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Interaction and Linguistic Structures

Functional Aspects of Collaborative Productions in English Conversation

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In recognition of the enthusiasm he has brought to all aspects of the study of spoken verbal interaction, we dedicate this series to Professor Dr. Aldo di Luzio, University of Konstanz.

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1 Introduction[1]

This paper discusses what incoming speakers do interactionally when they complete or extend a previous participant's turn prosodically, syntactically and semantically.[2] The primary focus is on the way in which a collaborative incoming is designed, and how it might have been triggered from within the first speaker's utterance. Of course, this study does not claim to offer an exclusive list of all interactional functions which collaborative productions can possibly accomplish, but it suggests a number of things they seem to be doing in the current data collection.

In 2.1, several data extracts will be analyzed which suggest that one environment in which collaborative productions occur are conversational duets. In 2.2, the data analyses point towards another kind of collaborative incoming which displays understanding to the previous speaker. A range of differing data will be presented to suggest possible sub-functions of showing understanding. In 2.3, an utterly different type of collaborative is introduced and then interpreted as a second speaker's way of borrowing a construction from a first speaker. In 2.4, the data shows a first speaker eliciting information from another speaker, who is invited to complete a construction already begun.

2.1 Collaborative Productions in Duets

In this section it will be suggested that collaborative productions of one particular sort appear in conversational duets. A duet has been defined by Falk (1980:18) as a multi-party conversation where "two or more persons may participate as though they were one, by talking to an audience in tandem for both (or sometimes one) of them about the same thing, with the same communicative goal".[3]

According to Falk, duetters share a turn, each producing a so-called "subturn", and thereby share the role of speaker for the time of a conversational topic on which they have mutual knowledge. Further conditions for duetting as Falk understands the phenomenon are equal authority to talk about the topic, i.e. an equal right to the story, and camaraderie between the participants of the duet.

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2 Cf. Szczepek (2000) for an investigation of the formal characteristics of collaborative productions.

3 Lerner (1992) on assisted story telling deals with a similar phenomenon. For duets in German see Quasthoff (1980) and Hartog (1992).

One reason why Falk considers the respective duetters' contributions as subturns rather than as turns in their own right is because they are not treated as interruptions by the duet partner, and are usually received by the audience as if uttered by one person alone. In fact, Falk shows how the duetters are often treated as if they were one speaker by the other conversationalists. As a result, she defines a duet as necessarily including an audience of recipients, as the co-speakers in her view cannot be recipients of each other's talk. This view is a problematic one, as an example from my data will reveal below.

Another reason why Falk thinks of duetters' utterances as subturns is their internal make-up. She points out that "there is typically an <u>absence</u> of any transition in duet subturns. Duet partners are speaking as if they were one person. The second's utterance is often even syntactically, lexically and prosodically a <u>continuation</u> of the first's" (22, emphasis in the original). Sacks *et al* (1974) argue that turns "regularly have a three-part structure: one which addresses the relation of a turn to a prior, one involved with what is occupying the turn, and one which addresses the relation of the turn to a succeeding one." Once a duet has begun, the subturns typically lack the first part of turn structure, namely the part that expresses a relation to and an understanding of the prior turn.

A representative example of a duet is (1), "River," which comes from a family dinner conversation. The speakers are recapitulating a trip they took several months before:

(1)

29: River

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1       PA:    we ↑pOInted out this pub at mawnan smith when we passed THROUGH
2              there.
3              but we wAnted to get ↑rAther NEARer to the, (.)
4       RO:    THAT'S RIGHT,
5   ->  PA:    RIver.
6   ->  RO:    and we THOUGHT    [there must be something in MALpas.
7       PA:                      [(      )
8              yeah.
9   ->  RO:    and there WASn't.
10      PA:    m.
11      RO:    yeah,
12  ->  PA:    and we deCIded to go through that ROAD,
13             from which there were lOvely VIEWS,
```

The narrative is a collaborative one in which Patrick and Robert link their utterances together – respectively in the collaborative productions in lines 1-3, 5, 6, 9, 12, - so as to produce a chain of events which might have been told by one participant alone. Between those utterances, however, the participants are still providing each other with recipient responses (lines 4, 7, 8, 10, 11). They are moving back and forth between the role of speaker, i.e. co-speaker, and recipient. In fact, it seems they are acting as both at the same time. It becomes clear throughout the whole duet, from which our example is only a small extract, that the

question of who is (co-)speaker and who is recipient cannot be mutually exclusive.[4] All persons present, including the non-speakers, are "knowing recipients" (Goodwin 1977)[5] and have mutual knowledge about the trip discussed, so there is no "audience" in Falk's sense of people receiving news. For example, a recipient in a duet can share the co-speakers' knowledge but decide not to join in the duet itself and thereby act as audience. Moreover, even the duetters themselves are recipients of each others' subturns, as they react to them and, as in (1), "River," above, produce both backchannelling and duetting contributions.

However, other characteristics for duets which Falk mentions can be observed in the above example. The participants all have mutual knowledge of the trip discussed, they also have equal "authority" on it, as they have all participated in it, and they share a great deal of camaraderie. Their perspective seems a mutual one, as is partly evident in the frequent use of *we* as personal pronoun. The subturns are not treated as interruptions by each respective co-speaker. Also, at least one of the incoming contributions lacks that first part of turn structure mentioned above which has been associated with referring back to and signaling understanding of the prior turn (line 5). The other three collaborative incomings each contain *and*, which could be interpreted as a way of establishing a relation to previous material, and therefore as containing that first element.

While this extract is in some ways a representative instance of a duet, it also shows that duetters cannot be as readily divided into co-speakers and recipients as Falk suggests.

The next piece of data comes from a conversation in which two ex-missionaries, Sandy and Richard, are telling Richard's mother about their time in Africa. At this point they are engaged in a story about a woman who was killed by an elephant:

(2)
100: Skull

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1     SA:    and ONE foot (.) of his feet; (.)
2            CRUSHED one of her lEgs;
3  ->        and Unfortunately the Other one; (.)
4  -> RI:    [gOt her SKULL.    ]
5  -> SA:    [(stamped)         ] RIGHT on the back of her skUll.
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Neither Sandy nor Richard have witnessed the accident, but they both seem to know the story well. Sandy has acted as primary speaker throughout the whole narrative before the beginning of this extract, and Richard has from time to time completed her utterances with

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4 Duets make the problematic concept of a strict division between the role of speaker and listener in conversation particularly apparent. As Tannen (1989:12) comments on the distribution of these two interactional roles: "Conversation is not a matter of two (or more) people alternatively taking the role of speaker and listener, but (...) both speaking and listening include elements and traces of the other."

5 "A recipient presumed to already know about the event being described by the speaker will be called a knowing recipient while a recipient presumed to be not yet informed about that event will be called an unknowing recipient." (Goodwin 1977:283)

short contributions. In this extract, the story is about to reach its climax, that is, the manner in which the woman died. Sandy is building up tension by neatly organizing small details of the story into single intonation units. She also sets up a rhythm with the stressed syllables *CRUSHED*, *lEgs*, *Un-* and *O-*. When she reaches the point where the actual climax is about to come, Richard comes in with that climax in exact coordination with Sandy's established rhythm.[6] Sandy, who also begins to continue her rhythm, draws out her one item *(stamped)* until Richard has finished his incoming, and then completes the story herself, as well.

This is again an instance where the narrative is mutual property, however the form of access the speakers have to it is different to that of the previous example, which was first-hand experience. Sandy and Richard have not been witnesses to the event, but they have both been told about it. They therefore also share a perspective, but this time one of knowing from hearsay rather than from participation. Sandy acts as a primary speaker in that she has started to tell the narrative, knowing that Richard is also familiar with it. Her prosody in line 5 does not rise to a higher volume and/or pitch, which would signal a fight for the floor[7], nor does she sanction his version of the story climax in any other way. She even gives him time to finish and clearly does not treat his incoming as an interruption. However, she still produces her own completion of the utterance.

Richard on his part does not attempt to take over the floor after his candidate story climax. He offers his turn completion at an unmarked volume and pitch and lets the floor go back to Sandy immediately afterwards.

The above instance differs slightly from the previous example (1), "River", in that the perspective which the speakers share is one of second hand knowledge. There are also differences in floor distribution: firstly, one participant (Sandy) acts as primary speaker; secondly, the actual duet occurs in overlap, with the primary speaker paraphrasing the co-participant's incoming after its occurrence.

The following example is taken from the same conversation as (1), "River." This time three of the conversationalists are taking part in the duet: Robert, Patrick and Patrick's wife Beverly. They are still re-enacting the trip they all took together. In this extract, they are collaboratively recollecting the bad service they received at the pub at which they went for lunch:

(3)
29: Sausages
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1  -> PA:    and we waited FOUR hours for lUnch,
2     RO:    ((cough))
3     BE:    ((cough))
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6 For rhythmic coordination between speakers at turn transitions see Couper-Kuhlen (1993).

7 Cf. French/Local (1986)

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4        (1.0)
5  -> RO:   TWO hours for the bEEr, (2.0)
6  -> PA:   and it was FREEZing cOld to bOOt.
7  ->       re↑MEMber thAt.
8  -> RO:   and there was a hell of a NOISe going on,=
9          =because they were doing alteRATions,
10 -> BE:   and they were BANG bang banging awAY,
11       (5.0)
12     RO:   now ↑WHAT did we HAVE.
13       (1.0)
14     PA:   [<<f> YOU had SAUsages.>
15     BE:   [something with CHIPS.

16           [SAUsages wasn't it;
17     RO:   [THAT'S rIght,

18     PA:   [you had SAUsages.
19     BE:   [and CHIPS.
20     RO:   [THAT'S rIght,
21     PA:   you had SPEcial   [LOcal CORnish SAUsages.
22     BE:                     [YES.
23          because she said;
24          DO you want ehm;
25          Ordinary sausages or lOcal or HOME MADE; .h
26          and we said ↑OH we'll have the HOME MADE;
27          and mY ↑GOD [they were TERRible.
28 -> RO:                [and they were the WORST sAUsages;
29 ->       [i have Ever HAD-
30 -> BE:   [<<f> there was LOTS of GRISTle that[pig had.>
31 -> RO:                                       [<<f> i have Ever HAD;
32 ->       [in my WHOLE LIFE.>
33 -> BE:   [in MY life;
34 ->       ME TOO.
35     RO:   and i- i've got a THING about sau   [sage-
36     BE:                                        [mhm,
37     RO:   BRITish sausages,
```

