tell. But in a large number of cases (40/98) speakers use a topic proffer in which they do not reveal a belief that the recipient has news to tell. I call these Agnostic News Inquiries: the speaker takes an unknowing stance with regard to the issue of whether there is news. If there is news, the recipient should not only confirm, but also provide the news.

Consider extract (13). Lies and Pam are two elderly women. Pam has called to ask if Lies received an invitation for a mutual friend's sixtieth birthday. The sequence ends with an exchange of passes (Schegloff & Sacks, 1973, p. 304), two of which can be seen in lines 1–2. Pam then launches a new topic by asking if Lies has worked on the puzzle, presumably the newspaper crossword. In the design of her topic proffer, Pam takes an agnostic stance: she does not presuppose that Lies has made any attempts with the puzzle.

(13) GF1–02:10.8–02:37.6

```
01  Pam     ((snuift)) [°nee:°.
                        no
            ((sniffs)) [°no:°.
02  Loe                [°°(hè)°°
                           PRT
                       [°°(right)°°
03  Pam -> he'  je  nog   wat       aan de  puzzel gedaan, hh=
            have you still something on  the puzzel done
            did you still work a bit on the puzzel, hh=
05  Loe     =ja:: ik heb  maar één woor:dje joh,<en .h (0.2)
```

```
            yeah I  have just one word     INT  and
06          <maar ik heb  er   ↑één:tje>, daar moe'je me straks
            but  I  have there one there have.to.you me later
07          eens mee helpen,=die kom:' uit 't aa dee:, .hhh (.)
            just with help that comes from the AD
            =yea::h I have only one wor:d,<and .h (0.2) <but I
            have on:e>, you have to help me with that later,=it
            is from the AD, .hhh (.)
```

In her response Lies confirms that she has worked on the puzzle, and elaborates that she has only found one word, before talking about a puzzle from the AD, a national newspaper. She thus not only confirms that she has news to tell, but also provides the news. And we see this pattern in all cases where the speaker takes an agnostic stance in their topic proffer: if there is news to tell, the recipient responds by not only confirming that there is news, but by providing it as well, thereby also orienting to the Agnostic News Inquiry as a topic proffer.

In almost half of the cases (17/40) there is no news to tell. Interestingly, these are some of the clearest cases of Agnostic News Inquiries. Excerpt (14) is a case in point. Trudy has called Roos to congratulate her on her birthday. After talking about her birthday, Roos asks in lines 1–2 whether Trudy's offer, presumably for a house, has been accepted.

(14) MS1–02:21.3–02:38.0

```
01  Roo ->             [.hh ^hee en  is jullie e:h^ bod
                             hey and is your.PL     offer
02          al      geaccepteerd.
            already accepted
                    [.hh ^hey and did your e:h^ offer
            get accepted yet.
03          (0.2)
04  Tru     e- NEE. (.) ^nog niet^? ^we hebben nog niks
               no        not yet     we have still nothing
05          gehoord vandaag dus e:[hm:^   ] 'khoop dat  we
            heard   today   so             I.hope that we
06  Roo                           [°(oké)°]
                                     okay
07  Tru     ↑morgen   wat  horen.
             tomorrow hear something
04-07       e- NO. (.) ^not yet^? ^we still haven't heard
            anything today so e:[hm:^    ] I hope that we'll
06  Roo                         [°(okay)°]
    Tru     hear something tomorrow.
08  ???     .hh
09  Roo     ja: ↑spannen[d.
```

```
          yeah exciting
          yea:h ↑exciti[ng.
10  Tru               [dus. ↑maar: komt wel goe- ja   komt
                       so    but   come PRT      yeah come
11        wel goed °joh°.
          PRT good  INT
                       [so. ↑but it'll work ou- yeah it'll
          work out.
```

Trudy provides a disconfirming response in line 4, showing with *nog* ("yet") that she expects that a response to their offer is still forthcoming. She thus has no news to tell. The topic is kept alive for a few more turns, but lacking news, there is little for the participants to do. And in lines 10–11 Trudy recognizably moves towards sequence closure by saying that it will work out, using a reassuring turn-final *joh*.[13]

Roos in her topic proffer reveals some knowledge about Trudy: namely that Trudy has made an offer on a house. She also reveals an expectation that there might be news to tell. By asking the question she treats it as possible that the offer has been accepted, which would be news. But she does not actually reveal an expectation that there will be news, only the possibility thereof. This is what makes her turn an Agnostic News Inquiry as opposed to a News Requests. When using the latter, the speaker reveals a belief that there is news: A confirming response typically conveys good news and a disconfirming response bad news.[14] But the disconfirming response by Trudy conveys a no-news situation. Good news would mean their offer had been accepted, bad news would be that their offer had been rejected—although neither participant seems to treat that as a relevant possibility. Agnostic News Inquiries thus address one of the primary means in which recipients account for dispreferred responses to topic proffers: whether the recipient can provide extended talk.

As with Other's-News Announcements and News Requests, Agnostic News Inquiries can also address upcoming events. Their design differs only slightly from inquiries about past events: instead of using the past tense, speakers use an auxiliary verb to make clear that they are inquiring about a potentially upcoming event. Consider for example (15) in which Lisa asks her father if he and her mother are planning to go boating the coming weekend.

---

[13] *Joh* is an untranslatable address term. Its function depends strongly on its context of use: here it is heareably doing reassuring, because the rest of the turn is designed to do reassuring. But see excerpt (13) where in line 5 it is used in a display of disappointment. It can for example also be used to display something like annoyance: *Hou eens op, joh!* ("Stop it!").

[14] Like medical questions in acute primary care, News Requests are optimized for good news outcomes (see Boyd & Heritage, 2006).

(15) KM1–00:48.9–01:07.5

```
01  Lis -> >gaan jullie nog<  varen   volgend weekend.
            go   you.PL still boating next    weekend
           >are you still< going boating next weekend.
02          (0.2)
03  Sim     ja:  we gaan wel varen. =als 't beetje mooi weer
            yeah we go   ADV boating if  it bit    nice weather
04          is  °(   )°.
            is
           yea:h we will go boating.=if the weather is a
           bit nice °(   )°.
05          (0.5)
06  Sim     [('ksta)       net  eh bij de  haven  om d'r
              I'm.standing just    at  the harbor to there
07  Lis     [oké.
             okay
08  Sim     weer  ↑nieuwe >benzine in te gooien<? Uhu
            again  new     gas     in to throw
06-08       [(I'm standing) just eh at the harbor >to fill it up
07  Lis     [okay.
    Sim     with more gas< again? Uhu
```

Simon confirms that depending on the weather conditions they will go boating and that he is actually making preparations just then. While Lisa might be thought to ask her query because she wants to join and not as a topic proffer, such an ulterior motive does not become apparent in the interaction. They simply close the sequence after Simon has brought her up to date on the state of the boat (data not shown). Both participants thus orient to her utterance in line 1 as a topic proffer, in which she takes an unknowing stance with regard to whether Simon has plans he could tell about, that is, as an Agnostic News Inquiry about an upcoming event.

I have shown in this section that in addition to implementing a topic proffer by revealing a belief that the recipient has news to tell, speakers can also implement a topic proffer by taking an unknowing stance towards the existence of news. Although speakers inherently reveal an expectation that a recipient could have something to tell by doing a topic proffer, that does not mean speakers belief—or do not belief for that matter—that there is news to tell. And this is made clear in the response. Where a disconfirming response to a News Request would convey bad news, a dispreferred response to an Agnostic News Inquiry conveys that there is no news.

3.4 Conclusion

In this chapter I have argued that when speakers nominate a recipient-oriented topic—that is, when they implement a topic proffer—of a past or future event they make use of one of three practices. First, they can reveal a belief that the recipient has news to tell as well as a belief of what that news will be. They do so by using what I call Other's-News Announcements. This term shows that they are both similar to but different from News Announcements in which speakers announce their own news (see Button & Casey, 1985). Second, speakers can reveal a belief that the recipient has news to tell, but only an expectation of what the news will be. I call these News Requests, because speakers request of the recipient that they provide the news. Third, speakers can proffer a topic without presupposing that there actually is news. I call these Agnostic News Inquiries, because like Itemized News Inquiries they nominate a recipient-oriented topic, but speakers take an agnostic stance as to whether there is news.

All three types of topic proffers are double-barreled (Schegloff, 2007, p. 76): speakers use a yes/no-type initiating action (G. Raymond, 2010a) as a vehicle to do topic proffers (see also Sacks, 1995, p. 566ff.). And this is also how they are taken up: recipients generally begin their response by confirming with a yes/no-type particle, before providing some form of telling. In this way recipients show that they are willing and able to provide sustained talk.

The three types of proffers are strongly associated with specific syntactic practices: Other's-News Announcements are implemented primarily with declarative word order (21/23), News Requests are implemented primarily with interrogative word order (34/35), and Agnostic News Inquiries are even exclusively implemented with interrogatives (40/40). This association seems to arise because in all but a few cases speakers use the syntactic design of their proffer to take a certain epistemic stance. The declarative word order is typically used to take a knowing stance, to treat something as a foregone conclusion (G. Raymond, 2010a; Heritage, 2012a), which makes it a fitting practice for Other's-News Announcements as speakers use these to claim that they already know the news. Similarly, the polar interrogative word order is typically used to take an unknowing stance, to treat something as still in question (G. Raymond, 2010a; Heritage, 2012a), which makes it a fitting format for News Requests and Agnostic News Inquiries as speakers use these to claim that they do not know the news or if there even is news. But this relation is not deterministic: there is no one-to-one correspondence between form and function. Every topic proffer is designed to fit the local exigencies of the interaction (Mazeland, 2013; Sacks et al., 1974; Schegloff, 1988a, 1988b); its context, the recipient, the sequential

environment, and so on. And indeed examples (3) and (11) show that Other's-News Announcements can be implemented with YNIs whereas News Requests can be implemented with YNDs, and that these formats can be used differently on different occasions.

3.5 Discussion

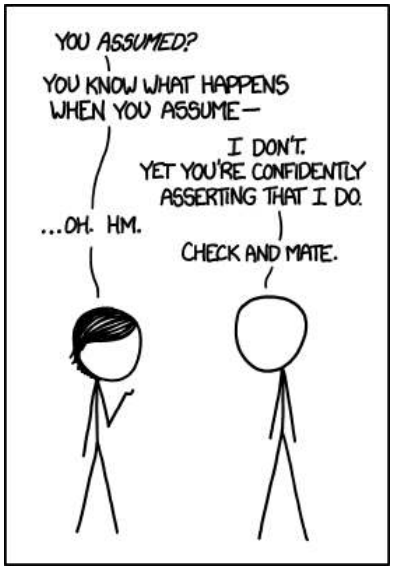
My focus in this chapter has been exclusively on topic proffers that (i) were produced in environments of activity closure (see Button & Casey, 1984, 1988), or that were marked as disjunct with misplacement markers such as *trouwens* ("by the way") (Schegloff & Sacks, 1973); (ii) were implemented with a request for confirmation as their vehicle, that is, either with a yes/no-type interrogative or a yes/no declarative (see G. Raymond, 2010a); and (iii) dealt with activities that had either been (potentially) completed or were (potentially) upcoming.

The reason for this limited scope was three-fold. First, unlike actions and activities, topics are typically not clearly marked and transitions are done as not to be recognizable as topic shift (Crow, 1983; Hobbs, 1990; Jefferson, 1984; Sacks, 1995; Schegloff & Sacks, 1973). I thus focused on sequential environments in which participants would either have to launch a new activity or move to conversational closure (Button & Casey, 1988). Second, by focusing only on requests for confirmation as vehicles, I could more easily compare if and how the syntax was employed differently between the two typical formats: declaratives and polar interrogatives. Third, Button and Casey (1985) had focused extensively on topic nominations of (potentially) ongoing events, and my initial investigation suggested that most of my Dutch data was in line with their analysis.

It should be clear that I have not been able to cover the entire spectrum of topic proffers in this chapter, nor that I have come close to exhaustively analyzing the practices I did discuss. For example, I did not discuss a very common practice for topic proffers: *wh*-interrogatives. I expect that they are used similarly to polar interrogatives, but at the same time they are clearly distinct and further research should address what participants achieve by choosing one format over the other.

What I did show is that doing topic talk is an important part of social interaction. Conversation Analysis has since its inception touched upon it very infrequently (i.a., Button & Casey, 1984, 1985, 1988; Maynard, 1980; Riou, 2015; Svennevig, 2000), partly because determining what the topic is and more importantly, showing that the analysist's perception of what the topic is aligns

with that of the participants, is inherently problematic. While participants in each next action display their understanding of what the prior action was doing, thereby providing us with evidence for action formation and ascription (Sacks et al., 1974), we lack a proof procedure for topics. Furthermore, topic was historically considered from the perspective of coherence (e.g., Chafe, 1994; Geluykens, 1993; Ochs Keenan & Schieffelin, 1975), and Schegloff (1990) convincingly argued that participants achieve coherence through sequences of actions, not topics. But as an activity topic talk takes up a large chunk of talk-in-interaction, and as Schegloff (2007; see also Sacks, 1995) points out, it does not fit the sequential structure of many other activities. To adequately grasp talk-in-interaction it is thus necessary to understand how participants do topic talk. Topic is a subject both worthy and in need of further study.



You know what happens when you assert—you make an ass out of the emergency response team.

Image courtesy of xkcd.com

CHAPTER 4

Remembering and understanding with *oh*-prefaced yes/no declaratives in Dutch[1]

Abstract

Shared understanding is at the heart of social interaction: it is demonstrated and maintained with every turn-at-talk. Still intersubjectivity can on occasion break down, and this can happen for a plethora of reasons. Using conversation analysis, this paper demonstrates three practices that participants in Dutch talk-in-interaction use to repair breakdowns of intersubjectivity. The first practice consists of an *oh ja*-prefaced declarative. With this practice an interactant conveys that s/he remembers here-and-now some information which s/he thereby treats as relevant for understanding the prior talk. The second practice consists of an *oh*-prefaced declarative, with which the speaker claims to now understand something s/he earlier did not understand or had misunderstood. Both practices are declarative yes/no-type initiating actions, meaning that confirmation is treated as the relevant next action. Both practices, however, do very distinct actions. With a remembering, an interactant claims independent epistemic access, whereas with doing understanding access is local, and inferred from and dependent on the co-interactant's talk. We compare

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these two practices to *oh*-prefaced yes/no-type interrogatives. These too are used to address problems with intersubjectivity, but they claim instead that the prior talk by the interlocutor somehow contradicts the speakers background assumptions.

Keywords: Conversation Analysis, Yes/no-type initiating actions, Epistemics, Repair, Intersubjectivity, Understanding

4.1 Knowing and understanding in interaction

As was argued by Sacks (1995, Volume II, p. 140) in his lectures, understanding is indispensable for social interaction: "if understanding isn't there, then there's nothing much going on." But as Sacks also notes, this is not why understanding is of interest for researchers of social interaction. Instead, it is because participants in talk-in-interaction do "showing understanding"; that is, the interactants treat understanding as relevant for the ongoing talk.

This paper discusses three practices that interactants use in Dutch talk-in-interaction to address breakdowns of intersubjective understanding (see Heritage, 1984b; Sidnell, 2014). The focus is on two specific types of declarative yes/no-type initiating actions (YNDs). These are declarative utterances that address information to which the addressee has primary epistemic access and which therefore make confirmation relevant as a next action (G. Raymond, 2010a; Heritage, 2012a). In the first practice the YND is prefaced by *oh ja* ("oh yeah"/ "oh that's right"). With an *oh ja*-prefaced YND the speakers claims that s/he here-and-now remembers some information which s/he thereby treats as relevant for understanding the prior talk (cf. Betz & Golato, 2008; Emmertsen & Heinemann, 2010; Heritage, 1984a; Koivisto, 2013; Middleton & Edwards, 1990; Kasterpalu & Hennoste, 2016). These two turn-constructional units—the *oh ja* and the YND—constitute one turn at talk, one "major action" (Levinson, 2013). In the second practice the YND is prefaced by just *oh*. With an *oh*-prefaced YND an interactant both claims and demonstrates that s/he now understands (Heritage, 1984a; Koivisto, 2015b; Golato & Betz, 2008; Kasterpalu & Hennoste, 2016; Weidner, 2016). We compare these two practices with a third, very similar practice: an *oh*-prefaced yes/no-type interrogative (YNI) (G. Raymond, 2003). With an *oh*-prefaced YNI, a speaker also addresses a problem with intersubjectivity, and confirmation is also treated as a relevant next action. With *oh*-prefaced YNIs, however, the speaker conveys that his/her assumptions were in some way contradicted by the addressee.

The particular understanding that interactants achieve is typically not for-

mulated. Instead, by doing a next turn interactants displays how they understood a prior turn—for example, by doing an answer, a speaker displays his/her understanding of the prior turn as a question (Sacks et al., 1974, p. 728). After each turn-constructional unit (TCU) there is a transition relevance space (TRP) where the addressee of that TCU can become the next speaker (Sacks et al., 1974) and by not initiating repair at a TRP the addressee implicitly claims that the prior turn was unproblematic and thus that s/he has understood that prior turn (Robinson, 2014). This understanding can then be accepted or rejected in the third turn (Schegloff, 1992; see also Koole, 2015). Understanding thus to an extent takes place under the radar: as long as there is no evidence to the contrary, interactants continue to assume that they understand and are understood (Schutz, 1932/1967). This means that when interactants do understanding—that is, specifically demonstrate and not just claim that they understand—they do so for a reason: reaching an understanding was problematic (Lindwall & Lymer, 2011; Robinson, 2014)—that is, intersubjectivity had potentially or actually broken down (Schegloff, 1992).

The three practices discussed in this paper are used to address actual breakdowns of intersubjectivity. In all three practices, the change-of-state token *oh* (Heritage, 1984a) is combined with an additional TCU that conveys the specific change of state that has been realized.

The *oh ja*-prefaced YND is used to do now-remembering. We call this doing now-remembering as opposed to just doing remembering, because one of the crucial aspects of the practice we discuss, is that the interactant had forgotten information that s/he treats as relevant for understanding a prior turn (cf. Middleton & Edwards, 1990). As s/he now remembers, s/he also understands that prior action, and thus the interaction can continue (Mondada, 2011; Robinson, 2014).

The *oh*-prefaced YND is used to do now-understanding (Koivisto, 2015b). Interactants do now-understanding for one of two reasons: either they did not understand at all, or they had misunderstood. In both cases, the *oh*-prefaced YND claims that the speaker here-and-now understands correctly. The practices is thus the same, but the sequential environment varies. When an interactant does not understand, the talk does not progress until the problematic turn has been addressed. The trouble source can thus be found in the local sequential environment. In cases of misunderstandings, however, the interactants have no reason to assume that their understanding was not correct. In fact, a misunderstanding requires by definition that the participants have moved on, since by moving on they claim to understand each other. The problem source of a misunderstanding is thus not necessarily located in the immediate prior turn,

or even in the local sequence (Koivisto, 2015b; Schegloff, 1992).

Although the focus in our analysis is on declaratives, we find that *oh*-prefaced YNIs can also be used to restore intersubjectivity. This practice, however, is less frequent in our data and its functions are diverse. As such, we can only give a taste of *oh*-prefaced YNIs in this paper. Our aim here is to show that there are systematic differences between *oh*-prefaced YNDs and YNIs: they are used in different sequential environments and do different actions. These differences provide insights into the epistemic claims that are encoded with both syntactic constructions.

4.2 Data

The data used for this analysis consist of about 12.5 hours of casual phone conversations recorded by students at Utrecht University. The conversations are mostly between students, friends, and family, with topics spanning everything from homework to social events. The data have been analyzed according to the method of conversation analysis (Ten Have, 2007) and transcribed according to Jeffersonian conventions (in Atkinson & Heritage, 1984). We provided word-by-word glosses as well as a free translation on a roughly turn-by-turn basis.

We found 66 cases of *oh* (*ja*)-prefaced YNDs and 27 cases of *oh*-prefaced YNIs. From this we removed all instances where the practice was used for other functions than repair. For example, in response to a news announcement, an *oh*-prefaced YND can be used to invite more talk (Heritage, 1984a; Jefferson, 1981). We also removed all cases where either the quality of the recording was insufficient, or the *oh*-prefaced YND was not responded to due to extra-interactional circumstances. Our final selection consisted of 19 clear cases of *oh*-prefaced YNDs, 8 *oh ja*-prefaced YNDs, and 12 *oh*-prefaced YNIs.

4.3 Restoring intersubjectivity

We will first show that interactants use *oh ja*-prefaced YNDs to do now-remembering. This practice is used to revise a claim of not understanding by demonstrating that the interactant now has adequate knowledge to understand an action that s/he had treated as problematic. We then show that *oh*-prefaced YNDs are used to do now-understanding. This practice can be used when an interactant lacked any understanding, had an understanding that was treated as incorrect by the interlocutor, or when the interactant him-/herself notices

that an assumed understanding was incorrect. Finally, we briefly discuss an *oh*-prefaced YNI to show how syntax plays a part in these practices.

4.3.1 Doing now-remembering with *oh ja*-prefaced *YNDs*

When an interactant has a problem understanding his or her co-interactant, s/he can signal that s/he has a problem, thereby soliciting a remedy from the co-interactant (Schegloff et al., 1977). But as Heritage showed in his seminal paper on *oh* in English (Heritage, 1984a, p. 319), an interactant can instead propose a solution by formulating an understanding, what he calls an understanding check. In this way the interactant shows that s/he has an understanding problem, suggests a means of resolving it, and requests of the co-interactant that s/he confirms or disconfirms the adequacy of the proposed understanding.

Heritage (1984a) shows that there are two types of understanding checks: candidate understandings and displays of understanding. They differ in their sequential structure. With candidate understandings, the speaker uses *oh* after the addressee has confirmed the understanding and in that way claims that the confirmation was necessary for the change of state. With displays of understanding on the other hand, *oh* prefaces the understanding check, thereby claiming that the understanding has been achieved independent of any subsequent confirmation by the addressee. In both cases, *oh* is used to claim a "now-understanding" (Koivisto, 2015b).

In this section we will show how rememberings can be used to repair problems of intersubjectivity. Similar to understanding checks, they propose a solution to a problem of understanding, but not by proposing the correct understanding. Instead, they address some temporary lack in the speaker's background knowledge.

We find that interactants do now-remembering following a slight hiccup in the interaction. That is, the turn-transition from the co-interactant who has done a first-pair part to the interactant who should provide an appropriate second pair part is problematic (Sacks et al., 1974). By doing now-remembering at this point, the interactant (i) treats a prior turn as problematic, (ii) shows that the problem is one of understanding, and (iii) conveys that s/he lacked an understanding because s/he had forgotten some background information. This remembering is interactionally contingent on confirmation even though the change of state has already been claimed and demonstrated: the remembered information falls in the co-interactant's epistemic domain, and confirmation is thus treated as a relevant next action (Heritage, 2012a; see also Labov & Fanshel, 1977).

Extract (1) is a case in point. Ben has been telling Nadia about his plans for the evening: he is going to a friend's place to watch football (data not shown) and probably play poker (line 1–5).

(1) GK1–03:12.6–03:33.2

```
01  Ben     w- we ga- gaan ook  pokeren    als °het goed  is°.
               we     go   also play.poker if   it  right is
            w- we a- are going to play poker °if I'm right°.
02  Nad     ↑WAT?
             what
            ↑WHAT?
03          (0.8)
04  Ben     >we gaan waarSCHIJnlijk ook  even< po:keren
             we go   probably       also just play.poker
05          als het goed  is;
            if  it  right is
            >we are proBABLY also going< to play po:ker
            if I'm right;
06          (2.0)
07  Nad     e- oké:, h.
               okay
            e- okay:, h.
08          (1.6)
09  Ben     >ja   wee' niet,<
             yeah know not
            >yeah don't know,<
10          dat v- °(ja)  dat  dat° vond  ik wel ↑leuk.=
            that     yeah that that found I  ADV  fun
            that f- ° (yeah) that that° I liked.=
11  Nad ->  =>oh ja   je     hebt natuurlijk< vaka:ntie.=
              oh yeah you.SG have of.course   vacation
            =>oh that's right you're on holiday< of course.=
12          =ik ve:rgeet het de  hele #tijd#.
             I  forget   it  the whole time
            =I kee:p forgetting that.
13  Ben     (ehm) j(h)a h (.) gelukkig   ↑wEl.
                  yeah      fortunately ADV
            (ehm) y(h)eah h (.) fortunately I ↑am.
14  Nad     >oké  en  stefano dan? e:h<
             okay and Stefano then
            >okay and what about stefano? e:h<
```

Nadia treats Ben's telling as problematic. She first initiates repair in line 2 with the open-class repair initiator (Drew, 1997) *wat*, which Ben treats as signaling a hearing problem. After his repeat in line 4–5, however, there is a long silence of 2 seconds. Nadia then says *oké* in a somewhat marked manner:

she stretches the final vowel and there is a slight rise in pitch. When done as a sequence-closing third (Schegloff, 2007) *oké* (e.g., in line 14) is short and the pitch is flat or falls. As *oké* is pronounced here, it conveys that the prior turn was heard, but that Nadia has an unspecified reason as to why she cannot accept it—that is, *oké* indexes but does not identify a problem (Robinson, 2014).

