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Interaction and Linguistic Structures

Fragments of TCUs as deviant cases of TCU-production in conversational talk*

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

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1. Introduction

In previous papers I have analysed the interplay of syntax and prosody in the production and interpretation of TCUs in their lexico-syntactic, semantic, pragmatic and sequential context (Selting 1996a, 1998 Ms). I described the roles of syntax as the projection device with scope over the current TCU till the end of a possible sentence or other possible syntactic construction in the given context, and prosody as the projection device with the ability to locally project continuation beyond the current TCU, with further lexico-syntactic, lexico-semantic, pragmatic and activity-type specific factors projecting larger turns. This analysis was used to clarify the notions of the turn-constructional unit (TCU) and of transition relevance places (TRPs) at possible completion points of possible turns. TCUs were, largely in agreement with Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson (1974), defined as basically the smallest linguistically possible complete units in their sequential context, with TRPs being blocked and suspended at the ends of non-final TCUs till the projected (first) possible completion point(s) of possible final TCUs in the turn.

If, however, we want to further ask what the constructions and resources are in detail that participants use in order to construct their units in talk, we encounter difficulties. As Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson (1974) noted, in principle any item can be used in, say, a phrasal or a single-word unit, signalled and contextualized via intonation. For this reason, it will be difficult to validate and warrant our analysis of the ingredients in a possible TCU positively. Therefore, in this paper, I will use deviant cases in the production of units, i.e. fragments of units, in order to (a) further investigate the kinds of knowledge that we use to construct and make both fragments of units as well as units in talk interpretable, and to (b) further support and validate my prior analyses of 'units' in talk.

Fragments of units occur quite frequently in talk. For not everything that occurs before the beginning of a new unit is itself a unit: besides units we find stretches of talk that do not constitute complete units but are left unfinished. How are such unfinished fragments recognizable as unfinished? How can participants distinguish units from fragments of units? And what, in consequence, makes finished, complete units recognizable as such?

2. The analysis of deviant cases: the investigation of 'fragments of units' as a way to reconstruct our interpretation of 'units'

Fragments of TCUs are those stretches of talk that are treated as unfinished by participants. As any unit-in-progress can, even after a pause of considerable length, be continued by producing a morpho-syntactic and prosodic continuation, fragments of units only become interpretable as such retrospectively, i.e. when the speaker cuts them off and continues with a new beginning or when an unfinished construction is abandoned and left unfinished when, e.g., the floor is relinquished. In general, the interpretation of stretches of talk as 'unfinished fragments' seems to be the result of opened up and yet unfulfilled projections of various kinds. The interpretation of a stretch of speech as a 'fragment of a unit' entails that it has not reached a point of possible TCU completion, regardless of whether this TCU is a turn-internal one the completion of which is not an operative TRP, or a possible turn-final one with one or more than one projected operative TRP(s) at its first and later point(s) of possible unit completion (cf. Selting 1998). I want to ask what kinds of projections and knowledge are involved in the interpretation of a stretch of talk as 'unfinished'.

Following received analytical practices in CA and applying them to the question at hand, the analysis of deviant cases can be used in order to investigate participants' underlying expectations the production of complete TCUs (for deviant case analysis see Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson 1974, Levinson 1983, Wootton 1989). The analysis of deviant cases of TCU production can lead us to infer the kinds of knowledge that are involved in the interpretation of a stretch of talk as a TCU. The result of this investigation is the deconstruction and reconstruction of the signalling systems and activities or practices that are routinely used in order to make fragments interpretable as 'fragments' and that make units interpretable as 'units'.

There are at least three distinct classes of fragments of units; in these the interpretation of the stretch of talk as fragmentary rests on different criteria:

- (a) cut-off of a projected unit plus new start and beginning of a new unit,
- (b) non-completion of a syntactically and prosodically projected unit,
- (c) non-completion of a semantically and/or pragmatically projected unit.

These classes have been ordered according to the place in which the fragmentary character of the given or prior unit becomes obvious for the recipient: Cut-offs do something to the projected talk-in-progress, new starts and beginnings of new units follow immediately. Both the non-completion of syntactically and prosodically as well as lexico-syntactically, lexico-semantically, pragmatically and/or activity-type specifically projected units only become recognizable in retrospect, i.e. after a new unit has been begun. I will give examples of each of these classes in the following sections. For the purposes of the present paper, it is in most cases sufficient to differentiate between syntactic, semantic and pragmatic projections within a given sequential context (see Selting 1998 for more detail).

I will first look at examples of the most frequent cases in which syntax and prosody in co-occurrence are involved in the production of fragments. Following that, I will show, however, that fragments of units cannot be distinguished from complete units with reference to either syntax or prosody alone, nor without reference to their semantic, pragmatic and sequential relations to their contexts. I will first deal with 'clear cases', then present examples of less clear cases. I will try to separate the kinds of knowledge, projections and activities that make fragments of units as well as units in talk recognizable, i.e., that distinguish 'fragments of units' from 'units'.

The data are taken from informal conversations between three participants. Apart from analysing the extracts auditively, the auditive description was verified by instrumental phonetic analysis.

The analysis of fragments of units yields insights into speech production and interpretation processes and resources. My analysis of fragments of TCUs will (1) corroborate my earlier analyses of TCUs in conversation and (2) make it clear that neither fragments of TCUs nor TCUs are the categories that participants orient to as such. The production of TCUs is only an epiphenomenon of, and contingent on, the constitution of activities in conversation; fragments of units are only deviant cases of unit-production. As participants in conversation orient and react to interactionally relevant conversational activities, not to single TCUs and not to single linguistic construction devices, we cannot expect to be able to always make use of recipient responses as warrants of single TCUs or even their single production devices. This methodological problem must be overcome by the systematic reconstruction of the signalling devices and resources that are used by participants to manage the production of fragments and units in talk.

As Jefferson (1974) has shown, the production of fragments can be used by participants as a resource of activity constitution, e.g. participants can recognizably project an activity without actually completing it, thus hinting at it and then leaving the actual production of the hinted-at activity open to interactional negotiation. My analysis looks below the interpretation of such possible 'hints' by reconstructing the resources and conditions that make fragments interpretable as fragments at all.

3. The roles of syntax and prosody in fragment- and unit-production

In the following, I will first look at the most frequent cases in which syntactically and prosodically incomplete structures co-occur in fragments of units, after that I will try to separate the individual roles of syntax and prosody for the interpretation of fragments.

