

Research Article

Arnulf Deppermann*, Alexandra Gubina, Katharina König, and Martin Pfeiffer

Request for confirmation sequences in German

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Abstract: In request for confirmation (RfC) sequences, interlocutors negotiate their social positions regarding access and rights to knowledge. The article presents an overview of a quantitative analysis of 200 RfCs and their responses in German conversations to highlight the relevant linguistic resources speakers of the language deployed to position themselves *vis-à-vis* a confirmable proposition. In German RfCs, modal particles and tags play an important role in expressing the requester's epistemic stance; explicit inference marking is used less frequently. Responses usually include response tokens (among others *doch* as a token specialized for disconfirming negatively formatted RfCs) and an expansion. The article shows that such expansions do important work to tailor the response to the situated informational needs of the requester in a cooperative way beyond the constraints of type-conformity.

Keywords: request for confirmation, tags, response particles, German, interactional linguistics

1 Introduction

The article gives an overview of request for confirmation (RfC) sequences in German. It presents a quantitative analysis of 200 RfCs and their responses in everyday mundane conversations. As outlined in the introduction to this issue (cf. König and Pfeiffer forthcoming), RfCs are turns that introduce a proposition and make (dis)confirmation by another participant relevant. They establish a relatively flat epistemic gradient between speaker and addressee (cf. Heritage 2012): the speaker claims partial knowledge (some access, some certainty, some right to claim knowledge; cf. Section 4.3) about the confirmable, but treats the addressee as having better access or more rights to knowledge about the matter at hand. Our collection of cases draws on this definition and is action-based; i.e., we did not rely on pre-defined formal criteria, such as specific syntactic or prosodic formats.

The following example illustrates the features of a prototypical RfC sequence in German. Laura enquires about a concert Leander attended:

Extract 1: FOLK_E_00308_SE_01_T_03_DF_01_c0466-0467 No. 183

```
001 LAU: aber dann waren da    gestern    auch achthundert LEUte;=[Oder?]
        but  then were  there yesterday also 800         people  or_QT
        but then there were 800 people there yesterday, weren't there?
002 LEA:                                     [      ]ja.=
                                                yes
003      =war VOLL;
        (it) was crowded
```

* **Corresponding author: Arnulf Deppermann**, Department of Pragmatics, Leibniz-Institut für Deutsche Sprache Mannheim, Mannheim, Germany, e-mail: deppermann@ids-mannheim.de

Alexandra Gubina: Department of Pragmatics, Leibniz-Institut für Deutsche Sprache, Mannheim, Germany

Katharina König: Germanistisches Institut, Universität Münster, Münster, Germany

Martin Pfeiffer: Institut für Germanistik, Universität Potsdam, Potsdam, Germany

Laura requests confirmation from Leander regarding the size of the concert audience, using a declarative clause with falling final intonation and appending the tag *oder* ('or') with rising intonation. Leander confirms the RfC with the response token *ja* ('yes') followed by the expansion *war voll* ('(it) was crowded'), which claims epistemic authority on the matter at hand.

In Section 2, we review previous studies of German RfC sequences. Section 3 introduces our data. The following sections outline the linguistic resources used to build RfCs (Section 4) and responses to RfCs (Section 5) in our collection. The analyses adhere to the general structure of all articles in this issue and highlight the particularities of RfCs in German. Section 6 summarizes the main findings and discusses future directions for studies of RfCs in spoken German.

2 Literature review

2.1 Requesting confirmation in German conversation

In reference grammar, RfCs are usually contrasted with declaratives or verb-first polar questions. They are referred to as *Vergewisserungsfrage* ('reassurance seeking question') or *Bestätigungsfrage* ('assertive question', Duden 2016, Weinrich 2007). RfCs are characterized by a finite verb in a non-imperative mode in the second position. Like declaratives, they can be modalized with particles such as *doch*, but not with particles such as *denn*, which are typical for verb-first or *wh*-questions. There is no general consensus, however, as to whether declarative questions constitute a sentence type or mode of their own (Alm 2016).

To date, there is no comprehensive empirical study of RfCs in German talk-in-interaction. However, there are a number of studies which focus on particular formats or sequential contexts that can make confirmation relevant. RfCs can be presented as upshots or inferences from prior discourse (Zinken and Küttner 2022) or other-speaker formulations (Deppermann 2011). They can be marked as such for instance by incorporating markers such as *das heißt* ('this means', Helmer and Zinken 2019) or connectives such as *also* ('so') or *dann* ('then', Deppermann and Helmer 2013). Studies on RfCs in German also highlight the relevance of their sequential embedding in larger courses of action. Deppermann and Spranz-Fogasy (2011), for instance, show that RfCs play an important role in the stepwise construction of shared knowledge in anamnestic interviews.

The role of the RfC's final intonation contour is discussed controversially. While many studies of sentence modes in German treat a final rising contour as the decisive feature that distinguishes declarative questions from assertions (Altmann 1987, refer to Alm 2016 for a discussion), Selting (1995) shows that response-mobilizing inference checks ('beantwortungsbedürftige Inferenzüberprüfungen') using verb-second declaratives or non-finite phrases, which continue a topic, can be realized both with final rise or final fall. While the final rising contour is open to confirmation or disconfirmation, the final falling contour indexes a preference for confirmation (Selting 1995, 283). In both cases, speakers do not respond with elaborative answers, but offer short confirmations or disconfirmations. Selting points out that other syntactic formats like verb-first final falling utterances also work as topic continuations that invite short polar answers (Selting 1995, 269). This attests that in German conversations, different formats can be used as RfCs.

2.2 Tags in German RfCs

In German, tags are usually realized in the TCU-final position.¹ They are derived from response tokens (*ja*? 'yes'), negation adverbs (*ne? nech? nicht?* 'not'), connectives (*oder*, 'or'), or verb phrases (*gell?* from *gelten* 'to be valid') (Auer and Günthner 2005). They can also take the form of short phrases such as *oder wie/was/wer* ('or

¹ But also see König (2017) for TCU-initial uses of *ne*. Jefferson (1981) discusses a delayed placement of *ne* after the addressee has already given their answer.

how/what/who'), etc., or *nicht wahr* (literally 'not true?'). Other TCU-final phrasal forms such as *verstehst du* ('do you understand?', Deppermann and Elstermann 2008) or *weißt du* ('do you know?', Günthner 2017) are also described as tags. Apart from Willkop's (1988) early work, there is no large-scale comprehensive study on the differential use of these forms in German talk-in-interaction. Studies usually focus on one particular form, for instance *ja* (Imo 2013), *ne* (Hagemann 2009, Harren 2001, Jefferson 1981, König 2017), *oder* (Drake 2016, König 2020), or *oder nicht* (Drake et al. 2021). Previous research attests to considerable regional variation (Lanwer 2019).