In the beginning of the extract we find a long collaborative sequence (lines 1-10) which recapitulates the long time the party had to wait for their food. Each speaker adds another aspect in a rhythmically similar fashion. In lines 1, 5, 6 and 7 Patrick and Robert design their intonation units so that they contain two prominent syllables with primary and then secondary stress: *FOUR, lUnch, TWO, bEEr, FREEZ-, bOOt, -MEM-, thAt*. Robert's two tone groups in lines 8 and 9 only have one primary stress each, but Beverly in line 10 takes up the rhythm again and even inserts two redundant syllables into her intonation unit in order to keep it up.

Up to this point, all speakers share a collective perspective and none of them treats the other's contribution as an intrusion on his/her right to speak; the floor is common property, as is the shared experience. In line 12 the topic changes to the actual food that was ordered. The sudden collaborative recollection of the food, especially the sausages, results in an outburst of talk at a noticeably higher volume than before. Lines 14/15 and 16/17 are spoken in overlap by two speakers, and in lines 18-20 all three participants speak

simultaneously. This, however, is not necessarily an indication of a floor fight. According to Deborah Tannen's research on conversational styles (cf. Tannen 1984), one possible way of showing enthusiasm about a topic is to speak in overlap with other speakers and to do so at a louder volume, faster pace and greater intensity.[8] This seems to be the case in lines 14-22.

Beverly recalls the actual ordering of the food (lines 23-26). She then goes on to assess the quality of the food (line 27). However, Robert also comes in with an assessment in relatively loud volume of *and they were the worst sausages I have ever had*, which interrupts Beverly's first assessment *and my god they were terrible*.

However, Beverly still regards the floor as hers and continues at a higher volume, now intervening during Robert's turn (line 30). Robert also seems to consider himself a legitimate speaker, and restarts and continues his assessment (line 31/32), speaking likewise in a louder voice than before.

In line 33 Beverly shows agreement with Robert by completing his construction in the sense that he intended, however with her own personal pronoun (*my*). She also joins his rhythm, which he establishes in line 31 with *E-* and *HAD* and continues in line 32 with *WHO:LE* and *LIFE*. She produces *MY life* at the rhythmically precise moment in time, and overlaps with his *WHO:LE*. But whereas her two items only take up one rhythmic beat, he places his two items *WHO:LE* and *LIFE* on two beats and therefore his completion can be heard as the more prominent of the two.

By joining him in his utterance, she signals agreement with him. However, by her own use of the personal pronoun *my*, she makes his perspective her own and thereby takes over the construction. That is, she joins him in semantic content and in the activity of assessing, but not in perspective. She then offers explicit agreement in her next line (*ME TOO*). Robert then goes on to talk about his personal attitude towards sausages.

At this point, what the speakers are engaged in is not a duet in its strictest sense anymore. Rather, this instance is one in which we witness a change in the way speakers negotiate their rights to a certain element of the story: a past event, which is at first the shared property of all participants, is claimed by one single speaker, Robert, as a personal experience of his own. Another speaker, Beverly, is not willing to give up either the floor or her right to the story, but she does agree with Robert on the content level. By agreeing with him, she is no longer a co-speaker in a duet. She is now talking *to* him rather than *with* him.[9]

Although the participants are duetting before and after this episode, this is a moment in the interaction where the floor shifts from being a shared property to being claimed by

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8 "Rapid rate of speech, overlap, and latching of utterances are devices by which some speakers show solidarity, enthusiasm, and interest in others' talk." (Tannen: 1984:77)

9 Cf. 4.2 on the agreeing function of collaboratives.

individual speakers. So it seems that even when conversationalists are engaged in a duet for a longer period of time, this does not necessarily mean a sharing of the floor throughout.

A last example is one that contains an attempted duet from a speaker who does not have first-hand access to the main speaker's experience. Ken and Jo are telling a third person about a doctor whose diagnosing practices they both strongly disagree with. It is Ken who is directly affected by them as he suffers from a yet undiagnosed disease.

(4)