3.1 The co-occurrence of syntactic and prosodic incompleteness in their sequential context

In most cases, both syntactic and prosodic devices are involved in the production of fragments of units; the prosodic devices, however, can be quite different, as the sets of fragments in (a) and (b) show:

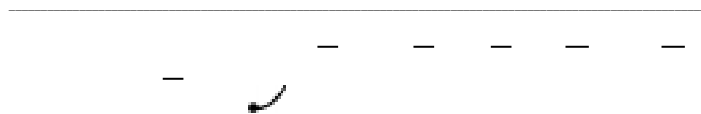
(a) Cut-off of a projected unit plus new start and beginning of a new unit

Instances in which a projected unit in progress is cut off and the speaker starts a new unit are exemplified in the following extracts (English translations are given separately after the figures.):

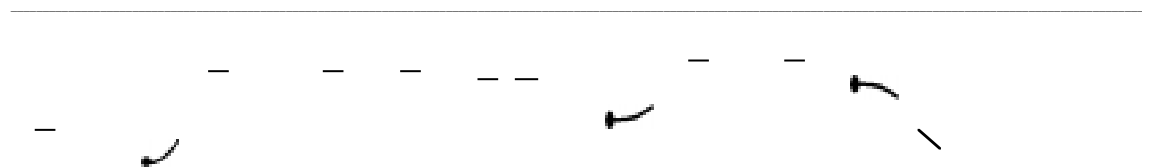
(1) K4: 530-531

((Sie reden über Vorbereitungszeit für
Lehrveranstaltungen))

01 Eli: aber **DAS** is jetzt NICH mehr so
F(\ \)



Lea: aso **ICH** hab das manchma scho'=
<all>



=aso **ICH** hab das dies semester **SCHLIM**mer als **LETZ**tes=
<all>

Eli: =**JA**

05 Lea: ja

Eli: NEE bei **MIR** wirts BESser

((Talk about the time the participants need for the preparation of seminars.))

Eli: although it's stopped being like that now

Lea: well for me it was sometimes alr'=
=well for me it's worse this semester
than it was the last one=

Eli: =yeah

Lea: yeah

Eli: no
I'mimproving

In (1), the unit in progress, aso ICH hab das manchmascho' ('well for me it was sometimes alr'), is cut off with a glottal closure in the middle of the word schon, which itself is not a possible completion of this unit, and speaker Lea immediately starts a new unit. Besides the cut-off and the latching of the new unit, she produces a downstep in pitch for the beginning of the new unit and produces the first word of the new unit, aso, with fast tempo. Syntactically, too, a new construction is recognizably begun; the beginning of this new construction cannot be heard as a continuation of the old one. So, here, we find syntax and prosody constituting the break in talk that makes the fragment interpretable as a fragment and the start of a new unit as the start of a new unit. Retrospectively, it becomes evident that Lea is recycling the beginning of her first unit, produces the items aso ICH hab again and then chooses a new formulation.

(2) K1: 5-6

01 Nat: NEE ich **WAR** auch aso: die er 'm
<d>

weiß nich die ersten drei vier **SIT**zungen
<p p> <u>

war ich da:(.) [weil mir das dann gest**UN**ken hat

Ida: [WARS du da: als ich n:

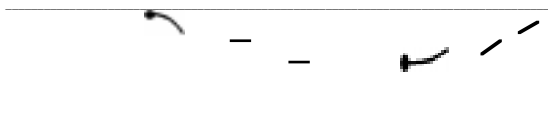
05 n refer**RAT** gehalten hab

Nat: **NEE**: da war ich [t 'ich] glaub das war

Ida: [hm]

Nat: da**NACH** irgnwie die [sitz]ung (..)

Ida: [hm]



10 Nat: WARS du noch **LÄN**ger da

Nat: no I was also so the er 'm
 I don't know the first three four meetings
 I was there (.) [because it got on my nerves
 Ida: [were you there when I
 presented my paper
 Nat: no then I was [t 'I] think that was
 Ida: [hm]
 Nat: somehow the next [meet] ing (..)
 Ida: [hm]
 did you stay there longer

In (2), we find several fragments of TCUs. The speaker starts with *ich WAR auch* 'I was also', but then adds *aso:* with sound stretch and level pitch, thus holding the turn and projecting 'more to come'. *Aso* (=also, 'so') with this prosody cannot be heard as the continuation of the prior syntactic construction. The prior syntactic construction itself, *ich WAR auch*, could well be a possibly complete syntactic construction in other sequential environments, e.g. after a possible prior utterance such as *'und dann erzählte sie du wärs da gewesen'* ('and then she told us that you had been there' - 'I was'). In the sequential context given here, however, it is not a possibly complete syntactic construction. After this, Nat creates a break in talk by producing the particle *aso:* which is very often used as a signal to project reformulation (Gülich/Kotschi 1987). But this, too, is left as a fragment, and Lea delivers another beginning of a new unit *die er* with a downstep, but cuts this off again with a glottal stop and a nasal *m*. Then, she produces the parenthetical phrase *weiß nich* 'I don't know' with very low pitch and low voice. Finally, the beginning of the unit that is then ultimately finished, *die erstn drei vier SITzungn war ich da:* 'the first three four meetings I was there', is set off with an upstep in pitch and a return to normal loudness, thus making this beginning of a new unit recognizable as such.

Another cut-off is produced further down in the transcript, when Nat starts with *NEE: da war ich*, then produces the sound *t* and immediately after that a clearly audible glottal stop - more prominent than the normal glottal stop expectable here for phonological reasons - which here produces something like a prosodic break: a 'hard' start of the *ich* as the signalling of the start of a new unit. Furthermore, the item *ich* realizes a downstep in pitch and is syntactically incompatible with the unit that had been begun before, i.e. it must also on syntactic grounds be interpreted as the beginning of a new unit by the recipients.

(3) K3: 27-28

01 Nat: **NEE** da **IS** au also **ICH** hatte am
<all > <d>

anfang **AUCH** keine beziehung zu

meim vater=un das **HAT** sich dann
<all >

so nach un nach **AUF**gebaut ((usw.))

Nat: no there is also well I had
also at first no relationship to
my father=and then it was
built up one bit after the other

Another fragmentary unit can be seen in (3). After a first unit NEE ('no'), speaker Nat begins a second one with da IS au, which is produced with fast tempo. But after this, she produces a downstep in pitch with the reformulation signal also and thereby creates a prosodic break and begins a new unit. Here, thus, a downstep in pitch, the change in tempo from faster to normal, and the start of a new syntactic construction with the reformulationsignal also constitute the break and signal the beginning of a new unit, while the prior one is left unfinished.