Ben's initial response—*ja wee niet* ("yeah don't know")—aligns with Nadia in treating his turn as unusual. That is, with his utterance Ben orients to Nadia's turn as treating his telling as unusual and he agrees that it is unusual that he is going to play poker (see Selting, 1996 for a similar case in German). He further demonstrates this orientation by providing an account, thereby attempting to resolve the problem. But the problem persists, as is clear from Nadia's following utterance in line 11. Instead of acknowledging Ben's account, she does an *oh ja*-prefaced YND. By treating the information in her remembering as here-and-now relevant, she shows that she could not understand Ben's turn in line 4–5, because she had forgotten that he was on vacation. The problem thus was not that she did not understand why Ben would want to play poker—which is how Ben addressed Nadia's *oké* with his account in line 10. She did not understand why Ben had extensive plans for what she believed was a school night.

So we see that Nadia indexes a problem in line 7 because she lacked the relevant background information to completely understand Ben's turn in lines 4–5 (and possibly in line 1). That does not mean Ben's turn is not adequately designed for Nadia (see Sacks et al., 1974). By doing a remembering, she conveys (i) that she now has adequate knowledge to understand the prior turn, (ii) that she already had independent access to that knowledge, and thus by extension (iii) that Ben had adequately designed his earlier action. Notice also that Nadia acts convinced that Ben is on holiday: she claims independent epistemic access with *natuurlijk* ("of course") and explicitly states in line 12 that she keeps forgetting. Nonetheless confirmation of her remembering is treated as relevant. Nadia provides a sequence-closing third in response to Ben's confirmation in line 13, and only afterwards does she move on to a new topic.

Notice that the nature of the problem is opaque to Ben. While there clearly is some problem which Nadia signals with her *oké*, what that problem is, is unclear until Nadia herself has repaired it. Interactants in general rely on an indeterminate number of assumptions about shared background knowledge for each action. Without a signal as to which one might be problematic, repair cannot be provided. Ben does attempt to, his account does not address the problem. All these unspoken assumptions also mean that we as analysts can see only a fraction of what is going on. It is only in cases such as these

where assumptions are (possibly) violated, that is, where interactants explicitly address that there is misalignment, that we get a glimpse into the vast amount of shared knowledge and experience that interactants rely on.

While doing remembering claims that the speaker has independent epistemic access to some piece of information, that is, that s/he holds that piece of information to be true, that information need not actually be true. This distinction between cognitive and interactional remembering becomes clear in extract (2). It takes place early in a conversation between Sandra and her mother Anja. Anja has been telling Sandra what she is cooking for dinner. Prior to the data shown, Anja has named a long list of ingredients.

(2) VW1–01:18.3-01:26.6

```
01  San     voor jou    alleen?
            for  you.SG alone
            just for you?
02          of ook eh
            or also
            or also eh
03          is: papa
            is dad
04        -> oh ja   papa is er    zo       #wel#.
            oh yeah dad  is there presently ADV
            oh that's right dad will be there #presently#.
05  Anj     voor mij alleen,=
            for  my  alone
            just for me,=
06          =nee fred die e:h <↓werkt>.
             no  Fred he        works
            =no fred he e:h <↓'has to' work>.
07          (0.2)
08  San     (↑maar jo)
             but   yo
            (↑but yo)
09          ga je     dat  allemaal ↑helemaal   maken voor
            go you.SG that all       completely make  for
10          jezelf;
            yourself;
            are you going to make ↑all of that for
            yourself;
11          (0.7)
12  Anj     ja?
            yeah?
13          (.)
14  San     oh wau:w; (0.4) wat ↑goed.
            oh wow          what good
            oh wo:w; (0.4) how ↑great.
```

In line 1, Sandra asks if Anja is going to cook all that just for herself. She begins to ask if it is also for her father, but breaks off that TCU. She also breaks off the next action in line 3 in which she was probably going to ask if her dad was going to be home soon (*is papa zo thuis /* "will dad be home momentarily"). The reason for the break is clear: in line 4 she demonstrates that she remembers that her father will indeed be home in a little while. But as it turns out, Anja is cooking only for herself, because Fred, Sandra's father, has to work.

Although the concept of remembering presupposes knowing, which in turn presupposes a belief that the information is true, it can in fact be false. Participant's beliefs, no matter how strong, are open to negotiation, in particular when another participant has epistemic primacy.[2] We have no reason to assume that Sandra is any less certain of her beliefs than Nadia in (1), but the sequence in (2) shows why confirmation is relevant: the addressee as the one who has epistemic primacy is always in a position to deny what the speaker beliefs s/he knows. Remembering is an interactional practice and it's done for interactional purposes (Middleton & Edwards, 1990).

In this section we have shown that interactants in Dutch can claim and demonstrate now-remembering with a YND prefaced by the particle combination *oh ja*. This practice is highly similar to the German *ach ja* (Betz & Golato, 2008), English *oh that's right* (Heritage, 1984a), Danish *nåja* (Emmertsen & Heinemann, 2010), and Finnish *ai nii*(*n*) (Koivisto, 2013). The speaker shows that s/he remembers then and there some locally relevant information. When now-remembering is done at a point where a response is due, it conveys that the interactant had forgotten some background information critical to understanding the turn for which a response is due. Now that the interactant remembers, s/he understands the prior turn and the talk can continue.

4.3.2 Doing now-understanding

In the previous section, we showed how displays of remembering are used in a way similar to understanding checks as they are described by Heritage (1984a). An interactant does now-remembering to index that a problem of understanding has been resolved. In this section we focus on actual understanding checks. We discuss three sequential environments in which understanding checks are used in Dutch talk-in-interaction. In all cases an *oh*-prefaced YND is used to claim

[2]It is possible that Sandra does not actually remember that her dad will be home soon, that is, believes that she remembers, but instead that she remembers that he is typically home around dinner time, and thus that he will be home soon. However, this is not the remembering she demonstrates in the interaction.

and demonstrate that the speaker now understands. The problems addressed are, however, different and this is reflected in the sequential structure of each case.

We begin by showing a case that has a sequential structure slightly different from the examples Heritage (1984a) discusses. Heritage finds that when repair is solicited by a speaker, and the repair is provided by the addressee, the adequacy of that repair is demonstrated with a free-standing *oh* as a sequence-closing third. In our corpus we find that following the repair proper the speaker who solicited repair can do an *oh*-prefaced YND, thereby demonstrating his/her now understanding.

Consider extract (3). Christina and Belle are talking about Belle's thesis project for which she has to go to Den Bosch, a city they both loathe. In overlap with what seems to be an affiliating turn by Christina in line 3, Belle suddenly complains that she has problems fixing her stove.

(3) HS1–01:45.8-02:07.8

```
01  Bel   =>ik word   er    echt< <gedeprimeerd van °(joh)°>.
            I  become there really depressed    of    INT
          =>it's making me really <depressed>.
02          (.)
03  Chr   jA   het is o[ok,=jah.    ]
          yeah it  is also  yeah
          yEAH it is a[lso=yeah.
04  Bel                [ik zit het g]asfornuis te fiksen,
                        I  sit the stove       to fix
                      [I'm fixing the stove
05          maar het past ↓niet.
          but  it  fits  not
          but it doesn't fit.
06          (0.4)
07  Chr   wat,#eh#
          what
          what, #eh#
08  Bel   °oh wacht°.
          °oh wait°.
09          (0.2)
10          verkeerde °(ringetje)°,
          wrong       ring.DIM
          wrong °(ring)°,
11          (0.7)
12          hhh. hu
13          .HH ja:  me gasfornuis was heel gf- goo:r?
              yeah my stove      was realy    filthy
          .HH yea:h my stove was really gf- filthy?
```

```
14          (.)
15          dat  was (.) drie  maa:nden niet gedaan
            that was     three months   not  done
16          of zo, .HH
            or something
            that hadn't (.) been done in three months or
            something, .HH
17          (0.3)
18          °dus ik° dacht   laat ik °effetjes #e:h#°
             so  I   thought let  I   just
            °so I° though lets °just #e:h#°
19          (0.2)
20  Chr -> oh [ je   bent  aan  het  schoo]nmaken
            oh   you  are  on   the  cleaning
21      -> gesla°ge:n°_
            started
            oh [ you started cleaning_]
22  Bel        [°(laat ik een keer schoon)°]
                  let  I  a   time clean
               [°(lets for once clean)°]
23          (1.1)
24  Bel     .h ja: ik ben ook ongesteld.=
               yeah I am also on.my.period
            .h yeah because I'm on my period.=
25          =dus dan  krijg
             so  then get
26          [je  ineens   van die   s]choonmaak°[(neiging]en)°.
             one suddenly of  those cleaning.urges
            =so then [you suddenly get those c]leaning
            °[(urg]es)°.
26  Chr     [         Hmpf::         ]          [ha ha ha]
```

In response to Belle's complaint in line 4–5, Christina initiates repair with the open-class repair initiator *wat* ("what"). Her problem seems to be a result of the way in which Belle introduces her complaint: she does so in overlap with Christina's affiliating turn in line 3: it is topically disjunct from the ongoing talk, and she does not account for her complaint—that is, she does not say what does not fit.

After some intervening turns in which Belle seems to have fixed her problem with the stove—while the utterances in line 8 and 10 are done for Christina, they are not addressed to her—she begins to explain in line 13 that her stove was really filthy because nobody had cleaned it for three months. She thereby begins to address Christina's problem. In the middle of her TCU in lines 18 and 22, there is a small pause and at this point Christina displays her understanding that Belle is cleaning, which explains why she is putting her

stove back together.[3] While Christina's understanding may be independent of any confirmation (Heritage, 1984a), Belle does provide one in line 24. In this way she orients to her primary epistemic rights both as the one who did the problematic turn, as well as the one who is cleaning. Christina provides the repair proper which she has inferred from Belle's talk. So while both participants are not on equal epistemic footing, this is not a matter of who knows more (see Golato & Betz, 2008), but who has more rights to know.

As argued by Heritage (1984a), by having *oh* preface her understanding check, Christina is treating the prior talk as adequately informative. She can infer from Belle's talk about her dirty stove, and possibly the turn started in line 18, why Belle started talking about the stove. However, by formulating her understanding, Christina also shows that the explanation had not yet been provided. A free-standing *oh* or *oh* combined with some other sequence-closing third like *oké* would treat the repair sequence Christina initiated in line 7 as complete. An understanding formulation on the other hand treats the understanding as inferable from prior talk, but not yet on record. In this way Christina claims co-responsibility for restoring intersubjectivity: Belle did a problematic turn, but as soon as Christina has reached an understanding of that turn, she demonstrates this.

In extract (4) we also see a problem of understanding that is repaired with an *oh*-prefaced YND. The problem is, however, different from the one in (3) and so is the repair sequence. The extract comes from a conversation between mother and daughter, Marie and Diane. Marie has been telling Diane that James, Diane's brother, recently went on a sailing trip during which he lost his sunglasses.

(4) WD1–06:37.6-06:52.2

```
01  Dia    oa::::h;
02         (0.5)
03         heeft hij ook met:
           has   he also with
           has he also with:
04         betrAA:nde ogen is ie thuis gekomen;
           teary      eyes is he home  come
           did he come home with tEA:ry eyes;
05         (1.0)
06  Mar    nou: dat  is vandaag gebeur:d.=
           well that is today   happened
           well: that happened today.=
```

[3] Another aspect of Belle's turn that might be problematic is her use of *fiksen* ("repairing"). This could imply that her stove was broken, while she only took it apart for cleaning.

```
07          =dus eh h:u [   hu    hu   ]
             so
            =so eh h:u [hu hu]
08  Dia ->              [oh >hij heeft<] geBE:LD.
                         oh  he  has     called
                        [oh he] CALLed.
09          (0.6)
10  Mar     jA:h.
            yEA:h.
11          (.)
12  Dia     oa::h.
```

Diane in line 1 provides an emphatic response cry (Goffman, 1981) and asks if James was crying when he came home to tell his parents. She thereby conveys her understanding that James had come home when he told his parents. Marie does not provide a type-conforming answer to Diane's YNI, signaling a problem with the question (Hayano, 2013; G. Raymond, 2003). Instead she prefaces her response with *nou* ("well"), showing that it is not going to be straightforward (Mazeland, 2016; Pander Maat, Driessen, & Van Mierlo, 1986; Schegloff & Lerner, 2009). Marie rejects one of the underlying presuppositions of Diane's question: that James had come home to tell his parents about the sunglasses. But she rejects the presupposition indirectly. She uses a stand-alone *dus* ("so") to project the upshot (G. Raymond, 2004) that James did not come home, because he only lost his glasses that very day. Thereby leaving the actual inference to Diane.

In the subsequent turn, Diane uses an *oh*-prefaced YND to convey her now revised understanding (Koivisto, 2015b) that James called, which Marie confirms. Notice that there is a short pause after Diane's revised understanding, but that almost immediately after Marie's confirmation, Diane moves on with a new turn at talk. While her understanding may be independent from any subsequent confirmation, by not doing a next action until confirmation has been provided, she treats that confirmation as conditionally relevant.

So far we have shown that *oh*-prefaced YNDs are used to display that the speaker now understands either after s/he had claimed to not understand as in (3) or had understood incorrectly as in (4). The final case we will discuss also concerns a misunderstanding. It is, however, repaired differently from the misunderstanding in (4). In (4), the incorrect understanding is encoded as a presupposition of a request for information. It would not be possible to provide a type-conforming response to that request, without confirming the presupposition (see G. Raymond, 2003; Hayano, 2013). So repair is initiated, at least in part, to account for why an answer cannot be provided. The situation

is different in fragment (5) (see below). Here, repair is done not to address some problematic action, but its primary function seems to be solely to restore intersubjectivity.

Extract (5) is from a conversation between two friends, Sarah and Wendy. Wendy was supposed to visit her boyfriend's parents over the weekend, and in lines 1–2 Sarah asks how that went.[4]

(5) BN1–02:13.5-03:50.5

```
01  Sar   .hh en  hoe was het ↑zondag ↑no:g?
            and how was it   Sunday  still
02        met  die   ou↓ders van daan.
          with those parents of  Daan
          .hh and how was it on sunday? with daan's
          parents.
03        (1.0)
04  Wen   e::hm >↑oh da's   niet ↑doorgegaan<.=
                 oh that's not   go.through
          e::hm >oh that did not take place<.=
05  Sar   =job en elle kwamen ↑toch of niet.=
           Job and Elle came   TAG  or not
          =job and elle were coming ↑right or not.=
06  Wen   [ =ja ]
           [yeah ]
07  Sar   [(   )] (da) helemaal   niet doorgegaan.
                       completely not  go.through
          [(   )] (that) not take place at all.
08  Wen   >ja   da'  is wel doorgegaan, alleen ik ging<
           yeah that is ADV go.through  only   I went
          >yeah that did take place, I just went<
09        ik ging smiddags         high↓teaen  hè?
          I  went in.the.afternoon to.high.tea TAG
          I went for high tea in the afternoon right?
09        (0.6)
10  Sar   .hh
11        (1.1)
12  Sar   wa'  ging je ↑doen smiddags?
          what went you do   in.the.afternoon
          what did you ↑do in the afternoon?
13  Wen   highteaen   met uh anne
          to.high.tea with   Anne
          highteaing with uh Anne
14        en[e:h]
             and]
```

[4]Wendy talks about *high tea—highteaen* is a verb and could be translated as "to high tea"—which is usually called afternoon tea in England and the US.

```
            and[e:h]
15  Sar       [o:h] >ja   ja   ja< (et) ja
               oh    yeah yeah yeah     yeah
                [o:h] yeah yeah yeah (et) yeah
16          (0.8)
17  Wen     [ en eh ]
            [ and   eh ]
18  Sar     [(is da')] niet doo:rgegaan.=
              is that  not  go.through
            [(did that)] not take place.=
19  Wen     =nee want    toen (wa-)
             no  because then
            =no because then (wa-)
20          ik was pas veelste   laat thui:s.
            I  was only much.too late home
            I was ho:me far too late.
..          <Wendy talks about trip to high tea>
65          .hh toen zAg ik dat  het jasmin was
                then saw I  that it  Jasmin was
            .hh then I sAw that it was jasmin
66          en  toen ja   dat  was (.) was echt   super leuk.
            and then yeah that was     was really super fun
            and then yeah that was (.) was really super fun.
67          (0.5)
68  Sar ->  .h oh dus je   high tea is ↑wel doorgaan.
               oh so  your high tea is  PRT go.through
            .h oh so your high tea ↑did take place.
69          (1.0)
70  Wen     >↑ja:  ja   ja<
              yeah yeah yeah
            >↑yea:h yeah yeah<
71          (0.6)
72          maar da' [bij die   ouders  van daan niet.]
            but  that at  those parents of  Daan not
            but that [with the parents of Daan not.]
73  Sar ->          [oh    maar     d-    de    ou]ders van
                     oh    but      d-    the   parents of
74      ->  daan niet.
            Daan not
                    [  oh   but   t-   the    par]ents of
            daan not.
75  Wen     ja
            yeah
76          (0.7)
77  Sar ->  .h o:h de (.) high tea is (te) laat geworden om
               oh  the    high tea is  too late became   to
78          nog naar de- nou snap ik het .hh
```

```
            PRT to   the now get  I  it
            .h oh the (.) high tea had gotten (too) late to
            still to the- now I get it .hh
79  Wen     £ja  snap je  het£?
            yeah get  you it
            £yeah do you get it£?
80          (0.6)
81  Sar     j(h)a uhuhu £ik dacht   dat  je  gewoon te£ (.)
            yeah         I  thought that you simple too
            yeah uhuhu £I thought that you simply too£ (.)
82          te  lang had geslapen of zo.
            too long had slept    or something
            had slept too long or something.
```

Wendy's initial response in line 4 is delayed, and by *oh*-prefacing it she resists Sarah's question (Heritage, 1998). But Sarah pursues the topic in line 5, asking clarification on whether the visit did not take place at all, because other people were supposed to go as well. In her explanation Wendy introduces the afternoon tea she had also planned, which was the reason she did not visit Daan's parents. But she never gets to the explanation, as Sarah interrupts in line 18 asking if that—the afternoon tea—did not take place. Although Sarah uses *dat* ("that") to refer to the afternoon tea, it is understood by Wendy as referring to her visit to Daan's parents. So by providing a confirmation, Wendy conveys to Sarah that her afternoon tea fell through, while she herself understands it as confirming that her date with Daan fell through.

At a later point in the interaction Sarah seems to notice that she misunderstood Wendy. After her confirmation in line 19–20, Wendy starts a narrative about the trip she made to the restaurant (data not shown). The story comes to conclusion in line 65–66, but instead of providing an appropriate response, Sarah does an *oh*-prefaced YND. By using this practice, and particularly by putting emphasis on the positive polarity adverb *wel*, she displays her revised understanding that Wendy's afternoon tea did take place, and that she had earlier understood the exact opposite. In response to this question, Wendy shows in line 70 that she believed that Sarah had correctly understood: she uses a multiple saying to convey that she had already addressed the question (see Stivers, 2004). After two more displays of understanding in lines 73–74 and 77, Sarah explicitly states that she now understands and she explains how she had understood: she thought that Wendy had overslept and missed her afternoon tea.

Both (4) and (5) show cases of misalignment; one interactant has an incorrect understanding of something in the co-interactant's epistemic domain. The sequential structure of the two extracts, however, differs. In (4) Diane en-

codes the incorrect understanding in a question. This is addressed by Marie after which Diane repairs her misunderstanding. In (5) on the other hand, Sarah immediately corrects her own misunderstanding when she notices it and only later (line 81–82) explains how she had misunderstood. This difference is partly brought about by the structure of the conversation. Sarah could infer from Wendy's story about her afternoon tea that Wendy had had afternoon tea and thus that she must have misunderstood, but Diane had no such cues and thus her incorrect understanding has to be corrected by Marie. Yet the practice in both these cases, and in (3), is the same: an *oh*-prefaced YND is used to display that the speaker now understands. The practice is thus highly similar to remembering we showed in section 4.3.1. The sequential structure of both practices is, however, very distinct. The *oh ja*-prefaced YNDs are done independent of the interlocutor's talk, and so claim independent epistemic access. The *oh*-prefaced YNDs are done in response to the co-interactant's talk; the correct understanding is inferred from what the other says. The speaker's epistemic access is thus dependent on the interlocutor.

4.3.3 Interrogative formulations of understanding

The epistemic stance encoded with declaratives make them especially suitable for displays of understanding. With a declarative the speaker claims high certainty, which means that the epistemic gradient is relatively shallow (Heritage, 2012a). When a speaker does understanding, the claim is that s/he understands the co-interactant adequately for all practical purposes. This need not mean that both are equally knowledgeable, but such a claim also indexes a shallow or flat epistemic gradient. And while the declarative is indeed the format we most frequently see for doing now-understanding, we found that understanding can also be done with other practices. In our corpus, we found a small selection of *oh*-prefaced yes/no-type interrogatives (YNIs) (G. Raymond, 2010a). By doing an *oh*-prefaced YNI an interactant claims that the prior telling was not in line with his/her prior knowledge and/or expectations, and s/he conveys the revised belief.[5] An exhaustive discussion of this practice requires more attention than we can give it here. We will, however, use an example to show that *oh*-prefaced YNDs and YNIs are used in different contexts.

Consider extract (6). Annemarie has been telling Michelle about a week she recently spent at a school in Germany, where she claims she spent the entire

[5]We want to stress here that we are not talking about the participants' *actual* cognitive beliefs. Our discussion is about the beliefs that participants convey through talk and these may or may not reflect the beliefs the participants have *in their mind*.

time eating. After joking that she must have gained five kilos she begins to talk about all the food that was available.

(6) RM1—01:16.1-01:26.9

```
01  Ann     je  begon   met  ontbijt   elke  dag (dan) >hadden
            one started with breakfast every day  then  had
02          we<
            we
            every day started with breakfast >we (then) had<
03          (0.9)
04          vijf soorten yoghurt staan,
            five types   yoghurt stand
            five types of yoghurt,
05          (0.3)
06          (vier) soorten muesli,
             four  types   muesli
            (four) types of muesli,
07  Mic ->  oh had je     echt   zo'n   hot↑elontbijt.
            oh had you.SG really such.a hotel.breakfast
            oh did you really have like a hot↑el breakfast.
08          (0.6)
09  Ann     ja:  we >↑zaten in een< (.) gebouw   van een eh (.)
            yeah we   were  in a        building of  a
            yea:h we >were in a< (.) building of a eh (.)
10          ↑politieke partij?
             political party
            ↑political party?
```

While Annemarie is still in the middle of her telling in line 6—the prior turn does not seem pragmatically or prosodically complete (Ford & Thompson, 1996; Local & Walker, 2012)—Michelle uses an *oh*-prefaced YNI to ask whether Annemarie had a hotel breakfast, that is, a continental breakfast or breakfast buffet. As the topic has only just been initiated, Michelle has not yet conveyed any expectations about what Annemarie would have eaten during her trip, yet notice the adverb *echt* ("really"). The function of *echt* varies, but it is typically found either as a news receipt or as a focus particle. When used as a news receipt, it conveys (feigned) disbelief comparable to English *really*. As a focus particle, as it is used here, we frequently find it in first pair parts, where it is used to emphasize the truth of a proposition. Its function here, as part of an inserted question, is similar: it puts emphasis on *hotelontbijt* and conveys that Michelle did not expect it. This does not mean that Michelle had any assumptions about what Annemarie had for breakfast, but most schools—at least in the Netherlands—do not serve a buffet-type breakfast. Annemarie's telling is surprising; it does not fit Michelle's knowledge of breakfast at schools.