Tags are recurrently named as a formal feature that supports the interpretation of declaratively formatted utterances as RfCs. For this reason, Rehbein (1979) calls them 'speech act augments'. Research on *ne* and *oder*-based tags suggests that in the first position, the tags differ in their relative epistemic positioning and in terms of the responses they invite (Harren 2001, Willkop 1988, 253–76, Zifonun et al. 1997, 384–5). With a steep-rising contour, a *ne*-tag activates knowledge as part of the interlocutors' common ground. In contrast, a mildly rising contour contextualizes speaker's epistemic independence (Lanwer 2019). In contrast to *ne*, *oder* contextualizes reduced epistemic access (Willkop 1988, 271–6). While *ne* strongly invites confirmation, final rising *oder?* is said to make a polar answer relevant that can be either a confirmation or a disconfirmation (Drake 2016, 190). In contrast, *oder*- (with level intonation) is more open in terms of the syntactic formats it can be appended to;² it also contextualizes that an unmentioned alternative is possible and thus weakens polar constraints (Drake 2016). Moreover, it is recurrently associated with information to which the addressee has superior epistemic rights (such as biographical knowledge, König 2020). Differences in the epistemic gradient are also partly reflected in the modal particles that co-occur with tagged utterances. Whereas *ne*- and *oder?*-turns often incorporate modal particles³ such as *ja*, *doch*, *eben*, or *halt* (Hagemann 2009, 170–1), which index shared knowledge between the interlocutors, *oder*-turns do not show such modalization (König 2020, 192). Even though tags can be used for a variety of contexts in German mundane conversations, they play an important role in indexing epistemic access and authority in RfCs. Moreover, they contribute to establishing response preferences.

2.3 Response tokens in German

In German, simple (dis)confirmation can be articulated with a range of response tokens. They differ with regard to the epistemic stance that speakers take in confirming or disconfirming. They usually take the form of uninflected, invariable mono- or bisyllabic lexemes. Reference grammars refer to them as *Responsive* (Zifonun et al. 1997; also Ehlich 2009, 437–8) or *Antwortpartikeln* ('response particles', Duden 2016); i.e., they are recognized as a distinct word class.

Response tokens such as *hm_hm* and *ja* are described as expressions of convergence that confirm an RfC (Zifonun et al. 1997, Hoffmann 2008). Compared to *ja*, the token *hm_hm* is characterized as less explicit and less formal (Zifonun et al. 1997, 370). Prosodic design can add an affective layer (e.g., a rising-falling *jâ* is said to express emphatic confirmation, Zifonun et al. 1997, 374). However, both tokens are 'unmarked' (Stivers 2019) in that they do not take issue with the way in which the confirmable is formulated, the prior speaker's agency or epistemic stance. Following confirmations with *ja* and *hm*, the proposition in question is treated as shared knowledge. In contrast, following positively formatted RfCs, response tokens such as *hm_hm* (with glottal closure) and *nein* indicate that the confirmable does not hold true (i.e., the speaker's expectation was not adequate, Weinrich 2007, 865). Interlocutors have yet to reach a common understanding of the matter at hand, which is one reason why disconfirming *nein*-responses are usually expanded (Imo 2017). Following an RfC with negative polarity (e.g., with the negation particle *nicht* ('not') or the negation article *kein* ('no' as in 'no idea')), negative response tokens are heard as confirmations. With responsive *doch*, German provides a response token for (among other things) disconfirming a negatively formatted RfC; it asserts that the negated proposition is indeed the case (Zifonun et al. 1997, 381, Willkop 1988, 156, Gubina forthcoming; Weinrich 2007, 866).

² Unlike other tags it can also follow verb-first questions.

³ Modal particles are frequently used in German. Most of them do not have lexical equivalents in other languages and are therefore not translated in this article.

Other tokens used in response to RfCs are ‘marked’ in that they express an upgraded or downgraded epistemic stance and can thus take issue with the RfC’s topical agenda. With the tokens *genau* (‘exactly’), *jaja* (‘yes yes’), *eben* (‘exactly’), and *stimmt* (‘(that’s) right’), speakers index their epistemic primacy regarding the prior proposition. They differ, however, in the kind of epistemic priority they claim. *Genau* signals a convergence of knowledge between the interlocutors that has already existed prior to the conversation but which is now attested for the first time (Oloff 2017). *Jaja* indicates that the RfC asks for something obvious that should already be known (Golato and Fagyal 2008, Barth-Weingarten 2011). With *eben*, speakers treat the proposition as something they had already stated earlier in the conversation (Betz and Deppermann 2018). In contrast, responsive *joa* is used to indicate a downgraded epistemic stance (Imo 2013, 169, Groß 2023) contextualizing that the speaker does not have sufficient access to fully confirm the matter at hand. While all of the aforementioned response tokens confirm the structural expectations set by the RfC, the overview also attests that they are multi-functional in that they negotiate matters of epistemic access, rights, and responsibilities.

3 Data

Our collection is built from data from naturally occurring interactions in Germany. We used two private audiovisual corpora of casual face-to-face interactions between college students, mostly friends or classmates, collected by Pepe Droste (KoMI, *Korpus Multimodale Interaktion*) and Martin Pfeiffer (StudI, *Studentische Interaktion*). Each interaction involved two to four participants who spoke standard-near (regional) varieties of German. Conversations took place at a student’s home or in seminar rooms at the university. Additionally, we used the reference corpus of spoken German FOLK, hosted at the Leibniz Institute for the German Language (IDS; Schmidt 2016), which is accessible for scientific use via <https://dgd.ids-mannheim.de>. We used video-recorded mundane and institutional talk-in-interaction from FOLK with two to five participants involved in joint activities, like eating, cooking, renovating a room, etc. In sum, the data comprise approx. 36 h of talk with 155 speakers involved. According to the guidelines of our larger comparative enterprise (Pfeiffer *et al.* forthcoming), we collected 200 RfC sequences and coded them according to the manual developed in the research group (König *et al.* forthcoming).

4 Designing RfCs in German

4.1 Syntactic design

RfCs in our data predominantly take the form of declaratives ($n = 148$; 74%), i.e., clauses with the finite verb in the second position. Phrases, the second most common format, are much less frequent ($n = 43$; 21.5%, Table 1).

The overwhelming majority of declaratives used as RfCs in our collection are syntactically simple, consisting of one main clause ($n = 140$; 70%). Only eight declaratives are syntactically complex, involving a subordinated clause (complement clause, relative clause, or adverbial clause) or two coordinated main clauses.

In German, polar interrogatives are a standard format for requests for information, in which the questioner presents him- or herself as unknowing (Couper-Kuhlen and Selting 2018, 218). Polar interrogatives,

Table 1: Syntactic design of RfCs in German

Syntactic format	Frequency (total $n = 200$)
Declarative clause	149 (74.5%)
Phrase	43 (21.5%)
Polar interrogative clause	5 (2.5%)
Subordinate clause	2 (1%)
Response token	1 (0.5%)

which are marked by the finite verb in the first position in German, are used as RfCs in only five cases in our data. Interestingly, all of them are modified either by the modal particle *nich(t)* ('not') ($n = 4$) or the adverb *einfach* ('simply') ($n = 1$). The modal particle *nich(t)* expresses that the questioner expects a confirmation that the state of affairs formulated in the interrogative is true (Thurmair 1989, 161). This is shown in the following example.