(4) K4: 733-736

((über Studenten))

01 Lea: weil ich **IM**mer darüber **NACH**gedacht hab warum die so=

=die **KOM**men mir immer so melan**CHOL**isch vor ne

Eli: die stu**DEN**ten

Lea: JAA

05 weil ich **GLAU**be nich WEIß die sagen
<all

immer alle die sind **FAUL**:=
all all>

Lea: =die REden nix und [so=un[d die MACHen nix
?: [hhh [hhh

((Talk about students))

Lea: because I always wondered about why they so=
=they always seem to me to be so depressed you know

Eli: the students

Lea: yes
because I don't believe you know they always
all say they are lazy=

=they won't talk and [so=and they don't do anything
 ?: [hhh hhh

In (4), we first see an example of a fragmentary unit that is cut off by quickly starting a new unit, i.e. by latching the beginning of a new unit onto the abandoned old one at just the point where the old one is abandoned: weil ich IMmer darüber NACHgedacht hab warum die so=die KOMM mir immerso melanCHOLisch vor ne 'because I always wondered about why they so=they always seem to me to be so depressed you know'. Later in the extract, there is another fragment: Lea's stretch of talk weil ich GLAUbe nich 'because I don't believe'. In this context this construction needs to be complemented with a subordinate clause specifying what Lea does not believe, i.e. it semantically projects more-to-come. It also prosodically ends with a level pitch accent, i.e. it also prosodically projects continuation. But here, too, Lea begins a new unit immediately after ich GLAUbe nich by beginning a recognizably new syntactic construction WEIß die sagn immer alle die sind FAUL 'you know they always all say they are lazy' and by changing to faster tempo for the new unit.

In these examples (1) through (4), the following syntactic and prosodic devices are used in co-occurrence to constitute and contextualize the beginning of a new unit and thus to retrospectively make inferrable that the previously begun unit has been abandoned and left unfinished:

syntactic cues:

- unfinished unit-in-progress prior to the break and
- recognizable start of a new syntactic construction,

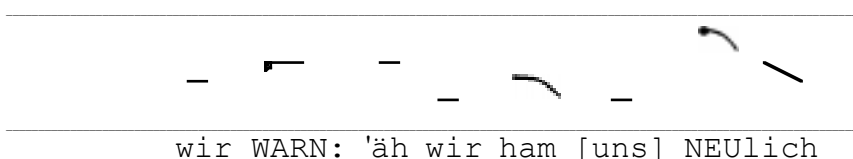
prosodic cues:

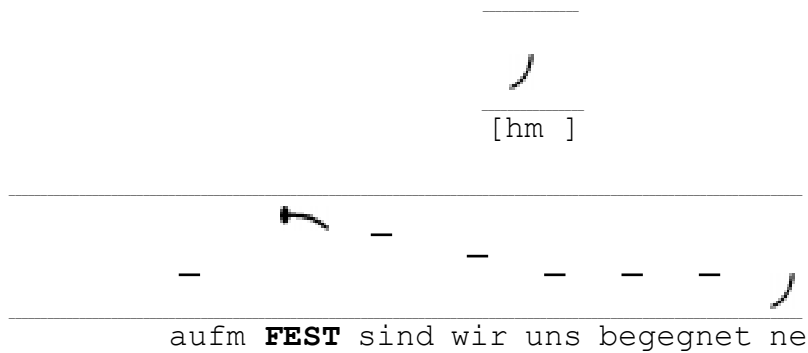
- glottal closure or alveolar stop as a means to cut-off a unit-in-progress and/or
- change of tempo and/or
- upstep or downstep in pitch.

In contrast to these examples with fairly clear and saliently displayed breaks to signal the beginning of a new unit when a prior one is abandoned and left unfinished, the next two extracts (5) and (6) demonstrate less clear cases.

(5) K4: 181-183

01 Lea: es SEI denn mir tut die **LUN**ge weh ne
 M(/ \ /)





Lea: provided that my lungs don't hurt me you know
we were uhm we saw [each other the other day
Eli: [m
at that party we met didn't we

A first interesting case can be seen in (5). Here, Lea begins a unit with *wir WARN*: ('we were'), in which she deploys level pitch accent and sound lengthening to contextualize turn-holding (Local 1992, Selting 1995a). After this, she produces another turn-holding device, 'äh, on still the same pitch height. Then, however, she drops pitch in a downstep for the beginning of the new unit *wir ham uns* (literally 'we have (us)'). Syntactically, this formulation recycles the beginning of the prior unit and produces a repair of the verb *warn* by the verb *ham uns*. The continuation of this construction, *NEUlich aufm FEST* ('the other day at a party'), can still be heard as the continuation of the possible sentence begun with *wir ham uns*, although the pitch jumps up to a higher level for *NEUlich*. But instead of finishing this possible sentence by providing, for example, the verb form *gesehn* ('seen') to yield the possible sentence *wir ham uns NEUlich aufm FEST gesehn* ('we saw each other the other day at a party'), Lea now produces the words *sind wir uns begegnet* ('we met'), which are incompatible with the beginning of the prior construction *wir ham uns*. So, in retrospect, it now becomes clear that Lea has reorganized her syntactic unit to start with the upstep in pitch at *NEUlich* and finally yield the possible sentence *NEUlich aufm FEST sind wir uns begegnet* ('the other day we met at a party'). As, however, the prosodic break was not contextualized clearly and saliently, - it could as well just have been a prominent pitch accent - this re-organization only becomes inferrable in retrospect and what results is a syntactic construction that is called 'apokoinu' (cf. also Scheutz 1992, Selting 1995b), a special kind of merged syntactic construction used to construct special kinds of TCUs.¹

¹ When a speaker merges two constructions, as s/he does in the case of apokoinu-constructions, the first part of this construction might be analysed as a fragment. But on the other hand, as two by themselves completely grammatical constructions are merged around the koinon in a systematic and functional way, and there is no prosodic break signalling the start of a new unit, I would prefer to conceive of them as a special case of possible sentence in spoken language for constructing special turns in conversation (cf. also Selting 1995b, Scheutz 1992).

(6) K3: 103-104

((Nat. über ihren Vater))

01 Nat: bloß wenn es darum ging

daß **ICH** seine hilfe BRAUCHte ((atmet ein))

is egal WIE (.)

dann GING das **I:R**gndwie **GINGs** dann nich
<u>

05 dann gabs IMmer irgndwelche GRÜNDe
bei ihm warum er mir nich **HEL**fen konnte ((usw.))

((Nat about her father))

Nat: only when it happended
that I needed his help ((inbreath))
doesn't matter how
then it worked somehow it didn't work then
then there were always some reasons
on his side why he couldn't help me ((etc.))

A similar construction occurs in (6). Nat produces the possible beginning of a sentential unit dann GING das ('then it worked'). Although in other contexts this could very well be a complete possible sentence and unit, in this case, in which the preceding sequential context projected a negative statement, this construction is heard as unfinished and still lacking a negation (cf. below). And even though the next word, I:Rgndwie ('somehow'), could still be heard as continuing the prior syntactic construction, it is produced with an upstep in pitch to constitute an - albeit not very salient - prosodic break. And again it is the continuation with the formulation of yet another verb form in GINGs dann nich ('didn't work') that shows retrospectively that Nat has reorganized her possible sentence from the initially projected dann

GING das (I:Rgndwie) nich ('then it somehow didn't work') to the finally produced I:Rgndwie GINGs dann nicht ('somehow it didn't work then'). Here, too, the prosodic break is not saliently displayed; rather than analysing the first part of the construction as a fragmentary unit, I would suggest analysing the entire construction as an apokoinu.