Note also that Michelle uses the term *hotelontbijt*, instead of a term like continental breakfast, and uses *zo'n* ("such a") as a means of categorizing the type of breakfast. By categorizing the type of breakfast as one you would get in a hotel, Michelle shows that Annemarie's talk about breakfast fits with her beliefs about one context—hotels and possibly vacations—but conflicts with her beliefs of the locally relevant context—the facilities of a school.

The action implemented by the *oh*-prefaced YNI is similar to the YNDs in the previous section: it conveys both that Michelle now understands and what—that is, how—she understands. But unlike the formulations of understanding in excerpt (3), (4), and (5), Michelle conveys that her new understanding contradicts an understanding that had not yet been expressed or even implied. Furthermore, the YNI does not address a local problem of understanding. Instead it treats the prior talk as unexpected in relation to the speaker's background assumptions.

4.4 Discussion & Conclusion

Research on change-of-state tokens over the past few decades has shown that they can support many types of social actions (i.a. Betz & Golato, 2008; Emmertsen & Heinemann, 2010; Golato & Betz, 2008; Heritage, 1984a; Koivisto, 2013, 2015b; Schegloff, 1992; Kasterpalu & Hennoste, 2016; Weidner, 2016). In this paper, we have focused on two specific practices in Dutch talk-in-interaction: declarative yes/no-type initiating actions (YNDs) that are prefaced by *oh ja*, and YNDs that are prefaced by just *oh*. We demonstrated that these practices are used for different, albeit strongly related, functions. Both are used in situations where an interactant has a problem with understanding, and they are used to address this problem. However, the particulars of the problems they address are different and this reflects the different epistemic claims that are made by these practices (Stivers et al., 2011). *Oh ja*-prefaced YNDs claim independent epistemic access: the change-of-state is realized independent of the interlocutor's talk (Emmertsen & Heinemann, 2010). *Oh*-prefaced YNDs on the other hand claim dependent epistemic access: the change-of-state is realized in response to the interlocutor's talk.

With an *oh ja*-prefaced YND, an interactant does now-remembering (see Betz & Golato, 2008; Emmertsen & Heinemann, 2010; Heritage, 1984a; Koivisto, 2013; Middleton & Edwards, 1990) by both claiming to remember and showing what s/he remembers (see Koole, 2010). We find that speakers do now-remembering in this way when they have claimed to lack epistemic ac-

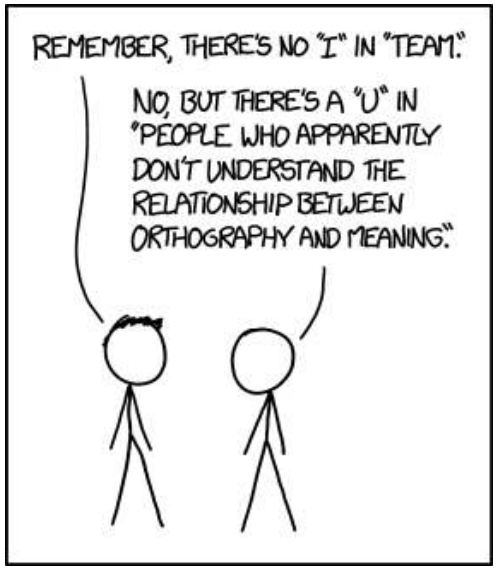
cess, either by claiming a lack of understanding or by requesting information. Doing remembering repairs the earlier claim of no understanding. Here the preference for self-repair over other-initiated repair (Schegloff et al., 1977) and the preference for remembering (Koivisto, 2013) seem to be one and the same. Although a speaker makes a claim about a personal mental state, confirmation by the interlocutor is still treated as relevant as the interlocutor has primary epistemic access.

With an *oh*-prefaced YND, the speaker claims to now-understand (Koivisto, 2015b; Weidner, 2016), thereby also inherently conveying that s/he earlier did not understand (Lindwall & Lymer, 2011). We have shown that this practice is used to address problems of understanding in various sequential environments. It can convey that a repair proper was adequately informative and that the speaker now understands (Heritage, 1984a). It is then used to propose closing of the repair sequence. Second, it can index the revision of an incorrect understanding that was encoded in a prior turn. Finally, it can be used to signal that the interactant had misunderstood, where that incorrect understanding had earlier been interactionally ratified. While these contexts differ, the practice and its function are the same: doing now-understanding. As with doing now-remembering, when a speaker claims to now-understand, confirmation is treated as a relevant response. Both interactants thus attribute primary epistemic status to the interlocutor.

As doing understanding claims a relatively shallow epistemic gradient, we would expect that declaratives are particularly suitable for this action. However, we occasionally find *oh*-prefaced yes/no-type interrogatives (YNIs) as a practice for doing understanding. A crucial difference between these practices is that *oh*-prefaced YNIs are used to show that the prior talk was unexpected in relation to the interactant's background assumptions. The *oh* thus still indexes a change-of-state, but the change is a realization that the speaker might have held incorrect assumptions. Furthermore, we do not find, nor do we expect, that YNIs can be used to do remembering. These findings would be in line with earlier work by Turner (2012; see also Gunlogson, 2001), who argued that B-event declaratives are used when a speaker has epistemic access based on what was said earlier in the conversation—that is, they treat the information in the YND as shared (G. Raymond, 2010a)—whereas B-event interrogatives are used when information is new to the interaction and the speaker lacks epistemic access. Further work might show that indeed interrogatives do not claim epistemic access and therefore cannot be used to do remembering. It would be particularly interesting to look at negative interrogatives, as these are frequently considered to actually make a strong claim of knowing. This would

suggest that negative interrogatives might be suitable to in some way do both now-understanding and now-remembering.

Intersubjectivity is thus very much a cooperative project. On the one hand participants in talk-in-interaction design their utterances so they can be optimally understood by their co-interactants (Sacks et al., 1974, p. 727). And on the other hand participants strive towards an understanding of their co-interactant's talk. When intersubjectivity breaks down, restoring it takes priority (see Sacks et al., 1974, p. 709), and both interactants work together towards a situation where they again understand one another. This becomes particularly clear when the addressee in (3) in the middle of her co-interactant's account and in overlap with the repair proper displays that she now understands. Understanding is at heart an interactional achievement, and not simply a state of mind.



There's no "I" in "VOWELS".

Image courtesy of xkcd.com

CHAPTER 5

Resolving knowledge-discrepancies in informing sequences[1]

Abstract

This paper investigates a specific practice recipients in Dutch talk-in-interaction use when responding to turns that have as one of their main jobs to inform. By responding to an informing turn with an *oh*-prefaced non-repeating response that has yes/no-type interrogative word order, recipients treat that turn as counter to expectation and request both confirmation of the inference formulated in their response, as well as reconciliatory information for the two discrepant states of affairs. This practice is compared to similar cases where the non-repeating response is not *oh*-prefaced to show that such turns implement different actions. Data are in Dutch with English translations.

Keywords: Counterexpectations; Change-of-state; yes/no-type interrogatives; action formation; practions.

5.1 Receipting information

When dealing with actions that are done to inform, such as news, reportings and answers to questions, recipients have a whole array of verbal responsive prac-

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tices at their disposal that they can provide upon completion of that informing action, each showing a different orientation to that informing action and varying in agency (Thompson, Fox, & Couper-Kuhlen, 2015). The projected response to an informing is a move that signals that the recipient has been informed, but there is more than one way in which recipients can do being informed.

One family of practices that accomplishes this is news receipts (Couper-Kuhlen, 2012; Heritage, 1984a; Maynard, 2003). The simplest, least agentive practice recipients have for receipting information is what Heritage (1984) calls a change-of-state token (see also Golato, 2010; Heinemann, 2017; Hilmisdóttir, 2016; Kasterpalu & Hennoste, 2016; Koivisto, 2015a; Local, 1996; Persson, 2015; Weidner, 2016). With interjections like *oh* speakers claim that they now know, after which the sequence reaches possible completion (Heritage, 1984a; Schegloff, 2007). A slightly more expanded sequence arises when recipients use minimal clausal responses (Thompson et al., 2015) to request reconfirmation, treating the information as news, without encouraging further talk on the topic (Couper-Kuhlen, 2012; Maynard, 2003; Schegloff, 1984).

In contrast with these relatively minimal forms of uptake, recipients have practices to encourage further talk on the news. Many of these practices fall into a family of newsmarks (Couper-Kuhlen, 2012; Heritage, 1984a; Jefferson, 1981; Maynard, 2003; Robinson, 2009). These newsmarks often come in the form of a lexical or phrasal response with rising intonation such as *really*, suggesting that "the veracity of the news is not a foregone conclusion" (Couper-Kuhlen, 2012, p. 141), and they are often used to solicit some form of an account (Thompson et al., 2015).

Even more agentive forms of uptake are expanded clausal responses, such as clausal repetitions (Thompson et al., 2015). These can be used to treat the informing turn as counter-to-expectations or as counterinformings: the recipient claims to have had prior beliefs on the issue addressed by the speaker (Heritage, 1984a; Persson, 2015; Robinson, 2009). These practices are strongly expansion-implicative and solicit some form of an account for the discrepancy.

This paper is concerned with the fourth and most agentive type of response, what Thompson et al. (2015) call *Unrelated Clausal Responses*. With these responses recipients do not deal with the information as put by the speaker, but retrieve information that was embedded or presupposed in prior talk; either the immediately prior informing turn or a larger discourse unit in which that turn is contained. By formulating an inference or understanding[2] of that turn

[2]Thompson et al. (2015) distinguish between candidate understandings and inferences. This distinction, however, is not treated as relevant by the participants in our data. Therefore we will

and making relevant confirmation, recipients treat something as news which was not done as news (see also Smith, 2013; Steensig & Heinemann, 2013; Terasaki, 1976/2004).

We argue in this paper that when recipients in Dutch talk-in-interaction produce an *oh*-prefaced[3] unrelated clausal response with yes/no-type interrogative word order, they implement what we gloss as a *counterexpectation remark*. This term should not be understood as a category of action, on par with such actions as requests or invitations, but as a specific combination of practices used for a specific interactional purpose, comparable to the action of *confirming allusions* (Schegloff, 1996a; see also Enfield, 2013; Sidnell, 2014).

By doing a counterexpectation remark a recipient (i) accepts the terms of the prior, informing turn—the action it implements and the information it conveys, (ii) treats that turn as not in line with a prior, private belief or expectation—one not made public in the interaction, (iii) topicalizes the unexpected inference, (iv) requests confirmation of that inference as well as what Robinson (2009) calls reconciliatory information, and (v) tentatively accepts the formulated inference or understanding.

Counterexpectation remarks, at least as we define them for this paper, thus come in a specific sequential position: after an informing turn. They are therefore produced in environments similar to other types of news uptake, such as free-standing *oh*. But as they constitute a more agentive form of uptake, they do not merely receipt information, completing a question-answer-*oh* sequence (Heritage, 1984a; Schegloff, 2007), but also launch a new adjacency pair.

We want to stress here that our claims are not about the speaker's actual, private beliefs; we have no access to the speaker's cognition and as such do not aim to discuss his/her cognitive state. But participants display beliefs through talk, and thus also make claims about what their prior beliefs were through talk, irrespective of whether these claims are true.

To support our argument, the analysis in this paper consists of three steps. We begin by demonstrating that *oh*-prefaced unrelated clausal responses with yes/no-type interrogative word order (YNIs) (G. Raymond, 2003) implement counterexpectation remarks. We first discuss the clearest cases: counterexpectation remarks that are implemented with *oh*-prefaced negative YNIs. As Koshik (2002, 2005; see also Reese, 2007) has shown, negative YNIs can be used in environments where prior beliefs of the recipient have been called into

stick to the term inference.

[3]Dutch *oh* seems to be used very similar to English *oh*. There is, however, little research on Dutch *oh*, and what research there is has focused on different sequential environments.

question. They imply that the formulated belief or understanding is counter to expectations. While this makes them particularly suitable for implementing counterexpectation remarks, we subsequently show that positive YNIs can also implement counterexpectation remarks. That is not to say that positive and negative YNIs are equivalent practices, but both formats can be used to treat a prior informing turn as counter to expectation.

In closing we show that when unrelated clausal response with yes/no-type interrogative word order are not *oh*-prefaced, they implement different actions. By not using *oh*, the recipient does not accept the terms of speaker's informing turn—either the information it provides or the action it implements—nor the inference formulated in the YNI. In fact, any change-of-state token is only produced after the speaker has provided confirmation and where relevant an account (see Heritage, 1984a). These non-*oh*-prefaced YNIs are thus used to convey that the recipient has a problem understanding or accepting the speaker's prior turn.

5.2 Data & Method

The data we use in this paper consist of 21.5hrs of audio recordings of Dutch informal phone and Skype conversations between friends and family, which were recorded by students at Utrecht University in 2011 and 2012. All speakers signed informed consent forms allowing use of the data for research and publication purposes, and the transcripts have been anonymized: all proper names are pseudonyms, except in a few cases where the original name does not help in identifying the participant and was necessary for analytical purposes—for example, we did not change the names of sports teams.

From these data we initially selected all *oh*-prefaced YNIs ($N = 38$). We subsequently removed the cases where the YNI (i) did not respond to an informing turn,[4] or (ii) implemented topicalization in response to a news announcement (*was het leuk* / "was it fun") (Button & Casey, 1985). This resulted in a collection of 27 counterexpectation remarks.

In order to compare these counterexpectation remarks with other YNIs we also collected the first 300 YNIs from the 20 hour corpus and then selected all YNIs that were used to convey that the prior, informing turn was not in line

[4]As was pointed out to us by a reviewer, this leaves open the possibility that counterexpectation remarks can also be produced in response to other types of actions. Of the eleven cases we removed, however, only two were produced in responses to a non-informing turn, and of these only one looks similar to a counterexpectation remark; the other is used to launch an activity disjunctive from the prior talk. But since it is only one case, we have kept it out of our analysis.

with the speaker's prior beliefs or expectations. This led to a total of 26 cases of non-*oh*-prefaced YNIs for comparison.

The data have been analyzed using conversation analysis (Ten Have, 2007) and transcribed according to Jeffersonian conventions (Jefferson, 2004). The transcripts consists of three lines: first the original Dutch, then a word-by-word translation into English, and finally a free translation.

5.3 Counterexpectation remarks

5.3.1 Combining practices

Informing turns should be designed to fit the recipient's knowledge state (Sacks et al., 1974): speakers should not tell recipient what they already know, presuppose information that recipients do not know, or convey information that recipients believe to be false. But discrepancies can arise, and when they do recipients can deal with them in myriad ways. For example, Heritage (1984a, p. 314ff.; see also Robinson, 2009) showed that recipients can contradict a speaker's statement by doing a counterinforming. More recently Smith (2013) and Steensig and Heinemann (2013) discussed practices with which recipients topicalize a discrepancy between their prior beliefs and the information conveyed by the speaker. Smith (2013) focused on recipients who formulate their prior belief with counterfactual modality (Kärkkäinen, 2009) by using turn-initial I thought. In contrast, Steensig and Heinemann (2013) focus on recipients who formulate an inference of the prior turn that is discrepant with their prior knowledge, implementing what Steensig and Heinemann call knowledge-discrepancy questions. With both practices recipients solicit not just confirmation, but also an account.

Counterexpectation remarks are a more fine-grained category of action. They are best analyzed as a specific combination of practices that together implement a specific action, what Enfield (2013, p. 100; see also Sidnell & Enfield, 2014) calls a praction. The practices used are not produced as distinct actions, but provide the recipients with different cues as to what type of response is being solicited, that is, what action the speaker of that practice is doing.

There are three practices the combination of which we gloss as counterexpectation remarks. The main practice is an unrelated clausal response: the recipient formulates an inference of the speaker's prior, informing turn. By being next-positioned, the understanding comes off as having been gleaned or inferred from the prior turn, even though the speaker had not designed that turn to convey this understanding (see Terasaki, 1976/2004; Maynard, 2003;

Steensig & Heinemann, 2013). By doing an unrelated clausal response, the speaker treats this inference as counter to expectation (Steensig & Heinemann, 2013; Thompson et al., 2015) and topicalizes it, thereby *shifting the focus of the at issue talk*: in the subsequent turns the participants discuss the inference formulated by the recipient, not the informing turn that was done by the speaker.

The following extract is a case in point. Lisa is going on vacation to Indonesia in six weeks and is telling in lines 1–2 when she has an appointment to get the necessary vaccinations. Initially Amelie receipts that answer with *oh* (Heritage, 1984a), but after a micropause she produces an *oh*-prefaced YNI. In it she formulates her inference that Lisa does not have to get those vaccinations a set number of weeks in advance of her trip. She thus shifts the talk from when Lisa is going on vacation, to whether the time she gets the vaccination matters.

(1) VC1–02:16.5–02:26.0

```
01  Lis    volgens      mij m:aandag over: (0.5) twee of
           according.to me  Monday   in          two  or
02         drie  we:ken. .H >'kweet het eigenlijk [niet<.]
           three weeks       I.know it  actually   not
           I think monday in: (0.5) two or three wee:ks.
           .H >I actually don't [know<.]
03  Ame                              [    o:]::h.
04         (.)
05      -> >oh moet    het niet een bepaalde< tijd eh een pa-
            oh have.to it  now  a   certain   time    a
06      -> een aantal weken van te  voren:,
           a   number weeks of  PRT advance
           >oh does that not have to 'be done' a certain<
           time eh a fe- a number of weeks in advance:,
07         (0.4)
08         of [(      )]
           or [(      )]
09  Lis       [   o:h  ] >da'  maakt   niet uit<,=je  moet
                  oh      that matters not  out   you have.to
10         het gewoon ten minste een maand van te  voren
           it  simply at  least  a   month of  PRT advance
11         doe:n,
           do
              [   o:h  ] >that doesn't matter<,=you simply
           have to do it at least a month in adva:nce,
12          (0.6)
13  Ame    °o[:h°;]    [ °oh ja°  ]
            oh            oh yeah
           °o[:h°;]    [ °oh yeah°]
```

The second practice is *oh*-prefacing. By *oh*-prefacing the speaker accepts

the information conveyed in the prior, informing turn, and thereby also tentatively accepts the subsequently formulated inference (Heritage 1984). It is treated as a candidate understanding that the recipient just now arrived at. In extract (1), Amelie's *oh*-preface conveys that she has tentatively accepted the formulated inference that one does not have to get vaccinations a certain number of weeks in advance. She thereby implicitly also accepts the information conveyed by Lisa that she will get her vaccinations in two or three weeks. Without *oh* her turn would likely be heard as challenging, as raising a potential problem (Steensig & Heinemann, 2013; see also section 5.4 in this paper)

The third practice is the use of the negative YNI, which in this environment treats the formulated understanding as contradicting a prior belief or expectation.[5] In case of extract (1), Amelie uses the negative YNI to imply that she previously thought that there is a timetable for vaccinations, but that this belief has been called into question. She thereby asks of Lisa not just to (dis)confirm, but also to explain why she does not have to get her vaccinations a set number of weeks in advance. Only after Lisa has explained in line 9–10 that you have to get it at least a month in advance, does Amelie move to sequence closure (Heritage, 1984a; Schegloff, 2007). Acceptance of the inference is thus tentative until reconciliatory information has been provided.

This is different from yes/no declaratives (G. Raymond, 2010a), which are often called B-event statements (Labov, 1970), that are *oh*-prefaced: with these a recipients does now-understanding and solicits only confirmation (see chapter 4). In other words, by using a negative YNI the recipient accepts the speaker's prior, informative turn, but only tentatively accepts the inference that s/he has gleaned from it and offered up for confirmation. But at the same time, because it is *oh*-prefaced, her negative YNI will not be heard as a challenge, but as a prior expectation that in light of the prior turn has tentatively been abandoned.

5.3.2 Responding with negative interrogatives

In the example discussed in the prior section, the speaker used a negative YNI in doing the counterexpectation remark. In this section we will discuss additional cases where the counterexpectation remark is implemented with an *oh*-prefaced

[5]See Koshik (2005, extract 3) for a similar use of negative YNIs, albeit in a slightly different sequential environment. In that example, lacking ratification by the recipient of a formulated belief, the speaker moves from an assertive position—*But those were Alex's tanks*—to a weakened position—*Weren't those Alex's tanks?* The sequence gives rise to a possible understanding that a prior belief, in that case explicitly formulated, was incorrect, and this is made salient first with a negative YNI.

negative YNI. We begin our analysis by showing a prototypical case in which the recipient of an informing turn treats that turn as offering evidence against a prior belief, and where the speaker subsequently also treats that prior belief as something that could have been expected. In excerpt (2) Ronald is on the phone with Wendy, his girlfriend. He initiates the sequence by formulating his expectation that she will have class in a moment.

(2) BN3–01:55.2–02:07.8

```
01  Ron     =ga je     nou e:h
             ga you.SG now
            =are you now going to e:h
02          >je     hebt dadelijk    col↑lege<;
             you.SG have in.a.moment class
            >you have class in a moment<;
03           (0.8)
04  Wen     .h ja:  om een uur;
               yeah at one o'clock
            .h yea:h at one o'clock;
05          ik ga ↑eerst nog   even thuis wat  dingetjes doen,
            I  go  first still just home  some things    do
            I am ↑first going to do some things at home,
06          °en  dan eh°
             and then
            °and then eh°
07          (0.8)
08  Ron ->  oh ↑ga je  niet naar de  bieb.
            oh  go you not  to   the library
            oh ↑are you not going to the library.
09          (0.4)
10  Wen     nee: >nee nee< °van↑daag niet°.
            no    no  no    today    not
            no: >no no< °not today°.
11          (1.4)
12  Ron     ↑o:ke.
             okay
            ↑o:kay.
```

In line 8 Ron uses the three practices discussed earlier, implementing a counterexpectation remark. First, Ronald formulates an inference of Wendy's answer: that she will not be going to the library. The evidence that he has been offered for this inference is that Wendy told him that she will do chores at home before going to class. Wendy, at least on the face of it, did not design her turn to convey that she would not be visiting the library any more than she conveys that she will for example not be going to a coffee shop. Ronald thus provides an unrelated clausal response to Wendy's informing turn. He thereby treats the

inference as based on Wendy's turn and shifts the focus of the at issue talk from going to class to not going to the library.

Second, Ronald's turn is *oh*-prefaced, with which he treats his inference as just now arrived at. He thereby tentatively accepts that she will not be going to the library thereby accepting that Wendy will be doing stuff at home and then go to class. In other words, it is only after Wendy has said she will be doing chores that Roland has come to belief that she likely will not be visiting the library.

Third, by formulating his inference with a negative YNI Ronald implies that he had expected that Wendy would be going to the library. He thereby requests not just confirmation of his inference, but also some form of reconciliatory information for this discrepancy. As Wendy has said that she is going to do chores, she has already accounted for why she won't be visiting the library, but nonetheless she elaborates. She says she is not going today, suggesting that her visiting the library is a regular and therefore expectable occurrence. She thus validates Ronald's prior expectation that she might have been going to the library.

Both participants show an orientation to Ronald's *oh*-prefaced YNI as suggesting a prior expectation. Ronald does so by simply asking the question. Whereas declaratives and tag-interrogatives convey a speaker's strong epistemic stance and solicit confirmation of speaker's expectations (Heritage, 2010, 2012a; G. Raymond, 2010a), negative interrogatives are used to solicit confirmation of the inverse of some belief or expectation of the speaker for which s/he has just been provided counterevidence (Koshik, 2002, 2005; Reese, 2007). Wendy in her response deals with the expectability of her visiting the library, by accounting that she won't visit today. That is, her visits are recurrent and therefore expectable.

By combining these practices a recipient of some informing thus conveys that s/he had a prior belief to which the speaker has provided counterevidence, and that in light of this evidence the recipient no longer holds that belief or at least strongly questions it. That is, the recipient does not challenge the speaker's prior turn, and attributes epistemic primacy in the matter formulated to the speaker. We will use two examples to offer further evidence that *oh*-prefaced negative interrogatives both accept the prior turn and treat it as counter to expectation.

First consider excerpt (3). The data is from a conversation between Miep and Bea, who are mother and daughter respectively. Bea has called Miep on a Friday to make arrangements for bringing over groceries on Saturday—it is clear that Miep is an elderly woman, but we do not know her exact age. Bea

shows in line 1 that she is launching a new activity with turn-initial *hee*.

