Turn-final *or* in English: A conversation analytic perspective

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Abstract

*Or* is commonly understood to be a conjunction linking two or more constituents. Ending a sentence with *or* is considered non-canonical in written interaction, but ending a turn with *or* occurs regularly in spoken interaction. This dissertation investigates the interactional work of turn-final *or* as in “Did his oxygen get low or”. In an effort to better understand how interlocutors use such *or*'s in naturally occurring everyday interaction, I investigate the sequential environments in which participants employ turn-final *or*, the social actions *or*-turns as such accomplish, and the interactional work turn-final *or* accomplishes.

My work shows that participants end questioning turns with *or*. These questions make relevant confirmation or disconfirmation. I found that *or* in turn-final placement relaxes the preference for a confirming response in that both disconfirmation and confirmation can be produced in a preferred manner without dispreferred turn design features. Furthermore, turn-final *or* occurs in environments where there is a knowledge differential between participants. Within such epistemic asymmetries, turn-final *or* is a resource for interactants to locally work out and index a stance of uncertainty.

My work explicates that rather than an error or mistake on the questioner's part, turn-final *or* is employed as an interactional resource that indexes a stance of uncertainty about the produced proposition and that relaxes the preference for a confirming response. As such, this dissertation contributes to the fields of interactional linguistics and conversation analysis in general and to research on grammar in interaction, epistemics in interaction and preference organization in particular.
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1. Introduction

1.1. Objectives and significance of study

This dissertation seeks to contribute to our understanding of grammar in interaction by investigating turn-final *or* as it occurs in English ordinary conversation as for instance in the question "Does that bring up jealousy for you or"\(^1\), where the turn comes to possible completion with the turn-final *or*. *Or* is generally considered to be a coordinating conjunction linking two or more constituents of the same grammatical structure (e.g., Biber, Johansson, Leech, Conrad, & Finegan, 1999; Huddleston & Pullum, 2002; Quirk, Greenbaum, Leech, & Svartvik, 1985). Examples (1) and (2) below illustrate the basic usage of *or* when it functions as such a coordinating conjunction.

(1) She speaks French or German.

(2) Did mom leave before the game or after the game?

In both instances, which are invented examples, *or* links two of the same types of phrases: two noun phrases in example (1) and two prepositional phrases in example (2). Descriptive grammars\(^2\) suggest that two alternatives linked by *or* are exclusive, that is, only one of the component propositions can be true.\(^3\) In example (2), mom cannot have left both before and after the game, i.e., only one of the propositions is true. *Or* also encodes some uncertainty as to which of the propositions is correct. Moreover, descriptive grammars maintain that *or*, and other

\(^1\) This example of a turn-final *or* is part of my data collection and as such not an invented example.

\(^2\) I use "descriptive grammars" for comprehensive grammars of English such as *A Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language* by Quirk et al. (1985) and *Longman grammar of spoken and written English* by Biber et al. (1999).

\(^3\) *Or* can be used in an inclusive manner as well. See section 2.1. in chapter 2 for a more detailed descriptive account of *or*-phrases.
coordinating conjunctions such as *and* and *but*, are confined to initial position in phrases, clauses and sentences (Biber et al., 1999; Huddleston & Pullum, 2002; Quirk et al., 1985). In example (1) and (2), *or* occurs in initial position of the second phrase, not following the second alternative. Hence, *or* in final position would be considered ungrammatical. Yet data from spontaneous spoken discourse evidences that *or* occurs regularly in precisely such placement, i.e., after the first alternative, at the end of utterances rather than in initial position to the second alternative linked by *or*. Excerpt (1) below serves as an initial example of such uses of turn-final *or*. In this excerpt, Angela, Eric, Jessica and Albert are playing the board game *Risk*. Prior to the excerpt provided here, they have been discussing the rules of the game. Eric won his game move against Angela before he begins his turn in line 4.

Excerpt (1): Lose one then too or⁴

(69; Rockwell Hr 2_C1:00.46.34)

1 Ang: One: e. why am I such a lou[sy:,
2 Eri: ((very quiet speech))
3 Jes: [ooh:,
4 => Eri: so, just lose one right, >nd do I lose one then ↑too ↓or
5 Jes: no cause you- both of yours are big[ger.
6 Eri: [oh okay.

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⁴ All data were transcribed according to the transcription system developed by Gail Jefferson (Heritage & Atkinson, 1984). Some additional notations were used to represent intonation (based on the *Gesprächsanalytische Transkriptionssystem* 2 (GAT 2) (Selting et al., 2009) (see Appendix A for a description). Specifically, I use "?" for rising intonation, "," for slightly rising intonation, " _" for level intonation, ",:" for slightly falling intonation and "." for falling intonation.
In this excerpt, Eric removes one of Angela's game pieces and says "so just lose one right" in line 4 before producing the turn constructional unit (TCU) ending in *or*. He says "nd do I lose one then too" and immediately, without any prosodic break and shaped as one intonation unit, he produces the turn-final *or*. In my collection, *or* can be produced with a weakened, schwa-like vowel as well as with a non-weakened (and sometimes stretched) vowel. In the excerpt above, there is a rise in pitch on "too" and a fall in pitch on "or". The turn-final intonation is level, that is, it is neither falling nor rising. In this instance, the *or* is neither elongated nor is the vowel especially weakened. Turn-final *or* exhibits features similar to trail-off conjunctions described by Walker (2012a) (see chapter 2 for a discussion). In all data samples, and illustrated in the sample above, the co-participant treats these turn-final *or*’s as, indeed, turn-final. Here, Jessica treats the turn as complete since she immediately produces her response without missing a beat (line 5). *Or* is placed in final position, and while *or* could project a second alternative, that second possible alternative remains unverbalized.

The puzzle is that based on descriptive grammars, this use of *or* would be considered ungrammatical, especially in formal written discourse; yet, interactants use *or* in this ways regularly in spoken discourse. My focus in this dissertation is to establish what exactly is being accomplished interactionally when participants produce *or* (and other formulations containing *or*) at the ends of turns at talk in everyday interaction. Hence, I analyze the sequential environment in which turn-final *or* occurs, the specific actions interlocutors achieve with turns ending in *or*, and the interactional work *or* accomplishes. While turn-final *or* is at the center of this dissertation and the phenomenon of investigation, I discuss some uses of other *or*-phrases in the concluding discussion (chapter 6) in an effort to highlight some related yet different

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5 A systematic study of when participants produce which variant is needed in the future.
interactional uses of such *or*-phrases. These other *or*-phrases consist of *or* plus additional linguistic elements, resulting in constructions such as *or what, or whatever, or not* and *or something*. My research questions are:

1. In what sequential environments does turn-final *or* occur?
2. What are the social actions *or*-turns as such accomplish?
3. What interactional work does turn-final *or* achieve?
4. What interactional work do other *or*-phrases accomplish?

My dissertation advances our understanding of how speakers encode linguistically and use socially turn-final *or*-constructions, with a focus on turn-final *or*. By investigating where these formats appear (i.e., the sequential environment) and what these linguistic formats accomplish interactionally (i.e., the social action), this study advances our understanding not only of how linguistic units are adapted for interaction, but also how grammar is emergent in interaction. My work contributes to several major areas of conversation analytic research, including grammar in interaction, preference organization and the negotiation of epistemics, knowledge and (un)certainty in interaction.

In the remainder of this section, I discuss how a usage-based and interactionist approach to language use offers valuable insights into language. I provide several examples of how linguistic resources have been implicated in the co-construction of turns at talk, sequences and action formation, ultimately arguing for a usage/interaction based approach to the study of language.

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*The term 'construction' is used as a technical term in construction grammar (e.g., Goldberg, 2006). I use it in a non-technical way, interchangeably with 'phrase'.*
The "social world is a pervasively conversational one in which an overwhelming proportion of the world's business is conducted through the medium of spoken interaction" (Heritage, 1984b, p. 239). Talk, then, is central to most facets of life. Indeed, talk-in-interaction constitutes the natural habitat of language. It is produced jointly by participants and is the "primordial site of sociality" (Schegloff, 2000b, p. 1), as interlocutors accomplish social actions through the co-construction of talk on a moment-by-moment basis. Linguistic resources such as "sentential, clausal, phrasal, and lexical constructions" (Sacks, Schegloff, & Jefferson, 1974; also, e.g.; Schegloff, 2007) have long been considered some of the major building blocks of turns in this co-construction of talk.⁷ Research in Conversation Analysis (CA) and Interactional Linguistics (IL) has found that unit construction is systematically contributed to through resources beyond grammar and lexicon, such as body conduct (e.g., Ford, Thompson, & Drake, 2012; Hayashi, 2003, 2005; Iwasaki, 2009; Kendon, 1990; Streeck, 1993), gestures (e.g., C. Goodwin, 1986b; M. H. Goodwin, 1980; M. H. Goodwin & Goodwin, 1986; Heath, 1984), gaze (e.g., C. Goodwin, 1979, 2000; Lerner, 2003), and prosody and intonation (e.g., Couper-Kuhlen, 2009; Ford & Thompson, 1996; Selting, 1996, 2007; Selting & Couper-Kuhlen, 1996). In fact, turns-at-talk are often multimodal⁸ in their composition. While non-vocal components of turns

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⁷ For a discussion on benefits of descriptions of units from a non-linguistic perspective, see Ford, Fox, and Thompson (in press); see also Hopper (1987) and Thompson and Hopper (2001) for an approach to grammar as emergent. Language, when seen as emergent, does not have structure a priori. Rather, the apparent structure emerges from the repetition of many local events, or put differently, many local instances of turns at talk.

⁸ Multimodal turn-construction, while adding a crucial dimension to the understanding of interaction, is not the focus of this dissertation per se. When video data is available, such non-verbal properties are included in the analysis, particularly when their patterning bears on the analysis of the turn-final or construction in question. For an overview of multimodality, see Stivers and Sidnell (2005).
are regularly and unproblematically produced in overlap with vocal and linguistic elements, overlap of vocal components is regularly and accountably treated as problematic as evidenced by the initiation of repair (e.g., Drew, 1997; Sacks et al., 1974; Schegloff, 1997). The vocal components of any utterance are produced by combining linguistic resources in a linear, temporally unfolding, fashion (on temporality, e.g., Ford, 2004; C. Goodwin, 2002; Schegloff, 2007). The temporal unfolding and online production of talk is thus crucial in trying to understand how language works, which units can be added to which preceding units, how grammar is structured and how usage shapes this structure. In other words, in order to understand further how language works, we need to continue advancing our understanding of how linguistic resources are used for and emerge in interaction.

Linguistic structures help build turns at talk. These turns themselves make up sequences of talk, which in turn shape the on-going production of turns at talk. Sequences consist minimally of two parts, the adjacency pair. For instance, a question-answer adjacency pair consists of a turn that initiates the action of asking a question (i.e., the first pair part) and a turn in next position that completes the initiated action (i.e., the second pair part) (e.g., C. Goodwin & Heritage, 1990; Heritage, 1984a; Sacks, 1992; Schegloff, 1968, 2007; Schegloff & Sacks, 1973; Sidnell, 2010). A question conditionally makes relevant a response as the next action, and if such a response is absent, participants treat this as an accountable absence (e.g., Schegloff, 2007; Sidnell, 2010). Participants hold each other accountable for responses to questions, for instance. When such a response is not produced, it is noticeably and accountably absent (Schegloff, 2007) (see chapter 3 for a more detailed overview of sequence organization).

Research on polar and wh-questions and their responding turns in English (e.g., de Ruiter, 2012; Enfield, Stivers, & Levinson, 2010; Fox & Thompson, 2010; Heritage & Raymond, 2005;
Raymond, 2003; Schegloff & Lerner, 2009) has shown that as first pair-parts (FPPs), questions not only make answers conditionally relevant in that the lack of an answer is treated as an accountable absence (Schegloff, 1968; Schegloff & Sacks, 1973), they also impose constraints as to the form and type of the relevant second pair part (SPP). Polar questions (Raymond, 2003), for example, make relevant yes- or no-answers, whereas wh-questions make relevant an answer corresponding to the wh-word used in the question (Fox & Thompson, 2010; Schegloff, 2007; Schegloff & Lerner, 2009). However, participants have a wide range of other possible response types and response formats at their disposal (Stivers & Robinson, 2006). Response types include "non-answers/answers, partial/whole answers, direct/indirect answers" (Enfield et al., 2010, p. 2615); response formats include "partial repetitions, response tokens of various kinds from nods to yes, [and] one word answers" (Enfield et al., 2010, p. 2615). When a participant formulates a question in first position, i.e., as the FPP, a response as a SPP is relevant next. However, the answerer does not have sole control over what can be produced as a possible response to a FPP; rather, by initiating an action, the questioner is actively engaged in co-constructing such question-answer adjacency pairs. By limiting the range of possible nexts or by imposing the constraints of polar questions for a response containing yes or no, the range of potential linguistic structures that can possibly be provided in the response slot is limited as well. This does not mean that question-answer sequences are predetermined. Recipients of polar questions, for instance, are free to produce an answer that does not contain a yes or no. This is a response format that needs accounting and is done for cause, however (Raymond, 2003). Both participants thus jointly manage the ongoing interaction.

Another illustration of the co-construction of turns as well as of the role of linguistic resources in this co-construction is the practice of collaborative completions. Speakers regularly
orient to turns being semi-permeable (Lerner, 1996, 2002). The practice of producing units consisting of two parts (or, linguistically, clauses) such as *when-then* constructions across two speakers is shown in excerpt (2):

**Excerpt (2): Straight Jackets**

(Lerner, 2002, p. 445; his example (8))

1 Dan: *when the group reconvenes in two weeks=*
2 Rog: *=they're gunna issue strait jackets*

This excerpt shows that both participants (what used to be seen as 'listeners' and 'speakers') are actively involved in the joint construction of turns at talk in that Dan produces a *when*-clause, i.e., the first component, which is immediately completed with the clause by Roger. Rather than being a passive listener, Roger is actively engaged in the interaction, and he is drawing, in part, on his linguistic knowledge in producing the linguistically fitted second component to his co-participant's first component. Roger, in this case, does not produce a *then*-clause (a *then*-clause that omits the initial "then") for the sake of producing this linguistic structure, but rather is drawing on this linguistic structure to articulate his understanding of the situation and thus shows alignment with Dan. The point is, then, that linguistic resources are units in interaction that are highly recognizable to co-participants and that work in many ways like recognizable chunks⁹ on which speakers can draw as they are working toward the joint accomplishment of social actions.

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⁹ See Bybee (2006) for the recognizability of conventionalized collocations, or 'prefabs'. She argues that speakers recognize such conventionalized collocations (e.g., "pull strings, level playing field, too many irons in the fire" (Bybee, 2006, p. 713)) "as familiar, which indicates that these sequences of words are stored in memory despite being largely predictable in form and meaning" (p. 713). Grammar is then seen as an 'exemplar model', a system based on exemplars that are based on frequency of use.
The incremental construction of turns serves as yet another example of the joint emergence of talk that builds on readily available linguistic resources. When a turn reaches a possible point of completion, speaker change and uptake from the co-participant may be relevant (e.g., Ford & Thompson, 1996; Schegloff, 2007). If such uptake is not produced, the current speaker can add both linguistic and non-linguistic resources to the current turn, thereby adding to the turn and renewing relevance for uptake (C. Goodwin, 1979). This is often done by adding turn continuations and increments, such as the ones in excerpt (3) below.

Excerpt (3): Glue-On

(Holt: 1988 Undated: Side 1: Call 9, taken from Couper-Kuhlen & Ono, 2007, p. 521, their example (5))

1 -> Gor: [.t O:kay. .h I: sh- I shall leave you. .h
2 => to get on with your hard studying.
3 => that I know I interrupted. .hhhhhh
4 => rather[rudely
5 Dan: [(Oh yes.)

Here, Gordon adds several increments after his initial turn I shall leave you. The first is an infinitival clause (line 2), "with a reference to what (he implies) Dana was engaged in when he called" (Couper-Kuhlen & Ono, 2007, p. 521), the second one is a that-clause with which Gordon criticizes himself for having interrupted Dana. Gordon is still not receiving the relevant uptake from Dana and after a long outbreath, adds a fourth increment rather rudely in line 4, after which he is able to secure uptake from Dana. Linguistically fitted units are thus an important resource to continue a turn when faced with lack of uptake, and this is particularly the case in languages such as English with a Subject-Verb-Object word order (Biber et al., 1999;
Dana's lack of immediate uptake shapes the unfolding of the sequence, and she is being held accountable for her role in the co-construction of talk-in-interaction.

A last illustration of the co-construction of talk by all participants is the interplay of both linguistic and non-linguistic resources. Participant feedback or lack of such feedback can alter the ongoing production of a turn. Participants produce continuers such as *mhmm* (C. Goodwin, 1986a; Mazeland, 1990; Schegloff, 1981; Stivers, 2008) during other interactants' turns. If such signals are not provided, the ongoing production of a turn is regularly altered. Co-participants are held accountable for their active involvement by providing continuers or by gazing at the speaker. For example, when a speaker gazes at a recipient, the recipient should be gazing at the speaker (C. Goodwin, 1980). If a speaker gazes and finds the recipient not gazing back at them (i.e., if a violation of gaze rules occurs), then the speaker often produces phrasal breaks, restarts, and cut-offs within a turn to secure the gaze\(^\text{11}\), and it is at those phrasal breaks that recipients often begin to direct their gaze back to the speaker.\(^\text{12}\) Phrasal breaks, that is, when a phrase is

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\(^{10}\) Note that a verb-final language such as Japanese does not easily afford this kind of extension, though it still occurs (Ford & Mori, 1994). Ford and Mori (1994) found, based on their data, that adverbial clauses can be added after possible completion in Japanese interaction, but not as often as they are in English.

\(^{11}\) This is reminiscent of work by Iwasaki (2009) on how participant can hold a gesture until the co-participant redirects their gaze back to the current speaker as a display of continued attention and understanding.

\(^{12}\) Recipients are of course not required to continuously look at the speaker. They can also look away. This often occurs when recipients orient to the talk at hand as background information or during a multi-unit turn that does not require immediate action on part of the recipient. The recipients can still display their attending to the talk by nodding even without the gaze directed at the speaker.
halted before the completion of the phrase, are linguistically incomplete and are oriented to as a signal that some action on part of the recipient is needed.

These sample studies have shown us that talk and the linguistic (and non-linguistic) resources used to furnish talk are emergent in the interaction, are adapted to and for local interactional needs, and are jointly constructed by both participants on a moment-by-moment basis. In fact, Hopper (1998) suggests that grammar by virtue of being emergent, is "always provisional, always negotiable, … always in a process" (p. 156-157). Along similar lines, Bybee (2006) shows that grammar is based on the experience with language. Hence, usage feeds into the creation of grammar just as much as grammar determines the shape of usage. Actual language use cannot be omitted from the study of grammar, because it constitutes a large part of the explanation for why languages have grammar and what form that grammar takes. (p. 730).

By looking at language as an emergent system, interactionist researchers contribute to an understanding of how language works and how grammar is structured that is different from theories of language, such as generative grammar (Chomsky, 1957 [1985], 1965). Within generative grammar, language is regarded as an abstract system and linguistic units such as sentences, clauses and phrases are analyzed in isolation from their immediate interactional context. By analyzing the uses and functions of or in spoken discourse, my dissertation contributes to an interactionist approach in advancing our understanding of how interlocutors use linguistic structures for specific interactional ends.
1.2. **Methodology: Conversation Analysis and Interactional Linguistics**

In this section, I outline the methodology used to carry out my dissertation research. As noted above, because my aim is to investigate the forms and interactional functions of one specific linguistic resource, namely turn-final *or*, I employ an interactionist approach to language use. My methodology is firmly grounded in Conversation Analysis (CA)\textsuperscript{13} and Interactional Linguistics (IL).\textsuperscript{14} As such, my methodology can be understood as linguistically-driven CA. My interest is therefore not in what is theoretically possible in a given language, but rather in what we, the language users, actually do with language in everyday social interaction. Ultimately, an overarching theory of language should account both for what evidence we have for an idealized system and how such a system is integrated with what evidence we have of the systematicity of language as a form of social interaction.

Talk is central to many facets of life, and it is surprising that linguists and other researchers undertook the study the mechanics and the organization of naturally occurring oral language only some thirty years ago. Even though Goffman (1955 / 1967), Bakthin (1952-3/1986) as well as Wittgenstein (1953) (and others) have investigated spoken language prior to this, their focus was on the abstract properties of spoken language, and not on the sequential organization of social interaction per se. It was not until tape recorders that the repeated study of naturally occurring talk has developed into a primary field of research. CA, founded by Harvey Sacks, Schegloff, and Gail Jefferson in the 1960s, not only challenged the assumption that talk is chaotic or disorderly, but their research, and research growing out of those beginnings, has

\textsuperscript{13} For broader introductions to CA, refer to Schegloff (2007), Sidnell (2010), ten Have (1999) and Hutchby and Wooffitt (1998).

\textsuperscript{14} For a more detailed introduction to IL, refer to Selting and Couper-Kuhlen (2001) (see also Selting and Couper-Kuhlen (1996); Ford and Wagner (1996)).
shown that talk is, in fact, orderly and systematic (for introductory overviews, see Hutchby and Wooffitt, 1998, pp. 17-18; ten Have, 1999, pp. 3-5). If talk were not systematic and orderly, we would not make sense to one another the way we do. Researchers employ CA as a methodology to study the sequential organization and structure of ordinary or mundane talk. Speakers accomplish social actions, such as identification/recognition, requests, proposals, compliments, and complaints, etc., through conversation. Conversation, be it mundane or institutional talk, is hence labeled talk-in-interaction, and it is viewed as a socially ordered phenomenon.15

CA is a leading theory and methodology for understanding how talk-in-interaction is organized and how we do conversations. It investigates the competences and resources every speaker relies upon and uses during conversations (C. Goodwin & Heritage, 1990). CA shows that through the speakers' orientation to each others' utterances meaningful and orderly communication is achieved. The structure of talk is not imposed onto the talk by the researcher, but it is a structure that the speakers themselves establish and make evident (for the analysts) on a turn-by-turn basis. Each turn displays how a speaker has understood the prior turn, hence, this resource for understanding the ascription of action can be used by the researcher. Thus, the so-called "next turn proof procedure" is an integral part of CA and differentiates it from other approaches to the study of discourse (Hutchby & Wooffitt, 1998, p. 15; ten Have, 1999, pp. 20-21). Speakers actively design their talk by orienting to each others' utterances in specific ways that are relevant to them (Hutchby & Wooffitt, 1998, pp. 5, 13-15). CA, then, is capable of elucidating the procedural basis of talk-in-interaction, that is, the underlying devices available to the speakers (Heritage, 1984b; Levinson, 2012a; ten Have, 1999).

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15 See also Hutchby and Wooffitt (1998, pp. 1-14, 24), ten Have (1999, pp 3f).
CA, in essence, is data-driven. The recorded conversation and the transcript are the overarching tools for CA research. It is not, at its base, a quantitative research method, and, in general (but with exceptions\textsuperscript{16}), it does not rely on field notes, participants' intuition, surveys or questionnaires. In its most fundamental form, CA research is driven exclusively by the data and an emic perspective on this data. Unmotivated looking is another crucial characteristic of CA, which means that the researchers do not approach their data with a pre-formed hypothesis, but rather with their only agenda being discovering and accounting for the mechanisms through which interactants (participants in interaction) make sense as they work their way through jointly constructed activities. The researcher cannot presume that a social variable, such as class or gender, is a defining element in the talk unless the speakers' orientation to what is said, as shown in the data, lends support to such an assumption (Heritage, 1984b; Hutchby & Wooffitt, 1998). For instance, it is almost impossible to single out a social feature, such as gender, class, or race, to be the reason for any particular action or turn in a conversation (C. Goodwin & Heritage, 1990), because at any given time in a conversation, multiple potential social variables are at play. The researcher cannot know which social variable is the defining one for a specific action. CA, then, elucidates the sequential organization of talk-in-interaction, the procedures that speakers make use of and depend on to understand the other speaker's talk, and to actively participate in a split-second manner in the construction of courses of action (Jefferson, 1973; Levinson, 2012a).

\textsuperscript{16} For instance, Ford and Thompson (1996) use descriptive statistics in their work on complex transition relevance points and Clayman, Elliot, Heritage, and Beckett (2012) use statistics in their study "The President's Questioners: Consequential Attributes of the White House Press Corps".
Interactionally-oriented studies of language have repeatedly shown that participants draw on linguistic resources to accomplish interactional goals (see examples in section 1.1. of this chapter). Studies in IL have also shown that those linguistic resources that at first glance do not conform to traditional usage of grammar have interactional functions. Hayashi (2001), in his work on postpositioned-initiated utterances in Japanese, is a case in point. He shows that items that traditionally occur after some other item in a sentence, i.e., as postpositions, are used turn-initially (i.e., not following another item) to do distinct interactional work such as answering preemptively, co-answering, and pursuing a further response. Hayashi’s work is but one example of studies highlighting how language and grammar shape and are shaped by interaction. Turn-final or-phrases are another example of how interactants adapt linguistic resources for and to specific interactional needs. Specifically, by using or in turn-final placement rather than as a coordinating conjunction, grammar emerges in the interaction and participants are pushing the boundaries of descriptive grammar, and they do so for interactional ends. Following Ford and Couper-Kuhlen (2004), I thus adopt a view of language as a dynamic system "adapted to serve humans as they navigate through the recurrent and yet infinitely contingent social interactions that make up their lives" (p. 4). Language and linguistic resources are "adapted to and for interactional functions" (p. 4), which raises an important implication, namely that studies of linguistic resources and grammar benefit from an approach that integrates linguistic resources and the interactions they are used in. As Ford and Couper-Kuhlen (2004) state, "the study of language must ultimately account for language as embodied in social interaction" (p. 4).

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17 In fact, Hopper and Thompson (1984) suggest that categories such as noun and verb are not a priori given, but instead emerge in the situated context of an interaction and that those categories are "imposed on the form by discourse" (Hopper & Thomson, 1984, p.747).
CA, originally an exclusively sociological enterprise, is primarily concerned with the social actions we accomplish in interactions. It is thus not primarily a tool for linguistic inquiry. However, grammar has long been recognized as one major building block of turn-constructional units (TCUs). Thus, language and language usage figures prominently in CA-work, as language is one of the major ways in which we formulate these social actions. My interest lies both in the social actions and the linguistic resources used to accomplish them. Hence, my approach is one that mutually integrates linguistic inquiry and conversation analysis, or, put differently, linguistically-driven CA. As such, I draw equally from CA and IL.

IL explicitly brings to the foreground the linguistic side to talk-in-interaction. IL specifically takes all aspects of language such as syntax, prosody, morphology and phonology, into consideration as well as their implications and involvement in the organization of talk as such and the accomplishment of social actions. IL addresses how linguistic structures and patterns of use are both shaped by and shaping of interaction. IL is not the first approach that holds linguistic form and function in use to be related. The discourse functional tradition, focusing on information management, put forward a motivated relationship between linguistic form and discourse function, showing that linguistic distinctions are rooted in the function they play in discourse (e.g., Chafe, 1979; Du Bois, 1987; Hopper & Thompson, 1984). In contrast to the discourse functional approach, IL, inspired by CA, advances the study of linguistic form and function in language use by investigating conversational data in its own terms, thus adding fundamental interactional structures and practices to the explanatory basis of functionally oriented linguistic inquiry.

Two of the central underlying assumptions of IL are (i) that participants use the resources provided by language methodically, and (ii) that speakers use resources to "engage in practices,
[which are] routine and recognizable ways of carrying out sequentially situated *actions* and *activities*" (Couper-Kuhlen & Selting, 2001, p. 3; see also Schegloff, 1997). Building on these assumptions, Couper-Kuhlen and Selting (2001) identify two questions central to IL:

(i) what linguistic resources are used to articulate particular conversational structures and fulfill interactional functions?

(ii) what interactional function or conversational structure is furthered by particular linguistic forms and ways of using them? (p. 3)

Linguistic resources such as syntax are crucial in social action accomplishment and the organization of talk-in-interaction. Repair, turn-taking and projection of completion all depend heavily on syntax as well as on prosody and phonetic structure.

An interactionally oriented approach to language and grammar acknowledges that language and talk shape each other. Schegloff (1996) notes that talk "appears to be the basic and primordial environment for the use and development (...) of language" (p. 54). Language is not solely seen as an abstract system that we use in interaction, but rather as a system that is "at least partially shaped by interactional considerations" (Schegloff, 1996, p.55). In other words, grammatical structures emerge in and from interaction. In daily interactions, we rely on linguistic resources to accomplish social action and at the same time shape such linguistic resources.

1.3. **Prior literature**

In this section, I provide an overview of literature on what I call turn-final *or*, constructions involving *or* (such as *or something*, *or anything*, *or what*), and research focusing on other linguistic elements that can occur in turn-final position in English. My goal in this
dissertation is to account for turn-final *or* as it is used in interaction. I considered the interactional work of other *or*-phrases in turn-final placement to arrive at a better understanding of the interactional function of *or* alone and discuss some interactional functions of other *or*-phrases in the concluding discussion. Hence, I include an overview of other *or*-phrases here. All constructions reviewed share that they occur in turn-final placement. Turn-final position has been shown to be crucial in interaction not only because it is implicated in projection of possible turn completion and speaker change, but also because it is an environment where speakers can produce -- both verbal and non-vocal -- stance markers (Schegloff, 1996).\(^{18}\) This position is a place where the preceding utterance can be modified, where speakers can display and possibly change their stance\(^{19}\) about what they have just said. In fact, it is really the last opportunity to modify a just-uttered turn before speaker change is relevant.

Heretofore, the most commonly reported use of *or* is as a coordinating conjunction, whereas the other combinations involving *or* have not been described in much detail. In section 1.3.1., I provide an overview of accounts of *or* from descriptive grammars as a baseline for this study, before I outline the sparse research on *or* from a CA and IL perspective (section 1.3.2.). Finally, I outline research on other turn-final tokens in English (section 1.3.3.).

\(^{18}\) Note that stance markers can also occur elsewhere in an on-going turn. For instance, the epistemic phrases "I think" and "I guess" can be produced turn-initially, turn-medially and in turn-final placement (Kärkkäinen, 2003, 2007).

\(^{19}\) When speakers index a stance, they are engaged in an act of evaluation (Moore & Podesva, 2009, p. 448). According to Du Bois (2007), the speaker taking a stance "(1) evaluates an object, (2) positions a subject (usually the self), and (3) aligns with other subjects" (p. 163). Stances also "reflect micro-social identity processes" (Moore & Podesva, 2009, p. 450), and Pomerantz (2011, 2012) uses the term *stance* to refer to a speaker's attitudes and sympathies.
1.3.1. **Or-phrases: A descriptive account**

My aim in this section is to summarize what we know about *or* from descriptive grammars. One of the most basic properties of *or*, as described in leading grammars of English, is that it links two (or more) alternatives in a format of 'X or Y'. *Or* is generally described to be a coordinating conjunction (Biber et al., 1999; Quirk et al., 1985) or a coordinator (Huddleston & Pullum, 2002). *And, but, and or* are the three most common coordinators, which can link almost any syntactic category, that is, words, phrases, and clauses. These "link-words" (Quirk et al., 1985, p. 46) link two elements of equal status. That is, each linked element could stand alone. For example, the coordinator *and* in *She speaks French and English" links the noun phrases *French* and *English* -- the two component propositions. "She speaks French" and "She speaks English" can both stand alone, without being ungrammatical (Huddleston & Pullum, 2002, p. 1275). In addition, reversing the order of these two noun phrases would not have a "significant effect on structure or meaning" (Huddleston & Pullum, 2002, p. 1275). Even though usually only two elements are coordinated, the number of coordinated constituents can be open-ended when multiple elements are coordinated (Quirk et al., 1985; Huddleston & Pullum, 2002).

Coordinating conjunctions are also referred to as 'function words', 'grammar words,' and 'structure words', which emphasizes their role as structural markers in a grammatical sense (Quirk et al, 1985). A conjunction, for example, is considered to signal the "beginning of a clause" (Quirk et al., 1985; p. 72; see also Biber et al., 1999; Huddleston & Pullum, 2002, p. 1293), but they may also occur in sentence-initial position as in "And so did her mother" (Huddleston & Pullum, 2002, p. 1277). Biber et al. (1999) suggest that sentences such as "They carved it out but" are ungrammatical (p. 80), because conjunctions cannot occur in sentence-final position. Given that *but, and, and or* are the three most common coordinating conjunctions and
share key properties, the proposed ungrammaticality of final but can be extended to final or. As mentioned before, the limitation on where or can be placed does not hold for naturally occurring interaction as evidenced by my data collection. This suggests that the instances of turn-final or I describe in this dissertation are not functioning as coordinating conjunctions, and that turn-final or may be on its way to becoming a discourse maker, similar to turn-final but (Mulder & Thompson, 2008) (see also chapter 6 for a discussion).

Descriptive grammars also offer some insights into the use of or. The general consensus is that or "introduces an alternative" (Quirk et al., 1985, p. 932; see Biber et al., 1999; Huddleston & Pullum, 2002) and that or is exclusive, i.e., "it excludes the possibility that both conjoins are true, or are to be fulfilled" (Quirk et al., 1985, p. 932; see also Huddleston & Pullum, 2002).

Huddleston and Pullum (2002) add that "Or is most characteristically used when the speaker believes that only one of the component proposition is true" (p. 1294). The authors also suggest that the implicature is that the "speaker doesn't know which [proposition] it is" (p. 1294), i.e., the person is not certain. For example, when asked about the location of a book (in a scenario of only one book existing), a speaker saying "There's a copy in the office or in the library", the person who asked about this book will assume that the speaker doesn't "know precisely where it is (…) because if [he] did know [he] would surely tell" (p. 1294).

Biber et al. (1999) describe the use and distribution of or and other coordinators in spoken and written English and offer the following insights. And is the most frequent coordinator whereas overall, or is very uncommon, being more common in academic prose than

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20 Huddleston and Pullum (2002) note that or can also be inclusive in its interpretation, "where it is implied that both conjoins may be true" (p. 932) as in: "you can boil an egg, (or) you can make some sandwiches, or you can do both" (p. 933).
in other registers (see their chart on p. 81). Biber et al. (1999) also discuss "coordination tags", that is, constructions such as *and stuff, and things* and *and everything*, including *or something*. *Or something* is the most frequent one among these four coordination tags. The authors describe these constructions "as some kind of vagueness markers or hedges" (p.116). They suggest that these constructions "indicate that the expression preceding the conjunction is not to be taken as precise or exhaustive" (p. 116). These coordination tags are found mostly in conversation, but the construction *or so*, for example, occurs more often in written data. Quirk et al (1985) concur, suggesting that *or so* "is used to express approximation" (p. 981). McCarthy and Carter (2006) on spoken and written English mentions *or something* as an example of vague language use. In "She can have an orange juice or something" (p. 202), the authors argue that *or something* stands in for "a list of every available drink and the vague usage simply keeps options open" (p. 202). *Or anything, or so, or whatever* are identified as other phrases of vague language use. Finally, the use of *or something* as one of the most informal used of approximation as in "It weighed about twenty kilo or something" (p. 204) is mentioned.

While we know quite a bit about *or* as a conjunction from descriptive grammars, descriptive grammars do not discuss *or* in final placement. Biber et al. (1999) provide an example that happens to include a turn-final *or*: "Okay, do you want to switch sides with me, or?" (p. 1074). However, the authors cite this example as part of their discussion of how *okay* is used at the beginning of utterances. Thus, they do not focus on uses of turn-final *or*. It is important to note that the goal of descriptive grammars is not to account for all possible patterns of language use, especially of spoken language use. As Biber et al. (1999) note, "most grammars focus on structural considerations: cataloguing and describing form and meaning of grammatical constructions rather than how they are actually used in spoken and written discourse" (p. 4).
Systematic patterns of language use in written and spoken discourse have not always been considered important for such structural considerations of grammar. In their own corpus-based grammar, Biber et al. (1999) aim to describe "the actual use of grammatical features in different varieties of English" (p. 4), both in actual written and spoken discourse rather than by means of invented examples.

Descriptive grammars, however, aim to be comprehensive (though not exhaustive). Quirk et al.'s (1985) *A comprehensive grammar of the English language* has been described as the "authority on present-day English grammar" (Mukherjee, 2006, p. 337), providing "inspiration for a project of similar scope" (Biber et al., 1999, p. viii) for Biber et al.'s (1999) corpus-based grammar. A grammar such as that by Biber et al. (1999), which is based on authentic written and spoken discourse, cannot include all possible patterns of language use, especially given the fact that language is constantly changing and in flux. If grammars do take seriously the aim of being a reference grammar for the actual use of language, then findings from interactionist approaches should be incorporated more. The idea of a "'monitor grammar' of the English Language" (Mukherjee, 2006, p. 349) that could easily and promptly be updated and revised "when changes in English grammar can be traced in new data" (Mukherjee, 2006, p. 349) could be a way of incorporating findings of interactionist approaches in reference grammars. In addition, descriptive corpus-based grammars are resources for cross-linguistic comparisons. For such comparative work, it would be crucial that the use of tags and other final particles, including turn-final *or*, be included in them.