These latter examples show that the use of only a single prosodic contextualization cue such as an upstep in pitch in a construction that still can be interpreted as syntactically cohesive is not sufficient to signal a clear break and make the beginning of a new unit interpretable. Nevertheless, this kind of less salient contextualization seems to be a design feature of the kind of apokoinu-construction examined here: the upstep subtly contextualizes the point at which reorganization of the syntactic construction begins. The reconstruction is, however, only recognizable in retrospect.

(b) Non-completion of a syntactically and prosodically projected unit

Some fragmentary, unfinished units are the result of the non-completion of a projected syntactic and prosodic construction. The speaker stops her or his unit without beginning a new one immediately. This is illustrated in the following extracts:

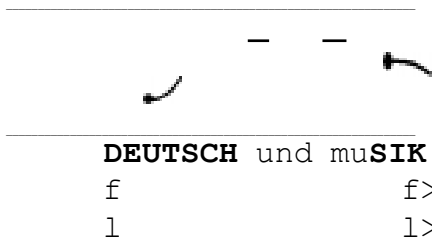
(7) K1: 106

((Ron. hatte gesagt, Überrepräsentation von Frauen in Seminaren sei normal))

01 Nat: was stu**DIERS** du denn (.)

ich mein es **KOMMT** [ja auch immer:

Ron: [ich mach auch
<f f
<l l



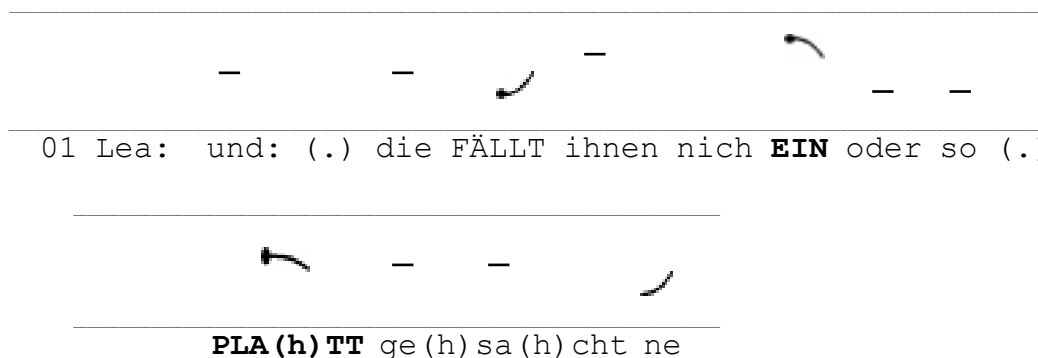
((Ron just said that an overrepresentation of women in seminars was normal))

Nat: what is your subject then (.)
 I mean it always [depends on
 Ron: [I am studying
 German and music

In (7), Nat has addressed a question to Ron. When Ron does not take the turn in the short gap after her question, Nat begins another unit in order to specify her question. Midway through her unit, however, Ron now takes the floor to give his answer. As a result of this, after a few more words Nat drops out and gives the floor to Ron. Both syntactically and prosodically, Nat's unit is recognizable as an unfinished one. Syntactically, the syntagm *ich mein es KOMMT ja auch immer*: ('I mean it always depends on') is, in this context, not a possible syntactically complete construction but only the beginning of one (in another context, however, this formulation is well imaginable as a complete TCU). Prosodically, the last word ends with a sound stretch and leaves a projected globally falling intonation contour hanging at about mid pitch range, not producing something like a terminal falling or rising pitch as contextualization cues of a possible unit or turn ending, but ending with almost level pitch as a prosodic unit- and turn-holding cue. Both these prosodic devices contextualize that this is not a possible ending of a complete unit. As, however, this prosodic projection of more-to-come is not fulfilled, retrospectively, Nat must be heard as relinquishing her unit and turn after interruption by another speaker.

(8) K4: 822

((Studenten suchen nach neuer Form))



Cis: na **JA** aber **ICH** denke eher [(....)]
 <all>
 Lea: [((räuspert sich laut))]

05 Cis: äh: [daß es
 Lea: [ich **WEISS** es nich
 Eli: ich HAB mir keine ge**DAN**ken darüber gemacht
 M(/ \)

((Lea has just proposed that the students feel in need of new forms))

Lea: and (.) they can't find one or so

(.) plainly said you know

Cis: well but I rather think [(....)]

Lea: [((clears her throat))

Cis: uh: [that it

Lea: [I don't know

Eli: I haven't thought about that ((etc.))

In (8), Cis first begins a unit with *aber ICH denke eher* ('but I rather think') and then pauses. Syntactically, this is not a possibly complete construction in this context; the verb phrase needs to be complemented by either an indirect object or a subordinate clause. Prosodically, high level pitch projects unit- and turn-holding for more-to-come. After the pause, Cis continues with *äh: daß es* ('uh that it'), but abandons her unit when Lea takes the floor. Cis' *äh:*, although on lower pitch than the pre-pause part of the construction, can be analysed here as a signal to contextualize continuation of her previously begun unit, and *daß es* can be analysed as the beginning and projection of a subordinate clause to complete the possible complex sentence begun earlier. The continuation after the pause does not have properties that make it recognizable as a new start. Here, too, the unit is simply abandoned and left unfinished: neither the syntactic nor the prosodic projection are fulfilled. Prosodically, the fragment again ends with level pitch, not signalling possible prosodic or intonational turn completion.

(9) K3: 208-209

((Ida über die Einladungen ihres Vaters))

01 Ida: die ersten male **KONNT** ich auch nich

weil ich meistens **AR**beiten mußte (.)

un **DANN** is mir ma aufgegangen (.)

EINmal hatt ich ihn SELBST am t am **TE**lefon

((usw.: Erzählung))

((Ida about her father's invitations))

Ida: the first times I couldn't go
because in most cases I had to work (.)
and then I discovered (.)
one time when he called I answered the telephone myself ((etc.))

Extract (9) shows a less clear case. After the construction un DANN is mir ma aufgegangen ('and then I discovered'), syntactically, a subordinate clause is necessary for the construction to be complete; this could be added and prosodically integrated into the same continued intonation contour. At the end of un DANN is mir ma aufgegangen such a continuation is projected syntactically. Prosodically, the signalling seems to be less clear than in the previous cases: the pitch in the entire stretch is globally falling, and in the last syllables of this unit it is still falling, if only very flatly and slightly. The ending of the fragment is not accompanied by other holding devices. As continuation has been projected here syntactically, the speaker seems to be free to use equivocal prosody, signalling neither unit completion nor unit holding clearly. In this way she gains maximal freedom as to how to continue: prolong this unit or begin

a new one. Yet, after a brief pause Ida chooses a new unit by beginning a recognizably new syntactic construction EINmal hatt ich ihn SELST am t am TElefon ('one time when he called I answered the telephone myself'), starting with an upstep in pitch in relation to the prior talk and constituting a new intonation contour. Retrospectively, the prior stretch of talk is recognizable as a fragmentary unit that nevertheless fulfills its function of holding the turn and projecting more-to-come and of announcing the story that Ida then tells about what she discovered about her father's behaviour towards her.²

In (7) through (9), then, a begun and syntactically projected TCU is not cut off, but simply abandoned and left unfinished before a possible syntactic completion point of a possible syntactic construction has been reached. And the prosody in most cases contextualizes just that: the intonation contour is left hanging at mid pitch without a falling, rising or level possible last pitch accent contextualizing possible unit or turn completion (for more detail see Selting 1996a); in some cases additional devices such as sound lengthenings project turn holding which, however, is not fulfilled after all. In one of the cases, however, syntactic projection of more-to-come is accompanied by prosodically equivocal cues, syntactic projection thus clearly overriding prosodic equivocality here.