Just before extract 2, Hermann told Robert about a second television set he and his flatmates – including Elena – received as a gift from a friend. In l. 001, Robert reacts to this news with an 'extreme case formulation' (Pomerantz 1986), positioning the two co-participants as extraordinarily lucky (Section 4.5 shows further analysis). Later, tying in with the news, Hermann requests confirmation concerning another present (a drilling machine) Robert received as a gift quite recently (l. 008).

Extract 2: Studi We, No. 65

001 ROB: ihr kriegt die gÄnze zeit so geile SÄchen geschenkt;=ge,
you get really great things as a present all the time don't you
002 HER: irgendwie SCHON;
somehow we do
003 ((HER and ROB laugh))
004 ELE: hä wieSO;=
huh why
005 =was den NOCH,
what else
006 ROB: WEISS nich;
don't know
007 zwei FERNseher jetzt;
two TVs now
008 und hasch du nich auch ne BOHRmaschine erscht
and have.2SG you.sg not also a drilling-machine recently
gekriegt, =oder so;
get.PTCP.PAST or so
and haven't you also recently received a drilling machine as a
present or something
009 +(0.6)+
her: +nods +
010 ((everybody laughs, 1.4))
011 HER: ja
yes

Using *nich* as a modal particle, Robert designs the question as an RfC (l. 008). *Nich* occurs in a context in which the RfC speaker positions himself as partially knowing and expecting a confirming answer (Heritage and Raymond 2021). This is evidenced by the plural form *SÄchen* ('things', l. 001), which documents his assumption that they received more than one present, and the temporal adverb *erscht* ('recently', l. 008), through which he additionally claims to have some knowledge about the time when Robert received the drilling machine.

Phrasal RfCs in our collection ($n = 43$, predominantly nominal and prepositional, less frequently adjectival, verbal, and adverbial phrases) are mainly used to accomplish understanding checks used for establishing reference to a person, time, or place which has not become clear in a co-participant's preceding turn.

In the following example, Sandra has just displayed trouble in identifying a school Johanna is talking about. Hence, Johanna provides a detailed description of the location of the school, finally leading to Sandra's claim of understanding (*achSO*, Golato 2010), followed by an RfC:

Extract 3: KoMI 13_2, No. 114

001 JOH: so_n großes geBÄUde;
such a big building
002 SAN: achSO;;
oh I see
003 ja +direkt neben diesem verWÄltungs+ding; =ne,
yes directly next-to this administration-thing NE_QT
yeah directly next to this administration thing, right?
joh: +nods-----+
004 JOH: +ja [geNAU;]
yes exactly
+nods--->>
005 SAN: [da is doch auch irgend]was v:erwaltungsAMT oder so;
there is PRT also (located) something like administrative
office or something

With the RFC in the form of a prepositional phrase (l. 003), Sandra checks her understanding by referring to the presumed location of the school, which is confirmed by Johanna.

Furthermore, phrasal RFCs frequently offer formulations (Deppermann 2011) of a prior speaker's talk. Preceding the following extract, Sophie tells her friends about the trouble she had when organizing her study abroad. She closes her telling with the good news that the university administration's concerns did not apply in the end, and her application went through (l. 001).

Extract 4: StudI Gü_Ka 1, No. 30

001 SOP: also is jetzt [alle:s (-)] voll DURCH,
 so everything went through now
 002 HEL: [aber des_s ja RICHTig gut;]
 but that's really good
 003 SOP: ich hab jetzt gleich: diese SPRECHstunde:-
 I'll go to this office hour later
 004 DOM: also strEss wegen NICHTS;=oder was,
 so strain because-of nothing or what_QT
 so, much fuss about nothing or what
 005 SOP: [(stud) JA,]
 yes
 006 JAS: [JA also;;]
 yes well
 007 voll die sinnlose PAnik im grunde;=ne,
 completely senseless panicking basically right

After Helena's affiliative assessment of the story climax (l. 002), Dominik formulates the gist of the story (*also strEss wegen NICHTS; = oder was*, 'so much fuss about nothing or what', l. 004), using a complex nominal phrase preceded by the connective *also* ('so'), presenting it as an inference (Deppermann and Helmer 2013, also Section 4.4). Dominik documents his comprehension of the story and makes Sophie's confirmation relevant, which she provides in l. 005.

4.2 Polarity

In our data, RFCs are overwhelmingly ($n = 165$, 82.5%) formatted with positive polarity, whereas RFCs with negative polarity occur only infrequently ($n = 35$; 17.5%). In German RFCs, negative polarity is expressed by a range of lexical elements, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Negative polarity marking in German RFCs

Negative polarity marker	Frequency (total $n = 35$)
<i>nich(t)</i> ('not')	21 (60%)
<i>kein</i> ('no')	8 (23%)
<i>nix</i> ('nothing')	4 (11%)
<i>nie</i> ('never')	1 (3%)
<i>nee</i> ('no')	1 (3%)

In the majority of cases, the negative particle *nich(t)* ('not') is used for marking negative polarity, followed by the negative article *kein* ('no'), the less frequent indefinite pronoun *nix* ('nothing'), the adverb *nie* ('never'), and the exceptional case of the negative response token *nee* ('no') constituting an RFC by itself.

Two properties of negative polarity in RFCs in German are remarkable. First, there are four instances of *nich(t)* used as modal particles, all of which are employed in interrogative clauses (also Section 4.1), expressing the expectation of a confirming answer and marking the questioner's epistemic position as partially in the know. Second, negatively formatted RFCs can be confirmed with response tokens with positive or negative semantics (Section 5.3).

4.3 Modulation

According to our definition (cf. König and Pfeiffer forthcoming), RfCs always involve an epistemic asymmetry tilted toward the recipient. Epistemic modulation concerns explicit marking (with lexical, morphological, and syntactic resources) of the subjectively assumed validity of the confirmable, mitigating, or upgrading the requester's certainty. Although recipients of an RfC are ascribed more knowledge about the matter at hand, epistemic modulation occurs only in less than a third of all cases in the German data ($n = 61$; 30.5%). While this may not seem like a high percentage, German is among the languages that modulate RfCs most frequently (cf. Pfeiffer et al. forthcoming). Since in six examples, two modulation markers occur in one RfC, the total number of markers is slightly higher ($n = 67$).

As shown in Table 3, we find a great variety of modulation markers, 24 different forms in total, including modal particles,⁴ adverbs, epistemic verbs, and – yet only once – morphological marking of the verb (subjunctive).