101: Drink

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1     KE:    he just di- did a BLOOD TEST.=
2   ->       =and said yEAh well your b- your blOOd's all SHOT;=
3   ->       =and you have the lIver of a NINEty year old, .hh
4            uhm -
5            [and i w- <<f> and i and i THINK->
6   -> JO:   [<<f> dO you DRINK?
7   ->       and he DOESn't    [drInk.>
8     KE:                      [<<f> and i think ->
9            and i think uh:: -
10  ->       you you picked up some uhm    [(.)
11  -> JO:                                 [<<pp> VIrus.>
12  -> KE:   VIrus;
```

Both participants have mutual knowledge about the incident discussed, but the experience itself is Ken's. He reports what the doctor said and begins listing the results from his blood test using list intonation (lines 2 and 3). With the last list item he seems to have word retrieval problems (lines 4, 5 and also 8-10). According to Jefferson (1990), lists usually have a three-part structure, which speakers orient towards. It therefore seems probable that Ken's hesitation in line 4 prompts Jo's incoming with a possible third list item in lines 6/7.[10] She comes in in overlap with Ken's still hesitant production of a third list item and does so at a high volume but at an average pitch level. This may signal that she sees nothing wrong with a collaborative list here, as she has equal knowledge about the situation. Ken, however, seems to regard the floor as his own and apparently does not appreciate Jo's attempted duetting contribution. He does not take up her material even though he still has problems formulating his own. He also remains at *forte* and repeats his own words (*and I think*) until she stops talking, which indicates a fight for the floor on his part.

It is interesting that Ken accepts Jo's offer to help with the word-search for *virus* when she comes in at *pianissimo* in line 11, her prosody contextualizing her incoming as clearly

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10 Cf. Jefferson (1990) and Lerner (1994) on collaborative list construction.

non-competitive.[11] By now, she is clearly not attempting to collaborate in his turn as an equal duet partner anymore, but is contributing to it from the background.

It seems that what goes wrong in lines 5-8 is the distribution of authority on the subject. Ken sees himself as main narrator as he is the one with first-hand experience. Jo at first believes it okay to collaborate in his story as if it was also hers. When her incoming is treated as an interruption rather than as a collaboration she changes strategies and her help in Ken's word search is received without any more interactional trouble.

Summary

It is not surprising that collaborative productions occur frequently in duets. When two people share an experience, they are likely to know where their co-speaker is going with the construction long before s/he has come to a possible completion point. From the excerpts we have looked at, it has become clear that the content of a duet is accessible to both participants of the collaborative production. They are co-speakers who share both knowledge and the floor.

The data contain, however, varying degrees of distribution for both these aspects. Concerning the floor, there are cases in which one speaker has the role of main narrator, with the duet-partner contributing only small bits of shared information here and there ((2), "Skull," and (4), "Drink"). The major amount of speaking time is taken up by one main turn-holder. In other cases the floor is more or less equally divided between the duetters, none of them claiming a primary right to speak ((1), "River" and the beginning of (3), "Sausages").

> Who comes to be the 'storyteller of record' can be problematic when story consociate participation is a possibility. Determining who will emerge from the story's preface as teller is a concerted achievement. In addition, tellership can be transferred during the story or it can even alternate throughout the course of the story. Since there are ways for a story consociate to begin participating throughout the course of the story, co-telling is a systematic possibility. Therefore the narrative produced on each occasion can be seen as an outcome of its collaboratively achieved telling. (Lerner 1992:268)

With regard to distribution and kinds of knowledge, the above extracts also suggest several possibilities. Speakers can have different degrees of knowledge about something, but also different forms of access to it. Both are criteria for the rights which participants allow themselves and others to a particular story. Quasthoff (1980) calls this the "Prinzip der Zuständigkeit" (principle of responsibility) which a speaker may have for a particular story.

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11 Cf. 4.2.1 for collaborative incomings as a way of "helping out".

It seems that it is not always the amount of knowledge a speaker has about a certain content which decides whose property a story may be. The form of access seems also to play an important role, for example whether a speaker has first-hand experience or not.[12]

> We need to distinguish between, on the one hand, speakers' actual states of knowledge and, on the other hand, their orientations to the normative distributions of rights and entitlements to certain kinds of knowledge.
> (Drew 1991:41)

In the excerpts examined here, three different possibilities seem to exist: The speakers may talk about an experience shared by all, as in example (1), "River," where they are likely to have an equal amount of knowledge and are therefore equally authorized to tell the story. In such a case, we would expect the use of the personal pronoun "we" throughout, although that alone of course is not a reliable indicator for such a collective perspective.[13] In these instances of duets, the narrative clearly belongs to all of the involved participants, and the floor is distributed equally among the duetters.[14]

A second possibility is knowledge which some or all conversationalists have equal access to without being first-hand witnesses. It is not knowledge of a shared experience but involves a neutral or third perspective. An example is a narrative which the speakers are acquainted with, but which none of them have experienced themselves ((2), "Skull"). Instances from the current data collection of collaborative informings or collaborative answers to questions, where more than one person have an answer, also belong in this group. With this type of duet it is possible for one participant to consider the material his/hers, acting as primary speaker, and others to come in only for a short additional comment, but there are also duets of this type with a similar amount of speaking time for all co-speakers.

A third kind of duet in our data are those where only one of the co-speakers' perspectives is represented, either because only they themselves have actually witnessed what is being discussed, or because the conversational topic is in some other way primarily related to them ((4), "Drink"). Here we would expect to find one of the conversationalists being the person to whom the story unmistakably belongs and the others being secondary speakers, coming in with smaller amounts of talk and taking up less speaking-time. This role of secondary speaker can be compared to another type of "Koerzähler" (co-teller) in

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12 Hartog (1992:197), finds that in medical genetic counselling, women dominate as primary speakers when it comes to discussing family issues.

13 The "we" might be non-inclusive and refer to the speaker and other, non-present persons.

14 Quasthoff (1980) on collective story-telling makes a distinction between the narrator and co-teller ("Erzähler" and "Koerzähler") of a story: „a narrator, who has lived through the experience and initiates the narrative discourse unit" ("ein Erzähler, der das Geschehen miterlebt hat und der die narrative Diskurseinheit initiiert bzw. (...) einleitet") and „a co-teller who, like the narrator, has also lived through the experience and participates in the verbal representation of the experience" ("ein Koerzähler, der wie der Erzähler das erzählte Geschehen miterlebt hat und der sich in der Erzählsituation an der verbalen Repräsentation des Geschehens beteiligt.") (113). She mentions the possibility of a „co-teller gradually taking over the story telling" ("etappenweise Übernahme der Repräsentation der Geschichte durch den Koerzähler") (127) However, this is not exactly our phenomenon, as Quasthoff considers whole episodes told by a second speaker, not smaller units, such as incomplete syntactic constructions.

Quasthoff (1980:126*f*), where the co-teller's behaviour is primarily supportive and consists of brief conversational contributions. The co-teller's respective activities are ones that contribute to a first narrator's perspective:

> Das Reagieren auf ein Hilfeersuchen des Erzählers, das Aushelfen bei Formulierungs– und Benennungsschwierigkeiten des Erzählers, das Ergänzen von Informationen, die die Handlungsrolle des Ko-Erzählers im Geschehen betreffen, und das Korrigieren des Erzählers durch eine konfligierende Geschichtsdarstellung. (1980:125, emphasis in the original)[15]

In the data for the present study, this type includes cases where incoming participants have an almost equal amount of knowledge about the discussed topic, but the fact that there is someone who this story or topic "belongs to" seems to deprive them of their right to act as equal co-speakers in the duet. It is interesting to see how interlocutors deal with the choice of personal pronouns in such a case ((3), "Sausages").

Another characteristic of collaborative productions in duets is the way participants handle each others' incomings in relation to turn-taking. Duetters typically do not treat each others' contributions as interruptions of their own turn. If that happens, it can be an indication of the incoming speaker's attempt to duet, but the current speaker's denying him/her the right to do so ((4), "Drink"). Sometimes first speakers insist on their own completion of a construction: however they usually give the incomers time to finish ((2); "Skull"). Often, speakers link their utterances together as if uttered by one speaker alone, without insisting on their own version of a continuation ((1), "River").

On the part of incoming speakers an attempt at a duet does not seem to be an attempt to take over the floor. The prosody of such incomings is non-competitive. After a duetting contribution participants typically do not claim the floor for themselves but seem to consider it common property. An indication for this are the pauses between duet contributions, as for example in (1),"River."

One possible function of collaborative productions in a duet has been pointed out by Harvey Sacks (1995). Discussing his famous example "We were in an automobile discussion"[16], he remarks:

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15 "Reacting to a narrator's asking for help, helping out with difficulties in phrasing and word retrieval, adding information concerning the role of the co-teller in the reported incident and correcting the narrator with a conflicting version of the story."

16 Joe: We were in an automobile discussion,

Henry: discussing the psychological motives for

Mel: drag racing on the streets. (Sacks 1995, 144)

We would take it that that's an obvious device to show, through this playing with the syntactic features of an utterance, that these people are close to each other. They're a unit. Because a sentence is obviously a prototypical instance of that thing which is done by some unit. Normally, some single person. That then permits it (...) to be a way that some non-apparent unit may be demonstrated to exist. We get, then, a kind of extraordinary tie between syntactic possibilities and phenomena like social organization. (145)

There probably isn't any better way of presenting the fact that 'we are a group' than by building a new sentence together. (322)

However, there are different kinds of units. One possibility is the duet: Two or more participants share knowledge and show each other that they do. At certain moments in the duet their 'togetherness' becomes maximally apparent. That is when they collaboratively build a semantic, syntactic and prosodic production. They might be forming their unit in front of an unknowing audience or because they want to establish rapport with each other, or both.

Consequently, one way of signaling unity to another is to show that you *know* what they are saying. Another way is to show them that you *understand* what they are saying. This is a second function collaborative productions can take in interaction.

2.2 Showing Understanding

In order to complete another's utterance, a participant is not necessarily required to know what the other person knows about their current utterance. In fact, in most cases incoming speakers do not share the previous speaker's knowledge, they guess it. And, at least in this data collection, in 99.5% of the cases they get it right.[17] This is at least partially due to the syntactic, semantic and prosodic projectability of utterances.[18]

Schegloff (1984) discusses the difference between agreeing and showing agreement:

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17 A single exception in the data underlying this investigation is

4: Gun-Shy

1	JO:	what happens when you call andy ↑DORkins.
2	BA:	<<nasal> well ANdy's a little NERvous <l about me right now.>>
3		you know we're we're <<laughing> TRIED to schedule the
4		debAte,>=
5		just before the eLEction,=
6		<<nasal> WE HA:VE the mineApolis debate;> hh
7		i think the DAY before the elEction.
8		I: think <laughing DORkins I:s;>(.)
9	JO:	I:s in TROUBle.
10	BA:	well I Also think he's GUN-shy. (.)
11		<<l> maybe that's not the word to> ↑USE but; .hh
12		I thInk he's a LITTle-
13	JO:	he's BARbra shy.

18 Cf. Sacks, Schegloff, Jefferson (1974); Auer (1996)

There is a range of forms through the use of which conversationalists can do the work of bringing off collaboratively that they are in agreement. Some are nea[t]ly prepackaged, for example, "I agree," "I know," "Right," and the like, which are *assertions of agreement*; others, unlistable because they are in particulars (*sic*) fitted to the matter being agreed on, *show agreement* by a variety of techniques, for example, showing one knows what the other has in mind by saying it for him, as in completing his sentence or his argument. (1984:42, emphasis mine)

What Schegloff (1984) writes about agreement is also applicable to the larger notion of understanding in general. Rather than asserting understanding explicitly, as in "I understand" or "I know what you mean," participants more frequently *show* their understanding in their follow-up turn, for instance by completing the other's utterance. This display of understanding often seems to be used to accomplish another action simultaneously.

The following example is a fairly typical case of a collaborative incoming showing a second speaker's understanding of a first speaker's material. The conversationalists come from the same family as those in (1), "River," and (3), "Sausages," but this time they have met for a different conversational occasion. Beverly is planning a trip to their mutual relatives in Australia, whom Harry and his wife Muriel have already visited several times. At the moment of our extract, Harry tells Beverly about how many of their relatives' acquaintances were born in England:

(5)

28: Wide Australian

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1      HA:   one of dAvid's frIEnds comes from cAme from hErnel ↑HEMPstead;
2            when he    [was (.) thIr↑TEEN. (.)
3      BE:             [<<h< (↑HAS he;)>
4      HA:   or eLEVen. (1.1)
5      BE:   ↑↑OH:,
6  -> HA:   you would you would nEver gUEss it from his Accent;=
7  ->       i mean he's (.)
8  -> BE:   WIDE austrAlian   [now.
9  -> HA:                    [spEAking au[STRAlian,
10 -> BE:                               [yeah.
11     HA:   with (      )
12     BE:   m;
13     MU:   oh yes like KEIR does of course but, (0.5)
14           <<h> FUNNily enough Ewan DOESn't.>
```

