Overlapping reactions during tag questions

Abstract

This article examines the form and the functions of what we label "overlapping reactions during tag questions in order to develop a detailed typology of their uses. Overlapping responses are responses which overlap utterances containing a variable interrogative tag, e.g. *It's nice, isn't it*, and are orientated towards the proposition contained in the simultaneously uttered tag question. Our research employs methods and insights from corpus linguistics, conversation analysis and phonetics, and is grounded in a corpus of spoken British English. Based on the clustering of grammatical, discoursal and prosodic features in our data we propose a typology of the interactional functions of overlapping responses, i.e. acknowledgements, continuers, disagreements, non-committals and turn-competitive early responses and demonstrate that such responses are not errors but rather function as part of the well-oiled machinery of spontaneous dialogue. We show that the typology of overlaps proposed by Jefferson (1983) is unable to fully distinguish between the functional categories identified in our data, Hence we suggest that a taxonomy of overlaps must be based on the patterning of formal and functional features, Our data provides evidence that tag questions are responded to a syntagmatic wholes rather than as a sequence of two parts: anchor and tag.

Key words

Tag questions, Overlaps, Prosody, Form-function, Responses, Conversation

1. Introduction[1]

The main goal of this article is to provide a description of the grammatical, prosodic and functional features of overlapping reactions during tag questions (henceforth TQs). In Section 2 we set out the details of our data and methodology, and in Section 3 we describe the interactional functions of overlapping reactions, followed by a discussion of their formal and prosodic properties. But before we can pursue these goals it is necessary to describe: (i) what we take to be a TQ (1.1), (ii) how we define an overlapping reaction as a special type of overlap (1.2), and (iii) where the overlap is located against the TQ (1.3).

1.1 Tag questions (TQs)

In English conversation, language users can add different types of tags to their utterances, consisting of a word, e.g. (1), or a clause, e.g. (2-3) (Quirk *et al*. 1985: 810-816). Throughout the article we will refer to the whole construction with the term 'tag question', while the term 'tag' will be reserved for the appended element. We will refer to the utterance being modified as the 'anchor'.

(1) That's the Soviet, right. (ICE-GB)
(2) And you suffer from mild asthma, is that right? (ICE-GB)
(3) You don't know that either, do you. (ICE-GB)

Tags can be either grammatically independent, as in (1-2), or dependent on elements of the anchor as in (3). The former type of TQ is referred to as an invariable TQ or an invariant tag, and they can take many forms, such as *eh*, *huh*, *yeah*, *okay, right…* (see for instance Columbus 2010), while the latter is known as a variable or canonical TQ (e.g. Tottie & Hoffmann 2006).

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To limit the scope of the paper we only investigate variable TQs. However, we would expect to find similar results for non-variable TQs,[2] as both TQ types may be seen as constructions with similar form and functions. As stated in Author 1 (2018: 29), there are overlaps between the functions of variable and invariable TQs, as has been shown in a series of studies investigating both types of TQs (e.g. Holmes 1983, Barron et al. 2015), and in studies of Asian English tags, which seem to be in the process of losing their variable qualities (e.g. Takahashi 2014).

The dataset of variable TQs used in this study is a subset of the data analysed by Author 1 (2018). It contains 1,144 variable TQs found in British English spontaneous conversations from the London Lund Corpus (LLC) and the British English component of the International Corpus of English (ICE-GB). Using the TQ dataset analysed by Author 1 (2018) is an advantage as it is already coded for functional, conversational, grammatical and prosodic properties. It allows us to easily compare the dataset of TQs without overlapping reactions with the dataset of TQs with overlapping reactions. For more information on the dataset and methodology, see Section 2.

One of the functions of TQs is to elicit a response from the co-participants in the conversation. Author 1 (2018: 68) found that in her dataset of English variable TQs (Table 1), 70% of cases elicit a response, 27% of TQs do not and 3% were unclassifiable due to incomprehensible words. When there is a response, it is mostly a confirmation (47%), sometimes a non-confirmative response (15%), and more rarely a disagreement (8%). If the co-participant confirms the proposition in the TQ, he or she responds with the polarity expected by the first speaker. A disagreement is a response that has the polarity not expected by the speaker, while a non-confirmation can be query, a disclaimer or an evasive answer.

Table 1. TQs and their responses (Author 1 2018: 68)

Responses		n	%
No response		395	27
Response:	Confirmation	675	47
	Disagreement	117	8

[2] We also expect that uptalk, i.e. rising intonation at the end of declarative sentences (see Warren 2016), similarly overlaps in function with variable and invariable TQs.

Non-confirmative	215	15
Uninterpretable	50	3
Total	**1452**	**100**

During the analysis of the responses, it became apparent that there were a number of examples of TQs where the response itself overlapped with the TQ. Indeed, in the 12% of cases where the TQ is reacted to, the reaction partly or entirely overlaps with the TQ (see Table 2). We have dubbed these overlapping reactions. Interestingly, when we examined the entire TQ dataset, including TQs which did not elicit a reaction, we found that only 9% of TQs were overlapped by a reaction. Thus, it seems that TQs do not usually trigger overlapping reactions. We will clarify in the following paragraphs which kind of overlap we consider to be an overlapping reaction.

Table 2. TQs and their overlapping reactions

All TQs	n	%	**Only TQs eliciting a response**	n	%
TQ without overlapping reactions	1045	91	TQs followed by timely response	756	88
TQ with overlapping reactions	99	9	TQs followed by overlapping reaction	99	12
Total TQ dataset	**1144**[3]	**100**	**Total of TQs eliciting a reaction**	**855**	**100**

1.2 Early responses

This section will explain in more detail how we define overlapping reactions in relation to overlaps and TQs. First we will provide some background on overlaps, then we will discuss the general frequency of overlaps during TQs, followed by examples of overlap types found in the TQ data.

1.2.1 *Background on overlaps*

Researchers have used alternative terms for overlaps and durations of overlaps, such as "*double talking* and (*negative*) *response times* (Norwine & Murphy 1938), *double talk* and *interruptions* (Brady 1968), *simultaneous speech* (Jaffe & Feldstein 1970), (*negative*)

[3] The total of this TQ dataset is lower than the one in Author 1 (2018) listed in Table 1, because this study excludes the TQs from COLT, due to difficulties accessing the audio files. See Section 2.

switch time or *switch overlaps* (Sellen 1995), and (*negative*) *floor transfer offsets* (de Ruiter *et al*. 2006)" (Heldner & Edlund 2010: 556), but also *turn-competitive incomings* (French & Local 1983), and *(choral) co-production* (Lerner 2002). Some of these terms refer to the function of the overlap, e.g. an interruption or turn-competitive incoming, while others refer to the place and duration of the overlap during turn-transitions, e.g. negative response times and floor transfer offsets. In the latter cases, the overlapping turn-transitions are generally contrasted with gaps, i.e. short silences between turns (Sacks *et al.* 1974), Stivers et al. (2009), Heldner & Edlund (2010) and Levinson & Torreira (2015). But most terms point to the fact that overlaps, regardless of their function or position in the turn, are the parts of speech where at least two different speakers talk simultaneously.[4] It is this general definition of overlaps, that we adopt for the current study.