Having provided an overview of *or* and other *or*-phrases based on leading grammars of English, I now turn to research on turn-final *or* from an IL and CA perspective. Then, I review research on other turn-final constructions in English.
1.3.2. *Or* and other *or*-phrases in CA and IL

English *or*-constructions have received little attention from a CA perspective.21 In fact, neither *or* nor other *or*-phrases have been studied systematically within CA or IL. In her work on conjunctionals such as *or*, *but*, *and* and *so*, Jefferson (1983) hypothesizes that these conjunctionals are vulnerable toward overlap and that speakers producing them drop out during overlapping speech. Her data did not lend support for this hypothesis. Jefferson proposes that when a conjunctional + pause is produced and the recipient starts up, then the producer of the conjunctional stays out and the recipient continues. She argues that both parties together shape what a pause is: A pause can be an intra-turn pause (when the recipient of conjunctional + pause does not start up and the same speaker continues after the pause) or it can be a pause after a turn (in those cases where the recipient starts up following a conjunctional + pause). The rule of "first starter acquiring rights to a turn" (p. 24) holds not only for complete utterances, but also for incomplete ones like those ending in conjunctionals.22 Jefferson also proposes that conjunctionals could be doing a 'pro-tem' speakership where a speaker may initiate something new after just having passed a point of possible completion, and where the speaker will only do so until another speaker comes in. Jefferson's (1983) work is primarily an exploration of the organization of overlap and the implications of conjunctionals for overlapping speech, whereas my work focuses on the social actions accomplished by turn-final *or* as such.

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21 Jenks (2011), in his presentation "Turn-ending *or*-constructions: What are they and how are they used?", notes that *or* and *or what* are constructions that occur rather frequently in his data.

22 Jefferson bases her analysis on an understanding of complete versus incomplete that rests on lexico-grammatical properties. See Walker (2012a) for an analysis of turn-final conjunctions as a constitutive part of the ongoing turn. I discuss Walker (2012a) work in detail in chapter 2 of this dissertation.
Although turn-final *or* is not the focus of her work, Stokoe (2010) touches on turn-final *or* in her study on how interactants account for relationship histories in the context of speed-dating. She suggests that turn-final *or* is a design feature used to ask delicate questions such as "'ve y'got children as we:ll or:: "(p. 268). She proposes that *or* works to neutralize the polarity of the question. Given the item *as well*, which "tilts the preferred answer towards 'yes'" (p. 269), the question "have you got children as well" is built to receive a positive response. The *or* neutralizes this preference, making either a *yes* or *no* answer unproblematic. Stokoe stresses that *or* does not reverse the polarity of the question but rather neutralizes or deletes it. Given Stokoe's emphasis on how participants establish and negotiate relationship histories in speed-dating settings, her primary focus is not on turn-final *or* per se, but on all design features participants use in the service of getting to know one another at speed-dating events. Her findings as they pertain to turn-final *or* correspond to some of the observations I make regarding turn-final *or*. However, in building on Stokoe's observations, I present a systematic study of *or*-turns, i.e., those turns that end in *or* (their turn shape, their sequential environment, their social actions) and of the interactional work of *or* itself.

1.3.3. **Other turn-final resources in English**

In addition to *or*-phrases, participants regularly produce other tokens when a turn is just-possibly completed, such as *isn't it, is it, right?*, *but*, and *though*. In contrast to turn-final *or* in English, other turn-final resources used in English have been researched more comprehensively. This body of research includes tag questions (e.g., Cameron, McAlind, & O'Leary, 1989; Gardner, 2007b; Hepburn & Potter, 2010, 2011; Heritage, 2005; Holmes, 1982, 1984, 1995;
Lakoff, 1975; Moore & Podesva, 2009), as well as the turn-final elements but\(^{23}\) (Mulder & Thompson, 2008) and though (Barth-Weingarten & Couper-Kuhlen, 2002). I briefly summarize the work on but and though before I turn to tags.

Barth-Weingarten and Couper-Kuhlen (2002) study the uses of turn-final though. They propose that turn-final though "concedes a prior point but it does not make this point explicit" (p. 348). When though is used as a marker of concession, speaker B acknowledges the validity of a prior point made by speaker A but then "goes on to state that a potentially incompatible point also holds" (p. 346). By doing this, speaker B is making two otherwise incompatible claims hold. Barth-Weingarten and Couper-Kuhlen's (2002) study highlights the usefulness of investigating linguistic elements when they are used in turn-final positions.

Similarly, Mulder and Thompson's (2008) study on turn-final but accentuates the value of closely analyzing form and function of turn-final elements, in their case, turn-final conjunctions. Mulder and Thompson's (2008) study on turn-final but\(^{24}\) such as in "I could scream but" echoes Barth-Weingarten and Couper-Kuhlen's (2002) work on though, because the authors, too, see some parallels with a grammaticalization development. They found a continuum of uses of but

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\(^{23}\)Walker (2012a) also made turn-final conjunctions his subject of study. Specifically, he researched the phonetic composition and features of what he calls trail-off conjunctions. I provide a detailed account of his work in chapter 2 where I address the question of whether or is a turn-final token added after a point of possible completion or constitutive of the on-going turn. In addition, Jefferson (1983) has worked on what she calls syntactic conjunctionals, such as because, but, and, so, and or.

\(^{24}\)Fielder (2008) suggests that in turn-final position, the Bulgarian clause connectives no, ama and ami, which correspond to English but, function more like discourse markers than conjunctions.
ranging from turn-initial conjunction to turn-final discourse particle. Turn-final *but* is closer to how other final particles are used, because it is treated as indicating that the just-produced turn is finished "but with an implication left 'hanging'" (Mulder & Thompson, 2008, p. 179). Crucially, Mulder and Thompson (2008) have found that even if the same speaker continues after a turn-final *but*, what comes after it does not contrast with what came before *but*, but rather initiates a new action. In other words, turn-final *but* does not do what a *but*-conjunction would do. The authors propose that turn-final *but* accomplishes interactionally that "the clause ending with *but* is open to being interpreted as a concession, with the claim for which it is a concession only implied" (p. 186).

English, generally not seen as a particle-heavy language in contrast to other languages, features at least *but* and *though* as turn-final elements that either have already become particles or are in the process of becoming particles. Grammatically speaking, turn-final *but* renders the

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25 A final particle "is a discourse marker that occurs at the end of an interactional unit, whether a turn, a turn unit, or a prosodic unit, and indexes certain pragmatic stances, in this case [i.e., turn-final "but"] inviting the listener(s) to infer a contrast" (Mulder & Thompson, 2008, p. 183).

26 Turn-final particles and tokens have been investigated in other languages besides English. Examples of this work include, among others, work by Beeching (2002) on French *hein*, work by Laury and Seppänen (2008) and by Koivisto, Laury, and Seppänen (2011) on Finnish *että* as complementizer, turn-initial and turn-final particle, work on Swedish *eller* by Lindström (1997), research on German "ne?" (Harren, 2001) and other German turn-final particles (Hagemann, 2009) as well as work on Estonian *et* (Keevallik, 2008).

27 Meyerhoff (1994) has described *eh*, what she calls a tag particle, as a politeness marker and in-group identity marker in New Zealand English. For studies on Canadian *eh* see Gibson (1976), Avis (1972) and Love (1973).
on-going turn incomplete, yet interactants use them frequently. The observation that turn-final *but* alludes to an implication that is left hanging is important to my dissertation. Turn-final *or* shares this property of leaving something hanging, because traditionally, as a conjunction, *or* connects two elements such as phrases, clauses or lexical items. In turn-final uses of *or*, this second element is not produced, but a co-participant may infer such a projected second element. Turn-final tokens, while some do not conform to the norms of formal written discourse, are regularly used for specific interactional ends. Participants demonstrate, through such non-canonical uses of linguistic structures, that they adapt linguistic resources to local interactional needs.

Having highlighted the relevance of other work on turn-final tokens in English, I now turn to tags. Tags are generally thought of as consisting of a declarative statement followed by a 'tagged on' interrogative structure such as *is it* and *isn't it*. These tags in English consist of an "operator and a subject pronoun, the choice of operator and pronoun depending on the statement" (Quirk & Greenbaum, 1990, p. 234), such as *is it* and *aren't you*. These types of tags, formed through inversion of the declarative component, are sometimes referred to as "standard tags" (Cheshire, 1981), whereas other additions in turn-final position such as *ain't it* and *innit* are sometimes considered non-standard or "invariant verbal tags" (Moore & Podesva, 2009). Elements such as final *huh?* or *right?* are sometimes subsumed under the broad category of tags as "tag type clauses" (Stivers & Enfield, 2010, p. 2622). While there are many different studies on and labels for tag questions, common to all these elements is that they are predominantly

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28 Incomplete utterances have been studied by Koshik (2002b). In her study, Koshik focuses on designedly incomplete utterances (DIUs) as a practice to elicit self-correction from ESL students in writing conferences.
found in turn-final, i.e., tag, position, which is exactly the placement within a turn that is of interest for this study.

The body of literature on tag questions in English is fairly extensive, from a broad, overall linguistic perspective. Infamously labeled a 'feminine' marker based on Lakoff's (1975) early influential work on women's language, _Language and Women's Place_, tag questions have, indeed, been associated with uncertainty or weakness. Lakoff sees them as a resource changing the force of an utterance and as somewhat in between a declarative and an interrogative. Tags, furthermore, indicate a speaker's uncertainty and are used to seek confirmation. Lakoff views tag questions, then, as a linguistic manifestation of women's weakness and as a marker reflective of this weakness relative to men. Tags are considered not so much a resource used to establish mutual understanding by down- or upgrading one's epistemic authority, but as indicative of the general weakness of women's speech style.²⁹

Subsequent research into tag questions not only began to empirically investigate Lakoff's claims, but is also illustrative of the many nuances and different uses tag questions can serve in spoken interaction. Holmes (1982, 1984, 1995) has found that tags facilitate discourse and she categorized tags either as _epistemic modal tags_ as in "Fay Weldon's lecture is at eight isn't it?" (Holmes, 1995, p. 80) or _affective tags_ as in "It's a lovely day, isn't it?" (as cited in Moore & Podesva, 2009, p. 452). Affective tags are said to indicate a speaker's concern for the addressee whereas epistemic modal tags are used when a speaker is unsure about some state of affairs. Moreover, in her 1995 work, Holmes has added a third category, that of using tags as a

²⁹ Questioning Lakoff's work, Fishman (1998) shows that while women ask more questions in her data than men, they are more successful in establishing a topic when they use interrogatives over declarative questions. Questions then are not a sign of insecurity, but a powerful tool with which women can establish a topic. See also Ford (2008) on how women use questions in the workplace.
challenge. Challenging tags are used to exert pressure on a recipient to respond and they can also strengthen the "force of a negative speech act" (Holmes, 1995, p. 81) in an aggressive way. An exchange between a detective and his superior illustrate this type of tag. After a detective had already replied to a question of his superior by saying "Yes sir, yes, understood", the superior asks the detective again, by producing a turn with a tag question "Now you er fully understand, don't you?" (Holmes, 1995, p. 81). Holmes proposes that this tag is challenging because it pressures the detective to respond.

In their study of tag questions, Cameron et al. (1989) have found that men use tag questions more than women. They argue that speakers used tags as information requests, to facilitate talk, and to increase politeness rather than merely as a marker of insecurity.

In contrast to the studies described above, in which the researcher predominantly interpreted and decided what a tag does and what it conveys and indexes, studies that use approaches grounded in interactionist methods have looked at the action of the tag and its turn to determine what the speakers in each individual case accomplishes with it and how co-participants in next turns orient and respond to them. Looking into the social meaning of tags, indexicality, and tags as identity-markers, Moore and Podesva (2009) studied negative polarity tags, i.e., those that contain a form of not, following declaratives, such as "She'd be like really nasty to you about stuff, weren't she?" (p. 466). The authors found that such negative polarity tags overwhelmingly receive a positive response and proposed that these tags help create some pressure for an aligning response.

Re-examining Lakoff’s (1975) and subsequent research on tags, Hepburn and Potter (2010) analyze instances of tags that occur in talk on a child protection helpline as shown in
excerpt (4) below. Here, the CPO (Child Protection Officer) is talking to a caller (Cal) about the caller's friend.

Excerpt (4): Self-harming friend

(simplified from Hepburn and Potter (2010); their excerpt (2)).

1 CPO: Is there a teacher at school or someone like that.
2 Cal: [Yeah,
3 (0.3)
4 CPO: Hhhh I think that would be the best thing to find a grown up, who: hh she trusts, = who she thinks she can talk to,
5 Cal: Yeah =
6 CPO: = Hhh because there's lots of things that could be done to help
7 your friend,
8 (0.5)
9 Cal: Yeah.
10 -> CPO: Hh Because obviously she'll- (0.2) she's had a really difficult
11 t(h)i:me.=hasn't she:
12 (0.7)
13 Cal: Yeah.
14 (.)
15 CPO: Yeh (0.2) you sound as though you're very upset about it.
16 Cal: .shih ~yeh I am~
17 (0.4)
18 CPO: Mm:
19 (.)
20 Cal: [I'm] clo(h)se to teahr:s.
21 (0.5)
22 CPO: I can hear that, (.) yea:h.
23 (1.0)
Here, the child protection officer (CPO) inquires about the possibility for the caller's friend to turn to someone at school. The caller provides minimal uptake in lines 2 and 6. In line 10, the CPO produces a declarative ending in a tag. The declarative "builds a picture of the friend's problem based on the things that the caller has told her" (p. 8). The authors argue that in environments like this, CPOs commonly use tags when they are offering advice that is being resisted by the caller. The declaratives, often consisting of B-event statements (Labov & Fanshel, 1977), to which the tags are added contain reformulated prior advice. The authors suggest that the tag treats the caller as already knowing, i.e., as the person who can confirm the suggested course of action.

In their work on tags and gender, Hepburn and Potter (2011) further show that tags can be deployed as a resource to "press subtly and rather indirectly for a course of action that has already been resisted" (p. 135) in everyday interaction. They argue that tags can be used coercively ("attempting to alter, or place constraints on, the recipient's conduct" (p. 150)) and invasively ("attempting to re/construct the recipient's desires, beliefs, knowledge or other 'psychological' matters" (p. 150)). Overall, the use of tags in everyday interaction shows that tags are added to declaratives that suggest "competing or alternative courses of action for the recipient" (Hepburn & Potter, 2011, p. 150) and, crucially, that tags index the speaker's stance that the recipient already knows about this competing course of action.

Also employing a CA-perspective, Heritage and Raymond (2005) discuss tags as a resource to down- or upgrade first- and second-position assessments as shown in the following excerpt.

Excerpt (5): Beautiful day (their excerpt (2), p. 17)

1 -> J: T's tsuh beautiful day out isn't it?
2 -> L: Yeh it's jus' gorgeous...
In line 1, J utters a first assessment in first position, positively evaluating the day. In line 2, L produces a second assessment, responsive to the first assessment. L's second position assessment is in agreement with J's first assessment. It is such agreeing assessments that Heritage and Raymond (2005) investigate. The authors closely analyze assessments and how speakers can indicate that their second assessment is independent of the other speaker's first assessment, thus proposing that first and second positions of assessments are implicated in the rights to assess. Generally, as they argue, producers of first assessments have higher rights to assess, and second position ones have lower rights to assess, but there are resources with which this order can be manipulated, such as tag questions, negative syntax, and oh-prefacing.

Tags can be implicated in downgrading first assessments in that they introduce "an invitation to agree with the assessments as a feature of its [i.e., tag's] surface syntax" (Heritage & Raymond, 2005, p. 20), and because of this linguistic feature, "such questions index a putatively secondary access to a referent relative to the coparticipant" (p. 20). The authors argue that tag questions invite first and foremost a response to the question. The co-participant thus has to deal with answering a question first, before she can address the assertion preceding the tag. The excerpt below illustrates this use.

Excerpt (6): Lovely family (their excerpt (11), p. 20)

1  Jen:  Mm [I: bet they proud of the fam'ly.=
2    Ver:       [Ye:s.
3  -> Jen:   =They're [a luvly family now ar'n't [they.
4    Ver:          [OMm:.o   [They are ye[s.
5  Jen:                     [eeYe[s::,.
6    Ver:                         [Yes,
7  Jen:  Mm: All they need now is a little girl tih complete i:t.
Here, Jen positively assesses Vera's family in line 3, and Vera produces an agreement with this positive assessment in line 4. The tag with which Jen's assessment ends "defers to Vera's rights to assess her own family members" (Heritage & Raymond, 2005, p. 20). The authors argue that by asking a question (via the tag question), Jen makes relevant in first order an answer to the question and cedes epistemic rights. By turning the assertion into a question making relevant a yes- or no-answer first, the interlocutor downgrades the assertion or, put differently, downgrades her primary rights to assess the state of affairs at hand. In situations where both co-participants have equal epistemic access and authority (such as the current weather, shown in excerpt (5) above), a tag can be used to "downgrade the putatively primary rights to assess the referent that might attach to having gone first. This downgrading is accomplished by inviting agreement in the surface design of the turn through the [declarative + tag question] format" (Heritage & Raymond, 2005, p. 22).

In contrast to first position assessments, second position assessments are somewhat trickier than first position assessments, because they have to take into account the first position assessment and its specific intricacies. In second position, tags added to assessments serve to indicate that the interlocutor has arrived at the assessment independently from the co-participant, i.e., speakers can use tags in second position assessments to upgrade their epistemic rights to assess. Consider excerpt (7) below.

Excerpt (7): Little devil
(taken from Heritage & Raymond, 2005, p. 28f.; their excerpt (23))

1 Ver: ehr: they readjer comics: 'n evrythink yihkn[ow
2 Jen: [Yeh: w'l
3 I think he's a bright little boy: u[h:m

\[30\] The same is true for German ne (Golato, 2005).
Here, Jen assesses Vera's family member in line 11, and in line 14, Vera produces an agreeing assessment in second position. She ends her assessment with a tag question, thereby claiming higher epistemic rights to assess her family member than Jen and "resists the putatively superior access" (Heritage & Raymond, 2005, p. 29) a first assessment generally entails. The tag question again invites a response and as such positions Vera's assessment as a first action. As the authors write: "In this way, it attenuates its responsiveness to Jenny's initial evaluation, thus asserting Vera's rights in the matter" (p. 29).

Heritage and Raymond (2005) draw attention to the unique properties of tags when they write: "An assessment with a tag question appended offers the recipient an opportunity to disentangle confirmation and agreement as distinct activities in a responding turn" (p. 26). By employing a fine-grained conversation analytic analysis, these studies are able to show that tags are used to manage local actions in interaction. Building on such work, I show that turn-final or
allows interlocutors to disentangle epistemic status and epistemic stance. Before I turn to the analytic chapters, I provide a description of my data collection.

1.4. Data

The data corpus for this study consists of roughly 54 hours of naturally-occurring American English interaction. The data include audio-recorded telephone interaction, video-recorded face-to-face interactions and audio-recorded face-to-face conversation.\(^{31}\) Data from both dyadic interactions and multi-party interactions were included. All participants recorded are native speakers of English, but they come from a variety of different geographic backgrounds in the United States (for instance, from the Midwest, the West Coast and the East Coast as well as the South). A total of 97 speakers are involved in these different conversations (51 female speakers and 46 male speakers, their age range being between 12 to 80 years old). Conversations include both mixed gender ones as well as conversations among only women or only men. Ordinary interaction comprises most of the data, however, some institutional data has been included.\(^{32}\) The data comes from both my own recordings\(^{33}\), from Cecilia E. Ford's corpus of

\(^{31}\) The face-to-face interactions for which I only have audio recordings are from the Santa Barbara Corpus of American English (SBCAE), available online through www.talkbank.org. Acknowledging the limitations inherent in audio-recorded face-to-face interactions, I analyzed examples taken from such data separately from other examples. Limitations include, among others, the lack of access to visual and non-verbal elements and practices that may have accompanied, occasioned, or followed or-phrases. Because these samples show the same properties as those based on samples from telephone and video-recorded face-to-face interaction, I then proceeded to include all samples in one larger collection.

\(^{32}\) The institutional data yielded three instances of turn-final or.
videotaped interaction, and corpora available on talkbank.org, such as CallFriend\textsuperscript{34} and the Santa Barbara Corpus of Spoken Interaction. This corpus has yielded 81 instances of turn-final \textit{or}.	extsuperscript{35} In addition to turn-final \textit{or}, the corpus described above yielded 25 instances of \textit{or not}, 39 instances of \textit{or something}, 20 instances of \textit{or what} and 13 instances of \textit{or whatever}, all of which are turn-final. These \textit{or}-phrases were collected in order to compare them to turn-final \textit{or}. The collection of turn-final \textit{or} and other turn-final \textit{or}-phrases is small. However, as Schegloff (1993) argues, quantifications and numbers alone do not determine the significance of research findings:

\textit{One} is also a number, the single case is also a quantity, and \textit{statistical} significance is but one form of significance. Indeed, it is significance in only the technical sense that a 'finding' in a sample may be taken as indicating the likely presence of an element of order in the larger universe being studied (p. 103).

Therefore, quantitative measures do not not change or alter the way an episode of conversation unfolded in that way for those speakers in that occasion (Schegloff, 1987, 1993; Walker, 2012a; Wootton, 1989). A singular occurrence of a phenomenon is "the result of a set of resources and practices available to those participants for so conducting interaction, and these resources and

\textsuperscript{33} All data for this study were collected in compliance with the regulations and policies set by the IRB of the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Participants consented to take part in this study in writing. In order to protect the participants' identities and anonymity, all names and other identifying information have been changed in all transcripts of this study.

\textsuperscript{34} The CALLHOME corpus consists of 120 phone calls lasting up to 30 minutes. Conversations are between family members and friends and all calls are made from North America. I inspected all publicly available conversations online (i.e., 39 of 120 conversations).

\textsuperscript{35} In addition to the core collection of 81 instances of turn-final \textit{or}, I also collected 22 instances of turn-medial \textit{or}. I discuss one of these related instances in chapter 5 on epistemics, as they are distinct but yet somewhat related. For the analysis presented in this dissertation, I draw exclusively on the core collection of 81 instances.
practices therefore require an analytic account" (Walker, 2012a; p. 142; also Wootton 1989). It is the orientation to a phenomenon at hand that is of central importance rather than numbers. Throughout this dissertation, I provide numbers when I present my findings. While my findings and the arguments based on them do not rely on those numbers, they show tendencies of how turn-final or is used in the current database of interaction. More importantly, my including of numbers also evidenced that, in line with CA method, illustrates that no small number or single case is treated as irrelevant. In the analyses, I hence account for all instances of and uses of turn-final or as they emerged in my data rather than only for what or typically does in interaction.

All data were closely transcribed according to the system developed by Gail Jefferson (Heritage & Atkinson, 1984). Some additional notations were used to represent intonation (based on GAT2 conventions; see Selting et al, 2009) (see Appendix A for a description). The phenomenon under investigation in this study has been highlighted using an arrow (=>) and gray background in all transcripts of data samples.

During the process of analysis, samples from institutional and ordinary talk were analyzed separately in order to track potential differences in use and function. Because I have not found differences in use of turn-final or-phrases in these two different settings, I am presenting my findings in general, for both ordinary and institutional settings. In analyzing my collection, I also paid close attention to the number of participants present as well as visual access to co-participants, as this may affect the negotiation of epistemic stance and epistemic claims and thus also the use of specific linguistic resources to construct these claims and stances.

36 In fact, analyses of single cases are established practice in CA research (e.g., Chevalier, 2011; Gill, Halkowski, & Roberts, 2011; Maynard & Frankel, 2003; Schegloff, 1987).

37 Across all data samples, only three instances come from institutional data. Hence, the majority of or-phrases are from ordinary, non-institutional talk.
1.5. **Structure of dissertation**

This dissertation is structured as follows. I discuss the lexico-grammatical and prosodic turn shapes of *or*-turns and how participants manage turn transition in the face of a grammatically speaking incomplete turn ending in *or* (chapter 2). In chapter 3, I provide an overview of the sequential environment in which *or*-phrases occur as well as a discussion of the social actions participants accomplish when they employ *or*-turns. In chapters 4 and 5, I turn to the interactional work *or* accomplishes in this sequential and action environment. I will argue that *or* relaxes the preference for a confirming response and that it functions as an epistemic stance marker indexing uncertainty about the *or*-turn's proposition. I end with a concluding discussion in which I address the interactional work of some other *or*-phrases, the limitations of this study and avenues for future research.
2. **Or-turns: Possible turn completion and turn transition**

2.1. **Introduction**

The *or’s* that are the object of study here are placed at the end of turns in environments where turn transition and speaker change occurs. I will show that participants produce and treat *or* as constitutive component of the on-going turn rather than as an element projecting further talk. The main objective for this chapter is to address how *or* in final position of a turn impacts turn transition, how it affects the construction, projectability, and recognizability of possible points of completion, and how participants are able to produce and recognize *or* as belonging to the turn constructional unit (TCU) in progress rather than to a newly begun additional TCU even though it follows possible syntactic, prosodic and action completion points.

Conversation analytic research has demonstrated that points in talk-in-interaction where speaker change is relevant – transition relevance points (TRPs) – are recognizable based upon the convergence of components of projected trajectories: syntactic and pragmatic (i.e., action) completion (e.g., Ford & Thompson, 1996; Jefferson, 1983; Sacks et al., 1974; Schegloff, 2000b) phonetic design features (e.g., Ford & Thompson, 1996; Local, Kelly, & Wells, 1986), as well as bodily-visual behavior (Duncan, 1972; Ford et al., 2012; Kendon, 1967; Stivers & Rossano, 2010). Interactants not only use these projectable features in designing a point of possible turn completion where speaker change may be relevant, but recipients orient to them as projecting and constituting points of possible completion, and, therefore, likely places for speaker change with minimal gap or overlap (Sacks et al., 1974). Points of possible completion are hence crucial in talk-in-interaction and they contribute to the orderliness of it.

There are some turn formats that are, from a grammatical perspective, incomplete yet are oriented to as complete in interaction. For instance, Koshik (2002b) studied designedly
incomplete utterances in tutoring sessions. Such designedly incomplete utterances are used to elicit self-correction from English-as-a-second-language students in writing conferences. In the cases Koshik examines, tutors left turns incomplete so as to prompt the co-participant to complete them, which is different from turns ending in *or* which are not designed to be completed by the co-participant but rather are designed to be answered by the coparticipant. Other grammatically incomplete turns are what Schegloff (1996) calls "trail-offs". He notes that "The grammatical constitution of possible completion is what is 'played with' or flouted by trail offs: in the trail off, just what is needed to arrive at a possible completion point is projected, and then left unarticulated" (p. 87).\(^{38}\) Turns ending in *or* are another instance of, grammatically speaking, incomplete turns. As was mentioned earlier in this dissertation, *or* is generally considered to be a conjunction linking two elements in the format of "X or Y" (Couper-Kuhlen & Ono, 2007). As such, it has "continuation-projecting character" (Walker, 2012a). Yet, as demonstrated in my database, interactants regularly cease the production of talk following such *or*'s. Their turn is composed precisely so as not to include additional talk beyond the *or*. In all instances in the current collection, *or* emerges in turn-final position. Participants could orient to *or* as projecting more talk, or put differently, as the beginning of a new TCU, or they could orient to *or* as not projecting more talk, that is, as completing the current TCU in progress. I demonstrate that *or* is treated as an item that completes the on-going TCU rather than projecting more talk.

In my analyses, I inspect the composition of *or*-turns to determine if these turns have come to possible turn completion prior to *or*, and I examine how mechanisms of speaker change

\(^{38}\) Collaborative (or anticipatory) completions (Lerner, 1991, 1993, 1996, 2002, 2003) are another example of how grammatically incomplete units can be used in interaction. See chapter 1 for a discussion of this practice.
and turn transition are implicated as a turn approaches possible completion. I will show that the question of whether *or* is integrated into the on-going turn or whether it is produced as a turn continuation added to a just possibly complete turn is not clear cut and straightforward. In all cases in my collection, *or* is produced in one breath with the prior turn material, without any pause or break in the sound production between *or* and the preceding turn material. However, *or* follows a possible point of syntactic and pragmatic completion, and it follows an accented syllable similar to syllables that project turn completion (e.g., Local et al., 1986; Walker, 2012a; Wells & Macfarlane, 2009). That is, while on the one hand, there are production features (through produced phonation and lack of pause) that formulate the *or* as being a smooth continuation of the prior talk, on the other hand, syntactically and pragmatically, *or* is produced with some features of a post-completion addition, akin to post-completion stance markers (Schegloff, 1996). As I will show in chapters 4 and 5, *or* accomplishes interactional work that is distinct from the action the *or*-turn achieves as such (I discuss the actions of *or*-turns in chapter 3), indicating that *or* is produced and treated as doing something other than the social action accomplished by the *or*-turn as such.

In this chapter, I will first describe the syntactic turn formats that end in *or* as well as the intonation pattern of *or*-turns and their significance in designing *or*-turns as recognizably complete. Against this background, I will present several excerpts containing turns ending in *or* to provide an overview of the different turn transition patterns and to illustrate that participants routinely and unproblematically manage turn transitions after *or* has been uttered. I also discuss possible points of completion, transition relevance and speaker change in more detail as they relate to lexico-grammatical and prosodic features of turns ending in *or*. I address the following questions:
(1) What are the syntactic turn formats of the turns that end in or?

(2) What are the intonation patterns of turns ending in or?

(3) How do participants manage turn transition and speaker change with or-turns?

(4) How do participants design and recognize or as a post possible-completion element within a TCU-in-progress?

2.2. **Turn shapes of or-turns**

In my data, turn-final or can be produced in final position of turns that consist of a variety of lexico-grammatical structures. Phrasal, clausal, and sentential units, all of which function as questions in the interaction, can end in or. All or-turns share the same turn-final intonation pattern of a pitch drop on or and a subsequent leveling off of the intonation. That is, the pitch on or is started lower than that on the prior syllable. The prior syllable can exhibit a pitch jump in addition to the lowering of the pitch that starts with or. In the next two sections, I provide a descriptive account of the lexico-grammatical composition and the intonation patterns that emerged from the data and I then address the significance of these patterns in regard to turn transition and speaker change.

2.2.1. **Lexico-grammatical composition**

In order to arrive at a full picture of the phenomenon under investigation, it is important to consider the lexico-grammatical composition of or-turns, because linguistic resources such as "sentential, clausal, phrasal, and lexical constructions" (Sacks et al., 1974; also, e.g., Schegloff, 2007) are some of the major building blocks of TCUs in the co-construction of talk in naturally occurring interaction. The question of whether or can be considered a turn continuation or as an
element produced as one with the prior turn material depends on the syntactic composition and the prosodic delivery of *or*-turns as well as the pragmatic import of the turns. In this section, I focus on the syntactic, or lexico-grammatical form, of *or*-turns.

A variety of lexico-grammatical structures can be combined with turn-final *or*. The turn material prior to *or* includes adverb phrases, prepositional phrases, noun phrases, relative clauses, conditional clauses, temporal clauses, and interrogative and declarative sentential units. In each instance of the collection, a possible point of syntactic completion could be reached just before *or* is uttered. *Or*, from a grammatical point of view, renders the turn incomplete (Biber et al., 1999; Huddleston & Pullum, 2002; Quirk et al., 1985). Below, I offer a list of examples taken from my data collection of each of the different turn material types preceding *or*-phrases. Because the focus here is not on the sequential environment and the social action of *or*-turns, I provide a simplified version of the turns in order to highlight the syntactic range of them. I mark the possible point of syntactic completion prior to *or* with a "/".

1. Literally / or
2. In uh **New Orleans** / or
3. Last **week** / or
4. The one that I kept on runway heading for a bit / or
5. Then they'd been married for a long time /or
6. I'm getting you in the middle of dinner but I hope you don't have friends over / or
7. You walked into his **studio** / or_
8. So he's not quite as crooked as Savedra / or
9. What did they tell you. her body's not used to **regulating itself** / or
10. Oh you mean you would have picked a different **season** maybe / or
Examples (1) through (5) illustrate phrasal and clausal structures ending in *or* with (1) showing an adverb phrase, (2) a prepositional phrase, (3) a noun phrase, (4) a relative clause as a post-modification to the noun phrase "one," and (5) a conditional *then*-clause. Examples (6) and (7) show two instances of declarative structures ending in *or*. Finally, examples (8) through (10) show multi-unit turns where the TCU ending in *or* follows a turn-initial TCU. The initial TCUs prior to the one ending in *or* are: "so" in example (8), a *wh*-question in example (9), and "oh you mean" in example (10). Examples (11) through (14) show different types of interrogatives ending in *or*. Example (11) shows a polar question formed through periphrastic *do*, (12) shows a polar question being formed through subject-verb inversion, (13) shows the combination of a *wh*-question followed by a polar question ending in *or*, and (14) shows an alternative interrogative structure ending in *or*.

As the examples above illustrate, the turn material preceding turn-final *or* can consist of as little as single word phrases, longer phrases, clauses, and syntactically complete declaratives as well as interrogatives. Some structures are initiated by *so* (see Raymond, 2004 for *so*), *like*, and *you mean* (see Benjamin, 2012; Schegloff, Jefferson, & Sacks, 1977), which reinforce the clarifying nature of the turn in progress. Whereas *so* projects an upshot needing confirmation or disconfirmation (Raymond, 2004), *you mean* explicitly projects a clarification request (Benjamin, 2012; Schegloff et al., 1977). While *or* can end a syntactic polar question, the data show that participants do not directly end *wh*-questions (Fox & Thompson, 2010; Schegloff &
Lerner, 2009) in or as such. They do, however, produce or following a candidate answer formulated in the turn material following such wh-questions as in examples (9) and (13) (e.g., "What did they tell you, her body's not used to regulating itself or" and "How was their soccer game. Did they win their soccer game or") above. The or-turns in my collection all make confirmation or disconfirmation relevant, that is, they ask for a positive or negative answer, with or possibly projecting an alternative to the proposition of the or-turn. Wh-questions are broader in that they contain no proposition offered for confirmation or disconfirmation39 (Fox & Thompson, 2010; Schegloff & Lerner, 2009; Schegloff 2007). In this regard, it is not surprising that participants do not end wh-questions in or.

In all instances, the turn prior to or could be syntactically possibly complete, yet participants produce or in final position. For instance, in example (1), the adverb phrase "literally" is possibly complete at this point in the interaction, in example (3), the noun phrase "last week" is possibly complete at this point in the interaction, in excerpt (8), the declarative sentential unit "So he's not quite as crooked as Savedra or" comes to possible syntactic completion prior to or, and so on. These instances, representative of the larger collection, show that participants regularly produce or immediately following a grammatically complete turn shape, rendering the on-going turn grammatically incomplete.

In this section, I have illustrated that participants produce turn-final or in combination with a range of lexico-grammatical constructions. Turn-final or is a versatile and flexible lexical resource in naturally occurring interaction. In my analyses, I have not found that these different

39 Note, however, that even in an open wh-question such as "Where did you go?", the speaker conveys the assumption that the recipient did, in fact, go somewhere. In contrast, a polar question would include a proposition about a location, for instance, "Did you go to New Orleans", which is offered for confirmation or disconfirmation (the examples in this footnote are invented ones).
lexico-grammatical compositions alter or modify the work turn-final or accomplishes. In all my instances, participants use a grammatically incomplete structure that is regularly treated as complete interactionally. This raises the question of how participants can recognize or as an element that completes an on-going turn rather than as an element that projects more talk. In the next section, I describe the prosodic shape of or-turns, arguing that pitch and intonation play an important role in making or-turns recognizably complete.

2.2.2. Prosodic delivery of or-turns

As mentioned briefly above, points of possible completion are achieved through syntactic, prosodic, and pragmatic means in interaction (e.g., Ford, Fox, & Thompson, 1996; Ford & Thompson, 1996). In the prior section, I provided an overview of the lexico-grammatical composition of turns, showing that or-turns could be complete prior to or and that or renders the on-going turn, grammatically speaking, incomplete. In what follows, I discuss the role of prosody more generally in projecting and constructing points of possible completion before discussing the prosodic delivery of or-turns more specifically.

Prosody, broadly defined, includes phenomena related to stress, accent, pitch, loudness, duration, and timing (Couper-Kuhlen, 2009), and has been shown to be implicated in structural and interactional organization of spoken interaction and language in use such as turn construction, sequential organization, and floor management.40 Falling and rising intonation has been considered as indicating intonational completion of an interactional unit (Ford & Thompson, 1996). However, Szczepk Reed (2004) has shown that interactants manage smooth turn transition after virtually any intonation contour, including slightly rising and level

40 For an overview, see Couper-Kuhlen (2009).
intonation. This leads Couper-Kuhlen & Ono (2007) to the conclusion that "any type of final pitch would have to be called 'complete' in English" (p. 517). "Certain on-syllable accent types may be the pitch cues which project upcoming TRPs in English" (Couper-Kuhlen & Ono, 2007, p. 517; see also Couper-Kuhlen, 2012; Schegloff, 1987; Wells & Macfarlane, 1998). Such pitch peaks have been described and analyzed relative to where they occur within a syntactically complete turn. For instance, Schegloff (1988), noting that pitch peaks are only one resource among other resources to project points of possible completion, suggests that a pitch peak "can project intended turn completion at the next grammatically possible completion point" (p. 144; see also Schegloff, 1996, p. 84; Fox, 2001). Wells and Macfarlane (1998) identify the last major accent syllable as the "earliest point at which turn exchange mechanisms can unproblematically come into play" (p. 281). The authors also note that "turn-endings routinely (though not invariably) coincide with grammatical completion" (p. 281). Further, they show that for their data set participants can recognize the last major accent syllable as projecting turn completion based on phonetic properties alone.

Such TRP-projecting accents are important for Walker's (2012a) work on trail-off conjunctions. Extending earlier work on prosodic delivery of turns that are considered trail-off patterns (Local & Kelly, 1986; Local et al., 1986; Walker, 2004), Walker (2012a) specifically focuses on turn-final conjunctions. Based on an acoustic analysis of 28 instances of turn-final but, and, or, and so, he describes phonetic and visual features that regularly co-occur with the

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41 Similarly, Selting (1996) suggests that for German, an accent close to the end of a syntactic unit can be a cue for an upcoming point of possible completion.

