

POSTPRINT

CHAPTER 3

OKAY in responding and claiming understanding

Emma Betz and Arnulf Deppermann

University of Waterloo / Leibniz-Institut für Deutsche Sprache, Mannheim

With contributions from Elizabeth Couper-Kuhlen, Elwys De Stefani, Katariina Harjunpää, Kaoru Hayano, Henrike Helmer, Leelo Keevallik, Mary Shin Kim, Stephanie Hyeri Kim, Aino Koivisto, Satomi Kuroshima, Seung-Hee Lee, Xiaoting Li, Anna Lindström, Lorenza Mondada, Ana Cristina Ostermann, Søren Sandager Sørensen, Marja-Leena Sorjonen, Jakob Steensig, and Matylda Weidner

OKAY originates from English, but it is increasingly used across languages. This chapter presents data from 13 languages, illustrating the spectrum of possible uses of OKAY in responding and claiming understanding in contexts of informings. Drawing on a wide range of interaction types from both informal and institutional contexts, including those crucially involving embodied practices, we show how OKAY can be used to (i) claim sufficient understanding, (ii) mark understanding of the prior informing as preliminary or not complete, and (iii) index discrepancy of expectation.

Keywords: informing, second position, third position, closing, understanding, intersubjectivity, newsmark, continuer, (discrepancy of) expectation, prosody

1. Introduction

The uses of OKAY¹ discussed in this chapter form a family of uses whose members are related in various ways to the management of understanding in interaction, specifically in contexts of informings.² OKAY is indexical by nature: Its use for indexing understanding of a prior turn is tied to specific sequential and turn positions (cf. Sidnell 2014; Deppermann 2015). When OKAY is used in response to an

1. We use the all-capitals spelling of the particle to refer to the item in general, not to a particular prosodic realization or language-specific variant. When quoting a particular instance of OKAY, we display it in italics in its specific realization.

2. Chapter 4 also examines OKAY in other contexts, such as request and proposal sequences.

interlocutor's turn,³ it can embody some sort of understanding of that turn. Sacks (1992, vol. 2, 141) distinguishes *claiming* from *demonstrating* understanding (cf. Schegloff 1979). The latter involves giving proof or evidence of an understanding gained, for example by formulating an inference or by executing a fitting or mandated next action. The former can be performed by repetitions, nodding, and various response particles like OKAY. Being merely a claim to understanding, response practices do not give any evidence of the precise kind of understanding gained, and they therefore do not allow the producer of the first action to assess whether the claimed understanding is correct or not. OKAY, like other verbal resources for claiming understanding, can also be used for other actions involved in managing understanding and intersubjectivity in interaction, such as initiating repair (Rossi 2020), projecting the continuation of the interlocutor's turn (Schegloff 1982) or merely registering a piece of information, while not yet having understood its relevance to the larger topical, argumentative, or pragmatic context (Betz et al. 2013). Prosody plays a major role in distinguishing between these uses (cf. Thompson, Fox, and Couper-Kuhlen 2015 on the role of prosody in responses).

Responsive OKAY can receipt information as understood and sufficient (Section 2), thus allowing for sequence closing and a move to pending or next matters (see Chapter 4). OKAY, however, can also mark prior information as preliminary or not yet complete (Section 3) and thus invite continuation. It can furthermore communicate that a prior turn was counter to expectation, thus engendering elaborations and accounts (Section 4). There are still other uses of OKAY which contribute to managing understanding in interaction, for example its use as a tag which pursues a response or as a turn-final particle (see Couper-Kuhlen on English and Ostermann and Harjunpää on Portuguese, both in this volume) and its use at the beginning of an extended turn (see Lindström 2018 on Swedish and DeSouza et al. 2021 on English). In this chapter, however, we will restrict ourselves to stand-alone cases, that is, OKAYs which have their own prosodic contour and perform a single action. These tend to be OKAYs that form their own turn.

We begin, however, with an OKAY in German which combines with the change-of-state particle *aAH* 'oh' and is followed by talk that explicates the claim of understanding which it embodies. This suggests that 'claiming understanding' is indeed a participant category for the responsive uses in which we are interested. Excerpt 1 is from the four-person card game *Phase 10*, in which players advance

3. We use a broad understanding of response/responsive in this chapter and include next actions that are positionally sensitive but not sequence-specific, such as continuer uses of OKAY (see Section 3). See Enfield (2011, 286–287) for a broader and Thompson, Fox, and Couper-Kuhlen (2015, 2–10) for a narrower definition of what constitutes a 'response'.

through a set series of successively more difficult ‘phases’.⁴ In lines 1–2, Vincenzo (VIN, whose first language is Italian), who is learning the game, is asking for an explanation of the rules guiding Anna’s just-completed move.