Regarding the functions and positions of overlaps, we will focus on the fact that overlaps are not necessarily features of conversations where turn-taking has gone wrong, but quite the opposite. We therefore follow Gail Jefferson's view on overlaps who said in 1983 (our emphasis):

> While in the past I had noticed that *not all overlap was a matter of 'people just not listening to each other'*, but quite to the contrary could, at least now and then, here and there, be a matter of fine-grained attention, I had no idea just *how massively overlap is associated with just such attention*. (Jefferson 1983:11)

According to Jefferson (1983), there are three main types of overlaps, namely overlaps with transitional, recognitional or progressional onsets.[5] Transitional onsets are those overlaps which occur at a state of possible syntactic completeness, and thus at a possible speaker transition place. Example (4) contains a TQ which is overlapped at the very end of the tag, during the pronoun *it*, thus at a state of possible syntactic completeness and a possible speaker transition place.

(4) A: ^oh it`s b\eautiful# - .

[4] This includes any (piece of) word or backchannel, such as *hm,* uttered at the same time. In-breath or glottal stops are not counted.
[5] See also Wells & McFarlane (1998) for a discussion of Jefferson's fuller classification with more delicate subtypes.

B: it ^\is nice /is ***it#***

A: ***^y\eah#*** (LLC: 1.7) [6]

Recognitional and progressional onsets, on the other hand, start before the completion of the previous speaker's utterance, these are, together, classified as interjacent onsets by Wells & McFarlane (1998: 272). For Jefferson (1983), recognitional onsets occur at a state of semantic or pragmatic 'adequacy', while progressional onsets occur when the previous speaker breaks his/her fluency or hesitates. In example (5) two ladies are talking about an older lady who had died after living a rich social life for about six months in a service flat. Speaker b overlaps speaker a during the anchor of the TQ, thus well before the end of the TQ. However, what speaker a wants to convey is already clear from the previous context, and is a direct reaction to speaker b's previous sentence, e.g. *she'd obviously been living it up too much.* Thus, what is being said "has been made perfectly available" (Jefferson 1983: 12), which makes this overlap recognitional.

(5) b: **and** she ^d\ied# ^after a_bout !six !m\onths# - [@:m] . and . I ^think she had a !h\eart attack or s/omething# ^very !s\uddenly# *.* but ^everybody :said well
a: *^[\m]#*
b: she`d 'obviously been 'living it !\up **too 'much#**
a: **^y=es#** well it`s ^obviously a :nice ***way*** to g/\o {^\isn`t it#}# ** in a ^s/ense#**
b: ***^y\es#*** (LLC: 5.8)

(6) B: cos ^since we !h\aven`t 'got 'much c/apital# . ^and [si] ^if we . if we ^d\id 'need# a^bout !four hundred 'pounds to :do 'something !t\/o 'it# . ^then [@] we`re !going to !need to be !high -. !m/\ort***gaged# ^/aren`t*** we#
C: ***right*** (LLC: 8.2a)

Example (6) exemplifies a progressional onset overlap, as the incoming speaker can be seen to "be orienting to the 'forward movement' of an ongoing utterance, and acting upon the fact that at some point in it a problem arises in its progression towards completion and/or adequacy" (Jefferson 1983: 12). Concretely, speaker B utters a

[6] We have kept the original markings and speaker tags, but we have visually aligned and put in bold the overlapping parts (indicated with *). The overlap is underlined. See Transcription conventions.

hesitation ‘uh’, transcribed with @, at the beginning of the TQ and there is a long pause later in the anchor, transcribed with ‘-.’.As we have shown with the examples from our TQ dataset, these three types of overlap occur during TQs, where they function as overlapping reactions to TQs. In section 1.2.3 we will discuss the kind of overlaps present in the TQ dataset vis-à-vis the TQ construction. But first we will briefly describe the frequency of overlaps during TQs.

1.2.2 *How often are TQs overlapped?*

After classifying all TQs into examples with or without overlaps, we found that 21% of the examples in the TQ dataset show different kinds of overlap (see Table 3). This number is much higher than in the study by Levinson & Torreira (2015: 7), whose report of their switchboard corpus noted that only 3.8% of the speech signal was simultaneous speech. By contrast, Heldner & Edlund (2010: 562) report that during turn-transitions in spontaneous conversations 40% of the speech signal contains overlap. This suggests that overlaps are more prevalent around turn-transitions, which is where TQs generally occur. However, we must point out an important difference in measurement between Levinson & Torreira’s (2015) and Heldner & Edlund’s (2010) analyses on the one hand and our analysis on the other. In their analyses the percentages refer to the proportions of the total durations of gaps, overlaps and speech by one speaker, while we only calculate the number of examples with or without overlap. We do not take duration into account. Our method is in line with Gravano & Hirschberg’s (2011) turn-taking analysis of the Columbia Games Corpus. They list 12 turn-taking categories (2011: 612) of which 26.1% is categorised as simultaneous speech during turn-transitions. This percentage is slightly higher than the 21% reported here..

Table 3. TQs and overlap

TQs with or without overlap	n	%
TQ without overlap	905	89
TQ with overlap	239	21
Total	**1144**	**100**

1.2.3 *Which types of overlaps are included in our dataset?*

Initially, we included all types of overlap present in the TQ dataset. We noticed though that overlaps occurred at different places of the TQ. We will illustrate these possibilities by means of a set of examples and explain our reasons for including examples like (10), (11) and (12), while excluding other types of overlaps, e.g. (7), (8) and (9), in this study. Table 4 lists the frequencies of the different overlap positions found with TQs.

Table 4. TQs and positions of overlap

Position of overlap vis-à-vis TQ	n	%
Overlapping reaction	99	41
Complete overlap	30	13
Beginning overlap	104	44
Expansion overlap	6	2
Total overlap	**239**	**100**

In 13% of the TQ dataset the TQ is completely overlapped by simultaneous speech, as in (7). In such cases, the speakers compete for the floor after a possible speaker transition place. These cases are excluded from the present study as the overlapping part is not an overlapping reaction to the TQ, but a reaction to a previous turn.

(7) B: ***^s\illy# ((^\isn`t it#))***
a: ***but supposing*** you hadn`t married (LLC: 1.13)

In a large amount of TQ cases (44%) the overlap coincides with the very beginning of the TQ. Example (8) shows that Speaker D starts talking during speaker B's turn. In this case the speaker of the TQ is the overlapping speaker, and this type of example is excluded from the study, as these overlaps are not overlapping reactions to TQs.

(8) B: to ^see if _you kn/\ow# ^who ***!they be!l\ong to#****
D: ***[@: @:] ^and**** they`re !{\all} com:pletely h\/airy# ^\aren`t +they# (LLC: 1.12)

In a small set of cases (2%) the onset of the overlaps starts during an expansion after the tag, as in (9). These cases are not included in the present study, because they are

unforeseen additions by the TQ speaker after the possible transition place. Here, speaker B could not foresee that speaker A would continue with an expansion and answers in time after the TQ.