(3) CS5–01:54.6–02:11.9

```
01  Bea     =.HH hee ↓ik wilde  morgen   even langskomen
                 hey  I  wanted tomorrow just come.by
            =.HH hey ↓I wanted to come by tomorrow
02          om Eten te #brengen#.
            to food to  bring
            to bring over #groceries#.
03          (0.4)
04  Mie     wanneer?
            when
            when?
05          (0.2)
06  Bea     m:orgen,
            tomorrow
            tom:orrow,
07          (0.5)
08  Mie ->  #oh# kom  ik ↑niet naar jou toe.
             oh  come I   not  to   you to
            #oh# am I ↑not coming to you.
09  Bea     nee je     komt niet naar MIJ,
            no  you.SG come not  to   me
            no you are not coming to ME,
10          want    z:ondag komt #ans:#.
            because Sunday  come  Ans
            because on s:unday #ans:# will come.
```

In lines 1–2 Bea says that she wants to come over the next day to bring some groceries. After a brief repair sequence in which the day is established Miep uses an *oh*-prefaced negative YNI in which she formulates her inference that she will not be visiting Bea. This is subsequently confirmed and accounted for by Bea: Ans, a friend of hers, will be visiting on Sunday. With her account, Bea indicates that Miep will not be able to visit her on Sunday as she normally would, since Ans is already visiting. But since Bea still has to bring over groceries, she plans to visit on Saturday instead.

Miep uses the by now familiar three practices. First, she uses an unrelated clausal response, treating her inference as based on Bea's prior turn and shifts the focus of the at issue talk from Bea's plan to bring over groceries, to Miep not going to visit Bea. Miep's inference is of course strongly implied by Bea's plans—if Bea is going to visit Miep, it will likely not be the other way around as well—but Bea did not formulate her plans as such. Second, by *oh*-prefacing this inference, Miep claims that she has just-now arrived at it and thus treats Bea's plan to come over as already established, that is, not as something she has to

agree to. Third, by using a negative YNI she implies that she previously believed she would be visiting Bea and requests reconciliatory information for why she won't be. Bea aligns with this request by not only giving a type-conforming and preferred *nee* (G. Raymond, 2003), but also providing an account: she already has someone coming over on Sunday.

An additional interesting point of this excerpt is that Miep in her uptake seems to ascribe a different action to Bea's turn in line 1–2 than what Bea had designed that turn to do. Bea formulates plans that are contingent on Miep's availability. Miep is a co-participant in the proposed plans and it would thus seem that she would have to accept it. Miep, however, formulates the plans in line 8 as having already been established: she has just inferred that she will not be visiting Bea. Miep thereby treats Bea's turn not as a proposal that has to be agreed with, and in fact after shifting the focus of the talk she never agrees or disagrees, but as simply announcing a change in plans in which she has no say. She treats Bea's turn as an informing, not a proposal.

Miep thus treats Bea's turn in lines 1–2 as contradicting her prior, private belief that she would be visiting Bea, and by *oh*-prefacing her uptake of that turn, Miep shows that she has tentatively accepted it and thus abandoned her own expectation. Bea also orients to Miep's *oh*-prefaced negative YNI as such: she does not simply confirm, but goes on to give an account for why Miep cannot visit (Steensig & Heinemann, 2013; Thompson et al., 2015).

The following case offers further evidence that *oh*-prefaced negative interrogatives claim that the preceding talk was not in line with the speaker's prior, private beliefs. The excerpt is from the start of a phone call where Toos has called her friend Angela. In line 1 Toos responds to Angela's reciprocal *how are you*, building on that response to shift to a new topic in line 2.

(4) LM1–00:12.1–00:31.4

```
01  Too     <ook #hoo:r#>.
             also  PRT
            <me too>.
02          ik ↓lag even lekker <op bed te chillen>.
            I   lay just nice    on bed to chill
            I was just lying <in bed and chilling>.
03          (0.3)
04  Ang     ↓echt?
             really
            ↓really?
05          (0.4)
06      -> ↓o:h ↑moet    je     nie[t aan je]  scriptie.
             oh   have.to you.SG not   on  your thesis
```

```
          ↓o:h don't you ↑have to 'wor[k' on your] thesis.
07  Too                             [ #ja:#  ]
                                      yeah
                                        [  #yea:h# ]
08          (0.8)
09          .HH ja   ik heb  hem al     >helemaal<  af;
                yeah I  have it  already completely finished
            .HH yeah I've already >completely< finished it;
10          <dus da's   wel fijn>.
             so  that's ADV nice
            <so that's kind of nice>.
11  Ang     ↑ECHT? ↓wo::w.
             really wow
            ↑REALLY? ↓wo::w.
12          (.)
13          hUh? [je    ↑was  er]  (echt ) net  aan begonnen;
            huh   you.SG were there really just on  started
            hUh? [you had] (really) only just started;
14          of niet;
            or not
            or not;
```

Angela responds to Toos' telling of what she is doing with a newsmark *echt* ("really"), treating that telling as more than just informative, and projecting further talk (Couper-Kuhlen, 2012; Heritage, 1984a; Jefferson, 1981; Maynard, 2003). After a brief gap—Toos' response is eventually produced in overlap—Angela produces a counterexpectation remark, formulating her inference that Toos does not have to work on her thesis. Toos then explains that she has already finished it, and so she has no thesis to work on. Although her response has a turn-initial *ja*, this particle thus does not implement confirmation.

Angela's unrelated clausal response is on the more inferential side of the continuum described by Thompson et al. (2015). While it may be that Toos said that she was chilling as a means of implying that she had finished her thesis, there is nothing in the data that supports this idea. In fact, when she responds in line 9–10, her assessment of the situation is rather downgraded, certainly compared to how Angela takes it up in line 11. Toos is thus not hinting at good news: she is simply saying that she is relaxing and Angela infers from this that Toos does not have to work on her thesis.

With the unrelated clausal response Angela treats her understanding as inferred from Toos's prior turn and as it is *oh*-prefaced, it also does what her newsmark did not do: it tentatively accepts Toos's telling. By formulating her inference with a negative YNI she does, however, make clear that she is not just soliciting confirmation of a revised belief, but reconciliatory information for

the contradictory states of affairs: her prior belief that Toos has to work on her thesis, which she thinks Toos had only just started working on (lines 13–14), and Toos' announcement that she is relaxing.

Thus we see in (4), as we did in (1)–(3), that recipient use *oh*-prefaced negative YNIs to convey that the prior, informing turn by the speaker was in some way not in line with their prior, private beliefs. Again, whether these are actual beliefs in the mind of the speaker is not what we're interested in and we make no claims about this. Our point is that the speaker treats it as what s/he previously believed. By formulating an inference and treating it as just-now arrived at as a result of the interlocutor's prior turn, these YNIs are used to treat the prior turn as counter to expectations, and solicit reconciliatory information for the two contradicting states of affairs.

5.3.3 Responding with positive interrogatives

So far we have focused exclusively on negative interrogatives, but in fact positive interrogatives can be used in a similar, albeit not completely identical, manner. We will demonstrate this on the basis of two examples.[6] In the first case, excerpt 5 below, the recipient initially produces a positive YNI and after a short pause adds a negative YNI, changing the preferred response from *yes* to *no*. Tina has just been telling Anna, her daughter, what she had for dinner and that it tasted very good, which Anna assesses positively in line 1. Tina then in line 2 shows that she is now going to ask about Anna, and subsequently, after 0.3s of silence, displays her expectation that Anna still has to eat (line 4).

(5) AG1–06:21.4–06:39.3

01	Ann	=↓oh ↑chillie:;=
		oh chill
		=↓oh ↑chill:;=
02	Tin	=en jij:?
		and you.SG
		=and you:?
03		(0.3)
04		je ↑moet nog eten.
		you.SG have.to still eat
		you still ↑have to eat.
05		(0.7)
06	Ann	ik heb al: een zak ↑wortels leeggegeten?=
		I have already a bag carrots empty.eaten
		I've already: eaten a bag of carrots?=

[6]See chapter 4 example (6) for an additional case.

```
07  Tin     =ja,
             yeah
            =yeah,
08  Ann     °.h°
09          (0.4)
10          <moet    nu  alleen nog e:::h>
             have.to now only   still
            <now I only still have to e:::h>
11          (0.9)
12          een tar↑taar bakken;
            a   tartare  bake
            bake a tar↑tare;
13          (0.2)
14  Tin ->  oh maar ben je  alleen;
            oh but  are you alone
            oh but are you alone;
15          (0.8)
16      ->  is ni[cole] der   niet;
            is Nicole   there not
            is ni[cole] not there
17  Ann          [ ja ]
                 [yeah]
18          (0.8)
19  Ann     <nee die moet   allemaal dingen voor de
             no  she has.to all      things for  the
20          dies        van ↓veri regelen>.=
            anniversary of   Veri arrange
            <no she has to arrange a bunch of things for the
            anniversary of veri>.=
21  Tin     =oh ja   ja   ja.
             oh yeah yeah yeah
            =oh yeah yeah yeah.
```

Anna's response in line 6 shows that neither confirmation nor disconfirmation are appropriate responses. She has already eaten something, a bag of carrots, but she also still has some cooking to do, baking a tartare. Instead of simply receipting or assessing Anna's answer, Tina provides a positive *oh*-prefaced YNI, inquiring whether Anna is alone (line 14). After a 0.8s gap and in overlap with Anna's confirmation, she uses a negative YNI to inquire whether Nicole, Anna's roommate, is not with her (line 16). Anna subsequently explains that Nicole has to make arrangements for the anniversary of her student society (similar to fraternity/sorority), which Tina receipts with *oh ja* in line 21.

Like the *oh*-prefaced negative YNIs discussed in the prior section, Tina's turn in line 14 consists of three practices. First, while Anna has been talking about what she is having for dinner, Tina responds by asking whether she is

alone. She thus implements an unrelated clausal response, shifting the focus of the at issue talk. Second, her turn is *oh*-prefaced, treating her inference that Anna is alone as just now arrived at, and tentatively accepts this inference. Third, by using the YNI she claims a relatively unknowing stance with regard to the inference. This does not mean that the issue of whether or not Anna is alone is considered in question: by *oh*-prefacing she tentatively accepts this inference and, as is indeed clear from her subsequent negative YNI, she no longer holds to the belief that Anna is in company. By using a YNI instead of a declarative she treats the inference as unexpected but unlike the subsequent negative YNI, her positive YNI does not explicitly register an abandoned expectation.

The positive YNI as it is used here is in a sense a weaker version of the negative YNI. With an *oh*-prefaced negative YNI the speaker implies that s/he had a prior belief that is directly contradicted by the prior talk, and with a positive YNI the speaker merely treats the formulated inference as unexpected. Having abandoned a prior belief as in (5) is only one of the reasons why something may be unexpected.

The following case makes that emphatically clear. Bea has called Moniek, her daughter, simply to chat. After a reciprocal greeting sequence, Bea asks Moniek in line 1 how she is doing.

(6) CS4–00:02.0–00:18.2

```
01  Bea     =hoe ↑is het met  je.
             how  is it  with you.SG
            how are you.
02          (0.2)
03  Mon     het is goed met  mIJh;
            it  is fine with me
            I'm doing fine;
04          (0.9)
05  Bea     o:h? ↓wat  bEn je     aan het doen.
            oh    what are you.SG on  the do
            o:h? ↓what are you doing.
06          (.)
07  Mon     ik ben effe aan het eten met  marjanne.
            I  ben just on  the eat  with Marjanne
            I'm just having dinner with marjanne.
08          (1.0)
09  Bea ->  oh b- is mar↑janne bij je.
            oh    is Marjanne  at  you
            oh b- is marjanne at your place.
10          (0.3)
11  Mon     nee: ik ben bij marjanne,
            no   I  am  at  Marjanne
```

```
            no: I am at marjanne's,
12          (0.8)
13  Bea     .h oh je     bent ↑bij: marjanne. oh [gezellig.
               oh you.SG are   at   Marjanne  oh  lovely
            .h oh you are ↑at marjanne's.      oh [lovely
14  Mon                                           [ja
                                                  [yeah
15          ja:↑ha is het ↑ook; .h >en ze   wou    je
            yeah   is it   also     and she wanted you.SG
16          nog   even< bedanken voor de  chocola.
            still just  thank    for  the chocolate
            yea:↑heah it is; .h >and she just wanted to<
            thank you for the chocolate.
```

In response to Moniek's positive assessment in line 3, Bea produces an *oh* with a strong rising intonation, possibly to convey that some elaboration is desired, and she subsequently asks what Moniek is doing. Moniek answers in line 7 that she is eating with Marjanne, a friend of hers whom Bea also knows. After a long lapse of 1.0s, Bea produces an *oh*-prefaced YNI in line 9, formulating her understanding that Marjanne is at Moniek's.[7] This is disconfirmed by Moniek as she is at Marjanne's. Bea then uses an *oh*-prefaced repeat in line 13 to formulate her now-revised understanding (Koivisto, 2015b; Persson, 2015; Robinson, 2009; see also chapter 4) and continues with an assessment. Moniek agrees with this assessment and then moves to a new topic in lines 15–16.

Our focus is on the turn in line 9. By disconfirming and correcting, Moniek addresses it as a fairly straightforward request for information. We want to argue, however, that with it Bea treats it as here-and-now relevant that she did not know that Moniek was with Marjanne. That is, she does not ask a follow-up question, but treats her inference as unexpected. To start we show that it consists of same three practices as excerpt (5).

First, Bea shifts the focus of the talk from Moniek's answer of sharing dinner with Marjanne to Marjanne visiting Moniek, thereby providing an unrelated clausal response. Second, by *oh*-prefacing Bea tentatively accepts the inference that Marjanne is visiting Moniek, something Bea thus previously did not know, thereby also accepting that Moniek is having dinner with Marjanne. Third, Bea's use of a YNI claims a relatively unknowing stance, thereby projecting not just confirmation, but at least in this sequential environment, also some form of elaboration.

[7] *Bij* in this construction can be used both to inquire whether Marjanne is *with* Moniek, or whether Marjanna is *at* Moniek; it is taken up by Moniek, and subsequently by Bea as well, as the latter.

Using a positive YNI thus does not suggest an abandoned expectation: There's no evidence that Bea had any expectations about Marjanne. But neither does it merely convey an inference, nor does it treat the matter as still in question. Speakers can extract news, that is, foreground somethings as news that was not conveyed as news, both with declarative or polar interrogative word order (Steensig & Heinemann, 2013; Thompson et al., 2015). By using an *oh*-prefaced YNI, Bea does not treat the news as something she just now learned (cf. chapter 4), but as in some way not in line with her prior beliefs, that is, as unexpected.

The reason for why Bea considers Moniek's being at Marjanne to be relevant then and there does not become clear immediately: Both participants treat Bea's turn as requesting confirmation. And after having resolved who is visiting whom, Moniek simply launches a new activity, thanking Bea on Marjanne's behalf. It thus initially seems that it is merely treated as unexpected news.

But if we look at how the conversation progresses (see (7)), we see that this activity is closed quickly: The talk between excerpts (6) and (7) comprises a mere nine seconds in which Bea acknowledges Marjanne's gratitude. Immediately afterwards Bea says that they will keep the conversation short (line 35). Moreover, with the resumption marker *maar* ("but") (Mazeland & Huiskes, 2001) and the inferential *dan* ("then") Bea designs this proposal as based on earlier talk: Bea conveys they should keep the conversation short, because Moniek is with Marjanne. She thus changes the activity from a somewhat standard conversational opening, *how are you*-sequence and establishing a first topic (Schegloff, 1968), to the topic of Moniek being with Marjanne, as it means they can only talk briefly.

(7) CS4–00:27.4–00:34.1

```
29  Bea    .H heb je-    >hEb  je<    heb  je     het er
              have you.SG have you.SG have you.SG it  her
30         ook  gegeven? le[uk.
           also given    nice
           .H did you- >did you< did you also give it to her?
           ni[ce.
31  Mon                   [ja.  leuk hè?
                           yeah nice TAG
             [yeah. nice right?
32         (0.8)
33  Bea    ja [↓leuk
           yeah nice
           yeah [↓nice
34  Mon       [(      )
35  Bea    HEY MAAR dan e:h >houwe we 't maar effe< ko:rt,
```

```
            hey but  then     keep  we it only just  brief
            HEY BUT then e:h >we'll just keep it< brie:f,
36          (.)
37  Mon     ja:ha [(   )
            yeah
            yea:hea [(   )
```

Bea thus treats the inference as unexpected and as relevant, because it means Marjanne is not available for talk. An assumption that is inherently conveyed if not by calling (see Schegloff, 1968), then by moving into the conversation without checking whether the recipient is available for talk. By calling, Bea has interrupted a social encounter, and not just any social encounter: a dinner between friends. By proposing to keep the conversation brief and relating that proposal to her inference that Moniek is having dinner with Marjanne, she implies that had she known that Moniek was having dinner with Marjanna, she would not have called.

While it may seem that Bea is proposing to keep the conversation short of her own accord, on deeper inspection it looks like Moniek has been dropping subtle hints that Bea is calling at a bad time. First, she does not answer Bea's *how are you* in the conventional way with a simple adjective, but instead gives a clausal response. Second, she does not reciprocate the question, resulting in a lapse of 0.9s. Third, she answers Bea's inquiry in line 5 in the most minimal way, stating only what she is doing. She does not take it up as a topic proffer (Schegloff, 2007), and the result is again a lapse, this time of 1.0s. Finally, she does not treat Bea's turn in line 13 as an invitation or an opportunity to say more about what she is currently doing with Marjanne.

If these points do show that Moniek treats her mother's call as ill-timed, they are subtle clues, and they also do not work very well. While both agree to keep the conversation short, they actually talk for another minute and a half, in which Bea unsuccessfully solicits news from Moniek (data not shown). When Moniek says that she wants to get back to being *gezellig* ("fun" / "sociable") Bea instead passes the phone to Moniek's father. Only when Moniek starts pressing for an end to the conversation by saying that it is not *gezellig* if she is on the phone the whole time do they move to conversational closure.

To sum up, we have shown in this section that *oh*-prefaced positive YNIs are used in a manner similar to *oh*-prefaced negative YNIs: When produced in response to an informing turn, they are used to convey an inference from the interlocutor's prior turn, and treat that inference as unexpected. Both also make relevant confirmation as a next action.

But there are differences. While both negative and positive YNIs treat the

inference unexpected, the negative YNIs do and positive YNIs do not imply a now abandoned expectation. By contrasting the inference to a former belief, the negative YNIs make the here-and-now relevance of the inference immediately clear. Positive YNIs however merely imply that the inference is somehow not in line with the speaker's prior beliefs. The here-and-now relevance of the inference is therefore not made clear through the counterexpectation remark itself.

Yet, in Dutch talk-in-interaction, negative and positive YNIs can both be used as counterexpectation remarks. With an *oh*-preface and sequentially following turns that are done to inform they can display that the inference made was not expected.

5.4 Challenges and repair

In the previous sections we have argued that by combining three practices—(i) an unrelated clausal response, (ii) *oh*-prefacing, and (iii) yes/no-type interrogative word order—speakers implement what we gloss as a counterexpectation remark. In this section we will show two actions similar to counterexpectation remarks. Both consist of an unrelated clausal response with yes/no-type interrogative word order, but in both cases the recipient does not preface his/her turn with *oh*. Like knowledge-discrepancy questions, these non-*oh*-prefaced YNIs are used by recipients to address a discrepancy between the speaker's prior informing turn, and the recipient's prior knowledge or beliefs (Steensig & Heinemann, 2013). In these cases, however, the recipient does not necessarily request confirmation and elaboration. While these actions can receive confirmation and an account, the speaker can also provide only confirmation or even back down, treating the response not as an inquiry, but a challenge (see Heinemann, 2008). Without the *oh*-preface the recipient does not accept the terms of the prior informing turn—neither the action it implements nor the information it conveys—and thus implements a different action.

Consider for example excerpt (8). Sarah and Jessica are talking about a mutual friend who is in her final year of high school. In the Netherlands, high schools have a centralized national exam, which their mutual friend has to take. Sarah in line 2 says that the exams are soon, and this is initially accepted by Jessica with her claim of remembering in line 3; *oh ja da's waar* ("oh yeah that's right") (Heritage, 1984a; see also section 4.3.1).

(8) DN1–02:54.3–03:15.5

```
01  Sar    ja  >ik weet niet< hoe vaak  zij ↑werkt >nou
           yeah I  know not   how often she  works  now
02         eigenlijk<.=maar ze  heeft (.) binnenkort exa:mens
           actually    but  she has       shortly    exams
03         °volgens      mij°.=
            according.to me
           yeah >I do not know< how often she ↑works >now
           actually<.=but she has (.) to take exams soon °I
           believe°.=
04  Jes    =↑oh ja   das    ↑waa:r;
             oh yeah that.is true
           =↑oh yeah that's ↑ri:ght;
05         (0.4)
06      -> ↑is dat  niet deze week begonnen al      de
            is that not  this week started  already the
        -> exa:mens?
           exams
           ↑has that not started this week already the exa:ms?
07         (1.2)
08  Sar    zou   zo   eens kunnheh hu hu (.) .Hh
           could thus once can
           could just be the case hu hu (.).Hh
09  Jes    volgens      mij[: ↑wel   >namel]ijkh<.
           according.to me     ADV    namely
           I believe[: ↑so >namel]y<
```

While Jessica initially accepts Sarah's informing turn that the exams are soon, even claiming that she also knew it, she uses a negative interrogative in lines 6–7 to introduce her expectation that the exams have in fact already started. As she uses a negative interrogative, confirmation would be in line with Sarah's statement that the exams are to start soon. That is, a confirming response would mean that the exams have not started this week. But Sarah does not provide confirmation. In fact, both participants in the subsequent talk orient to the YNI as a challenge, as a reversed polarity question where disconfirmation is the preferred response (Koshik, 2005): (i) Sarah backs down from her earlier statement, now saying that it could be that the exams have already started (line 8) and (ii) Jessica states that she actually beliefs that the exams have already started (line 9).

Jessica's YNI seems to hold the middle ground between a counterinforming and a counterexpectation remark. She does not say Sarah is wrong, and that the exams have already started, but neither does she treat the formulated state of affairs as an inference she has now arrived at. She thus creates room for Sarah to either confirm, to claim epistemic primacy, or to back down. The difference

between Jessica's YNI and the cases in section 3 is brought about by the lack of *oh*: as Jessica's turn in line 6 is not *oh*-prefaced she does not convey tentative acceptance of either the formulated inference and therefore the terms of the turn it addresses.

The following excerpt is also a case in which the negative YNI indexes resistance to the terms of a prior informing turn. In this case the speaker treats the prior turn as confusing; that is, the speaker claims a lack of understanding and shows why she does not understand. The excerpt is from a conversation between two friends: Rianna and Melinda. Rianna has been telling about her recent visit to a university in Belgium where she might want to get a master's degree.

(9) CL1–01:00.3–01:24.4

```
01  Ria     °ik° vond  er    drie  lEU:k,
             I   found there three fun
            °I° liked three of them,
02          en  die   WA:ren >d'r   allemaal< niet eens.
            and those were    there all       not  even
            and they WE:re >none of them< even there.
03          .H[h
04  Me: ->    [HUH?
              [HUH?
05        -> maa[r ↑wist je  dat  niet van te  voren.]
            but    knew you that not  of  PRT ahead
            bu[t ↑did you not know that beforehand.]
06  Ria       [  (         )   ik   dacht   .hh    ]
                             I    thought
              [  (         )   I   thought   .hh   ]
07          (0.7)
08          nEE: er    stond op de  site van JA:
            no   there stood at the site of  yeah
            nO: it said on the website like YEAH:
09          °dat  en  dat° zijn masteropleidingen,
             that and that are  master's.programs
            °that and that° are master's programs,
10          en  dat  er    geen .HHh E::h (.) niet
            and that there none              not
            and that there not a .HHh e::h (.) not
11          >zalk    maar zeggen< zo'n   WOR:kshop van WAS.
             shall.I just say     such.a workshop  of  was
            >so to speak< like a WOR:kshop of WAS.
12          dat  je     gewoon echt (.) voorlichting krijgt.
            that you.SG simply really   information  get
            that you simply really (.) get information.
```

In line 1 Rianna is finishing a complaint. She had gone to Belgium to get information about three specific programs, but the university did not provide information on those programs. An affiliating response might be something like co-complaining or expressing sympathy, but instead Melinda claims she does not understand with *huh* and then uses a YNI to address the question of whether Rianne could have known in advance. She uses a TCU-initial *maar*, not as a resumption marker, but to show that there is a contrast between what Rianna just said and her uptake. In other words, she can be seen to question whether Rianna has a right to complain: should she not simply have prepared better. Melinda also responds to it as such: she provides confirmation and explains that indeed she could not have known in advance, shifting the blame to the university.