Excerpt 1. *versteh ich* ‘I understand’ (Phase10.ms_03.2016_23:12–24:06), 2016, German, face-to-face, informal game-playing interaction

- 01 VIN: aber JEtzt wir sind auf den dritte, u:nd (.) sie
but now we’re on(to) the third ((phase)) and she
- 02 spielt auf den zweite. wie[=s geh]t das jetzt;
is playing the second how does that work now
- 03 ANN: [>ja<]]
yeah
- 04 BRI: JA WEI[%L- es ist] ein%facher für sie rauszulegen;%=
well cause it’s easier for her to lay down cards
bri %RH fwd-----%RH palm up gest twd VIN----%
- 05 ANN: [++jaJA.+]]
yeayeah
ann +moves hands apart+
- 06 BRI: =%als für uns.%
than for us
bri %retracts RH-%
- 07 natürlich hat sie bessere chancen ↑aufzuholen.
of course she has better chances to catchup
- 08 VIN: (m) okee;
- 09 BRI: aber es is: geht ganz nor↑mal.
but it’s proceeds as usual
- 10 du kannst bei ihr anlegen=
you can add to her cards
- 11 =so[bald du]deine phase ausgelegt hast.
as soon as you have displayed your phase
- 12 ANN: [genau.]]
exactly
- 13 ANN: [>ja<]]
yeah
- 14 VIN: [aA]H okay.=[okay:]]
oh
- 15 ANN: [°genau°]
exactly

4. A note of explanation for readers unfamiliar with the game: Completing a phase (see Anna’s celebratory announcement in line 20) means assembling a pre-described collection of cards (e.g., two sets of three, a run of seven) and then laying them down, face up. After completing a phase, players may add their left-over cards to other players’ completed and displayed collections (*rauslegen*, line 4). If a player fails to complete a certain phase, they must repeat it in the next game round. As a result, players typically have different collection goals in each round in which they are playing together.

Brigitte, the most experienced player, provides a response to Vincenzo's question in lines 4–11. Vincenzo receipts her explanation regarding Anna's play with *(m)okee*; (line 8). Brigitte then adds a prospectively-oriented reminder that the remaining game rules still apply (line 9) and formulates one of those rules (lines 10–11). This is endorsed by Anna (lines 12, 13) and receipted by Vincenzo in line 14: Vincenzo marks the prior as new information with *aAH* (Imo 2009; Golato 2010; see also Koivisto 2015b on now-understanding in Finnish), and the following OKAYs signal that the new information is to be taken as understood.⁵ That OKAY is proposing understanding is supported by the continuation of Vincenzo's turn in lines 17–18: He does not move to next or new matters but instead elaborates the claim adumbrated by the particle. Additionally, in his next turn a few seconds later (not shown), Vincenzo demonstrates his understanding by offering a correct application of a related rule. Examples in which OKAY is followed by self-reformulation suggests that OKAY is directly implicated in claiming understanding. In the remainder of this chapter, we illustrate different ways in which speakers across languages use free-standing OKAY as a resource in managing understanding in responsive turns.

What OKAY does crucially depends on the action that the prior turn has been implementing. While after assessments, proposals and suggestions, a free-standing OKAY conveys agreement, after informings, it works as a claim of (sufficient) understanding (Beach 1993, 329–331). An informing can be an announcement, an

5. For a more detailed analysis of change-of-state + OKAY combinations, see Helmer et al. on German and Koivisto and Sorjonen on Finnish, both in this volume.

explanation, a piece of news, a reporting, or part of a telling, for which particles are a common format for responding (for English, see Thompson et al. 2015, 64–84). Informings can be volunteered, elicited, or offered as part of a larger activity (a story or other telling), and particle responses thus appear in different sequential positions (second or third). We first show how OKAY is used as a second- or third-position receipt after informings and explanations, both solicited and unsolicited. Excerpt 2 illustrates the use of OKAY in Mandarin in second position to an announcement. Four student friends – Lim, Lien, Ruiling, and Peng – are playing cards around a table (see Figures 1, 2). Lim verbally (line 1) and gesturally (line 3) marks the beginning of the card game. Before the excerpt below, participants had decided to play – and be recorded – for an hour.