(9) A: you`re ^[g] !getting r\id of them ((/are you# ***^l\ater# . ^g\ood#))***
B: ***^y\es# [@] it was ^passed*** at [dhi: ?@ dhi @] :sub-committee !last *!T\uesday#* (LLC: 1.1)

In the remaining 41% of cases, the overlap is not at the beginning and does not cover the TQ completely. The onset of the overlap starts in the middle (10) or end of the anchor (11), or occurs during the tag (12). Such examples are considered to be overlapping reactions to the TQ.

(10) a: **^y=es#** well it`s ^obviously a :nice ***way*** to g/\o {^\isn`t it#}# **in a ^s/ense#**
b: ***^y\es#*** (LLC: 5.8)
(11) ^then [@] we`re !going to !need to be !high -. !m/\ort***gaged# ^/aren`t*** we# ***right*** (LLC: 8.2a)
(12) B: it ^\is nice /is ***it#***
A: ***^y\eah#*** (LLC: 1.7)

In the remainder of the article we will focus exclusively on overlapping reactions such as in (10-12). As exemplified, these overlapping reactions demonstrate variety in timing or position vis-à-vis the TQ construction. Transitional examples such as (12), overlap at the very end of the tag, which is a textbook example of a possible TRP. However, the dataset also contains recognitional examples such as (11) where the overlap occurs at the end of the anchor, itself a possible state of syntactic completeness. This raises the issue of whether this overlap is at a possible speaker transition place, in Jefferson's terms, making the example transitional as well. This would imply that a TQ has two TRPs. We will discuss the notion of TRP and how it relates to TQs in more detail in the following section.

1.3 The notion of TRP in relation to TQs

As the location of a possible completion and turn-transition is debatable given the combined form of anchor and tag, TQs are an interesting construction to look at with regard to overlaps and overlapping reactions,. On the one hand there is the obvious TRP at the end of the TQ, i.e. at the end of the tag, as in (13).

(13) A: I ^think it !probably !w\ould# ^w\ouldn`t ***it#***
B: ***oh*** ^that`d be . very . k\ind# (LLC: 8.3i)

The overlapping reaction occurs at the end of the lexico-syntactic unit and at a place where turn-transition becomes relevant. On the other hand, the occurrence of overlapping reactions at the end of the anchor has been noted by a number of linguists as well, see example (11) above. (Levinson & Torreira 2015: 7), interpret the rules in Sacks *et al*. (1974: 704) as providing for a situation where "[o]verlaps often arise when unforeseen additions to the first speaker's turn after a transitional relevance place (e.g. during increments or tags) occur". Also Schegloff (1996) and Thompson & Couper-Kuhlen (2005: 491) list tags along with address terms, politeness markers and adverbial constituents as being positioned post-completion, which results in tags being "frequently overlapped by an incoming next speaker" (Thompson & Couper-Kuhlen 2005: 491). In these accounts, the overlapping reaction occurs during the tag, right after or at the end of the anchor (14-15). The end of the anchor is considered to be the TRP, since it is a point of lexico-syntactic completeness, and in most cases (91%, see Author 1 2018: 75) also the end of a prosodic phrase.

(14) A: You 'd be able to affⱯord it up ***there# w\ouldn't*** you#
C: ***Yeah*** (ICE-GB: S1A-19-284)
(15) D: But some people love uhm <,> period type b\ooks# ***d\on't they#*** <,>
A: ***Yes*** (ICE-GB: S1A-16-261)

Thus, there seem to be two possible TRPs in relation to TQs: one at the end of the anchor, and the other at the end of the tag. But only the second one seems to be the relevant place of transition for variable TQs, since the end of the anchor is not yet the end of the turn. Contrary to Thompson and Couper-Kuhlen's (2005) claim, tags

– at least British variable tags – are not overlapped that frequently. In fact, as stated above (see Table 2), in 91% of all variable TQs in the dataset the reaction is not early, but comes in a timely fashion after the interrogative tag, which is an indication that variable TQs are constructionally syntagmatic wholes and not just a sequence of two parts. Therefore, we follow Selting's (2000) and not Clayman's (2013) definition of a TRP and distinguish between a TRP, a TCU (turn construction unit), and a CP (completion point). To quote Barth-Weingarten I2009: 145):

> A TCU ending is determined by a syntactic CP co-occurring with a prosodic CP, i.e. a prosodic unit ending. TRPs, in turn, are determined pragmatically/sequentially: they are potential CPs of activity types. If the activity is accomplished by an extended turn-at-talk, a TRP occurs only at the end of the TCU which resolves the projected end of the activity. Hence, we need to distinguish between TCUs and TRPs.

For TQs this means that the end of the anchor is a syntactic, and, in most cases (Author 1 2018), a prosodic CP. But there is no CP of activity type, which makes it a TCU. The end of the tag, on the other hand, is a syntactic, prosodic and activity type CP, and is thus a TRP.

Examples where the overlap occurs at the end of the tag, as in (13), are considered to be relatively on time as they occur around the prosodic TRP, which is "the space between the TRP-projecting accent (nucleus) of the current turn and the onset of the next turn" (Wells & MacFarlane 1998: 265). The nucleus itself is not included in the TRP. If the tag carries a nucleus, then it is the auxiliary that receives the nuclear accent (Quirk *et al.* 1985: 810, Dehé & Braun 2013: 131). In other words, cases where the overlap occurs on the pronoun of the tag are considered to be around the time of the TRP, and on time.

But as we have gathered from examples such as (10-11) and (14-15), there are also cases of overlap before the TRP. We will further explore the forms and positions of these overlapping reactions in Section 3, after a short description of the dataset, framework and methods used in this research.

2. Dataset and methodology

This study follows a functional and interactional linguistics framework and aims at a systematic, inductive and empirical study of spoken language (Couper-Kuhlen & Selting 1996, Lindström 2009). It focusses on form-function correspondences, in which methods and insights from corpus linguistics, conversation analysis and phonetics are integrated. The tag questions and their overlaps were quantitatively and qualitatively analysed according to their grammatical, sequential and prosodic forms in relation to their functions. The analysis has been done independently by both authors. Points of disagreement were taken to be an opportunity to discuss and fine-tune the categorisation process. Our few disagreements were resolved through consensus. For the prosodic investigation we conducted a combination of an instrumental and auditory acoustic analysis in Praat (Boersma & Weenink 2015).

Depending on the analysis, absolute numbers, relative and/or normalized frequencies will be given. To establish whether a certain distribution of an individual value is significant or not we refer to the (adjusted) Pearson residuals (PR), which are the individual contributions to the Pearson χ^2 tests with a Monte Carlo simulation. The Monte Carlo simulation compensates for the small data set, while the Pearson residuals are the "differences between the observed and the expected frequencies divided by the square root of the expected value" (Levshina 2015: 208). If the Pearson residual is equal to or higher than 2, there is a significant difference in the distribution of the results. If it is lower than 2, there is no significant difference in distribution. These calculations have been done in R (see R Development Core Team 2008; Baayen 2008).