42 Walker (2012a) uses acoustic analyses, using the speech analysis software program Praat to measure vowel duration, pitch and intonation contours.
production of such trail-off conjunctions. He addresses the question of how such conjunctions, which contradictory to commonly held expectations of them projecting more talk, are designed as and treated as completing a turn rather than projecting more talk. Below is an example of turn-final but, taken from Walker's (2012a) study, with the conjunction of interest provided in bold font (p. 143).

Excerpt: A.8, Farmhouse, 3:17

1 Don: that's what my [ husband will do ]
2 Lau: [ well you can help make l]unches
3 [ 'n : : ]
4 Don: [ you c'd go] and buy one cheaper but
5 Mom: right
6 Lau: [ you can help ]
7 Mom: [ but I pro ]bably will do it now

Walker (2012a) identifies several features for such trail-off conjunctions: The conjunction and prior turn material are produced as one piece, they have "just those phonetic characteristics of other designed-to-be- and treated-as-complete utterances" (p. 148) in that they occur after TRP-projecting accents, they are produced as belonging to the preceding turn material rather than initiating a new TCU. By virtue of them being less prominent than the preceding accented syllables, "there is nothing about the phonetic design of the conjunction which projects the imminent production of more talk by that speaker" (p. 148), and there are no indicators of cut-offs. These features are observable in my data set for or-turns.

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43 Walker's collection includes only one instance of or (personal communication, 01/09/2013).

44 See Mulder & Thompson (2008) for a discussion on the interactional work accomplished by turn-final but, a summary of which is given in the literature review in chapter 1.
Furthermore, Walker (2012a) notes that smooth turn transition can be taken as an "important source of evidence that participants orient to 'trail off' conjunctions as representing points of possible turn completion" (p. 148). In addition, talk ceases after the trail off conjunction and speaker transition occurs after the trail-off in half of his cases. When a recipient produces talk in terminal overlap, such incoming talk is not turn-competitive or hostile as evidenced by the lack of features such as high pitch and loudness that have been found to be associated with competitive incoming talk and its resolution (French & Local, 1983; Schegloff, 2000a). Furthermore, participants do not orient to the turn ending in a trail-off conjunction as an invitation for a collaborative completion and treat the turn as "informationally complete" (Walker, 2012a, p. 149).

In section 2.3., I discuss representative excerpts of my collection that illustrate that or-turns in my collection share the characteristics Walker (2012a) found for trail-off conjunctions. In my data set, prosody emerged as an important cue for participants in determining that an ongoing turn is about to be completed. Following the practice of other scholars in CA (e.g., Couper-Kuhlen, 2012; Walker, 2012b), in my analysis of intonation and pitch patterns of or-turns, I listened repeatedly to each segment and relied on auditory analysis. In cases where I remained uncertain about the prosodic delivery of an or-turn, I performed acoustic inspections using the speech analysis software program Praat. This acoustic inspection was supplementary in nature and confirmed the auditory impression of the prosodic delivery. Two major characteristics of the prosodic delivery of or-turns emerged: (i) a pitch rise or peak either on the last syllable prior to or or on the last lexical item as such prior to or, and (ii) a drop in pitch with the beginning of or and a subsequent leveling

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45 Walker (2012a) notes that in two instances, participants produce an inbreath after the turn-final conjunction. In my collection, participants produce inbreaths following or in two instances, see excerpt (2) and its discussion in section 2.3.2.1.
off of the intonation contour resulting in neither final rising nor final falling intonation on or. In all samples, or and the preceding turn material are produced "of a piece with the ongoing turn" (Walker, 2012a, p. 148), without any pauses or gaps. There is a pitch jump prior to or and a fall in pitch on or.

Using the same instances I used in section 2.2.1. to illustrate the variety of lexico-grammatical structures prior to or, I illustrate the prosodic delivery of or-turns (now numbered (1a) through (14a). Recall that I include transcription conventions used to denote prosodic characteristics based on GAT 2 (Selting et al., 2009). These are: "?" for rising intonation, ",," for slightly rising intonation, "_" for level intonation, ",;" for slightly falling intonation and ",." for falling intonation. I supplement these with "↑" for a pitch jump and "↓" for a pitch fall and shorter arrows "=*" and "+=" to represent less pronounced jumps and drops in pitch.

(1a) Literall'y 'or_
(2a) in, u:h New O:r;leans or:_
(3a) last wee'k 'or_
(4a) the one that I kept >on runway heading for a 'bit 'or_<
(5a) then they'd been married for a long ti:'me 'or_
(6a) I kno:w I'm getting you in the middle of dinner but I hope you don't have like frien:ds ov'er: or_
(7a) You walked into his _udio 'or_
(8a) so he's not quite as crooked as Sav;edra 'or_
(9a) WHat Did THey tell you=her body's not used to _e:lf
(10a) oh you mean you would have _icked a different sea:son maybe: 'or_
(11a) does that bring up _ealousy for y'ou 'or:_
(12a) ARE YOU AND terry monogam'ous 'or:_
(13a) how was their _occer game. did they win their soccer g'ame 'or_
should they go somewhere where they- they- recycle or turn into com' post 'or_

These examples, representative of the collection as a whole, show that interactants producing or-turns draw from similar prosodic resources. That is, they raise their pitch prior to or and lower it with the onset of or only to end the turn in a level intonation at the end of or itself. Example (10a) shows only a drop in pitch on or without a preceding pitch jump. Examples (2a), (11a), and (12a) also show a sound stretch on or.\footnote{Vowel and consonant stretches were not acoustically measured, but is an avenue for future research.} Examples (2a), (5a), (6a), (9a) and (10a) show that there can be sound stretches on the lexical items prior to or.

In my collection as a whole, 76 of 81 instances show both a rise in pitch on the lexical item prior to or and a fall in pitch with or and a subsequent leveling off in intonation.\footnote{For one instance, the prosodic shape could not be determined, because I only have access to the transcript, which does not include prosodic feature. This instance based on access to a transcript only is not one of the core cases for purposes of analyzing the prosodic shape of the or-turn. The instances for which I do have access to audio and thus to the prosodic shape and intonation pattern presents robust results in terms of the pitch peaks observable prior to or and the pitch drop at the onset of or and subsequent leveling off.} In four cases, there is either no rise in pitch prior to or or several lexical items prior to or are produced with higher pitch (and where there is no additional pitch jump prior to or). In these four cases, a pitch drop at the beginning of or is hearable, which subsequently levels off, resulting in level intonation without a final fall or rise. Sound stretches on the lexical items prior to or are another prosodic feature of or-turns. Such sound stretches are often found in turn completion sound patterns (Ford & Thompson, 1996; Szczepek Reed, 2004; Wells & Macfarlane, 1998).

The prosodic delivery of or-turns shows characteristics of other prosodic shapes that can indicate that a point of possible completion is imminent. As the examples above illustrate, or-turns not only show sound stretches on lexical items prior to or, they also exhibit a pitch peak on the
lexical element prior to or. As mentioned earlier, Wells & Macfarlane (1998) show that participants can recognize the last major accent syllable as projecting turn completion based on phonetic properties alone. They note that for participants, in the moment-by-moment unfolding of talk, the characteristic of "last" syllable accent is meaningless, as participants do not know a priori which accent will be, in fact, the last. The authors argue that rather than being the last major accent syllable in a turn, there are other ways for participants to distinguish TRP-projecting accents from other accents in a turn, namely "(i) information focus; (ii) syntactic characteristics; (iii) phonetic characteristics" (p. 282). The turn-final or's in my data are all placed after a pitch peak. Schegloff (1996) notes that a pitch peak "can adumbrate 'designed possible completion at next grammatically possible completion'" (p. 84), provided that "some recognizable action has been projected" (p. 84). Wells and Macfarlane (1998) argue that "final major accents routinely occur at syntactic completion points; most turns are both syntactically and prosodically complete" (p. 284). This is true for my data: Pitch peak and possible grammatical completion coincide for or-turns immediately prior to or. Yet, interactants produce or after this point in the turn's production. They do so without any pause and break in phonation, and in instances where the sound prior to or ends in a vowel, without a glottal stop. Instead, they produce or and the prior material as of one piece with prior talk, as one unit. Or's are not placed after a micro-pause or other indications of possible lack of uptake and thus do not deal with an immediate problem of recipient uptake.

The prosodic delivery of the or-turn-in-progress mirrors that of trail-off conjunctions more generally as described by Walker (2012a). His collection includes only one instance of or. The auditory analyses of my collection of turn-final or corroborates his findings.\textsuperscript{48} Hence, all instances of or-turns in my collection are turns that are completed with or and treated as

\textsuperscript{48} I relied, as I mentioned earlier, primarily on auditory analyses. Examining the acoustic pattern of all turn-final or's in my collection is a task for an extension of my work.
complete by the recipient based on prosodic features Walker (2012a) describes for his data set as well. Prosody is a crucial factor for participants in projecting an upcoming point of possible completion despite a grammatically incomplete turn shape.\(^{49}\)

Having discussed the lexico-grammatical and prosodic shape of or-turns and the role prosody and intonation plays in allowing interactants to design and recognize turn-final or as a turn-final element, I now turn to the implications of this on turn transition and speaker change.

2.3. **Or-turns: possible turn completion and turn transitions**

So far, I have described the lexico-grammatical shape of or-turns and the prosodic properties of them that contribute to the recognizability of or as a turn-final element. In this section, I pay attention to how participants manage or-turns locally. I address whether turn-final or is or is not a problem for speakers and recipients as they negotiate turn transition.

2.3.1. **Possible completion and turn transitions: Some preliminaries**

Or is produced in turn-final position where turns are already possibly complete, which is a placement sensitive to (potential) speaker change and transition relevance (e.g., Ford, Fox, & Thompson, 2002; Ford & Thompson, 1996; Lerner, 1996, 2002, 2003; Sacks et al., 1974; Schegloff, 1996). Possible completions are interactionally enforced by the fact that they are oriented to by speakers as points in the interaction at which they either have "rights or obligations" (Schegloff 1996: p. 82) to talk.

\(^{49}\) But see de Ruiter, Mitterer, and Enfield (2006). Using an experimental framework, the authors found that participants are able to recognize turn endings even when intonational contours are removed from a turn. They also found that when the intonational contour was intact but when the turn did not contain any recognizable words, then participants' accuracy in predicting turn ending deteriorated.
Points of possible completion can coincide with transition relevance and speaker change. Speaker change does not necessarily occur at every possible point of completion, as interlocutors can choose to talk past such points (e.g., Sacks et al., 1974; Schegloff, 2000a, 2007). Turn transition does routinely and unproblematically occur at or around points of possible completion, however. A TRP is a "span that begins with the imminence of possible completion" (Schegloff, 2007, p. 4). Transition relevance then begins slightly prior to the completion of a turn and extends slightly past its completion (Jefferson, 1983; Sacks et al., 1974; Schegloff, 2007; Weatherall, 2011). Schegloff (1996) introduces the terms "pre-possible completion," which is where a possible TRP begins, and "post-possible completion" (p. 83), which is where a possible TRP ends (see visualization below).

Figure 1: Pre-possible completion and post-possible completion

The figure shows where, roughly, pre-possible completion and post-possible completion occur in a linear and temporally unfolding fashion. A possible point of completion is generally projected prior to the actual completion of a TCU, and interlocutors can produce a relevant next once they can project the end of an on-going TCU in interaction, which can result in overlap. A beat of silence can follow a point of possible completion after which either same speaker or a different speaker can select to produce a turn-at-talk (Sacks et al., 1974). Possible points of completion and TRPs are achieved through syntactic, prosodic, and pragmatic means in interaction (e.g.,
Designing possible completion as recognizable and projectable for co-participants is crucial for managing turn transition. Recipients closely monitor an on-going turn to project where and when it can come to possible completion, as these points allow for smooth turn transition. I also discuss instances in which the next turn is produced after a delay and cases in which the same speaker continues after a delay.

Speaker change is managed in real time for interactants and is achieved in an orderly fashion in interaction. Interactants, once they can project the end of an on-going turn, can come in to provide a relevant next in response to the prior turn. Smooth, unproblematic turn transition and smooth, unproblematic speaker change can occur after a beat of silence, it can occur faster by a latched on response, and it can occur even earlier than that in (terminal) overlap (Jefferson, 1973, 1984, 1986; Sacks et al., 1974; Schegloff, 2000a). The beginning of the terminal item of a turn has been shown to be a systematic place for a co-participant to come in (Jefferson, 1983; 1986), and such minimal overlap is generally not treated as problematic by participants. In contrast, more extensive overlap and interruptions are treated as problematic (Jefferson, 1973, 1984, 1986; Sacks et al., 1974; Schegloff, 2000a). Terminal overlap occurs in the space that Schegloff (1996) terms pre-possible completion. The minimization of overlap and pauses is a result of participants being able to predict a possible point of completion (Wells & Macfarlane, 1998) and reflects the orderliness of talk-in-interaction, because speakers talk into being the normative rule of one speaker at a time (e.g., Ford & Thompson 1996; Sacks et al., 1974; Schegloff, 2000a, 2007).

For the current study, how transition relevance is associated with or-turns becomes a key question in relation to the work such constructions are doing in interaction. How is turn-final or oriented to by participants in the interaction? The cases in the data need to be inspected to
determine whether participants treat turn-final *or* as projecting more talk or as indeed
constituting a turn-final component of a TCU-in-progress, thereby constituting arrival at a TRP,
an interactionally consequential location for the unfolding of the interaction. A recipient could
treat *or* as an element that projects more talk, meaning that the production of *or* after a point of
possible syntactic completion would be treated as an indicator of same-speaker continuation (a
non-TRP), not occasioning speaker change. In contrast, recipients could treat *or* as a turn-final
component completing the ongoing turn and occasioning speaker change by producing a relevant
next turn. In principle, the possibility exists that a participant could provide a turn syntactically
fitted to the turn ending in *or*. In my data samples however, participants do not treat *or* as an
invitation for collaborative completion. I will demonstrate in this chapter that participants treat
*or* as turn-final by regularly and unproblematically producing a relevant next responsive action
(1) immediately after *or* has been produced, (2) in terminal overlap (Jefferson, 1973) or (3) after a
beat of silence. By producing a next in these three environments, participants manage smooth
turn transition.

To be able to show a clear orientation of the recipient toward turn-final *or*, ideally, there
wouldn't be any terminal overlap at all. If the turn-final *or* is overlapped in its entirety, the
recipient's immediate response may not be responsive to the *or* as such but rather to the material
before the *or* as the complete turn. However, a partial overlap on *or* where only the "r" or the
sound stretch on the "r" is overlapped, participants may very well be able to project the
production of "or" based on only the first sound of *or*, i.e., the "o". In my data, I did not find that
participants' responses to those turns ending in *or* that are partially overlapped and to those turns
where there is no overlap differed systematically. In her dissertation on Swedish *eller* (the
English equivalent of which is *or*), Lindström (1997) argues that what she calls an *or*-inquiry is
"projectably complete as an or-inquiry" (p. 60; original emphasis) as soon as the first syllable of eller is produced. She thus treats cases with partial overlap on eller not only as cases exhibiting smooth turn transition but also as cases where a recipient’s next can be shown to be responsive to eller. Based on my data and following Lindström (1997), I suggest that an or-turn as such is recognizable and projectable as an or-turn after the onset of or, i.e., after the production of "o".

In addition, participants regularly adapt and modify an on-going turn trajectory based on a co-participant's behavior. For instance, when faced with early onset overlap, participants often elect to speak louder and faster to (re-)gain the floor (Schegloff, 2000a), when participants do not receive uptake, they can add on increments and extend their turns (e.g., Couper-Kuhlen & Ono, 2007; Ford et al., 2002; Walker, 2004). These instances go to show that participants react incredibly fast based on what a co-participant does or does not do. Similarly, when participants begin preparing a relevant responsive action (which is usually done while the co-participant is still producing the first pair part; see figure 3 by Levinson (2012a) in section 2.4.), they are likely able to react, and possibly alter, their response. Hence, even in cases where or is completely overlapped with the beginning of the responsive action to the or-turn, the overlapped or may still have implications for the ongoing formulation of the response now in progress.

Having described the importance of possible completion in regard to turn transition, I now move on to an examination of representative instances from my collection illustrating how participants manage turn transition after turns ending in or.

2.3.2. Next speaker responses to or-turns

Turn transitions involving turns ending in or can play out in several different ways, which I will explicate in the sections that follow. In a first type of transition, participants can
manage turn transition smoothly, without any overlap, pauses or latchings (see excerpts (1), (2), and (3) in section 2.3.2.1.). Another kind of transition involves participants producing a relevant next immediately, in a latched-on-fashion (excerpt (4) and (5) in section 2.3.2.2.). A third way of managing turn transition is for participants to come in in terminal overlap, i.e., in (partial) overlap with the turn-final or (excerpts (6), (7), (8), (9)) as well as in more extensive overlap (excerpt (10) in section 2.3.2.3.). Finally, participants can come in in a delayed fashion, resulting in pauses after the turn-final or (excerpt (11) in section 2.3.2.4.). After I discuss these four types of turn transition and speaker change, I turn to instances in which the speaker who uttered the or-turn self-selects after a lack of uptake by a co-participant (excerpt (12) and (13) in section 2.3.2.5.). The turn material produced after such a pause does not usually constitute a grammatical continuation of the or-turn, and as such, these cases strengthen my argument that or is produced as a turn-final element. Overall, turn transition is managed, for the most part, unproblematically in all samples in my collection. This supports my claim that or is produced as a turn-final element completing the on-going turn rather than as a turn continuation or extension that would renew the relevance for participant uptake. The excerpts provided here include the turn ending in or and the responding turn. I discuss the larger sequential environment in chapter 3.

2.3.2.1. Smooth turn transition after or-turns

Excerpts (1), (2), and (3) below exemplify smooth turn transition, i.e., turn transition where no silence and no overlap occurs. Included in this pattern are those instances where a micropause or a beat of silence emerges in between the turns, something that is common in unmarked turn transition (e.g., Levinson, 2012a; Sacks et al., 1974).
Excerpt (1): Lose one then too OR
(69; Rockwell Hr2_C1:00.46.44)

1 => E: so, just lose one right, \textcolor{red}{\textbf{and do I lose one then ↑too ↓or}}_.
2 J: no cause you- both of yours are big[ger.]
3 E: [oh okay.

Excerpt (2): New Orleans or
(60; Call friend Engn6952:12.17)

1 => M1: or \textcolor{red}{\textbf{or in, u:h New O:rlleans \textbackslash{}or: _ or}}.
2 M2: no, but well they ( ) going to have Co:mde:x,
3 (0.6)
4 M1: oh

Excerpt (3): Upside down or
(40; Rockwell HR1_C1:00.44.00)

1 => A1: \textcolor{red}{\textbf{how does he like to be held.=↑up:_=\textbackslash{}side \textbackslash{}down \textbackslash{}or}}_.
2 (.)
3 E: just kinda hh. ((BVF))

In excerpt (1), Eric asks a question from his co-participant Jessica about his move in a board game all participants are playing. Jessica provides the relevant response without delay, overlap or latching. In the current database, there were 30 of 81 instances in which turn transition was achieved in this manner, i.e., without a beat of silence in between and without latching. In excerpt (2), M1 inquires about the location of a conference, ending the turn with \textcolor{red}{\textbf{or}} followed by an audible inbreath. M2 produces a response without delay, overlap or latching. In my
collection, only 2 instances contain an inbreath following or prior to speaker change. An inbreath can signal that a speaker prepares to produce more talk (Hutchby & Wooffitt, 2008; Schegloff, 1996; Walker, 2012a), but it can also be used in turn-initial position as a delay token (Schegloff, 1996, 2007; Stivers & Robinson, 2006). Here, speaker M1 may be preparing for more talk, but his recipient, M2, does not treat the inbreath as projecting more talk as is evidenced by his producing the relevant answer immediately. He hence orients to or as a turn-final element. In excerpt (3), Albert asks Eric a question about how Eric's cat likes to be held. After a micropause (i.e., a beat of silence), Eric provides the relevant answer, again without overlap or latching. A total of 8 of 81 instances contain a micro-pause prior to speaker change.

The producer of the question ending in or in each instance ceases speech production following or. In excerpt (2), M1 produces an audible inbreath after or, which is not followed by additional talk. The producer of the or-turn hence designs the turn-at-talk with or as the completing item rather than with or as an item projecting more talk. The recipients also treat or as an element that marks turn-finality, as they begin producing their responses immediately or after a beat of silence. They do not, as I mentioned before, treat the or as an invitation for collaborative completion.

2.3.2.2. Latched responses to or-turns

In the next two examples, participants manage turn transition by latching their response immediately onto the or-turn, again not treating or as an opportunity for collaborative completion or as an item projecting more talk by the questioner. Of 81 instances, 7 such examples were found in the data collection.
Excerpt (4): At U of Y now or

(58; Rockwell HR1_C1: 00.35.20)

1 Ang: [I can't tell you: how surprised I am]
2 => Eri: [Is he still- [is he- has he done a PhD at ] 'U of Y 'now: 'or_=
3 Ang: =no he's just gonna finish his master's. he's student teaching
4 this semester and then he's gonna find a job teaching at a high
5 school,
6 Eri: [oh okay

Excerpt (5) his oxygen get low OR

(76; SBC036: 04.32)

1 => K: Did his oxygen get lo\'w? ‘or=_
2 M: =yeah; [it was] like eighty-six percent.
3 L: [reall?]  

In excerpt (4), Eric is asking a question about a third party both he and Angela know. Immediately upon the completion of or Angela comes in to produce the relevant answer. In excerpt (5), K asks M about the oxygen level of M's newborn. As is the case in excerpt (4), M immediately produces the answer, in a latched fashion. Such latched responses are not treated as problematic by recipients. I use the term "latch" here to refer to turn transition with "no interval between the end of a prior and start of a next piece of talk" (Sacks et al., 1974, p. 731). That is,
latching refers to the practice of when participants produce a turn in response to a co-participant's prior turn without any beat of silence and without any overlap.\textsuperscript{50}

2.3.2.3. Overlap in responses to or-turns

In addition to such non-delayed and non-overlapped turn transitions, participants also manage speaker change through overlap. The following excerpts illustrate the varying degrees of overlap.

Excerpt (6): Monogamous or

(25; Call friend TBengs 6661: 15.08)

1 => M2: ARE YOU AND terry monogam’ous ‘or[:

2 M1: [yeah.

Excerpt (7): Regulating or

(51; Call friends TB engn 4889: 19.50)

1 => F1: What Did THey tell you=her body’s not used to regulating

2 its↑e:lf=↓o[\x

3 F2: [WELL they said that she had< a very tough time

4 getting born, so

5 (0.3)

6 F2: .hh [it probably is some ↑there and also cause I: .h I was sick

\textsuperscript{50} Participants employ a related practice, that of the rush-through (Schegloff, 2000a, 2007; Walker, 2003, 2010) as a turn-holding device, so as to inhibit a co-participant from taking the floor. Such rush-throughs are produced at a faster speed than surrounding talk and possess other phonetic qualities that distinguish them from other non-rush-through turn material (Walker, 2010).
Excerpt (8): Four letter words or

(50; TBengn4984: 00.01.26)

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<td>1</td>
<td>L:</td>
<td>.hh so We're being Recorded. so you know you can like tell all your secrets=\n</td>
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<td>[°.h(h)h .h(h</td>
<td>h .h(h)h .h(h)h°]</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>=&gt; R:</td>
<td>[okay_ °.h(h)h .h(h)h° don't u]se don't use any four letter wo':rd[s 'o:rd]</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>L:</td>
<td>[.hh ] AH: I think you can say anything you want. ((smile voice))</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>R:</td>
<td>°okay; good.&quot;</td>
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Excerpt (9): The other person or

(19; Callfriend TB4889:14.05)

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>=&gt; F1:</td>
<td>SO Rachel is one person and Hannah's the other person ['or</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>F2:</td>
<td>[yeah.</td>
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In these excerpts, the extent of the overlap differs, but in all cases, the overlap begins either precisely with the onset of or (excerpt 9), during the production of or (excerpts 6 and 7), and in excerpt (8), slightly prior to the production of or, but still on the terminal item of the turn as defined by Lerner (1996) as the last one or two words in a turn. For participants in the moment-by-moment temporally unfolding interaction, a possible point of completion is projectable with the grammatical point of completion, i.e., prior to or, thus the or emerges as the last item of the turn only retrospectively. This leads to the question of how it is heard and responded to by the speaker now initiating a response, and it also leads to the question of whether the or itself might
be responsive to some indication of delay as the first speaker enters the space of heightened monitoring of recipient response. In my collection, 4 instances show full overlap on *or* (as shown in excerpt (9)), 10 show partial overlap on *or* (as shown in excerpt (6) and (7)), and 4 instances show how a recipient is preparing to produce a turn as evidenced by the inbreath in terminal overlap (excerpt (8)). Such turn-initial inbreaths are a "turn-pre-beginning practice" (Schegloff, 2000b, p. 15) indicating that a speaker is preparing to produce a turn (see also Hutchby & Wooffitt, 2008; Schegloff, 1996; Walker 2012a). When inbreaths are produced in the clear, they can also work to delay a response, and thus can be implicated in dispreferred nexts (Drew & Holt, 1998; Schegloff, 1996, 2007; Sidnell, 2010).

Terminal item overlap has been shown to be a robust phenomenon of unproblematic speaker change (e.g., Jefferson, 1973, 1983, 1984; 1986; Schegloff, 1996, 2000). When recipients produce a relevant next turn with terminal overlap, they show that they can predict the upcoming completion and that they have understood the action import of the turn in progress. Recipients do not design their overlap in a way that would indicate competitive incomings (as evidenced by the lack of features such as high pitch and loudness that has been found to be associated with competitive incoming talk (French & Local, 1983; Walker 2012a), and the questioner also does not treat the overlap as competitive, as evidenced by the lack of resources commonly used to resolve overlap (Schegloff, 2000b). Once recipients begin their answers, they do not drop out but instead continue their response. If *or* were treated as having a continuation-projecting character, it would be likely for recipients to modify their responding TCU-in-progress upon registering the co-participant's *or* and potentially drop out to allow for the questioner’s completion of the *or*-component. Neither questioner nor recipient treats *or* as such a
component, however. This again shows that or is treated as an element that does not project more talk.

In four 4 out of 81 instances in my collection, the overlap is more extensive than on the terminal item. Excerpt (10) below illustrates such cases.

Excerpt (10): Fancy cars or
(3; SBC036:15.37)

1 K: how many
2 (.)
3 => K: people did they [get like that. just a [few or: ]
4 L: [I don't know; ] ["just" a fe]w.=h. yeah;

In this instance, K produces a wh-question first, "how many did they get like that", to which L produces a claim of no-knowledge in overlap with part of the wh-question. Specifically, L comes in in recognitional overlap (Jefferson, 1973; 1984). That is, she comes in at a point where she can project the gist of K's question (after "they" in line 3), treating this point in the interaction as one of "semantic adequacy" (Wells & Macfarlane, 1998, p. 267). When L can project the gist of the question, she produces a no-knowledge claim (Beach & Metzger, 1997), which overlaps not only with the final part of the wh-question TCU, but also with the first syllable of the candidate answer that K adds to his wh-question in line 3. K's candidate answer "just a few or" makes relevant a confirmation or disconfirmation. After L's no-knowledge claim, L begins formulating an answer to the wh-question which not only answers the wh-question but also aligns with and confirms K's barely begun candidate answer. It could be that L only understands fully K's question now that it has been fully produced and that this is the cause for her modification and correction of her answer from a no-knowledge claim to the answer "just a few", which is done in overlap with K's candidate answer. L also manages to be responsive to
K's candidate answer through the token "yeah", which she adds after "just a few". It is hard to
determine if L was going to produce "just a few yeah" even without K’s candidate answer or if
K's candidate answer was projectable and recognizable at "just", thus leading to an affirmation of
it.

I discuss this excerpt here because it highlights that or is used as a turn-final item that is
not implicated in securing recipient uptake. When K produces or, he has already secured such
uptake, hence, there is no interactional need for him to produce the or and he could cease talk
prior to or. By producing the token "yeah" rather than dropping out to allow for further talk
following her co-participant's or, L also shows her orientation to or as not projecting more talk.

2.3.2.4. Delay in responses to or-turns

In 5 of 81 data samples in my collection, recipients produce a response after some delay.
Excerpts (11) is representative for these cases.

Excerpt (11) : Deck or

(38; Rockwell_HR:59.00)

1 => Eri: And then do I put these cards back in the 'deck=or 
2   (0.9)
3   Alb: uh: yeah at the bottom; I think we're saying .h but I 'think
4       Jessica might have shuffled em in or whatever but whatever.

In excerpt (11), Eric inquires about what to do with one of the game cards after he drew it.
Albert, after a pause of 0.9 seconds, produces the relevant answer. Albert's answer displays
several markers of uncertainty ("I think" is used twice, "maybe" once), which retrospectively
shed light on the pause prior to his answer: he does not have an immediate answer to Eric's
question and once he does provide one, he produces several epistemic downgrades (Kärkkäinen,
The delay of 0.9 seconds after the question ending in *or* could be interpreted as a pause that would allow the questioner to continue his turn by adding further turn material in post *or*-position. In this scenario, the turn-final *or* would be oriented to as possibly projecting more talk by the questioner, and the pause as an opportunity for the questioner to produce such talk. However, Eric does not produce such additional talk, and Albert does not pursue it. Albert could produce a follow-up question such as "or what", but instead, he moves on (after the pause) to provide the answer made relevant by the question. The pause in this example can then be said to 'belong' to Albert, the recipient, rather than to Eric. Rather than waiting for more talk after *or*, Albert struggles with finding an appropriate answer to the question. This struggle is reflected in the unfolding of his answer turn via the epistemic markers.

2.3.2.5. Turn continuation by same speaker following *or*-turns

In 9 of 81 instances in my collection, the interactant who produces the turn-final *or* self-selects after a lack of uptake by a co-participant. In such cases, the next turn can be grammatically fitted (3 of these 9 cases) to the prior *or*-turn, and it can be produced in a way where it is not grammatically fitted to be a continuation of the turn-final *or* (6 of these 9 cases). Instead, it is a new unit and action. Consider excerpt (12) below:

Excerpt (12): Gender stereotype or

(48; Bias Lit R4C1 complete 071310:01.22.27)

```plaintext
1 => W:  (are you) saying that that's like a gender stereotype "or:"  
2                     (.)  
3  W:  is that what you're,  
4                     (.)  
5  W:  [(getting at/saying)  
```
Gwe: [well_ I mean_ do we- (.) do we- (.) do we have any _evid’ence _ that being soft spoken would prevent h’er from,

W: ['I see.' ((nodding))]

In this sample, speaker W formulates a clarification request that ends in or. G does not immediately produce a response (albeit only for a micro pause), and W self-selects to continue her turn. This continuation is not grammatically fitted to the prior or in that she does not produce a turn of the format "X or Y". Instead, she begins a new syntactic construction in form of a question.

This excerpt is representative of the other 5 instances in which a speaker continues talking after a lack of uptake in a fashion where this additional talk is not grammatically fitted. It supports my argument that or completes a current TCU in progress rather than projecting more talk by the same speaker that would complete the format "X or Y", which a conjunction would project. Or then 'belongs' to the TCU-in-progress rather than to a yet-to-be produced new TCU. As such, it can accomplish interactional work that is distinct yet closely connected to the or-turn.

In addition to unfitted grammatical turn continuation following a lack of uptake following an or-turn, participants can also produce grammatically fitted continuations. This occurred 3 times in my collection. Consider excerpt (13) below.

Excerpt (13): Send it to me or

(97; Call friend, TBengn4984: 22.55)

LI: it'll co:me to me; [.hh ] it was u:m ((yawning))

RO: [oka:y?]

LI: the guy w- is a professor at Ya:le; "a[nd:] what's his name_=it's

RO: [m hm:,

LI: like YAmaguchi ‘or Yomomut'i or:_huhu
RO is asking LI to inform her of an author’s name that LI is unable to remember on the spot (not shown in transcript). See lines 1-7 where LI is making visible for her co-participant her trying to remember the author's name. She produces several candidate solutions before indicating again that she has yet to remember the correct name in line 7 ("what the hell is his name"). This is when RO lets her off the hook, so to say, and suggests a solution that doesn’t require LI’s immediate remembering of the author’s name. RO suggests that LI can send "it" to her, ending the turn in or. The or is followed by a 0.5 second pause (line 12), after which RO adds additional turn material. (line 13). She replaces "it" with "the name", making clear that she does not expect LI to send the book itself (which could be one possible interpretation), but rather that LI send her the name. LI adds another unit to her turn, again linked with "or," here she replaces "send it" with "call me." These three options, sending the book, sending the name, and finally calling her, are marked by a decreasing burden on the recipient should the recipient agree with RO’s suggested course of action. LI accepts and agrees in overlap prior to the last option presented, but after an option has been presented that involves less burden for her (i.e., ‘sending the name’ versus 'sending the book').

RO’s additional turn material is thus used to secure uptake, and in the process of securing uptake, the additional turn material also rephrases the initial suggestion in a way that is more
prone to being accepted, which is one strategy for pursuing a response (Pomerantz, 1984b) and for dealing with impending dispreferred answers/actions in general (Schegloff, 2007). RO makes use of *or*’s ability to function in different ways. By adding a fitted next unit, the speaker is able to modify the on-going turn and retroactively turns *or* into a coordinating conjunction, now linking two alternatives. Had uptake been produced immediately, *or* would have lost this coordinating conjunction feature and would have been a turn-final element. Hence, *or* can be used in a somewhat fluid fashion, and participants can choose to exploit its coordinating characteristics for a grammatically fitted turn continuation when faced with lack of uptake, or they can chose to begin a new independent grammatical structure and treat *or* as a turn-final element that does not coordinate two elements (as was the case in excerpt (12) above).

These two instances (excerpt (12) and excerpt (13)) show that when recipient uptake is not immediately forthcoming following an *or*-turn, the speaker who produced the *or*-turn can self-select to form another turn-at-talk. Excerpt (12) shows that this next turn does not necessarily have to be syntactically fitted to *or*. In fact, in 6 of 9 instances where speaker change does not occur, the TCU following the turn-final *or* is not syntactically fitted but instead forms its own, grammatically independent turn. Excerpt (13) shows that participants can also formulate their new turn in a syntactically fitted way when no recipient uptake is produced following their *or*-turn. In either scenario, the new turn works toward securing the relevant but missing recipient uptake and works to establish sequential implicativeness.

The fact that in most cases, speaker change occurs and that in most cases of non-speaker change, the continuation is formulated as its own grammatical structure rather than a grammatically dependent coordinated turn points to two aspects: (i) *or* is a versatile resource that can be used and adapted for specific interactional goals in different ways and (ii) *or* – when
followed by a non-fitted grammatical structure – is not only treated by recipients as turn-final, but that participants also produce *or* as a turn-final element rather than an element that projects more talk. Only when faced with a lack of uptake do speakers opt to continue past an *or* that is a turn-final *or*. When speakers produce an alternative question, or other constructions involving turn-medial *or*, they naturally do continue their turn production past *or*. When participants produce an *or* as a turn-final element, they only opt to produce additional turns-at-talk when faced with a lack of participant uptake, which again shows that participants produce *or* in the first instance as a turn-final element. This final element can be adapted to being a bridge between two units when faced with lack of uptake, illustrating its fluid and versatile character.

### 2.3.2.6. Discussion of turn transition and *or*-turns

In this chapter so far, I have discussed the importance of possible completion points, turn transition, possible speaker change, overlap, and turn continuation. I have provided an overview of the grammatical composition of *or*-turns. Participants also draw from prosody and intonation in marking and projecting a point of possible completion. I have also discussed that *or* does not pose problems for smooth turn transition.

The examples above illustrate that speakers routinely project the end of the TCU-in-progress at or around the turn-final *or*. It has been established that when participants can project the action a turn-in-progress is accomplishing (Jefferson, 1973; 1984; Schegloff, 1996; 2007) they can enter another person's turn early, prior to the turn's completion. In fact, responses agreeing with a prior turn are routinely produced in terminal overlap (e.g., Jefferson, 1987; Schegloff, 2007; Sidnell, 2010). The primary action of the turns ending in *or* is to solicit confirmation or disconfirmation, and several of the examples above illustrate that participants are
able to recognize this action before the final item *or* is completely produced. The examples also show that *or* does not impede participants’ understanding of the TCU as requesting confirmation or disconfirmation of a put forward proposition. The way in which participants manage turn transition unproblematically in the face of a lexical item that, by grammatical standards, would project more talk, further supports my argument that *or* is seen as an item completing an on-going turn. In addition, turn-final *or* is produced of one piece with the prior turn material.

In my data, participants do not show an orientation to *or* as projecting more talk, and they treat the turns ending in *or* as complete rather than projecting continuation. The fact that these turns are, from a syntactic perspective, incomplete after the addition of *or* does not interfere with participants' recognizing a point of possible completion and the beginning of a transition space where speaker change is relevant. Participants can be shown to orient to *or* not as an element that projects further talk and as such would be a component of a multi-unit turn, but rather by managing smooth turn transition and speaker change when a turn ends in *or*, they display that *or* is treated as an element that completes an on-going turn.

The turn-final *or*'s in my collection seem to have lost some of the properties of coordinating conjunctions. As a coordinating conjunction, *or* commonly links two elements and when used as a coordinating conjunction, projects more talk. Specifically, it would project an alternative to what was provided prior to *or* (e.g., Couper-Kuhlen & Ono 2007; Walker, 2012a; Quirk et al., 1985). In my data, turns ending in *or* are not treated as not-yet-complete turns, with *or* not being treated as a coordinating conjunction in that participants do not orient to a non-
produced second alternative as recognizably and noticeably absent.\textsuperscript{51} For turns ending in \textit{or}, possible grammatical completion prior to \textit{or} does not impede turn transition and the recognizability of possible points of completion.