Figure 1. Participants from left to right, clockwise: Lim, Lien, Ruiling, and Peng. Ruiling (back right) is pointing and Lim (front left) is gazing at the timer (line 4)



Figure 2. Mutual gaze between Ruiling (back right) and Lim (front left) during *okay*; (line 6)

Excerpt 2. *jishi qi* ‘timer’ (card game_Video_02:50 (V5) Corpus 3), 2014, Mandarin, face-to-face, informal game-playing interaction

- 01 LIM: (okay) na women kaishi ba.
 then let's begin
- 02 (0.3) ((LIM: brief gaze up))
- 03 LIM: ((knocks table with cards twice))

- 04 RUI: +zhe bianr &you #shi+jian& you
 this side have time have
 there's time a timer on this side
 +...points to timer->gaze to LIM----->
 lim &gaze to timer&gaze forw to RUI-->
 fig #fig.1
- 05 jishi q[i ke]yi kandao.
 timer can see
 ((we)) can see the timer
- 06 LIM: [&°o#kay;°&+]
 &nod---->&
 rui ,,,,,>+gaze away
 fig #fig.2
- 07 LIM: &.hh &wo- women *shi ba:&
 we be BA⁶
 ,,,>&gaze to left to LIM&
 &circling gest w/r/index&
 *head tilt to right tow LIM
- 08 suoyou de pai dou fawan dui bu dui.
 all ASSC cards all hand out right NEG right
 we will take all the cards, right?

In line 4, Ruiling (who is sitting diagonally across from Lim) announces that the recording device on her side of the table includes a timer. Lim directs his gaze to the device to which Ruiling is pointing (Figure 1) and receipts her announcement with OKAY (Figure 2) and a simultaneous down-up head nod (on the coordination of nodding and OKAY, see Helmer et al. in this volume). Formal features of the particle include low pitch onset, low volume and falling pitch. Ruiling orients to Lim's OKAY-turn as a receipt of information and claim of sufficient understanding: She retracts her pointing finger and shifts her gaze away from Lim (line 6). Lim's bodily conduct also indicates that no further expansion of the subject matter is needed: He shifts his gaze to another participant (Lien, sitting to his left) and resumes game preparations by addressing to Lien a candidate understanding of a game rule (lines 7–8). OKAY-turns such as the one shown here mark information as sufficient, thus claiming understanding and, as a corollary, promoting sequence closing. After OKAY, speakers or recipients return to pending matters or move to next matters.

OKAYs regularly constitute third-position responses in question-elicited informings. In such sequences, elicited information is treated as sufficient with OKAY produced by the speaker who explicitly requested the informing. A claim of understanding systematically coincides with the proposal that sequence closing is appropriate (cf. Grosz 1982, 153); such OKAYs thus function as sequence-closing thirds (Schegloff 2007, 115–168; see also Chapter 4 in this volume). Excerpt 3 comes

6. Glosses used: BA = pretransitive marker in the BA-construction; ASSC = associative marker; NEG = negator.

from a Finnish interaction between friends and family on a Sunday afternoon. Paavo, Susa and Maija usually eat Sunday lunch with Susa's and Maija's father, who lives upstairs in the same building. On this particular Sunday, Maija was not present at the family lunch, and this motivates the question in line 1. Previously, the participants have been talking about the rings Maija is wearing, and during a 1.8 second silence just prior to line 1, Susa has been inspecting Maija's rings, trying to read the rings' inscriptions (Figure 3). Maija's question in line 1 is thus unrelated to the prior topic.



Figure 3. PAA (Paavo), IIN (Iina), SUS (Susa) and MAI (Maija), clockwise, seated in Susa and Paavo's home. Susa is trying to read the inscription on Maija's ring (line 12)

Excerpt 3. *ruoka* 'food' (Aineisto1_30_40), 2011, Finnish, face-to-face, informal conversation

- 01 MAI: ettekste ollu yläkerrassa syömäs;
 didn't you.PL have lunch upstairs
- 02 PAA: olti[in.]
 ((we)) did
- 03 MAI: [°↑(aa)], 'oo°,
 (aa) yeah
- 04 SUS: **kaisa** °j[a<°]
 Kaisa ((name)) °and°
- 05 MAI: [mitä r]uoka[a;]
 what food
- 06 SUS: [°hei]kki°=
 Heikki ((name))
- 07 PAA: =toi kanakastiketta ja,h
 =that chicken stew and h
- 08 (0.4)
- 09 SUS: yheksä_j_&ja kahek[sankyt,]
 nine and eighty
 mai &head up
- 10 PAA: [&semmosta.]&
 like that
 mai &head down-&
- 11 (0.4)

- 12 MAI: ↑(o) #kei; ↑
 fig #fig.3
- 13 (0.5)
- 14 SUS: °mikäköhän toi o°?, ((looking at Maja's ring))
 I wonder what that is
- 15 MAI: mites (.) oliko eilen pitkään ne (.) tyypit täällä;
 how were the guys long here yesterday