Table 3: Modulation in German RfCs

Epistemic marker	Frequency (total $n = 67$)
<i>doch</i> (modal particle)	11
<i>ja</i> (modal particle)	11
<i>wahrscheinlich</i> ('probably')	5
<i>irgendwie</i> ('somehow')	4
<i>nich(t)</i> ('not', modal particle)	4
<i>bestimmt</i> ('certainly')	3
<i>schon</i> ('though')	3
<i>(ich) glaub</i> ('(I) believe')	3
<i>sozusagen</i> ('so to speak')	3
<i>auf jeden Fall</i> ('in any case')	2
<i>einfach</i> ('simply')	2
<i>halt</i> (modal particle)	2
<i>auch</i> (modal particle)	2
<i>eher</i> ('rather')	2
<i>oder so</i> ('or so')	2
<i>so</i> ('like')	1
<i>so was wie</i> ('something like')	1
<i>mein ich</i> ('I mean')	1
<i>eh</i> (modal particle)	1
<i>in der Regel</i> ('usually')	1
<i>irgendwo</i> ('somewhere')	1
<i>möglicherweise</i> ('possibly')	1
Subjunctive	1

Taking the two most frequent markers – the modal particles *ja* and *doch* – as examples, we show how they contribute to the epistemic positioning of the RfC speaker.

In extract 5, Robert (ROB) has been talking about his and his girlfriend's job situation. In l. 001, Amelie (AME) displays her understanding of Robert's current situation by producing an RfC, which is marked by the modal particle *ja*.

⁴ Modal particles are uninflected words that occur in the mid-field of a clause. They do not have a phrasal value and are used to index the relationship of the turn to some pragmatic presupposition (Diewald 2015). In this way, they can also index speakers' (epistemic, evaluative) stance.

Extract 5: KoMI 14_1, No. 120

001 AME: dann habt ihr im moment ja so GAR keine kohle;
 then have.PL you.PL at-the moment PRT kinda at-all no money
 so you just don't have any money at all at the moment
 002 ROB: nee;
 no
 003 (0.3)
 004 HAM wir auch nich.
 we don't
 005 (0.1)
 006 hatten wir vorher aber AUCH nich;
 but we didn't have any before either

The RfC offers an inference from Robert's preceding telling. Amelie uses *ja* to express that the state of affairs formulated in the RfC is assumed to be shared knowledge (Reineke 2018).

With the modal particle *doch*, speakers commit themselves to the truth of the confirmable and, at the same time, express that the assertion is assumed to be part of the interlocutors' common ground (Pittner 2007). In extract 6, Amelie treats Robert's information that his girlfriend studies nutritional science as news. Her following RfC contains the modal particle *doch* (l. 008):

Extract 6: KoMI 14_1, No. 119

001 AME: wAs stuDIERT die[:-]
 what does she study
 002 ROB: [ök]otrophologie;
 nutritional science
 003 AME: <<h>ah:> oKAY;
 oh okay
 004 (0.4)
 005 ROB: erNÄhrungskram;
 diet stuff
 006 (0.6)
 007 AME: <<p>WITzig;>
 funny
 008 =aber ihr habt doch bEide vorher
 but you.PL have.2PL PRT both before
 schon was ANderes gemacht; =Oder,
 already something else done or_QT
 but both of you have done something else before, haven't you?
 009 ROB: +hm_HM,+
 u_hu
 rob +nods +
 010 (0.2)
 011 ja die war vorher erZIEherin;
 yes she was a kindergarten teacher before
 012 AME: STIMMT;
 right

With the RfC, Amelie documents that the new information is not in line with her knowledge about Robert and his girlfriend. The modal particle *doch* – together with other resources such as the connective *aber* (Section 4.5) and the tag *oder* (Section 4.6 for co-occurrences of connectives, epistemic markers, and tags) – explicitly points to the contrast between what Robert said and Amelie's earlier assumption that they “have done something else before” (l. 008), which is taken to be common ground. The RfC serves to resolve this potential contradiction.

4.4 Inference marking

RfCs are sometimes presented as inferences from a co-participant's earlier talk. Speakers of German make use of linguistic resources to mark an RfC as offering an inference in 24% ($n = 48$) of all cases, which can be

considered frequent compared to other languages (cf. Pfeiffer et al. forthcoming).⁵ This becomes obvious in comparison to, for instance, the genetically closely related language Low German, which employs inference markers in only 9% ($n = 18$) of all cases (Weber 2024).

In our data, the most frequent markers are *dann* ('then'/'so'; $n = 21$; 10.5%) and *also* ('so'; $n = 16$; 8%). The change-of-state tokens *ach* ($n = 5$; 2.5%), *achso* ($n = 3$; 1.5%), and *ah* ($n = 2$; 1%), as well as the expressions *du meinst* ('you mean'; $n = 3$; 1.5%), *das heißt* ('that means'; $n = 1$; 0.5 %) and the adverb *da* ('then'; $n = 1$; 0.5%) are only used infrequently for this purpose.

The most common inference marker *dann* is used in extract 7, in which the RfC relates to a preceding telling:

Extract 7: KoMI 14_1, No. 120 (extr. 5, shortened)

001 AME: *dann* *habt* *ihr* *im* *moment* *ja* *so* *GAR* *keine* *kohle*;
 then have.PL you.PL at-the moment PRT kinda at-all no money
 so you just don't have any money at all at the moment
 002 ROB: *nee*;
 no

In line with what Deppermann and Helmer (2013) have observed, the speaker uses *dann* in order to introduce her RfC as a 'unilateral inference', i.e., a subjective inference drawn by the RfC speaker without implying that this has already been meant by the co-participant before.

An example of the inference marker *also* can be found in extract 8:

Extract 8: StudI Gü_Ka 1, No. 30 (extr. 4, shortened)

004 DOM: *also* *strEss* *wegen* *NICHTS*; *=oder* *was*,
 so *strain* *because-of* *nothing* *or_what_QT*
 so much fuss *about* *nothing* *or* *what*
 005 SOP: [(stud) *JA*,]
 yes

In contrast to *dann*, *also* is commonly used to indicate an 'intersubjective inference', which claims to explicate what has already been communicated by the co-participant (Deppermann and Helmer 2013, 3). The RfC is presented and treated as providing the gist of the telling, that is, a pointed summary of what has already been expressed by the partner.

Inference markers index the tight sequential relationship between RfCs and their preceding turns. RfCs are used to negotiate and secure understanding and, thus, play an important role in the process of establishing intersubjectivity.

4.5 Connectives

Quite commonly ($n = 83$, 41.5%), speakers use connectives to link the RfC to the preceding discourse. We follow a broad understanding of 'connective', including prototypical elements such as conjunctions, subjunctives, and connective adverbs, but also discourse markers and change-of-change tokens which relate the RfC back to prior discourse (König et al. forthcoming). Table 4 provides an overview.⁶

As *dann* and *also* have already been discussed as inference markers in the preceding section, we focus on the interactional functions of *aber* ('but', $n = 25$; 12.5%) and *und* ('and', $n = 12$; 6%) here.

An example of *aber* occurs in Extract 9:

⁵ The number of inference markers is higher than the number of marked RfCs, since four RfCs contain two inference markers.

⁶ Some RfCs include several connectives, so there are more connectives than RfCs containing them.