In short, the cues can be summarized as follows:

syntactical cue:

- abandoning of a projected syntactic construction before a possible completion point in the present sequential context,

prosodic cues:

either

- pitch left hanging without possible ending of a contour and
- other optional turn-holding devices such as sound lengthening

or

- equivocal cues between unit and turn holding or completion.

The extracts presented in this section showed examples of the most frequent kinds of fragments of units, i.e. those in which both syntactic and prosodic construction schemata are cut-off or are abandoned and remain unfinished. In the next sections I will try to clarify the relation between syntax and prosody further by trying to separate the individual roles of syntax and prosody in unit production.

² The TCU EINmal hatt ich ihn SELST am t am TElefon contains yet another instance of cut-off and new start internally: the prepositional phrase am t is cut off, recycled to its beginning and then produced in full am TElefon. Self-initiated self-repair (Schegloff/Jefferson/Sacks 1977) is thus an instance of cut-off and new start within a unit here.

3.2 Trying to separate

In order to investigate the individual roles of syntax and prosody in the production of fragments, I looked for fragments in which the two signalling devices are used discrepantly: one of the two signalling devices is used as if to signal a complete unit, but the other signals incompleteness at the end of the fragment. This search, however, yielded results only in one of the possible cases.

3.2.1 The role of syntax

In the previous sections we saw cases in which syntactically incomplete fragments of units also ended with holding pitch or prosodically and/or intonationally incomplete contours. In order to determine whether syntax can be the only decisive cue, i.e. whether units can be distinguished from unfinished fragments of units with reference to only syntax, I looked for sequences in which it is only the prosody that projects more-to-come at the end of an otherwise possibly complete phrasing unit or TCU.

This search, however, yielded no results. In fact, cases in which a syntactically complete TCU is signalled prosodically as incomplete, are interpreted differently: in these cases, holding prosody is not interpreted as signalling the incompleteness of the current and just complete TCU, but it is interpreted as projecting more-to-come. This more-to-come can then be added both as a continuation of the just completed unit or as a new unit, depending on the kind of syntactic and prosodic continuation.

This shows that in cases of possibly complete syntax, prosody cannot be used in order to contextualize this unit as incomplete. Prosody cannot be used against syntactic structure. In these cases, then, (a) syntax seems to be stronger than prosody, and (b) prosody is not interpreted as signalling the state of the production process with respect to the signalling of completion or non-completion, but as signalling turn holding for a continuation, regardless of how this continuation will be added. Turn-holding, however, does not deal with the production and formation of units as such but is a completely different kind of activity that deals with turn organisation beyond the current unit-in-progress (see below).

This in turn confirms and corroborates my earlier results showing that while syntax is used in order to project possible completion points of single TCUs and reaches as far as the possible completion points of syntactic constructions such as possible sentences, clauses, phrases etc., prosody is used in order to more locally contextualize the state of the speaker's production process within the current unit and beyond that into the next such unit. Syntax and prosody thus seem to be used with different scope and with different functions in the organization of conversational talk (see Selting 1996a for more detail). In cases of discrepancy,

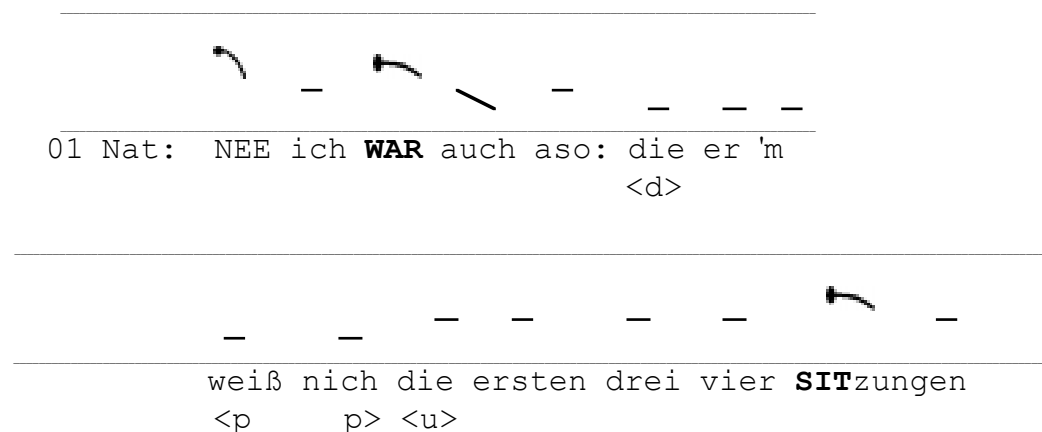
however, syntax seems to be able to override prosody and prosody does not seem to be usable against syntax.

3.2.2 The role of prosody

As we have seen, not every fragment of a unit is contextualized as such by a cut-off. Some fragments in the examples given so far ended with some kind of hanging pitch that, although perhaps still falling slightly, did not reach a projected possible ending of the intonation contour that was begun before. Some other fragments in the examples given so far ended with level pitch, with or without sound lengthenings, thus projecting turn-holding. Level pitch for turn-holding, however, is of course not a pitch contextualizing the fragmentariness of an unfinished fragment as such, but a pitch contextualizing the current state of the formulation process as unfinished in order to project intended continuation. As such, level pitch is used both at the ends of units in order to project another unit to come, and at the ends of syntactically and/or semantically and/or pragmatically unfinished units in order to project the continuation of the unit-in-progress. Only at the end of syntactically and/or semantically and/or pragmatically unfinished units can level (or slightly rising) pitch be used as a cue to signal intended turn-holding for a continuation of the unit and turn. Whether this continuation then turns out to be a continuation of the unit under way or a continuation of the turn by beginning a new unit, can only be analysed retrospectively. It is only the start of a new unit that retrospectively makes inferrable that a prior unit is not being continued and finished, but abandoned and left as a fragment.

In order to investigate the separate role of prosody, i.e. whether units can be distinguished from unfinished fragments of units with reference to only prosody, I looked for sequences in which syntactically incomplete fragments were nevertheless prosodically displayed as if the unit were complete. This search did yield quite a lot of cases in which fragments end with a pitch configuration that could on its own very well be used as the possible end of a possible contour. In the extracts presented so far, the following examples occur.