Harry's utterance before Beverly's incoming contains a description of "David's friend" that can roughly be summarized as 'born in England but speaking without a British accent'. From this Beverly infers that the person speaks with an Australian accent, which, given the conversational topic 'Australia', is rather predictable. From the transcript it may seem possible to assume that Harry does not hear her incoming, but she speaks at the same

volume and roughly the same pitch level as Harry, although without the kind of high onset we would expect of a new turn. She quite clearly designs her completion as part of Harry's utterance without claiming the floor for herself. Her lack of desire to take the floor is also displayed in lines 10 and 12: in line 9 Harry has produced his own completion of the utterance, semantically very similar to Beverly's version, but realized via a different syntactic construction. As he insists on his own completion, and does so in overlap with Beverly's incoming, it could be interpreted by Beverly that he did not appreciate her attempt to finish his utterance. In lines 10 and 12, she gives him supportive backchannelling, even though she has already shown that she has long understood what he wanted to say. She thereby assures him of his right to speak and simultaneously declines it herself. Similar to (2), "Skull," in the above extract the first speaker does not yield his utterance to the incoming participant, but produces a completion even though the incoming speaker's completion has already been given.

What Beverly is doing here is showing that she understands what Harry wants to tell her. The fact that her incoming is not treated as competitive by Harry shows that it is received as a "listening activity" (Yngve 1970).[19] Beverly does not claim the right to a whole utterance but lets the floor pass directly back to Harry, who is the original turn-holder.

The following sections will introduce some actions which participants accomplish in the current data corpus when they engage in showing understanding via a collaborative production.

2.2.1 Helping Out

As mentioned above, there are cases where participants seem to show their understanding of a previous utterance and accomplish another action at the same time. An example is taken from a radio phone-in program where Barbara is the host and Hanna the caller. The topic is the tax policies of a particular senator.

(6)
1: Introducer of bills

```
1     HA:    we ↑JUST HEARD the other day about ↑WELLstone by the way
2            bArbra,
3            <<all> hE never mentioned this to YOU;=
4            but I don't suppose he WOULD;> .hh
5            that hE is one of the ↑THREE ↑LARgest; (.)
6  ->        uhm (.) uh (.) intro↑DUcer of ↑BILLS; (.)
7  ->        i- uh (.) that uh (.) that uhm -
8  ->        [<<all+p> well Anyway.>
```

---

[19] "A person engages in different activities when he has the turn than when he doesn't have it. When he has the turn he engages primarily in speaking activities and when he doesn't have it he engages primarily in listening activities." (Yngve 1970:568)

```
9  -> BA:   [<<f> that SPEND MONey.>
10 -> HA:   <<f> MOney spending     [bills.>
11    BA:                           [<<l> Okay.>
```

Hanna has obvious problems with the production of her argument as she searches first for the expression *introducer(s) of bills*, which she finds by herself, and then for a second one, *money spending bills*, in which she eventually needs Barbara's assistance. In the respective lines 4-6, there are six pauses, five *uhm*s, three false starts, and eventually her resignation in the phrase *well anyway* in line 7, which is produced very quickly, at *piano* and comes down on a final fall. Her difficulties become even more apparent as her previous speech tempo is rather fast and now the flow of her utterance is forcefully held up by her word search, which takes place right in the climax of her argument.

In line 8 Barbara helps out with the missing words. Her prosody is *forte* with a high degree of intensity on *spend money*. Even louder, however, is Hanna's version *money spending bills*. It is interesting to note that she does not repeat Barbara's exact phrase: Barbara completes the syntactic structure and Hanna produces an unattached noun phrase. She does so with the raised volume that often accompanies a successful word-search.[20]

In other instances of helping out, incoming speakers are uncertain whether the expression they are offering is indeed the one wanted. They offer what they believe the other person is looking for with high rising intonation at the end, thereby contextualizing it as a 'question,' along the lines of "is this what you mean?" An example of such try-marking is taken from a family dinner, where in the following extract mother (Sally) and daughter-in-law (Cecilia) discuss a particular soft drink:

(7)

97: Regular grape

```
1     SA:   what i'm gonna comPLAIN about is that they don't make white
2           grape;
3           thIs stuff is GOOD.
4           it's like spArkling GRAPE JUICE (.) COCKtail or something,
5           you know remember that (      ) -
6     CE:   <<h+f> they only make that> with NUtra sweet though;
7           DON'T they;
8  ->       they DON'T make; (-)
9  ->       REGular - (-)
10 -> SA:   a REGular GRAPE?
11 ->       I don't KNOW.
12    CE:   every time i look at that bot that bottle of water;
13          that spArkling WATer it's all (      );
14    SA:   but they don't make thIs kind at ↑ALL anymore.
```

---

20 An item that has been successfully found after a word-search is often repeated by the original searching party at a high volume. (Szczepek 1998:29)

In line 6 Cecilia begins her question about the drink. What Cecilia wants to know is whether the company that produces the drink also makes a regularly sugared one as opposed to a nutra sweet version. She has trouble finding a verbal item that could come after "*REGular*". In line 10, Sally offers a candidate. She does so in high rising intonation which is heard as try-marking.

However, she does not give Cecilia the time to confirm that this was indeed the term looked for.[21] Sally assumes she has guessed the right expression, and continues to answer immediately. What is interesting about this example is that both participants are engaged in questions. Cecilia asks about the regular drink and Sally asks whether "*a REGular GRAPE*" is the item being looked for. Sally's completion of Cecilia's question has 'question intonation.' However, that intonation is not necessarily due to her completing Cecilia's question. The intonation on line 10 has probably less to do with the fact that Sally is completing a question which could possibly have rising intonation, and more with Sally's uncertainty about that completion. In other words the verbal material "*a REGular GRAPE*" belongs to Cecilia's utterance; the prosody in which it is delivered seems to be Sally's.

The above case suggests that in instances of try-marking, the incoming speaker, although s/he completes or continues the prosody of the previous speaker, does not necessarily do so in the way it was projected. We do not know whether Cecilia or Michael (note 18) were going to design their question with rising intonation. In other cases where the try-marking is not involved in a question from a first speaker, it is even more obvious that the rising pitch was not projected by the current utterance before the incoming. So although the second speaker's prosody is heard as a completion of the ongoing turn, it is one which the second speaker claims authorship for.

The fact that a speaker can follow up on the syntactic projection of an utterance but not on its prosodic projection is certainly one that could inspire further research.

In the examples above, a recipient's showing understanding seems to be sequentially necessary. They are cases where a first conversationalist gets into trouble with his/her current verbal material and seems to be searching for a particular word or phrase. S/he displays this word search through hesitation signals such as pauses, false starts, and *uh*s. A second speaker joins in, producing the item in an attempt to help out. If the candidate suggestion is what the first speaker was looking for, that speaker takes up the turn where

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21 In other instances this question is answered by the first speaker. See for example:

101: School

1   MI: are THEY – (2.0)
2   TEACHing – (1.0)
3   any more lamBAda at uh; (2.0)
4   JA: <<p> SCHOOL?>
5   MI: <<p> yeah.>

s/he left it incomplete and is again in possession of the floor. The incoming participant is not treated as an interrupter. Ferrara (1992:220) describes such sequences as "helpful utterance completions."

In (7), "Regular grape," we saw an instance of an incoming speaker who wishes to show understanding and to help out, but who is unsure whether s/he has understood the first speaker correctly. In such cases, second speakers typically design their completion prosodically as a candidate completion.