Table 4: Connectives in German RfCs

Connective	Frequency (Total <i>n</i> = 95)
<i>aber</i> ('but')	25
<i>dann</i> ('then'/'so')	21
<i>also</i> ('so')	17
<i>und</i> ('and')	12
<i>ach</i> (change-of-state token)	5
<i>achso</i> (change-of-state token)	3
<i>ah</i> (change-of-state token)	2
<i>weil</i> ('because')	2
<i>noch mal</i> ('again')	1
<i>das heißt</i> ('that means')	1
<i>doch doch</i> ('but sure')	1
<i>gut</i> ('good')	1
<i>na</i> (discourse marker, no English equivalent)	1
<i>okay</i> ('okay')	1
<i>damit</i> ('so that')	1
<i>wobei</i> ('although')	1

Extract 9: KoMI 14_1, No. 119 (extr. 6, shortened)

008 AME: =*aber* *ihr* *habt* *doch* *bEide* *vorher*
but you.PL have.2PL PRT both before
schon *was* *ANderes* *gemacht*;=*Oder*,
already something else done or_QT
but both of you have done something else before, haven't you?

As shown in Section 4.3, this RfC is related to an inconsistency between the speaker's assumptions and the new information she has just received. The RfC is introduced by *aber* with a concessive meaning, indicating that this piece of information runs counter to her expectations (Schlobinski 1992). Thus, the connective supports the RfC's function to resolve an apparent contradiction.

An instance of *und* can be found in extract 10:

Extract 10: StudI We, No. 65 (extr. 2, shortened)

008 ROB: *und* *hasch* *du* *nich* *auch* *ne* *BOHRmaschine* *ersch*
and have.2SG you.sg not also a drilling-machine recently
gekriegt, =*oder* *so*;
get.PTCP.PAST or so
and haven't you also recently received a drilling machine as a
present or something

Robert's RfC occurs after Hermann's informing that he and his flatmates received a second television set as a present. The additive connective *und*, which introduces the RfC, contributes to the construction of a list of presents. Thus, the connective *und* and the RfC as a whole play an important role in other-positioning the co-participants as 'outrageously lucky'.

4.6 Tags

Tags figure as a prominent resource in the design of RfCs in our German data set. They can be found in almost two-thirds of the cases in our collection (*n* = 128; 64%). Tags are thus not obligatory, but they can function as a response mobilizing feature (Stivers and Rossano 2010). Six forms are documented in our RfC collection: *oder* ('or', *n* = 52), *ne* ('not', *n* = 51), *ge(ll)* (*n* = 13, all of them in the data from Southwest Germany), *oder was* ('or what', *n* = 9), *oder wie* ('or how', *n* = 2), and *ja* ('yes', *n* = 1).

Our analyses focus on the two most prominent tags, final rising *oder*⁷ and *ne*. We show that in addition to increasing response relevance, the tags' core function is to index epistemic stances. In our collection, *ne*- and *oder*-tagged RfCs index different epistemic stances: using *oder*, speakers claim fewer rights to know than in *ne*-RfCs, which usually concern potentially shared knowledge (Section 2.2). Moreover, tags have different sequential trajectories: *oder*-RfCs tend to invite non-minimal responses, whereas *ne*-tagged RfCs rather receive a token-only response. Often *ne*-RfCs work as understanding checks, they ask for a piece of background information that is needed to proceed with the ongoing activity. As extract 11 illustrates, RfCs appended by *ne* usually open a side sequence. Lena has just told her friends Anne and Silke about her plans for the next day and now asks about theirs.

Extract 11: KoMI 04_1, No. 74

```

001 LEN: und IHR,
          and you_PL?
002   +(1.6)
          len +shifts gaze between ANN and SIL+
003 ANN: seminar;
          seminar
004 SIL: [ich AUCH;]
          me too
005 LEN: +[(das mit dem)]+
          that with the
          len +looks at ANN +
006   +du hast (0.1)+ das mit der gramMatik;=n[e, ]
          you_SG have that with the grammar NE_QT
          you have that grammar seminar, right?
          len +looks at SIL +
007 SIL: [hm_]HM,
          u_hu
008 LEN: +und DU, +
          and you_SG?
          len +looks at ANN+
009   (0.4)
010 ANN: ähm ähm vom o pe (0.1) PRAKtikum;
          ehm ehm from the o p practical training
011   das das hatte ich vor (0.2) zwei wochen freitag samstag SCHON mal,
          I have already had this two weeks ago on Friday and Saturday

```

With her RfC in 006, Lena presents a confirmable that concerns background information about the seminar Silke attends. Her RfC claims some shared knowledge (as indicated by the demonstrative reference ‘that grammar seminar’). Yet, by appending the tag *ne*, Lena assigns the authority to confirm to Silke, who has first-hand rights to knowledge concerning her own schedule. Silke confirms in a minimal response format (Section 5.5). RfCs tagged by *ne* are more often followed by minimal answers than *oder*-RfCs. Only 9 *oder*-RfCs (20% of all *oder*-tagged RfCs) get a minimal response, compared to 20 *ne*-RfCs (39%), i.e., they ask for confirmation without elaboration. This suggests that *ne*-RfCs present confirmables that are quite likely to be true.

As indicated above, *oder*-RfCs show a different design and tend to receive different responses. In addition to a modulation with the particle *doch*, they are often used with the concessive connective *aber* (‘but’, in 14 instances out of 18 *oder*-RfCs with connectives, see Section 4.5). These confirmables may run contrary to presuppositions made in previous discourse, which have not been made explicit yet (König 2020, 188f.), or they may conflict with assumptions the requester has held so far. This suggests that *oder*-RfCs do not only index downgraded epistemic access but are also concerned with lower epistemic rights, i.e., speakers assign the authority to (dis)confirm to the recipient.

In extract 12, Amelie’s RfC documents her previous assumptions, which are at odds with what has been said in the foregoing turns.

⁷ The analysis is based on the 45 instances of final rising *oder* as the most prominent form (Section 4.7). Note that *oder* with level intonation makes an alternative relevant and thus indexes a stance of lesser certainty (Drake 2016, König 2020). As there are only five instances of level *oder* in our collection, we do not discuss them here.

Extract 12: KoMI 14_1, No. 119 (extr. 6, shortened)

008 AME: =aber ihr habt doch bEide vorher schon was
 but you.PL have PRT both before already something
 ANderes gemacht;=Oder,
 else made or_QT
but both of you have done something else before, haven't you

009 ROB: +hm_HM,+
 u_hu
 rob +nods +
 (0.2)

010 ja die war vorher erZIEherin;
yes she was a kindergarten teacher before

012 AME: STIMMT;
right

Oder-RfCs are usually confirmed with an unmarked *ja* ('yes', 21 out of 31 token-responses, see Section 5.2). Compared with *ne*-RfCs, *oder*-RfCs receive fewer minimal responses, i.e., *oder*-RfCs regularly invite more than just confirmation (Section 5.5). In extract 12, Robert's reply is non-minimal: he first confirms with a response token and then elaborates on his girlfriend's former occupation.

4.7 Prosodic design

In the majority of instances, the confirmable is realized with a final falling intonation contour (Table 5). This holds true for confirmables which are realized with or without a final tag.

Tags are usually not integrated prosodically into the utterance they are appended to (Table 6); in most cases, however, they are latched to the preceding intonation phrase. Predominantly, the non-integrated tags are realized in a separate final rising contour (Table 7). In only three cases, there is a notable pause between the confirmable and the tag (in which no response is given by the recipients). These instances can be interpreted as response pursuits (Jefferson 1981).