(10) K1: 5-6



- - - - - ↘

war ich da:(.) [weil mir das dann ge**STUN**ken hat

↙ - - - - -

Ida: [WARS du da: als ich n:

- - - ↘ - - ↙

n refe**RAT** gehalten hab

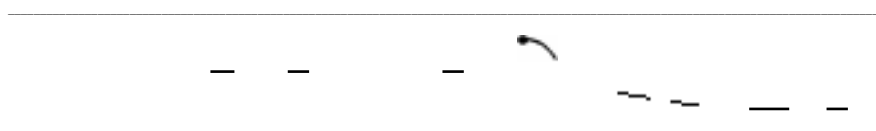
Nat: no I was also so the er 'm
 I don't know the first three four meetings
 I was there (.) [because it got on my nerves
 Ida: [were you there when I
 presented my paper

After prior talk about whether Nat and Ida know each other from a seminar they both participated in, the syntactic construction *ich WAR auch* ('I was also') in (10) cannot be interpreted as a complete unit here. Nevertheless, the fragment *ich WAR auch* shows a clear example of falling pitch in the accented word *WAR*, and the following unaccented word *auch* could on its own very well be the ending of a possible intonation contour that could be used as a possible unit- or turn-yielding contour. This pitch looks very much like that used for possible unit- and turn-endings, for instance the final pitch accent in Nat's later unit *weil mir das dann geSTUNkn hat* ('because it got on my nerves '). Nevertheless, despite its falling pitch, this construction could also have been continued by adding further material with continuing prosody. But again, it is only the following constructions that make it clear retrospectively that the construction *ich WAR auch* has been left unfinished and a new construction has been begun with *die erstn drei vier SITzungn war ich da:.* ('the first three four meetings I was there'). The first noun phrase of this construction, *die erstn drei vier SITzungn*, could still be interpreted as the continuation of the prior construction, after inserting some other material (aso: *die er 'm weiß nich* 'so the er 'm I don't know'). Just as in those cases in which possible sentences that are produced with non-cohesive prosody are nevertheless interpreted as one unit (Selting 1998), if here the fragment had been continued to finally produce a possible sentence, syntax would then, too, override the non-cohesive prosody and the result would have been the interpretation of a single unit with an internal self-initiated self-repair in which *die er 'm* is self-interrupted and followed by first the parenthetical phrase *weiß nich* and then the repaired *die erstn* etc. Here, however, retrospectively, the upstep for *die erstn drei vier SITzungn war ich da:* must be reinterpreted as contextualizing the beginning of a new unit. Notwithstanding all

this, the pitch configuration at the end of the fragment *ich WAR auch* is very similar to that at the end of *weil mir das dann geSTUNKn hat* and, leaving the rather long tail out of consideration, also similar to that ending the unit after the fragment, i.e. *die erstn drei vier SITZungn war ich da:*. The slope and the depth of the falling pitch accents and their tails are quitesimilar.

(11) K1:75-78

01 Ron: [wir **SIND** frauen und **MÜS**sen alle dieselbe meinung habm
 [H, F(/ / \)
 [<l l>
 Nat: [ja
 [\



Ron: oder äh: (.) [wir **HAB**en alle die[sel
 [F(\ [
 Nat: [wir HABM sie [wir MÜSsen
 [M(\) [T(\)

((Talk about problems in feminist groups; Ron is speaking in Nat's voice, proffering his own interpretation of Nat's prior descriptions))

Ron: we are women and we must have the same opin [ion

Nat: [yes

Ron: or uh (.) [we all have the s[a

Nat: [we have it [we must

In (11), Ron proffers his understanding of the view that according to Nat many women in feminist groups hold, namely *wir SIND frauen und MÜSsen alle dieselbe meinung habm* ('we are women and we must have the same opinion'). After this, he begins a new unit in which he sets out to formulate the alternative possibility, namely that these women might indeed have the same opinion voluntarily, but after the words *oder äh: (.) wir HABen alle diesel* he cuts this off in the middle of the word *dieselbe*. Here, however, no glottal stop is used and the intonation is falling from the pitch accent in the word *HABen* to a fairly low pitch that could in other contexts well be a possible or designed unit and turn yielding pitch. After Nat tries to take the floor, Ron simply seems to trail off until he finally stops with a pitch that in other circumstances could be used for unit- or turn-completion.

These examples, then, show that fragments need not necessarily end with holding devices or some other kind of pitch or prosody more generally that makes the yet unfinished unit

recognizable as unfinished. They can end with pitch contours that could also be used as possible completions of possible intonation contours and are similar to those used for designed unit- and turn-completions. Thus, in principle, fragments cannot be distinguished from complete units with reference only to prosody.

Nevertheless, the kind of prosody that is chosen does different kinds of interactional work, i.e. differentiating between holding or non-holding the yet unfinished unit and turn. In cases in which the speaker produces a prosodic break in order to contextualize the beginning of a new unit and then immediately begins that new unit, no holding devices need be used; instead the very beginning of the new unit cancels the prior projection and now projects the new unit-in-progress. Cut-offs, in some cases with saliently held glottal stops, sound lengthenings, and level or slightly rising intonation are used in order to signal unit- and turn-holding, no matter whether the construction-so-far is a syntactically possibly complete unit or not. In this case the speaker prosodically projects more-to-come and thus secures the turn for him/herself to continue. Locally falling or rising intonation, either as in possible and designed contour endings or as in trail-off pitch, is used in order to signal non-holding of the unit and turn. At the end of a possible unit, and if a more global semantic or pragmatic projection that still needs to be fulfilled has not been built up (cf. below), such non-holding locally falling or rising pitch is the unmarked pitch that contextualizes possible or designed turn yielding (cf. Selting 1995, 1996). If used as trail-off pitch, this pitch contextualizes that the speaker does not attempt to hold the turn but yields it to the recipient. If this recipient has already come in competitively before (French/Local 1983), the speaker now simply relinquishes the turn and leaves it to the competitor. If no competitor has been competing for the floor, the recipient is invited to take over and continue. Just as in the case of turn-holding, this last option of signalling non-holding of the turn can be used regardless of whether the construction-so-far is a syntactically possibly complete unit or not. That means that, although it can be used in order to display a stretch of talk that finally remains an unfinished fragment, the prosodic contextualization of holding or non-holding of the turn is used as an independent resource in order to contextualize the speaker's management of the unit and turn.

As a result, there is no evidence of a particular prosody signalling and 'doing fragments'. But there is, firstly, a prosody signalling and 'doing turn-holding' and 'doing possible turn-yielding' at the end of yet unfinished units, as well as, secondly, a prosody signalling and 'doing continuing' and 'doing beginning of a new unit' after a prosodic or other break within or after a yet unfinished unit. Ultimately, this suggests and confirms that it is not the units themselves and as such that are relevant for participants, but the activities related to the construction and delimitation of units, i.e. the practices of beginning new units, of projecting and continuing begun units with or without internal gaps or breaks, and of possibly completing units and yielding the turn.