2.2.2 Terminating Another's Turn

Another action that participants seem to accomplish when they show understanding via a collaborative production is terminating the first speaker's turn. The term 'terminate' is understood here in the sense of a forcible termination, in contrast to a more 'natural' end. An example is taken from a radio discussion with a politician during election time. Barbara is the host and Graham the congressman. The topic is representative government in general and the people's influence on a specific law in particular. Although the majority of constituents opposed the law – evidenced by large scale rejection after responsible politicians invited public reaction – the bill was passed. The congressman has been asked to comment on this particular bill:

(8)

1: Fight a bill

```
1     GR:   if you're going to FIGHT a BILL;
2           if you WAIT until it gEts to the floor of the HOUSE; (.)
3           the VOTES have already been CAST.
4     BA:   <<p> yeah.>
5     GR:   you HA:VE to be prO ACtive;
6           and you hAve to be out in FRONT of the bills; .h
7           <<all> and THAT'S what we're trying to do with a lOt of the
8           Issues.>
9           we want to BRING em home at our TOWN meetings; .hh
10          we want to comMUNicate to our (.) vOters what's going On;
11          and A:sk for your response (.) ↑EARly; .h
12          to make ↑SURE that (.) uh (.) a- i-
13 ->       aGAIN i commEnd;
14 ->       ALL the CALLs that were MADE;
15 ->       and ALL the LETTers that were WRITTen; .h
16          i just think that [TOO Many
17 -> BA:                     [<<all+f> but it ↑SHOULD have been EARlier.>
18 -> GR:   it SHOULD have been EARlier.
19    BA:   i DO wanna answer that gentleman's call- that gentleman's
20          question.
```

Before this extract, Graham has already been talking for 30 seconds, reporting how the people's calls to the White House came too late to stop the bill. In lines 1-11, Graham is in

the middle of explaining the general conditions under which the public can influence political decisions. From line 7 onwards, he digresses into a brief election speech, which he has problems bringing to completion in line 11. Instead, he begins to repeat himself in lines 12-16; he has already thanked the public for their participation earlier in his turn.

In line 17 Barbara completes the concessive he has begun at a faster speech rate and at a higher volume than his. He agrees to her completion of his statement and shows that he does by repeating her exact material in the same prosodic fashion as she has done (line 18). After his repetition, Barbara changes the topic and turns to another member of the audience.

By the time Barbara comes in, Graham's turn has taken up 1 minute 7 seconds, with only one instance of backchannelling from Barbara (line 4). Considering the radio medium as one with restricted speaking time, this is an extremely long turn. Barbara is responsible for precise time management in her show, and it seems she is acting upon that responsibility - she brings his turn to a sudden completion by showing she understands what he wants to say. Her prosody signals both the aspect of speeding up (*allegro*) and of considering it her right to do so (*forte* without a rise in pitch level)[22].

In collaborative productions such as this one, in which an incoming participant forcibly terminates another's utterance by showing s/he has understood, the first speaker has usually displayed some kind of uncertainty, sometimes accompanied by prosodic hesitation. It is characteristic for the completing speaker to come in at a fast tempo and high volume.

2.2.3 Showing Support

In dealing with conversationalists showing understanding of each other, there are two senses of the term 'understand' that are relevant. One sense is implied in all collaborative productions that show understanding, namely that of comprehending what the other speaker has in mind. This sense of understanding concerns the semantic-pragmatic content of the current utterance, which the incoming speaker demonstrates to have correctly predicted. The Concise Oxford Dictionary lists as one meaning of 'understand' to "perceive the meaning of (words, a person, a language, etc)". A second meaning is the empathetic use of the term in the sense of 'I understand you, your motives for doing such-and-such a thing, for arguing this way', etc. The same dictionary lists as another meaning to "be sympathetically aware of the character or nature of, know how to deal with". This second sense is especially implied in those cases where the supportive function of showing understanding of the participant seems to be the main reason for the incoming.[23] See for example another piece of radio

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22 cf. French/Local (1986)

23 Schwitalla (1992) describes this function of collective speech as "showing the current speaker (and other participants) in a demonstrative and exceptional way that one thinks and feels like him/her" ("dem aktuellen Sprecher (und anderen Beteiligten) in demonstrativer und auffallender Weise zeigen, daß man so denkt und fühlt wie er." (1993: 73))

data. Barbara Carleson is hosting a radio show on the pros and cons of prolonging life on medical machines, even if the person concerned will not gain consciousness again.

(9)

3: Let her go

```
1      HE:    I had to make a decision with my MOther,
2             who was eighty seven years OLD, .hh
3             i'm an only CHILD,
4             a:nd I had to make the decIsion whether or NOT; .hh
5             to conTInue - .hh
6             hAve her continued O:n maCHI:NES, (.) .hh
7      BA:    <<p> mhm,>
8   -> HE:    O:R to let her GO:,
9   ->        and i mAde the decIsion to    [lEt her ↑GO.
10  -> BA:                                   [<<p> lEt her ↑GO.>
11     HE:    and it was (.) .hh VEry very ↑DIFFicult.
12     BA:    <<p> mhm,>
13     HE:    there were mAny unresolved THINGS;
14            that we had not (.) TALKED about during our LIVES, .hh
15            uhm ↑SO many unfinished thIngs;
16            and .hh still i had to make that deCISion and i, .hh
17            take responsiBILity for that,
18  -> BA:    <<p+l> i thInk you made the RIGHT decision;
19  ->        i'm GLAD you DID make that decision.>
20     HE:    a:nd i i uh REALLy canNOT -
21            i f:eel that SHE is in a way still wIth me.
```

Heather has made it clear in her talk before the above extract that she is in favor of "letting go", so the phrase has come up several times by the time Barbara produces it in precise overlap with Heather (line 10).

There are no signals from Heather that she is hesitating in any way. She has no problems finding the right expression, and she does not offer the slightest pause before Barbara's incoming. This is a characteristic environment for collaborative productions that show support, where the incoming participant's completion is designed to overlap precisely with the first speaker's and is usually done at very low volume. It does not lay claim to the floor in any way, but on the contrary seems to support the original speaker in his/her right to speak. Barbara also signals support verbally by taking up the gist of Heather's argument and prosodically by producing Heather's projected intonation, including the steep fall on - *GO*.[24] She adopts Heather's perspective for a moment and thereby backs her up in the decision she made to 'let her mother go.'

There is no immediate next-speaker evidence for the fact that Barbara's completion is received as support, but there is Barbara's additional backchannelling in line 12.

---

24 Cf. note 4. The steep fall on ↑*GO* in lines 9/10 can be interpreted as signaling a contrast between letting go and continuing on machines, which might explain why BA is able to predict the falling contour.

Furthermore, shortly afterwards in lines 18/19 Barbara explicitly states her agreement with Heather's decision, again with extremely subdued prosody.

Summary

Showing understanding of a first speaker by doing a collaborative completion of their utterance represents the largest group in this data collection. Among them are instances where the showing of understanding has an additional interactional function. Some of these secondary functions have been shown in the above data extracts. No doubt there are others. However, in many cases the showing of understanding seems to be motivated by the desire to establish rapport as an end in itself.

Showing understanding of previous talk is of course a component of all sequential utterances in a conversation (Schegloff 1984).[25] Collaborative productions are just one way of doing so, perhaps a particularly effective one, as the understanding is displayed before the current speaker has reached completion. The main criterion for collaborative productions to belong in this group of interactional functions is that here the two participants take the roles of speaker and recipient rather than that of co-speakers, as was the case in the duets. The incoming participant is not by experience or state of knowledge on a par with previous speaker but clearly a recipient of the ongoing utterance.

So the collaborative productions in this category are unmistakably recipient activities. Concerning the question of whose perspective the collaborative production represents, the incomings that show understanding are usually oriented towards the first speaker's perspective. Incoming speakers tend to complete the other's material as the other speaker's, not as something independently their own. That is, the whole collaborative utterance typically belongs to the participant who began it.

Again, the aspect of perspective is often closely linked to the distribution of floor. The prototypical case is one in which one conversationalist begins a construction, the other completes it, and the floor goes directly back to the original turn-holder after the collaborative incoming.[26] However, there are other possibilities. Second speakers do not necessarily have to share the same perspective as the original one; they need not even take up the projection of a previous utterance. The following section will demonstrate that there are cases where an incoming speaker's completion is not at all what a first speaker wanted to say.

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25 "Utterances, or larger units, are constructed to display to coparticipants that their speaker has attended a last utterance, or sequence of utterances, or other unit, and that this current utterance, in its construction, is placed with due regard for where it is occurring." (Schegloff 1984:37)

26 In those imaginable cases where completions of others' material is done to grab the floor, the incoming would act as a transition device from the role of recipient to that of speaker.

2.3 Borrowing

There are instances of collaborative productions where the incoming participant's completion is not fully what has been projected by the utterance so far. In a small number of cases, this is because interactants have made a guess that did not turn out to be what the original speaker had in mind to say.[27] It is more frequent, however, that when a next speaker's material is different from the expected completion of an ongoing utterance, it seems to have been produced intentionally. In many instances, the result is accompanied by laughter, both from the incoming speaker and from the other participants. Other such completions are motivated by a difference of opinion, which is realized within the frame of one syntactic gestalt. The latter instances often involve the second speaker taking over the floor.