Maija's gaze direction and the fact that Susa is focused on inspecting the rings in her hand (and continues to do so during Maija's and Paavo's exchange, lines 4, 6, 9, 14) suggest that line 1 is addressed to Paavo. Paavo gives an affirmative answer using verb repeat in line 2 (as is common in Finnish, see Sorjonen 2001, 93–130); he does not elaborate. After receipting Paavo's answer, Maija asks a follow-up question concerning the specific food served for lunch (lines 3, 5). Paavo's answer (line 7) offers a name for the dish that was served, *kana-kastike-tta* 'chicken stew'. This turn ends with *ja* 'and', and after a pause, Paavo adds a non-specific list-completer *semmos-ta* 'like that' (line 10). Maija now produces a third-position, high-register ↑(o)kei; ↑ (line 12), which treats the answer as understandable, appropriate, and sufficiently informative and thus proposes sequence closure. Sequence and topic do not continue beyond the OKAY turn; instead, Maija proffers a new topic in line 15. As a consequence, this use of OKAY in third position also indicates that the first pair part was designed as a request for information (cf. Heritage 1984a; 2018b, 46, fn. 15; Schegloff 2007, 37): The question about having lunch upstairs is not a potential new topic but purely an information-seeking question that does not need to be elaborated beyond the answer that provides the requested information.

OKAY is also used in third position in insertion sequences, e.g., repair sequences, where treating an answer as sufficiently informative for present purposes proposes a successful closure of the insertion. Excerpt 4, taken from a Japanese phone conversation between HUS, who is currently abroad, and his wife (WIF), who is in Japan, illustrates this. HUS is planning to send a letter to his wife and is now checking to make sure that the letter will arrive in the right place (*Okinawa*, line 2) at the right time (before the 25th).

Excerpt 4. *tegami* 'letter' (CallHome/jpn/0924_08:43), 1996, Japanese, telephone, informal conversation

- 01 HUS: ja tegami ga tsuku koro wa
 then by the time my letter arrives
- 02 kitto t- #u-# okinawa da ne.
 ((you)) will probably be in Okinawa
- 03 WIF: soo da ne?
 that's right
- 04 HUS: nn.
 yeah

- 05 WIF: un, [un.
yeah yeah
- 06 HUS: [okinawa (no koro) da naa::, .hh so-
(it) will be around the time
when ((you)) are in Okinawa .hh so
- 07 WIF: nijuugo made iru.
twenty fifth until stay
until the 25th ((we)) will stay
- 08 HUS: okinawa ni ne?
in Okinawa right?
- 09 WIF: u:n.=
yeah
- 10 HUS: =>ok↓ke.< sorede sa::,
then PRT
and you know
- 11 WIF: u:n,
yeah

HUS moves toward sequence closing in line 6, but with WIF's addition of specific information in line 7, a possible understanding problem seems to emerge for him. HUS offers a candidate understanding (line 8), which amounts to a question making relevant a yes- or no-response. HUS's understanding is confirmed by WIF. In next position, HUS receipts this with a falling-intoned >ok↓ke.< and then shifts to next matters. HUS's >ok↓ke.< proposes sufficient understanding in the sense that it marks that the answer aligns with what HUS had assumed and is sufficiently informative to enable HUS to carry out his planned course of action (sending a letter to arrive in Okinawa while his wife is still there).

The function of OKAY to indicate that an information-focused question has been sufficiently dealt with can also be used to communicate a more specific stance toward the prior turn in third position: An OKAY-turn can propose that the recipient has provided *too much* information, thus curtailing the (projected) further development of a sequence, for example an elaborate correction of a candidate understanding. Proposing that the prior is *more than sufficient* or "overdone" (Stivers 2004, 271), that is, that a speaker has "persisted unnecessarily in the current course of action" (Stivers 2004, 260), can be done with multiple OKAYs, which then target not only the just-provided information but rather the larger course of action.⁷

Third-position OKAY in informing sequences can also receipt an answer as sufficiently informative within a larger activity organized by sequences of questions

7. For a particularly clear example of this use with *okhe=okhe* in Korean, see Excerpt 4 "Unable to make it" in Kuroshima et al. (this volume); for an example of multiple OKAYs in English, see Stivers (2004, 270–271). This effect of reduplication, however, is not specific to OKAY; see for instance Barth-Weingarten (2011b) on German *jaja*, Kunnari (2011) on Finnish *joojoo*, and Keavallik (2010c) on reduplicated imperatives in Estonian.

and answers, for instance the history-taking phase in a doctor-patient encounter (see Beach 1995b, 266–267 for English). Excerpt 5 is from a Brazilian Portuguese interaction during an obstetric ultrasound exam performed by a physician. It is taken from the anamnesis phase, at a point at which the physician has already asked several questions. His query in line 1 concerns the medical history of the patient's mother.