The dataset contains examples of TQs and their overlaps from British English spontaneous conversations. The two corpora used to compile the dataset, are the London Lund Corpus (LLC) and the British component of the International Corpus of English (ICE-GB). These corpora were chosen because they contain audio files as well as transcriptions. The recorded conversations are mainly spontaneous face-to-face conversations, but can also be recorded phone calls or classroom discussions. Table 5 lists the most important features of the corpora and dataset, including the full list of conversation types. What should be noted about the dataset is that the participants are mainly educated speakers from London, and that the recordings are from the period 1953 and 1992. Since we used corpora not specifically compiled for our research intentions,

we were faced with a number of limitations. We could not differentiate between the signals of the overlapping speakers in Praat. Nor could we compensate for the variability of sound levels between speakers. We had to discard a sizeable number of overlapping reactions because the recordings contained many unclear passages due to background noise or poorly positioned microphones. A further limitation is that as we have no supporting video material, we have no information on gaze or body movement. . In the end we were left with a dataset of 99 examples of overlapping reactions.

Table 5. Information on dataset

DATASET	**LLC**	**ICE-GB**
Prosodic annotation	Already in the corpus & manual analysis in Praat	Manual analysis in Praat
Participants	Educated speakers from London	Mainly educated speakers from London (Cambridge & Kent)
Recorded	1953 – 1987	1990 – 1992
Number of words	425,000	360,000
Types of conversations	Face-to-face conversations Phone calls Broadcast discussions Broadcast interviews Legal cross-examinations Committee meetings Spontaneous commentaries	Face-to-face conversations Phone calls Classroom lessons Broadcast discussions & interviews Parliamentary debates Legal cross-examinations Business transactions
Examples: 99	68	31

When we look more closely at the overlapping reactions and their presence in the different conversation types, we see that 80% arise from face-to-face conversations, which is significantly higher compared to TQs without overlapping reactions (see Table 6). 13% of the overlapping reactions are found in telephone conversations and only 7% are found in less spontaneous conversations, such as broadcast discussions and interviews. The frequency of overlapping reactions is significantly lower in telephone conversations and less spontaneous conversations, compared to TQs without overlapping reactions. We have not found any examples of overlapping reactions in the classroom and court settings. We can only speculate that these settings are too formal or structured for overlapping reactions. These findings support Gravano & Hirschberg's (2011: 625)

claims that "non-face-to-face dialogues have significantly fewer speech overlaps than face-to-face ones" and that "people make fewer overlaps when talking with strangers (Yuan *et al.* 2007)". Such findings suggest that overlapping reactions are not necessarily haphazard mistakes, but that they have a function in the conversation.

Table 6. Distribution of overlapping reactions per conversation type[7]

Conversation types	**TQs with overlapping reaction**			**TQs without overlapping reaction**		
	n	**%**	**PR**	**n**	**%**	**PR**
Face-to-face spontaneous conversations	79	80	2.8	688	66	-2.8
Telephone conversations	13	13	1.0	103	10	-1.0
Less spontaneous conversations	7	7	-3.9	250	24	3.9

3. General findings about overlapping reactions

This section will focus on the properties and functions of overlapping reactions uttered during a TQ. We will first describe the interactional functions of these overlapping reactions, which are different from Jefferson's (1983) categories (see Section 1.2.). Consecutively, we will address the formal, positional and prosodic properties of overlapping reactions.

3.1 Interactional functions

The following classification of the functions of overlapping reactions is inspired by the speech functions analysis of Halliday and Matthiessen (2014: 156), where responses to informational exchanges are coded as acknowledgements, contradictions, answers or disclaimers. But because these overlapping reactions are not only positioned around the TRP, but can be found well before the TRP, we need additional categories. For this functional categorisation we thus take into account the position of the overlapping

[7] For more information on the different conversation types and the distribution of TQ functions, author 1 (2018: 45-49, 191-213). All TQs were produced on the spot and *only* TQs which occur in interactions of two or more participants were included in the dataset.

reaction and the type of answer it conveys, which is related to its contents. We distinguish between the following functions: acknowledgements, disagreements, continuers, non-committals and turn-competitive reactions. Their respective frequencies are listed in Table 7.

3.1.1 *Acknowledgements*

The majority of the overlapping reactions are acknowledgements. They occur in 70% of the cases. This category includes confirmations, such as *yeah* or *yes*, responses with the expected polarity, such as *it is*, or combinations of these, as in (16). This category also includes acknowledgements of the form *hmm* or *mm* with a clear fall. Though *hmm* and *mm* might also be categorised as continuers (see Gardner 2001, and Section 3.1.2), acknowledging cases are different from canonical continuers in that they express a clear acknowledgement around the time a response is expected (17), and/or where "there is no continuation by prior speaker on the current topic of talk" (Gardner 1998: 210), as in (18).

(16) b: oh ^that`s 'funny h/ours# ^\isn`t ***it#***
a: ***^y\es {it ***^\is#}# (LLC: 5.9)

(17) A: it`s "^st\ill n/oisy# ^even on th\at 'side /is ***it#***
?: ***^[\m]#*** (LLC: 3.4)

(18) A: that goes ^somewhere on the 'north coast of ***Sp/ain#*** isn't it#
B: ***^[\m]#*** (LLC: 2.13)

Since TQs are mainly biased towards confirmations (Author 1 2018: 68), it is not surprising that in 70% of the cases the overlapping reactions are acknowledgements. These acknowledgements are expected and preferred reactions (Levinson 1983, Schegloff 2007) to TQs. Acknowledgements can realise all three types of overlaps i.e. transitional, progressional or recognitional overlaps Jefferson (1983).

3.1.2 *Continuers*

Backchannels in general, and continuers in particular, have been linked to overlaps and overlapping reactions by linguists such as Levinson & Torreira (2015). Overlaps "may frequently arise in cases involving backchannels signalling feedback to the main speaker (e.g. *yeah*, *right*) and other minimal utterances that do not constitute an attempt to take

the floor" (Levinson & Torreira 2015: 7). However, though acknowledging tokens, such as *yeah*, could be used as continuers, they also acknowledge the proposition, while *hmm* or *mm* are not clear acknowledgements. Thus, we consider backchannels which express an acknowledgement, such as *yeah,* not to be continuers. Instead, we focus on lexically empty forms, such as *hmm* or *mm*, which occur before the TRP, as in (19).

(19) A: ^cos [?] !any'body with :any ****s\/ense#**** would ***^read the*** pl\ay in
B: ****^[\m]#**** ***^[\m]#***
A: the -'trans ****.**** -l/ation# ^w\ouldn`t they#
B: ****^[\m]#**** (LLC: 1.4)

These continuers signal that the co-participant is listening, and "tell the speaker of the turn to which it is a response to carry on speaking" (Gardner 1998: 210). In these cases, the co-participant has not overtly signalled whether or not they agree with the proposition. This restrictively defined category occurs in only 9% of the cases. We consider continuers to be preferred reactions, since they do not express disagreement, nor are they unexpected. A number of studies (for instance Ward & Tsukahara 2000, and Benus et al. 2007), report that backchannels can be triggered by prosodic cues and are expected reactions. Continuers can realise Jefferson's (1983) progressional or recognitional onsets. However, as example (19) shows, these continuers are not necessarily uttered after a dysfluency, or at a point of pragmatic adequacy.

3.1.3 *Non-committals*

Non-committals are evasive reactions before or around the TRP, in which the speaker neither confirms nor contradicts the proposition uttered in the anchor of the TQ. A clear example is a disclaimer where someone admits he or she does not know, as in (20). However speakers can employ non-committals in order to change the topic or be deliberately vague, as in (21).