3.3 Fragments as the result of semantically and/or pragmatically unfulfilled projections in their sequential context

In some cases, a syntactic (and prosodic) construction that could in other contexts very well be a syntactically (and prosodically) complete construction, cannot be interpreted as complete because in the given sequential context it contradicts the expectations built up in the preceding context. Examples of this occur in the previously presented extracts (2) and (6).

In (2), the fragment *da war ich t* ('there was I t'), in the lower part of the extract, is a case in point. This fragment, which, like many beginnings of a unit before its first accented syllable, is produced with level pitch, is cut off with the sound *t* and the new unit is started with a downstep in pitch and the use of a more salient-than-usual glottal stop as the signal of a prosodic break at the beginning of the new unit *ich glaub das war daNACH irgnwie die sitzung* ('I think that was in a later meeting'). -- In this case, however, it is not just the syntax and/or the prosody that make this stretch *da war ich t* recognizable as a fragment of a unit. After Ida's question *WARS du da: als ich n: n refeRAT gehaltn hab* ('were you there when I presented my paper'), the construction *da war ich* - albeit with a different intonation contour - could have been a possibly complete positive answer. But here, Nat's first unit *NEE:* ('no') had already given a negative answer. A now positive answer such as *da war ich* would produce an outright contradiction. And this is another reason why the fragment *da war ich* must be analysed as a fragment: because it does not fulfill the semantic or pragmatic projection built up in the prior unit.

A similar case occurs in (6). As I already said above, the first part of Nat's construction *dann GING das* ('then it worked'), although a possible syntactically complete unit in other contexts with also a possibly complete intonation contour, cannot be interpreted as possibly complete here, because it would be in contradiction to the previously built up expectation for a negated statement. Here, too, the previous talk projected a particular kind of semantic-pragmatic relation to the prior talk which constrains the interpretation of talk as complete as long as it does not fulfill these projections.

These examples show that the completeness or non-completeness of a unit cannot be analysed with reference to only syntax and prosody: completeness or incompleteness is a context-sensitive inference about whether a construction has reached possible completion in its present semantic, pragmatic and sequential context.

As I have tried to show, neither syntax nor prosody on their own can be used to unequivocally distinguish fragments of units and possibly complete units, with syntax in cases of discrepancy overriding prosody. Further, fragments are the result of unfinished syntactic, semantic, pragmatic and prosodic projection within their sequential context. Thus, we have to conclude that it is the interaction of the syntax and prosody of the utterance in its semantic, pragmatic and/or sequential context that makes fragments of units recognizable as such.

3.4 Recipient reactions as evidence of their interpretation of fragments

Evidence for the above analysis of unfinished fragments can be gained from an analysis of the subsequent behaviour of both the speaker and the recipient: The speaker gives evidence of his own interpretation of a stretch of speech as 'unfinished' by presenting it as a fragment through the deployment of cut-offs and/or holding devices as well as by indeed starting a new TCU that in many cases repairs or redirects the prior utterance. As by the turn-taking system (Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson 1974) speakers are entitled to complete TCUs, and as reciprocity tokens and other overlap is normally produced near, at or after the end of a complete TCU, most frequently an unfinished fragment will yield no response from the recipient. The recipient seems to be refraining from responding till the end or the near-end of the newly begun TCU (cf. Jefferson 1986 on 'latency' in overlap onset), thus displaying his or her orientation to the projected complete TCU.

Those recipient responses that do occur in the data at or after unfinished fragments can be explained by factors other than the fragmentary nature of the utterance: The *mhm* after *da war ich* in (2) can be analysed as Ida's late response to Nat's prior TCU *NEE*:. The reciprocity token *hm* with rising intonation in (5) does not seem to be designed to respond to Lea's fragments at all, but to some other matter altogether.

If fragments are the result of competitive incoming talk by another party, the other speaker's continuing while the prior speaker drops out can be regarded as evidence that the interrupter understands the former speaker's giving in and yielding the floor, even though a TCU has not been finished.

4. Conclusions: 'Fragments of units' and 'units' as epiphenomena of practices organizing talk in turns

The analysis of fragmentary units has shown that these unfinished or fragmentary units are the result of the speaker's non-finishing her or his unit due to the speaker's self-interruption in order to start a new unit, an interruption by another speaker, or the speaker's projecting more-to-come, but then ignoring this prior projection for the sake of beginning a new unit. In some cases, the end of a fragment is signalled by the speaker's cut-off of the given unit, but much more commonly, it is only the beginning of the new unit that is saliently contextualized and made recognizable, thus implying the abandonment of the prior yet unfinished unit. In general, the beginning of this new unit is signalled both syntactically and prosodically: by the recognizable beginning of a new syntactic construction and by prosodic devices such as an upstep or a downstep in pitch and/or a change in tempo. In many cases, the possible completeness or non-completeness of a syntactic construction is a context-sensitive interpretation in which syntactic, semantic and/or pragmatic projections within the given sequential context are involved. On the one hand, fragments may appear with possible completion prosody. But, on the other hand, prosody does not seem to be usable against syntax: if possibly complete syntactic constructions were presented as not complete by deploying prosodic unit and turn holding devices, this would not result in the unit's interpretation as fragmentary, but in the projection of more-to-come, regardless of whether this continuation were displayed as a continuation of the same or as a new unit. In cases of discrepancy, syntax overrides prosody. In short: Retrospectively, the unfinished and fragmentary unit is reconstructable as fragmentary because syntactic, prosodic, semantic and/or pragmatic projections have been built up in the sequential context, but have not been fulfilled. The interpretation of the fragmentariness of stretches of talk is thus the result of non-fulfilled context-sensitive projections.

If this is true for fragments of units, this also corroborates and supports my prior analysis that units cannot be recognized (and defined) with respect to either only syntax or only prosody but are the result of the interaction of both in their sequential context. The interpretation of units, then, is the result of fulfilled context-sensitive projections.

Identification of units results from context-sensitive inferences. They are the result of the participants' deployment of flexible syntactic and prosodic construction schemata which, within the given semantic, pragmatic and sequential context, provide flexible possible completion points of units. The points of possible completion, and thus units themselves, are the result of different kinds of projection. Syntactic projection is more far-reaching than prosodic contextualization. Yet, syntactic projection is confined to the limits of the current unit. Prosodic contextualization is in principle the local signalling of the state of the production process. It is used to project continuation within a unit until the contextualized end of the unit, but prosody can also project beyond the current unit and into the next. In comparison to syntax and prosody, lexico-syntactic, semantic, pragmatic and activity-type specific projections are even

more far-reaching and can reach beyond units and even turns in their sequential context (Selting 1998). The interpretation of units is the product of prosodic, syntactic, semantic, pragmatic and/or activity-type specific projection having been built up and fulfilled within the given sequential context. The interpretation of fragments of units is the product of one or a combination of these projections having been built up but left unfulfilled before the speaker begins a new unit or relinquishes the turn.