\textbf{2.4. Concluding discussion}

In this chapter, I discussed the notions of possible points of turn completion, turn transition and speaker change in general and how they relate to \textit{or}-turns. I paid attention to the mechanism of speaker change as well as the lexico-grammatical and prosodic composition of turns. I have shown that \textit{or}-turns are oriented to as complete turns with \textit{or} not being oriented to as projecting more talk to come, and that \textit{or}-turns, while produced as of one piece with the preceding turn material, exhibit a prosodic, syntactic and pragmatic point of possible completion prior to \textit{or}. This raises the question of whether \textit{or} is occasioned by a lack of recipient uptake akin to increments. For instance, the speaker could produce the turn-final \textit{or} because of a lack of recipient uptake as a resource to minimize gaps between turns and to secure recipient uptake, similar to what Davidson (1984) describes as a monitor space. When interlocutors face lack of participant uptake, they can add increments to their current turn after having reached possible completion (e.g., Ford & Thompson, 1996; Sacks et al., 1974, Schegloff, 1996; 2000; 2007). Ford et al. (2002), define an increment as "a non-main clause continuation after a possible point of turn completion" (p. 16). A common form of turn extension via such increments involves adding additional lexico-grammatical turn material when the turn has reached possible

\textsuperscript{51} Participants could orient to a second alternative as noticeably absent following \textit{or} by producing a turn along the lines of "or what" in next position. Participants could also treat \textit{or} as an invitation for a collaborative completion. However, this does not occur in any of my data samples.
completion. One type of these increments has been termed glue-on (Couper-Kuhlen & Ono, 2007) and is illustrated below.


1 Gor: .t O:kay. .h I: sh- I shall leave you. .h
to get on with your hard studying.
3 that I know I interrupted. .hhhhhh
4 rather[rudely
5 Dan: [(Oh yes.)

Here, in line 1, Gordon's turn reaches possible completion with "you.". After an inbreath, he adds to this prior possibly complete turn by forming an infinitival clause that is grammatically integrated with and fitted to the prior turn. In line 3, Gordon adds another increment, also grammatically integrated with the prior turn material by forming a relative clause modifying the prior NP "your hard studying.". In line 4, Gordon adds an adverbial modification, "rather rudely," which is also grammatically integrated with prior turn material. All these continuations, or increments, are of the type of glue-ons and occur after a possible point of completion has been reached. When no immediate participant uptake is provided, Gordon adds to the prior possibly complete turn and extends it past the possible completion, creating a new point of possible completion and transition relevance with the completion of each glue-on. The glue-on increment hence aids the progressivity of the interaction and works toward securing uptake from the co-participant. Each additional increment here is produced after a prior unit has come to possible completion,\(^5\) working toward securing participant uptake.

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\(^5\) In regard to prosody and intonation, Couper-Kuhlen and Ono (2007) operationalized possible completion as exhibiting turn-final intonation, which was defined as either falling or rising.
Turn-final *or* is produced at points in the interaction where a turn could be possibly complete from a grammatical, prosodic, and pragmatic perspective. In contrast to increments such as the one discussed above, *or* does not seem to be implicated in pursuing participant uptake, because recipients manage turn transition in most cases (63 of 81) immediately, prior to the turn's completion in terminal overlap, or with minimal gaps. *Or*, then, while it may be loosely related to increments in the sense that a current TCU contains a post-possible completion item, it is different from increments in that *or* does not renew transition relevance – it occurs in the transition relevance space. *Or*-turns consist of one TCU that contains a post-possible completion item (rather than a new TCU or an increment). This can be schematized as follows:

![Diagram](image)

Figure 2: *Or* as a post-possible completion item

*Or* is not an increment used to deal with a lack of participant uptake, but rather a component integrated in the TCU-in-progress. Recall that in cases where following *or* no uptake is produce, participants can self-select and subsequently pursue such missing uptake (section 2.3.2.5.). These uptake pursuits are produced after *or* has already been uttered and are not accomplished via the *or* itself. Turn-final *or* resembles Schegloff's (1996) definition of post-completion stance marker: In contrast to extensions of TCUs, which "re-occasion possible completion" (Schegloff, 1996, p. 90), post-completion stance markers refer to things that are added that are not an extension to
prior talk, but rather are "retrospective or retroactive alignment toward it, or consequences of it" (p. 90). These stance markers include laughter, breathing, facial expressions, nodding, shrugs, "I dunnos", in-breaths, etc (p. 93). In my collection, turn-final or does work toward indexing a stance of uncertainty or backing down from a question's proposition (I discuss this in detail in chapter 5). Other elements added in the same intra-turn placement as or include tags such as "isn't it" and "right". *Right* (Gardner, 2007a) shares with or that is not necessary for the action formation of a question. It retroactively expresses a stance about that which has been said. Tags such as "isn't" are also related, but seem to be doing additional work. That is, tags also express a stance about that which has been said, more precisely epistemic authority (Heritage & Raymond, 2005), but tags also contribute to the action formation of doing questioning. That is, a declarative turn is transformed into a question by the addition of a tag, and hence, tags are actively involved in marking a turn as a question. Tags can also be used to pursue a response when none is forthcoming. For or-turns, it is the interrogative syntax and the action import that make the turn recognizable as a question.

I briefly mentioned that recipients recognize the action of or-turns before or is produced (as is evidenced by, for instance, responses in overlap. Levinson (2012a) writes that participants are routinely faced with the challenge of assigning "at least one major action to a turn they have only heard part of so far" (p. 103). He notes that participants "must have parsed what they have heard and understood its grammar well enough to predict both the content and its structure" (p. 1), allowing them to project when an ongoing turn will come to an end. Levinson (2012a) provides a visualization of the temporal nature of when recipients begin preparing their responses to a prior turn (his figure 1, p. 103):
Because interactants manage turn transition in split seconds, they are actively engaged in monitoring a current turn for what has been produced already and for what is likely still to be produced so as to not only project when to come in but also to prepare what to say when it is time to come in. The figure above lends further proof to the fact that participants can and do recognize the action of or-turns before the or-turn reaches possible completion. Turn-final or is thus not necessary for recognizing and forming the action of doing questioning of the or-turn as such. However, interactants do produce this turn-final or nevertheless. If it is not needed for action formation of the turn as such, the question of what it does needs to be addressed. This is the question I take up in more detail in chapters 4 and 5. I have mentioned in this chapter that or-turns are questions and make relevant an answer, but I have yet to discuss the sequential environment and the social actions of or-turns in some more detail. It is to the sequential environment and the social actions of or-turns that I turn next.
3. **Sequential environment and social actions of or-turns**

3.1. **Introduction**

In chapter 2, I have outlined the composition of or-turns (both syntactic and prosodic). I also discussed that or occurs after a possible point of prosodic, syntactic, and pragmatic completion in a turn, but that or does not initiate a new, additional TCU within the on-going turn as it does not project more talk. Or occurs in final position of a turn where it completes that turn and where turn transition and speaker change is relevant. In addition to a turn's composition, its placement in the unfolding interaction is equally important in coming to an understanding of its action. In this chapter, I discuss the sequential environment in which or-turns emerge as well as the actions or-turns help accomplish in this environment.

Looking at the sequential organization and larger activity in which or-turns are employed constitutes an important step of understanding what participants do when they end a turn in or. In my data, or-turns occur in environments where knowledge differentials between the producer and the recipient of the or-turn are negotiated. In other words, participants end turns in or in places in the interaction where issues regarding who knows what emerge as important for the unfolding of the talk. The aim in this chapter is to demonstrate that the social actions accomplished by or-turns are actions where knowledge differentials are key. The questions I address in this chapter are: What is the sequential organization of the sequences in which or-turns are used? Which social actions do participants accomplish with turns ending in or?

3.2. **Sequential organization: Some preliminaries**

Any kind of joint activity has some organization to it. Playing a board game is a joint activity and involves an organization and a system of rules that all participants follow in order to
accomplish the activity of playing the game. Making a move in a board game is the way for players to participate in that board game. When we talk, we take turns at talk to participate in talk-in-interaction. Turn-taking is thus a crucial and central organizational feature of conversation (e.g., Sacks et al., 1974; Schegloff, 2007; Sidnell, 2010). In this section, I lay out some of the basics of the turn-taking system, especially in regard to the sequential organization of turns-at-talk to provide background information on these two central features of conversation. It is important to note that I focus on ordinary conversation rather than on institutional conversation.\(^{53}\)

Turns are the basic unit of conversation (Sacks et al., 1974), and as Sidnell (2010), crediting Levinson (2006), notes "turn-taking is a requirement of any coordinated action and thus of human society" (Sidnell, 2010, p. 37). The turn-taking system cannot be reduced to it being seen as a feature of polite conversation. Waiting one's turn and not interrupting are often seen as behaviors exhibited by good-mannered and polite people, and in this sense, turn-taking is sometimes understood as synonymous with politeness (Sidnell, 2010). Turn-taking, and the system of turn-taking, does not preclude interlocutors from, for example, being rude to one another, having arguments or fighting with someone. In fact, when we engage in arguments with other people, we still have to take and respond to turns to make our points. Similarly, turn-taking

\(^{53}\) Institutional talk refers to those conversations within institutions (or outside of them), where (among other features) interlocutors have predetermined roles, for example in meetings, in the courtroom or during job interviews. For instance, an interviewer generally talks into being the role of the interviewer by predominantly asking questions and the interviewee predominantly gives answers to questions (Clayman et al., 2012; Clayman & Heritage, 2002; Drew & Heritage, 1992). In contrast, mundane, or ordinary talk, has no such predetermined roles, and includes for instance dinner conversations among friends. In institutional settings, such mundane ordinary talk can also occur.
does not preclude rudeness. When we are rude to other people, we also exploit the properties of
the turn-taking system when we, for instance, "completely exclude some person from a
conversation (disallowing them any opportunity to speak)" or when we "withhold a response to
what someone else has said and in that way (...) ignore them" (Sidnell, 2010, p. 37).

Participants locally manage taking turns and accomplishing actions in conversation. That
is, they deal with the current and next turn just as they occur, i.e., in the context of what's come
before, not with reference to what may be produced later in a given conversation, and they
manage this together (Sacks et al., 1974). In chapter 2, I already discussed points of possible
completion, transition relevance points, and the mechanism for speaker change, all of which are
crucial components of the turn-taking system as such. The sequential organization of actions is
another crucial aspect of talk-in-interaction. For instance, a turn such as "Hi" initiates a greeting
sequence and the action of doing a greeting. This greeting sequence can then be completed by
the co-participant's next turn, for instance via another "Hi"-turn. Participants accomplish the
action of doing a greeting via the greeting sequence, which consists of a first turn and a second
turn that is responsive to that first turn.

Another term for pairs such as greeting-pairs is adjacency pair. Other examples of
adjacency pairs include, among many more, offer-acceptance/rejection and question-answer
pairs. In such pairs, the first, action-initiating turn is considered to be a first-pair part (FPP), the
second, action-completing turn is considered to be a second-pair part (SPP) (e.g., C. Goodwin &

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54 See Schegloff (1968) for a study on the sequencing of conversational openings.

55 Schegloff (2007) notes that "with great regularity greetings and their responses are done with the same
form ('Hi', 'Hi')" (p. 16).
Unexpanded adjacency pairs\textsuperscript{56} exhibit the following features (Schegloff, 2007; Sidnell, 2010):

(i) They are composed of two turns
(ii) They are produced by different speakers
(iii) They are placed one after the other (i.e., adjacently).
(iv) They are relatively ordered, i.e., as FPPs and SPPs
(v) They are composed of pair-types (i.e., a FPP makes relevant a certain type (or a limited range) of SPP.

Adjacency pairs\textsuperscript{57} serve as a normative underlying structure of talk and have implicativeness, meaning that a specific range of next activities are made relevant by the other speaker's preceding activity (Heritage, 1984a). They help in creating intersubjectivity, as each utterance provides current participants with a basis for checking how the utterance was understood by the other speaker, making it possible for correction and repair initiation to occur if need be. The interlocutors' intersubjectivity is hence co-constructed implicitly via sequential organization and updated continuously throughout the talk, rendering explicit assurances of each other's understanding unnecessary (Heritage, 1984a).

\textsuperscript{56} Such basic adjacency pairs can be expanded, via pre-expansion, post-expansion and minimal expansion (in third position). I return to minimal expansion in third position below.

\textsuperscript{57} Schegloff and Sacks (1973), Schegloff (1968) and Schegloff (2007) treat two-part adjacency pairs as the "minimal unexpanded unit of sequence organization" (Schegloff, 2007, p. 13). Jefferson and Schenkein (1978) propose that the third turn that often follows the adjacency pair and the adjacency pair itself together are the minimally unexpanded unit of sequence organization.
3.3. **Question-answer adjacency pairs and or-turns**

Participants in interaction orient to the sequential organization of adjacency pairs as normative as is evidenced by their own behavior. When a recipient of, for instance, a greeting, produces a second greeting, that interlocutor not only completes the adjacency pair and the action of doing a greeting, he or she also treats the first greeting as a FPP. The recipient displays his or her understanding of the prior turn as a greeting. As a by-product of the turn-taking system, the analyst of talk can rely on this next-turn-proof procedure (Sacks et al., 1974) to inspect the unfolding talk. Interlocutors also show, via their behavior, if a next turn following a FPP is noticeably absent, and in turn was conditionally relevant (Schegloff, 1968). Conditional relevance refers to the constraints set up by a FPP for the relevance of a SPP. Specifically, when a SPP is absent, and if that absence is treated as noticeably and accountably absent, this SPP was conditionally relevant and participants hold one another accountable for the production of such turns (Schegloff, 2007). For instance, if a FPP is a question, it makes an answer conditionally relevant next. When such an answer is not produced, participants can show that the answer is relevantly absent by pursuing that answer (e.g., Pomerantz, 1984b; Schegloff, 2007; Sidnell, 2010). A FPP hence creates "powerful constraints of action (what the recipient should do) and of interpretation (how what the recipient does should be understood) on the moments just following it" (Schegloff, 2007, p. 21).

Questions, as I noted above, make relevant an answer in next position. A question-answer adjacency pair looks, simply put, like this:

\begin{align*}
A: & \text{ question} \quad \leftarrow \text{ FPP} \\
B: & \text{ answer} \quad \leftarrow \text{ SPP}
\end{align*}
As mentioned in chapter 1, I focus my analysis on turn-final or and exclude turn-medial and turn-initial instances of or which generally initiate self-repair (see also Kitzinger & Lerner, manuscript). Turn-final or constitutes a possible point of completion and is oriented as a TRP where speaker change occurs. In my collection, turns ending in or function as initiating actions, that is, as FPPs in first position of question-answer adjacency pairs. The following representation shows the basic composition of such adjacency pairs in my data, with the or-turn occupying the FPP slot eliciting information and the turn in the SPP slot responding to it:

Speaker A: X + or ← FPP
Speaker B: response ← SPP

The SPP can be a confirming or disconfirming response. When participants are unable to provide a response, for instance due to a lack of knowledge, they can produce no-knowledge claims (Stivers & Hayashi, 2010) such as "I don't know" and thereby account for their inability to answer. By producing such no-knowledge claims, participants also show an orientation to the relevance of the SPP.

All or-turns in my data can be described as FPP in informing sequences (Heritage 1984a). In such informing sequences, the FPP seeks information and the SPP provides the information. In his research on "oh", Heritage (1984), noting that informing sequences are "massively recurrent in ordinary conversation" (p. 309), describes such sequences as consisting of three parts: questions, answers, and "oh"-receipts. "Oh"-receipts are optional minimal expansions of a base adjacency pair. Other minimal expansions in third position include, among others, assessments (Schegloff, 2007), "okay" (Beach, 1993, 1995a, 1995b), composite tokens such as "oh okay" (Beach, 1995a; Schegloff, 2007), and "aha". In addition to the basic two-turn
adjacency pair, participants can also add third position turns such as "oh"-receipts or assessments, i.e., minimal expansions (Schegloff, 2007), resulting in the following pattern:

Speaker A: X + or \rightarrow FPP
Speaker B: response \rightarrow SPP
Speaker A: e.g., tokens such as *oh, okay* \rightarrow 3rd position expansion

The following excerpts illustrate this basic pattern. The excerpts are representative of the larger collection.

Excerpt (1): Lose one then too OR

(69; Rockwell Hr 2_C1:00.46.44)

1 => Eri: *and do I lose one then too* or  \rightarrow FPP
2 Jes: no cause you- both of yours are big[ger; \rightarrow SPP
3 Eri: [oh okay; \rightarrow 3rd pos. token

Excerpt (2): U of Y or

(58; Rockwell HR1_C1:00.35.20)

1 Ang: [I can't tell you: how surprised I am]
2 => Eri: *Is he still- [is he- has he done a PhD at ] U of Y now: 'or_' \rightarrow FPP
3 Ang: =no he's just gonna finish his master's. he's student teaching this semester and then he's gonna find a job teaching at a high scho[ol,
4 Eri: [oh okay; \rightarrow 3rd pos. token
Excerpt (3): New Orleans or

(60; Call friend Engn6952:12.17)

1. M1: I know, well where's the ones in Hawaii and that— that
2. M2: ah, they don't have those=
3. M1: =aw they don't have those?
4. M2: [no, not- ]
5. => M1: [or in, u:h] New Orleans=or: [.h ]
6. M2: [no, =]
7. =but well they're gonna have Com:de:x,
8. (0.6)
9. M1: o[h]
10. M2: [i:s actually going to be in Chica:go.

Excerpt (4): Research project or

(43; Call friend TBengn4175:28.00)

1. M1: did Lee tell you about that?
2. F1: well he wrote me a little note
3. M1: yeah
4. => F1: and I-=uh I gather that it's a:=
5. =research? (.p:roject o[r:]
6. M1: [a yeah, something,=
7. =I think they're just gonna, they're just=
8. =getting a lot of speech so that they=
9. =can: uh:, (.h) .hh "you know" (0.3) try=
10. =to have ay: uh (0.3) a system learn to=

58 Note that I am not making an argument about the interactional work of or and the implications of the overlap here. I addressed overlap in chapter 2.
be able to recognize different words from different speakers.

Excerpt (5): Regulating or

(51; Call friends TB engn 4889: 19.50)

1 => F1: What Did They tell you=her body's not used
2 to regulating its↑e:lf=↓o[r
3 F2: >WEll they said=
4 =that she had< a very tough time getting born, so
5 (0.3)
6 F2: .hh [it probably is some ↓there and also cause I:=
7 F1: [mhm
8 F2: .=h was sick and they gave me antibiotics in labor=
9 =that you know __ who knows. (.) I had a fever in=
10 =labor also.

Excerpt (6): Your job or

(30; Callfriend TBengn4175:18.10)

1 M1: .hh so uh:: how's it going in >in< general.=
2 => you: liking your job ↓or:
3 M2: =e:=yeah:, it's all ri↓ght, um[:
4 M1: [getting any=
5 =publications?=
These examples are representative of the adjacency pair question-answer pattern of or-turns that is predominant in my collection. In each of these excerpts, a questioning turn ending in or in first position is met with a response in second position, and in no case does a recipient treat the or-final first pair part as incomplete -- i.e., projecting an alternative to be produced by the speaker of the FPP. In excerpts (1), (2), (3), and (4), a minimal expansion is produced in third position that closes the question-answer sequence. In my collection, sequence closing thirds can be tokens such as "oh," "okay," "right," "aha," as well as assessments. In excerpt (5) and (6), such minimal expansions are not produced. The production of 3rd position tokens correlates with the action accomplished via the or-turns. In other words, sequence-closing thirds are produced when turns ending in or seek information, request clarification and initiate repair. When or-turns proffer a topic, sequence-closing thirds are not produced. In these environments, the participants then further develop the initiated topic rather than closing it down with a sequence-closing third.

In all three environments, knowledge differentials are key. By asking questions, participants position themselves as having less knowledge relative to the recipient of the question. In other words, participants claim different knowledge levels in interaction, and they do so through a variety of resources. Questions are a primary form of claiming lower knowledge relative to a co-participant (e.g., Heinemann, 2008; Heritage, 2012a, 2012b; Heritage & Raymond, 2012). In the next section, I show that the specific actions or-turns accomplish further show that knowledge differentials are real for participants in that the questioner seeks

59 But see work by Pomerantz (1988, 2011, 2012) on candidate answer queries. In such candidate answer queries, a question contains a possible answer and as such, the questioner can display some knowledge.
information he or she claims to not have knowledge about. It is to the actions of or-turns that I turn next.

### 3.4. Social actions and or-turns

Having offered an overview of the sequential characteristics of or-turns, I now move the focus to the actions the turns do in the sequence where they are generally used in my collection. Examining the sequences and activities in which or-turns are used is an important step in understanding what participants accomplish by ending a turn with or. Participants use turns ending in or for three related and overlapping social actions: information seeking, topic proffering, and repair initiation. Looking at these environments and their sequence organization allows the analyst to understand what it is about these environments that is conducive to the formulation of actions through turns ending in or and to understand what or adds to the action being accomplished by the turn. As I have mentioned before, I will show that or-turns accomplish actions that are connected to the negotiation of knowledge differentials, where one participant seeks information the other is proposed to have.

While all or-turns, when they are part of question-answer adjacency pairs, are a FPP of an informing sequence, three different uses emerged from my data. Or-turns can be used to initiate repair, to proffer or shift a topic, and to seek information, with potential for combinations of these actions as well (e.g., information seeking and topic proffering). Seeking information is a common thread across all data samples. Rather than three distinct categories, however, these three types emerge as related and overlapping in terms of the interactional work accomplished with or-turns. For instance, when a participant initiates repair with a turn ending in or, he or she is seeking information that enables him or her to deal with a trouble source in prior talk and to
move the conversation forward. When a topic is proffered by an or-turn, there is likely to also be information seeking involved, with the recipient of the or-turn responding with information as well. Information seeking and giving is thus an integral part of all or-turn sequences. In some instances, information seeking emerged as the primary, or main, action whereas in other instances, topic proffering or repair initiation was accomplished at the same time. In all three types, the or-turn indexes and claims lower knowledge related to the co-participant. Knowledge differentials between participants are being displayed or talked into being via the or-turns-at-talk. That is, in each instance, the or-turn-producer positions him/herself as the participant who has less knowledge about that which he/she is inquiring about. This is a characteristic of question-answer sequences in general (e.g., Heinemann, 2008; Heritage, 2012a, 2012b; Heritage & Raymond, 2012; Ruiter, 2012). I will return to the issue of epistemics in more detail in chapter 5. In the remainder of this section, I provide instances of each action type, and I discuss how knowledge differentials are negotiated in each.

3.4.1. Information seeking

When participants use turns ending in or to primarily ask for information, they do so without putting an on-going sequence or activity on hold and without proffering a new topic for subsequent development. In such cases, the producer of the or-turn regularly produces a third position receipt token. It is important to reiterate that information seeking is something that connects all three types of interactional work (topic proffering, repair, information seeking), that is, when a participant asks for clarification of some prior talk, they also ask for information, and when they offer a potential topic, subsequent development of such topics includes information giving. However, there are differences in how the sequences with these different actions unfold:
Topic proffers do not receive a third position receipt token, repair initiators put some activity or action on hold until the trouble is resolved (i.e., are insertion sequences (Schegloff, 2007)), information seeking or-turns do not put anything on hold and do not proffer a topic. Keeping in mind that the boundaries between the three categories are not rigid, I will provide three examples to illustrate the or-turns with primarily information-seeking functions.

In excerpt (7), Angela, Eric, Jessica and Albert are playing the board game Risk. Prior to the excerpt provided here, they have been discussing the rules of the game. Eric went up against Angela and won, which occasions Angela's cut-off wh-question, in this case a self-deprecating lamentation of her game playing skills.

Excerpt (7): Lose one then too or

(69; Rockwell Hr2_C1:00.46.44)

1     Ang: On:e. why am I such a lou[sy,:,
2     Eri:                  [((talks to himself? very quiet))
3     Jes:                  [ooh:,
4 =>  Eri: so, just lose one right, >nd do I lose one then ↑too ↓or:_
5     Jes: no cause you- both of yours are big[ger.
6     Eri:                  [oh okay.
7     (.)
8     Eri: so I still have my guys are still there tho[ugh.
9     Jes:                  [yeah.
10    (.)
11    Eri: okay

Having beat Angela in this game move, Eric removes one of Angela's game pieces and says "so just lose one right" in line 4 before producing the turn ending in or, "nd do I lose one then too or". As a polar question, this turn makes relevant a confirmation or a disconfirmation, which is
provided in line 5 via a SPP containing a no-token. The disconfirmation is followed by an explanation for why Eric's assumption of him losing one game piece is incorrect. In line 6, Eric produces a third position change-of-state token "oh" (Heritage 1984), indicating that he has moved from an unknowing to a knowing state, combined with the token "okay", which signals that Eric is accepting the second pair (Schegloff, 2007). After a micro-pause, Eric checks his understanding of another related aspect of his game move.

In this excerpt, Eric's or-turn initiates an informing sequence that is closed with a combination of two third position tokens ("oh" and "okay") and thus does not invite or proffer a topic for subsequent development by his coparticipants. Rather, Eric is looking for information he needs in order to continue his game move. Once he has obtained the necessary information, he moves on to asking about a related piece of information that also informs his game move. While this sequence works in service of ensuring Eric's continued progress in making his game move, it does not put on hold the progressivity of the sequence. Hence, in this example, the informing sequence does just that: seek information; it does not perform topic proffering or repair initiation.

Eric also claims lower knowledge relative to his co-participant by asking the question ending in or.

Excerpt (8) involves the same participants as excerpt (7). Prior to the excerpt, Angela had received a call from Bobby, someone she knows from her undergraduate institution. Eric completed his graduate work at the same institution and is somewhat familiar with Bobby. Jessica and Albert do not know Bobby. Angela has been expressing her surprise to have received

60 Note that Eric puts on hold the progressivity of the game until this issue is resolved, but this is not what conversational repair refers to, which is about problems with hearing, speaking or understanding (Schegloff et al. 1977: 361).
this phone call out of the blue and has been explaining that she really didn't know Bobby that well and that this call was completely out of the blue.

Excerpt (8): At U of Y or

(58; Rockwell HR1_C1: 00.35.20)

1    Ang:   we can keep in touch since we're like on the same  
2           page gonna be looking for jobs and I was like 'yeah:  
            [keep in to]uch.           [n=ha
3    Jes:                     [n=ha
4    Ang:   [I can't  [tell you: how surprised I am]
5  =>  Eri:  [Is he still-[is he- has he done a PhD at ] U of Y 'now: 'or-
6    Ang:  =no he's just gonna finish his master's. he's student teaching  
7           this semester and then he's gonna find a job teaching at a high  
8           school,
9    Eri:    [oh okay;
10   (.)
11  Ang:    ((nods)) I- I can't even tell you how surprised I am like that is  
12     s:o  random: I can't even explain it.=

In lines 1-2, Angela is finishing a telling of how Bobby and she had left it at a noncommittal "let's keep in touch" at a workshop both of them attended a while back. In line 4, she expresses the level of surprise at this call, and Eric, in line 5, produces an or-turn. Eric cuts off the formulation of his question twice before changing it from "is he" to "has he" in "has he done a PhD at U of Y now or." This interrogative makes relevant a yes or no answer. Angela produces a negative answer and an explanation of the disconfirmation in lines 6 - 9. Eric acknowledges this information by producing a third position change-of-state token oh (Heritage, 1984a) followed by the token okay (Beach, 1993; Schegloff, 2007), which again indexes that Eric is accepting the SPP. After a micro pause in line 10, Angela continues expressing her surprise at this phone call.
Here, Eric is asking polar question ending in *or* to elicit a certain piece of information. His information seeking question is not oriented to as a topic proffer, as evidenced by Angela returning to the topic of her surprise after she answers Eric's question. Eric's turn could have been proffering a topic had Angela or Eric developed it further. However, this is not the case. Eric treats the response as an answer to the information question here. He does not pursue further topic development of what could potentially be a topic ("Eric's school"). Angela's response could be a first step in developing this topic, but Eric's third position receipt token works against such a topic and sequence expansion. After Angela produces this information, Eric acknowledges it and Angela continues where she left off. This excerpt also shows that topic development is achieved jointly by coparticipants. Eric may or may not have intended the polar question as a topic proffer (this is not accessible for the analyst), but Angela begins to engage in potentially developing the topic contained in Eric's question. Eric however blocks any further sequence expansion via the third position receipt token. Whether polar questions are purely information seeking questions or topic proffers is contingent and worked out by the participants in the here and now of the conversation.

Eric's question interrupts Angela's assessment of her own surprise, but it does not put on hold an action initiated by her, and Eric does not initiate repair on some prior talk. Eric does not orient to some prior talk as a potential trouble source he needs clarification on, but rather inquires about a fact rather unrelated to Angela's expression of surprise. In this excerpt, the *or-*turn works primarily to elicit information. And again, Eric displays a lack of knowledge by asking the *or-*question. He also constructs his coparticipant as possessing the information he is seeking. Angela, by answering the question, shows that she accepts his construal of her as being more knowledgeable.
Excerpt (9) below serves as another illustration of an *or*-turn primarily doing the interactional work of information seeking. The interlocutors are Liz and Roberta, with Liz having called Roberta on the phone. Liz is in the process of explaining the research project that enabled her to place a paid for, thirty-minute phone call.

Excerpt (9): Four letter words or

(50; TBengn4984: 00.01.26)

1 L: they said you know, if you wanna make a free thirty minute phone
call to anyone, it has to be a native speaker of English,
2 (0.4)
3 R: okay, [well that] I am,
4 L: [you know, ]
5 L: .hh so We're being Recorded. so you know you can like tell all
6 your secrets=n [°.h(h)h .h(h)h .h(h)h .h(h)h°]
7 R: [okay °.h(h)h .h(h)h° don't use any
8 four letter wo':rd[s °:r_]
9 L: [.hh ] AH: I think you can say anything you
10 want. ((smile voice))
11 R: °okay; good.° .hh HOW ARE you.
12 L: .hh ↑I'm good_

In line 6, Liz informs Roberta that they are being recorded and produces the statement "so you know you can like tell all your secrets" which is oriented to as a joke as evidenced by both participants producing laughter tokens. Roberta also acknowledges this information in line 8 by producing the token "okay.". After two laughter tokens, she produces the turn of interest, i.e., the imperatively formed *or*-turn (lines 8-9). Roberta formulates the consequences of this information of being recorded, i.e., she proposes that four letter words would then be inappropriate and should not be used. In line 10, Liz shows an orientation to Roberta's turn as
doing questioning as she provides an answer to it. She disconfirms this assumption and says that Roberta is free to say anything she wants, which is acknowledged and accepted with a third position *okay* (Beach, 1993; Schegloff, 2007) in line 12 and positively assessed via the adjective "good" (also line 12). Both the token and the assessment move to close the question-answer sequence. Then Roberta produced a FPP of a How-are-you sequence (Schegloff, 1968).

Again, as was the case in the last excerpt, the interlocutor producing the *or*-turn does not proffer a topic for subsequent development by the co-participant and Roberta also does not initiate repair on some problematic prior talk. Roberta does not orient to any of Liz’s prior turns as potentially problematic. She has acknowledged Liz’s informing from lines 6-7 and accepted it with the token *okay* (Beach, 1993; Schegloff, 2007). She accepts and receipts it further by joining in with Liz’s laughter. Liz provides an answer for Roberta’s information seeking question, but does not subsequently elaborate on or develop further this topic further. Rather, Roberta is seeking a specific piece of information (whether or not four letter words are prohibited), which is provided by Liz in her SPP (line 11-12). Roberta closes the informing sequence via the third-position token, her assessment, and launches a new sequence via the FPP of a How-are-you sequence.

When participants seek information, they can do so with a question ending in *or*. In the instances I discussed here, representative of the other cases in my collection, the producer of the *or*-turn not only seeks information but also positions him/herself as knowing less relative to the coparticipant. Seeking information alone is one action participants can accomplish via *or*-turns. In the next section, I show that participants also use *or*-turns to initiate repair.
3.4.2. Repair

In the previous section, I showed three excerpts illustrating the information seeking function of or-turns. I showed that information seeking can be the primary action of an or-turn, without the turn putting another action or activity on hold. In this section, I show that participants also use or-turns to initiate repair. In these cases, an on-going action is being put on hold until the trouble-source is resolved. Note that repair as such, while putting an action on hold temporarily, works toward progressivity of the talk in that some trouble-source is being dealt with. By dealing with the trouble source, participants ensure the progressivity of the talk, yet, they temporarily put an on-going action on hold.

Before I present excerpts that illustrate the repair functions of the turns or is added to, I provide a brief overview of the phenomenon of repair. Repair deals with problems "hearing, speaking, and understanding" (Schegloff et al., 1977, p. 361). A crucial aspect is that speakers put the conversation on 'hold' and that the on-going activity is not moved forward until the trouble is resolved (e.g, Drew, 1997; Kitzinger, 2012; Schegloff et al., 1977). Speakers deal with such trouble in conversation in a highly organized and structured way, which enables them to resolve the trouble quickly, which allows them in turn to ensure the overall progressivity of talk. Interlocutors have many resources at their disposal with which they can initiate repair, and the following examples only illustrate a few of these resources. Most cases of repair fall in one of the following categories: self-initiated and self-completed, self-initiated and other-completed, and other-initiated and self-completed.
Excerpt (10) exemplifies a self-initiated but other-completed repair.

Excerpt (10): Watts
(taken from Schegloff et al., 1977, p. 364)

1  B:  He had dis uh Mistuh W- whatever k- I can't think of his first
2            name, Watts on, the one that wrote [that piece
3  A:            [Dan Watts.

Here, speaker B has trouble producing the name of a person, and by producing "mister W-", the
speaker is initiating self-repair, that is, he initiates repair on talk he has produced. There are
several cut-offs before the last name "Watts" is produced, but speaker B shows that some trouble
relating to the person's first name still exists. Speaker A then provides this first name, "Dan" and
thereby completes the repair, that is, performs an other-completed repair resolution. While the
talk at hand is temporarily put on hold, the process of initiating and resolving repair ultimately
ensures the moving forward of the conversation.

Another type of repair, other-initiated and self-completed, is illustrated in the next
example, excerpt (11). This example also illustrates the preference for self-completion more
generally in conversation.

Excerpt (11): Is Al here
(Schegloff et al., 1977: p. 364)

1  K:  Is Al here today?
2  D:  Yeah.
3        (2.0)
4 =>  R:  He is? hh eh heh
5  D:  Well he was.

Here, D confirms K's question from line 1, saying that Al is here today. After a pause of 2.0
seconds, R initiates repair on this information. That is, the trouble source is D's confirmation in
line 2. In line 5, D resolves this repair by modifying his initial answer from "yeah" to "well he was.". D was the speaker who produced the trouble source and he is the one to resolve it after an other-initiation of repair by R.

Other-initiation of repair is rather common in interaction, but other-completion of repair is not. There is a preference for the person who produced the trouble source to resolve the repair and move the talk forward (e.g., Schegloff et al., 1977). In most cases where other-initiation leads to other-repair, a correction of the other speaker is involved (e.g., Schegloff, 2007). Excerpt (12) illustrates a case of repair in which the other person not only initiates but also resolves the repair.

Excerpt (12): Playing around

(Schegloff et al., 1977, p. 365; shortened)

1 A:  half the group that we had las' term woz there en
2 we jus' playing around.
3 B:  Uh- fooling around.
4 A:  Eh- yeah...

Here, A states that the group was just "playing around" in line 1. In line 3, B initiates repair by locating the repairable in the choice of word and produces "fooling around" as the resolution to the repair initiation. Hence, B not only initiated repair, he also resolved it. This illustrates that in such cases, correction of something the other speaker has said is involved. In all the examples above, the conversation, more specifically, the activity and on-going sequence was put on hold temporarily and the speakers resolved the trouble source before moving the conversation forward.

As mentioned above, across these different types of repair, participants have a variety of resources, both vocal and non-vocal, at their disposal. Participants can use open-class repair
initiators such as "what?" (Drew, 1997), which in contrast to other initiators, do not pin-point the source of the trouble. A partial repeat or a partial repeat + question word as in "you said" or "you said what" are more precise in locating the trouble source in the prior talk in that they narrow down the possible trouble candidates. Potentially, everything that is uttered can become a trouble source. At the moment of producing a turn, that speaker has no way of knowing if what he or she is saying will need to be clarified for the co-participant in subsequent talk. Locating the trouble source more specifically in the prior talk thus aids in the swift and efficient resolution of the trouble.

One resource to initiate repair is by proffering a possible understanding, or candidate understanding, of some prior talk or the upshot of it for confirmation or disconfirmation to the co-participants. Such candidate understandings can be prefaced by additional lexical items as in the format you mean X. Such a format also involves the formulation of a candidate understanding of the trouble source. Put differently, interlocutors offer their own understanding of some previous turn to the other speaker, who then has to either confirm or refute this understanding. Excerpt (13) below illustrates this type.

Excerpt (13): Turn out this way

(Schegloff et al., 1977, p. 368)

1 A: Why did I turn out this way.
2 B: → You mean homosexual?
3 A: Yes.

In this excerpt, speaker A asks a question, but before B can answer, B clarifies what A means by "this way". B produces a candidate understanding of "this way" by saying "you mean homosexual" to which the answer is "yes". What is important to keep in mind is, again, that the

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61 For other examples of candidate understandings used in repair, see Sidnell (2010, p. 132f.).
activity launched by A is a question-answer sequence. The second-pair part to this question can't be provided until B knows exactly what the question is about. Speaker B then launches a clarification request that contains a candidate understanding (i.e., that A is homosexual). Once speaker B receives A's response to his clarification request, B can move the sequence forward and provide the second-pair part to the question in line 1.62

This repair sequence is a classic example of an insertion sequence (Schegloff, 2007). The ongoing sequence was put on hold until the insertion sequence was completed (that is speaker B asking for and receiving clarification). Speaker B offered his candidate understanding, making relevant confirmation or disconfirmation. Note that the insertion sequence ultimately supports progressivity of talk-in-interaction despite putting a sequence or action on hold temporarily. In my collection, participants produce turns ending in or to initiate repair in sequences similar to such insertion sequences.