Melinda's YNI shares some features with the counterexpectation remarks: she addresses a discrepancy between Rianna's prior informing turn and what might be expected. Rianna also subsequently confirms and elaborates. But as Melinda's turn is not *oh*-prefaced, it does not convey an inference Melinda has now arrived at. Instead, using *huh* she claims that she does not understand the prior turn and in her YNI she formulates the problem.

Finally, consider (10). This excerpt is also from a conversation between two friends, Christy and Marsha, who are talking about a recent soccer match, the final of the annual cup in which FC Twente beat Ajax 3–2 despite being down 0–2 at half-time.

(10) DL1–03:10.0–03:29.5

```
01  Mar:    tom die ging EErst    helemaal niet eens meer
             Tom he  went at.first at.all   not  even anymore
02           kijk:en enzo. .h roep maar wEEr  als het gel#ijk
             watch and.such   yell just again if  it  tied
03           staat#.
             stands
             tom he at FIrst did not go watch anymore at all
             and such. .h just shout when it #is tied# again.
04           (0.8)
05  Chr: -> ↑maar (m-) (0.2) is tom voor ↑twent↓#e:#.
              but             is Tom for   Twente
             ↑but (m-) (0.2) does tom support ↑twent↓#e:#.
06           (1.1)
07  Mar:    jaha:,
             yeah
             yeahea:h,
08  Chr:    o:h dat  w[ist ik niet.]=
             oh  that knew  I  not
```

```
                o:h I d[idn't know that.]=
09  Mar:                [ (ook fan) ]
                       [   (also fan)   ]
10  Chr:        ='kdacht   dat  tom ook  voor a:jax wa:s.
                 I.thought that Tom also for  Ajax  was
                =I thought that tom also supported a:jax.
11              (0.5)
12  Mar:        #nee:: hij is voor ↑twente#.
                 no    he is  for   Twente
                #no:: he supports ↑twente#.
```

In line 1 Marsha tells that Tom, her boyfriend, stopped watching when Ajax was ahead and that he wanted her to call out to him only if the game was again level. What follows is a silence of 0.8s, after which Christy produces a YNI, formulating her inference that Tom supports Twente. Christy's turn has almost all the telltale signs of a counterexpectation remark: (i) it is an unrelated clausal response, (ii) it has yes/no-type interrogative word order, and (iii) it formulates an inference that is not in line with her prior beliefs, a contrast that is even marked with turn-initial *maar*. But she only produces an *oh* after Marsha has provided confirmation, that is, she does not accept the revised understanding until after the confirmation.

Notice that after Marsha's confirming response, Christy explicitly formulates that she did not know (line 8) and that she thought that Tom supported Ajax (line 10). Although this prior belief is introduced with *Ik dacht* ("I thought") it is a different practice from the "I thought"-initiated turns discussed by Smith (2013). In the cases discussed by Smith, the "I thought"-turn is produced in response to a problematic informing turn in order to reveal a discrepancy and solicit an account for that discrepancy. Here Christy uses it after the discrepancy has already been resolved, and it gets only re-confirmation. She uses it to account for the delay in progressivity. It is a practice that is frequently produced to account for a problem after repair has been initiated and resolved (Ekberg, 2012; Schegloff, 1992; see also example 5 in chapter 4).

These three cases show that while unrelated clausal responses to informing turns implemented with YNIs treat that prior turn as counter to the speaker's beliefs or expectations, they do not implement counterexpectation remarks. Instead, they treat that prior turn as somehow problematic in light of the recipient's prior beliefs. *Oh*-prefacing is thus a crucial aspect of counterexpectation remarks: it indexes that the speaker has tentatively accepted the formulated understanding and by extension the terms of the prior informing turn, both the information it conveys and the action it implements.

5.5 Discussion & Conclusion

Research over the last thirty years has shown that participants have a large array of resources to respond to informing actions such as news, stories, and other tellings of past, current, or future experiences (see Thompson et al., 2015, for an overview). All these responsive actions take a different stance to the informing action, and therefore have different sequential implications. On the one hand recipients can be mostly passive recipients by conveying that they have been informed, typically by using a change-of-state token like *oh* (Heritage, 1984a; see also Heinemann & Koivisto, 2016 and the references cited therein) thereby proposing sequence closure (Schegloff, 2007). At the other end of the spectrum, we find actions with which speaker's actively partake in the informing sequence. By formulating prior beliefs, recipients can treat the informing turn as not just conveying new information, but as information that contradicts those prior beliefs, and thus merits elaboration (Steensig & Heinemann, 2013; Smith, 2013; Robinson, 2009). They actively transform the newsworthiness of the prior turn (see Maynard, 2003; Terasaki, 1976/2004).

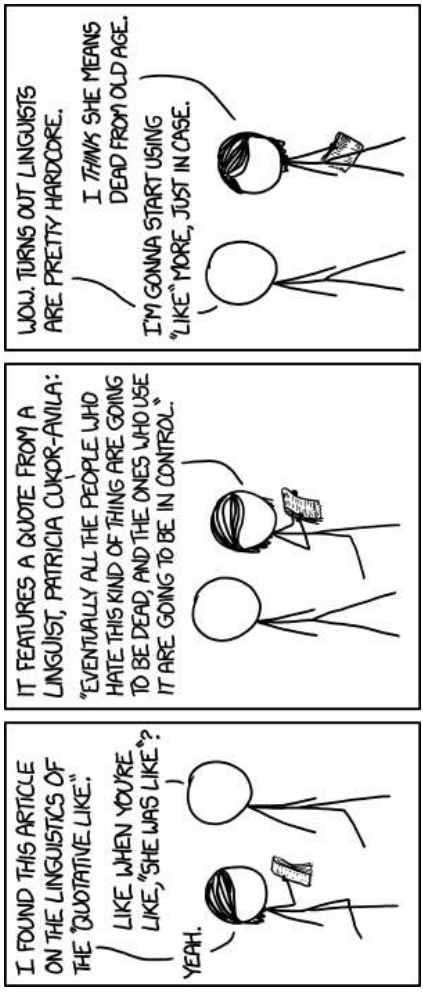
The analysis in this paper contributes to this line of investigation by discussing one specific way in which recipients in Dutch talk-in-interaction respond to informing turns: producing an *oh*-prefaced yes/no-type interrogative in which they formulate an understanding inferred from the informing turn. We glossed these as counterexpectation remarks; they treat the prior turn as conveying information that is counter to what the recipient expected, even though that prior turn was not designed as such. We have argued that in producing such a response, the recipient (i) accepts the terms of the prior, informing turn—the action it implements and the information it conveys, (ii) treats that turn as not in line with a prior, private belief or expectation—one not made public in the interaction, (iii) topicalizes the unexpected inference, (iv) requests confirmation of that inference as well as what Robinson (2009) calls reconciliatory information, and (v) tentatively accepts the formulated inference or understanding.

To support this analysis, we compared counterexpectation remarks to YNIs that also treat a prior informing turn by the interlocutor as providing information that is counter-to-expectation but that are not *oh*-prefaced. We showed that because these YNIs are not *oh*-prefaced, they do not accept the terms of that prior turn and instead treat that turn as in some way problematic. In each case the recipient has discrepant beliefs or expectations, but is not yet willing to even tentatively commit to the inference gleaned from the speaker's turn. That these YNIs implement different actions from counterexpectation remarks is partially revealed in their sequential uptake: (i) the speaker can back down, treating

the response as a correction or challenge; or (ii) the speaker can provide only confirmation and no reconciliatory information. The recipient can also convey that s/he has a problem by prefacing the YNI with *huh*, which is used to claim a problem with understanding the prior turn.

Both the way in which this combination of practices is used and the infrequency with which we find it in casual conversation suggest that these *oh*-prefaced YNIs are not one fixed practice. Instead, counterexpectation remarks consist of multiple practices that are combined to implement one specific action and make relevant a specific response; they are best analyzed as what Enfield (2013, p. 100) calls a praction (see also Sidnell & Enfield, 2014). The relevant practices with which these counterexpectation remarks are implemented are as follows: (i) the recipient produced what Thompson et al. (2015) call an unrelated clausal response: a response that formulates some inference that was gleaned from the prior informing turn; (ii) this response is *oh*-prefaced to index a here-and-now change-of-state (Heritage, 1984a) and convey that the speaker has accepted the terms of the prior informing turn and has tentatively accepted the formulated inference; and (iii) the response has yes/no-type interrogative word order to request both confirmation and reconciliatory information (Robinson, 2009).

This paper thus supports the idea that there is much to be gained in our understanding of talk-in-interaction by looking not at particular actions or practices, but focusing on a more micro level of participant behavior; what is recurrently achieved by a specific combination of behavioral practices in a specific sequential environment (e.g., Schegloff, 1996a). It will lead to the discovery of actions that are maybe impossible to anticipate and it can demonstrate the ability of people to attend to the most subtle details of interaction and design their actions accordingly moment by moment, without even having to be aware of it.



God was like, "Let there be light," and there was light.

Image courtesy of xkcd.com

CHAPTER 6

Assessing Answers: Action ascription in third position[1]

Abstract

Although the adjacency pair is a basic unit of interactional structure, many sequences consist of three parts. This paper is concerned with assessments used in third position to receive answers to inquiries. It argues that participants distinguish between two types of assessments: evaluative assessments and deontic assessments. By adopting a particular stance in third position, speakers not only display their understanding of what the answer was doing, but can also actively ascribe an action to it. They thereby build and maintain the architecture of intersubjectivity. Data are in Dutch with English translations.

Keywords: sequence organization, assessments, stance taking, deontics, proposals, action formation

6.1 Conversational Structure

Assessments have featured centrally in conversation analytic research since the 1970s (Pomerantz, 1975, 1978, 1984; see Lindström & Mondada, 2009

[1]This chapter is a slightly modified version of a paper that was accepted as
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for an overview). They take up such a central role in the study of interaction, because they are one of the primary means participants have of showing social engagement and social solidarity (Goodwin & Goodwin, 1992; Pomerantz, 1984). By taking up some evaluative stance towards an interlocutor's prior turn, speakers can demonstrate that they have understood the import of an interlocutor's talk, and thus that they have been attentive recipients, but also that they share their interlocutor's point of view.

Most of the work on assessments has focused on their production in environments such as storytellings and news exchanges—that is, reports of past events—and their sequential implications (Goodwin & Goodwin, 1987, 1992; Lindström & Mondada, 2009; Maynard, 1997; Pomerantz, 1984; Stivers, 2008). When speakers convey news or produce a story, they do not merely provide their recipient with information: they display a stance towards the reported event with which the recipient should subsequently agree (Maynard, 1997; Stivers, 2008). Assessments of another's talk therefore not only have a social function, their production also has sequential implications. By providing an assessment speakers can show that they have finished describing some event, and similarly recipients can display their understanding that a telling has come to completion by providing an assessment (Goodwin & Goodwin, 1992; Jefferson, 1978, 1993; Sacks, 1974; Stivers, 2008).

But assessments are used to deal with more than just reports of past events. In this paper I argue that participants in Dutch talk-in-interaction respond to answers to inquiries with two types of assessments and that they thereby treat the answer as implementing different categories of actions. In addition, I show that this distinction has consequences for action formation and sequence organization.

The first type of assessment is the one that is typically discussed in the literature (Goodwin & Goodwin, 1987, 1992; Lindström & Mondada, 2009; Maynard, 1997; Pomerantz, 1984; Stivers, 2008). These are assessments with which speakers adopt an evaluative stance towards the answer, treating it as a telling of news or a story. I call these evaluative assessments. The second type of assessment has not previously been discussed. These assessments are used to adopt a deontic stance towards the answer.[2] The deontic authority of participants concerns their rights and obligations to determine their own and other's actions

[2]In this paper stance is used not in parallel with status to refer to the verbal and embodied resources that speakers use to claim some measure of for example knowledgeability (Heritage, 2012a), but to indicate that a speaker takes a position: "an assessment in third position articulates a *stance* [emphasis added] taken up toward what the second pair part speaker had said or done in the prior turn" (Schegloff, 2007, p. 123f.; see also Stivers, 2008).

(Stevanovic & Peräkylä, 2012). In interaction, participants frequently orient to their respective authority. For example, in making a proposal for a future course of action, a speaker inherently encroaches on the recipient's authority to determine his/her own future actions. The degree to which the speaker has rights to make such an infringement is reflected not only in the design of the proposal, but also its uptake. With the deontic assessments discussed in this paper, a speaker treats the prior turn as a proposal and receipts it as an acceptable proposal.

I offer three forms of evidence for the distinction between these two assessment types. First, I show that these types of assessment differ in their turn design. Participants make use of a broad range of assessment terms such as *leuk* ("fun" / "nice") or *gezellig* ("lovely")[3] to adopt an evaluative stance toward a state of affairs. In contrast they use a specific practice for adopting a deontic stance: *is goed* ("∅ is fine").[4] Second, speakers orient to these assessments differently through different prefacing particles. Evaluative assessments are often prefaced by interjections that register the answer as informative such as *oh* (Heritage, 1984a).[5] By registering the answer as informative, these *oh*-prefaced assessments are designed to be understood as articulating a stance towards news or a report of past events. Deontic assessments on the other hand are often prefaced by *oké* ("okay"), a particle that is used to receipt answers that are not primarily concerned with informing, but with such activities as arrangement making or requesting (Beach, 1993; Schegloff, 2007). These *oké*-prefaced assessments are therefore designed to be dealing with some action in which informing does not feature centrally.

Third, I show that the two types of assessments can be combined into a single turn at talk, suggesting that speakers treat them as doing different work. Speakers can take up a deontic stance, treating an answer as an acceptable proposal, and subsequently take some evaluative stance towards the proposed course of action and the agreement.

The distinction between these assessment types raises questions about sequence organization. Work on action formation and ascription has historically focused on the adjacency pair: how sequence-initiating actions make conditionally relevant type-fitting responses, and how recipients in their response

[3]The meaning of Dutch adjectives, particularly *gezellig*, depends largely on the context; "lovely" is chosen here for convenience, but *gezellig* is used far more broadly, akin to Danish *hygge* and German *gemütlich*.

[4]Speakers sometimes use *das goed* ("that's fine") when providing deontic assessments in second position. The ∅ denotes the lack of a subject in *is goed* ("is fine").

[5]Dutch *oh* seems to be used in a very similar way to English *oh*.

display an understanding of and ascribe an action to that sequence-initiating action (Levinson, 2013; Sacks et al., 1974). This paper instead investigates instead how speakers of some first pair part take up the response, that is, the second pair part, in a way that does not project further sequence expansion (see Schegloff, 2007).

Prior research on English has shown that participants use three practices to implement such sequence-closing thirds (Schegloff, 2007, p. 118) and that they can either be produced as a stand-alone turn-constructional unit or combined into a composite. First, speakers can use *oh* to receipt a second pair part as informative: When the first pair part was done to request information, *oh* conveys that the answer was adequately informative, thereby proposing sequence closure (Heritage, 1984a; Schegloff, 2007). Second, speakers can use *okay* to accept the second pair part and the stance it encodes, proposing sequence closure for such actions as requests, offers, or invitations (Schegloff, 2007, p. 120; see also Beach, 1993). Third, speakers can use an assessment to articulate a stance towards the second pair part (Schegloff, 2007, p. 123f.). These do not, or at least do not seem to deal with specific action types.

The practice(s) used to propose sequence closure therefore also provide insight into the action that the adjacency pair was concerned with. By receipting an answer with *oh*, a speaker can treat that answer as adequately informative, and show that an informing action had indeed been requested with the first pair part (Heritage, 2018). Similarly, composite practices can be examined for what they reveal about the multifaceted nature of the ongoing sequence. In fact, because many sequences run on more than one track, stand-alone particles like *oh* or *okay* can be examined as possible withholdings, that is, as keeping the sequence open (Schegloff, 2007, p. 127ff.).

This paper builds on these findings by discussing how in third position speakers not only receipt a response in a move towards sequence closure, but can actively ascribe an action to that response. By using *is goed* in third position, speakes treat the second pair part as a proposal, even if the second pair part is not done as a proposal. The three-part structures that arise in this way, were not set up by the speaker when s/he launched the sequence (cf. Houtkoop-Steenstra, 1985; Jefferson & Schenkein, 1977; Kevoe-Feldman & Robinson, 2012; Kevoe-Feldman, 2015; Tsui, 1989). They arise locally, as speakers deal with contingencies raised in or ascribed to the response.

The analysis in this paper is organized as follows. In section 6.3 I discuss ways in which participants do evaluative assessments, and I compare that in section 6.4 to one way in which speakers do deontic assessments, where I briefly show that the same practice is used in second position to accept proposals and

offers. In section 6.5 I show that deontic and evaluative assessments can be produced in one turn at talk, providing additional evidence that they do different work. Finally in section 6.6 I discuss the sequential implications of the resulting structures.

6.2 Data & Method

The data used in this paper come from a corpus of 21.5h of informal phone conversations that were recorded by students at Utrecht University as part of a course assignment in 2011 and 2012. These conversations are primarily between the students and their friends or family, and concern mundane topics of everyday life, such as studies and relationships. All speakers provided written informed consent allowing use of the data for research and publication purposes, and the transcripts have been anonymized.

All cases of *is goed* / *das goed* ("is fine" / "that's fine") were gathered from the corpus, but the cases that were produced in response to a first pair part were excluded from the analysis. This resulted in a collection of 21 cases of *is goed* in third position that were collected from 235 dyads. Since evaluative assessments are produced a lot more frequently, they were gathered from a subset of the corpus: 3.5h of conversation, or 34 dyads. Only the cases that were produced in response to turn that was recognizable as a second pair part were selected. This resulted in a collection of 48 third-position evaluative assessments, 32 of which are treated as proposals for sequence closure (Schegloff, 2007).

Transcriptions have been made according to Jeffersonian conventions (Jefferson 2004). Word-by-word translations are provided for each line and free translations are provided on a roughly turn-by-turn basis. All pauses were computer timed. This means that they are measured as slightly longer compared to manual counting techniques (Kendrick & Torreira, 2015). The method used is conversation analysis (Ten Have, 2007): recurrent practices, in this case two types of assessments, were investigated to determine the actions they are used to implement and the underlying principles that participants orient to in using these practices in their respective sequential positions (Sidnell, 2013).

6.3 Evaluative Assessments

This section discusses a few of the ways in which participants use assessments to take up an evaluative stance towards an answer. These assessments are frequently implemented with either a full clause, consisting of a demonstrative,

a copula, and an assessment term; or just an assessment term (see Goodwin & Goodwin, 1992, p. 162). These evaluative assessments often address answers in which the recipient either tells a story or gives an answer to a request for information, in other words types of answers that are done, at least in part, to inform. The recipient of the answer often prefaces the assessment with an interjection that registers that answer as informative (Heritage, 1984a). Consider the following extract from a conversation between two sisters, Fleur and Loes. Loes is planning a trip to Barcelona with her mother and in line 1 Fleur asks how much time they will spend there. After Loes has provided an answer in line 3, Fleur receipts that answer with an *oh*-prefaced assessment.

(1) BE1 – 02:27.8-02:31.7

```
01  Fle     hoe lang >gaan jullie nou:<?
            how long  go   you.PL PRT
            how long >are you going<?
02          (0.4)
03  Loe     e::h zeven dagen,
                 seven days
            e::h seven days,
04          (0.8)
05  Fle ->  oh das    la:ng.
            oh that's long
            oh that's lo:ng.
06          (0.4)
07  Loe     ja   lang hè,
            yeah long TAG
            yeah long right,
08          (1.1)
09  Loe     °(   [   )°
10  Fle      [°(ga ik)°
                go I
             [°(am I)°
11          (1.1)
12          wat  ga ik dan  doe:n?=
            what go I  then do
            then what am I going to do:?=
```

By assessing seven days as long in line 5, Fleur characterizes the time Loes and her mother will spend in Barcelona as longer than what she would consider normal for such a trip. Although Loes subsequently endorses Fleur's assessment in line 7, she did not provide an evaluation in her answer. In other words, Loes did not project an assessment with her answer. Fleur provides an assessment from her own perspective, recognizably so by using *lang* in both her inquiry and her assessment. Loes in her subsequent agreement also

displays her understanding that Fleur conveys a stance of her own: she uses turn-final *hè*, a tag that is normally used in first position to solicit agreement with some assessment (Enfield et al., 2012). With this particle, Loes implies that her assessment is independent of Fleur's; that is, Loes and Fleur agree that seven days is *lang* ("long"), but they came to that assessment independently of each other (Heritage & Raymond, 2005; G. Raymond & Heritage, 2006). By conveying her own perspective, Fleur treats Loes' response not as a telling that displays a stance to be agreed with, but as an answer to an information request.

The *oh*-preface provides further evidence that Fleur takes an evaluative stance. It is used to receipt the answer as informative, treating its informative content as its primary focus (Heritage, 1984a, 2018). The assessment is thereby construed as dealing with an informative response, as evaluating a telling of news. That is, the assessment is designed to be understood as evaluating news.

As further exemplification of evaluative assessments consider extract (2). In line 1 Eline produces an itemized news enquiry (Button & Casey, 1985), inviting her friend Melanie to talk about her weekend by requesting an assessment with *hoe was* ("how was"). Melanie first deals with the format of the news enquiry, providing an assessment in line 3, before she begins telling about her weekend (Schegloff, 2007; Sidnell, 2017a).

(2) BR1–00:47.8–01:16.6

```
01  Eli     hoe was ↑jouw    weekend.
            how was  your.SG weekend
            how was ↑your weekend.
02          (0.3)
03  Mel     ja. (.) was echt   heel lek↓ker.
            yeah    was really very nice
            yeah. (.) was really very nice.
..          <6 lines omitted>
10          enne:h ja   je     kent het wel: winkelen (.)
            and    yeah you.SG know it  ADV  shopping
11          uitgaa:n: (.) uit ete:n, (0.3) .h leuke dingen
            clubbing      out dinner          fun   things
12          doen: >en  zo:<?
            do     and such
            ande:h yeah you know what it's like: shopping (.)
            clubbing: (.) out to dinner, (0.3) .h doing fun
            things >and such:<?
13          (0.8)
14  Eli ->  o::h lekker ma[:n:?]
            oh   nice   man
            o::h nice ma[:n:? ]
15  Mel                 [ja::] echt  ↑super leu:k.
```

yeah really super fun
[yea::] really ↑super fu:n.

Melanie's story is moving to completion in lines 10–12 where she provides a list of things Eline should be able to recognize—*je kent het wel* ("you know what it's like"). She moves from the specifics of her weekend to a more general description of activities one does when visiting a city. Eline also orients to this list as a point of possible completion by providing an *oh*-prefaced assessment. Throughout her telling it is clear that Melanie is taking up a positive evaluative stance. She uses assessment terms such as *lekker* ("nice"), *top* ("great"), and *leuk* ("fun"), thereby projecting how her story should be taken up by Eline, who in line 14 provides an affiliating response. By using the same adjective as Melanie did in her initial assessment, *lekker*, Eline's assessments is fitted to that answer: she adopts Melanie's stance, treating her response as a telling that carries some valence to be adopted.

As in the previous case, the assessment is prefaced with *oh*. Eline thereby treats the story as informative and its informative nature as the primary focus of her uptake. Her assessment is thus designed to address some state of affairs about which she had limited prior knowledge, that is, news or a story. The *oh*-preface thus indicates that in her assessment Eline articulates a stance towards that state of affairs.

In addition to *oh* there are other response cries (Goffman, 1978) or reaction tokens (Wilkinson & Kitzinger, 2006) that provide evidence that a speaker is adopting an evaluative stance. The following excerpt is a case in point. It is from the same conversation as (2) and takes place shortly afterwards. Melanie is talking about an Asian restaurant she visited where they serve an all-you-can-eat buffet that includes drinks for €22. In lines 1–4 she compares it to a similar type of restaurant in Best, a place they both live nearby, where drinks are not included.