A first example comes from the two couples we have already encountered several times, here in their conversation about their Australian relatives. One cousin is a musician and the conversation is about a song she has had published:

(10)

28: Bit of a dirge

```
1      MU:   i THINK someone Else wrote the music.
2            YEAH.
3      PA:   the MUsic sounds like thAt one of grAcie FIELDS;
4            WHAT was it;
5      (2.0)
6            the er (.) the new ZEAland one.
7      (2.5)
8      MU:   i n- i THINK i knOw what you mean;=
9            but i cAn't remember the ↑NAME;
10     (1.3)
11           erm -
12     (0.8)
13     PA:   NOW is the HOUR.
14           [NOW is the HOUR.
15     BE:   [((humming))
16           [NOW is the HOUR yes.
17     MU:   [NOW is the HOUR.
18  -> well it's a ↑BIT like that;=
19  -> it's a sort of - (.)
20  -> PA:   <<all+p> bIt of a DI:RGE.>
21  -> MU:   <<len> austrAlian WESTern      [thIng.>
22  -> BE:                                  [hahahahahahahaha:
23  ->       <<laughing> PATrick you're (GORgeous.)>
24  -> MU:   ↑DON'T be ↓HORRible,
```

In this sequence, Muriel and Patrick are looking for an adequate characterization of the song for Beverly, who does not know it. Patrick's attempt is to compare it to another song (*Now is*

---

the hour), after which Muriel begins a description of it. Muriel's construction is 'borrowed' by Patrick to insert his non-serious remark in line 20. Patrick's characterization of the song was clearly not what Muriel intended, and at first she continues with her own description without paying any attention to Patrick's incoming (line 21). But the little piece of ridicule has not gone unnoticed by Beverly, who starts to laugh and comments on Patrick's sense of humor. In line 24 Muriel also comments on the remark, however in a playfully reproachful fashion. The two reactions by Beverly and Muriel show that Patrick, with his completion of Muriel's utterance, did something out of the ordinary, something both funny and *horrible*. His prosody on the completion is faster and quieter than the surrounding material, contextualizing it as subordinate. It seems he would not have made such a remark in an utterance all his own, but as Muriel has unwittingly supplied the beginning of a construction, he takes it and quickly inserts his incoming into her turn before she continues. This way, he brings about a situation where he does not have to take full responsibility for the turn as a whole, which is Muriel's rather than his. However, the two other participants both in their own way respond to his comment as coming independently from him.

The same strategy of borrowing somebody else's construction to insert one's own material can also be used for disagreeing. In the following example, the two radio hosts are talking about a boxing match to which Don has challenged another moderator. This person has told Tommy that he will not fight:

(11)

8: Boxing thing

```
1       DO:   tOmmy actually TALKED to him today,
2             he WOULDdn't-
3             he WON'T do the BOXing thing.
4       TO:   no i c-
5             i TALKED    [to him a cOUple of times today,
6       DO:              [(he)
7       TO:   his ↑RATionale for NOT doing t[he BOXing was; (.)
8       DO:                                 [(yeah)
9   -> TO:   that the ↑Idea THERE seems to bE that; (.)
10  ->        there's    [aniMOSity-
11  -> DO:              [he JUST WON'T DO it.
12      TO:   there's aniMOSity [both ways.
13  -> DO:                      [<<f+h> the ↑Idea> THERE is he's a COWard.
14            [THAT'S the idea.
15      TO:   [NO.
16      DO:   THAT'S the idea.
17      TO:   [↑NO.
18      DO:   [SO-
19      TO:   <<f+h> BRYan said,
20            [that he (          )>
21      DO:   [<<f+h> I don't care what BRYan said;=
```

```
22          =he's a COWard.
23          ↑SO;> (-)
24          in (VIEW) of that,
25          ´``´NOW,
26    TO:   <<h+all> in FACT he said he loved you.>
27    DO:   <<l> yeah.
28          RIGHT.> .h
29          [NOW-
30    TO:   [<<h> lIke a SON.>
31    DO:   nOw we're trying to uh get him to .hh (.) into Actual Duel.
32          (-)
33          where we would uh (-) engAge in FENCing;
```

Don's incoming in line 11 is a collaborative completion of Tommy's *the idea there seems to be that*, which Don repeats as a whole construction in line 13, taking up Tommy's pitch jump up on - *Idea*. In the meantime, Tommy has attempted twice to complete his report of what was said (lines 10/12). After Don's judgement of the third person as a *coward* in line 13, there comes a sequential possibility for Tommy to agree - he abandons his reported speech and can now offer his own assessment of the situation. He does so, but in unmitigated disagreement with Don (lines15/17): *NO*. From line 19 – 21 the speakers are fighting for the floor, their prosody is both high and *forte*, and Don interrupts Tommy in line 21. After this floor fight and an insertion sequence (lines 26-30) the floor is taken over by Don.

This is an instance where a second speaker borrows the other's construction to complete it according to his own interpretation, which couldn't possibly be what the previous material projected semantically or pragmatically (the reported person would hardly call himself a coward). Don uses Tommy's phrase "the idea there is" to formulate his personal perspective, which has little to do with the original speaker's. However, the line that carries the collaborative production (line 11) is not prosodically designed as an interruption, or even as an incoming at a non-TRP. At this point, Don still speaks at unmarked volume and his pitch is rather low. It is only afterwards that the two speakers get into an open fight for the floor.

Summary

These instances have been termed "borrowing" because one speaker seems to borrow another's syntactic construction and semantic content in order to insert something independently of his/her own. Borrowing differs in this respect from other forms of collaborative productions where the inserted material is designed according to the perspective of the original speaker. Two types of borrowing can be identified.

In some cases the inserted sequence turns the collaborative production into an utterance which the incoming speakers would not necessarily have dared to say all by themselves, but are happy to add to someone else's utterance. This first type of borrowing is

demonstrated in (10), "Bit of a dirge." It is a non-competitive kind of borrowing which is not inserted to take the floor from the current speaker, but is usually done for the purpose of amusement.[28] Speaker reactions such as commenting on the incoming and laughter are typical for this kind of collaborative.

Hartung (1998) mentions this kind of completion when he describes strategies for the use of irony:

> Bei der ironischen Verwendung dieses Formats muß der Hörer zwar der Sprecheräußerung so weit folgen, daß er einen korrekten syntaktischen Anschluß realisieren kann, seine Äußerungsabsicht voraussehen braucht er aber nicht, denn er bietet absichtlich Formulierungen an, von denen er nicht nur weiß, daß sie für den Sprecher nicht in Frage kommen, sondern die sogar dessen Aussageabsicht widersprechen. Auf diese Weise nutzt der Hörer dieses in üblicher Verwendung unterstützende Format, um die Sprecheräußerung kritisch und oftmals auch witzig zu kommentieren. (1998:144)[29]

A second type of borrowing seems to be fundamentally different and was exemplified in (11), "Boxing thing". This kind of borrowing has a competitive aspect in that a second speaker takes over the utterance already begun in order to disagree. This usually happens in combination with an illegitimate claiming of the floor.[30]

With respect to perspective, the incoming is not offered as something which still belongs to the original speaker, but as representing the incoming participant's point of view.

---

28 One typical format is collaborative lists, into which second speakers can insert items that do not match the rest of the list and which produce a comic effect. See for example:

Riverbanks

1		DA:	you can sAY hello to the WORLD while you're on.
2		G:	well i'd just like to say hello to (1.0) PARENTS, (1.0)
3			GIRLFRIEND,
4			judith BANKS, (.) .h
5			mary BANKS,
6			PAUL BANKS,
7			KAren BANKS, (.) .h
8			DAVE WARing,
9			SUE JAGGer
10	->	DA:	RIverBANKS,
11		G:	hehehe

29 "When a hearer uses this format ironically, he must follow the speaker's utterance in so far as to be able to produce a correct syntactic continuation, but he need not predict the speaker's intention, as he deliberately offers phrases of which he not only knows that they are not a possibility for the speaker but which even contradict the speaker's intention. This way, the hearer uses this format, which in its typical use is supportive, in order to critically or playfully comment on the speaker's utterance."

30 Kotthoff (1993) has found another way in which participants use others' material in argumentation sequences: "The speaker co-opts the opponent's expression or point, and uses it for his or her own side. (…) Opponent's formulations are incorporated but interpreted to the contrary." (201f) In these cases, the strategy is to incorporate semantic and verbal material, whereas in the cases under analysis here, participants borrow a syntactic construction and a global prosodic contour in order to insert sematically and lexically *new* material.

The interactional evidence that a collaborative production belongs to this group is in the turns that follow. Firstly, the original speaker's and other recipients' responses usually show that for them the completion comes as a surprise, i.e. via laughing or disagreeing. Secondly, the first speaker then typically self-completes and thereby shows what the projected end of the utterance would have been from his/her own perspective.

2.4 Eliciting Information

The last interactional function considered here takes the incoming speaker's perspective. It is possible for speakers to begin a construction without knowing, or pretending not to know, how it will end. In those cases, the addressee is expected to provide the completion, and is prosodically invited to do so. The prosody that contextualizes such a function of an incomplete utterance is often extreme lengthening on one or more of the vowels in the incomplete intonation unit preceding the expected incoming and typically rising or level intonation on the last accented syllable.