Excerpt 5. *pressão alta* 'high blood pressure' (ECOCLIN_GABRIEL_Agata_RM_07_01_2013 00.38), 2013, Brazilian Portuguese, face-to-face, doctor-patient interaction

- 01 ECO: >↑sabe< se a tua mãe teve
do you know if your mother had
- 02 pressão alta na gestação?=
high blood pressure during pregnancy
- 03 PAT: =nã:o.
no
- 04 (0.1)
- 05 ECO: .hh[h
- 06 PAT: [não ↓teve;
((she)) didn't
- 07 ECO: °oq(h)ue:i?° <e: a- >e a< gestação
and the and the pregnancy
- 08 (.) é:: foi espon↑tânea
uh was ((it)) spontaneous
- 09 >ou tu< precisou fazê algum tratamento
or did you need to have some treatment
- 10 pra [(ele::)]
in order to
- 11 PAT: [foi] espontânea.
((it)) was spontaneous

In lines 1–2, the physician asks a 'do you know'-framed next question, to which the patient responds with *nã:o* 'no' (line 3). After a pause in line 4, the patient redoes her answer with a verb repeat response (*nã:o teve* '((she)) didn't'). She thus removes a possible ambiguity in her initial answer (in line 3) between responding to the 'do you know'-frame ('no' = I don't know the answer) and responding to the proposition of the question ('no' = she didn't have high blood pressure). The physician's third-position °*oq(h)ue:i?*° receipts the information given in line 6, marking it as now sufficient. In the larger activity of history-taking, the understanding claim with OKAY enables progression to the next point, in which the physician now topicalizes the patient's own pregnancy (lines 7–10). This OKAY thus is a boundary case, combining the use of indexing sufficient understanding with the use as a transition marker as discussed in Chapter 4 of this volume. The occurrence of °*oq(h)ue:i?*° at the juncture between two question-elicited informing sequences within a larger activity may also account for the prosodic delivery of the particle

with rising intonation (rather than with the falling intonation we observe as typical for the uses illustrated in this section; on the interaction between the intonation of OKAY and topic shift, see also Heritage and Clayman 2010, 110–115). OKAYs with final rising intonation and marked prosody systematically index not-yet-complete understanding and counter-to-expectation informings and thus make more talk from the prior speaker relevant (see Sections 3 and 4; cf. Oloff 2019).⁸ This is not the case in the present example: The particle is quiet and aspirated, and it is not oriented to by the patient as encouraging more talk. Instead, rising intonation here seems to contribute to projecting that the physician will continue with a next item within the larger activity (cf. Barth-Weingarten 2002, 2009), and the *and*-prefacing of the next item supports this (Heritage and Sorjonen 1994; Nevile 2007).

The larger activity context is also relevant in the next excerpt from an Estonian phone conversation, in which the OKAY-speaker explicitly formulates the action that the just-received information makes relevant. Merilin (MER) is at work in an office building, when Hannes (HAN) calls her from his car. Merilin responds to the summons in line 1 and asks, immediately after Hannes' self-identification (line 3), for his location (line 4). This points to a prior arrangement between the two: Hannes seems to be picking up Merilin from work.

Excerpt 6. *Balti jaamast* 'from Balti station' (CASE 2. M1A8, Tallinn), 1998/99, Estonian, telephone, informal conversation

- 01 MER: -lo;
 (hel)lo
- 02 (0.3)
- 03 HAN: tere hannes on siinpool.
 hi it's Hannes ((speaking)) here
- 04 MER: jah. kuspool.
 yeah where
- 05 HAN: ole-n liikvel. (.) [sinu] poole.
 I am moving toward you
- 06 MER: [jah];
 yeah;
- 07 MER: [balti jaama-st.]
 from Balti ((name)) station.
- 08 HAN: [ole-n TEE-L] su poole.
 I am on my way to you
- 09 (.) balti jaama-st jah;
 from Balti station, yeah
- 10 MER: oKEI.
- 11 (0.2)

8. For a similar argument regarding English *oh* in informing sequences (that is, a systematic connection between *oh* indexing “now K+” vs. “not yet fully K+” and falling vs. rising intonation), see Thompson et al. 2015, 56–57.

- 12 MER: akka-n kokku pane-ma asju ja alla tule-n.
I'll begin to collect my stuff and come down
- 13 HAN: no: akka jah,
do that
- 14 MER: jah;
yeah

Hannes' location description in line 5 as 'moving toward you' leads to an understanding check by way of a syntactic extension (line 7). In line 9, Hannes provides a repeat-formatted confirmation, and this confirmation is receipted by Merilin with *oKEI*. That this OKAY constitutes an understanding *claim*, that is, a claim to having been sufficiently informed for present purposes, is supported by Merilin's announcement after *oKEI*: With *akka-n kokku pane-ma asju ja alla tule-n*. 'I'll begin to collect my stuff and come down', she formulates the next actions following from Hannes' informing concerning his current location, thus essentially offering an understanding *demonstration* (cf. Grosz 1982, 153). Since the understanding which is embodied by *oKEI*: here concerns an expected next action,⁹ it is also related to the use as a device indexing transition to a next activity (cf. Bangerter and Clark 2003; Bangerter, Clark, and Katz 2004; Merritt 1978; see Chapter 4, this volume). This promise of action reflects Merilin's understanding of agreed-upon plans and is endorsed by Hannes in line 13 with *no: akka jah*, 'do that', a responsive imperative that provides a go-ahead for the action to which Merilin is already committed (Zinken and Deppermann 2017; Heinemann and Steensig 2017; Keevallik 2017; Sorjonen 2017).