Excerpt (14) below illustrates the use of or-turns in the service of requesting clarification. In this example, Lucy is in the process of a two-part telling that involved a pencil test and a platter test. Prior to the excerpt, she has just finished explaining what a pencil test is and brings that part to a close in lines 1-4. Note that a pencil test is, according to Lucy's elaboration, something she remembers from High School. If a girl can put a pencil under her breast and the pencil doesn't fall, then she passes the pencil test. The point of her story is that one of her classmates passed the "platter" test and as such it also implicates (albeit in an unspoken fashion) the classmate's breast size. Her co-participants are John and S. S is the person videotaping the interaction for a class project and lives in a dorm in which Lucy used to live when she was an undergraduate.

62 Schegloff et al. (1977) do not provide the second pair part to the question in line 1.
Excerpt (14): Drinks with that or

(63; John & Lucy 11-99: 00.52.13)

1 Luc: so that's the pencil test. *it's a*=

2 =((L's right hand moves up; head shake)) / (0.2)

3 Joh: isn't [that jus-

4 Luc: [traditional high school thing .h [WELL (NAME).

5 S: [°°hehe°°=((leans over))

6 (1.7)

7 Luc: (name) passed_ the platter test

8 Joh: huu[huu the pla[ter.

9 Luc: [[(laughs [quietly))

10 S: [°°huhuhu°°=((turns away while laughing))

11 Luc: ((nods))

12 S: huhu

13 Luc: two platters.=

14 S: .HHH=

15 Joh: =good grieve.=

16 Luc: uh[u.

17 S: [°wo:w.° wo(h)w=that's_

18 Luc: that's my most favorite memory of (name) coming [out

19 Joh: [so you actually

   *((right hand gesture))

20 put a *pla- [platter under her:]

21 Luc: [YEAH she- ] yeah. she could just- I mean

22 she could

23 S: .hh

24 => Joh: could she serve drinks? with 'that 'or.=

25 Luc: =well no. cause [they're- cause they're underneath.
In line 4, Lucy transitions from the first part of her telling, i.e., explaining what the pencil test is, to the second part of her telling, the pointe, by producing "well" and the name of the person who her pointe is about. After a pause of 1.7 seconds in line 6, Lucy repeats the person's name and announces that that girl "passed the platter test". In lines 8, John produces several laughter tokens and repeats "the platter", in partial overlap with which S quietly laughs while turning around. Lucy orients to John's repeat in line 8 as making relevant confirmation and provides that via her head nod in line 11. In line 13, Lucy upgrades her telling by rephrasing "platter" to "two platters", which receives an astonished inbreath by S and an assessment by John, i.e., "good grief" in line 15. In line 17, S also produces an assessment and in line 18, Lucy begins to add to her telling by indicating that this is her most favorite memory of high school. In line 19, John initiates a first repair by formulating a so-initiated upshot (Raymond, 2004) of prior talk, partially articulating what had been left unsaid by Lucy in the prior talk. Lucy, in line 21, confirms the upshot in overlap. Note that John produces a gesture at "pla-" (line 20) that articulates non-verbally the upshot of the story, which is that one of Lucy's classmates was able
to put two platters under her breasts, which of course surpasses the pencil test. The timing of confirmation is curious because it interjects before John actually verbalizes this upshot. After the resolution of the overlap in line 21, Lucy struggles with the formulation of her turn, visible through her cut-off, restart and trail off in lines 21-22. This is where John formulates his second attempt at clarifying the upshot (that so far has remained unsaid). Specifically, he formulates a polar question in line 24, "could she serve drinks", with upward intonation. To this polar question, he adds the prepositional phrase "with that" as an increment (Couper-Kuhlen & Ono, 2007) and ends his turn with or.

This or-turn makes relevant confirmation or disconfirmation and seeks clarification of what exactly Lucy's classmate in High School was able to do with the platters. The polar question constitutes a potential candidate understanding of the upshot, that is, it is John's best guess of what the upshot of Lucy's story is. Candidate understandings have been defined as best guesses about something (Sacks 1964, 1966, 1967 as cited in Pomerantz, 1988). This applies here as well. In line 25, Lucy disconfirms John's understanding by producing "well no." to which she adds the explanation of where the platters were. After a pause in line 27, John produces the change-of-state token "oh" (Heritage, 1984a) followed by "I see" and an embodied display of John's revised understanding. In overlap with John's multimodal display of his revised understanding, Lucy confirms this understanding several times in line 29, showing that John's revised understanding now is, in fact, correct.63 John then produces the token "okay" (line 30), again claiming that he has now moved from a state of not knowing to a state of knowing and

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63 Note that the upshot of where the platters were located and the implication of the classmate's large breasts (if the girl can place two platters instead of a pencil under her breast, then the implication would be that her breasts are larger than when a pencil can be placed in the same position) are left unsaid in this whole excerpt. This points to the delicate nature of the topic being discussed.
having accepted the SPP (Schegloff, 2007). Having only now fully understood the story Lucy was telling allows him to appreciate it and to produce a turn that shows this appreciation: In line 35, he builds on Lucy's story by producing a self-deprecating turn about how he could pass the pencil test himself. When a story reaches possible completion, "orientation to what a recipient makes of the story" (Jefferson, 1978, p. 233) are common. In this instance, John produces a turn that shows his appreciation and thereby what he made of the story only after the completion of the repair sequence.

The or-turn in this excerpt is part of a three-part informing sequence as outlined earlier: FPP ending or, SPP disconfirmation, and a third position token. This excerpt illustrates an instance of where an or-turn seeks clarification of an upshot of some prior talk. That is, the or-turn is a repair initiator that helps resolve some trouble and aids in the securing and establishing of the participants' understanding and appreciation of Lucy's telling.

Excerpt (15) below is another representative example of how or-turns can be used to initiate repair on some prior talk. Again, the repair is about a problem of understanding and is backward looking. In this excerpt, the participants Marie, Kevin and Lisa are talking about Marie's baby and his medical problems at the hospital. Kevin and Lisa are siblings, Marie is a friend of Lisa's.

Excerpt (15): His oxygen get low OR

(76; SBC036: 04.32)

1 M: And Then the doctor comes in_ and he just >looks at him, and
2 'then they stick this< fing- .hh thing on his finger?
3 (.)
4 M: it's like light sensored? .hh and they have to guard it from the
5 light, and that's what measures his heart rate?
Here, Marie has been telling Kevin and Lisa about her experience with her baby at the hospital, his difficulty breathing and her holding an oxygen mask over her baby's face. In lines 1-6, Marie describes a sensor that was attached to the baby's finger to measure his heart rate and oxygen intake. In lines 9 and 10, respectively, Kevin and Lisa provide positive assessments of this device. First assessments typically make relevant second assessments, and if such second
assessments are upgraded, a speaker expresses agreement with the first assessment (Pomerantz, 1984a; see also Fasulo & Monzoni, 2009; Heritage, 2002; Heritage & Raymond, 2005; Lindström & Mondada, 2009; Schegloff, 2007). In line 10, Marie provides such a second assessment, namely "it was weird". "Wow" and "cool" are both positive assessments, whereas "it was weird" is not necessarily a positive assessment. "It was weird" is thus not an upgrade, and expresses a different stance from "wow" and "cool." It seems to be assessing the situation as a whole rather than only the medical device.

Marie thus expresses a different stance toward her telling. Kevin is unable to agree or disagree with this new stance (and Marie's assessment) because he claims not to have fully understood the implications and the situation. This is evidenced by Kevin putting the talk on hold and initiating repair via the or-turn in line 11. Kevin orients to additional information as necessary before he can properly assess the situation and show sympathy with Marie. Kevin produces a polar question ending in or "Did his oxygen get low or", asking for more information on the baby's oxygen level. This information would also help Kevin in understanding the implications of Marie's telling and her stance as expressed in "it was weird." In line 12, Marie confirms Kevin's polar question and adds a short explanation informing Kevin of the percentage of her baby's oxygen intake. Immediately after Marie's "yeah", Lisa produces "really" in overlap with Marie's turn. After a micro pause in line 14, Kevin produces a follow-up question on his initial repair initiation by beginning to ask about what that number means. In the next lines, Lisa presents possible answers to Kevin's question, but it is Marie in line 23-24 who asserts primary rights by stating what the correct levels are for adults. After Kevin asks another clarification question (omitted in the transcript), he produces a turn that indexes his understanding in form of a turn initiated by "so", which is confirmed by Marie.
In this case, there is no immediate third position change-of-state token, instead Kevin further pursues clarification through additional questions to help him understand the implications of different levels of oxygen. After several clarification rounds, Kevin produces his now changed understanding of the situation and its implications in lines 35-36. His turn assesses the baby's condition and aligns with Marie's original assessment in line 11. The or-turn again put on hold the sequence and delayed the production of the aligning second assessment. At the same time, Kevin's or-turn and subsequent clarification request work toward the overall progressivity of the talk. Like excerpt (14), Kevin proposes that the baby's oxygen level got low, but presents it as a candidate understanding that needs to be confirmed by Marie. Just as in excerpt (14), the or-turn is part of an informing sequence consisting of a FPP and a SPP. And again, the informing sequence is used to initiate repair. However, because Kevin needs additional clarification, there is not third position token. Like excerpt (14), the clarification request deals with a problem in understanding some of the implications of a portion of prior talk and thus is repair relevant.

In my data, in addition to clarification requests such as the ones in excerpts (14) and (15), which are formulated through interrogative clarification requests ending in or, participants use other more distinct and explicit formats for clarification requests: "you mean X" and "are you saying X," followed by turn-final or. These formats specifically target prior talk as a trouble source and seek clarification from the co-participant in order to resolve the trouble. Excerpt (16) illustrates the use of "are you saying X" + or. In this excerpt, participants of a workshop aimed at reducing gender bias in academia are asked to comment on a scenario describing a search committee's discussion of potential candidates. The workshop participants had discussed the scenario in groups, and one of the workshop organizers (Gwen) is now asking participants to
relate some of the theoretical constructs they have been talking about throughout the workshop to this scenario. Lynn is another workshop organizer.

Excerpt (16): Gender stereotypes or

(48; Bias Lit R4C1complete: 1.22.27)

1  G:  okay? (.)  h and too uhm given the _ (0.4) discussions we've ha:d_
2  some of the constructs have come up, uhm  .hh can you think of
3  some of these uh constructs that _might be playing out in some of
4  the comments in some of the search committee_
5  (0.9)
6  L:  or in that particular instance of [being soft spoke-
7  G:  ]>in that particular instan-<
8  yeah. like being soft spoken. (.) where does that come from.
9  => W:  "are you* saying that that's like a gender stereo'type 'or:__
10  (.)
11  W:  is that what you're,
12  (.)
13  W:  [(getting at/saying]
14  G:  [well_ I mean_ do we- (.) do we- (.) do we have any _evid'ence
15  that being soft spoken would prevent h'er from,
16  W:  ["I see." ((nodding))
17  G:  [from uh running this research program?

In lines 1-4, Gwen formulates a prompt for the participants to relate constructs they have been
familiarized with throughout the workshop to the scenario the participants just discussed in small
groups. After none of the participants self-select and a pause of 0.9 seconds in line 5, Lynn, adds
to Gwen's prompt by specifying it. She mentions a particular instance of women being soft
spoken in line 6. In line 7, Gwen begins to repeat part of Lynn's turn ("in that particular instan-")
and she does so in overlap and with accelerated speed. In response, Lynn cuts off her own turn
before completion. Gwen also cuts herself off and subsequently produces a confirmation token (yeah), now clear of overlap. Finally, she continues her repeat of Lynn's addition, bringing it to completion. Through both the repeats and the confirmation token, Gwen asserts her interactional role in this moment as the primary discussion leader (Ford & Stickle, 2012). Not only does she treat Lynn's rephrasing of her general prompt as a confirmable, she also does so in overlap and after the resolution of the overlap. It is Gwen who completes the addition that L had begun, posing the more specific question about women being soft spoken to the group (line 8). This wh-question "where does that come from" makes relevant an answer that corresponds to the wh-word used in the question (Fox & Thompson, 2010; Schegloff, 2007; Schegloff & Lerner, 2009). Instead of providing such an answer, one of the participants initiates repair in line 9, the turn of interest here.

W produces a clarification request, a type of repair initiator, prefaced by "are you saying" and ending in "or" in line 9, which is the FPP of an informing sequence. W is orienting to a need for further elaboration about the question that Gwen has asked of the participants. This is an instance of other-repair initiation, as the trouble source lies in talk not produced by the repair initiating participant. As a polar question, the format again makes relevant a confirmation or a disconfirmation. Gwen, however, does not produce either, and a after a micro pause in line 10, W follows up on her clarification request by adding "is that what you're" in line 11. After another micro pause, W finishes her turn in overlap with Gwen's answer in line 14. Gwen produces a classic dispreferred turn beginning, prefaced by "well" and further perturbation and delaying self-repairs including "I mean" and three repetitions of "do we-" before she continues formulating her answer. This turn is responsive to W's or-final repair initiation. Treating Gwen's response as addressing the clarification request, W produces a third position change-of-
state marker, "I see," in overlap with Gwen's turn completion, as well as a head nod (line 15). At this point, then, W claims that the trouble is resolved, and the sequence can progress past the repair. After further elaboration by Gwen (not shown in transcript), the participants then begin producing answers to Gwen's initial prompt.

The or-turn initiates an insertion sequence doing repair. Gwen's prompt prior to it makes a response relevant, but a relevant SPP to that question-answer adjacency pair is not produced. Instead, W initiates repair through her clarification request, a turn formatted as a yes/no interrogative with a turn-final or. Once the trouble is resolved, the talk moves forward.

The excerpts above all have in common that an informing sequence that contains an or-turn is used in the interaction to deal with some trouble and that seeks information that will help clarify something about the prior talk. Hence, or-turns are involved in initiating repair. Doing primarily information seeking versus repair initiation are actions that are closely related in that information seeking is at the core of resolving some trouble. In section 3.4.1., I discussed three examples where information seeking is the primary action, that is, where the conversation and the progressivity of it is not put on hold by the or-turn. The main difference between seeking information in its own right and seeking information as repair initiation lies thus in the effect of the or-turn's action, whether or not it halts the progress of an on-going sequence. That is, when an activity or action is put on hold by an or-turn (all the while working toward the overall progressivity of talk), the or-turn initiates repair, whereas, with information seeking or-turns, there is no halting of the progressivity of the currently unfolding sequence. In both instances discussed in the current section, the producer of the or-turn again positions himself/herself as the interlocutor who has less knowledge relative to the co-participant. Again, knowledge differentials are apparent and talked into being through the participant's actions.
In the final section of this chapter, I move to those instances where or-turns are used to proffer a topic or to initiate a topic shift. Again, seeking information is relevant here as well, as developing a topic involves seeking and giving information.

3.4.3. Topic proffering

Having outlined information seeking and repair initiating as two related but subtly different courses of action that or-turns help accomplish, I now address a third (also related) course of action: topic proffering and topic shifting. I begin with a brief overview of topic development practices.

Introducing new topics into a conversation or shifting from one topic to a related topic is commonplace in interaction. A common practice of topic initiation is posing yes/no questions or wh-questions (Couper-Kuhlen, 2012). Button and Casey (1984) have described one practice of generating topics in talk-in-interaction – that of using topic initial elicitors (TIEs) such as "what else" or "Anything else to report" (Button & Casey, 1984, p. 170f.). Such topic initial elicitors can be placed after a closing component or after an opening component or after a topic-bounded turn (p. 168). Their work shows that participants jointly establish a new topic through a three-turn sequence. TIEs inquire about a possible next topic and are not topics themselves. That is, they provide an opportunity for a possible topic, and the presented possible topic then needs to be ratified and subsequently developed jointly. In the first turn, speaker A inquires about a possible newsworthy event. This opens up two possible trajectories: Speaker B can provide a positive answer that is conducive to sequence expansion and topic development, or speaker B can provide a negative answer, which foreshadows sequence closure. If a newsworthy event is
produced in second position, speaker A can then produce go-ahead tokens such as "yeah?" which further help develop talk on the elicited newsworthy event. Excerpt (17) is an illustration:

Excerpt (17): Girls over
(taken from Button & Casey, 1984, p. 182)

1 S: what's new,
2 G: we::ill? 't lemme see' las' ni:ght, I had the girls ove[r?
3 S: [yea:h?=
    ((continues on topic))

Here, speaker S produces the TIE in line 1, followed by a positive response which contains a newsworthy event. Speaker S then produces a go-ahead token in line 3, which Button & Casey (1984) call a topicalizer. Speaker G then continues with on-topic talk.

In addition to this itemized news inquiry, participants can also proffer a new topic at points in the interaction where a prior sequence has been brought to closure. With such topic proffers, a "speaker proposes a particular topic" (Schegloff, 2007, p. 169; original emphasis). With TIEs, a speaker solicits a topic from the co-participant, a topic proffer names a possible topic but leaves it to the co-participant to further the proposed topic. With TIEs, a speaker solicits a topic from the co-participant, a topic proffer names a possible topic but leaves it to the co-participant to further the proposed topic. Schegloff (2007) argues that most topic proffers are implemented via polar questions, but notes that other formats may be used as well such as wh-questions and declarative questions. He further notes that such topic proffers prefer responses that engender sequence expansion and that dispreferred responses are those that engender sequence closure. Excerpt (18) below illustrates topic proffers.

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64 This is similar to News Delivery Sequences (NDS) described by Maynard (2003). Following a preannouncement, which is the precondition for anything to become news, the receiver can either produce go-ahead turns or blocking turns. Only if a go-ahead token is produced does news come into being. See also Maynard (1989) on perspective display sequences.
Excerpt (18): Abnormal class

(Schegloff, 2007, p. 173; his excerpt 8.09)

1 Ava: °That's goo[d,
2 => Bee: [Dihyuh have any-cl- You have a class with
3 Billy this te:rm?
4 Ava: Yeh he's in my abnormal class.
5 Bee: mnYeh [how-]
6 Ava: [Abnor]mal psy[ch.
7 Bee: [Still not gettin married.
8 Ava: hhh Oh no. Definitely not. [married.]

After a prior sequence has been closed with an assessment (line 1), Bee produces the topic proffer in form of a polar question in lines 2-3. The topic she proffers is "talk about Billy" (Schegloff, 2007, p. 172). Ava produces a positive response, signaling a positive stance toward sequence and topic expansion. After a self-repair from "abnormal class" (line 4) to "abnormal psych" (line 6), Bee produces a follow-up question that continues to develop talk on the topic of Billy. In contrast to TIEs, which elicit a possible newsworthy event via an open question, the question here proposes a particular topic for subsequent talk. Similar to TIEs, participants use topic proffers to jointly develop a topic. The recipient of a topic proffer is in a position of having to ratify and accept the proffered topic or to dismiss the proffered topic.

In this section, I will show two different but closely related kinds of interactional work that can be accomplished via or-turns. Specifically, participants can direct the development of a topic that has been established in prior talk and for which they offer a subtopic for further elaboration, or participants can proffer a topic that is not related to prior talk, i.e., a new topic. The or-turns in both patterns are, as is the case for repair work, part of informing sequences consisting of a FPP making relevant a confirmation/disconfirmation and a SPP. However, what
is distinct about informing sequences working to establish, (re)direct, or sustain a topic is that they do not contain a third position token, and instead consist only of the base adjacency pair. This makes sense with respect to the interactional action accomplished: rather than the informing being center stage, it is proffering a topic for development by the co-participant. Once the topic is proffered, the co-participant decides whether or not to pursue it and develop it. Participants are not so much orienting to a need for informing each other and thus a display of having gone from an uninformed to an informed state via a third position token is not necessarily needed to develop a topic. In fact, such a third position token would work against further sequence expansion and on-topic talk as it would mark the closing of the informing sequence and as such also the closing of the topic proffering sequence. By leaving the sequence open, the producer of the or-turn aids and supports the development and expansion of the sequence, something that will help to move the activity forward. Toward the success accomplishment of the action initiated in first position. I begin with cases illustrating the pattern where participants introduce a new topic via formulating a turn ending in or.

When participant introduce a new topic by drawing on turns ending in or, they do so in combination with wh-questions. That is, the format used is wh-question + X + or. In my data, I found five examples of these types of turns. This format can be used to introduce a new topic, one that is not related to the prior talk. Excerpt (19) is a case in point. Here, M1 and M2 are talking on the phone about M1's baby which is due on Halloween. They both agree that being born on Halloween is better than being born on Christmas, because in the latter case, people don't give as many birthday gifts.
In line 1, M1 begins bringing the topic of being born on Halloween to a closure. He received only minimal uptake from M2 and adds a further turn about a potential name for the baby in line 5, which is received with several laugh tokens. After a lull in the conversation (lines 7-9), M proffers a new topic in line 10. Wh-questions are often produced in such environments of lulls in
conversation (Schegloff & Lerner, 2009), but rather than waiting for M2 to provide a relevant answer corresponding to the *wh*-word, M1 adds a candidate answer ending in *or* to his *wh*-question, i.e., "you liking your job *or*. M1 thus changes the relevancies of the FPP from a *wh*-question to orienting for a need for confirmation or disconfirmation. Note that the *wh*-question is an open one, and a very broad one, and could go in many directions. In addition, there's little guidance for M2 as to what would constitute a potential topic. M1, by adding the candidate answer, gives guidance to M2 by narrowing the breadth of potential topics down to M2's work.

When participants proffer a new topic, they can do so in different ways. The proffered topic needs to be accepted and ratified by the coparticipant in order to move into expansion. Interactants regularly abandon a particular topic if it has not been ratified after the second try (Schegloff, 2007). In (19), rather than a third position token after M2's answer, M1 adds a follow-up question, performing such a second attempt. M2 then launches a telling about the lack of publication opportunities he's been getting. The turn-final *or*, here, added to a candidate answer which in turn was added to a *wh*-question, helps in establishing a new topic for subsequent talk. By not producing a third position token, M1 orients to the preceding adjacency pair as not predominantly doing a clarification request, but rather, that it is doing a topic proffer. When *or*-turns are used to proffer topics, they seek information that is in the co-participant's realm of knowledge. It is the producer of the *or*-turn who positions him/herself as knowing less about the topic than the recipient of the *or*-turn.

When participants produce an *or*-turn to introduce a potential subtopic for further development rather than a new topic, they do so by drawing on the format [X+*or*] rather than [*wh*-question + X + *or*]. In the next excerpt, the *or*-turn is used to (re-)direct the flow of topics
rather than to introduce a new topic. Specifically, the participant is connecting back to a prior topic. Here, Lisa, Marie, and Kevin are talking about a new mayor.

Excerpt (20): Gangs gotten worse or

(80; SBC036: 11.17)

1 L: HE'S Like for gang- like uh g- Like against- ga:ngs, and stuff
2 like that but_ .hh
3 (0.4)
4 L: you COuld see that um:
5 (0.7)
6 L: ((lip smack)) like Carg’o’d just kinda be like_ ((lip smack)) ALL
7 these low lifes. you know like
8 L: You know [like. I COULD see] h:im thinking something like that.
9 K: [hehehehehehe ]
10 L: .HH Where he's just ab:ove all those people and like they, .h you
11 know that their problems you know, it's cause they're just like
12 bad peop’le 'or 'something? .hh but I don’t see him_ like_
13 (0.3)
14 L: him being so [(much) ( )]
15 M: [HE's done- ] He's done like what_ two big food
16 drives, even at his inaugural ball_ they had a food drive.
17 L: yeah.
18 (0.4)
19 => K: °that's cool." Have ga:ngs gotten worse 'or: _
20 (.)
21 M: bsh:::
22 L: It seems that way;
23 M: yeah_ it [seems like-]
24 K: ["was it-" ] [the el ay GA’]ngs ‘or_
Lisa voices her opinion of the new mayor in lines 1 through 14. She mentions that he is against gangs in line 1. In line 15, Marie produces a statement describing that the new mayor has already done two big food drives, which Lisa confirms in line 17. After a pause in line 18, Kevin assesses this good deed positively by saying "that's cool." He then adds a polar question ending in or to his positive assessment, which is the turn of interest here (line 19). Kevin asks a question that back-connects to line 1 in which Lisa had mentioned gangs as something that the new mayor was against. Here, Kevin asks about a possible implication of that statement, namely whether or not gangs have gotten bad. After a micro pause in line 20, Marie produces what sounds like a dismissive "bsh" and Lisa in line 22 tentatively agrees by producing "it seems that way". Marie then agrees with that judgment in line 23 by producing a "yeah"-token and a partial repeat of Lisa's turn, i.e., "it seems like-". Kevin then produces another polar question ending in or that is a follow-up question about the gang topic, i.e., "was it the el ay gangs or" in line 24. He receives a claim of no knowledge and subsequently rephrases his question by specifying it in more detail in line 29. He mentions two specific gang names: the crips and the bloods. He then
receives Lisa's answer in which she indicates that she does not think so (line 31). Following this turn, Marie then self-selects and produces a more elaborated description of her own opinion.

In this excerpt, the or-turn in line 19 serves as a device to direct the topic back to a topic that was mentioned earlier in the talk, i.e., in line 1. Prior to the topic director, Marie had introduced another potential topic, that of food drives and the mayor's actions, but after assessing that as something positive, Kevin moves back to the prior topic of gangs. He is offering this new topic to his co-participants, and after a tentative agreement, he produces a follow-up question, which also serves to establish this offered topic as an actual topic. However, Kevin has to rephrase his topic once again in line 29 before his coparticipants develop lengthier answers and develop the topic further. Here, just as in excerpt (34), Kevin does not produce a third-position token, which again indicates that he did not primarily orient to his own turn as having made relevant solely confirmation or disconfirmation. It also indexes that he is keeping this topic open and is offering it for topic development.

Or-turns, when used to proffer a topic or shift a topic, involve information seeking. Similar to repair initiation, information seeking is not the primary or only action accomplished, yet is a key component of the action of topic proffering. Topic proffers are generally about something that is in the recipient's realm of knowledge (Schegloff, 2007). Or-turns are used in topic proffering environments and for this type of action.

3.5. Conclusion

In this chapter, I described the sequential organization of or-turns and have shown that they occur as FPPs in question-answer sequences, or informing sequences. I also discussed that as FPP of such informing sequences, or-turns have emerged to accomplish three related but
overlapping social actions. I have discussed that or-turns can work to seek clarification about something that was talked about in prior sequences, i.e., that they can work to clarify some potential trouble source. In those instances, participants overwhelmingly produce third position tokens that indicate that they have moved from a state of not knowing or understanding to a state of understanding or knowing. In contrast to that pattern, participants do not produce such third position tokens when the or-turn works to establish, (re)direct, or sustain a topic. In such patterns, the or-turn offers a potential topic for subsequent development, and by not producing a third position token, the participants are showing their orientation to subsequent development of this still-open sequence.

Information seeking and knowledge differentials figure prominently in sequences initiated by or-turns. Participants can accomplish the actions of repair, topic proffering and information seeking with a variety of other resources in addition to or-turns. That is, or-turns are not the only and exclusive resource to accomplish repair initiation, seeking information, and topic proffering. In fact, in principle, participants could accomplish these actions without a turn-final or. The question of what or in turn-final placement adds to the actions being accomplished will be the focus of the next two chapters.
4. Preference organization and or-turns

4.1. Introduction

Chapter 2 centered on or and transition relevance points, prosody, and the composition of or-turns. In chapter 3, I demonstrated that or-turns occur as first pair parts (FPPs) of question-answer adjacency pairs and that or-turns are deployed to accomplish repair initiations, information seeking, and topic proffering, with information seeking being a common thread among all three action types. When analyzing the collection, it became apparent that turn-final or is implicated in preference organization (i.e., the normative turn structures and actions that characterize responses to or-turns). I initially noticed that recipients provide disconfirmations more often than confirmations in response to or-turns. I then noticed that these two types of responses (i.e., confirmation and disconfirmation) are formatted differently. It is preference organization that I turn to now. The question I aim to answer in this chapter is "Does turn-final or affect the preference structure of question-answer sequences, and if so, how?". I show that turn-final or allows for the unproblematic production of both disconfirmations and confirmations. I argue that turn-final or alters the preference organization insofar as it relaxes the preference for a positive, confirming response. I also show that both response types are treated as accountable, that is, elaborations of a confirmation or disconfirmation are treated as relevant.

I begin with an overview of preference more generally before I turn to preference as it relates to question-answer sequences, including design-based preference, action-based preference, and type-conformity preference. Then, I provide data excerpts to illustrate that or-turns are built so that disconfirmation is not problematic. I close the chapter with a concluding discussion.
4.2. Preference organization: Some preliminaries

4.2.1. Action-type preference and design-based preference

When participants produce turns in first position, they narrow the possibilities of what can be produced next as a recognizable second pair part (SPP) to the turn in first position. For instance, a greeting such as "hi" in first position (i.e., a first pair part or FPP) makes relevant only one type of possible next, that of another greeting (Schegloff, 2007). Grammatically differently formed question types as FPPs make relevant different answer types as SPPs (e.g., de Ruiter, 2012; Enfield et al., 2010; Raymond, 2003; Schegloff, 2007). Polar questions (Biber et al., 1999; Bolinger, 1957, 1978a, 1978b; Enfield et al., 2010; Heinemann, 2008; Heinemann, Lindström, & Steensig, 2011; Heritage, 2012a, 2012b; Heritage & Raymond, 2012; Koshik, 2002a; Pomerantz, 2011, 2012; Quirk et al., 1985; Raymond, 2003; Schegloff, 2007) make relevant an answer that contains, minimally, a yes or no answer (Raymond, 2003). Wh-questions make relevant a response corresponding to the wh-word used in the question (Fox & Thompson, 2010; Schegloff, 2007; Schegloff & Lerner, 2009). Wh-questions are broad, whereas Yes/No-type Interrogatives (YNIs) are narrower in terms of the constraints put on the co-participant (Fox & Thompson, 2010; Raymond, 2003).

Different ways of responding to a FPP, as Schegloff (2007) notes, "embody different alignments toward the project undertaken in the first pair part" (59). Crucially, these responses are not symmetrical alternatives (Sacks, 1987 [1973]), but rather, responses that aid in furthering the FPP's action toward success are preferred over a response that would hinder the

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65 Fox and Thompson (2010) distinguish specifying wh-questions from telling wh-questions. The former type elicits specific information. Seeking information is their main action. The latter type seeks extended responses such as tellings, reports, and accounts.
accomplishment of the action initiated in the FPP. SPPs that are answers to a question in first position and second greetings in response to first greetings are turns that further the action initiated in the FPP and as such are preferred over SPPs that do not further the initiated action. Preference, in this sense, has to do with the success of an initiated action.

Preference, as used in CA, is not an individual or psychological preference but is rooted in "the structural preferences that organize much of talk-in-interaction" (Sidnell, 2010, p. 77). An example taken from Sidnell (2010) will help elucidate this concept:

Consider a situation in which you are invited to a dinner party at the house of someone you dislike and whose company you assiduously avoid. In such a situation you would obviously prefer, in the individual or psychological sense, to decline the invitation, but this does not alter the fact that acceptance is the preferred alternative in terms of the organization of talk. A declination will likely require an accompanying explanation, for example that you are busy that evening, or that you have a rare and highly contagious fungal infection, whereas an acceptance will not (p. 77).

The preference structure that is a characteristic of talk-in-interaction then can be seen to be related to the course of the action under way. In a situation where something is being requested from the co-participant, the preferred response would be one that aids in bringing this action to completion, i.e., by granting the request, whereas a response that would not grant the request would be one that is dispreferred because it does not lead to the successful completion of a request sequence (Pomerantz, 1984a; Schegloff, 2007; Sidnell, 2010). However, there are cultural differences associated with preference structure. For instance, in Farsi, acceptances of offers are done in a dispreferred way whereas rejections are not (Taleghani-Nikazm, 1998, 1999).
CA research has demonstrated that participants deploy turn-design features that mark a turn as preferred or dispreferred. Preference then emerges from the data by way of how participants design their turns. That is, participants signal preferred and dispreferred turns via the turn's design, which shows again the participants' orientation to preference organization as real to them in the unfolding interaction. Dispreferred turns are commonly marked by several design features (e.g., Schegloff, 2007; Sidnell, 2010): delays, palliatives such as "that is sweet of you", pro-forma agreements, accounts, and other elaborations such as excuses, hedges, and disclaimers. Excerpt (1) exhibits many of these features.

Excerpt (1): Visit a little while
(taken from Sidnell, 2010, p. 78; his excerpt (1))

1 A: Uh if you'd care to come and visit a little while
2 this morning I'll give you a cup of coffee.
3 B: hehh Wll that's awfully sweet of you. I don't
4 think I can make it this morning. .hh uhm I'm
5 running an ad in the paper and- and uh I have to
6 stay near the phone.

In line 1, speaker A issues an invitation to speaker B. A response that "favors furthering or the accomplishment of the activity" (Schegloff, 2007, p. 59) would be the preferred response. In line 3, B produces a dispreferred response in that she does not accept the invitation. This dispreference is apparent in several turn design features. There are some delays before the actual declination: a turn-initial outbreath ("hehh") followed by the token "well" (Schegloff & Lerner, 2007; Pomerantz 1984a) and the palliative "that is awfully sweet of you." The declination is further mitigated by an epistemic phrase "I don't think" (Kärkkäinen, 2003), which makes the declination, on its face, less definite. Following the declination of the invitation, B produces
another turn component commonly associated with dispreferred responses, an account that explains why she is not accepting the invitation.

In contrast to such dispreferred turns, responses that are preferred and further the accomplishment of the activity initiated through the FPP are generally produced immediately, without delay and often with minimal turn-final overlap (Jefferson, 1973, 1983, 1984, 1986; Schegloff, 2007). Consider excerpt (2) below as an illustration of contiguously placed preferred responses.

Excerpt (2): Come and see me
(taken from Atkinson and Drew (1979, p. 58)).

1    B: Why don't you come and see me some[time
2    A: [I would like to

Here, speaker B also issues an invitation, similar to excerpt (1) above. In contrast to excerpt (1), the response here is a preferred one, aligning with and furthering the activity initiated in the FPP, that is, speaker A accepts the invitation immediately, without delay and in fact in terminal overlap. There are no hedges, delays, mitigations, or accounts. These two examples show turn design features of the responding turn that display its status as a preferred or dispreferred response in regard to the prior turn's action. Via these response turn features, participants enact preference organization in the unfolding interaction and show an orientation to it.

4.2.2. Type-conformity preference

In addition to action-based preference, type-conformity preference figures centrally in polar questions. A polar question makes relevant one of two possible response types: a positive or a negative answer, i.e., in most cases a yes or no. In answering a polar question, a participant can produce an answer that is type-conforming (that is, a response that includes the relevant
answer) or an answer that is *nonconforming* (that is, a response that does not includes the relevant answer) (Raymond, 2003). The difference will be illustrated below.

Excerpt (3): Type-conforming response to a polar question

(Raymond 2003, p. 949; his excerpt 9)

1 Mar: .hhhh Oh:.((vl))hhhhmhhhh Wudje talk about .hh

2 Bob: Oh I don't remember no[:w,

3 Mar: [.hhhhhh=

4 Bob: =.hh hhheh-eh-[heh

5 => Mar: I- [W'l dih you talk aboutcher future? hh

6 (0.2)

7 => Bob: No:. [Nothing so intricate.h

8 Mar: [Oh.

9 ????: .hhhhhhh

10 Mar: Oh[(it-)

11 Bob: [En what future.

12 Mar: Jis surface.

---

*Wh*-questions can also be responded to with both type-conforming and nonconforming answers. Here, a type-conforming response is one that conforms to the *wh*-word of the question, a nonconforming one does not (Schegloff, 2007). But see also Fox and Thompson (2010) who argue that different grammatical compositions of responses to specifying *wh*-questions accomplish different interactional work. For instance, when participants answer specifying *wh*-question with a phrase (such as "ten miles") rather than a clause (such as "it's ten miles up the canyon"; invented example), they are doing straightforward answering. Clausal answers, in contrast, "display sequential trouble" (Fox & Thompson, 2010, p. 154). Phrasal answers and clausal answers are grammatical alternatives that are exploited for interactional ends (i.e., indicating sequential trouble with one form and doing simple answering with the other form).
Excerpt (4): Nonconforming response to a polar question

(Raymond 2003, p. 9498; his excerpt 8)

1 => HV: I- Mm.=Are your breasts alright.
2   (0.7)
3 => Mom: They're fi:ne no:w I've stopped leaking (. ) so:
4   HV: You didn't want to breast feed,

In excerpt (3), the polar question "did you talk about your future" is met with a disconfirming answer "no. nothing so intricate.". The response includes the token no and as such is a type-conforming answer. Excerpt (4), in contrast, does not contain either a yes or no in the response turn. The question "Are your breasts alright" receives the nonconforming answer "they're fine now.". This response does not include a yes or no token, and as such is a nonconforming answer. The response nevertheless confirms the question's proposition, but it does so without an explicit yes token.

In excerpt (4), the recipient confirms the question, but without a yes, thereby producing a nonconforming (but confirming) response. Below is an example of a type-conforming and confirming response.