An example is taken from a radio-show in which Barbara has invited a dog trainer into the studio, who has brought two of her dogs with her. Striker is the dog that is talked about at the moment our extract begins:

(12)

1: Striker

```
1  -> BA:   a:nd STRIker i::s a::: -
2  -> CI:   GOLDen reTRIEver,
3      he's thrEE years OLD,
4     BA:   [<<p> oKAY,>
5     CI:   [and i'm (training) him in oBEDience right no:w,
6     BA:   oKAY:,
```

In line 1 Barbara does a request for information by providing a slot for Cindy to fill in the missing verbal item. She does so syntactically by producing a copulative structure only until the indefinite article (*a*). Prosodically, she elicits completion by increasingly drawling her vowels in *a:nd*, *i::s* and *a:::*, thereby slowing down her speech rate and giving Cindy a chance to prepare for her incoming. Cindy acts accordingly, filling in the open slot with her dog's breed.

This interactional function of collaborative productions is one of Ferrara's (1992) categories which she calls "invited utterance completions." For her, inviting utterance completion is a discourse strategy with which speakers cover up their lack of knowledge, eliciting missing information through "questions masquerading as statements" (1992:221). However, in many of the instances, speakers openly display their lack of information through hesitant and incomplete prosody.

3. One Form of Reaction to Collaborative Productions: Agreement-Tokens

Among the potential ways in which participants can react to collaborative productions one seems extremely frequent, at least in the data corpus for the present investigation: the use of agreement-tokens by either the first or the incoming speaker. The participant-reactions considered here will be limited to those participants engaged in the collaborative production itself: reactions from third parties will only be mentioned briefly, e.g. in the discussion of example (13). It is an instance of an agreement token from the original speaker. The extract is taken from a dinner conversation among friends; Al is in the middle of reporting a joke about fanatic anti-smoking campaigners:

(13)

12: Accurate

```
1    AL:    and he said the ↑Only thing WORSE than sEcond hand SMUG uh
2           <<laughing + p> GOD;>
3           sEcond hand SMOKE is; .h
4           MOral SMUGness.
5    ((laughter))
6 ->        <<p >which (.) which is> (.) aGAIN REAlly; (1.0)
7 -> TR:    [Accurate.
8    DO:    [it's [FUnny;
9 -> AL:          [yeah.
```

In line 6, Al is engaged in a word-search. Trish provides a lexical item in line 7, which suits Al's incomplete utterance, and Al confirms this in line 9 by the use of the agreement-token *yeah*, without producing a completion of his own. His agreement not only signals his affirmation of the lexical item, though. It is also a way of treating Trish's incoming as a collaborative action, rather than as an illegitimate intrusion into his turn. The latter would have required some sort of sanctioning action rather than a confirmation token.

It is interesting that Al's incomplete utterance (line 6) is received in two different ways: Trish seems to interpret it as incomplete and brings it to an end by completing the syntactic structure. Donna seems to consider it possibly complete, a trail-off, as she treats it as a TRP and begins a new turn.

The following example is taken from a family dinner where the current topic is electrical appliances. Agreement by the first speaker to a collaboratively produced completion here again seems to do more than simply agreeing:

(14)

30: Rogue one

```
1     BE:   well ↑dOn't you FIND;
2           that with Anything <<l> elEctrical (.) or like that;>
3     PA:   the MORE    [you-
4     BE:               [you get a ROGUE one,
5           and it it   [gOEs WRONG.
6     PA:               [OH yes yeah yeah yeah;
7     BE:   it's the same w-
8  -> with TELevisions and m- MOtor cars even;
9  -> [you gEt-
10 -> LI:   [you can't guaranTEE;
11         CAN you.
12 -> BE:   NO.
```

The collaborative production of interest here begins in line 8. Beverly has clearly not reached a possible completion point, both her prosody and her semantics project a continuation of her turn. In contrast to speaker Al in (13), "Accurate," she has produced no hesitation signals that could be understood to invite a second speaker's incoming. She does attempt to complete her turn in line 9, but Linda comes in in overlap, also with a possible completion of it. Beverly gives up her own attempt at completion and agrees with Linda's in her next turn (line 12).

In this example, we are not dealing with a helpful utterance completion from the incoming speaker, as in (13), "Accurate," but with a rather abrupt taking over of another's turn, which could possibly be understood as an illegitimate intrusion. Beverly's agreement with Linda's completion, however, is a way for her to signal that she was going to continue along those same lines and that Linda's incoming is not being taken as competitive but on the contrary, as collaborative.

Another function of a first speaker's agreement with an incoming speaker's completion is to ensure a smooth conversational flow. Had Beverly insisted on her own completion, there would probably have followed a short sequence in which the continuation of the turn and possibly the floor distribution would have had to be negotiated.

A third example of an agreement by a first speaker is (15). The two conversationalists are engaged in a duet, in which they tell the other participants about a young man who has a strong liking for various sub-cultures, such as punk, but does not participate in any way himself:

(15)

67: Whole thing

```
1     SU:   he's got SUCH a (.) a strAnge sense of decOrum;=
2           on ONE hand he's he rEAlly is fAscinated by these really TRENDy
3           things [like disco:::;
4     AS:          [oh like pUnk ROCK;
```

```
5              and lEAther [(      )
6     SU:              [punk RO::CK an;
7              you know strAIght leg jeans ROLLED UP an;
8              and the rIght kind of BOOTS;
9     LU:      does he have taTOOS;
10    SU:      [NO no no;
11    AS:      [NO.
12    SU:      NOT at All;
13    AS:      he would never do-
14             [he gets he's a he's a
15    SU:      [that's too too wild.
16    AS:      he's a voyEUR you see,
17    SU:      [yeah;
18    AL:      [he likes to see this on other PEOple;
19             and he likes to sort of preTEND that; (.)
20 ->         mAYbe he can      [sOrt of gEt LIKE it;
21    SU:                       [yeah:::;
22 -> AL:     [but he doesn't want to be a real] MEMber of it; nO;
23 -> SU:     [but he WON'T do the whole THING.]
```

The pragmatic content of Sue's and Ashley's description of their friend seems to project a two-fold construction from line 16 (*he's a voyeur*). The first part of this format is produced by Ashley with hardly any hesitation signals (lines 3-5). The projected second part of the formulation is produced by both participants in overlap, they both begin with *but* and then continue along rather similar lines. At the end of Ashley's completion he produces an agreement-token (*no*). To agree with one's own utterance is rather unusual, and from the sequential format of this collaborative production it is very probable that Ashley is not agreeing with his own turn but with Sue's, which he has heard in spite of the overlap.

Sue's incoming has not been prompted by any sign of hesitation from Ashley and could therefore theoretically be interpreted as illegitimate, because uninvited. Ashley's agreement again confirms the collaborative rather than the competitive aspect of it.

It is also arguably necessary in the circumstances to give a sign of appreciation for Sue's incoming. Simultaneous speech of such length as in lines 7/8 allows for the interpretation of one speaker ignoring the other, in this case Ashley ignoring the incoming of Sue. Within his ongoing intonation unit in line 7 he could be heard as not responding to her continuation of his turn. We have seen other first speakers breaking off and even giving incomers time to finish their completion until they themselves continue ((2), "Skull"). Ashley does nothing of the sort. However, neither does he fight for the floor. If he were to attempt to simply 'talk over' Sue, we could expect a different prosodic design for his completion, most importantly a louder one. Ashley remains at his original volume and pitch level. The agreement-token directly latched onto his own completion thus seems to function as a signal of retrospective appreciation of Sue's contribution and her collaborative efforts.

To summarize the first three excerpts: Agreement-tokens by the original speaker in a collaborative production seem to do several things at once. First of all, they are doing agreement, and in some cases this can be thought of as their main function. In (13), "Accurate," the incoming speaker has reacted to an ongoing word-search and obviously provided a term that is acceptable to the original speaker. He agrees with it. Secondly, the agreement-token assures the incoming speaker that his action is being received as a collaborative one, which is being appreciated, rather than being sanctioned as an illegitimate intrusion into another's ongoing turn.

In addition to these two functions, a third one is demonstrated in (14), "Rogue one." Here, the agreement-token prevents a possible insertion sequence, in which the acceptability of the second speaker's candidate completion would perhaps have been negotiated.

In (15), "Whole thing," both the original and the incoming speaker produce a completion, and therefore the first speaker already provides evidence for their mutual agreement on the matter discussed. His agreement with the incomer is therefore potentially redundant. However, by producing an additional agreement-token and latching it onto his own completion, he retrospectively appreciates the collaborative incoming of his co-participant. He thereby excludes a possible interpretation of his simultaneous speech as ignoring the second participant's contribution, which is a fourth possible function agreement-tokens from first speakers can accomplish in collaborative sequences.

The following extracts are instances of second speakers' agreement. A first one is taken from a conversation between two women, the current topic is Alissa's husband's job situation:

(16)
96: Stable
```
1    LE:    HIS posItion is pretty uh - (-)
2    AL:    .hh STABle.
3           YEAH.
```

Lesley seems to be searching for the right expression to characterize Alissa's husband's job situation. Alissa fills in a candidate term and agrees with it in a second TCU. A possible interpretation is that Lesley is eliciting information that she does not have and Alissa provides it.