In general, syntax and prosody co-occur in the signalling of units. There is no evidence that either syntax or prosody is more important for the construction and projection of units in their sequential context. While in some instances of discrepancy in unit production, syntax overrides prosody, for the constitution of particular activity types in conversation, prosody overrides syntax and is distinctive on its own (cf. Selting 1992, 1996b, Couper-Kuhlen 1996, Günthner 1996 etc.). Both with respect to syntax and with respect to prosody, units are flexible, expandable, revisable, situationally adaptable kinds of phenomena.

Fragments of units are interpreted as 'unfinished fragments' because, retrospectively, after the beginning of a new unit, they become recognizable as constructions that projected some kind of continuation and completion that was not fulfilled. The projections themselves have been established with respect to more far-reaching syntactic, lexico-syntactic, semantic or pragmatic construction schemata, expectable activity-type specific action schemata, or more local prosodic contextualization and projection in the given sequential context. The more far-reaching syntactic, lexico-syntactic, semantic and pragmatic projections determine possible completion points of the unit under way. If such a projected unit is abandoned before a possible completion point is reached in the present sequential context, the result is an unfinished fragment of a unit. In its sequential context, a possible syntactic construction is thus a context-sensitive inference. The fragment can, but need not, be contextualized prosodically with, e.g., a cut-off and, possibly, unit- and turn-holding devices such as level (or slightly rising) pitch and/or sound lengthening. But even if it is, this is not the signalling of the fragment as such but the signalling of projected unit- and turn-holding for a projected continuation.

The production and interpretation of 'units' is not an end in itself, but an epiphenomenon of the participants' practices or methods of organizing and making recognizable the state of their interaction process: constructing, holding, yielding and taking units and turns in conversational interaction.

It is not fragments as such that are signalled and displayed prosodically, but participant activities that may result in such things as complete units or fragments. Fragments can be the

result of several activities:³ (1) A speaker may self-interrupt in order to begin a new unit. A special case of this is when a speaker changes her or his projected syntactic construction midway, thus producing an apokoinu-construction as described above. (2) A speaker may drop out of his speakership and be silent or yield the floor to his recipient(s), thus leaving an unfinished fragment behind.

In (1), which - as I assume - is the most frequent case, the 'doing beginning' of a new unit can be analysed as the initiation of repair of the prior unfinished unit, which cancels the syntactic and prosodic projections built up in the prior fragment. This shows that the possibility of leaving an unfinished fragment behind and beginning a new unit is a local resource that cancels local syntactic and prosodic projections built up in the prior fragment, while keeping intact and only suspending more global semantic, pragmatic, activity-type specific or sequential projections for being continued and fulfilled within the new and/or the following units. In the special case of the production of an apokoinu-construction, the syntactic construction is changed around and re-oriented. Here, too, when a prosodic break contextualizes the 'doing beginning of a new unit', the new beginning can retrospectively be analysed as a repair of the previously abandoned stretch of speech, albeit one that is performed in a camouflaged and in a syntactically highly systematic way, leaving both parts of the construction intact but 'melted'. In both these cases, the prosody prior to the prosodic break and/or the 'doing beginning of a new unit' may be holding or non-holding the unit and turn, with incomplete syntax as an unfulfilled more global projection overriding more local prosodic contextualization (Selting 1996a). In (2), there is simply a trail-off and a relinquishing of the unfinished fragment, i.e. a non-holding of the unit and turn or a yielding of the turn in spite of the yet incomplete syntactic unit in the given sequential context.

Ultimately, the fact that it is not units or fragments as such that are signalled by participants suggests that it is not the units themselves that are relevant for participants, but the activities related to the construction and delimitation of units in turns and of making recognizable the state of their production process within turns, i.e. the practices of beginning new units, of projecting or holding and continuing begun units with or without internal gaps or breaks, and of possibly ending units and yielding turns. This means that fragments of units as well as units themselves, are epiphenomena of the participants' activities and practices of constructing, organizing and making recognizable turns at talk for the recipient(s) in the interaction. This result thus supports research that aims at departing from the description of units and their properties as fixed and static entities and that focusses on the deconstruction and reconstruction of participants' activities and practices of constructing and making interpretable recognizable units and turns in interaction (Selting 1996a, cf. also Ford/Fox/Thompson 1996).

³ Cf. also Hoffmann (1991: 99ff.) who differentiates the procedures underlying the production of anacoluthons as 'Ausstieg', 'Retraktion' und 'Umstieg'.

Yet, as I have tried to show in a previous paper, these epiphenomena, i.e. units or TCUs in talk in turns, are by no means irrelevant for the internal and external organization of turns-at-talk in conversation (cf. Selting 1998).

In sum, fragments are interpreted as 'fragments' because they are the result of built up but unfulfilled or not (yet) completed projections in their given sequential context. And as any completion of a turn presupposes the concomitant completion of the last TCU of the turn, final fragments of units in a turn in all cases also imply unfinished turns. While, however, each turn-final fragment of a unit entails by implication the interpretation that the turn was left unfinished, not every turn that is left unfinished entails a fragment of a unit. We can easily imagine incomplete turns which nevertheless consist of complete TCUs, e.g. when a story is left unfinished without producing a fragmentary TCU before dropping out.

Appendix:

Transcription conventions

Sequential structure

[] overlap and simultaneous talk
= latching

Pauses

(.) micropause
(..) brief pause

Other segmental conventions

und=äh assimilations within units
:, ::, ::: segmental lengthening, according to duration
äh, öh, etc. hesitation signals, so-called 'filled pauses'
' cut-off with glottal closure

Laughter

so(h)o laugh particles within talk
haha hehe hihi laugh syllables
((lacht)) description of laughter

Recipieny tokens

hm, ja, nein, nee monosyllabic signals
hm=hm, ja=a, disyllabic signals
nei=ein, nee=e
'hm'hm with glottal stops, usually used for negative responses

Accentuation

ak**ZENT** strong, primary accent
akZENT weaker, secondary accents

Pitch upstep/downstep

<u> to higher pitch
<d> to lower pitch

Notation of pitch accent movements

\ falling to mid
/ rising to mid
- level

/\ rising-falling
\ / falling-rising

Notation of global pitch realised in the stretch of speech notated above the brackets

F() falling
R() rising
M() mid
H() high
L() low
M,F() falling within mid register
H,R() rising within high register
[() ()] combined contours constituting a paratone
({ }] embedded contour, e.g. for parentheses

Changes in loudness and speech rate

<<f> > =forte, loud
<<p> > =piano, soft
<<l> > =lento, slow
<<all> > =allegro, fast

Breathing

.h, .hh, .hhh inbreath, according to duration
h, hh, hhh outbreath, according to duration

Other conventions

((hustet)) para- und extralinguistic activities and events
<<hustend> > concomitant para- und extralinguistic activities and
(...) unintelligible according to duration

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