(20) B: but the "^children d\/on`t# - **^**d\o ***they#***
A: ***^\well#*** I`m ^not too 'sure . I`m ^not too 'sure 'how . 'common . **((2 to 3 sylls))** (LLC: 2.9)
(21) A: and ^he`s going to . :go to the ***((t\op#)) ^/is he#***

B: **<u>*^w\ell# . I mean*</u>** ^this . [@] ^Mallet said ^Mallet was [@] ^said something a!bout [@] you know he 'felt it would be a good thing if [@:] . if Oscar :w\ent# (LLC: 1.2)

These unexpected, and thus, dispreferred reactions are not very frequent. They occur in only 9% of the cases. They can realise transitional, recognitional and progressional onsets (Jefferson 1983).

3.1.4 *Turn-competitive overlaps*

Similar to continuers, this functional category is not frequent. Turn-competitive overlaps make up 11% of the dataset. They are "overlaps in which either or both speakers demonstrate that they want the turn for themselves at that very moment. These overlaps are treated as problematic by the overlapping speakers" (Kurtić *et al*. 2013: 726), and are thus considered to be dispreferred. The overlapping speaker may disagree with the other speakers after recognising the gist of the proposition, as in (22), but the overlapping reaction is not necessarily a disagreement to the proposition stated in the TQ. It may signal disagreement with or a reaction to something previously said, as in (23).

(22) B: ^well there was a !little :bit of !B\ake'lite# be^fore the ***:w\ar# ^w\asn`t there#***
D: **<u>*^\oh 'no# ^n\o 'no#*</u>**
(LLC: 1.12)

(23) A: I was ^thinking 'more in po:l\itical# ^rather than *!sc\enic* +t/erms (('actually))#
(. laughs)+
c: *but [na]*
d: +[m] . ((yes)) . yes+
A: cos ^that is ***((:B\asque 'country# ^\isn`t it#))***
c: **<u>*but nothing .*</u>** don`t imagine anything political happens along the north coast of Spain
A: it`s +^B\asque#+ (LLC: 2.13)

Contrary to Wells & McFarlane (1998), Schegloff (2000), and Jefferson (1983), but like Kurtić *et al*. (2013), we do not necessarily limit turn-competitive overlapping reactions to overlaps starting prior to the TRP. Transitional turn-competitive overlaps are possible,

when it becomes clear, for example, that the incoming speaker is not responding to the TQ, but reacting to a previous utterance. However, there are no such transitional turn-competitive overlaps in our dataset, which means that all turn-competitive overlapping reactions are characterised by a position prior to the TRP. There are, however, turn-competitive overlaps with a recognitional onset (e.g. 22), and even progressional ones, but the majority of examples (55%) cannot be classified into any of the three categories (e.g. 22).

3.1.5 *Disagreements*

In one case in the dataset, the overlapping reaction is a disagreement in a non-turn-competitive turn. In example (24), the overlapping reaction comes after a pause, which might be mistaken for the end of a turn. Since this overlapping reaction has a progressional onset, it is not categorized as a turn-competitive overlapping reaction. This type of overlapping reaction is possible with transitional onsets as well.

(24) A: **which** are ^two com:pletely :different !th\ings#
B: ^both 'done by the _Abbey !N\ational 'though# . ***^/are they# . ^or . ^or [d]***
A: ***[@m] - ^n\o#*** ^they`re . ^they`re !subcon'tracted !\out# (LLC: 8.1a)

To conclude, almost 4 out of 5 overlapping reactions to TQs signal preferred reactions (see Table 7). All three types of Jefferson's overlap categories occur with both preferred and dispreferred overlapping reactions. However, in the case of continuers, turn-competitive overlaps and disagreements, there are no transitional onsets, even though they would be technically possible for the latter two types. Disagreements with a recognitional onset are not present since they are classified as turn-competitive overlaps. Although Jefferson (1983) provides a useful categorisation in terms of position or reasons why an overlap is possible, we have found examples of both continuers and turn-competitive overlaps which do not accord with her categories. Her categorisation does not cover all overlaps, and is unable to exhaustively distinguish the interactional functions of the overlapping reactions.

Table 7. Functions of overlapping reactions in relation to their (dis)preferred status and Jefferson's types (1983) (n: 99)

Functions	n	%	Preferred	%	Possible Jefferson's types
Acknowledgements	69	70	Yes	79	Transitional, progressional, recognitional
Continuers	9	9	Yes		Progressional, recognitional
Non-committals	9	9	No		Transitional, progressional, recognitional
Turn-competitive	11	11	No	21	(Transitional), progressional, recognitional
Disagreements	1	1	No		(Transitional), progressional

3.2 Formal and prosodic properties

This section will describe the formal and prosodic features of overlapping reactions to TQs in general, and discuss them in relation to the functions of overlapping reactions. We will first examinine the different positions of the onsets of the overlapping reactions vis-à-vis the TQ, then describe the durations of these overlapping reactions and their grammatical forms. Subsequently, we will focus on the prosodic features.

3.2.1 *Positions*

As shown in Table 8, 89% of the cases has only one overlapping reaction during the TQ, but in 11% of the cases there are two or more overlapping parts. Example (19) shows a TQ anchor which is overlapped more than once, but in most cases there is one overlap during the anchor and one during the tag, as in (25). Where there is more than one overlapping reaction, we focus on the first one. The frequencies and categories of the functions and properties given in the analysis pertain to the first overlap only.

(25) B: he`ll be ^here hims\elf# : ^soon **.* ^soon after n\ine# ^\isn`t ****he#;-**;**
C: ***^y\es#*** ****^y/es# ^y\es#****
(LLC: 1.5)

As explained in Section 1.2.3, the overlapping reaction may occur during the anchor, see example (10), during the tag, see example (12), and there are cases where the overlap

starts at the end of the anchor and continues onto the tag see example (11). 54% of overlapping reactions occur during the tag only, with 29% of overlapping reactions having onsets in the middle of the anchor. The remaining 17% of the overlapping reactions span the anchor and tag. These figures are listed in Table 8.

Table 8. Positions of overlapping reactions (n: 99)

Number of overlaps	**n**	**%**	**Position vis-à-vis TQ**	**n**	**%**	**Position vis-à-vis TCU/TRP**	**n**	**%**
One	88	89	Tag	53	54	Around TRP	36	36
More than one	11	11	Anchor	29	29	Before TCU	22	22
			End of anchor and tag	17	17	Around TCU	42	42

Besides categorisation on the basis of the position vis-à-vis the TQ construction, we also make a distinction between overlaps starting around the place of the TRP, as in (20), around the TCU, as in (24) or before the TCU, as in (21). 42% of overlapping reactions start around the TCU, which includes the overlapping reactions starting at the beginning of the tag. Additionally, about a third of the overlapping reactions occur around the TRP. This means that in 78% of the cases the onset of the overlap occurs after the point of informational salience, i.e. after the information focus of the proposition. In less than a quarter of cases the speaker starts the overlap before he or she has heard the informationally salient part of the proposition.