Excerpt (5): Polar question

(taken from Raymond (2003); his excerpt 7, p. 948)

1 => HV: I-- How about your breast(s) have they settled do:wn
2   [no:w.
3 => Mom: [Yeah they 'ave no:w yeah.=
4   HV: ={ } they're not uncomfortable anymo:re.

In this excerpt, the confirming response includes the token "yeah" and as such is a type-conforming response. Both negative and positive responses can be type-conforming, and nonconforming responses can be both negative and positive.
Raymond's (2003) work on polar questions shows that this difference in response format is not merely an analytical one, but one that is consequential for interactants in real time and oriented to by them. Nonconforming answers to polar questions are done for cause (Raymond, 2003). As Raymond (2003) puts it:

in type-conforming responses, a speaker's stance toward the course of action initiated by a FPP is stated simply and straightforwardly (e.g., through as 'yes' or 'no', which may be subsequently elaborated), while nonconforming responses specifically depart from the constraints embodied in the grammatical form of the FPP to produce an action not contemplated by it (p. 949).

The extracts taken from Raymond (2003) stem from a first visit of a health visitor with a new mother. Raymond (2003) explains that the question "have they settled down now" in excerpt (5) references the progress of the mother's breasts and "by extension… an implicit recognition that her breasts had been, in some way, painful, or problematic" (p. 948). The type-conforming answer "allows the mother to confirm that her breasts have 'settled down' while also indicating that she had suffered some discomfort prior to the visit" (p. 948). In contrast, the answer in excerpt (4), the one that does not contain a yes token, "treats the response options made relevant by the question as inadequate for conveying the status of her breasts since the choice between 'yes' and 'no' would only make reference to their current state" (p. 948). That is, the response indexes that the question is somehow problematic as it does not include anything about how the mother may have been feeling in the past, something mom's response via the adverb "now" clearly conveys. The different formats of responses, type-conforming and nonconforming, show an orientation to the presuppositions that are encoded in the question, and recipients can withhold confirming such presuppositions via the format of their response.
In regard to yes/no-question-answer sequences, confirming responses "readily lend themselves to formulation as 'agreements'" (Schegloff, 2007, p. 59), and disconfirming responses as disagreements. Responses that do agreement "embody an alignment with the first pair part … [disagreeing responses] a distancing from it" (Schegloff, 2007, p. 59). Questions that contain negative polarity items (Heinemann, 2008; Heritage, 2012a, 2012b; Heritage & Raymond, 2012; Huddleston & Pullum, 2002; Koshik, 2002a, 2005; Schegloff, 2007) have been shown to tilt the turn toward a negative reply. A question containing the negative polarity item "yet" such as the one in excerpt (6) below then prefers a negative reply.

Excerpt (6): Polar question containing a negative polarity item

(Schegloff, 2007; p. 62; simplified and shortened; his excerpt 5.03)

1 Bee: Did they get rid of Kuhkeznik yet
2 Ava: No in fact I know somebuddy who has huh now.

As Schegloff (2007) notes, Ava's response here is provided immediately, without any delays or other dispreference markers. Ava thereby orients to the question in line 1 as one that is tilted toward this negative answer. Ava does produce an elaboration, a feature that is characteristic of dispreferred responses. However, in this excerpt, the FPP accomplishes the action of a topic
proffer, and the elaboration can be said to respond to this action. Except for biased questions and questions that contain negative polarity items, a "general preference for agreement" (Schegloff, 2007, p. 79f.) is said to hold for yes/no-type questions. That is, questions that make relevant confirmation or disconfirmation are treated as questions that prefer a yes-answer. I argue that or-turns relax such a preference for positive answers and that disconfirmations are a response type that can be produced contiguously without dispreferred turn design features when participants end a question in or.

4.3. **Or-turns and preference**

In the prior section, I have shown examples that illustrate that responses that contribute to the successful completion of the action initiated in first position are preferred and are generally produced without markers of dispreference. A response accepting a request is preferred over a response declining the request. An affirmative response to a question is preferred over a negative response (Heritage, 2012a, 2012b; Heritage & Raymond, 2012; Raymond, 2003; 67 Biased questions, also called conducive questions, are those questions "where the speaker is predisposed to accept one particular answer as the right one" (Huddleston & Pullum, 2002, p. 879). Huddleston and Pullum (2002) suggest that negative interrogative questions "are always strongly biased" (p. 883), but – crucially – either towards the negative or positive answer. They propose that it is the context that helps shed light on the type of bias encoded in such questions. For instance, the question "Didn't I tell you Kim would be coming?", the authors suggest that it could be biased toward the negative answer "You didn't tell me" or toward the positive answer "You did tell me" (for a related line of arguments, see Biber et al. (1999) and Quirk et al. (1985). This example shows that from a linguistic perspective, polarity and a bias toward either a positive or negative response is not as clear cut as some CA literature at times suggests. There is a need for further research on the notion of polarity and how polarity plays out in interaction, how it is oriented to as real for interactants and employed for interactional ends (but see Heinemann, 2008; Koshik, 2002a, 2005).
Schegloff, 2007). In this section, I show that *or* relaxes this preference, making it easier for the co-participant to produce a negative answer in that, through use of turn-final *or*, the current speaker indexes the possibility of an alternative to the candidate understanding offered in the turn itself. In other words, the usual design features of dispreference are oriented to as unnecessary when recipients formulate their answer to *or*-turns. *Or* enables an unproblematic production of a disconfirmation and recipients orient to this by regularly producing contiguously placed negative responses without any markers of dispreference. Even though I found negative responses with markers of dispreference, I found that such responses are marked as dispreferred for a reason other than being disconfirmations. For instance, dispreferred disconfirmations are produced when a question, as it is asked, is not immediately answerable. Although participants overwhelmingly form up disconfirmations using preferred turn design features, participants also produce positive, confirming responses with preferred turn shapes. If positive responses were dispreferred (which a reversal of preference would suggest), then one would expect to see interactional evidence for this in the data via, for instance, positive responses being formulated with dispreferred turn shape features. This is not the case. This is why I propose that turn-final *or* relaxes rather than reverses the preference for a positive response. I am using the term *relaxes*\(^{68}\) because both confirmations and disconfirmations are possible and more importantly formed up with preferred turn design features, that is, unproblematically. A reversal of preference for a positive response would erase any likelihood for a positive, confirming response (see also section 4.3.3).

\(^{68}\) I adopt the phrase *relaxes the preference for a confirmation* from Lindström's (1997) dissertation.
My collection of *or*-turns consists of 81 instances. In 11 of these 81 instances, there is no immediately produced SPP, either because the *or*-turn is sequentially deleted\(^{69}\) (n=2), that is, there is no direct response to it, or because the speaker who utters the *or*-turn self-selects after a pause in an effort to pursue the not immediately forthcoming response (n=9). In these 11 instances, then, the *or*-turn is not responded to directly by the co-participant, and these 11 instances are not included in the analysis of the preference organization. In 14 instances, no clear confirmation or disconfirmation is provided in the SPP. Recipients avoid giving a (clear) answer (n=5), claim an inability to answer the question (n=3), or provide no-knowledge claims (n=6). Because there is no clear confirmation or disconfirmation in the SPP, these 14 instances also are not included in this chapter’s analysis.

The remaining 56 instances are all met with either a confirming or a disconfirming response. Of 18 confirmations, 4 are produced in overlap before the turn-final *or* is produced. 38 responses are disconfirmations, of which 4 are produced in overlap prior to the production of turn-final *or*. While recipients may very well be able to attend to a turn-final *or* even when it is produced in overlap with their on-going response, I have excluded cases of full overlap from the analysis here to better ground my analysis in cases where responsive turns are produced in the

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\(^{69}\) In these two cases, a third speaker in a multi-party interaction comes in and, vernacularly speaking, derails the on-going topic and sequence by introducing a new line of talk, which leads to the *or*-turn being left unattended.
I do include instances in which there is partial overlap on *or* (e.g., of the "o[r"] and or[:"
format, that is, where the overlap onset occurs during the final sound stretch or with the "r" in
"or"). This degree of overlap is one type of smooth turn transition and speaker change
(Jefferson, 1983, 1986; Sacks et al., 1974; Schegloff, 2007), and the onset of recipients'
responses occurs when *or* is projectable via its initial vowel, which is produced in the clear.

The analysis in this chapter is based on 48 examples of which 14 (29%) are confirmations
and 34 (71%) are disconfirmations. In the current collection, recipients disconfirm *or*-turns over
twice as often as they confirm them. While the numbers suggest that disconfirmations are the
default-type response to *or*-turns, they do not form the backbone of my argument. Rather, I have
arrived at my finding in a detailed, line-by-line inspection of all 48 data samples. In the
remainder of this section, I discuss data excerpts representative of the collection to show that
turn-final *or* relaxes the preference for confirming responses. I begin with disconfirming
responses that are produced contiguously and without any markers of dispreference, such as
delays or perturbations.

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There is a possibility that the turn-final *or* in such full overlap cases was already on its way, locally
planned by the FPP-speaker. However, this individual cognitive process is not available for conversation analysts
for inspection, and it would be speculation to claim this in my analysis as a given. In addition, a recipient of an *or-
turn may also be able to project a turn-final *or* through aspects of prosody which I have not studied in this regard. In
order to ground my analyses in the speakers' orientation to turn-final *or*, I exclude these instances from the analysis
presented here.
4.3.1. Disconfirmations without dispreferred turn design features

Excerpt (7) below serves as a first illustration. Recall that prior to this excerpt, Angela has been on the phone with a third party, Bobby, whom both she and Eric know. Eric is less familiar with Bobby than is Angela.

Excerpt (7): At U of Y now or

(58; Rockwell HR1_C1: 00.35.20)

1 Ang: we can keep in touch since we're like on the same page gonna be
2 looking for jobs and I was like ↑yeah:. ↑keep in to[uch.
3 Jes: [n=ha
4 Ang: [I can't [tell you: how surprised I am]
5 => Eri: [Is he still- [is he- has he done a PhD at ] U of Y ↑now: 'or =
6 Ang: =no he's just gonna finish his master's. he's student teaching
7 this semester and then he's gonna find a job teaching at a high
8 [school,
9 Eri: [oh okay;
10 (.)
11 Ang: ((nods)) I- I can't even tell you how surprised I am like that is
12 s:o random: I can't even explain it .=

In line 5, Eric is asking an interrogatively formulated information seeking question about a third party both he and Angela know. Immediately upon the completion of or Angela comes in to produce the relevant answer. Her type-conforming response is a disconfirmation and is provided immediately, without any delays, perturbations or other dispreferred turn design features. Angela treats the or-turn as one that allows for an unproblematic disconfirming response by shaping her response in a preferred manner. Angela also treats Eric's question as an information seeking question that makes relevant more than just a yes or no answer. Without pause, she adds the elaboration that contains information about Bobby's stage in the graduate program he
currently attends. Angela's response is thus a preferred one that furthers the FPPs' action. Talk about Bobby beyond the disconfirmation serves the action of providing information Eric's question made relevant. After Eric produces a third-position composite token "oh okay," Angela returns to the previous topic, one she had begun to develop prior to Eric's polar question in line 5, namely that of her surprise at Bobby's call. Eric's or-turn can thus be seen as allowing for a negative response, or put differently, the turn-final or relaxes the preference for a confirming response.

Similar to excerpt (7) above, excerpt (8) also contains a disconfirming response that is produced without dispreference markers. M1 and M2 are talking on the phone. M1 has asked M2 if he was going to go anywhere for any seminars. M2 informs M1 that he has no travel plans as he has already been to Chicago (not provided in transcript). In line 1, M1 acknowledges this as known information and produces a clarification request.

Excerpt (8): New Orleans or
(60; Call friend Engn6952:12.17)

1 M1: I know, well where's the ones in Hawaii and that- that
2 M2: ah, they don't have those=
3 M1: =aw they don't have those?
4 M2: [no: not- ]
5 => M1: [or in, u:h] New O:n:es=or: []h
6 M2: [no,=]
7 =but well they're gonna have Co:md:x,
8 (0.6)

Angela could also be treating Eric's question as a topic proffer, detailing Bobby's future plans (lines 7-8). From this perspective, her response would also be the preferred one. Eric, however, ends such a potential topic and sequence expansion by producing the third position receipt token.
In line 2, M2 informs M1 that the seminars in Hawaii are not an option. M1 repeats M2's utterance with upward intonation. M1's repeat is oriented to as a clarification request, as evidenced by M2's answer in line 4. In overlap with M2's answer, M1 produces another clarification request, this time targeting New Orleans as another possible location presumably for potential seminars M2 may travel to. In line 6, M2 provides a disconfirmation via a no token. The disconfirmation is produced immediately and without any delay. M2 does produce an elaboration, similar to excerpt (7) in which he informs M1 about a seminar (or a conference or some other event like that) with the name "comdex." M1 acknowledges this information in line 9, and M2 adds further clarification by providing the location of this event in line 10. The elaboration in this instance is responsive to the information seeking action of the FPP rather than a marker of dispreference. Again, the or-turn relaxes the preference for a confirming response and indexes to the recipient that a negative response can be given unproblematically. Based on this function, the recipient of the question can forgo dispreferred turn design features and produce a contiguously placed disconfirmation, because the preference for a confirming response has been relaxed via the or. In addition, the third position receipt tokens, "oh" and "oh okay" respectively, lend further proof to or relaxing the preference for a confirmation. A third position receipt token such as "oh really" would show that the response was unsuspected or unbelievable.

In both examples, an elaboration was produced immediately following the negative token no. In all but 1 of the 25 instances where a disconfirmation is produced immediately such an elaboration is produced immediately as well. In one instance – shown in excerpt (9) – the elaboration is not produced right away, but after a pause of 0.6 seconds. In this excerpt, taken from a family conversation, Frank and Jan (a married couple) are talking with Jan's brother Ron
who is visiting from California. Brett and Melissa are Frank and Jan's junior-high-school-age children, who are doing homework and also taking part in the conversation. In this segment, the participants are talking about the children's cello teacher and about how it is difficult to make money solely by teaching cello. Frank speculates as to whether the cello teacher goes to different places and towns to increase the number of students he can teach (lines 1-5).

Excerpt (9): School system too or

(52; SBC019: 07.10)

1  Fra: >So he could go- may say< maybe go to <Battle Creek,> on a_
2    (0.5)
3  Fra: afternoon?["per]haps," after school hours_ "maybe_" It's \hard=
4  Ron:                     [huh. ]
5  Fra: =telling.
6    (1.0)
7  Fra: ((lip smack)) He _seems like a pretty nice _guy though.
8  <= Ron: does he teach in the school system to'o 'or[:
9  Fra:                                       [M: m:].
10    (0.6)
11  Fra: ((lip smack)) he's _strictly;
12    (0.5)
13  Fra: priv- he's _not >married or anything_="nd I< think _strictly private
14     'lessons_ 'a=nd orchestra.
15  Ron:  Hm.

In line 7, Frank produces a positive assessment about the cello teacher. In line 8, Ron produces the or-turn of interest here. He produces a polar question ending in or, thereby – as I argue – inviting a negative response. In line 9, Frank produces such a negative response via the token "M: m:" (not to be confused with the token "mhm" which would signal confirmation). Frank's
response is thus a type-conforming one. The disconfirmation is produced without any delay, and in fact, in partial overlap with the turn-final *or*. Specifically, the sound stretch of the word-final sound is overlapped. Such partial overlaps on the terminal item of a turn have been found to regularly accompany preferred responses rather than dispreferred responses (Jefferson, 1984). Frank utters the response to the *or*-turn as one that doesn't require dispreferred turn design features. Frank does not, however, provide an elaboration immediately after this disconfirmation (in contrast to the examples shown before). Ron, who had asked the question ending in *or*, provides interactional space for Frank to self-select, which is what Frank subsequently does. I should note that this excerpt is taken from a face-to-face conversation to which I only have audio recording available. There may well be non-verbal indicators that Frank is preparing an elaboration during the pause of 0.6 seconds. After the pause of 0.6 seconds he provides the information he has about the cello teacher (lines 11-14), formulating an elaboration of his answer.

Based on the audio recording, the moment-by-moment unfolding of talk in this last sample shows that when a negative, disconfirming response is not immediately followed by an elaboration, this elaboration is oriented to as relevantly missing. In this case, the questioner, upon having received the disconfirmation withhold a third position acknowledgment of the recipient's answer. After a pause of 0.6 seconds, the recipient of the *or*-turn moves to provide such an elaboration, expanding the established line of talk about the teacher and responding to the information seeking action of the FPP.

The excerpts above show that responses that disconfirm the proposition of the FPP *or*-turn are regularly produced without markers of dispreference such as delays or perturbations (25 of 34 responses). Recipients treat the negative response as unproblematic, as a response that
does not need to be hedged or delayed. No special interactional work is needed. This shows that recipients orient to or-turns as turns where the organization of preference is relaxed, where a negative response can be provided straightforwardly and contiguously placed.

My collection also shows that negative responses to turn-final or generally contain an elaboration. Ford (2001) found that elaboration units following negation particles are generally oriented to as relevant, and if absent, are pursued by further talk. However, in my data, confirming responding turns also generally contain an explanation or elaboration unit (see sections 4.3.3. and 4.3.4). If such an explanation is not provided, it is oriented to as noticeably absent and pursued by co-participants (for both confirming and disconfirming responses). In chapter 3, I argued that while or-turns can accomplish different actions (repair, topic proffering, and information seeking), information seeking is the common thread across these social actions. An elaboration unit contains information, which is precisely what the or-turn made relevant. Because elaborations are produced in both confirming and disconfirming responses, I suggest that these elaborations are different from accounts that are more commonly associated with dispreferred responses (Antaki, 1994; Heritage, 1984a; Heritage & Atkinson, 1984), such as claims of no knowledge (e.g., Stivers & Hayashi, 2010), because they aid in the progressivity of the on-going sequence and help carry the FPP's action to successful completion.

4.3.2. Disconfirmations with dispreferred turn design features

In addition to responses that are produced without markers of dispreference, recipients can also provide responses that exhibit some of these dispreference turn design features (e.g., turn-initial delay tokens such as well, perturbations such as uhm and the like) (9 of 34 responses).
In the current section, I show that dispreferred markers occur predominantly when a response cannot be given immediately or straightforwardly for reasons other than being a disconfirmation.

Excerpt (10) serves as a first illustration. It involves the participants Eric, Albert, and Angela, and is taken from video-recorded face-to-face interaction. The interlocutors are playing the board game *Risk* and Eric is about to conclude his game move.

**Excerpt (10): Deck or**

(38; Rockwell HR2_C1:00.59.00)

1. Eric: let's see here. so I get-
2. (1.6)
3. Eric: I get my (m/p-) __six from that one two three four (0.9) five
4. => s::ix. And then do I put these cards back in the 'deck='or
5. (0.9)
6. Albert: uh: yeah at the _bottom_; I think we're saying_ .h but I 'think
7. Jessica might have shuffled em _in or whatever_ but whatever.
8. ((Eric hands the cards to Albert who shuffles them in))

In line 4, Eric produces a YNI ending in *or*, relaxing the preference for a confirming response and signaling to his recipient, Albert, that a negative response can be produced contiguously without the usual interactional work associated with dispreferred responses. Albert does not respond immediately, and a delay of 0.9 seconds ensues. In line 6, Albert produces a turn-initial perturbation "uh" followed by a *yes* token ("yeah"), making his response a type-conforming one (Raymond, 2003). This "yeah" is a pro-forma agreement (Schegloff, 2007; Sidnell, 2010) or "yes but" response type72 (Pomerantz, 1984a), as the continuation immediately corrects this initial confirmation. Albert's response is thus one that disconfirms Eric's proposition. Albert informs Eric that the cards go "at the bottom", not as Eric had proposed "in the deck."

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72 See Steensig and Asmuß (2005) for "yes but" initiated utterances in German and Danish.
then adds the epistemic phrase "I think" (Kärkkäinen, 2003) twice in line 6, moving on to cite another participant, Jessica, who may have shuffled the cards in rather than putting them at the bottom of the deck. Albert indicates that while he is not sure, both "at the bottom" and "in the deck" may actually be appropriate courses of action. Albert's elaboration here satisfies the information-request that the FPP-question initiated, and as such is again different from elaborations that would account for dispreferred responses. What is important here is that Albert displays uncertainty and a lack of definite knowledge as to what is to be done with the cards Eric is inquiring about. Rather than the disconfirming response itself, the uncertainty and lack of knowledge is, I argue, the driving force behind the dispreferred turn shape markers.

This excerpt illustrates that responses that contain dispreferred turn shape markers are produced for cause, that is, for a reason that does not necessarily lie in the fact that the or-turn is being disconfirmed. Here, the dispreferred response lies in the recipient's lack of knowledge. In the next chapter, I discuss the negotiation of knowledge, the commitment to a proposition and the role of or as an epistemic marker of uncertainty. For now, my interest is in showing that dispreferred responses are not tied to the nature of the response as disconfirming but that there are other local contingencies that are being worked out via dispreferred response shapes.

Excerpt (11) is another example. Here, M1 and M2 are talking on the phone about M1's experience with a partner who is not completely faithful.

Excerpt (11): Jealousy for you or

(59; Call friend TBengs 6661:15.08)

1 M2: .hh WHEN:: he says that he's done this;
2 (1.2)

73 The Callfriend corpus uses the abbreviations "M1" and "M2" for male participants. M1 and M2 are speakers different from M1 and M2 in excerpt (8).
Here, M2 produces a YNI ending in or in line 3, relaxing the preference for a confirming response as the relevant next. M1 delays the SPP by producing a lengthy inbreath (0.9 seconds), thereby delaying the response "not really." Instead of providing a clear yes or no answer, M1's response is a hedge in itself. It contains no no token and as such is a nonconforming response (Raymond, 2003). M1 does not produce an elaboration immediately, as evidenced by the fact that M2 has time to come in and produce the follow-up question "no?", which also functions as a news mark, followed by a quietly uttered positive assessment. The follow-up question pursues the elaboration M1 did not immediately produce. In line 7, M1 begins elaborating on his disconfirmation. He produces the epistemic phrase "I guess" (Kärkkäinen, 2003) and by saying "for some reason" further displays that he is having a hard time explaining his answer. The formulation "for some reason" also shows M1's orientation to a need for an elaboration. The
turn-initial inbreath, the hedged answer "Not really," and the epistemically marked elaborations allow M1 to claim an inability to provide a relevant straightforward answer right away.

These two examples show that when participants use dispreferred response shapes, they generally do so for cause rather than because they are ultimately disconfirming the proposition of the or-turn. Disconfirming responses are generally produced immediately, without dispreferred turn design features. When such dispreferred design features are produced, the dispreferred nature of the response lies in something other than the disconfirmation. In excerpt (10) and (11), the recipients claim uncertainty and lack of knowledge (excerpt (10)), or a claim to have difficulties in producing a straightforward disconfirmation right away (excerpt (11)).

Having discussed disconfirmations and their role in preference organization, I move to confirmations next. I begin with confirming responses that lack dispreferred turn design features.

4.3.3. Confirmations without dispreferred turn design features

Talk-in-interaction is always managed locally and jointly by participants; thus, normative patterns are not inviolate rules nor is the response of a recipient "pre-scripted" (Schegloff, 1986). While or works to relax the preference for a confirming response and allows for disconfirming responses to be formed up without dispreferred turn design features, what emerged from the data is that or does not reverse the preference organization. Confirmations are a possible response to or-turns. However, affirmative responses make up only 29% of all cases. When participants produce confirming responses, the response overwhelmingly does not contain markers of dispreference (12 of 14). In only 2 instances do participants produce dispreferred turn design features. This distribution suggests that while or in turn-final position, indeed, relaxes the
preference for a confirming response, it does not preclude confirmations. In 10 of the 14 instances, participants provide an elaboration rather than only a minimal yes answer. I also found that in 9 of the 14 instances of confirming responses, participants engage in additional interactional work after the SPP that further explains the type of answer given. In this section, I begin with a discussion of confirming responses that do not contain markers of dispreference.

Excerpt (12) is taken from a phone conversation between F1 and F2. Prior to this excerpt, F1 had asked F2 about her family. F2 first reports on how her sister is doing before she informs F1 that her grandfather is not doing well and is in the hospital because of a painful infection in his leg.

Excerpt (12): Good spirits or

(37; TB engn5000:12.45)

1 F1: °I think my grandpa had that too.°
2 F2: yea:h_ it's_ (0.3) it's looks- I (.) guess it hurts him a lot (.)
3 and he gets a really high _fever_
4 F1: [*ooh* no;
5 F2: [:h hh so:. but I went and saw him yesterday and he was okay=>and
6 he was< supposed to get out today but_ (0.3) .hh he's not. °so I
7 might go see him° tomorrow again_
8 => F1: °that's good°=is he in good spirit:s ‘or:
9 F2: _yes:, he is. .hh [in a kind of a bi]zarre way I think he:- he=
10 F1: [well that's good ]
11 F2: =likes the: attention, and it's excitement in his life.=
12 =[*i mean ]
13 F1 [h::uhu>>huhuhu<< .h]
14 F2: 'No I don't [mean- that sounds really awful but.
In line 1, F1 comments that her grandfather may have had the same condition. In lines 2-3, F2 elaborates on the physical effects the leg injury has on her grandfather (i.e., it hurts a lot and he gets a high fever). In lines 5-7, F2 continues her telling about her grandfather by saying that she went to visit him the day before, and that because he was not released that day, she may go back and visit him again the next day. In line 8, F1 produces a positive assessment before she adds the polar question ending in _or_. This FPP seeks information regarding F2's grandfather's mental state. Specifically, her YNI contains the proposition that her grandfather is in good spirits. F2's telling had not included anything about how F2's grandfather is dealing with this situation, but only information about the physical effects of the infection. Given the pain he is reportedly in, the high fever he gets, and the fact that he was not released from the hospital as planned, F2's grandfather may very well not be in good spirits. A negative response is thus likely, and this likelihood is reflected in the turn-final _or_, which relaxes the preference for a confirmation and allows for a contiguously placed negative response.

The type-conforming response F2 provides is, however, a confirmation consisting of a turn-initial _yes_ token and partial repetition ("he is"; line 9). The SPP consists of a preferred turn shape, that is, it is placed contiguously, without any delays or perturbations. After an inbreath, F2 adds an elaboration to her confirmation. F2 provides a reason for why her grandfather would be in good spirits despite his physical condition (9-11). Note that after the response "yes:, he is.". F 1 produces a well-prefaced assessment in overlap. Such third-position assessments are often produced as sequence-closing assessments (Schegloff, 2007). F1 treats the confirming response as an appropriate and sufficient response whereas F2 initiates further elaboration – an elaboration that was not prompted by a follow-up question from F1 but is volunteered by the recipient right away and which furthers the information seeking activity initiated through the
FPP. After this elaboration unit, F2 initiates a reformulation of her answer by producing "I mean" in line 12, which is overlapped by F1's laughter. F2's elaboration on why her grandfather would be in good spirits is oriented to as a laughable by F1. F2's remark "I don't mean- that sounds awful" displays that F2 evaluates her own response as awful sounding. By engaging in this additional interactional work, F2 shows that the confirming response and its elaboration may not have been expected and that a disconfirmation, by extension, would not have sounded awful. This reformulation, evaluative of her own response, is different from elaborations that add additional information about that which the or-turn inquiries about in that it explains or justifies the type of answer given. As such, even though the response itself lacks markers of dispreference, the unfolding of the subsequent talk exhibits an understanding of the confirmation as a possible but marked response.

This excerpt, illustrative of the larger collection, then shows that despite or working to relax the preference for a confirmation, such confirmations can be produced straightforwardly without markers of dispreference in the response itself. It also shows that interlocutors engage in additional explanatory work thereafter, pointing to a disconfirmation as having been equally likely. This excerpt also shows that F2, the recipient of the or-turn, orients to an elaboration as necessary in addition to a minimal confirmation. The next excerpt demonstrates this as well.

In excerpt (13), the recipient of the or-turn also produces a confirmation without any delays or other dispreferred turn features. The participants Marie, Kevin, and Lisa are talking about Marie's baby and his medical problems at the hospital. Kevin and Lisa are siblings; Marie is a friend of Lisa's.
Excerpt (13): Did his oxygen get low or

(76; SBC036: 04.32)

1 M: ANd Then the _doctor comes in_ and he just _>looks at him, and_
2 'then they stick this< fing- .hh thing on his finger?
3 (.)
4 M: it's like light sensored? .hh and they have to guard it from the
5 light, and that's what measures his heart rate?
6 (0.4)
7 M: and it measures: his oxygen percent; how much
8 oxygen [he's _get]ting.
9 K: [(wild/wow).]
10 L: cool?
11 M: it was _weird. [A(h)Dd H(h)e Wa(h)s A(h)l-
12 => K: [Did _his oxygen g]et lo\'w? \’or:_
13 M: yeah; [it was] like eighty-six percent.
14 L: [reall?]
15 (.)
16 K: which- of what's[: :-
17 L: [supposed to be] [like ninety-] what?
18 M: [a hundred. ]
19 (0.6)
20 M: .hh u:m, adults [are probably-]
22 (0.3)
23 M: ((lip smack)) .hh adults are [supposed to] be anywhere from like
24 ninety-three to- on up.
25 ((several lines omitted))
26 K: so she- yea:h; so_ he was really _not doing well.
In lines 1-8, Marie describes a sensor that was attached to her baby's finger to measure his heart rate and oxygen intake. In lines 9 and 10, respectively, Kevin and Lisa provide positive assessments of this device. Marie's assessment "it was weird" in line 11 expresses a different stance from "wow" and "cool" and seems to be assessing the situation as a whole rather than only the medical device. So far, Marie has described all the technical equipment that monitored her baby, which was positively assessed by Lisa in line 10, but assessed as "weird" by Marie in line 11. Marie does not include the reason for the medical equipment, and Kevin is now faced with two different stances. Kevin's YNI ending in or in line 12 initiates repair (see chapter 3 for a detailed analysis of this or-turn's social action of repair) and also seems to invite a negative response. Such a negative response would align with Lisa's positive assessment of the equipment and would index that there was no serious medical condition that called for the equipment.

In line 12, however, Marie confirms Kevin's proposition immediately and straightforwardly via a type-conforming response, without dispreferred turn shape elements. After the turn-initial token "yeah", she adds an elaboration informing Kevin of the percentage of her baby's oxygen intake. Kevin orient to this response as insufficient as evidenced by his follow-up question in line 16 (again, see chapter 3 for an analysis of the full excerpt). Both questioner and answerer here orient to the need for an elaboration in the response, a relevance that is further demonstrated by Kevin's follow-up question. While the response is a confirming one, the elaboration unit is oriented to as relevant, and a minimal yes or no answer is shown to be insufficient. The resolution of the repair in this instance takes quite a bit of interactional work, including more than one subsequent clarification request from Kevin. While Marie does not explain her confirming response in a manner similar to the prior excerpt, there is some more
evidence in the data that supports the analysis that the confirming response was unexpected. In line 14, Lisa challenges Marie's confirmation by producing "reall(y)?" in overlap with Marie's elaboration unit. Even though Lisa is not the participant who produced the or-turn, she shows an orientation to a negative answer as having been possible. Similar to the prior excerpt, participants engage in interactional work that displays an orientation to the confirmation as having been unexpected. In the prior excerpt, this orientation is shown via the assessment of the confirming answer as "sounding awful," here it is accomplished via the challenging "reall(y)?".

Before turning to instances where a confirmation is produced with markers of dispreference, I discuss one last instance of an or-turn that receives a contiguously placed confirmation where the subsequent unfolding of the talk again shows that the confirmation was unexpected. The following excerpt involves participants Eric, Jessica, Albert, and Angela. They are playing the board game Risk and it is Eric's turn.

Excerpt (14): Keep attacking or

(22; Rockwell_HR2_C2:00.46.53)

1  Eri: so I still- my guys still there though.
2  Jes: yeah.
3  (.)
4  Eri: okay.
5  (.)
6  => Eri: can I still keep attacking or_
7  Alb: y[eah,
8  Jes: [yeah,
9  Eri: oh sweet. hu[HU
10  Alb: [wait where are you attacking from?
11  Eri: same spot? [(or) is that not what_
12  Alb: [you're taking [north Africa?=>yeah< that's fine.=
This excerpt contains two checking (or informing) sequences (Heritage, 1984a; Keevallik, 2008). The first one spans lines 1 through 4 and is initiated with a so-preface (Raymond, 2004) in line 1. Eric's first clarification request receives a positive response, which he then acknowledges in line 4. After a micro-pause in line 5, Eric initiates another checking sequence with a YNI ending in or in line 6. He is asking if, on top of not losing any game pieces, he can continue his turn and "keep attacking." His or-turn indexes that a disconfirmation can be produced unproblematically. Instead, Albert produces a type-conforming and confirming response, as does Jessica in partial overlap with Albert's "yeah" (lines 7 and 8). Eric's turn in third position consists of a change-of-state token "oh," the positive assessment "sweet" and two laughter tokens (line 9). Through the use of the highly positive assessment "sweet," Eric indexes surprise (Wilkinson & Kitzinger, 2006) at the confirmation, further displaying that Eric may have been inviting a disconfirmation. Eric's surprise, in turn, occasions Albert to backtrack his response. He explicitly stops the game play by producing "wait" and by producing a clarification request. Albert further expresses his confusion in lines 14 through 16.

This excerpt demonstrates that while confirmations can be produced immediately (and without an elaboration), such positive responses are vulnerable toward subsequent interactional work aimed at sorting out the local contingencies of the unfolding sequence. The confirmation is not only oriented to as a surprise by Eric, but is later also re-evaluated by Albert in terms of its validity when faced with this surprise.
In my collection, 9 of 14 excerpts containing a confirmation with preferred turn shapes lead to subsequent additional interactional work where a positive response is explained and elaborated on further. While no overt markers of dispreference are produced in the responding turn, subsequent talk exhibits a stance toward the confirmation as unexpected. While the preference for confirmation is relaxed when participants produce turn-final *or*, this preference is not reversed and such confirmations are possible. However, the fact that confirmations regularly lead to subsequent interactional work that shows that the confirmation was unexpected further underscores my argument that *or* allows for both confirmation and disconfirmation to be given unproblematically. In my data, I also found two instances in which a confirmation is produced with dispreferred turn design features. I turn to this pattern next.

### 4.3.4. Confirmations with dispreferred turn design features

If *or*-turns categorically reversed the preference organization from confirmation to disconfirmation, one would expect that all confirmations would be marked by dispreferred turn design features. As the previous section shows, the production of confirmations is possible with preferred turn shapes. Therefore, I argue that *or* relaxes but does not reverse the preference for a confirmation. However, in two instances (out of 14 confirmations), participants do produce such dispreferred turn design features with a confirmation. Excerpt (15) below illustrates this pattern.

In this excerpt, M1 and M2 are talking on the phone. Prior to the transcript, they are talking about M1’s baby, which is due on Halloween. They both agree that being born on Halloween is better than being born on Christmas, because in the latter case, people don’t give as many birthday gifts. See chapter 3 for a detailed analysis of the *or*-turn's social action of topic proffer.
Excerpt (15): Your job or

(30; TBengn4175:18.10)

1 => M1: \textcolor{red}{.hh so uh:: how's it going in >in< general. you: liking your
2 job ↓or:_
3 M2: \textcolor{red}{;e:=yeah:, it's all ri↓ght, um[:
4 M1: [getting any publications?=
5 M2: =no:=
6 M1: =no:=
7 M2: >.h< no, it's kind of a (0.4) it's kind of a dead end ↓jo↓:b as far
8 as that go[es .h if we'd gotten funding early. .h there was
9 M1: [yeah
10 M2: there > in=it< for me to become like a real post doc
11 in[stead of a slave]
12 M1: [YEah THat's what I remember you said that

M1 proffers a new topic in line 1 (Button & Casey, 1984; Schegloff, 2007). He does so by producing a broad \textit{wh}-question about M1’s job to which he immediately adds a candidate answer ending in \textit{or}, i.e., "you liking your job or." In line 2, M2 produces a high-pitched turn-initial and lengthened sound stretch followed by an unenthusiastic "yeah it's all right." Wells & Mcfarlane (1998) have established that such high pitched initial sound stretches are markers of dispreference. In overlap, M1 produces a question targeting a sub-aspect of M2’s job, namely his publications, next. This quick succession of potential proffers of (related) topics by M2 can be heard as a way to move away from the topic that received a dispreferred response to a topic that may occasion a response that aligns with the topic proffer. This second attempt is, however, met with a blocking move (line 5), which is then challenged by M1 via the upward intoned "no?" in line 6. This prompts M2 to launch an elaboration of both the topic of "publications" and of "job"
in lines 7-11, in which he negatively assesses his job. In line 12, M1 claims to remember some of the negative characteristics M2 is telling him about his job.

Positive, confirming SPPs generally do not lead to sequence expansion but rather to sequence closure whereas negative, disconfirming SPPs generally lead to sequence expansion and elaboration (e.g., Heritage, 2012a, 2012b; Schegloff, 2007). In the context of a topic proffer, a response that leads to sequence expansion is one that would be preferred. Hence, the or-turn as part of the topic proffer makes sense in that it allows for such a negative response. Retrospectively, we can also see in the data that M1 claims to have some knowledge about M2 not being enthusiastic about his job (line 12), and it is possible that this is reflected in the or-turn. Of course, as conversation analysts, we have no way of knowing if M1 posed his topic proffer ending in or with this in mind. The dispreferred turn shape of the SPP in response to the or-turn indicates that a negative response can be formed up unproblematically.