Concerning RfCs with a tag, a relatively stable pattern of a final falling RfC with an appended final rising tag is documented in the data: In more than 94% of the tagged RfCs, the final pitch movement of the confirmable is falling

Table 5: Final intonation of the confirmable in German RfCs

	Final intonation confirmable (<i>N</i> = 200)	Final intonation confirmable without a tag (<i>n</i> = 72)	Final intonation confirmable with a tag (<i>n</i> = 128)
Rise	26 (13%)	21 (29%)	5 (4%)
Level	3 (1.5%)	2 (3%)	1 (1%)
Fall	165 (82.5%)	44 (61%)	121 (95%)
n.a. ⁸	6 (3%)	5 (7%)	1 (1%)

Table 6: Prosodic integration of tags into confirmable in German RfCs

	<i>oder</i> (<i>n</i> = 52)	<i>ne</i> (<i>n</i> = 51)	<i>ge(II)</i> (<i>n</i> = 13)	<i>oder was</i> (<i>n</i> = 9)	<i>oder wie</i> (<i>n</i> = 2)	<i>ja</i> (<i>n</i> = 1)	Σ (<i>n</i> = 128)
Non-integrated	52 (100%)	51 (100%)	13 (100%)	6 (67%)	1 (50%)	1 (100%)	124 (97%)
Integrated	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	3 (33%)	1 (50%)	0 (0%)	4 (3%)

⁸ In some cases, the audio signal is not sufficient to determine the final intonation contour.

Table 7: Final contour of tag (only non-integrated tags)

	<i>oder</i> (<i>n</i> = 52)	<i>ne</i> (<i>n</i> = 51)	<i>gell</i> (<i>n</i> = 13)	<i>oder was</i> (<i>n</i> = 6)	<i>oder wie</i> (<i>n</i> = 1)	<i>ja</i> (<i>n</i> = 1)	Σ (<i>n</i> = 124)
Rise	45 (87%)	51 (100%)	13 (100%)	4 (6%)	1 (100%)	1 (100%)	115 (92%)
Level	5 (10%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	5 (4%)
Fall	2 (4%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (33%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4 (3%)

(Table 5); 92% of the following tags have a rising contour (Table 7). Notable exceptions concern *oder* ('or'), and *oder was* ('or what'), for which level⁹ and falling contours can also be observed.

A closer analysis reveals some differences between RfCs with and without a tag: A final rising contour is more likely in confirmables without a tag (*n* = 21, 29%) compared to 4% (*n* = 5) in those with a tag (Table 5). Selting (1995) shows that final falling contours prefer confirmation, whereas rising contours are more open concerning the responses they invite (Section 2.1). In our collection, 67% of all final falling confirmables receive a confirming response compared to 54% of all final rising confirmables. Thus, differences in response projection between final rising and final falling confirmables do not seem to be categorical but rather a matter of degree.

5 Building responses to RfCs in German

5.1 Responsive actions

In our data, RfCs are mostly confirmed (*n* = 132, 66%); yet, sometimes mitigated, which is predominantly done by turn-expansion (see below). Disconfirmations (*n* = 34, 17%) and responses that neither confirm nor disconfirm (*n* = 26, 13%) are much rarer, the latter being, e.g., other-repair, repair initiation, additional information, expression of preference (*des hoff ich*, 'I hope so'), and tangential and transformative answers (Stivers and Hayashi 2010). In eight instances (4%), there is no response in our data. This can be due to a schism in multi-party interaction, participants attending to co-occurring embodied actions, or a turn continuation by the RfC speaker without assigning a TRP for a response. There is only one instance of a purely embodied response. The following overview will be based on the 191 cases of RfC sequences with a verbal response.

5.2 Response tokens

In German data, response tokens are overwhelmingly used for building a response to an RfC, as has been shown for polar questions in a wide range of languages (Enfield et al. 2019). In *n* = 161/191 cases (84%), the response includes at least one response token; only in *n* = 31 cases (16%), no response token occurs. While verbal responses are often accompanied by embodied (dis)confirmation, mostly nodding or head shakes, only in one instance, a purely nonverbal confirmation (nodding) is produced.¹⁰ This clearly shows (contrary to Enfield et al. 2019) that at least in German, nodding and head shakes are not on an equal footing with verbal response tokens as proper means to signal (dis)confirmation. They can only be used as additional cues.

The notion 'response token' here only refers to particles used for fulfilling the conditional relevance established by the RfC (i.e., express confirmation or disconfirmation), which match the formal linguistic design preferences for an answer set up by the prior turn (Raymond 2003) and which make for a possibly complete

⁹ For level *oder*-tags, see Drake (2016) and König (2020). See also Section 4.6 for a discussion of functions of the prosodic variants.

¹⁰ Due to limitations of space, this article only deals with verbal responses. This does not mean that the embodied design of the response is irrelevant; yet, our analyses, which are thoroughly based on video-data, show that a verbal response is required and that it defines the action implemented by the response.

assumption that Larissa was allowed to choose two answers for each question. Larissa confirms with *genau* and gives further details on the design of the tasks.

Extract 15: 07_3_2016-11-16_2 No.90

001 BEA: das war,
 it was
 002 ihr hattet irgendWIE:,
 you had somehow
 003 ihr konntet mit !ZWEI! antworten irgendwie:,
 you could with two answers somehow
 004 (dingsen) bei-
 (something) with
 005 LAR: geNAU;
 exactly
 006 wir hatten nur !VIER! zur Auswahl; ((continues explanation))
 we had only four to choose from

Nee is the default means for expressing disconfirmation ($n = 14/34$ disconfirmations, 41%, Table 9). In extract 16, Despina and Penelope are discussing how to prepare a dish:

Extract 16: FOLK_E_00327_SE_01_T_01_DF_01_c0874-877 No. 189

001 DES: da muss halt was SCHWEreres drauf;=Oder?
 so something more heavy must be put on it, mustn't it?
 002 PEN: NEE-
 no
 003 (0.5)
 004 da muss mehr WASSer rein.=
 more water must be poured into it
 005 =ich muss SALZlake produzieren, h°
 I need to produce brine

Table 9: Response tokens in German RfC sequences used for disconfirmation

Token	Number
<i>nee</i> 'no/nope'	14
<i>doch</i> (after negation 'be/do'-construction)	8
<i>nein</i> 'no/nope'	4
<i>nö</i> 'no/nope'	2
<i>?hm_?hm</i> (negation token)	2

Nee is significantly more often used for disconfirmation than the standard written negation token *nein* (only $n = 4$). While this may be due to the preponderance of informal interaction types in our data (cf. Imo 2017), future research is needed to analyze differences in function and use of these two tokens.