Table 9. Positions of overlapping reactions vis-à-vis TCU & TRP in relation to their functions (n: 99)

Functions	**Before TCU**			**Around TCU**			**Around TRP**		
	n	**%**	**PR**	**n**	**%**	**PR**	**n**	**%**	**PR**
Acknowledgement	13	19	-1.2	24	35	-2.0	32	46	3.1
Continuer	3	33	0.8	6	67	1.6	0	0	-2.4
Disagreement	0	0	-0.5	0	0	-0.8	1	100	1.3
Non-committal	3	33.3	0.8	3	33.3	-0.5	3	33.3	-0.2
Turn-competitive	3	27	0.4	8	73	2.2	11	0	-2.7

Table 10. Positions of overlapping reactions vis-à-vis TQ in relation to their functions (n: 99)

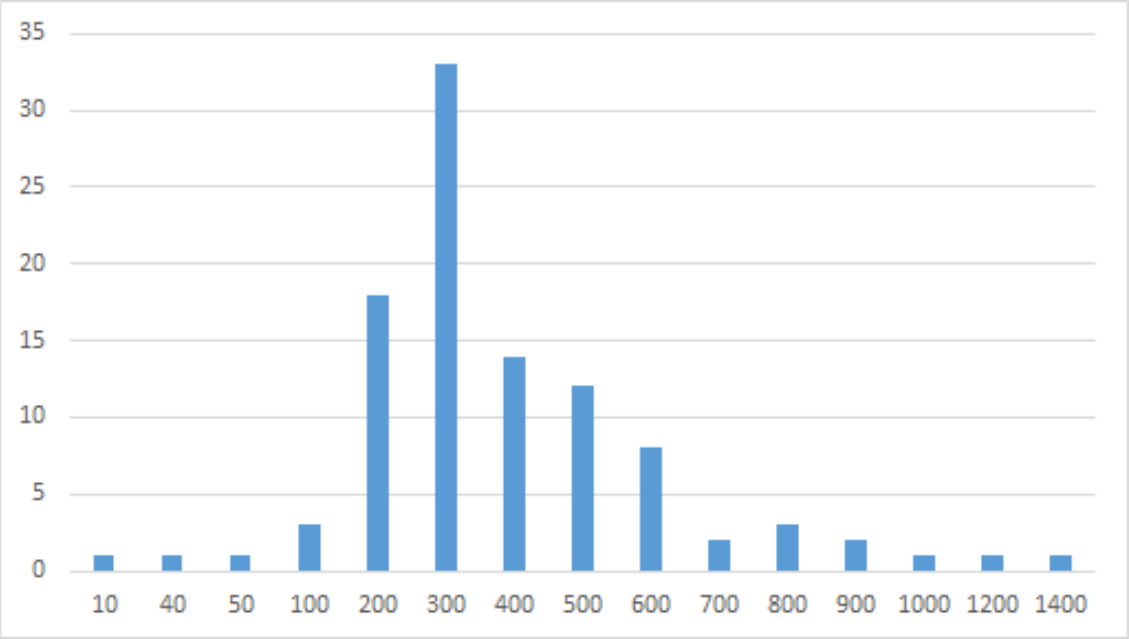
Functions	Anchor			Tag			Anchor & tag		
	n	%	PR	n	%	PR	n	%	PR
Acknowledgement	19	28	-0.6	40	58	1.3	10	14	-1.1
Continuer	5	56	1.8	1	11	-2.7	3	33	1.3
Disagreement	0	0	-0.6	1	100	0.9	0	0	-0.5
Non-committal	3	33	0.3	4	45	-0.6	2	22	0.4
Turn-competitive	2	18	-0.9	7	64	0.7	2	18	0.1

When comparing the distribution of the positions of the overlapping reactions with their functions (see Tables 9 and 10), we can note only a few correlations. In the first place, there is a strong correlation between acknowledgements and a position at the very end of the tag, i.e. around the TRP, even though acknowledgements are also frequent in the anchor. Secondly, turn-competitive overlaps start their onset typically around the TCU, i.e. at the end of the anchor or at the very beginning of the tag. Occurrences of non-committals are distributed across the three TCU and TRP positions, though there is a slight preference for onsets starting at the tag. Continuers, lastly, show up preferably around the TCU. However, the Pearson Residuals do not show this correlation to be significant.

3.2.2 *Duration and grammatical form*

We will discuss the duration of the overlapping reactions in combination with their grammatical forms, as the form influences the extent of the duration. The default duration of the overlapping part of the overlapping reactions is 300ms, which is consistent with findings by Levinson & Torreira (2015). As Figure 1 shows, the majority of overlaps cluster around 300ms, but the overlap can last between 10 and 1400ms.

Figure 1. Duration of overlaps in ms (X) in relation to their absolute counts (Y) (n:99)



This means that the overlapping reaction can be either a very short non-clausal reaction, of around 300ms, such as *yes*, or *hm*, or a very long (multi) clausal reaction (e.g. 23). Combinations of these are also possible of course. Hence, we have made further subclassifications as indicated in Table 11. Our categories describe all examples of overlapping reactions, thus we include examples where the reaction continues after the overlap, as in (24). 36% of overlapping reactions are non-clausal, 40% a combination of non-clausal and clausal, and 22% clausal with an optional non-clausal tail. The remaining 2% contain examples with unclear passages. It turns out that most overlapping reactions are not only a short (dis)confirming answer, but that they frequently signal the commencement of a full turn.

Table 11. Grammatical properties of overlapping reactions in relation to their functions

Functions	**Clausal**			**Clausal + non-clausal**			**Non-clausal**			**Non-clausal + clausal**			**Unclear**	
	n	**%**	**PR**	**n**	**%**	**PR**	**n**	**%**	**PR**	**n**	**%**	**PR**	**n**	**%**
Acknowledgement	8	11	-2.6	4	6	1.3	24	35	-0.6	32	47	2.1	1	1
Continuer	0	0	-1.5	0	0	-0.7	9	78	4.1	0	0	-2.6	0	0
Disagreement	0	0	-0.5	0	0	-0.2	0	0	-0.8	1	100	1.2	0	0
Non-committal	4	44.5	2.1	0	0	-0.7	1	11	-1.7	4	44.5	0.3	0	0
Turn-competitive	6	55	3.6	0	0	-0.7	2	18	-1.2	2	18	-1.4	1	9

Total	**18**	**18**		**4**	**4**		**36**	**36**		**39**	**40**		**2**	**2**

With regard to the correspondences between the forms and functions of overlapping reactions, we see a clear correlation between clausal reactions and turn-competitive overlaps and non-committals. The Pearson Residuals in Table 11 are 2.1 for non-committals and 3.6 for turn-competitive overlaps, which points to a very strong correlation. This is not surprising as dispreferred reactions are more likely to be longer and hence contain clausal material according to Fox & Thompson (2010). This is confirmed by the high PR of 4.1 in Table 12. Unsurprisingly we found a correlation between continuers and non-clausal (minimal) overlapping reactions,. Acknowledgements, furthermore, can be of any form, but they are typically found to be non-clausal overlapping reactions with a following clausal reaction. Together, acknowledgements and continuers illustrate the correlation between preferred reactions and non-clausal realisations.