In Excerpt 7, similar to Excerpt 6, a third-position OKAY follows a repeat-formatted confirmation of an understanding. In this phone conversation, the caller makes a request for help with a malfunctioning elevator (lines 1–2), which is rejected by the operator in line 3. The caller then formulates an understanding for confirmation in line 5.

Excerpt 7. *ascenseur* 'elevator' (Jean2/rec2/2.05), 2003, French, telephone, service encounter

- 01 APP: .h euh: ce soir ça serait possible
.h uhm this evening would it be possible
- 02 de me dépanner ou [pas?
to assist me or not?
- 03 OPE: [non.<
no
- 04 (0.4)

9. In responding to an informing, this OKAY thus not only marks sufficient understanding of the informing but also conveys that the informing has implications for the respondent's own future behavior. Couper-Kuhlen (2019a) terms this a "consequential" use of OKAY.

- 05 APP: ah ça fait demain?
oh this means tomorrow?
- 06 (0.2)
- 07 OPE: demain oui.
tomorrow yes
- 08 APP: o:ké.
- 09 OPE: au r'voir,
bye
- 10 APP: très bien, à demain
very good, see you tomorrow

After having completed a description of the problem that he is currently experiencing (not shown), the caller launches a request that targets the time at which help could be delivered. *Ce soir* 'tonight' (line 1) is positioned early in the caller's turn, which is formatted as a polar question and closed by *ou pas* 'or not', indicating that the speaker now expects a negative answer. This final *ou pas* is overlapped by the operator's *non* 'no'. The caller registers the straightforward rejection of the time with *ah* in line 5 (in this context similar to *oh* in English; Heritage 1984a) and then offers the new temporal reference *demain* 'tomorrow'. This turn is designed as a conclusion from the prior sequence (with *ça fait* 'this/that means') and as dependent on the prior talk.¹⁰ The conclusion is confirmed in line 7 by the operator and followed by the caller's *o:ké*. The claim to having been sufficiently informed for present purposes in this example allows for sequence closing and a transition to the next relevant step, in this case conversation closing. Note that the caller reuses the lexical item *demain* in the final greetings (line 10), which is another way of ratifying the new, agreed-upon time.

The specialized use of OKAY as a claim to sufficient understanding of information emerges particularly clearly in contexts in which the particle is followed by a separate element dedicated to sequence closing or transition (e.g., Polish *do:bra*: 'good'; Portuguese *tudo bem*. 'alright', see line 21 of Excerpt 10 "That type of information" in Ostermann and Harjunpää, this volume). Prosodic shape seems to be an important feature of OKAY: As the excerpts above illustrate, OKAY in this use tends to be realized with falling pitch (cf. Gravano et al. 2012).¹¹

OKAYs also serve as receipts after other-corrections and disconfirmations, thus marking *revised understanding*. In these contexts, OKAY regularly co-occurs with

10. Compare uses of German *das heißt* 'that means' and *du meinst* 'you mean', as described by Helmer and Zinken (2019).

11. See Golato and Betz (2008) and Golato (2010) for similar observations regarding understanding claims in third position and the prosodic realization of the German particle combination *achso* 'oh I see'. Thompson et al. (2015, 55) note that falling intonation is typical of sequence-curtailling responses to question-elicited informings in English in general.

tokens registering a change of epistemic state (e.g., *a:* in Korean, *ah* in Chinese; cf. Oloff 2019; Helmer et al. this volume). Yet, more rarely, there are also cases in which a free-standing OKAY occurs by itself as change-of-state token. Such OKAYs thus appear to index a transition from a state of not knowing to now knowing (Heritage 1984a, 2012a; cf. Heinemann and Koivisto 2016a). The use of OKAY as a stand-alone change-of-state token can be observed in the next example from Mandarin Chinese. Here, however, it combines with an additional note of concession. Don, Yua, Hon, and Min are friends who are talking about children's reaction to divorce. Don has maintained that divorcing parents should talk with their teenage children about divorce reasons, rather than merely informing their children. This, he argues, would make it easier to understand and accept the situation. Yua, to the contrary, has argued that no matter how much parents talk to their children, they would not be able to understand *zhezong qingkuang* 'this situation'. Don now objects that Yua does not have any experience of such a 'type of situation' (lines 1–2).