(3) BR1–01:38.6–01:54.0

```
01  Mel    en  as je- (.) bij best heb  je     dan  ook e:h
           and if you.SG  at  Best have you.SG then also
02         (0.5) alleen eten >maar hier had je     dan  ook
                 only   food  but  here had you.SG then also
03         nog <onbeperkt drank #derbij:#,=dus 'twas   echt
           yet  unlimited drinks with.it   so   it.was really
04         super #chill:#.
           super  chill
           and if you- (.) at best you then have e:h (0.5)
           just food >but here you then also had< unlimited
```

```
            drinks #with it#,=so it was really super #chill:#.
05          (1.0)
06  Eli     hoe- hoe duur      was dat  bij  mekaa:r?
            how  how expensive was that with together
            how- how expensive was that all together?
07          (.)
08  Mel     tweeëntwintig euro:
            twenty.two    euro
            twenty two euro:
09          (1.0)
10  Eli ->  >WOW DAS< (0.4) echt   niet duu[r:?
             wow that.is    really not  expensive
            >WOW THAT'S< (0.4) really not expensi[ve?
11  Mel                                    [(das)    echt
                                             that.is really
12          goedkoo:p jonge:,
            cheap     man
                                                  [(that's)
            really chea:p man:,
13          (0.4)
14          JA[:.
            YEA[:h.
15  Eli       [↑ja
               [↑yeah
```

After Melanie has finished describing the restaurant, taking a very positive stance in lines 3–4—*super chill*—Eline does not provide an affiliating assessment. Instead she asks how expensive it was, information she treats as necessary to evaluate (see Pomerantz, 1984). Melanie answers in line 8 and after a 1.0s pause Eline provides an assessment of the answer.

The structure of the sequence in (3) is the same as in (1). Eline launches the sequence by requesting information, and after Melanie has provided the answer, Eline gives an assessment. Although Eline's inquiry in line 6 initiates repair on Melanie's story—Melanie had already named the price prior to the data shown—her assessment in line 10 is designed to deal primarily with the price and not the telling as a whole. She uses the same assessment term—*duur* ("expensive")—in both her repair initiating inquiry and her assessment. Note that in her assessment she negates it: *echt niet duur* ("really not expensive"). Eline thus does not adopt a stance projected by Melanie, but provides her own perspective, although one that is clearly in line with Melanie's.

While the evaluative assessments in (1) and (2) were *oh*-prefaced, Eline prefaces her assessment with *wow*. In combination with the preceding silence, which can be glossed as doing being at a loss for words, it indexes surprise or even astonishment (Wilkinson & Kitzinger, 2006), which means that Eline

treats the answer as noteworthy and thus the prior turn as informative. Like *oh*, *wow* thus indicates that the prefaced assessment addresses some new and in this case surprising information, and displays an evaluative stance.

Particles like *oh* and *wow* deal with the informative nature of the response, and thereby provide evidence that the assessments they preface articulate a stance towards an informative answer. But that is not to say that they are necessary when speakers provide an evaluative assessment. Consider the following case where the speaker provides only an assessment. Prior to the data shown, Lisa asked Kees, her boyfriend, how things are at his internship. At the start of the excerpt in line 1 Kees says that he is now working more independently.

(4) BO1 – 00:49.4-00:53.9

```
01  Kee     wel e:h ik ben nu  steeds meer zelfstandig bezig,=
            PRT     I  am  now ever   more independent busy
            well e:h I am working ever more independently,=
02          =dus ik e:h n- (.) ('k) neem   nu  ook  zelf
             so  I              I   answer now also self
03          telefoontjes aa:n, ↓en e:h
            phone.calls  on     and
            =so I e:h a- (.) (I) answer the phone now also on
            my own, and e:h
04          (0.7)
05  Lis     ↑oh das     wel [↑leuk.]
             oh that.is ADV   nice
            ↑oh that's [↑nice.]
06  Kee                    [(   ) ] vragen (.) aan de  balie:,
                                    questions  at  the desk
                         [(   )] questions (.) at the desk,
07          (0.5)
08  Lis     dus steeds meer verant[woord]elijkheden.
            so  ever   more responsibilities
            so ever more responsib[iliti]es.
09  Kee                            [(   )]
10          (0.8)
11  Kee     ja:h,
            yeah
            yea:h,
12          (.)
13  Lis ->  leu[k
            nice
            ni[ce
14  Kee        [inderdaa:d °(maar)°
                indeed       but
              [indeed °(but)°
```

Lisa assesses Kees' telling at two points, first in line 5 and then in line 13.

Her first assessment is designed in a way we have come to expect: it registers Kees' telling as news with a turn-initial *oh*, and it subsequently provides a positive evaluation of that news. Lisa's second assessment comes at a point where Kees' story has come to possible completion. Although his turn-final intonation in line 6 could suggest that he is not finished yet, Lisa's subsequent summary formulation (Heritage & Watson, 1979) treats the story as complete and this move is not resisted by Kees. He simply provides an affirming *ja*, after which Lisa gives her assessment, *leuk* ("nice").

By providing a summary formulation Lisa conveys her understanding that Kees is getting more responsibilities (see Heritage, 2010, 2012a; G. Raymond, 2010a). His response in line 11 thus merely affirms what she has come to expect and there is no contingency with which *oh* would deal. The positive development of Kees making progress in his job has, however, not yet been evaluated. By formulating Kees' story without also assessing it, Lisa launches a sequence in which her subsequent assessment will be understood as an evaluative assessment, even though a confirming answer no longer conveys news.[6]

The evaluative assessments in the data shown are all responded to with some form of agreement. In other words, they all seem to be taken up as first pair parts of an assessment sequence (Pomerantz, 1984). Indeed, a large number of evaluative assessments in the data studied—21 out of 48—receive an acknowledging or (dis)agreeing response. This suggests that these third-position assessments are not sequence-closing thirds, but are used to launch some form of non-minimal post-expansion.

Minimal, however, does not mean that after the adjacency pair only one turn is provided. It signifies that the action provided in third position is used to proposes sequence closure (Schegloff, 2007, p. 118). In most cases recipients align with that proposal. Consider excerpt (1) where after Loes' second assessment in line 7 the sequence is closed. And even when they do not align, the recipient shows that the assessment was a move towards closure, by doing re-opening: for example, Kees uses *maar* ("but") to re-open the sequence in line 14 of excerpt (4) after his agreeing *inderdaad* ("indeed").

Nonetheless it is unclear whether these second assessments are optional or conditionally relevant. If they are optional, they might receive uptake so frequently because the speaker evaluates recipient-oriented news (Heritage & Raymond, 2005; G. Raymond & Heritage, 2006). In that case they are still sequence-closing thirds but unlike particles such as *oh* and *okay* have

[6]Summary assessments (Jefferson, 1984) already take an evaluative stance, and so they do not seem to set up the same contingency.

the potential to be taken up. They might, however, also be first actions in a sequence-closing sequence (Schegloff, 2007, chapter 9), in which case a response is normatively due. They need not even all fall into one category; some could be optional and others conditionally relevant. There is not enough evidence in the data to allow the choice of one alternative over the other. Further research could shed more light on the matter.

This section has been concerned with assessments that are used to take an evaluative stance towards an answer. Speakers do them as assessments by producing either a clause consisting of a demonstrative, a copula, and an assessment term; or just the assessment term. As they are used to deal with informative answers, they are also frequently prefaced by interjections that treat the answer as informative. *Oh* is the most prevalent, appearing in 25 of the 48 cases analyzed for this paper, but *wow* is also sometimes used (7 cases), as well as other forms of response cries (Goffman, 1978) or reaction tokens (Wilkinson & Kitzinger, 2006).

6.4 Deontic assessments

The previous section showed how participants use assessments to evaluate an answer. In this section I show that participants can also use assessments in which they articulate a deontic stance. Whereas the assessments in the previous section were produced in response to news or tellings, the assessments in this section are produced in response to answers that formulate a future course of action involving both participants: they are used to treat these answers as implementing a proposal (Couper-Kuhlen, 2014; Stivers & Sidnell, 2016). The turn design of deontic assessments is also different from the evaluative assessments. They consist of a copula and assessment term, but speakers make use of a specialized practice: *is goed* ("∅ is fine").

I first briefly discuss these deontic assessments in cases where the co-interactant has made acceptance conditionally relevant to show that these assessments implement acceptance of a proposal. Subsequently I show that they are used to the same effect in third position.

6.4.1 Deontic assessments in second position

When speakers produce proposals, they make relevant acceptance or rejection (Sacks et al., 1974; Schegloff & Sacks, 1973). Houtkoop-Steenstra (1985) discussed a few of the ways in which speakers in Dutch can implement acceptance, such as formulating the future course of action, articulating that complying is

not a problem, or evaluating the agreement. Providing a deontic assessment is thus but one way speakers of Dutch have of implementing acceptance. I briefly discuss two cases where a deontic assessment is used in second position to treat a future course of action involving both participants as an acceptable proposal.[7]

Consider extract (5). Anna has called Sofie to inquire about her plans for the weekend, and Sofie has answered that she is busy on Saturday but free on Sunday.

(5) VK2 – 00:09.5-00:40.7

```
01  Sof     >↑zondag heb  ik ↑niks<.
              Sunday have I   nothing
            >↑sunday have I ↑nothing<.
02          (1.0)
03  Ann     oh oké.=>zullen we ↑dan  iets<     leuks gaan doen:.
            oh okay  shall  we  then something fun   go   do
            oh okay.=>shall we then go< do something fun:.
04          (.)
05  Sof ->  ja   is goed?
            yeah is fine
            yeah is fine?
```

By answering that she is free on Sunday, Sofie provides Anne with the constraints for whatever plans she may propose. Anne receipts these constraints in line 3 with *oh oké* ("oh okay"), closing that phase of the arrangement making project (Beach, 1993; Schegloff, 2007). She subsequently proposes to do something fun on Sunday and this proposal is accepted with a type-conforming *ja* (G. Raymond, 2003) and the deontic assessment *is goed*.

When dealing with *remote proposals*, such as in (5) where Anne proposes a future get-together, some form of explicit commitment is conditionally relevant (Lindström, 2017; for a similar analysis of remote requests, see Houtkoop-Steenstra, 1985). That is, confirmation is not enough. A case of pursuit can be seen extract (6). In line 1 Amelie proposes to her sister that she make sushi for dinner. Fabienne initially responds with just *oké*, but this is not treated as adequate by Amelie. Just when Fabienne provides a commitment with *ja is goed*, Amelie almost simultaneously pursues that commitment with *ja* in line 5, thereby showing that *oké* was not enough.

(6) VB1 – 00:59.2-01:17.5

[7]Beach (1993) shows a case for English in which *okay that's fine* is used in second position to accept a proposal.

```
01  Ame     ja; h (0.2) maar: zal   ik anders  °sushi(s)°
            yeah        but   shall I  otherwise sushis
02          ma↑ken?
            make
            yeah; h (0.2) but shall I make sushi(s) otherwise?
03          (0.6)
04  Fab -> o↓ké::? (0.3) >ja  [is goed<.
            okay           yeah is fine
            o↓kay::? (0.3) >yeah [is fine<.
05  Ame                          [ja?
                                   [yeah?
```

These cases show that *is goed* is used to accept proposals by taking a positive deontic stance. They implement acceptance of and commitment to a future course of action involving both participants.

6.4.2 Deontic assessments in third position

The previous section showed that *is goed* is used as a deontic assessment, treating the prior turn as implementing a proposal. In this section I focus on its production in third position where it is used to receipt answers to inquiries. With deontic assessments speakers also articulate a stance towards the answer, but instead of treating the answer as a telling or as news, they treat it as a proposal. Their preface provides additional evidence for this distinction: they are not prefaced by news receipt tokens like *oh*, but by *oké* ("okay"), which is used to close sequences "in which other actions than informing feature centrally" (Schegloff, 2007).[8]

Consider the following example from a conversation between two friends, Moniek and Esmee, who are trying to arrange dinner together. Prior to the data shown, Moniek asked whether Esmee is going to Anne's, a mutual friend, the following evening. But Esmee has to work that night. In lines 1–3 Moniek then asks if Esmee is available next week for dinner.[9]

(7) VO1 – 01:12.4-01:24.6

```
01  Mon     maar e:h ↑kan je     anders    volgende week
            but      can you.SG otherwise next     week
02          even wat       doen: dan. (.)
```

[8]Sometimes *oké* and *is goed* are phonetically realized as distinct TCUs while other times they are realized as a single TCU (see Ford & Thompson, 1996). There do not seem to be differences between these two types of turns in their respective action implications, but see extract (11) below.

[9]In line 8, Esmee actually says *all yours*.

```
             just something do    then
             but e:h ↑can you otherwise just do something
             next week then. (.)
03           [doen we volgende week even e[ten.
              do   we next     week just eat
             [we'll go for dinner next we[ek.
04  Esm      [.hh ja     (          )     [volgende wee:k. h
                 yeah                     next     week
             [.hh yeah (          )       [next wee:k .h
05           ja:  gewoon in het begi:- in het begin,=ja   ik
             yeah simply at the star-  at the start  yeah I
06           moet    nou voorlopig >gewoon iedere<
             have.to now for.now    just   every
07           donderdagavond   terug >maar de  rest< van de
             Thursday.evening back   but  the rest  of  the
08             week eh .HH >ben ik< #all your:s#.
             week    am  I
             yea:h simply at the star:- at the start,=yeah I
             have to go back >simply every< thursday evening for
             now >but the rest< of the week eh .HH I'm
             #all your:s#.
09  Mon -> ↑oké, is goed.
              okay is fine
             ↑okay, that's fine.
10           .h nou  dan e:h contacten  we daar  anders nog even
                well then    contact.PL we there else   yet just
11           over:.
             about
             .h well then e:h we'll talk just about that.
```

Moniek's turn reaches possible completion at the end of line 2, at which point she can be seen to inquire whether Esmee is available the next week, possibly as a pre to the future proposal in lines 10–11 (Schegloff, 2007). Although in line 3 Moniek transforms her action into an actual proposal by suggesting dinner, Esmee already begins addressing the query in overlap, confirming that she is available. She subsequently explains in lines 6–8 that she has to go back home (presumably to her parents) every Thursday in order to work on Friday, but that during the rest of the week she is at Moniek's beck and call (lines 7–8). This answer is taken up by Moniek in line 9, first with *oké* and subsequently with the assessment *is goed*. With this assessment she closes the part of the sequence that deals with availability, and she suggests in lines 10–11 that they'll talk specifics later. By providing a positive assessment *is goed*, Moniek shows that Esmee's answer here-and-now constitutes an acceptable proposal; the specifics can be filled in later.

Esmee begins answering when Moniek has only inquired whether she

is available the next week, and she only seems to inform Moniek of when she will be available. Esmee's response could thus be done and understood as an answer to a request for information: She provides Moniek with the information necessary to make a specific proposal for getting together. But by receipting Esmee's answer not as simply informative with a change-of-state token (Heritage, 1984a) but with a deontic assessment, Moniek treats it as a proposal. And by delaying setting a specific time and date, she treats Esmee's answer as an acceptable next step in the process of making arrangements. Although a proposal may have been what she was looking for, as she suggests an activity—dinner—but not a time, her deontic assessment deals primarily with Esmee's answer and treats it as adequate.

The following example provides further evidence that *is goed* is used as a deontic assessment and deals with contingencies that arise in the answer. The excerpt is a slightly extended version of (6). Amelie has called her sister, Fabienne, to ask if she'll be home for dinner. When Fabienne has confirmed that she will be, Amelie proposes that she make sushi in line 1.

(6') VB1 – 00:59.2-01:17.5

```
01  Ame     ja; h (0.2) maar: zal   ik anders  °sushi(s)°
            yeah        but   shall I  otherwise sushis
02          ma↑ken?
            make
            yeah; h (0.2) but shall I make sushi(s) otherwise?
03          (0.6)
04  Fab ->  o↓ké::? (0.3) >ja  [is goed<. dan: >doen we dat wel
            okay           yeah is fine   then  do   we that ADV
05  Ame                        [ja?
                               yeah
06  Fab     samen<  °das     wel leuk°.
            together that.is ADV fun
04-06 Fab   o↓kay::? (0.3) >yeah [is fine<. then: >we'll do that
      Ame                        [yeah?
      Fab   together< °that is fun°.
07          (0.3)
08  Ame ->  °oké is goed°.
             okay is fine
            °okay is fine°.
```

Fabienne accepts the offer after a slight pause with a type-conforming *ja* and the deontic assessment *is goed*. She goes on to suggest in lines 4–6 that they make the sushi together, as that will be fun. This suggestion is accepted as a modified proposal by Amelie in line 8 with *oké is goed*.

The contingency that Amelie deals with in line 8 was not projected in her sequence-initiating action. That is, she was not soliciting a proposal. But Fabienne does not just accept her offer: She modifies it. By suggesting that they make sushi together, she transforms the plan into a collaborative project; Amelie will no longer be doing something *for* her, but *with* her. Fabienne thereby encroaches upon Amelie's deontic rights, who sees an altruistic offer changed into a proposal. By responding to Fabienne's answer with *is goed*, Amelie treats Fabienne's response as implementing a modified proposal with which she subsequently has to agree or disagree. She claims the right to approve the revised course of action formulated by Fabienne.

Note that she does not treat Fabienne's proposal as launching a new sequence. In second position recipients preface their deontic assessments with a type-conforming *ja*, like Fabienne does in line 4 (see also excerpt 5), but Amelie uses *oké*. So while the sequence develops very different from the one in excerpt (7), Amelie similarly moves towards sequence-closure by using a deontic assessment to deal with a contingency that is raised in the response.

Although *oké* provides evidence that the assessment does not deal with the answer for its informative content, it is not an integral part of deontic assessments. The following excerpt is a case in point. It also shows that even when the sequence-initiating action looks like a request for information and the answer provides the requested information, that answer can still be treated as a proposal. In other words, whatever action potential the answer may have, with *is goed* a specific type of action is reflexively ascribed to it: it becomes a proposal by being treated as one.

Excerpt (8) is from a conversation between Kyra and her mother, Marie. Kyra no longer lives at her parents' house, and has called her mother early in the morning to congratulate her on her birthday. Marie moves to sequence closure by thanking her daughter, and subsequently produces an itemized news enquiry (Button & Casey, 1985), asking what plans Kyra has for the day.

(8) DV1 – 00:23.4-00:38.5

```
01  Mar   ↑nou ↓dankjewel,<wa'  ga je     doen vandaa:g?
           PRT  thank.you  what go you.SG do   today
          well thank you,<wha' are you going to do today?
02        (0.7)
03  Kyr   nou (.) 'k ga zometeen    trainen,
          PRT      I go in.a.moment exercising,
          well (.) I'm going exercising in a moment,
04        (0.7)
05  Mar   j:a:, h=
          yeah
```

```
            y:ea:h, h=
06  Kyr     =en  dA:n: gaan  we mis↑schien heel even    nog
             and then  go.PL we maybe      very briefly still
07          (0.2) e:hm (0.2) rondlopen door    de  stAd?<en
                             walk      through the city  and
08          dan  kom     ik wel een keertje: richting ↑huis.
            then come.SG I  ADV a   time     direction home
            =and then we'll maybe very briefly go (0.2) e:hm
            (.) for a walk through the city?<and then I'll
            come home at some point.
09          (0.5)
10  Mar -> >'s ↑goed<?
             is  fine
            >'s fine<?
```

Marie's news enquiry does not show an orientation to some future course of action in which she will also be involved: its design suggests that it is done solely to inquire about Kyra's plans for the day.[10] Kyra also addresses the news enquiry as such, articulating in chronological order what her plans are: first she has training (line 3)—Kyra is an active rower—then maybe go for a walk in the city with her teammates (lines 6–7), and then visit her mother (lines 7–8).[11] Kyra's answer thus does involve Marie, albeit as a passive visitee, and Marie receipts it not as an answer to a news enquiry, that is, a story with some valence, but as a proposal: *is goed* is not used to convey that Kyra has good plans, but that those plans are acceptable to Marie. The contingency Marie deals with, when it's acceptable for her daughter to come visit, was not projected by her initial inquiry, but arises in the answer, and the sequence thus requires expansion before it can be closed.

In this section I demonstrated how participants in Dutch talk-in-interaction can make use of a specific practice when evaluating an answer as an acceptable proposal: *is goed* ("∅ is fine"). This practice is not just used when the sequence-initiating inquiry is oriented to arrangement making as in (6) and (7), but also when it seems a request for information as in (8). The contingency that *is goed* deals with arises in the answer: whether an answer is or is not a proposal, speakers use *is goed* to treat it as one. Since the answer is not treated as relevant for its informative nature but as a proposal, *is goed* is, at least in my data, never prefaced by *oh*, but instead frequently by *oké* ("okay"), a particle that is often used to propose closure of sequences in which actions other than informing

[10]There is no birthday celebration planned for Marie, so her inquiry about Kyra's plans is not done to find out when Kyra is coming home for a birthday celebration.

[11]*Huis* ("home") in line 8 does not mean her own home. Dutch students who no longer live at their parents' house will often still refer to it as *(t)huis*.

feature centrally (Beach, 1993; Schegloff, 2007).

6.5 Mixed assessments

In the previous sections I distinguished between evaluative and deontic assessments. As these two types of assessments do different work, the first evaluating some state of affairs, the second accepting a proposal, they can be combined into a composite turn (Schegloff, 2007, p. 127ff.). One case was already shown in extract (8), of which a slightly extended version is shown below. Marie receipts her daughter's answer not just with *is goed*, but also with *gezellig*. She thus first treats Kyra's answer as an acceptable proposal, and subsequently evaluates her plan as *gezellig*.

(9) DV1 – 00:23.4-00:38.5

```
01  Mar     ↑nou ↓dankjewel,<wa'  ga je     doen vandaa:g?
             PRT  thank.you  what go you.SG do   today
            well thank you,<wha' are you going to do today?
02          (0.7)
03  Kyr     nou (.) 'k ga zometeen    trainen,
            PRT      I go in.a.moment exercising,
            well (.) I'm going exercising in a moment,
04          (0.7)
05  Mar     j:a:, h=
            yeah
            y:ea:h, h=
06  Kyr     =en  dA:n: gaan  we mis↑schien heel even    nog
             and then  go.PL we maybe      very briefly still
07          (0.2) e:hm (0.2) rondlopen door    de  stAd?<en
                             walk      through the city  and
08          dan  kom     ik wel een keertje: richting ↑huis.
            then come.SG I  ADV a   time     direction home
            =and then we'll maybe very briefly go (0.2) e:hm
            (.) for a walk through the city?<and then I'll
            come home at some point.
09          (0.5)
10  Mar ->  >'s ↑goed<? gezel[lig?
             is  fine   nice
            >'s fine<? ni[ce?
11  Kyr                   [°denk  ik°
                            think I
                          [°I think°
12          (1.0)
13  Mar     'k zie 't ↑wel:;
             I see  it ADV
             I'll see what happens:;
```

Marie's deontic and evaluative assessment in line 10 are recognizably distinct: Marie uses a specific practice to take a deontic stance towards Kyra's answer, whereas the assessment term *gezellig* is fitted to the specific state of affairs being evaluated: Kyra's coming over for Marie's birthday. In other words, this example confirms that deontic assessments are done to be recognizably different from evaluative assessments.

As evaluative assessments formulate a stance towards states of affairs such as agreements in addition to tellings, they are sometimes prefaced by particles that do not receipt the response as informative. Of the 48 evaluative assessments analyzed, three are prefaced by *oké*. But these are still in line with the analysis presented here. The claim is not that only deontic assessments can be prefaced by *oké*, but that by receipting an answer with *oké* a speaker reveals a different orientation to the action status of that answer. In fact, these three cases support the claim that *oh*-prefaced assessments deal with informative answers such as tellings, whereas *oké* is used in environments of arrangement making. The three *oh*-prefaced assessments are used to evaluate an answer that formulates or affirms a future course of action involving both participants , but they do not treat the answer as either a proposal or as news.

Consider the following example from the closing section of a conversation between Karel and Loes, who are boyfriend and girlfriend. A few minutes earlier in the talk they made arrangements for the weekend: Karel will play soccer on Friday and then go to Loes to spend the night. In the closing section of the conversation, Loes asks Karel to re-affirm that arrangement (see Schegloff & Sacks, 1973).

(10) BM1 – 09:26.5-09:36.8

```
01  Loe     dan  kom  je ↑dus  nadat je  met  de  jongens bent
            then come you thus after you with the guys    have
02          geweest.
            been
            then you'll come after you've been out with the guys
03          (0.7)
04  Kar     ↓j:a.
            ↓y:eah.
05          (0.2)
06  Loe ->  o:ké gezellig.=
            okay lovely
            o:kay lovely.=
07          =.h geef ik ↑dat [ook  effe] door  aan me ouders;
                pass I   that also just  along to  my parents
            =.h I'll pass that [just also] along to my parents;
```

After Karel has re-affirmed their arrangement in line 4, Loes moves to sequence closure with *oké gezellig*, acknowledging Karel's answer and giving a positive evaluation of their arrangement. She then reveals why she asked again: she needs to inform her parents of their arrangement. *Oké* thus has a dual character, both accepting the answer, while preparing the ground for next-positioned matters (Beach, 1993).