Table 12. Grammatical properties of overlapping reactions in relation to (dis)preferred reactions (n: 99)

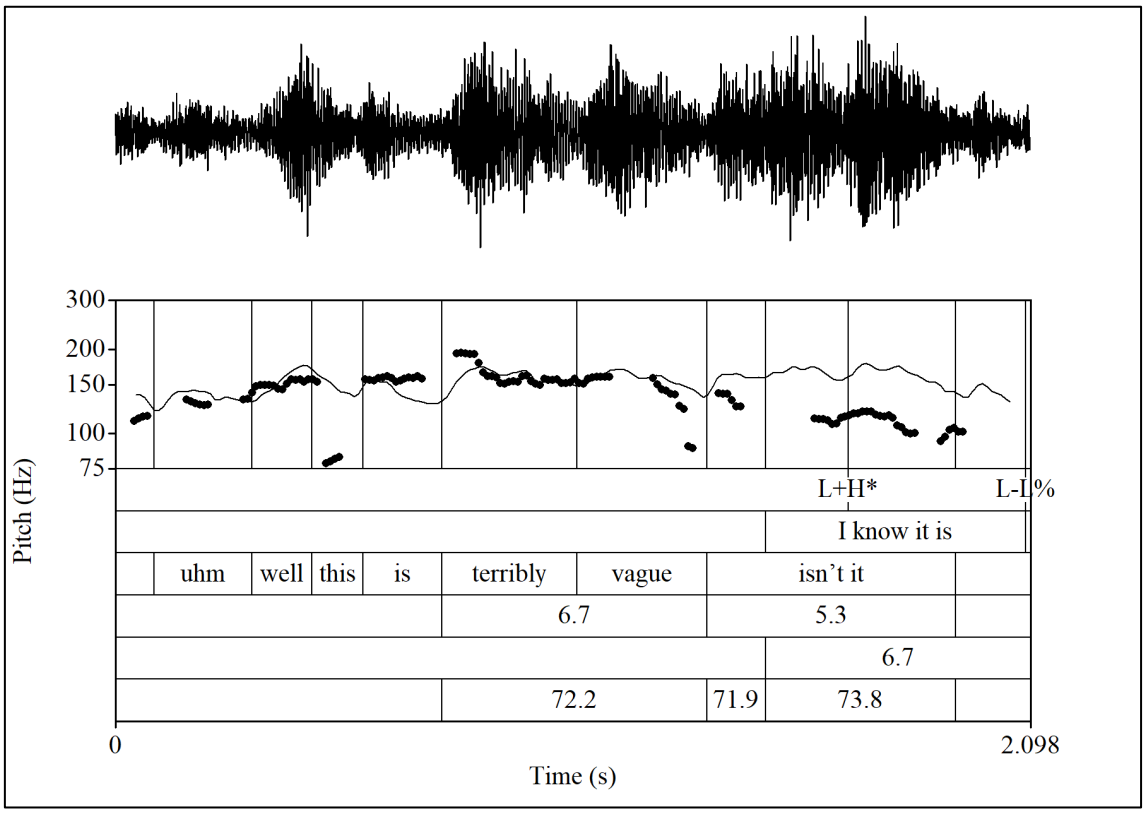
Preferred/ dispreferred	**Clausal**			**Clausal + non-clausal**			**Non-clausal**			**Non-clausal + clausal**			**Unclear**	
	n	**%**	**PR**	**n**	**%**	**PR**	**n**	**%**	**PR**	**n**	**%**	**PR**	**n**	**%**
Preferred	8	10	-4.1	4	5	1.0	33	42	2.3	32	42	0.5	1	1
Dispreferred	10	48	4.1	0	0	-1.0	3	14	-2.3	7	33	-0.5	1	5

3.2.3 *Prosodic features*

The default prosodic properties of overlapping reactions are listed in Table 13, as well as their distributions across the different functions. We have analysed in Praat (Figure 2) the tone of the overlap (tier 1), the speech rate of the preceding phrase of the TQ (tier 4) and of the overlap (tier 5), and volume (tier 6). Speech rate or tempo is calculated by dividing the number of syllables by the duration in seconds. For volume we let Praat calculate the mean volume of the overlap and the preceding phrase. Whenever there is no difference reported in volume and speech rate, the values of the overlap and the preceding part of the TQ are equal. For aligning pitches we allowed a difference of less than 20 Hz. Differences in pitch are calculated in terms of absolute F0 value. In general, overlapping

reactions carry a fall and they are generally slower and louder than the preceding part of the TQ. [8]

Figure 2: An example of a prosodically analysed example in Praat



Interestingly, there are a number of prosodic properties which occur significantly more often with certain functions than with others. Firstly, rising pitch movements and decreases in speech rate are more likely with continuers (see Jurafsky *et al*. 1998), though the PR is only 1.8 for the faster speech rate. Secondly, an aligning (similar) pitch between the TQ and the overlapping reaction is typical of acknowledgements. These acknowledgements also align with the preceding part of the TQ in terms of speech rate. Based on the relative frequencies we can conclude that these acknowledgements carry falls in the majority of cases, though there is no significant distributional difference compared to other functions such as the non-committals and the turn-competitive overlaps. Thirdly, French & Local (1983), Shriberg *et al*. (2001), Schegloff (2000) and

[8] Since two speakers talk at the same time, it is not surprising that the majority of overlaps measure more decibels than the previous part of the TQ.

Kurtić *et al*. (2013) report an increase in pitch with turn-competitive overlaps. Our frequencies suggest a similar tendency, since the PR flirts with the threshold at 1.9. The same PR occurs with increases in volume of more than 5dB with turn-competitive overlapping reactions, which was also reported by Wells & McFarlane (1998) and Kurtić *et al*. (2013), (see also French & Local 1983, Shriberg *et al*. 2001, Schegloff 2000). Though we only found a tentative correlation between turn-competitive reactions on the one hand, and increases in pitch and volume vis-à-vis the preceding part of the TQ, there is a very strong correlation between these competitive overlapping reactions and an increase in speech rate/tempo. This differs somewhat from Kurtić *et al*.'s (2013) conclusions, which stated that speech rate features are not the best predictors for turn-competitiveness with regard to overlaps in general. Fourthly, non-committals show similar though weaker tendencies with with regard to their volume and tempo. Incoming speakers speed up in a significant number of cases when they are not ready to confirm or deny the proposition. They are more likely to increase volume, but they are unlikely to raise their pitch level above the pitch level of preceding utterance.

It is not surprising that turn-competitive reactions and non-committals show a number of similarities, as both are dispreferred reactions. If we classify the functions into preferred versus dispreferred reactions, as in Table 14, we are able to discern the clusters of correlations more clearly. Essentially, a louder and faster overlapping reaction with higher F0 at its start is typical of dispreferred reactions, while an aligning pitch and slower tempo is typical of preferred reactions. More effort is needed to get a dispreferred reaction onto the floor, in comparison with preferred reactions.