Excerpt 8. *zhezong qingkuang* 'this type of situation' (Tea talk_Audio 01:11:21, Corpus 3, Edmonton), 2014, Mandarin, face-to-face, informal interaction

- 01 DON: *shouxian shi zheyang de;*
first of all it's like this
- 02 *yi:: ni meiyou yudao zhezong qingkuang.*
first you didn't encounter this type of situation
- 03 YUA: *wo yudao zhezong qingkuang;*
I encountered this type of situation
- 04 *[ni ping] shenme shuo wo mei=*
you depend on what say I NEG
what makes you say I didn't
- 05 DON: *[ah yu]*
AH en(counter)
- 06 YUA: *=yudao [zhezong qingkuang.]²*
encounter this type of situation
- 07 DON: *[+O:#°kay.°+= [ni yudao zhe]¹zhong]²=*
you encountered this type of
+head/gaze up+
fig #fig.4
- 08 MIN: *[&kHHH!&]¹*
&gaze to Don, then Yua&
- 09 DON: *=qingkuang.= [na +jiu%shi²] (0.2)+(0.2)%*
situation that just be
situation then (it's) just
+gaze to Yua----+
%head tilt to left%
- 10 YUA: *[*°dui.°*]*
right.
gaze down, away from Don
- 11 DON: *.h danshi wo ye wo queshi*
but I also I indeed



Figure 4. Participants clockwise from left: Min, Don, Yuan, and Hon. Don moves his head upward on *O:°kay.°*

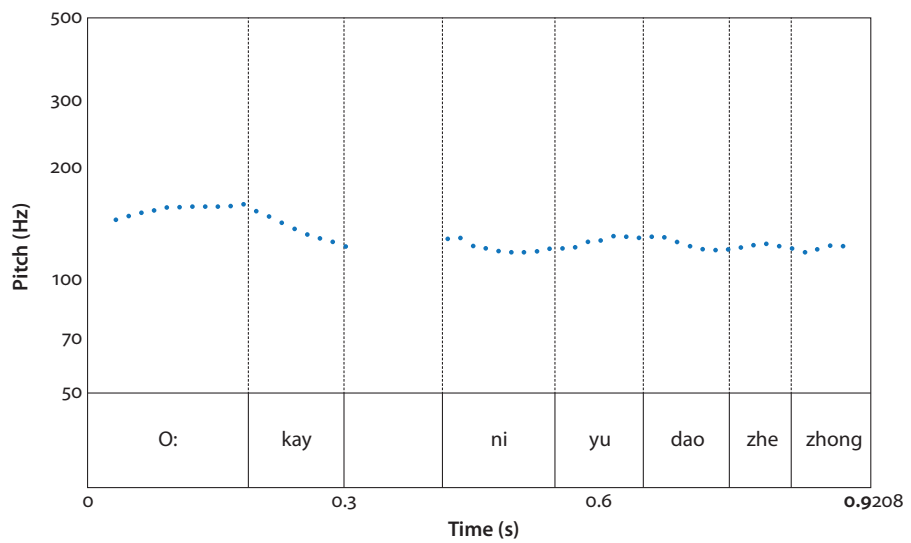


Figure 5. Pitch trace for *O:°kay.°=ni yudao zhezong*, in line 7

Yuan corrects Don’s assumption (line 3) and then asks Don for a justification (lines 4, 6), a move which amounts to an accusation. In overlap, Don receipts Yuan’s correction as news with a change-of-state token (*ah*, line 5), and, still in overlap with Yuan, produces an OKAY and repeats Yuan’s correction (lines 7, 9). The OKAY here is produced in second position in a repair sequence: correction – OKAY. The *O:°kay.°* follows a change-of-state claim (line 5) and is realized with a higher-pitch, lengthened first syllable and a softer, falling second syllable (see Figure 5).¹² There is a slight hiatus between the first and the second syllable, whose prosodic deliveries

12. Compare Koivisto (2015b) on indexing revised understanding with Finnish *aa* after corrections, and her discussion of how the prosodic realization of the particle is systematically connected to upgrading or downplaying the proposed cognitive shift.

contrast sharply, sounding like two quite distinct parts: *O: + kay*. This may suggest that both parts are designed to express the two different actions in play here: indexing a change of state with the first part (which has more phonetic prominence) and indexing concession with the second part (which is delivered like an agreeing OKAY). This analysis is also supported by the fact that on the first syllable of *O:°kay.°*, Don nods up (Figure 4), as is common for change-of-state tokens (cf. Helmer et al. in this volume), shifting his gaze away from Yuan, and then lowers his head again on the second syllable. In this sequential position, after an other-correction, OKAY conveys a change of epistemic state, but also concession, because the OKAY-speaker backs down from his prior assumption (that his interlocutor is not knowledgeable about the matters talked about) in response to the interlocutor's correction and accusation.¹³ This double function of OKAY as indicating a change in epistemic state and indicating a concession is reinforced by the ensuing repetition of the concession by the OKAY-speaker. The subsequent interaction (not shown here) gives further evidence of Don's revised understanding after OKAY.