Loes uses declarative syntax to treat the arrangement as already established (Heritage, 2012a; G. Raymond, 2010a), and so Karel merely affirms what she already understands to be the case. By receipting his answer with *oké gezellig* Loes also treats it as doing re-affirming and therefore closure-implicative: She simply acknowledges it, and positively evaluates their plans. In other words, there are no contingencies that either *oh* or *is goed* would deal with: Karel provides neither new information nor a new proposal. Loes is simply verifying before she tells her parents.

While we see that *oké* on occasion prefaces an evaluative assessment, this does not contradict the analysis made in the prior sections. These assessments deal not with the answer, but with the arrangement that the participants have made. Loes in (10) does not treat the sequence as implementing a proposal, because the arrangement has already been made and is just re-affirmed.

6.6 Implications for sequence organization

The findings in the previous sections raise some questions about sequence organization. Sequence-closing thirds are typically fitted to the sequence; for example, because *oh* is used to receipt informings, it is the prototypical means of closing a Q-A sequence (Heritage, 1984a; Schegloff, 2007). This fittedness makes sequence-closing thirds useful as an analytic tool for understanding the interaction: By treating a preferred response as adequate for its informative content, the speaker can in third position tacitly convey that an informative response had been made relevant, and thus that the first pair part was a request for information (Heritage, 2018). The third position is used to reflexively characterize and reveal the agenda of the inquiry (Heritage, 1984b; Pomerantz, 2017; see also Schegloff, 1992.

Cases such as (6)–(8), however, suggest that the same does not apply when a speaker uses *is goed* as a sequence-closing third: Its relevance only becomes apparent when the second pair part is provided.[12] In (8), for example, Marie did

[12]Kevoe-Feldman and Robinson (2012) show that in some arrangement making sequences the first-pair part is used to elicit a proposal as a second pair part, and so approval in third position

not elicit a proposal but a telling. A type-fitting sequence-closing third would be something like *oh* plus an evaluative assessment as in (2). But because Kyra responds by saying when she plans to visit, Marie is put in a position where she can or even should confirm that that plan is acceptable to her.

But the picture is even more complex. Not only do speakers use *is goed* to display their understanding of a second pair part as needing approval, they can use it to reflexively ascribe the action of proposing to it. Consider excerpt (11). Naomi and Romy are sisters. Their parents are away for the weekend and left Naomi in charge. Naomi is home at the time of the call, sometime in the evening after 9:15, while Romy is at a friend's place.

(11) BM2 – 02:37.9-02:50.0

```
01  Nao     maare::hm: (1.1) ((slikt)) .pt.h
            but
            bute::hm: (1.1) ((swallows)) .pt.h
02          (0.8)
03          e:h >hoe laat< ben    je     thuis?
                  how late are.SG you.SG home
            e:h >at what time< will you be home?
04          (2.3)
05  Rom     over: <half uur:tje ofzo>.
            in     half our.DIM or.so
            in: <half an hour or so>
06          (0.5)
07  Nao ->  oh. (.) oké. (.) is goed.=
            oh      okay     is fine
            oh. (.) okay. (.) that's fine.=
08          =.hh doe je     dan ↑wel effe::hm, (.) .pt (0.3)
                 do  you.SG then ADV just
09          de  deur op slot enzo,
            the door on lock and.such
            =.hh will you then just, .pt (0.3) lock the door
            and such,
```

In line 3 Naomi seems to merely inquire when Romy will be home and Romy provides that information in line 5 potentially completing the sequence. But in her uptake in line 7 Naomi does not just receipt it as an informative response, but she provides approval, treating Romy's response as a proposal. An agreement was, however, not the outcome anticipated when the launched the sequence.

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is conditionally relevant. In those cases the sequence-closing third can be used to ground an analysis of the sequence.

By first treating her sister's answer as news with *oh*, Noami implies that she was expecting Romy home earlier—an expectation Romy might have been aware of, seeing as she waits 2.3s before answering. By subsequently accepting the time Romy will be home with *oké* and finally approving with *is goed*, Naomi treats her sister's answer as a proposal and claims the right to approve. Through the design of her turn she shows that she treats Romy's answer as a proposal, because it was not the answer she had anticipated. In this way she reflexively characterizes her inquiry as not just a request for information, but one asked by the big sister who is making sure that her little sister is home on time. Approval is doubly required, as Naomi now has to get Romy to lock the house.

Sequence-closing thirds can thus be used not only as receipts of a second pair part, revealing a speaker's understanding of that second pair part, but as a means of ascribing an action to it. By ascribing and addressing specific contingencies speakers also provide insight into how the first pair was to be understood. They can do so not by tacitly reconfirming that the second pair part displayed an adequate understanding (cf. Heritage, 2018), but more generally by explicating why a third turn is considered necessary and thus what contingencies the recipient raised by addressing the first pair part in a particular way with the second pair part.

6.7 Discussion & Conclusion

This paper has argued that participants in Dutch talk-in-interaction distinguish between two types of assessments, taking up either an evaluative stance or a deontic stance to the prior turn by the interlocutor. This claim was supported in two ways. First it was shown that these types of assessments differ in their turn design. When taking an evaluative stance, speakers select an assessment fitted to the local sequential context from a broad range of possible assessment terms. These assessments are also frequently prefaced by interjections such as *oh* that treat the response as informative (Heritage, 1984a; see also Goffman, 1978; Wilkinson & Kitzinger, 2006), showing that the assessments deal with turns that are done to inform. When assessing a proposal on the other hand speakers can make use of a specific practice: *is goed* ("∅ is fine"). These are often prefaced by *oké*, acknowledging the action in the prior turn instead of focusing on its informative content (Beach, 1993; Schegloff, 2007). Second, these two types of assessments can be produced as one turn-at-talk, suggesting that each does different work. In these cases the evaluative assessment positively evaluates the agreement.

Prior work on how speakers receipt responses has shown that by using specific practices in third position, speakers display their understanding of the action status of a response. Heritage (1984a, 2012b, 2018) has recurrently shown that speakers use *oh* not simply to index a change-of-state, but to treat the answer as relevant and adequate for its informative nature. Speakers can thereby reveal how that response relates to their sequence-initiating inquiry, and thus the agenda of that inquiry (Pomerantz, 2017). This paper has shown that participants can use assessments not only to display their understanding of the response, but to actively ascribe an action to it.

Whether the recipient provided a response to convey news or implement a (counter)proposal, or possibly even another action, its action status is ascribed to it by the speaker in third position. By providing these forms of uptake, speakers thus not only display their understanding of the response, but they build and maintain the architecture of intersubjectivity (Heritage, 1984b; Rommetveit, 1976; Schegloff, 1992; Sidnell, 2014). Action formation and ascription is thus shown to be a collaborative accomplishment (Levinson, 2013; Sidnell, 2014).

While these after-next actions do not prove what some sequence-initiating action was designed to do, they can provide evidence to recipients that they have provided an adequate response. In that way, they can also reveal to analysts what type of response is adequate for the particular sequence-initiating action. Understandings are displayed in each next action (Sacks et al., 1974, p. 728), and so each move forward re-confirms that the revealed understandings are the right understandings.

**Mad about jorts*

Image courtesy of xkcd.com

CHAPTER 7

Conclusion

7.1 Main findings

This dissertation started out with the observation that speakers can use two sentence types to ask questions, declaratives and interrogatives, only one of which is generally understood to be the prototypical format for this action. But as was made clear in the discussion in chapter 1, this is not a useful way to investigate how language is used by speakers to design social actions in talk-in-interaction, that is, what role language plays in the action-formation problem (see Schegloff, 2007, p. xiv). Not only does it assume an almost causal relationship between linguistic form and pragmatic function where no such relationship exists (Curl, 2006; Curl & Drew, 2008; Huddleston, 1994; Levinson, 1983; T. Walker, 2014; G. Walker, 2017a), but the entire concept of *question* is so vague as to be analytically useless (Schegloff, 1984).

We could consider the prototypical question as an action by which speakers request information and only information. But few actions we might want to call questions are actually used in this way. And even when speakers request information, they generally do so in service of other projects, such as repair (e.g., Englert, 2010; Schegloff et al., 1977; Stivers, 2010). If language is a system of family resemblances (Wittgenstein, 1958), then *question* is a pater familias: it rules over so many different types of actions, actions that need not have any direct relation to each other, that attempting to provide a coherent

and exhaustive analysis of how participants distinguish between two types of questions based only on their syntactic format is a wild goose chase.

The aim in this dissertation was therefore far more modest. In chapters 2 to 5 it focused on specific types of question-like actions in specific sequential environments, in order to show how syntax shapes and is shaped by the interaction (see Couper-Kuhlen, 2001b). The analyses in these chapters treat linguistic structures not as a priori given, but as enacted in interaction for certain interactional goals. These structures thus have no invariant meaning or function, but are positionally sensitive: interactants design their actions by considering the local sequential environment. In other words, forms are produced and understood not only to support a specific action, but for a specific context. Finally in chapter 6 the procedural nature of the action-formation problem was further demonstrated by showing that in third position, that is, after an adjacency pair has come to potential completion, participants can not only reconfirm or repair the action done in the first pair part (Heritage, 2018; Houtkoop-Steenstra, 1985; Jefferson & Schenkein, 1977; Kevoe-Feldman & Robinson, 2012; Kevoe-Feldman, 2015; Koole, 2015; Mehan, 1979; Schegloff, 1992, 2000; Tsui, 1989), but also ascribe a specific action to the second pair part and by extension recast the entire sequence.

In the rest of this chapter I first discuss the specific findings of each chapter as they pertain to our sequential understanding of action, the import of turn design, and the procedural nature of action. In closing I discuss the implications these findings have for future research, both for our understanding of social action and the organization of talk-in-interaction, and for our understanding of linguistic structure.

7.1.1 Sequential understanding of action

Conversational data are as Schegloff (2007/2017, p. 352) puts it "distinctively and densely interactive." Every turn at talk is understood and designed to be understood in relation to the prior talk (Heritage, 1984b; Sacks et al., 1974; Schegloff, 1988a). This, as was also discussed in section 1.3.1, is one of the fundamental observations that make Conversation Analysis a fruitful endeavor. This means that actions are designed with the local exigencies of the interaction in mind (Mazeland, 2013), and it means that participants reveal through each turn at talk their understanding of the state of talk they find themselves in. In this dissertation this has proven to be crucial indeed for our understanding of declarative yes/no-type initiating actions (G. Raymond, 2010a).

With epistemics taking a more central role in CA analyses, various analyses

have focused on the sequential implications of YNDs as being mandated by their epistemic stance. A declarative is used to take a relatively knowing stance (G. Raymond, 2010a), indexing a flat epistemic gradient, and therefore projects merely confirmation as a next action (Heritage, 2012a; Lee, 2015; Park, 2012). But the analysis of YNDs showed that they can be used to elicit elaboration as well as confirmation (chapters 2 and 3). The epistemic analysis thus does not account for all the data, precisely because it ignores the sequential environment in which these YNDs are produced.

Chapters 2 and 3 investigated YNDs in various positions in the structural organization of the interaction, primarily following closure of some other activity or YNDs that were themselves part of a sequence-closing sequence (Schegloff, 2007, chapter 9). These analyses demonstrated that speakers can use YNDs to make relevant not just confirmation, but also various forms of elaboration, and that this is largely dependent on the sequential context of the YND. Indeed, in cases where this elaboration is not provided, it can be pursued, meaning that it is treated as noticeably absent (Schegloff, 1968). One way in which we can distinguish between these two categories of actions is in whether or not the understanding or state of affairs formulated in the YND is either old—that is, it formulates prior talk from the same conversation (Heritage & Watson, 1979)—or new—that is, it formulates a prior belief of the speaker that has not been addressed in the interaction. This is in line with Heritage's proposal on epistemics as the engine of sequence (Heritage, 2012b). But we get a far more refined picture if we take the sequential environment more fully into consideration: it's not just about whether the information is new or not, but also how it relates to the immediate prior talk.

The YNDs that were studied in chapters 2 and 3 were produced in two sequential environments. First, speakers can produce a YND after some other activity has been brought to possible closure. In such environments participants can either launch a new activity, re-open an old activity, or move into conversational closure. When speakers formulate a previously established agreement, it is understood as re-opening an activity and preliminary to some other action—although not necessarily as a pre in a technical sense (cf. Terasaki, 1976/2004; Schegloff, 2007). In these cases a YND makes relevant only confirmation. By formulating a prior recipient-oriented belief on the other hand, speakers are understood to be launching a new activity, as requesting of the recipient that they bring them up to date on the addressed state of affairs. In other words, these YNDs are understood as topic proffers (Schegloff, 2007; see also Button & Casey, 1985).

Second, speakers were shown to produce YNDs in response to an informing

turn—that is, a turn that has as its main job to convey information, for example an answer to a request for information or a response to a topic proffer. It was shown that in such environments participants can use a YND to move towards sequence closure or to address a discrepancy between their prior beliefs and the information conveyed in the prior turn. By formulating the information conveyed, speakers will be understood to be displaying their understanding and thus requesting only confirmation (Heritage & Watson, 1979). Such moves are particularly closure-implicative if they are designed to recycle the turn with which the information had been requested (Schegloff, 2011). By formulating a prior belief on the other hand, speakers will be understood to be addressing a discrepancy between what they previously thought and the information that has just been conveyed. These "unrelated clausal responses" (Thompson et al., 2015) or "knowledge-discrepancy questions" (Steensig & Heinemann, 2013) generally make relevant not just confirmation, but also some form of account or explanation for the discrepancy (see also Robinson, 2009).

While these analyses already adequately demonstrate the importance of sequential context for the action formation problem, this was further supported in chapters 3 and 5 where yes/no-type interrogatives (G. Raymond, 2003) were analyzed. The focus was on YNIs that were produced in similar sequential environments to the YNDs discussed in chapters 2 and 3. Chapter 3 analyzed YNIs that were produced following activity closure, and chapter 5 analyzed YNIs that were produced in response to informing turns. The types of actions these YNIs implemented were very similar to the YNDs that were produced in similar environments. Following the possible closure of an activity, speakers used YNIs as topic proffers to establish a new activity. These were understood as requests to bring the speaker up to date on the addressed state of affairs. In response to informing turns, on the other hand, YNIs were understood as a type of knowledge-discrepancy question, and they were responded to with some form of account or explanation for the discrepancy between the speakers' prior beliefs and the information conveyed in the prior turn.[1]

The comparison between these syntactic forms shows that where and when a turn is produced is possibly more consequential for the action it implements than the grammatical design of that turn. Grammar does of course support action formation and ascription and speakers cannot use grammar willy-nilly if they want to be understood, but grammar is not the heart of action formation. This is obviously true after a first pair part as it makes conditionally relevant

[1]In some cases, the explanation had already been provided, and in those cases only confirmation was provided (see C. W. Raymond & Stivers, 2016).

a type-fitting second (Schegloff & Sacks, 1973), but in fact at every point in the interaction some actions will be more coherent and more salient than others. As students of social interaction we are interested in and concerned with action first and foremost, and while actions are implemented through language, they are not of language. This is precisely what Schegloff means when he proposes that instead of a stable, cognitive grammar, we have positionally sensitive grammars: "One has a range of grammatical resources, grammars if you will, whose relevance is positionally sensitive to organizational features and contingencies of the sequential and interactional moment in which the conduct is situated" (Schegloff, 1996c, p. 110). While this does not mean that grammar is inconsequential for action, as indeed it is not, it does mean that grammar should be understood not as directly encoding certain actions, but as dealing with the exigencies of the sequence as they pertain to the action that is being implemented.

7.1.2 Sequential understanding of grammar

The previous section discussed the importance of sequence for action formation and ascription. But that is not to say of course that grammar, or turn design more generally (Drew, 2013), has no part to play in making turns recognizable as certain actions. Indeed, if grammar were inconsequential for action formation, we would not expect there to be such rich and varied grammars. But quite the opposite is obviously true. And as Heritage (1984b, p. 242) so elegantly phrased it: "no order of detail can be dismissed *a priori* as insignificant." That participants distinguish between various syntactic formats, such as declaratives and polar interrogatives, should thus be treated as consequential for the interaction. Their import is just not on a broad level for which we would assume a direct form-function relationship, such as with the Literal Force Hypothesis, but form definitely has a function (T. Walker, 2014).

The comparison between YNDs and YNIs in chapter 3 showed that while they are used in similar sequential environments to implement similar actions, they are not used to implement the same actions. While both YNDs and YNIs are used to launch a new activity in an environment where another has been closed, they convey different presumptions about the relation between the participants and thus make relevant slightly different types of responses (see also G. Raymond, 2010a). It was shown that YNDs are primarily used to implement what were called Other's-News Announcements: topic proffers with which speakers claim to know that the recipient has news to tell and what that news is. The projected response is for the recipient to confirm and elaborate on what the

speaker already claims to know. In other words, speakers provide a headline of the news thereby inviting the recipient to provide the details (Button & Casey, 1985).

YNIs were used for two slightly different actions: what were called News Requests and Agnostic News Inquiries. News Requests are generally implemented with YNIs and share with Other's-News Announcements that speakers convey through them a belief that the recipient has news to tell. But with News Requests speakers do not claim to already know the news; by providing a candidate assessment speakers leave open whether the news is good or bad. They are optimized though, meaning that they are designed for good news outcomes (see also Boyd & Heritage, 2006). Recipients are thus requested to not only (dis)confirm the candidate assessment, but also elaborate on what made the news good or bad respectively.

Agnostic News Inquiries are also generally implemented with YNIs but as their name already suggests, they do not convey a belief that the recipient has news to tell. Of course by doing a topic proffer a speaker will inherently be seen to convey an expectation that there could be news, but with Agnostic News Inquiries speakers inquire whether there is news. Recipients should thus respond first by saying whether there is something to tell, and if so, by actually telling the news.

This association between form and function is easily accounted for by way of epistemic stance. Declaratives index a shallow epistemic gradient, and they are thus particularly suited for Other's-News Announcements. Polar interrogatives on the other hand index a steeper gradient and are thus suited for implementing News Requests and Agnostic News Inquiries. The syntactic design of a proffer thus contributes to making it recognizable as a specific type of proffer.

Note, however, that the association is not absolute; we are not dealing with an invariant form-function relationship. It was shown that Other's-News Announcements are occasionally implemented with interrogatives, while News Requests can be implemented with declaratives. While the design of a turn facilitates its recognizability as a specific action, the exigencies that the design deals with can only be properly appreciated in relation to the action itself. In other words, when speakers use interrogative word order to implement a News Request, they take a relatively unknowing stance in relation to whether the news will be good or bad, whereas if they use a declarative, they convey an expectation that the news will be good or bad respectively. Form always has to be understood by considering the action it carries.

In chapters 4–5 it was subsequently shown that when they are *oh*-prefaced both YNDs and YNIs address problems with intersubjectivity and launch a

sequence to remedy that problem. In these cases as well, the grammatical format was not used to convey different types of actions, but to deal with the local exigencies. Although *oh*-prefaced YNDs make relevant only confirmation, whereas *oh*-prefaced YNIs make relevant some form of reconciliatory information, the format does not project this response, at least not directly.

YNDs are used by speakers to claim that they now-understand something they previously did not understand. They address problems of understanding that have already surfaced in the interaction, that is, the understanding that is corrected had already been expressed or at least implied in the interaction. YNIs on the other hand are used to deal with prior assumptions of the speakers. They are produced in response to informing turns and treat those turns as unexpected in relation to the speaker's private beliefs, or background assumptions. Because they do not claim a now-understanding, they also invite reconciliatory information on top of the confirmation: the recipient should account for the discrepancy between what the speaker previously believed and has now come to understand.

This shows that grammar does matter for action formation, but it has no fixed function or meaning (i.a., Curl, 2006; Curl & Drew, 2008; Fox et al., 2013; Huddleston, 1994; Thompson et al., 2015; T. Walker, 2014; G. Walker, 2017b). A declarative is not a statement or assertion that becomes a request for information in the right sequential or epistemic context (see Levinson, 1983). In other words, recipients of a declarative utterance do not go through a process of first recognizing that the declarative cannot be asserting information, and subsequently applying some Searlean reasoning to figure out that the speaker is requesting information. And the same applies to interrogatives; they do not start out as requests for information only to become other actions, such as invitations, in cases where it is clear that the speaker cannot be merely requesting information. Speakers use turns to implement actions, and the manner in which actions are implemented depends on when and where they are implemented. Language is not action itself, it is a vehicle for action, and can be molded to suit the local sequential constraints of the interaction (Schegloff, 1996c). In and of itself, it does not project responses or set up contingencies, it does so only in relation to the action that it supports.

7.1.3 Procedural nature of action

What makes CA a radical method for investigating interaction is primarily its reliance on the participants' displayed understandings. Linguistics and Language Philosophy have for their understanding of social actions relied on constructed

evidence and the intuitions of native speakers of what constitutes an adequate, appropriate, and felicitous action. CA took a wholly different perspective, relying on conversational data not only as objects to be studied, but also as the evidence on which analyses of these objects were to be based (Sacks, 1972; Schegloff, 1988a). Because participants continuously display to each other how they understand "the current state of play" (Schegloff, 2007/2017, p. 325), researchers can ground their analysis of whatever some turn is doing in the understanding that is displayed in the subsequent adjacent turn (Sacks et al., 1974). To quote Schegloff quoting Garfinkel: "It is as if this world were designed to allow a science of it to be done" (Schegloff, 2007/2017, p. 325).

The basic structure by which much of conversation is organized is the adjacency pair; two actions, one after another, the first making conditionally relevant a type-fitting second (Schegloff & Sacks, 1973). But is has long been recognized that it can optionally be expanded with one additional action, what Schegloff (2007) later defined as a sequence-closing third. Indeed, the frequency of this third position led some scholars to argue that the basic sequential structure consist of three parts, not two (e.g., Houtkoop-Steenstra, 1985; Jefferson & Schenkein, 1977; Tsui, 1989). At the very least the third turn is generally treated as confirming as adequate the understanding displayed in the second pair part, thereby also reconfirming the action done with the first pair part (Heritage, 1984a, 2012b, 2018; Koole, 2015; G. Raymond, 2018; but see Macbeth & Wong, 2016).

In chapter 6 the role of the third position for the action-formation problem was further investigated by comparing two types of assessments that speakers produce in responses to answers to inquiries. These assessments articulated a different type of stance towards the second pair part, and thereby revealed different understandings of the response.

With the first type of assessment speaker adopts an evaluative stance, thereby treating it as a telling of news or a story. These were called *evaluative assessments* and they have been well documented in the CA literature (Goodwin & Goodwin, 1987, 1992; Jefferson, 1978; Lindström & Mondada, 2009; Maynard, 1997; Pomerantz, 1975, 1978, 1984; Sacks, 1974; Stivers, 2008). The second type of assessment was, however, previously not documented. It was shown that speakers can adopt a deontic stance towards the response, evaluating it for its implications for the speaker's right and authority to determine his or her own actions (see Stevanovic & Peräkylä, 2012). These were called *deontic assessments*.

Because these assessments articulate a different stance towards the second pair part, they display a different understanding of the action that second pair

part implements. But not only that, by using the deontic assessment *is goed* ("∅ is fine") speakers treated the second pair part as a proposal, even if it was not designed as a proposal and a proposal had not been requested with the first pair part (cf. Kevoe-Feldman & Robinson, 2012). In other words, in third position speakers can ascribe an action to a responsive turn. So whereas sequence-closing thirds are typically thought of as optional additions to the sequence that are primarily sequential in nature—they propose sequence closure—they can have an important role for action formation. Indeed, the use of *is goed* shows that actions are not implemented by turns in isolation, but that they are a collaborative accomplishment of the participants. A turn implements an action by getting treated as that action (Sidnell, 2014).

7.2 Implications for future research

While social actions have been part of parcel of CA research since its inception, it is only recently that the action-formation problem has gained traction as a central tenet for researchers working in the field. This is partly to the credit of Interactional Linguistics as its focus on how language shapes interaction generally surfaces as studies of how linguistic structures are used in a systematic way to bring about certain actions. But action as an *generic order of organization* (Schegloff, 2007, p. xiv) has also gotten more traction; the question is not just how action is implemented in a systematic way, but what action is; which aspects of the interaction are used by the participants and how; and what participants are concerned with when they implement action. This also means that the role of language in action has to be reconsidered; if language is not used directly to bring about action, then what is the role of language and how does it shape social interaction?