4.4. Concluding discussion

In this chapter I have demonstrated that or-turns relax the preference for confirming responses and that or-turns are built so that disagreement is not problematic. The majority of disconfirmations are produced without any markers of dispreference, but some disconfirmations can be produced with dispreferred turn shape markers. When disconfirmations are produced with a dispreferred turn shape, this turn shape points to some other problem, such as a recipient's claim of uncertainty and inability to provide a clear and straightforward contiguous answer. Responses to or-turns can also be confirmations. Most confirming responses are produced without markers of dispreference in the SPP itself, but participants show through the unfolding of the interaction that a disconfirmation would have been possible, and potentially, even
expected. Finally, participants also produce confirmations with dispreferred turn design features, which, in isolation, would suggest that or reverses the preference organization. However, the data set as a whole suggests that or relaxes rather than reverses the preference structure, allowing for confirmations but making disconfirmations equally likely.\footnote{This is parallel to Lindström's (1997) findings on the Swedish turn-final \textit{eller}, an equivalent to turn-final \textit{or}.}

Most disconfirmations include an elaboration as part of the SPP. While Ford (2001) has shown that elaborations are oriented to as relevantly missing when they are not produced following negative particles, my collection suggests that elaborations are also treated as relevant as part of positive, confirming responses. The elaborations that are routinely produced as part of the SPP to or-turns in first position are different from accounts that often accompany dispreferred responses. Accounts are practices through which speakers provide descriptions, justifications, and reasons for their inappropriate, unexpected, or problematic actions (e.g., Antaki 1994; Heritage 1984). For instance, when an invitation is declined, the account usually explains the dispreferred declination and gives a reason as to why the invitation is being declined (Schegloff, 2007; Sidnell, 2010; see also excerpt (1) in this chapter). Other common accounts that explain an inability to conform to the constraints created by a FPP are claims of no-knowledge. Via such claims of no knowledge (e.g., "I don't know"), participants account for why a relevant second cannot be provided contiguously (Stivers & Hayashi, 2010). Note that these accounts are provided to explain problematic actions. Elaborations as part of responses to or-turns such as the ones that occur in my data differ in that they provide the information sought by the information-seeking or-turn. Because or-turns are, at the broadest level, information seeking devices, a response that contains the sought information is a preferred response as it
further the ongoing activity and brings it to successful completion. The elaboration is thus not an account for a dispreferred response, but rather integral to it, and as such different from explanations often produced to account for problematic actions.

In terms of type-conforming preference, of 26 interrogatively shaped polar questions, 19 receive a type-conforming response and 7 receive a nonconforming response. Raymond's (2003) work directly applies and explains the nonconforming responses. For instance, in excerpt (11), the withholding of the no token projects trouble with formulating a response to a potentially delicate topic. The turn-final or does not affect the type-conforming preference organization of YNI-response sequences. In other words, a YNI ending in or still makes relevant minimally a yes or no response, and responses that do not contain one of these tokens are done for cause.

Overall, my findings on preference organization partially mirror those of Lindström (1997) for Swedish turn-final eller, an equivalent to English or. She argues that eller relaxes the preference for confirmation, marks an ongoing activity as problematic, and that the turns to which eller is added can be dispreferred in and of themselves. My findings differ from hers in that or in my data does not mark an activity as problematic or a turn as dispreferred as such, but my findings mirror her findings in that or relaxes the preference for a confirming response. Schegloff (2007) argues that speakers can add something to an on-going turn in light of a possible dispreferred response to avoid that dispreferred response, thereby derailing and preempting such a dispreferred response. When participants employ turn-final or, rather than derailing or preempting a dispreferred response they use turn-final or to relax the preference for a confirmation and thereby allow for a recipient to provide a contiguous disconfirmation without any hedging or delays.
In addition to *or* relaxing the preference for a confirmation, *or* is implicated in the epistemic organization of talk in interaction. That is, *or* works as an epistemic downgrade, backing down from a proposition and indexing uncertainty. Inviting a negative response and relaxing the preference for a confirmation is tied to the epistemic work *or* accomplishes. This chapter provides the backdrop for my analysis and argument that *or* works as an epistemic downgrade. I turn to this finding in the next chapter.
5. Epistemics and *or*

5.1. Introduction

In the previous chapters, I have discussed the placement of *or* in regard to transition relevance places. I have shown that turns ending in *or* could be prosodically, pragmatically, and grammatically complete prior to *or* but that participants regularly produce *or*'s in turn-final placement where it is treated as transition relevant. I have also discussed that *or* occurs at the end of turns that function as questions in interaction. As such, they make relevant a response next and form first pair parts of question-answer adjacency pairs. The turns ending in *or* work to accomplish three related and overlapping actions: topic proffering, repair, and information seeking. Information seeking is a common thread connecting these actions. In chapter 3, I touched on the knowledge differential between the *or*-utterer and the recipient of the question. That is, the producer of an *or*-turn claims to have less knowledge about what he/she is asking and simultaneously constructs the recipient as knowing more. It is in this environment of knowledge differentials that participants produce *or*-turns. In chapter 4, I showed that *or*, by allowing for an unproblematic negative response, relaxes the preference for a confirmation, and that an elaboration is treated as relevant as part of the response to *or*-turns.

In this chapter, I focus on a finding closely related to that of *or* relaxing the preference for confirmation. Specifically, I argue that turn-final *or* is employed in formulating the action of backing down from the proposition of the question, that is, it works as an epistemic downgrade, indexing uncertainty about the just-uttered proposition. Allowing for a negative response and indexing uncertainty go hand in hand. If a speaker is certain about a proposition, he or she may not expect a disconfirming response but rather a positive, confirming one, because it would confirm what the speaker has formulated as something regarding which s/he is certain. When a
speaker is uncertain about a proposition, a disconfirmation can be the invited response and would in turn confirm the uncertain stance of the speaker. I begin with a brief overview of epistemics in interaction before I analyze and discuss data samples that illustrate that turn-final *or* works as an epistemic stance marker indexing uncertainty.

5.2. **Epistemics: Some preliminaries**

5.2.1. **Introduction**

Epistemics has to do with the distribution of knowledge, access to knowledge, and depth of knowledge among participants in a given interaction (Stivers, Mondada, & Steensig, 2011b). The role of knowledge distribution has long been a part of CA-analyses. For instance, C. Goodwin (1979) shows that who knows what is relevant to how speakers formulate turns for specific recipients based on assumed epistemic differences. In Goodwin's fine-grained analysis of a multi-party dinner table conversation, one of the participants announces that he quit smoking, addressing the news report to an unknowing recipient at the table. When that recipient does not produce any uptake, the speaker modifies the announcement-in-progress (i.e., before the turn arrives at possible completion) to include a time reference, conveying that the day the conversation is taking place is the one-week anniversary of his quitting smoking. As he produces the modified turn, he gazes at his wife, who surely knows that her husband quit smoking but who may not be currently aware of the exact date. The unfolding and incrementally altered turn formulation (the original and modified one) is adapted to the epistemic status of specific addressed recipients such that the new information is something about which that recipient would lack knowledge. Sacks stipulates a general rule of "one should not tell one's coparticipant what one takes it they already know" (Sacks, 1973, p. 139; as quoted in Goodwin,
1979, p. 100). Goodwin's example illustrates that within CA research the precise ways in which the distribution of knowledge is real for participants and consequential for the moment-by-moment unfolding of interaction has long been acknowledged.

In more recent CA research epistemics has taken center stage, with interactionist work on epistemics becoming a vibrant and expanding area of research. However, it is also an area of study that requires more work to empirically tease out distinctions such as epistemic status, epistemic rights, epistemic authority, and epistemic territory, in an effort to base analytic distinctions on evidence of how interactants formulate, ascribe, and contest knowledge and certainty in interaction. My work in the current study contributes to this expanding field by analyzing the role turn-final or takes on as an epistemic stance marker in the negotiation of knowledge and uncertainty in interaction.

Before I continue, a caveat is in order. While much of the work on epistemics and knowledge distribution in CA is convincing, this work also relies – implicitly – on (native speaker) intuition. Sometimes it is not immediately available to the analyst if it is in fact epistemics that motivates a certain action (but see Heritage (2012a) for a perspective on epistemics as the driving force of sequence organization). The reformulation of the turn when faced with a lack of uptake in the example from Goodwin's (1979) work (described above) could also be analyzed simply as an instance of pursuing uptake through incremental turn extension. If the utterer of the turn really did take into account the different knowledge levels of his recipients (and if the wife of the utterer really did know that he had quit smoking) is not immediately accessible to the analyst (although it seems very plausible). I argue in this chapter that turn-final or allows a participant to back down from the question's proposition and index his or her uncertainty about that proposition. While I draw from concepts that are used widely in CA
research on epistemics (epistemic status, epistemic territory and epistemic stance, for instance), I acknowledge that my argument here is more introspective and logical.

In this section, I begin by reviewing some of the major epistemic concepts applied in CA research, namely epistemic status, epistemic territory, epistemic authority, epistemic stance, and type 1/type 2 knowables.\(^{75}\)

### 5.2.2. Territories of information, epistemic status, and type 1/type 2 knowables

Levels of uncertainty about, or levels of commitment to, what participants claim and propose are closely tied to and interrelated with knowledge displays, access to knowledge, and rights to knowledge. Participants negotiate what they know, how they know it, how much they know and how certain they are in interaction (e.g., Drew, 2012; Heritage, 2012a, 2012b; Heritage & Raymond, 2012; Sidnell, 2012; Stivers, Mondada, & Steensig, 2011a). What a participant can claim to know is considered to be in his or her domain/territory of information (Heritage, 2012a, 2012b). Relative to a co-participant, a speaker can thus claim to have K+ or K- epistemic status depending on how much they claim to know and how much access to a given domain of information they have (K+ refers to being more knowledgeable, K- to being less knowledgeable). Domains of information and the distribution of knowledge and the distribution of information constitute a shared backdrop for conversations between specific individuals (Heritage, 2012b), but they are also worked out in the unfolding talk through a speakers' claims to them and recipient responses to such claims.

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\(^{75}\) I also acknowledge that these concepts are somewhat fluid themselves and overlap at times, which makes it tricky to show participant orientation to them.
Another related way of seeing the distribution of knowledge and epistemic territories involves so-called type 1 and type 2 knowables (Pomerantz, 1980). Type 1 knowables are based on first-hand experience whereas type 2 knowables are based on hearsay, reports, inference, and other such indirect relations to knowledge. Subject-actors are held accountable for type 1 knowables more so than for type 2 knowables. Generally speaking, the distribution of knowledge is, crucially, worked out in the moment-by-moment unfolding of the interaction.

Consider excerpt (1) below as an illustration of the concepts introduced so far.

Excerpt (1): Your job or
(30; TBengn4175:18.10)

1 => M1: .hh so uh:: how's it going in >in< general. you: liking your
2    job ↓or:
3 M2: ↑e:=yeah:, it's all right, um:

Here, M1 asks M2 about M2's job (lines 1-2) and M2 provides the made relevant response in line 3. The "domain or territory of information" (Heritage, 2012a, p. 4) here is constructed as belonging to M2, as M1's question has to do with M2's job, i.e., it is in his realm of knowledge. To put it differently, M1 is inquiring about a type 1 knowable (Pomerantz, 1980), something about which M2 is construed as having more epistemic rights and authority than M1. M1 constructs himself as having lower epistemic rights, authority, and access to the information than M2 by asking a question of M2 rather than producing an assertion (Heritage, 2012b). M1's epistemic status is thus one of less knowledge (i.e., K-) relative to M2's epistemic status. This knowledge differential and K- and K+ status can be represented visually as follows (adapted from Enfield, Brown, and de Ruiter (2012, p. 194)).
Figure 4: K- and K+ status negotiated through questions

The figure shows that the speaker (S), i.e., the questioner, claims K- status for himself and claims K+ status for the answerer (A). Excerpt (4) shows that the answerer accepts this construction of him as having K+ status by providing an answer to the question. By providing a response to this question, M2 displays an alignment with M1’s construal, and displays having greater (or primary) epistemic rights and authority than M1. The distribution of knowledge among the two participants is construed as asymmetrical, with M1 being less knowledgeable and having lower epistemic rights and authority than M2. Such distributions of knowledge are part of the backdrop of conversation (Heritage, 2012a, 2012b; Sidnell, 2012), but as the excerpt above shows, they are also worked out, claimed, and aligned with in the here and now of the interaction.

5.2.3. Epistemic access

Another concept within epistemic research, which is related to epistemic status, authority, epistemic rights, and epistemic territories, is that of epistemic access and depth of knowledge. Heritage (2012a) suggests that "we can consider relative epistemic access to a domain or territory of information as stratified between interactants such that they occupy different positions on an epistemic gradient (more knowledgeable [K+] or less knowledgeable [K-]), which itself may vary in slope from shallow to deep" (p. 4). Epistemic access, or the level of
knowledge, then, is a continuum rather than a binary and is constructed and claimed relative to the co-participant. Consider excerpt (2) below.

Excerpt (2): Do I lose one then too or

(69, Rockwell Hr 2_C1:00.46.43)

1 A: One... why am I such a lousy.
2 E: ((talks to himself? very quiet))
3 J: [ooh:,
4 => E: so, just lose one right, and do I lose one then too or:
5 J: no cause you- both of yours are bigger.
6 E: [oh okay.

To recap, in this excerpt, Angela loses her turn against Eric (lines 1 - 3), and in line 4, Eric, while removing one of Angela's game piece, says "so, just lose one right." He immediately moves on to add "nd do I lose one then too or," and this is the turn of interest here. Earlier in the game, all participants had discussed the rules as they pertain to how many "armies," i.e., game pieces, are lost as the result of which scores. Now, Eric produces his understanding of those rules as him having to lose one game piece even though he had rolled the higher number, which Jessica disconfirms in line 5. Eric acknowledges and accepts her response in line 6 with the production of a change-of-state token, oh (Heritage, 1984a), and the token "okay."

In this excerpt, the information sought relates to the rules of a board game. As such it is not clearly within either Eric’s or Jessica's realm of knowledge. What I mean by this is that this information is not something that is a type 1 or type 2 knowable, as it does not concern immediate information about either of the participants' lives. Nevertheless, Eric construes the

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76 Equal epistemic access to a domain is implied in utterances such as "It's a beautiful day out isn't it?" (Pomerantz, 1984a, p. 59). Equal epistemic access "may be restricted to [but not guaranteed for] specifically shared (ordinarily simultaneous) experiences of persons, objects, and events" (Heritage, 2012a, p. 5).
information as being in Jessica's territory of knowledge and he claims to have less epistemic access to the information being pursued in relation to his co-participant. He does so by asking a question, claiming lower epistemic status, access, authority, and rights for himself relative to that of his recipients (e.g., Enfield et al., 2012; Heritage, 2012a, 2012b; Heritage & Raymond, 2005; Stivers et al., 2011a, 2011b). Eric also construes Jessica as having more epistemic access and more depth of knowledge about this piece of information. Eric presents the piece of information as something Jessica will have access to, again, by asking a question rather than making an assertion. Jessica accepts his construal of her as having more knowledge about the matter at hand by producing a knowledge-displaying response rather than resisting her construction as knowledgeable. Her response goes beyond accepting or claiming more epistemic access; Jessica displays that she does indeed have greater epistemic access relative to Eric by providing the answer, and also by providing an explanation for her answer. She is able to demonstrate that her epistemic access and the depth of her knowledge are high enough for her to

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The puzzle of why utterances that are formulated as declaratives rather than interrogatives are routinely heard as questions requiring an answer has been addressed in Labov and Fanshel's (1977) discussion of B-event statements. A-events and B-events refer to the distribution of knowledge about an event, across speakers A and B. A-events are those events known to A but not to B and B-events are those events that are known to B but not A. The adjacency pair in excerpt (a) illustrates an instance of a B-event statement.

Excerpt (a): Studio or

(56; SBC60:08.30)

1 A: You walked into his studio or
2 B: it was a gallery

Here, speaker A displays a lack of knowledge as evidenced by his asking for confirmation from speaker B. Speaker B is constructed as having access to this knowledge as evidenced by his providing an answer, specifically, disconfirming the proposition and simultaneously correcting the referent "studio" to "gallery".

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produce this type of informative elaboration. She thus not only answers Eric's question, she also shows alignment with Eric's construal of her epistemic access as higher than his (i.e., as K+), and by doing so, she reflexively aligns with Eric's construction of his own epistemic access as lower than hers (i.e., as K-). Both participants achieve epistemic access congruence (Stivers et al., 2011a) through the adjacency pair sequence. In other words, as they move through the sequence, they establish alignment about each other's relative knowledge about the matter at hand. In the next section, I outline how participants can index their epistemic stance in the unfolding of the talk.

5.2.4. Epistemic stance and epistemic gradient

Epistemic stance, in contrast to knowledge asymmetries based on domains of information or epistemic territories, is "managed through the design of turns at talk" (Heritage, 2012a, p. 6) and managed on a moment-by-moment basis. Epistemic stance can encompass stances of certainty and uncertainty and of knowing and unknowing. In other words, speakers can display a lack of full commitment to the proposition in the or-turn. I am adopting the terminology commitment to a proposition based on Enfield et al. (2012) work on sentence final particles (SFPs) across three languages (Dutch, Lao, and Tzeltal Mayan). Using the example "It's still snowing outside", Enfield et al. (2012) argue that the declarative form of the sentence suggests that the "speaker has, or claims to have, a relatively high commitment to the truth of the proposition (i.e., the speaker knows for sure that it is still snowing outside" (p. 193). The authors also suggest that in contrast to the speaker, who may have seen that it is snowing, the listener "might be less certain of it" (p. 193). In this work, Enfield et al., (2012) show that sentence-final particles (SFP) across different languages can encode a "different degree and kind of
commitment to the truth of that [i.e., a question's] proposition" (193). Employing the notion of the epistemic gradient (Heritage, 2012a, 2012b; Heritage & Raymond, 2012; Heritage & Watson, 1979), Enfield et al. (2012) show that different SFPs in each of these languages make "finer distinctions within this gradient" (p. 194) by either "lowering a speaker's commitment to the truth of the proposition" (p. 195) or by "raising the addressee's" (p. 195). I propose that or in English can do just that: lower a speaker's displayed commitment to the truth of the proposition.

In English, different stances can be expressed and claimed via, for instance, "different grammatical realizations of propositional content" (Heritage. 2012a, p. 6). These different turn formats, then, index different levels of commitment to a proposition. Heritage (2012a) illustrates this with the notion of the epistemic gradient and the following examples.

(a) Are you married?

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

(c) You're married.

All three examples (a-c) exhibit the same propositional content (i.e., the co-participant's marital status) while exhibiting different epistemic stances by the speaker of the utterances. In each case, the information lies within the epistemic domain of the recipient and the recipient is constructed to have primary access and rights to this information. The displayed speaker commitment to the likelihood that the proposition is true differs across these three examples. In (a), the speaker proposes to have "no definite knowledge of the recipient's marital status" (Heritage, 2012a, p. 6). In (3) and (4), an increasing "commitment to the likelihood that the
recipient is married" (Heritage, 2012a, p. 6) is expressed. These different stances can be visually represented as shown in the following figure (taken from Heritage, 2012a, p. 7).

Figure 5: Epistemic stance of (a) – (c) represented in terms of epistemic gradient

The figure shows that in sentence (a), the speaker's level of commitment to the proposition is lower than for (b) and (c), respectively. In addition to a K- status, i.e., a claimed lack of knowledge about the proposition relative to the recipient, the different grammatical structures also communicate a stance about a speaker's commitment to the proposition (in other words, how certain about the proposition he or she is.

As Heritage's (2012a) examples show, in English, grammatical structures are one resource of indexing such different degrees of commitment to a proposition. Stance markers are another resource to index uncertainty. Post-completion stance markers are added elements that

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78 Heritage (2012a) also notes that unknowing epistemic stances, as in example (a) in the main text, invite elaboration and "project the possibility of sequence expansion" (p. 6). The more knowing a stance is, the more likely sequence closure becomes (see also Heritage & Raymond, 2012; Raymond, 2010a, 2010b).

79 Note that I slightly adapted the figure. Specifically, I had all arrows converge at the same point to reflect the same level of knowledge that is being attributed to the recipient. If the arrows all have different end points, it could suggest that the recipient is being attributed different levels of knowledge.
are not an extension to prior talk, but rather are "retrospective or reactive alignment toward it, or consequences of it" (Schegloff, 1996, p. 90). These stance markers include laughter, breathing, facial expressions, nodding, shrugs, "I dunnos", in-breaths, etc. (p. 93). I will demonstrate that in my collection, turn-final or formulates a backing down from the proposition in a first pair part, working toward indexing a lack of commitment to a proposition, that is, a stance of uncertainty about it. I show in this chapter, that turns ending with or must be catalogued as another formal resource employed to index a stance of uncertainty. Specifically, turn-final or downgrades a speaker's certainty about a proposition further, or, in other words, downgrades the commitment to the proposition. In the next section, I offer two representative examples, demonstrating how participants employ turn-final or to index an epistemic stance of uncertainty about the proposition contained in the or-turn.

5.3. Or and epistemics

Questions, such as requests for information are "the ultimate paradigm of an adjacency pair first action" (Heritage, 2012a, p.3; also Schegloff, 2007; Stivers & Rossano, 2010) in that they make relevant a response and hold co-participants accountable for such responses (e.g., Heritage, 2012a; Schegloff, 2007). Such requests for information are infused with epistemics: The questioners construct themselves as unknowing, or as having K- status, and simultaneously index that the answerer is assumed to have the knowledge to provide an answer and to have K+ status (e.g., Enfield et al., 2012; Heritage, 2012a, 2012b; Levinson, 2012b). Heritage (2012a) suggests that because "requesting information is a fundamental underlying feature of many classes of social action, consideration of the (relative) epistemic status of the speaker and hearer are a fundamental and unavoidable element in the construction of social action" (p. 1). Hence,
epistemic status, which is negotiated through epistemic stance, is inextricably tied to the social actions participants jointly construct.

As mentioned above, *or*-phrases in my collection can occupy turn-final position of both declaratives and interrogatives. In all instances, *or*-turns as such are, in the broadest sense, information seeking devices or requests for information. In association with questions, they embody the kind of knowledge distribution Heritage (2012a, 2012b) and others have described for questions. Or, to put it differently, the formulation of a differential in epistemic status and knowledge makes an utterance recognizable as a question (Heritage, 2012a). In the introduction and in section 2 of this chapter, I described how participants work out knowledge differentials in the sequences in which they employ *or*-turns. I now turn to what *or* adds in these environments of epistemic asymmetry. I specifically argue that, against the backdrop of epistemic asymmetry set up by the question itself, a turn-final *or* allows a speaker to back down from what any proposition they have offered regarding the facts they are inquiring about. That is, *or* works as an epistemic downgrade, indexing a stance of uncertainty about the proposition encoded in the *or*-turn. I provide two data excerpts, representative of my collection, below to discuss how *or* is implicated in downgrading a speaker’s certainty.

Excerpt (3): New Orleans or

(60; Call friend Engn6952:12.17)

1 M1: I know, well where's the ones in Hawaii and that- that
2 M2: ah, they don't have those=
3 M1: aw they don't have those?
4 M2: [no: not- ]
5 => M1: [or in, uh] New Or:leans=or: [.h
6 M2: [no,=
7 but well they're gonna have Co:mde:x,
Recall from chapter 6 that M1 and M2 are talking on the phone. M1 has asked M2 if he needs to travel for a seminar or conference and is asking if there is such an event in New Orleans (line 5). He ends his declarative question with or.

Excerpt (4): Do I lose one then too or

(69, Rockwell Hr 2_C1:00.46.43)

Here, Eric formulates a question, "nd do I lose one then too or". Immediately after reaching a possible point of syntactic, prosodic, and pragmatic point of possible completion with the production of "too" does he continue the turn production without any pause or gap to produce the turn-final or.

In both data samples, K- and K+ rights are claimed and negotiated via the question itself while or adds an epistemic stance that backs away from the proposition and as such indexes a lack of commitment to and lack of certainty about the proposition. There are two types of evidence for my argument that or is an epistemic stance marker backing down from a proposition: (1) the implications of or's linking two alternatives (i.e., evidence from the speaker's turn), and (2) the type of response and the response formats given by the recipient (i.e., the next turn proof procedure that shows how a turn was understood). In addition, there are
related uses of *or* that further underline my analysis, to which I return in the discussion section of this chapter.

When *or* is used as a conjunction, it normally links two alternatives (Couper-Kuhlen & Ono, 2007; Biber et al., 1999; Huddleston & Pullum, 2002; Quirk et al., 1985), and as such projects a second alternative. In both data excerpts above, such a potential second alternative is projected by *or*, but left unverbalized. When *or* links two alternatives, the alternatives are generally considered exclusive. That is, not both alternatives can be true at the same time (Quirk et al., 1985). For instance, in the question "Are we leaving now or later?" (invented example), either "now" or "later" can be true, as people can't leave both now and later. *Or*, then, not only projects an alternative, it also projects an alternative that would stand in contrast to the alternative prior to *or* and would negate it. In sample (3), *or* projects another possible location or conference event and as such is opening up the possibility for a response that would negate the uttered proposition "new Orleans". In excerpt (4), *or* projects an alternative to having to lose one game piece as well. This alternative could be not having to lose any game piece or having to lose more than one game piece. Again, *or* opens up an interactional space and the possibility for a response that includes such an alternative and as such would negate the proposition of the *or*-turn. In excerpt (3), the recipient of the question produces a negation of "New Orleans" and subsequently providing a different location ("Chicago"), which again negates the location the *or*-utterer produced. In excerpt (4), the recipient of the *or*-turn produces one of the possible projected alternatives, namely that of Eric not having to lose any game pieces at all. In each

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80 This is related to the designedly incomplete utterances (DIUs) described by Koshik (2002b). However, these DIUs are purposefully designed to be incomplete so as to prompt the co-participant to complete them in a grammatically fitted way. In my cases, recipients of *or*-turns do not complete *or*-turns in grammatically fitted ways but treat the *or*-turns as complete.
instance, then, the speaker – with the turn-final *or* – downgrades his or her commitment to the proposition he or she produced by opening up an interactional space where an alternative negating the proposition is projectable.

By producing a turn that does questioning, the speakers claim K-status for themselves relative to their recipients' proposed K+ status. The turn-final *or* does work that is distinct from merely indexing a lower epistemic status of the speaker relative to the recipient. I argue that turn-final *or* downgrades a participant's certainty about the proposition in the question by weakening his or her commitment to the proposition within the question. It is important to note that the speaker, too, claims to have *some* knowledge of and familiarity with the rules of the game. For instance, in excerpt (4), Eric produces one possible understanding among others, i.e., a candidate understanding. He does not ask an open question, or *wh*-question, such as "how many do I lose," via which Eric could claim to lack any knowledge regarding the number of game pieces that he may lose.\(^8\) By choosing a polar question that contains a guess, which is that he is going to lose one game piece, Eric indexes this limited knowledge, and by employing turn-final *or*, I suggest, Eric indexes his uncertainty about his knowledge. In excerpt (3), M1 also produces a candidate understanding, a best guess, rather than a more open *wh*-question and thereby also claims to have some knowledge about M2's travel plans (or some familiarity with them). Vernacularly speaking, then, the question format conveys "This is my guess" and *or* conveys "I'm not sure about my guess" by projecting other, possibly contradicting and negating alternatives.

\(^8\) Note that a *wh*-question such as "How many do I lose?" indexes knowledge not about the number of game pieces, but knowledge that some pieces will be lost.
In addition to *or* projecting but leaving unverbalized a possible second alternative to the alternative contained in the question, the responses to *or*-turns further support my analysis of *or* working as an epistemic stance marker. Recipients orient to a speaker's uncertainty by regularly providing an elaboration and explanation rather than providing solely a confirmation or disconfirmation (see chapter 4). By backing away from the proposition of the question and thereby indexing a lack of certainty, a speaker is heard as indexing the relevance for further elaboration or explanation. In chapter 4, I demonstrated that this is how *or*-turns are oriented to in my data, because recipients regularly provide such elaborations, and when such elaborations are not produced immediately, they are treated as absent and pursued. The elaborations, in a way, address and remediate *or*-utterer's uncertainty by providing information made relevant by the question. In excerpt (3), the recipient provides the name and location of a conference or seminar he is going to be attending: "but well they're gonna have Co:mde:x" (line 7) and "i:s actually going to be in Chica:go." (line 10). In excerpt (4), the recipient elaborates on why Eric will not be losing any game pieces: " no cause you- both of yours are bigger." These elaborations, then, address and remove any doubt or uncertainty on the *or*-utterer's part.

Finally, *or*'s ability to relax the preference for a confirming response is closely connected to why it is that *or* also works as an epistemic stance marker. When a confirming response is projected or preferred, a speaker is simultaneously claiming to have relative certainty about the proposition. In contrast, when a disconfirming response is expected, a speaker can claim to be less certain about the proposition; I propose that this is exactly what turn-final *or* does. When a speaker claims to expect a disconfirmation, he or she simultaneously casts doubt on the proposition they just uttered. A turn-final *or* allows participants to accomplish just this. The fact that participants generally produce disconfirmations contiguously without markers of
dispreference shows that they are aligning with their co-participant's stance of uncertainty, in a way validating this stance. A confirmation would run counter to this uncertain stance as it conveys that the or-utterer was, indeed, correct. In excerpts (3) and (4), the or-utterers display a lack of commitment to the proposition within the question just produced. Turn-final or, then, backs down from the just-produced proposition and casts doubt over its accuracy. In these excerpts, questioners' propositions are disconfirmed, and their stance of uncertainty is aligned with through the negative response. The questioners' claim of uncertainty, their backing down, is accomplished through or. The negative answers solidify the claim of uncertainty as valid.

So far, I have laid out and illustrated some basic features of epistemics as it is understood and applied in conversation analytic research (5.2.). I have also demonstrated how these features apply to my data and how notions such as epistemic status, access, and knowledge differentials are worked out in my data excerpts. Against this background, I presented or-turns to argue that or backs down from a question's proposition and thereby indexes lower certainty and a lack of commitment to the question's proposition (5.3.). In section 5.4. below, I discuss differences between clarification requests ending in or and those that do not end in or, and I address some related uses of or that further suggest that or can work as a device that allows participants to back down from something they just said more generally. In the conclusion (chapter 6), I discuss the implications of these findings in that I address issues of why participants would propose something only to back away from this proposal as they produce it.

5.4. Discussion

In this section, my goal is to further my argument that or does indeed back down from something a participant has just said. I begin with a comparison of clarification requests not
ending in *or* with those ending in *or*, applying Heritage's (2012a) notion of the epistemic gradient. This comparison will further show that *or* is able to index uncertainty more so than questions that do not end in *or*. Excerpt (5) below contains such a clarification request that does not end in *or*. It involves Eric and Jessica, and Eric has just completed and won a game move against another player when he needs assistance in figuring out what exactly he can do next.

Excerpt (5): My guys are still there though

(69; Rockwell Hr2_C1:00.46.44)

1     Ang:  On:e.  why am I such a lou[sy:,
2     Eri:          (((talks to himself? very quiet))
3     Jes:          [ooh:,
4 => Eri:  so, just lose one right, \nd do I lose one then ↑too ↓or:_
5     Jes:  no cause you- both of yours are big[ger.
6     Eri:          [oh okay.
8 => Eri:  so I still have my guys are still there tho[ugh.
9     Jes:          [yeah.
10       (.)
11     Eri:  okay

In line 8 of excerpt (5), Eric formulates another understanding check. This time, the understanding check is produced with a turn-initial *so*, which often precedes the upshot of someone else's prior talk (Raymond, 2004). At this point in the interaction, Eric now knows that he does not lose one game piece. His turn in line 8, however, asks, by means of a B-event statement, whether or not his game pieces are still there. Eric proposes that he lacks information, i.e., that he has K- status relative to his recipient, who is assumed to have K+ status (and who accepts this status by producing the sought for answer). Eric's turn is initially formatted as a question, but through the pivot construction, this question becomes a statement, and specifically
a B-event statement. This change in grammatical form (from question to statement) can also be seen as a shift from less knowledge to more knowledge (but note that via the questioning function of even the B-event statement, K- status is being indexed for Eric and K+ status for his recipient). Notice the shift from a focus on whether or not he will lose a game piece from the first understanding check to a focus on whether or not his game pieces will remain where they are in the second understanding check. Eric again proposes that he lacks information, i.e., that he has K- status relative to his recipient, who is assumed to have K+ status (and who accepts this status by producing the sought for answer). The excerpt contains two clarification requests, one ending in or (lines 4-5; see section 5.3. for a discussion of it) and one not ending in or (lines 8-9). In both question-answer sequences, then, the questioner proposes K- and K+ rights via the action the turn does. One question ends in or, the other does not end in or. The fact that his second understanding check is met with a positive, agreeing response illustrates that based on Jessica's clarification in line 5, Eric is able to produce the accurate understanding himself. Jessica's clarification in line 5 enables Eric to produce a more informed guess, one that he does not back down from via a turn-final or. Eric choses a format different from turn-final or when formulating this second candidate understanding, which, crucially, is placed in the interaction only after Eric produced his first change-of-state token (Heritage, 1984a). In a position where he has claimed to have moved from an uninformed to an informed state via the change-of-state token, he produces a clarification request that contains a proposition from which he does not back down.

This differential in commitment to the proposition of the question and the epistemic stance can be represented using Heritage's (2012a) notion of the epistemic gradient (see figure X
below). I have adapted Heritage's (2012a) figure to more clearly show how K- and K+ status and level of commitment (or uncertainty) are related.

![Diagram showing epistemic stance of (4) and (5)](image)

Figure 6: Epistemic stance of (4) and (5)

Arrow (4) represents the or-turn taken from excerpt (4) ("Do I lose one then too or"), arrow (5) represents the or-turn take taken from excerpt (5) ("my guys are still there though"). The epistemic stance of less commitment to the proposition is shown in arrow (4), which is depicted as originating lower than arrow (5). In both instances, the speaker is proposing K-status for himself, and K+ status for the recipient. I suggest that the two questions ("Do I lose one then too or" and "So my guys are still there") illustrate the different degrees of certainty as it is encoded in the different linguistic formats. Plain questions (here the question is preceded by so), seem to index greater certainty about the understanding just uttered. In contrast, turns ending in or index less certainty about the just-uttered proposition. Both understanding checks are oriented to as requiring confirmation or disconfirmation. As the examples show, the question without or is oriented to as needing only a straightforward minimal response rather than
an elaboration whereas the understanding check ending in *or* is oriented to as requiring an elaboration.

Recall the three examples from Heritage (2012a) on how grammatical formats index different degrees of commitment to the likelihood that a proposition is true (discussed in section 7.2.5 above):

(d) Are you married?
(e) You're married, aren't you?
(f) You're married.

Based on my data, I propose that *or*-turns can be added to the top of this list to show yet another type and level of commitment to the proposition:

(g) Are you married *or* You're married *or*
(h) Are you married?
(i) You're married, aren't you?
(j) You're married.

In example (h) the speaker proposes to have "no definite knowledge of the recipient's marital status" (Heritage, 2012a, p. 6), whereas in (i) and (j), an increasing "commitment to the likelihood that the recipient is married" (Heritage, 2012a, p. 6) is expressed. *Or*-turns as in (g), because they do questioning, expresses similarly to (h) no "definite knowledge" about the proposition, but in addition, the *or* lowers the level of commitment to the likelihood that the recipient is married, and as such expresses the lowest certainty of these 4 examples. The different stances can be visually represented as shown in the following figure (adapted from Heritage, 2012a, p. 7).
The figure shows that in all four sentences, the speaker constructs the recipient as having K+. Each sentence, however, encodes a different level of certainty about or commitment to the question’s proposition: (k) expresses the highest level of relative certainty, while (h) – the or-turn – conveys the lowest level of certainty. These four different types of sentence patterns indexing relative certainty and uncertainty are by no means exclusive ways in which participants can negotiate uncertainty. And there are further nuances within each sentence pattern. For instance, Keisanen (2006) shows that final intonation with a tag question indexes higher certainty. In her example (p. 52), the downward intoned tag question "They got a different woman didn't they." is rephrased as "Didn't they get a different woman?" after a response that projects disagreement. Keisanen (2006) argues that the falling intonation on the tag signals "heightened degree of epistemic certainty" (p. 52) in contrast with a weakened epistemic certainty of the negative interrogative with rising intonation. Also, Holmes (1982) argues that
falling intonation on tags indexes certainty about an answer that confirms what was asked. To reiterate, turn-final *or* is far from the only resource that can be used to index and claim uncertainty, and participants can draw on other resources to accomplish similar interactional work. However, I suggest that *or* is routinely employed when a negative response is invited and that it works as an epistemic stance marker indexing a lack of commitment to the proposition of the question.

Some related uses of *or* further suggest that *or* can work as a device that allows participants to back down from something they just said more generally. *Or*, when produced in turn-medial position, can also be used to back down from something that was too specific and to allow the speaker to repair the too specific item to something less specific. Consider excerpt (6) where *or* initiates the rephrasing of some prior turn material, and as such is repair related.\(^{82}\) M2 and M1 are talking about funding in academia and M2 mentions an issue regarding a funding vote and how that relates to the fiscal year.

**Excerpt (6): Bureaucratic thing or**

(85; TBengn4175: 15.29)

1 M2: is that .hh BEcause it wasn't voted on until after July: first,
2 .hh now they're in the next fiscal year,
3 M1: [oh.
4 M2: [and they don't have to fund us until
5 (0.4)
6 => M2: the following fiscal year, or: you know some bureaucratic
7 [thing like that]
8 M1: [yeah yeah] (I) got it

\(^{82}\) See chapter 3 for a somewhat more detailed discussion of *or*-turns as a repair initiators. Also, see Kitzinger and Lerner (manuscript) for a detailed discussion of *or* as a repair initiator.
In chapter 3, I argued that *or* is used here to repair the "the following fiscal year" to "you know some bureaucratic thing like that." M2 rephrases the trouble source by broadening the formulation, and he initiates this broadening with *or*. What I want to point out here is that *or* backs down from one formulation ("the following fiscal year") and replaces it with a broader formulation. The formulation "some bureaucratic thing like that" does not delete the fiscal year, but rather creates a broader category that could still include "fiscal year" but also other members of the class "bureaucratic thing like that". Here, then, *or* also works as backing down from something, and similarly to turn-final *or*, indexes a lack of commitment to the immediately preceding turn element (i.e., "fiscal year"). Unlike turn-final *or*, however, the speaker here adds further talk that specifies the ways in which he is backing down.