A peculiarity of German seems to be the use of tokens responding to RfCs with negative polarity ($n = 33$, Table 10). Confirmation ($n = 13/33$, 39%) can be expressed by tokens with a positive semantics (as *ja*, $n = 3$). Yet, RfCs with a negative polarity are equally often confirmed by tokens with a negative semantics (*nee*, $n = 5/13$, *nein*, $n = 1/13$ and *?hm_?hm*, $n = 1/13$). In extract 17, Amelie presents a negatively-formatted RfC. Robert confirms by *nee*:

Extract 17: 14_2_2016-11-29_1, No. 120 (extract 5, shortened)

001 AME: dann habt ihr im moment ja so GAR keine kohle;
 so you just don't have any money at all at the moment
 002 ROB: nee;
 no
 003 (0.3)
 004 HAM wir auch nich.
 we PRT don't

Table 10: Response tokens used for (dis)confirming RfCs with negative polarity

Response type	Response token	Frequency (<i>N</i> = 33)
Confirmation (<i>n</i> = 13)	<i>nee</i> ‘no/nope’	5
	<i>nein</i> ‘no/nope’	1
	<i>nee nee</i> ‘no no’	2
	<i>ja</i> ‘yes/yeah/yep’	3
	<i>genau</i> ‘exactly’	2
	<i>?hm?hm</i> (negation token)	1
Disconfirmation (<i>n</i> = 10)	<i>doch</i> (after negation ‘be/do’-construction)	7 <i>nja doch</i> 1 (‘well’ <i>doch</i>), <i>doch natürlich</i> 2 (<i>doch</i> ‘of course’); 1 <i>doch</i> (correcting an immediately prior disconfirmation in same turn)
	<i>nö</i> ‘no/nope’	1
	no response token	2
neither (<i>n</i> = 10)	<i>ja</i> ‘yes/yeah/yep’	2
	<i>hm</i> ‘hm’	1
	no response token	7

The free variation between tokens with a positive and a negative semantics may seem puzzling. Yet, the status of these items in this specific environment, i.e., as a response to an RfC with negative polarity, is disambiguated by the fact that disconfirmation in this context is regularly produced with *doch* (*n* = 7/10, 70%), but never with one of the tokens used for confirmation or disconfirmation of RfCs with a positive polarity. Used as a response token, but also as an adverb and modal particle (Pittner 2007), *doch* indexes opposition counter to some contextually relevant expectation (Couper-Kuhlen and Selting 2018, 247f., Gubina forthcoming), as in extract 18. A couple is talking about the probable costs of a dental prosthesis for Amelie’s mother. She states that she herself has an insurance for this kind of costs. Christoph produces an RfC with negative polarity (l. 001), assuming that Amelie’s mother does not have an insurance. Amelie disconfirms by *doch*, yet adds a concessive restriction, declaring that her mother has an insurance that only covers a minor part of the costs.

Extract 18: FOLK_E_00332_SE_01_T_01_DF_01_c620-623 No. 195

001 CHR: hat deine mama (.) NICHT.=(oder?)
 your mother does not have (an insurance), does she?
 002 (0.6)
 003 AME: DOCH;=
 she does
 004 =aber nur so fünfundfünfzig dreißig proZENT oder so was.
 but only some fifty-five thirty percent or something
 005 CHR: [ja::;]
 yes

So, we have two different paradigmatic orders of response tokens, depending on the polarity of the RfC (Table 11).

Table 11: Relationship between RfC’s polarity and action implemented by most frequent response tokens in German

RfC	<i>ja</i>	<i>nee/nein</i>	<i>doch</i>
Positive polarity	Confirmation	Disconfirmation	Ø ¹¹
Negative polarity	Confirmation	Confirmation	Disconfirmation

About 31% of the verbal responses consist only of response tokens (*n* = 59/191); 70% (*n* = 133/191) exhibit a phrasal or clausal structure; *n* = 104 out of them include also response tokens (78%). Therefore, it would not be adequate to focus only on the beginning of the response and the role of tokens (e.g., in the study by Enfield *et al.* 2019) when discussing what RfCs project and how they are treated.

5.3 Cluster of response tokens

Even though Table 8 lists various possible combinations of response tokens (especially with the default confirmation token *ja*), only 11 instances of all token responses ($n = 11/161$, 7%) match the criterion that two or more tokens are realized as one prosodic unit to be coded as a cluster (*ja genau* ‘yes exactly’ $n = 8$, multiple sayings of *nee*, ‘no’ $n = 2$; *ja stimmt*, ‘yes right’ $n = 1$). With a *ja genau* response speakers usually underscore their authority:

Extract 19: KoMI 13_2, No. 114 (extract 3, shortened)

```
003 SAN: ja +direkt neben diesem verWAltungs+ding;=ne,
          yeah directly next to this administration thing, right
          joh +nods-----+
004 JOH: +ja geNAU;
          yes exactly
          joh +nods--->>
```

Moreover, in five out of eight instances, *ja genau* constitutes a minimal, token-only response (Section 5.5).

5.4 Position of first response token

As could be expected, response tokens are overwhelmingly produced in turn-initial position or make for the whole response turn ($n = 153$). Only in eight cases do response tokens occur in turn-final position after a clausal or phrasal response (*genau* $n = 4/8$, *ja* $n = 3/8$, *nee* $n = 1/8$). In this latter, non-canonical turn-design, the speaker mostly first produces a repeat of the RfC ($n = 6/8$, see extract 27 below), indexing their own epistemic authority on the matter, and then confirms ($n = 7/8$) or disconfirms ($n = 1/8$) the requester’s assumption.

5.5 Minimal and non-minimal responses

Minimal responses, i.e., responses by a token only (see extracts 2, 3, 11, 14, 19), are documented in $n = 59/191$ cases (30%). Overwhelmingly ($n = 55/59$, 93%), they present a confirmation of the RfC. Minimal responses tend to occur in side sequences such as understanding checks or after candidate answers (for which *ne*-tagged RfCs are quite frequent, see Section 4.6). There is a slight tendency for minimal responses to occur more commonly after phrasal RfCs compared to clausal RfCs. Tokens include *ja* and *jo* (‘yes’, $n = 26$), bilabial *hm* and *hm_hm* ($n = 15$), *genau* ($n = 6$), combinations (*ja genau* $n = 6$, *ja klar*, ‘yes, of course’ $n = 1$) and *nee* ($n = 1$) after RfCs in positive polarity and *?hm_?hm* ($n = 2$), *nein* ($n = 1$) and *nee* ($n = 1$) following RfCs in negative polarity.

Non-minimal responses (with a token) and responses without a token ($n = 132/191$, 70%) can consist of a single or several TCUs. The response turn can be expanded by a phrase:

Extract 20: Studi Be, No. 9

```
001 RIE: das Andere is FANta;=gell?
          and the other is fanta, right
          (...)
002 FLO: nein oRANgenlimo;
          no orange lemonade
```

¹¹ The results on the relation between *doch* and the polarity of the prior turn concern only RfCs. *Doch* as a response token can also be used in response to actions formatted with positive polarity (Gubina 2021; forthcoming.).