In the following two sections I briefly discuss how the analyses presented in this dissertation give direction for future research on the action-formation problem, and subsequently how the results of this dissertation influence the study of language in social interaction and linguistics more generally.

7.2.1 Accountability, Epistemics, and Action

This dissertation was centrally concerned with one aspect of action formation: how certain linguistic forms come to have certain functions. But in doing so it has touched upon a range of issues that are pertinent to our understanding of the action-formation problem, and social interaction in general. Here I discuss

three ways in which the studies in this dissertation can serve further research on the action-formation problem.

The first issue deals with accountability. Considering CA's roots in ethnomethodology it is no surprise that accountability takes a central role in CA and particularly in the study of action formation. Participants design their actions so as to be accountable for having implemented those particular actions; they make them observable-and-reportable (Garfinkel, 1967, p. 1). But participants at times implement actions in such a way they are not accountable for them. Specifically, speakers may design a topic proffer in such a way that they are not accountable for having done a topic proffer, but for example a request for confirmation, as was shown in chapter 2. The proffer can be responded to as a proffer and is thus observable, but it is designed so as to not be reportable as such. In other words, participants attempt to reach an interactional goal though alternate means (Sidnell, 2017b).

But this raises a few questions. For one chapter 2 showed that participants can avoid accountability, which leads us to wonder why do speakers sometimes design their actions so as to avoid accountability? Additionally we could ask why one way of designing an action avoids accountability; specifically in the case of topic proffers, why does declarative syntax seem to be a way of eliciting a telling without requesting one? Part of the answer may be that some actions are delicate, that is, it is a form of doing face work (Goffman, 1955). But as was also shown, that cannot be the entire story. In fact, the analysis of topic proffers showed that many are implemented with declarative word order, and these often do not address delicate topics, showing that it is not just about the type of topic being addressed (chapter 3). It is simply because speakers should design a topic proffer in line with what they already know and what the recipient can hold them accountable for knowing (Heritage, 2012a; Sacks et al., 1974; Stivers et al., 2011). Since accountability is so central to social interaction, its import of action formation clearly mandates further investigation.

The second issue, which is strongly related to the first, is what it means for participants to do actions. Chapter 6 showed that turns can come to be a particular action by being responded to in a certain way. This was taken to show that action is a collaborative accomplishment. But it could also be taken to mean that action does not exist in the way it is typically conceived of. Recipients do not attempt to categorize a turn in process as a certain type based on a closed set of possible actions before producing a response. Instead they infer from the displayed behavior what they should do next. By responding participants thus come to treat a prior turn as a certain action (Sidnell & Enfield, 2014).

Further research could investigate how procedural the notion of action really

is. Was the speaker in example (8) of chapter 2 really flying under the radar of accountability, designing an action to be observable-but-not-reportable, or is accountability also a procedural phenomenon. Meaning that the speaker implemented a topic proffer, but pursues in a less normative way in light of the strong resistance? In other words, the topic proffer is a topic proffer, but the recipient is the one who is in fact avoiding accountability by dealing with what could be considered the vehicle of the action (Schegloff, 2007; Sidnell, 2017a). The question then is how do speakers give themselves a way out and how do they give recipients a way out?

The third and final issue deals with the relation between recipient design and epistemics. In his seminal paper on Epistemic Status and Stance, Heritage (2012a) argues that people have a sort of "epistemic ticker", keeping track of what they know about other people and what other people know about them. This has clear implications for recipient design. Not only should speakers not design their turns to convey information that the recipient already knows (Sacks et al., 1974), but any turn-at-talk should be designed in such a way that fits the participants' respective epistemic rights and responsibilities (see Stivers et al., 2011).

The analysis of topic proffers showed that speakers design their proffers to fit what they know and expect and what they have a right to know and expect (chapter 3). It suggested that because speakers can use evidentials to treat their knowledge as hearsay or Type II Knowledge (Pomerantz, 1984), not using an evidential is a means of implicitly claiming that their knowledge was licensed by the recipient at some earlier point. Because the recipient has primary rights, the speaker has to show how he or she knows. If the speaker does not explicitly formulate how he or she knows, the recipient is tacitly treated as the source of the speaker's knowledge.

But there are many practices by which speakers seem to modify their claimed rights with respect to the addressed epistemic domain, and many of them are turn-final. Dutch has turn-final *of* ("or", Drake, 2015), *hè* and *toch* (Enfield et al., 2012; Foolen, 1994), as well as other particles such as *offeh* ("or eh"), *of niet* ("or not"), etc. How these various turn-final tokens contribute to recipient design has only been scantily investigated. So we are led to ask what role do these turn-final particles have for recipient design? Are they merely a way to mitigate the speaker's knowledge claim or do they address different dimensions of knowledge (Stivers et al., 2011, p. 9)? And how do these particles and their function inform us about the role of knowledge for interaction in general? Considering the importance of epistemics in contemporary CA

research on action formation, this clearly needs further investigation.[2]

7.2.2 Rethinking Linguistics

The analyses of the different positions in which YNDs and YNIs are used and the import of that position for the action these YNDs and YNIs implement (chapters 2–5) has shown that the design of a turn can only be adequately appreciated if we know what action the turn implements. Simply put: a recipient needs to know what a turn is doing to understand why it is designed in a certain way. From the view of linguistics and language philosophy this is the world turned upside down, but it is a logical result if we consider that conversation is about action, not about language. That is not to say that speakers do not use language to make their actions recognizable and in turn grasp the function of some utterance based on its linguistic design, but instead of seeing language as an adequate and necessary tool for implementing action, we should see it as a vehicle (Goodwin & Heritage, 1990; G. Raymond, 2003; Sacks, 1995; Schegloff, 1995; Schegloff, Ochs, & Thompson, 1996) one that may only be used for those actions that cannot easily and readily be done in a certain environment without language (see Rossi, 2014). Participants use it to solve various interactional problems, of which action is only one. A no less important function of linguistic structure is to make smooth turn taking possible: it allows projection of possible completion points (Sacks et al., 1974).

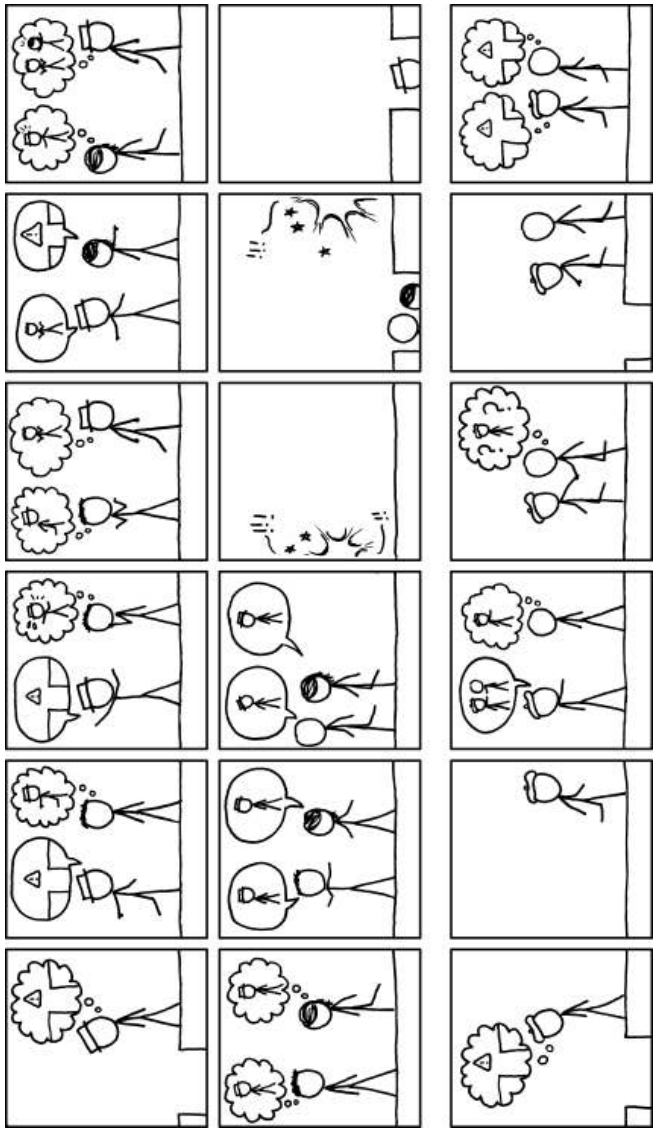
The obvious problem is how can we adequately grasp what language does for talk-in-interaction. If we need language to produce action, or at least a subset of all possible actions, but we can only fully understand language by first grasping the actions, we are in a vicious circle. Instead of simplifying, we complicate the action-formation problem.

One way of investigating the issue may be from the notion of projection. Participants are continuously trying to project when a turn comes to completion, and grammar makes this possible, because participants have knowledge of the conventionalized linguistic structures of the language that they use (de Ruiter, Mitterer, & Enfield, 2006; Ford & Thompson, 1996; Fox, 2001; Huiskes, 2010; Schegloff, 1996c; Selting, 2000; Steensig, 2001; Tanaka, 1999). Similarly, a competent conversationalists will have knowledge of the possible actions that

[2]Such an investigation has clear import for linguistics as well. It suggests that the right edge of the clause, possibly including its boundary pitch, has a specific function or set of functions in Dutch, and maybe in other Germanic languages as well. This should not be taken to mean though that there is a form-function relationship with function encoded into form. Quite the opposite: the form is molded to suit the functional demands of the interaction.

can be produced at any point in the interaction, and use that knowledge to project what action or type of action a speaker is implementing (e.g. Clark, 1996; Levinson, 2013). The construed understanding is subsequently displayed in the recipient's uptake and can then be confirmed or disconfirmed, and thereby *grounded* (Clark, 1996), by the speaker (Heritage, 1984a, 2018; Sacks et al., 1974; Schegloff & Sacks, 1973; Schegloff, 2007). So just as there is a linguistic grammar—or set of grammars—that a competent speaker of a language has mastered, so too there may be a conversational grammar. By that I do not mean a linguistic grammar for conversation, but an conventionalized system of norms and rules that facilitate projection and understandings of action in social interaction. The adjacency pair where a first pair part makes conditionally relevant a type-fitting second pair part is but one part of this grammar.

To study linguistics in interaction we must consider how the grammar of language is related to the grammar of conversation (e.g., Couper-Kuhlen & Ford, 2004; Couper-Kuhlen, 2012, 2014; Deppermann, 2011b; Fox & Heinemann, 2016; Persson, 2013; Selting, 2000; Selting & Couper-Kuhlen, 2001; Steensig & Heinemann, 2013; T. Walker, 2014, among many others). This seems to me what Schegloff (1996c) envisioned with his positionally sensitive grammars. At each point in the interaction, there is a range of contingencies that participants must deal with, some of them related to the action constraints: what came before and what can come next. The design of a turn, the linguistic structure, is produced and understood in relation to those constraints. Language and action exist not independent of each other, but are part of a symbiotic relationship. If this indeed is how language and action are related, it requires a radical rethinking of linguistic theorizing.



Anyone who says that they're great at communicating but 'people are bad at listening' is confused about how communication works.

Image courtesy of xkcd.com

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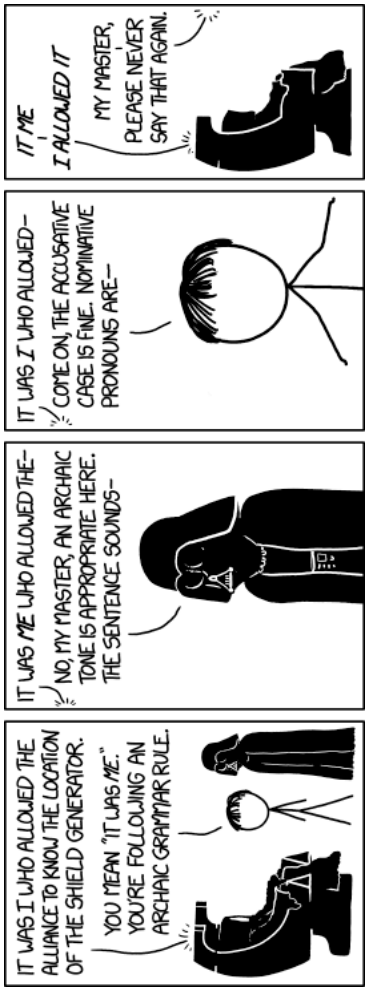

It me, your father

Image courtesy of xkcd.com

Samenvatting in het Nederlands

Dit proefschrift onderzoekt hoe sprekers in alledaagse gesprekken gebruikmaken van verschillende syntactische structuren bij het vormgeven en herkenbaar maken van hun talige handelingen. De focus ligt daarbij op acties waarmee sprekers een reactie relevant maken waarin de respondent (ten minste) een bevestiging geeft van de situatie zoals deze door de spreker is omschreven—conventioneel ja/nee-vragen of polaire vragen genoemd; in dit proefschrift ja/nee-initiërende handelingen. Door te onderzoeken hoe dit soort handelingen wordt vormgegeven op verschillende momenten wordt aangetoond dat de vorm van een handeling alleen adequaat begrepen kan worden in het licht van die handeling zelf. Er is met andere woorden sprake van een symbiotische relatie tussen taal en actie: de taal helpt de hoorder bij het begrijpen van de actie, en de actie helpt de hoorder bij het begrijpen van de vorm.

Daarnaast laat dit proefschrift zien dat actie niet een invariante status heeft. Respondenten geven normaliter in hun respons aan hoe ze de actie waarop ze reageren begrepen hebben: door een *Hallo* te beantwoorden met nog een *Hallo* en niet met *Ja* laat de respondent zien dat hij of zij de eerste *Hallo* heeft begrepen als een groet en niet als een oproep. Evenzo laat een respondent met een *Ja/Nee*-respons zien dat hij of zij de vorige actie begrepen heeft als een verzoek om bevestiging. Mocht de respondent een verkeerd soort reactie geven, dan kan de spreker dat vervolgens laten zien door herstelwerk te ondernemen. Vanuit dit perspectief is actie spreker-gecentreerd; het is aan de respondent om de "intenties" van de spreker te lezen. Maar respondenten kunnen ook een handeling toeschrijven aan de uiting van de spreker. Daarmee wordt actie dus een interactioneel product; het wordt bewerkstelligd door samenwerking tussen de participanten.

Vorm vis-à-vis handeling

In hoofdstuk 2 wordt onderzocht hoe sprekers met declaratieve ja/nee-initiërende handelingen (hierna, JND) om alleen bevestiging vragen of om bevestiging met een vorm van toelichting. Er wordt aangetoond dat wat voor reactie gevraagd wordt afhangt van de context waarin de JND geproduceerd wordt. De analyse laat zien dat als sprekers een JND gebruiken om de interactie te formuleren—bijvoorbeeld door een samenvatting te geven van wat eerder is gezegd—dit begrepen wordt als een verzoek om alleen bevestiging. Dit soort JND's wordt veelal gebruikt om langere onderwerpen af te sluiten of een afspraak te verifiëren. Als de gespreksdeelnemers daarentegen net een andere activiteit hebben afgesloten, moeten ze een nieuwe activiteit starten of het gesprek beëindigen. Op dit soort momenten worden JND's gebruikt om een nieuw topic te lanceren: sprekers laten zien dat ze iets weten over de recipiënt en vragen de recipiënt om de laatste stand van zaken. Daarnaast kunnen sprekers JND's gebruiken om aan te geven dat hetgeen hun co-participant net gezegd heeft niet strookt met hun verwachtingen; ze vragen die co-participant dan niet alleen om bevestiging, maar ook om uitleg voor deze discrepantie. Bij al deze handelingen drukken sprekers vertrouwen uit dat de geformuleerde stand van zaken klopt, maar de handeling die ze daarmee uitvoeren hangt af van wanneer ze die uiting produceren.

In hoofdstuk 3 wordt voortgebouwd op de bevindingen uit hoofdstuk 2 door te onderzoeken hoe sprekers nieuwe, recipiënt-georienteerde topics beginnen. Met andere woorden, hoe ze een *topicaanbod* doen, dat wil zeggen, recipiënten vragen om het laatste nieuws en de laatste stand van zaken betreffende een bepaald onderwerp te vertellen. In dit hoofdstuk wordt niet alleen gekeken naar JND's, maar ook naar interrogatieve ja/nee-initiërende handelingen (hierna, JNI). Er worden drie soorten topicaanbiedingen beschreven die als volgt gecategoriseerd worden. Ten eerste kunnen sprekers een kop ("headline") van het nieuws geven; daarmee claimen ze te weten dat (a) de recipiënt nieuws te vertellen heeft en (b) wat het nieuws is. Dit wordt een Anders-Nieuws Aankondiging ("Other's-News Announcement") genoemd. Ten tweede kunnen sprekers een kandidaatsoordeel van het nieuws geven; daarmee claimen ze eveneens te weten dat de recipiënt nieuws te vertellen heeft, maar niet of het nieuws goed of slecht zal zijn. Dit wordt een Nieuws Verzoek ("News Request") genoemd. Tot slot kunnen sprekers vragen of er nieuws is; daarmee laten sprekers zien dat ze niet weten of er nieuws is. Dit wordt een Agnostische Nieuwsvraag ("Agnostic News Inquiry") genoemd. Hoewel er een sterk verband is tussen het soort topicaanbod en de syntactische vorm van dat aanbod, moet dit keer op

keer opnieuw aangetoond worden. Sprekers kunnen de grammaticale vorm ook gebruiken om verrassing over bekend nieuws uit te drukken of verwachtingen over goed/slecht nieuws.

In hoofdstuk 4 wordt vervolgens gekeken naar hoe sprekers begripsproblemen oplossen door aan te tonen dat ze iets nu snappen of zich nu iets herinneren. Sprekers doen dit door een JND vooraf te gaan door de interjectie *oh*. Met *oh* signaleren sprekers dat er iets veranderd is in hun cognitieve toestand. Dat wil niet zeggen dat er daadwerkelijk iets veranderd is in hun cognitie, maar met *oh* claimen sprekers wel dat dat zo is. Door vervolgens een JND te produceren die prosodisch geïntegreerd is met die *oh* bieden sprekers inzicht in het soort cognitieve toestand: de JND wordt gebruikt om te formuleren wat een spreker nu begrijpt en wat hij of zij daarvoor dus niet begreep. Daarnaast kan een spreker de JND ook vooraf laten gaan door *oh ja*. Op die manier claimt de spreker dat hij of zij zich nu iets herinnert wat relevant is voor de interactie, en in de JND laat de spreker zien wat hij of zij zich herinnert. Ondanks dat het gaat om het begrip en de herinneringen van de spreker, is bevestiging in beide gevallen een relevante volgende handeling. Begrip is dus een interactioneel product, niet simpelweg een gemoedstoestand.

In hoofdstuk 5 wordt een vergelijking gemaakt met JNI's die vooraf worden gegaan door *oh*, die geproduceerd worden na een beurt waarmee de gesprekspartner informatie verschaft, en waarin samenvatting of inferentie van die informerende beurt wordt geformuleerd. Met dergelijke *oh*-JNI's laten sprekers zien dat de informerende beurt van de gesprekspartner niet in lijn was met hun verwachtingen, en dat ze hun verwachtingen op basis daarvan hebben bijgesteld. Maar van de gesprekspartner wordt nog wel gevraagd dat hij of zij uitleg geeft over waarom die discrepantie er is. Net als met *oh*-JND's lost de spreker met een *oh*-JNI dus een probleem aangaande de intersubjectiviteit op, maar anders dan met een *oh*-JND is bij een *oh*-JNI bevestiging niet een adequate respons. Dat wil niet zeggen dat sprekers een bepaalde grammaticale vorm kiezen op basis van het soort antwoord dat ze willen. De gekozen vorm is afgesteld op de vereisten van de interactie: een declaratief wordt gebruikt om een eerder uitgesproken of geïmpliceerd begrip bij te stellen, terwijl een interrogatief wordt gebruikt als de problematische verwachting nog niet tot uiting is gekomen in de context.

Actie als interactioneel proces

In hoofdstuk 6 wordt tot slot gekeken naar hoe sprekers omgaan met reacties op verzoeken om bevestiging of informatie. Dat wil zeggen, hoe sprekers in

de derde positie, na twee gepaarde handelingen, reageren op de handeling in het tweede paardeel. Anders dan een tweede paardeel is zo'n reactie in derde positie namelijk optioneel. Dat wil zeggen, waar een eerste paardeel een type-conformerend tweede paardeel conditioneel relevant maakt—een vraag heeft een antwoord nodig, een groet een wedergroet, etc.—maakt een tweede paardeel zo'n respons in derde positie normaliter niet relevant. De spreker van het eerste paardeel heeft dus de optie maar niet de plicht om na het tweede paardeel nog een beurt te produceren.

Er worden twee soorten reacties met elkaar vergeleken: (i) evaluatieve oordelen en (ii) deontische oordelen. Met een evaluatief oordeel geeft de spreker in derde positie een waardeoordeel over het gegeven antwoord. Dit oordeel komt veelal in de vorm van een aanwijzend voornaamwoord, met een koppelwerkwoord, en een bijvoeglijk naamwoord. Op die manier behandelt de spreker het gegeven antwoord als nieuwe informatie, en dergelijke oordelen worden dan ook vaak voorafgegaan door interjecties zoals *oh* of *wow* waarmee het antwoord als nieuws ontvangen wordt. Met een deontisch oordeel daarentegen drukt de spreker uit of het antwoord acceptabel is: de spreker behandelt het antwoord niet als nieuws, maar als een voorstel waarmee hij of zij akkoord moet gaat. Deze deontische oordelen hebben in derde positie de vorm *is goed*, maar dat kan in tweede positie ook *da's goed* of *dat is goed* zijn.

Waar evaluatieve oordelen projecteerbaar zijn en zich dus conformeren aan het soort antwoord, kunnen deontische oordelen gebruikt worden om antwoorden die niet zijn vormgegeven als een voorstel toch als een voorstel te ontvangen. Dat wil zeggen, een spreker kan een verzoek om informatie doen, waarna de recipiënt de gevraagde informatie geeft. Een type-conformerende derde positie zou dat antwoord dan als informatie behandelen, maar door op zo'n moment *is goed* te zeggen, behandelt de spreker het als een voorstel. Met andere woorden, met een deontisch oordeel tonen sprekers niet alleen hun begrip van de vorige beurt, maar schrijven ze er een handeling aan toe. Op die manier wordt de handeling dus interactioneel bewerkstelligd en is het een gezamenlijk product.

Taal in interactie

De analyses in dit proefschrift dragen zodoende bij niet alleen aan ons begrip van sociale interactie, maar ook aan dat van taal in bredere zin. Taal is niet een abstract systeem van structuren die mensen inzetten en waarvan betekenis aangepast wordt naargelang de situatie verandert. Niet alleen verandert de functie van een uiting als deze een andere vorm krijgt, maar de vorm is afgesteld op de lokale vereisten van de interactie en moet begrepen worden

in het licht van de handeling die wordt uitgevoerd. Dit suggereert dat we niet alleen een grammatica hebben—of grammatica's—van de taal die we spreken, maar ook een conversationele grammatica. Een competent spreker heeft kennis over de structuur van de taal, evenals over de structuur van gesprekken. Die kennis helpt om te projecteren wat mogelijk volgende acties zijn, en dus om een beurt-in-productie te voorspellen en te begrijpen. Taalvaardigheid en gespreksvaardigheid zijn onlosmakelijk met elkaar verbonden. Het gesprek is waar taal zich het meest thuis voelt.

Biography

Lucas M. Seuren pursued a bachelor in Astronomy before switching to Communication and Information Sciences in 2009. He finished his bachelor in 2011 and subsequently received a master's degrees in Communication and Information Sciences (cum laude) in 2012 and in Linguistics (cum laude) in 2013. After graduating he worked as a lecturer in Communication at the University of Groningen before starting a PhD in Linguistics in March of 2014.

During his PhD he spent time as an associate in the linguistics department at the University of York from January until May of 2015 and as a visiting graduate student at the Center for Language, Interaction, and Culture at the University of California Los Angeles from September 2016 until March 2017.

Lucas is currently affiliated with the Radboud University Medical Center in Nijmegen as a postdoctoral researcher, where he examines decision making between medical specialists with the aim of improving health outcomes for elderly patients in the Emergency Department.

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