Table 13. Prosodic properties of overlapping reactions in relation to their functions (n: 99)

Properties	**Acknowledge.**			**Continuer**			**Disagreement**			**Non-committal**			**Turn-competitive**			**Total**
	n	**%**	**PR**	**n**	**%**	**PR**	**n**	**%**	**PR**	**n**	**%**	**PR**	**n**	**%**	**PR**	**%**
Pitch movement																
• Rise	7	10	-2.5	4	44	2.3	0	0	-0.5	3	33	1.4	2	18	0.4	**16**
• Rise-fall	6	9	1.6	0	0	-0.8	0	0	-0.3	0	0	-0.8	0	0	-0.8	**6**
• Fall	53	77	1.3	5	56	-1.6	1	100	0.6	6	67	-0.7	7	64	0.1	**73**
• Unclear	3	4	NA	0	0	NA	0	0	NA	0	0	NA	2	18	NA	**5**
Pitch of overlapping reaction is																

• Higher	21	30	-1.7	3	33	-0.3	0	0	-1.0	7	56	1.3	5	64	1.9	**36**
• Lower	12	17	-0.5	2	22	0.2	1	100	1.7	2	22	0.2	2	18	-0.3	**19**
• Similar	17	25	2.4	2	22	0.2	0	0	-0.6	0	0	-1.6	0	0	-1.9	**19**
• Unclear	19	28	NA	2	22	NA	0	0	NA	2	22	NA	2	18	NA	**25**
Volume of overlapping reaction is																
• Higher <5dB	27	39	0.2	4	45	0.4	1	100	1.3	3	33	-0.3	3	27	-0.8	**39**
• Higher >5dB	23	33	-1.3	1	11	-1.7	0	0	-0.8	6	67	1.9	7	64	1.9	**37**
• Lower <5dB	10	15	0.6	2	22	0.8	0	0	-0.4	0	0	-1.2	2	9	-0.4	**13**
• Lower >5dB	4	7	0.5	1	11	0.9	0	0	-0.2	0	0	-0.7	0	0	-0.8	**5**
• Similar	5	6	0.7	1	11	0.7	0	0	-0.3	0	0	-0.8	0	0	-0.9	**6**
Tempo of overlapping reaction is																
• Faster	2	3	-3.4	0	0	-1.0	0	0	-0.3	3	33	2.6	4	36,5	3.8	**9**
• Slower	53	77	0.7	9	100	1.8	1	100	0.6	6	67	-0.7	4	36,5	-2.3	**74**
• Similar	13	19	2.0	0	0	-1.3	0	0	-0.4	0	0	-1.3	1	9	-0.3	**14**
• Unclear	1	1	NA	0	0	NA	0	0	NA	0	0	NA	2	18	NA	**3**

Table 14. Prosodic properties of (dis)preferred reactions

Properties	**Preferred**			**Dispreferred**		
	n	**%**	**PR**	**n**	**%**	**PR**
Pitch of overlapping reaction is						
• Higher	24	31	-2.4	12	57	2.4
• Lower	14	18	-0.1	5	24	0.1
• Similar	19	24	2.7	0	0	-2.7
• Unclear	21	27	NA	4	19	NA
Volume of overlapping reaction is						
• Higher	55	71	-2.3	20	95	2.3
• Lower	17	22	1.8	1	5	-1.8
• Similar	6	8	1.3	0	0	-1.3
Tempo of overlapping reaction is						
• Faster	2	3	-4.6	7	33	4.6
• Slower	62	79	2.1	11	52	-2.1
• Similar	13	17	1.3	1	5	-1.3
• Unclear	1	1	NA	2	10	NA

4. Concluding discussion

Simultaneous talk is quite frequent in spontaneous conversations, e.g. 40% of the speech signal during turn-transitions (Heldner & Edlund 2010) and 26% of the number of turn-transitions (Gravano & Hirschberg 2011). In our data set 21% of the TQs were overlapped, but a large portion of those overlaps are simultaneous starts or cases where the speaker of the TQ themselves overlaps with the previous speaker. The number of cases where the TQ is itself overlapped by an overlapping reaction is not that high, namely 9%. This low number and the fact that a third of these cases has an overlapping reaction around the TRP indicates that TQs are a single syntagmatic construction.

Even though overlapping reactions are not that frequent with TQs, they are not errors made by the interlocutors during conversations. The fact that overlapping reactions are not present, or highly infrequent, in certain conversational settings indicates that people do not produce overlapping reactions when it is not "allowed". They are more likely to occur in face-to-face conversations between people who know each other, which implies that their use is dependent on the conversational context of the speakers, and is thus somewhat systematic.

The generality of certain properties also counters the view that overlapping reactions are speaker errors. The default duration of the overlap is 300ms. They occur on the tag in the majority of cases. More importantly, 78% of the cases have an onset starting around or after the point of informational salience. When it comes to prosody, we see that most cases have a higher volume and a slower tempo compared to the preceding part of the TQ, and the majority of the cases also carry a fall, which corresponds, not surprisingly, with the high number of acknowledging overlapping reactions. In sum, the prototypical overlapping reaction is a short, non-clausal overlap with a falling intonation. It tends to be slower and louder than the preceding part of the TQ and it overlaps (part of) the tag.

The fact that overlapping reactions during TQs have distinctive functions, i.e. acknowledgements, continuers, disagreements, non-committals and turn-competitive overlaps, suggests that they are not errors but have their own purpose in the course of the conversation. Moreover, especially in relation to their (dis)preferred statuses, each function correlates with certain properties. For acknowledgements, there is a significant distributional preference for reactions combining a non-clausal with a clausal form. The

overlap of acknowledgements starts around the TRP with an aligning pitch and tempo. Continuers are characterised by non-clausal forms, which carry a rise in most cases. Non-committals tend to have clausal forms which have a faster tempo than the preceding part of the TQ. Turn-competitive overlaps similarly have clausal forms with a faster tempo, but occur more frequently around the TCU. As acknowledgements and continuers share certain properties, as do disagreements, non-committals and turn-competitive overlaps, the distributional differences become clearer when grouping them into preferred and dispreferred reactions. Dispreferred reactions tend to be realised by non-clausal forms with a higher pitch, volume and tempo than the preceding part of the TQs, while preferred reactions tend to be realised by non-clausal forms, aligning pitch and a slower tempo.

This clustering of properties with certain functions is too systematic to discard overlapping reactions as errors. On the contrary, it provides evidence that they are part of the well-oiled machinery of spontaneous dialogues. This means that we should examine why almost a quarter of the overlapping reactions occur before the TCU, and why this occurs with non-progressional acknowledgements and non-committals, and not just with continuers and turn-competitive overlaps. Future research is needed to identify the facilitators for these overlapping reactions as they are clearly not errors and certainly not always dispreferred.

Transcription conventions:

The markings in LLC include:

^	silent onset
#	tone unit boundary
\	fall
/	rise
\/	fall-rise
/\	rise-fall
.	brief pause
-	pause of one stress unit
'	normal stress
''	heavy stress
:	higher pitch than preceding syllable
!	booster
[]	partial words or phonetic symbols
{ }	subordinate tone unit
*	simultaneous talk
(())	incomprehensible words

The markings in ICE-GB include:

<,>	pause
<,,>	longer pause
#	tone unit boundary
\	fall
/	rise
\/	fall-rise
/\	rise-fall
*	simultaneous talk

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