It can also consist of several TCUs. A response token usually occurs at the beginning of the turn, while the ensuing turn-expansion is produced by a phrasal or clausal structure ($n = 102/132$, 77%). The expansion in addition to a first TCU can implement different kinds of actions (Gubina et al. 2024 for expansions of confirming responses).¹²

- *Elaboration*: In $n = 29/102$ cases (28%), a topical elaboration that contains additional information on the proposition formulated with the RfC is provided. In extract 21, Karen is trying to assure where a referent is located by presenting a candidate in the guise of an RfC. Monique confirms and adds more information about a property of the location, which makes its identification difficult.

Extract 21: StudI KI No. 37

001 KAR: aber nIch beim KURh^haus.=ode[r?]
but (it's) not at the spa hotel, is it?

002 MON: [n]ee NEE;= +
no no
mon +shakes head+

003 =des isch so MEga verstEckt,
this is so mega hidden
this is so hyper hidden

In some cases, the elaboration responds to RfCs that were clearly produced as topic proffers (Schegloff 2007, 169–80), eliciting a narrative or an extended description. In extract 22, the job trainer (TN2) recaps what she already knows from the trainee's CV, presenting it to him (TNE) to confirm (l. 001-002). He does so (l. 003), but then indexes that some unexpected, sensitive information has to be added (l. 005: *also (laughs) nun gut*) and provides a story giving additional biographical details (l. 006ff).

Extract 22: FOLK_E_00173_SE_01_T_01_DF_01_c0092-0095 No. 139

001 TN2: sie haben angefangen (.) mit ihrem SCHULabschluss;=
you started with our highschool diploma
002 =und ähm sind ja dann in die ausbildung zum EINzelhandelskaufmann
(gegangen).=ne?
and uhm then you (entered) into the formation as a retail
salesman, right?
003 TNE: geNAU,
exactly
004 (0.5)
005 also ((short laughter)) nun GUT.=
so well
006 =also es gab da noch so zwei jahre in der de de ER,=
so it gave.3SG there still like two years in the GDR
there were also like two years in the GDR
((continues story))

- **Correction:** If an RfC is disconfirmed (by a response token), then in most cases the speaker adds a TCU that corrects the assumption expressed in the RfC ($n = 22/102$, 22%; see also extract 20). A mere disconfirmation mostly would not count as cooperative, i.e., not sufficiently informative, because “any turn that formulates a K^+/K^- imbalance between participants will warrant the production of talk that redresses the imbalance” (Heritage 2012, 49), i.e., the producer of the RfC can be taken to be wanting to know what is the case, and not only, what is not the case (Imo 2017). This positive information then is provided by the correction. In extract 23 from a job interview training, the trainer (TN1) checks the trainee’s (TNE) CV, stating an assumption about the place (*monheim am rhein*) where he received his professional training. After a hesitation particle (*ähm* (.)), the trainee denies (*nee*) and corrects, repeating the topic and naming the correct place (*düsseldorf*).

12 If the speaker resumes or continues the activity they were pursuing before the RfC, this does not amount to an expansion of the response, but rather as closing the RfC-response sequence and treating it as an insertion-sequence instead. Consequently, these cases are not considered here.

Extract 23: FOLK_E_00173_SE_01_T_01_DE_01_c0305-0306 No. 141

001 TNL: in monheim am rhein ham sie dann die AUSbildung gemacht;=
 in monheim am rhein you did your professional training
 002 =zum pharma;
 for pharma
 003 TNE: ähm +(.)+ NEE die pharmareferentenausbildung hab ich in (.)
 uhm no the pharma-referent-training have.1SG I in
 tne +shakes head+
 in düsseldorf gemacht.
 in Düsseldorf make.PTCP.PAST
 uhm no, I did the pharmaceutical apprenticeship in Düsseldorf

- *Confirmation*: In $n = 32/102$ (31%) expanded confirming responses, an additional confirming TCU follows, repeating (part of) the RfC or transforming it (Stivers 2022: 147–178). Repeats and paraphrases serve to index the claim to epistemic authority or at least independent epistemic access by the responder. Before extract 24, Caro had declared that they had ‘driven’ to some destination. Willy produces an RfC for his inference that they went by car (l. 001). Caro first confirms by the response token *hm_hm?*. Then, she adds a full repeat of the RfC as a second confirmation (l. 003).

Extract 24: StudI Ha_Ka2, No. 36

001 WIL: +ihr seid AUto gefahren;+
 you drove by car
 wil +nods-----+
 002 CAR: +hm_hm?=
 u_hu
 car +nods-->
 003 =wir sin+ AUto gefahren;
 we are.1SG.PL car driven
 we drove by car
 car -->+

- *Account*: An account for the (dis)confirmation can be added in order to explain, give a reason, and/or support the credibility of the response ($n = 12/102$, 12%; see Gubina et al. 2024, Seuren and Huiskes 2017). In extract 25, Karen asks for confirmation of her assumption that the people they talk about will be able to travel in a short time to a place called *Emmendingen*. Monique confirms with *jaja* (Golato and Fagyal 2008, Barth-Weingarten 2011) and gives an additional warrant for the truth of this assumption by referring to the fact that these people have cars available.

Extract 25: StudI KI, No. 38

001 KAR: achso ja dann dann sind sie schnEll in EMmendingen;=oder,
 I see well then then they will be in Emmendingen quickly, won't
 they?
 002 MON: +jaja-+=
 yesyes
 mon +nods-+
 003 =die ham ja auch alle n AUto;
 they have.1PL PRT PRT all a car
 you know they all have a car as well

- *Concessive restriction*: This practice is related to downgrading the claim that the initial (dis)confirming response conveys. It restricts the degree/scope of the validity of the initial response component, its (interactional) relevance, or inferences to be drawn from it ($n = 7/102$, 7%, see also extract 18 “doch aber”; Szczepek Reed 2015). An example of restricting the interactional relevance of the confirmation (and, consequently of the proposition expressed by the RfC) is extract 26. Rahel and Charlene are talking about a recipe which states measures in terms of *cups*. Rahel requests confirmation for her translation of *cups*. Charlene confirms, but adds the restriction that their cups have different sizes. By this, she lets us infer that referring to ‘cups’ does not settle the practical problem of deciding on the volumes of ingredients needed for preparing the dough.

used to build and respond to RfCs, it can only offer preliminary reflections on the precise differential interactional functions that the choice of one linguistic resource over another has. More quantitative and qualitative analyses are needed to describe the systematic use of discourse particles speakers use in German RfCs across actions and interactional contexts (Selting et al. 2009).

Transcription conventions GAT2

[]	overlap and simultaneous talk
=	latching
(.)	micropause (shorter than 0.2 s)
(2.85)	measured pause
geht_s	assimilation of words
:, ::, :::	segmental lengthening, according to duration
((laughs))	non-verbal vocal actions and events
akZENT	focal accent
akzEnt	secondary stress
?	pitch rising to high at end of intonation phrase
,	pitch rising to mid
-	level pitch
;	pitch falling to mid
.	pitch falling to low
<<p>>	piano, soft
<<f>	forte, loud
<<h>>	high pitch register
<<p>>	piano, soft
<<all>>	allegro, fast
°h	inbreath, according to duration
h°	outbreath, according to duration
<<creaky voice>>	commentaries regarding voice qualities with indication of scope
(solche)	assumed wording

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