In addition to such repair related instances of *or*, *or* can also introduce a second alternative when an interactant aims to secure uptake after a turn consisting of a first alternative is unsuccessful in securing such uptake. Consider excerpt (7) below.

**Excerpt (7): Hairy chest liker**

(taken from Couper-Kuhlen, 2012, p. 134; her excerpt (10))

11 DN: are you a hairy chest er liker,
12 => (.) or do you like the bald [smooth chest.
13 JL: [oh no i prefer the bald ones
14 DN: you like the bald ones.
15 JL: [oh yes

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83 See Lerner & Kitzinger (manuscript) for similar cases.

84 Note that Lerner & Kitzinger (manuscript) explore cases like these in addition to *or*-prefaced repair initiators that further specify a prior formulation. Although *or* does not index the same level of lack of uncertainty in some of their cases, *or* nevertheless backs down from a formulation (albeit it in different ways from the turn-final *or* cases I examine here).
This excerpt is taken from a radio call-in show. Don (DN) formulates a polar question in line 11, making relevant a yes or no answer (Raymond, 2003). Couper-Kuhlen (2012) suggests that this question, because it is a positive question, "establishes a preference for an affirmative answer" (p.133). She further argues that because no immediate reply is forthcoming (see the micro pause in line 10), a negative response may be projectable. This occasions Don to reformulate his question by proposing that Julie (JL) may like a "bald smooth chest" in line 12. Crucially, Couper-Kuhlen (2012) argues that this reversal of the proposition (from "hairy chest" to "bald smooth chest") "can be expected to facilitate agreement" (p. 133). She proposes that the different intonation patterns on these two alternatives index a lesser and greater degree of "epistemic certainty" (p.134) on Don's part. The falling intonation on the second alternative indexes the "likelihood of a positive response" (p.133). The choice between liking a "hairy chest" and "bald smooth chest" is constructed as a binary choice because of the use of or, and because the first choice was not accepted immediately, Don can be more certain that the second alternative will be accepted due to the "either - or" nature of his turn, and this certainty is reflected, as Couper-Kuhlen proposes, in the intonation contour.

This excerpt and Couper-Kuhlen's (2012) analysis of it are relevant to my work here because it contains an instance of or that is different yet related to the turn-final instances of or that I discuss. Specifically, it contains an or that backs away from a just uttered alternative, and when a possibly negative response is projectable, introduces a new alternative: one that is more likely to get an affirmative response. In my cases, the turn-final or's accomplish work that is somewhat related: Turn-final or backs away form a just-uttered proposition and it allows for the unproblematic formulation of a negative response. Rather than adding an actual second alternative that would work toward securing agreeing uptake, turn-final or leaves such a second
alternative unverbalized and opens up an interactional space where the co-participant could potentially produce such a second alternative. This second alternative could be, as in the excerpt above, one that negates the first alternative. In my cases, participants do not produce such second alternatives in a grammatically fitted manner (as recipients of designedly incomplete utterances do; see Koshik (2002b)), but rather typically produce a response and elaborate on it.

Other research has shown that turn-final or may also be implicated in opening up or filling what Davidson (1984) called a monitor space. When uptake is not immediately produced, participants can add further units to their turns to minimize gaps and to secure smooth turn transition. This is different from producing a second alternative that increases the likelihood for a response (as Couper-Kuhlen’s (2012) example and her analysis show), yet it is another practice that ensures smooth turn transition and minimizes silence. While my instances are similar to Davidson’s (1984) monitor space, I argue that or does more than merely fill a void in the machinery of turn transition and speaker change. Specifically, it relaxes the preference for a confirmation and works as an epistemic downgrade indexing uncertainty.

5.5. Conclusion

While knowledge as such is dynamic and social, Stivers, et al. (2011a) argue that our use of epistemic resources is "normatively organized" (p. 3). Interactants hold each other accountable for asserting epistemic rights. As such, the epistemic domain is morally ordered and has consequences in terms of the alignments and affiliations we achieve with others. Claims of epistemic knowledge, certainty, about and directness of knowledge as well as relative rights to some information impact how participants design their actions and turns. In this chapter, I have argued that or, as a stance marker, is a turn design feature or a resource for participants to
negotiate claims of uncertainty. Participants can disentangle the construction and claim of their K- and K+ status relative to each other from the construction and claim of their certainty about a proposition: The former is accomplished by the questioning function of the turn, the latter through turn-final or.

In his recent work, Heritage (2012a, b) has argued that sequences in talk-in-interaction are always driven by epistemics in one way or another. He labels this underlying system the "epistemic engine" (2012b, p. 30) and suggests that epistemic imbalance (i.e., knowledge differentials) between participants occasions interactional moves including first and second pair parts, sequence closing thirds, and so on, which allow participants to eventually reach an epistemic equilibrium, marked by sequence closure. The notion of the epistemic engine can be applied to explain the unfolding interaction of the excerpts in my collection. In all excerpts, the participant who produces the FPP claims to be less knowledgeable about some piece of information relative to the co-participant. This epistemic imbalance occasions the production of the FPP, the production of the response to it contributes to the working out of this knowledge differential, and by the end of the sequence, participants have achieved, or claim to have achieved, epistemic balance.

Heritage (2012b) argues that after a sequence closure, a new sequence begins, again occasioned by an epistemic imbalance that is then worked out and brought into balance. Whether or not epistemics is at the heart of any and all interactional sequences is beyond the scope of my dissertation. While there is a great deal of research to be done to determine whether epistemic relations are omnirelevant in interaction, issues of knowledge and asymmetries of knowledge are oriented to in human interaction and in the grammars of human languages. The

85 For commentaries on Heritage's proposals, see Drew (2012), Sidnell (2012) and Clift (2012).
use of turn-final *or* is but one piece of evidence of how interactants formulate and ascribe certainty in interaction, and my work is a contribution to how participants can negotiate and index, moment by moment, their epistemic stance and uncertainty.
6. Concluding discussion

In this dissertation, I set out to investigate the sequential environments of or-turns, the social actions or-turns and the interactional work or accomplishes. In chapter 2, I focused on the composition of or-turns and transition relevance and speaker change. I demonstrated that turns ending in or can be shaped interrogatively or declaratively and that these turns can consist of as little as single words to phrases, clauses and full sentential units. In addition, I argued that the prosodic cues of or-turns mirror those of other trail-off conjunctions (Walker, 2012a). Even though or renders the ongoing turn grammatically speaking incomplete due to its continuation-projecting characteristics, participants routinely manage smooth turn transition at these points in the interaction. The prosodic cues of or-turns are thus important for participants in designing, recognizing and projecting an upcoming point of possible completion.

In chapter 3, I established that participants produce or in final position of turns that do questioning in the interaction. Participants provide a candidate answer, or a proposition, in the or-turn which is offered to the recipient for confirmation or disconfirmation. Or-turns, thus, are initiating actions occupying first positions in question-answer adjacency pairs. These question-answer adjacency pair sequences can be expanded minimally via third position tokens (for instance, "oh," "okay," "aha") or assessments. In addition, I discussed the social actions participants accomplish when they employ or-turns in chapter 3: information seeking, repair initiation and topic proffering. Information seeking is the common thread across these three related social actions. In all of these action environments, knowledge differentials are negotiated and worked out.

In chapters 4 and 5, I turned to the interactional work or accomplishes. The puzzle is that participants can seek information, initiate repair and direct or proffer a topic with turns that do
not end in or. That is, an information-seeking question such as "Do I lose one then too?" would be perfectly capable of eliciting the sought information. However, participants produce or at the end of such turns, a practice that requires an analytic account.

I found that or relaxes the preference for a confirming response (chapter 4). Participants usually produce disconfirmations without dispreferred turn features. When they do produce disconfirmations with dispreferred turn design features, participants index that they are having trouble providing a response immediately and/or straightforwardly. Confirmations are possible responses to or-turns as well. Confirmations account for only 29% of responses in my data set and they generally do not contain markers of dispreference. Because participants produce both confirmations and disconfirmations without any dispreference markers, I argue that or relaxes rather than reverses the preference for a confirmation. Finally, in chapter 4, I show that both confirmations and disconfirmations are accountable, that is, participants orient to an elaboration as relevant in responses to or-turns. When elaborations are not produced, they are treated as relevantly missing and are subsequently pursued. These elaborations satisfy the action constraints of the or-question rather than being a marker of dispreference. An elaboration addresses the action of the first pair part by providing the information that first pair part seeks. Put differently, elaborations work toward the progressivity of interaction and help bring the initiated action toward success.

In chapter 5, I continued to examine the interactional work or accomplishes. Against the backdrop of knowledge differentials being worked out through the question-answer sequence in which the or-turns occupy first position, the or itself works to index a stance of uncertainty. Participants manage to back down from a just-uttered proposition, they downgrade their epistemic stance and index that what they just said will likely turn out to be incorrect.
Interlocutors draw on turn-final *or* as a resource to disentangle epistemic status from epistemic stance: They claim lower epistemic status via the questioning format of the or-turn and they claim an uncertain stance via the turn-final *or*.

My findings in regards to turn-final *or* relaxing the preference for a confirmation, making the production of a disconfirmation unproblematic and indexing uncertainty about the just produced proposition raise the question of why participants formulate their questions in a way that invite disconfirmations. Participants could produce straightforward questions that prefer confirmations, where neither questioner nor answerer has to engage in additional interactional work. That is, instead of a questioning turn such as "Is he in good spirits or" (Excerpt (12) in chapter 4.3.3.), participants could be producing a turn such as "I assume your grandfather is not dealing well with this", which would still invite confirmation or disconfirmation as the next response. The latter of these two turn designs would likely be prone to confirmation of the proposition (i.e., "No, he's not"). I propose that a negative declarative question such as the (invented) one above carries with it a greater epistemic claim (that is, the assumption of knowing about something that lies in the co-participant's realm of knowledge), and with it greater interactional risk. A questioning turn ending in *or* that makes both confirmation and disconfirmation unproblematic does not cross the line in terms of who can know what and whose territory of knowledge the proposition belongs to.

In the remainder of this concluding discussion, I highlight some uses of other *or*-phrases, discuss implications of my research and point to limitations of my work and to avenues for future research. I begin with a brief overview of observations of other *or*-phrases, then I point to limitations and future areas of research before I discuss the implications of my work.
Here, I only report on some preliminary findings based on small collections of some
other or-phrases (or something: n = 39; or what: n=20; or whatever: n = 13; or not: n=25).
Excerpt (1) below illustrates the collection of turns ending in or something. F1 and F2 are
talking on the phone.

Excerpt (1): Baby or something

(11A; Callfriend_engn6938: 00.10.43)

1 F1: so you'll come to visit me?
2 F2: going to Kentucky.
3 F1: why- Why Kentucky.=I'm not in Kentucky.
4 F2: I- I know. isn't that-? isn't that o:dd?
5 (.)
6 F2: I thought [you we:re.]
7 F1: [*huhuhuhuh*]= HUHU[hu .h]
8 F2: [*huhu*]
9 => F1: shit for BRai::n[s_=>are you gonna go see that ba[by or=
10 F2: [ah haha [ha .h .h
11 =something?
12 F2: ye::[s_ gotta go see the bab[y;
13 F1: [why:. [I'm cuter,

In line 9, F1 produces an interrogatively formed polar question. This FPP makes relevant
confirmation or disconfirmation. In second position, F2 produces a type-conforming response by
uttering the token "yes". Her response also includes a minimally modified repeat of the question
"gotta go see the baby".86 F1 does not accept this information via a third position token, but
rather challenges this information through her "why"-question (Bolden & Robinson, 2011). Note

86 F2 changes "gonna" to "gotta", "that" to "the" and drops the subject pronoun.
that the question ending in *or something* is built as inclusive of potential reasons other than visiting the baby for F2’s visit to Kentucky. Thereby, a speaker can semantically widen the alternative "see the baby" to include other non-verbalized alternatives.

When produced in turn-final position of questions, *or something* indexes some uncertainty about the proposition, but it does so in different ways from turn-final *or*. Specifically, *or something* works to include a range of other possible alternatives in addition to the alternative produced prior to *or*. Participants allude to other similar referents by ending a turn in *or something*. By doing so, they invite a positive answer more so than a negative answer. When a referent is presented as inclusive of other related and similar referents, disconfirmation becomes more difficult in that a recipient is rarely able to disconfirm all possible referents that are similar to the referent that was actually uttered. McCarthy and Carter (2006), as noted in section 1.3.1., treat *or something* as an example of vague language use which stands in for a list of related referents and "simply keeps options open" (p. 202). While my collection shows that *or something* is inclusive of other similar referents, my data also shows that there is more to the story. Specifically, *or something* works to invite a positive response more than a negative one and as such has specific interactional functions associated with it rather than being merely an example of vague language use.

When participants end polar questions in *or what*, they inquire more specifically about something that was mentioned before. For instance, they can be asking for an answer to a similar prior question that received either no immediate uptake, minimal uptake or a general answer. In this way, *or what* serves as a resource to pursue uptake, pursue further uptake or more specific uptake. Excerpt (2) below illustrates this use. Participants B and A, talking on the phone, demonstrate that a question ending in *or what* can be used as a second try, or follow-up,
to occasion additional, and in most cases, more specific uptake than was provided in response to the first try. Prior to the excerpt provided, B had told A about his new girlfriend.

Excerpt (2): All the hype or what

(20A; Callfriend TBengn6193:10.10)

1 B: Yeah; >or- or< we'll like just- or we'll watch a movie;
2 A: Yeah.
3 B: or something like that_
4 A: [>Oh, did=you<] see toy story yet?
5 (.)
6 B: Yeah, I did actually;
7 => A: [is it- is it- you= know; worth all the hype? or what.
8 B: >e: It's pretty good. I mean, if you're- if you like all those;
9 if you like those kind of like_ kids movies, it's pretty good.
10 (0.3)
11 A: ['Oh:
12 B: [And, yeah_ it's kind of neat_ with all the computer animation
13 and stuff like that_
14 A: Yeah_ cause there's TWO more coming out,

In line 1, B tells A that sometimes he and his girlfriend like staying in and just watch a movie. In line 4, speaker A produces a remembering, signaled by "oh", claiming to just now have remembered to ask about the movie Toy Story. In line 6, A's polar questions is confirmed after a micro pause. B confirms it by producing the token "yeah" and the minimal answer "I did" followed by the adverb "actually". B's turn thus confirms the proposition in A's question but adds no further information. In line 7, A produces a follow-up question, or a 'second try', to prompt additional, and more specific information, namely about whether the movie justifies "all
the hype" (line 8). It is this question that ends in *or what* and works to mobilize further uptake and further information. B orients to the *or what*-question as one asking him about his reaction to the movie and whether he liked it. He begins his response with a high-pitched and stretched vowel before saying that the movie was "pretty good". The high-pitched turn initial token projects a dispreferred response (Wells & Macfarlane, 1998) and together with the lexical choice "pretty good" rather than a purely positive assessment item such as "awesome", B indexes that the movie was not superb, thereby also projecting that the hype may not have been justified. B proceeds to list the condition under which his assessment holds in lines 9-10 (i.e., that for those who like children's movies, the movie will be good). After a pause of 0.3 seconds, A produces a change of state token ("oh") in line 12 which is produced with lower pitch, possibly indicating that speaker A had expected a different, more positive kind of uptake. B orients to both the pause and possibly to the "Oh" in overlap as potentially that, as evidenced by his providing a positive agreement token ("yeah") an additional positive assessment, upgrading his initial assessment of "Pretty good" to "it's kind of neat". Here, the *or what*-turn is used not so much to index uncertainty, but rather as a resource to mobilize more uptake.

Turns that end in *or whatever* occur mostly within larger tellings. In this environment, the *or whatever*-turn completes what I call an intra-turn insertion unit. These insertion units set up, explain or justify that which comes next. Excerpt (3) below illustrates these observations. It is taken from a conversation between C and L. C has been telling L about a conversation she had with a co-worker, and immediately prior to the transcript provided, C had told L that her co-worker had asked her if she was going to go out that day. After C had confirmed this to her co-worker, he left and changed (this is where the transcript below starts).
Excerpt (3): Rotation or whatever

(17A; Callfriend TB engn6062: 07.50)

1 C: and then, · · · ha he goes and he changes, and he come− he comes back, and · · ·
2
3 (0.3)
4 => C: um: _ (. ) he's like all the− like you know we work in sections? like a rotation or whatever?
5
6 L: right;
7 C: [ . h ] so there's supposed to be four of us?: but, · · · ha everyone likes it when there's only three, because then you− everyone has another table?
8
9 L: right right;
10 C: so he's like yeah I just talked to all those guys in your

Speaker C is in the process of telling a larger story and informs L about what her co-worker – upon having changed and come back – said to her (lines 1-4). C formulates reported speech as marked via the quotative "he's like" (e.g., Ferrara & Bell, 1995), but instead of completing her co-worker's utterance, C cuts herself off at "the-" in line 4. C then inserts an intra-turn unit, "like you know we work in section? Like a rotation or whatever?". She secures her co-participant's display of understanding, "right" in line 5. Then, she elaborates on the fact she has established in the prior or whatever-turn by producing a "so"-prefaced upshot (Raymond, 2004). Once her coparticipant has again signaled her understanding, this time by two right tokens (Gardner, 2007), C repeats the indirect speech quotative "he's like" and moves to complete her co-worker's utterance. Her coworker had found out that they all preferred for C to not stay and work but instead leave, which C eventually did and which is C's point: after her coworker informed her
that the other team members were fine with C leaving that night, she "all of a sudden" found herself in her coworker's car and went on to spend all night with him (not shown in transcript).

C's *or whatever*-turn thus inserts background knowledge that is necessary for L to understand and fully appreciate C's telling. In this instance, C produces several of these background information units before producing the main point. In other instances, the speaker of the *or whatever*-turn includes only one piece of background information before pivoting back to the main telling or main point. In many cases, a contrastive marker such as "but" is used, but participants also use "so" and "and" to move on to a new unit.

First-pair parts in question-answer adjacency pairs in my data can also end in *or not* (although *or not* is produced overwhelmingly at the end of declarative turns that are prefaced with "I don't know" that are not in first position of question-answer pairs). Questions ending in *or not* pursue uptake that was relevant but not produced. Below is an illustration of this pattern.

Here, participants of a workshop are getting ready to close the meeting. As Gwen is preparing to leave the room, Eve beings formulating a question about what Gwen should mention at an upcoming meeting with department chairs.

Excerpt (4): Wanna do that or not

(9A; BiasLit092209_C1andC2: 00.50.30)

1      Eve:  so Gwen maybe in talking to the chairs that's something that you
2            bring up,=that we're gonna be testing both intervention and a
3            controls.
4      (1.0)
5 =>   Eve:  *Or do you wanna do 'that or not.*
6      Gwe:  that we're gonna be testing,
7      Eve:  both the intervention and the controls.
8      Flo:  thank you ((directed at another person present))
Gwen: we should tell them.

Here, in lines 1-3, Eve produces a suggestion for a future course of action Gwen should consider doing. Gwen, however, does not immediately respond to Eve's suggestion. After a pause of 1.0 seconds, Eve produces the or not-turn of interest (line 5), explicitly pursuing a response from Gwen, and specifically asking for Gwen to either accept or reject her suggestion. Eve's turn not only renews the relevance for a response, it also constitutes a significant change in what is relevant next. While the initial suggestion placed relatively lose constraints on Gwen, the or not-question presents the binary choice in unmistakable terms. Gwen will need to accept or reject the proposition put forward by Eve. Gwen then initiates repair in line 6 by producing a partial repeat of what Eve had said initially. In line 7, Eve completes the verbal unit begun by Gwen. This collaborative completion (Lerner, 1991, 1996, 2002) resolves the trouble and immediately after this insertion repair sequence in lines 6-7 is completed, Gwen aligns with Eve's initially suggested course of action of "bringing it up" by confirming Eve's polar question. Gwen's answer "we should tell them" thus is a positive response to the polar question first pair part and an acceptance of Eve's initial suggestion.

Participants can pursue a response that was made relevant before but not immediately forthcoming in a variety of ways. For instance, they can chose to extend their turn by adding increments, or they can chose to produce follow-up questions. A reformulation of the original question or a related question ending in or not is another one of these options. A polar question that ends in or not presents one option to the participant prior to or not. This option, in this case "you want to do that", is formulated positively, i.e., without any negative polarity item. The addition of or not adds as the second, binary choice, the negated option presented prior to or not and it does so without spelling out the option fully as in "or do you not want to do that". Explicitly narrowing the options presented in a polar question to one option of a binary choice
makes explicit what type of a response is made relevant next. Either a confirmation or
disconfirmation can satisfy the constraints set forth by the question. By only allowing for a
binary choice, this format is well-suited to actions such as information seeking and pursuit of
previously missing uptake.

These initial observations on how participants use other or-phrases in interaction serve
only to highlight the nuanced interactional work interactants accomplish with different turn-final
phrases. More research is needed to confirm my observations. Walker's (2012a) work on trail-
off conjunctions constitutes an important part in research devoted to other turn-final elements in
English as it shows how interlocutors are able to project turn-completion and transition relevance
points. Walker (2012a), noting that his work presents a technical account of the form of trail-off
conjunctions, calls for further research on the interactional work accomplished by ending turns in
such conjunctions. Work on English but (Mulder & Thompson, 2008) and though (Barth-
Weingarten & Couper-Kuhlen, 2002) has established the interactional work of these two turn-
final elements in English. Mulder and Thompson (2008) note that in Australian English, turn-
final but is much more common than in American English, and they propose that but in final
position is on its way to being grammaticalized as a discourse marker, where Australian English
usage has already moved further on the grammaticalization cline than American English.

Building on such research, I showed not only that or is another such turn-final element, but I also
demonstrated what or is used for in the interaction. My work also shows that or in final
placement of a turn does not work like a conjunction. Rather, it works to index a stance and to
relax the preference for a confirmation. As such, it is more like a discourse marker than a
conjunction. Further research on other or-phrases (such as or what, or not, or something, or
whatever) that routinely occur in turn-final position is needed to develop a taxonomy of turn-
final elements in English. Such a research program would lead to a more nuanced understanding of how exactly interactants encode different levels of certainty and uncertainty as well as other stances.

My work connects to prior work on *or* in English and the equivalent of *or* in Swedish (i.e., *eller*). Recall that Stokoe (2010) proposes that *or* neutralizes the polarity of a question, making both positive and negative responses unproblematic in response to questions ending in *or*. My study shows that rather than the polarity of the question, it is preference organization that is affected by turn-final *or*. My work also shows that English *or* and Swedish *eller* (Lindström, 1997) share some characteristics. Lindström (1997) argues that *eller* relaxes the preference for a confirmation, and this is exactly what English *or* does as well. However, in her data, Lindström (1997) also found evidence that turns that end in *eller* are problematic as such. I did not find that turns ending in *or* in my data are used as vehicles for problematic actions. In this regard, then, English *or* is different from Swedish *eller*. In addition, Keevallik (2009) shows that Estonian *vää* (which "developed from the disjunction *või* 'or'" (Keevallik, 2009, p. 163) can be added to negative questions. Keevallik (2009) notes that Swedish *eller* cannot be used for the function she described for Estonian. Specifically, *vää* is used when "part of the prior turn is repeated, as a conclusion based on any discursive or contextual matter, as a next question in a series, topic initiator, and even as a mild challenge" (p. 163). Estonian *vää*, when added to negative questions, then occurs in a range of different environments and accomplishes a range of different actions. Keevallik (2009) also notes that in contrast to other Estonian particles that can be added to negative questions (such as *ega* and *jah*), *vää* does not display "the same amount of epistemic certainty" (p. 163). The author also found that disconfirmations are more common in response to *vää*-questions than confirmations. There are then some similarities between Estonian *vää* and
English *or* in terms of the interactional function of inviting disconfirmations and in terms of being implicated in indexing uncertainty. However, in English, turn-final *or* is not restricted to negative questions.

In German, *oder* is an equivalent to English *or* in that it can function like a coordinating conjunction and as a turn-final element. In German, however, there are two differently intoned turn-final *oder*. When *oder* is produced with upward intonation as in "Wir gehen jetzt nach Hause, oder?" ("We are going home, aren't we?"; invented example), then the *oder* seems to be doing interactional work similar to English tag questions.\(^7\) In German interaction, participants can also produce *oder* with trail-off or level intonation, similar to English turn-final *or*, which are the focus of this dissertation. In those instances, *oder* seems to be doing different interactional work from German *oder?* produced with upward intonation, and it may be doing interactional work similar to English. These observations are based on initial observations only.\(^8\) An empirical study on these two different *oder* tokens is needed to come to a clear understanding of what *oder* accomplishes in naturally occurring talk.

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\(^7\) In her work on German "ne?", Harren (2001) shows that "ne?" in turn-final position conveys that speakers are rather sure of what they have just said. Bases on a few instances of "oder", Harren (2001) suggests that "oder" instead of "ne?" in turn-final position indicates that speakers are not very sure whether or not an agreeing second-pair part is forthcoming, and thus "oder" does not indicate mutually shared knowledge, agreement and understanding.

\(^8\) I made these initial observations while I worked on a seminar paper on German turn-final *oder was* and *oder wie*, which literally translated means "or what" and "or how". For this seminar paper, these two phrases were my focus, but I noticed turn-final German *oder* ("or") in naturally occurring interaction with two distinct intonation contours as well. My work on English turn-final *or* now enables future cross-linguistic comparisons on German *oder*. 
Of course, only because the linguistic forms of these turn-final elements (i.e., the fact that they all can function like the English coordinating conjunction *or*) does not mean that these cross-linguistic elements all accomplish the same or even similar work. However, Lindström's research on Swedish *eller* and Keevallik's (2009) work on Estonian *vää*, which I briefly describe above, does show that there could be a common theme of what these turn-final *or* elements do. This common theme seems to have to do with preference organization and polarity, as these elements are only added to polar questions (and in the case of Estonian, only to negative polar questions). However, future research from a cross-linguistic perspective is needed to compare and contrast English *or* to other language's equivalents of *or*.

A cross-linguistic perspective, a key component of interactional linguistics, can help elucidate what exactly is accomplished with turn-final *or* in different languages. Both CA and interactional linguistics see talk-in-interaction as the "locus of social order" (Couper-Kuhlen & Selting, 2001, p. 2), and both see language and linguistic resources – albeit to different degrees – as crucial in informing conversational order. As Couper-Kuhlen and Selting (2001) point out, a logical consequence of this view is the recognition that "different languages will contribute in distinct ways to the nature of the social order they construct" (p.3). Linguistic resources such as syntax, lexis and prosody of a particular language afford different interactional outcomes while they also simultaneously and "essentially define the possibilities for social action accomplished through talk" (Sidnell, 2009: p. 4). Comparing language-specific objects in different languages allows for a better understanding of how grammar shapes and is shaped by interaction, and it sheds light on how participants use local linguistic resources and how these resources "shape, constrain, torque or inflect the otherwise generic and universal underlying organization of talk-in-interaction" (Sidnell, 2009, p. 4).
Acknowledging that interaction is multimodal in nature, a close analysis of non-vocal resources such as gaze, body posture and bodily-visual clues is needed in a next step to determine how such non-vocal resources play in with and affect the negotiation of knowledge and (un)certainty through or-turns. In addition, other turn-final phrases that consist of or and other elements such as or something, or anything, or not, or what and or whatever should be analyzed on a larger scale to allow for a fuller and more nuanced picture of how interactants use or-phrases in interaction.

Having summarized the individual chapters of this dissertation, having highlighted functions of other or-phrases, and having pointed to some limitation of my work and future avenues for research, I now turn to some implications of my study.

Any polar question is, in essence, a way of advancing "a hypothesis for confirmation" (Bolinger, 1978b). Polar questions make relevant either a response that confirms the question's proposition or a response that disconfirms the proposition (e.g., Heritage, 2012a; 2012b; Heritage & Raymond, 2012; Raymond, 2003). Polar questions then advance a candidate understanding for confirmation or disconfirmation (Pomerantz, 1988, 2011, 2012). Questioners have been described as unknowing and answerers as knowing (Biber et al., 1999; Bolinger, 1978a, 1978b; Huddleston & Pullum, 2002; Quirk et al., 1985), and CA research has found that questioners at least claim to have K- knowledge and K- status relative to their recipient (Heinemann, 2008; Heritage, 2012a, 2012b; Heritage & Raymond, 2012; Koshik, 2002a; Schegloff, 2007; Sidnell, 2010). While questioners do claim to have less knowledge relative to their recipients, questioners also convey some level of familiarity with and knowledge about the hypothesis they are advancing through the polar question. In other words, participants formulate their questions with a potential candidate answer (Pomerantz, 1988, 2011, 2012). They are hence not
completely unknowing about a situation at hand. As I showed earlier, in some instances, questioners produce an open *wh*-question to which they immediately latch on a potential, candidate answer for which they seek confirmation or disconfirmation. The *wh*-question on its own would convey a greater lack of knowledge than the combination of [*wh*-question + candidate answer] would. Hence, even though questioners claim to know less relative to their co-participant, they do assert and index some familiarity with and knowledge about that which they are asking.

In my data set, all questioning turns ending in *or* are polar questions, and as such they are information seeking devices (e.g., de Ruiter, 2012; Heritage, 1984, 2012a, 2012b; Raymond, 2003). Each of the *or*-turns in my collection contains a proposition, a candidate answer. While claiming lower epistemic status and less knowledge in relation to their recipients, *or*-utterers convey that they have some idea about the information at hand but that they are uncertain about its veracity. They thus index an epistemic stance of uncertainty while also indicating that they are not completely unknowing.

Enfield et al.'s (2010) cross-linguistic study on sentence-final-particles has shown that 13% of questions work to initiate repair, 30% request confirmation or check an understanding and 35% of questions are "serious information requests" (Levinson, 2012b, p. 15). In my collection, *or*-turns, similarly, accomplish repair initiation and information seeking as well as topic proffers. Levinson (2012b) notes that interrogatives as such are frequently used as requests for confirmations where the producer of the question is "pretty sure that he knows the information" (p. 15). This does not necessarily mean that the questioner is, indeed, correct. The questioner may not, in fact, know the information, which leaves him or her vulnerable to looking stupid. As (Levinson, 2012b) puts it: "asking a question is a confession of ignorance" (Levinson,
Interlocutors risk being presumptuous to know something they do not know after all. Question then carry an interactional risks and can lead to "potential social costs" (Levinson, 2012b, p. 20). These social costs include (taken from Levinson, 2012b, p. 20):

- Face loss due to ignorance based in the questioner proposing to not know the requested information while also proposing that the addressee presumably does.
- Revealing one's current interests and concerns, because the question demonstrates that the questioner cares about the matter questioned and wants that information.
- Face loss all round when a speaker is mistaken in assuming that he has the right to know the information and the recipient the rights to give the information.
- Risk of having to act as if believing the provided information: By producing a question, the questioner "judges that the addressee will give him at least some truthful information" (p. 20).
- Risk of having to reveal parallel information to the recipient. When asking a question, the questioner may owe the recipient something for the information.

These risks help explain why, for instance, students may hesitate to ask questions. Asking a question has social consequences and "questions are not socially free" (Levinson, 2012b, p. 20). There are then a plethora of reasons for why a questioner may want to mitigate or soften his or her question as they are asking it. I have shown in this dissertation that turn-final *or* is a resource that can mitigate a just-produced question and one that can help alleviate this risk. Turn-final *or* does so by allowing for an unproblematic negative response, by indexing uncertainty about the information and by backing down from the just-produced proposition. *Or*-turns, then, can be described as requests for disconfirmations where the producer of the question is pretty sure his information is likely to be incorrect. Hence, turn-final *or* allows interlocutors to avoid looking
presumptuous and allows them to mitigate the social costs of questions. At the same time, the turn-final *or* makes it easier for a recipient to produce a disconfirmation, because the *or* indexes that a disconfirmation can be produced unproblematically. Telling a recipient that he or she is wrong about what they just said is associated with social risks as well. In interaction, dispreferred turn design features reflect this. The turn-final *or* then relieves the recipient from having to formulate his disconfirmation with such dispreferred turn design features, because the disconfirmation is already expected.

Levinson (2012b) notes that languages "will adapt by providing a range of interrogative types, varying in informational strengths" (p. 23). He predicts that questioners will never ask a *wh*-question where a polar question would do. (…) Because (a) the more information requested, the greater the cost; (b) since *Wh*-questions entail the corresponding polar questions and not vice versa, *Wh*-questions request more information (p. 23).

Turn-final *or* is uniquely positioned to manage this social cost: The producer of the *or*-turn avoids asking a *wh*-question on the record (which would carry the greater cost relative to a polar question), that is, he or she would produce the type of question that carries the lower social risk of the two question types. However, at the same time, the *or*-turns make relevant more than a confirmation or disconfirmation, because missing elaborations (as I have shown in chapter 4) are treated as relevantly missing. The *or*-turn then combines, in a way, both questioning formats, without incurring the higher social cost of a *wh*-question.89 Formulating an *or*-turn is not the

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89 The pattern found in my collection where participants produce a *wh*-question only to immediately follow it up with a candidate answer ending in *or* as in "How was their soccer game. Did they win their soccer game or?" could be another indicator that there is something to Levinson's (2012b) prediction, because the candidate answer replaces the prior *wh*-question (p.30).
only resource available for participants to mitigate the social cost of questions. For instance, formulating a B-event statement (Labov & Fanshel, 1977) rather than an interrogative to pose a question is another one of these strategies of avoiding having to asks a question on the record (Levinson, 2012b). In addition, tags that can be added to questions are often used to mitigate a question's strength and social risk from "strong informational interrogatives to dubitative declaratives" (Levinson, 2012b, p. 23). English has some particle-type elements that can be added to questions, such as tags, "right," and "huh," (Levinson, 2012b). Or is another element that can be produced in similar placement, that is, in turn-final position.

Based on descriptive grammars, or links two alternatives and when placed at the end of turns renders an on-going turn grammatically incomplete (Biber et al., 1999; Huddleston & Pullum, 2002; Quirk et al., 1985). An idealized and abstract system of language would not allow for turn-final or. Having taken an interactional linguistics and conversation analytic approach to turn-final or, I accounted for the use of or in interaction and my work contributes to an understanding of how language works and how grammar is structured that is different from theories of language, such as generative grammar (Chomsky, 1957 [1985], 1965). Turns emerge temporally in real-time. This temporal unfolding of talk in spoken interaction is a crucial difference between unscripted spoken interaction and edited written interaction, a difference that is central to the analysis of spoken interaction (e.g., Auer, 2005; Ford, 2004; Günthner & Hopper, 2010; Hausendorf, 2007; Mondada, 2006). The temporal nature of talk is crucial in developing an understanding of how language works and how turns are formed up through linguistic (and other) units. In demonstrating that turn-final or emerges in interaction for specific interactional needs, my work shows that grammar emerges in interaction via the ways in which participants use grammatical resources. As I have demonstrated, participants treat or-turns as
interactionally complete, and participants use the *or*-turns systematically and for cause in interaction. My work shows that rather than an error or mistake on the questioner's part, turn-final *or* is treated as an interactional resource that relaxes the preference for a confirming response and as a resource that indexes a stance of uncertainty about the produced proposition. As such, this dissertation contributes to the fields of interactional linguistics and conversation analysis in general and to research on grammar in interaction, preference organization and epistemics in interaction in particular.
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Appendix A: Transcription Conventions


[ ] start of overlap (simultaneous talk by two or more speakers) is marked with left-handed brackets

] the end of overlap is marked by right-handed brackets

= (a) latching between turns (an utterance by one speaker starts immediately after the end of another speaker's utterance without the normal intervening beat of silence

(b) latching between TCUs in one turn (two TCUs by one speaker are latched)

(c) indicates the continuation of a speaker's turn across lines of transcript where this would otherwise be difficult to trace

(0.5) silence; length of silence is timed to the speed of surrounding talk

(.) micro pause (less than 1/10 of a second)

.hh audible inbreath

.hh audible outbreath

hahahhi different vowels (i.e., e, i, a) indicate different quality of laugh tokens

(h) (hh) laughter within a word

*word* underlining of one or more letters indicates emphasis

WORD capital letters indicate higher volume; louder than the surrounding talk

°word° degree sign indicates that the enclosed passage of talk is quieter than the surrounding talk (can be used as multiples)

↑ marks rising pitch

↓ marks falling pitch
↑word↑ enclosed stretch of talk is markedly higher in pitch than surrounding talk
(word) words in single parentheses indicate transcriber's uncertain hearing
(     ) unintelligible stretch of talk
((     )) transcriber's additional comments or transcription of events
>word< increase in tempo relative to the surrounding talk (also as multiples)
<word> slowing down in tempo relative to surrounding talk (also as multiples)
: a colon indicates an extension of the sound it follows
::: multiple colons indicate a longer extension of the sound they follow
- a single dash indicates an abrupt ending or cut-off
* indicates the location of or the beginning and end of embodied action described
by the transcriber above the actual transcript

A.2. Transcription Conventions used based on GAT (Selting et al., 2009)

? rising intonation
, slightly rising intonation
_ level intonation
; slightly falling intonation
. falling intonation.

A.3. Other symbols used

\' rising pitch (less pronounced than ↑)
 fascism falling pitch (less pronounced than ↓)