The agreement- token seems to accomplish a function other than agreeing, as it is again unlikely that Alissa agrees with herself. One such function is that Alissa's completion of Lesley's turn is retrospectively treated as if it had come from Lesley herself. Stating something (*HIS posItion is pretty uh STABle*) and agreeing with it (*YEAH*) are two actions performed typically by two participants. It is even possible to assume that *HIS posItion is*

pretty uh STABle is treated by Alissa as a question and that her *YEAH* is an answer to that question. By completing Lesley's utterance and then agreeing with it, Alissa treats her own completion as belonging to Lesley, speaking in Lesley's voice first and in her own voice in the agreeing next turn.

In addition, Alissa's treatment of her completion as Lesley's has the effect of covering up Lesley's word search. By agreeing with it, Alissa treats her turn as complete.

A third result is again a smooth continuation of the talk. The distribution of the floor can now continue in the same distribution as it would have without Lesley's word-search. A different reaction from Alissa would have interrupted the conversational flow and required a new negotiation of the floor allocation.

The last example is taken from the family dinner conversation as in (3), "Sausages,":

(17)

29: Rubbish

```
1      PA:    but you CA:N use quality meat         [for SAUSages.
2      BE:                                          [VEAL actually,
3      RO:    ↑Oh you no you you CA:N,
4             and and they DO,
5             [in in GERmany ↑And swItzerland,
6   -> PA:    [but the but the ma↑JOrity of sAUsages,
7   ->        A:RE,
8   ->        [(       )
9   -> BE:    [↑RUbbish.
10     (1.0)
11  -> PA:    what they CAN'T sEll as ROASTing BOILing,
12  -> BE:    that's ↑RIGHT;
13  -> PA:    ↑FRYing joints.
```

In this collaborative production (lines 6-9) the first speaker, Patrick, does not produce any hesitation signals, but the prosodic design of his utterance makes it rather predictable how it is going to continue.[31] Beverly produces a candidate continuation which is a perfect match prosodically for Patrick's incomplete turn. He begins to continue in overlap, breaks off, and after a relatively long pause continues again, without overtly reacting to Beverly's completion. In his second attempt at continuation he is then supportively agreed with by Beverly (line 12).

This agreement token from Beverly is redundant as a marker of actual agreement: her earlier completion has already fulfilled that function. However, the agreement-token retrospectively contextualizes her previous incoming as collaborative. This is sequentially necessary as Patrick's lack of reaction to her completion allows for the interpretation that he sees it as in some way illegitimate. Such an interpretation is retrospectively denied by

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31 See Szczepek (forthcoming) for a prosodic analysis of this example.

Beverly's agreement with Patrick's own completion. By agreeing with something she herself has already formulated in very similar terms, Beverly treats her completion of Patrick's turn as his and therefore as a collaborative production rather than as an interruption to take the floor.

To summarize the implications from the examples for second speakers' reactions: Agreement-tokens by incoming speakers underline the collaborative character of their incoming. Incoming speakers can agree with their own completion of another's turn, as in (16), "Stable," and thereby treat the completion as belonging to the first speaker's utterance. Their agreement constitutes a new turn in itself, a reaction to the collaboratively completed turn before. It also covers up a possible word-search from the original speaker by maintaining the original floor distribution.

If the original speaker decides to continue his/her turn in addition to the already offered candidate completion from a second speaker, an agreement from the second speaker with that completion retrospectively contextualizes the earlier incoming as supportive rather than as competitive. It also treats the completion as the first speaker's property, and assures the original turn-holder of his/her right to it.

Summary

Agreement-tokens as reactions to collaborative productions are evidence for the constant necessity for sequential reception of other's talk. Just as a collaborative incoming is a form of uptake of a previous speaker's material, that incoming must also be explicitly received, or it will be interpreted as requiring further affirmation of its collaborative character. As the instances of agreement-tokens from first speakers show, such an explicit appreciation of a second speaker's contribution treats the early incoming as note-worthy but unmarked and unthreatening to current floor allocation.

Most importantly, however, agreeing reactions from both first and incoming speakers seem to be supportive evidence for the non-competitive character of collaborative productions. By agreeing with another's completion, participants signal their appreciation of the other's incoming. By agreeing with an utterance they themselves helped to complete, they allocate that utterance to its original producer and support the other participant in his/her right to the floor. By agreeing with a first speaker's completion, second speakers can signal retrospectively that their earlier collaborative incoming was non-competitive.

Szczepek (2000) has argued that collaborative productions are non-competitive early incomings in that they are not prosodically designed as turn-competitive (i.e. they lack loud volume and high pitch, as described by French/Local (1986)) and are not treated as turn-competitive sequentially by co-participants in that the floor typically goes back to the preceeding turn-holder.

The above occurrences of agreement-tokens after collaborative productions are more proof from the participants themselves that an early incoming in a collaborative production is not an attempt to take over the floor, but a way to both contribute to another's turn and at the same time support them in their right to speak.

4   Conclusion

This paper has investigated what participants of a conversation do when they collaboratively produce a turn. Four broad conversational actions have emerged from the data: duetting, showing understanding, borrowing and eliciting information. It seems therefore that collaborative productions are a "practice" in the sense of Schegloff (1997), which are used to achieve particular actions in conversation. Showing understanding has itself proved a practice for further actions: helping out, terminating another's turn and showing support.

A second part of the paper has dealt with one way in which conversationalists react to collaborative productions, namely the use of agreement tokens both by the original and by the incoming speaker.

Collaborative productions have been defined as sequences in which participants work together on the prosodic, syntactic and semantic plane of talk-in-interaction (Szczepek 2000). Additionally, in collaborative productions participants very often co-operate interactionally, for example when participants tell a story together, when they show understanding of each other, when they help each other out with word searches, when they show support of each other's position and when they provide information their co-participants lack.

Yet, there are instances where collaborative productions are not collaborative on the interactional level, or are only partially so. Incomers may decide that the story belongs more to them than to the other person; turn-holders may not appreciate an attempt to share their story; incomers may complete a current speaker's turn because they have decided that s/he has talked long enough; incomers may use another's turn to say things they would not normally say by themselves, and thereby avoid potential blame; and incomers may complete another person's turn in order to disagree with it.

However, whatever the action accomplished by a collaborative incoming, it has been incorporated in the previous speaker's turn, and is therefore offered up as talk which, although it is spoken by one conversationalist, potentially belongs to another. Collaboratives are therefore a way for participants to sensitively handle questions of authorship and responsibility. The possible implications this has for the notion of turn-taking and turn-allocation must be reserved for development in further research.

Appendix

<u>**GAT-Transcription Conventions**</u>

Basic Transcription Conventions

Sequential structure

[ ] [ ]	overlap
-	quick, immediate connection of new turns or single units

Pauses

(.)	micro-pause
(-), (--), (---)	short, middle or long pauses of cat 0.25 - 0.75 seconds, up to ca. 1 second
(2.0)	estimated pause of more than cat 1 second
(2.85)	measured pause (measured to hundredths of a second)

Other segmental conventions

and=uh	slurring within units
:,: :,:::	lengthening, according to its duration
uh,ah, etc.	hesitation signals, so-called "filled pauses"
'	glottal stop

Laughter

so(h)o	laughing particles during speech
haha hehe hihi	syllabic laughing
((laughing))	description of laughter

Reception signals

hm, yes, yeah, no	one syllable signals
hm=hm, yea=ah, no=o	two syllable signals
'hm'hm	two syllable signal with a glottal stop, usually signals negation

Accents

ACcent	primary, or main accent
!AC!cent	extra strong accent

Final pitch movements

?	high rise
,	mid-rise
-	level pitch
;	mid-fall
.	low fall

Other conventions

((cough))	paralinguistic and non-linguistic actions and events
<<coughing> >	accompanying paralinguistic and non-linguistic actions over a stretch of speech
<<surprised> >	interpretive comments over a stretch of speech
( )	unintelligible passage, according to its duration
(such)	presumed wording
al(s)o	presumed sound or syllable
(such/which)	possible alternatives

(( ))	omission of text
->	specific line in the transcript which is referred to in the text

Detailed Transcription Conventions

Accents

ACcent	primary or main accent
Accent	secondary accent
!AC!cent	extra strong accent

Pitch step-up/step down

↑	pitch step down
↓	pitch step up

Change of pitch register

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

Change of key

<<narrow key>>	use of small segment of speaker's voice range
<<wide key>>	use of large segment of speaker's voice range

Intra-linear notation of pitch movement within an accent

'SO	fall
'SO	rise
SO	level
^SO	rise-fall
"SO	fall-rise
↑`	small pitch step up to the peak of the accented syllable
↓´	small pitch step down to the bottom of the accented syllable
↑`SO or ↓´SO	conspicuously high or low pitch step up or down to the peak or the bottom of the accented syllable
↑`SO or ↓.SO	pitch jumps to conspicuously higher or lower accent

Volume and tempo changes

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

Breathing in and out

.h, .hh, .hhh	breathing in, according to its duration
h, hh, hhh	breathing out, according to its duration

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