We have seen that OKAY can be used to display sufficient understanding of a volunteered first-position or elicited second-position informing. In the response to multi-unit narratives or informings, OKAY is contrastively used with other displays of reciprocity: When items such as English *mh*, *mhm*, and *yes* have been used as continuers supporting the production of a lengthy multi-unit turn under way, OKAY is used only later to convey that the recipient considers the story or informing to be now complete and that they have understood it sufficiently. Excerpt 9, taken from a telephone call in Polish, is a case in point. A client has called a company selling shelves. In the excerpt, the salesperson instructs the client on how to find a specific type of shelf on their website. He tells the client that he needs to use the search window (line 1) and enter the product code (line 2). He then starts dictating the code number by number (lines 2–15).

Excerpt 9. *siedemdziesiąt sześć* 'seventy-six' (VN680313_numbers okej), 2009, Polish, telephone, service encounter

- 01 SAL: w lewym górnym rogu:: jest pole szukaj i tam=
in left top corner is (a) field search and there
- 02 =proszę wp[isać] (.) .hh twadzieścia trzy: ,
please write .hh twenty three
- 03 CLI: [tak,]
yes
- 04 (2.4) ((C is typing the numbers))
- 05 CLI: <ta::k,>
yes

13. A concessive use in American English can be found in Couper-Kuhlen (this volume; Excerpt 15 "Blow off your girlfriends"). See also Heisler (1996, 300–301) for a description of a concessive use of OKAY in Montréal French.

06 SAL: sześćdziesiąt sześć,
 sixty six
 07 (0.8) ((C is typing the numbers))
 08 CLI: ta:k_
 yes
 09 SAL: pięćdziesiąt cztery,
 fifty four
 10 (1.0) ((C is typing the numbers))
 11 CLI: °ta:k_
 yes
 12 SAL: osiemna:ście,
 eighteen
 13 (1.0) ((C is typing the numbers))
 14 CLI: ta::k_
 yes
 15 SAL: siedemdziesiąt sześć.
 seventy six
 16 (0.5) ((C is typing the numbers))
 17 CLI: <siedemdziesiąt> sześć. ↑o↓ke::j.
 seventy six
 18 (1.0) ((audible key stroke))
 19 CLI: o:::: y:::: jest.
 PRT PRT I got it
 oh uh I got it.

When dictating the code, the salesperson delivers it in two-digit chunk installments (cf. Clark and Brennan 1991; Svennevig 2018; see also Sorjonen 2001, 251–253 on receiving three-digit chunks of phone numbers with *joo* in Finnish), each indexed through a final rise as being not yet complete. Each of the subsequent installments is received by the client with the acknowledgment token *tak* ‘yes’ (lines 5, 8, 11, 14), after he has typed the respective two-digit chunk into the search window. *Tak* at the same time is used as a continuer, giving the salesperson a go-ahead to produce the next digits. In line 15, the salesperson delivers the last two digits, bringing his multi-unit turn to a possible completion (note the final falling intonation). Having typed the numbers in the search window (line 16), the client repeats the last two digits and then, in his second TCU in the same turn (line 17), produces an accented $\uparrow o \downarrow ke:j$. This $\uparrow o \downarrow ke:j$ exhibits a pitch peak on the first syllable and a falling contour on the second syllable, which indexes the speaker’s understanding that the activity of dictating is now complete and has sufficiently been understood. OKAY does not itself close the sequence but projects closure, which is then realized with the client’s key stroke (line 18), through which he sends his web-query. This action, which builds on the informing, provides further evidence that $\uparrow o \downarrow ke:j$ indexes the sufficiency of the informing. In his subsequent turn, the client declares that he has

found the merchandise he was looking for. The first item in the client's turn is the noticing particle *o:::*, followed by the stretched hesitation marker *y:::*, which may indicate the client's attempt at locating the item, and by the verb *jest*, which refers to the item as 'just found'.

Excerpt 9 shows that in responding to a lengthy multi-unit turn *in fieri*, OKAY has greater 'weight' than response particles which precede OKAY as acknowledgment tokens and continuers. OKAY indexes that the main information has been conveyed and that an understanding which is sufficient for the current practical purposes has been gained. However, using OKAY to index understanding of a major point made in an interlocutor's lengthy turn does not necessarily imply treatment of that turn as closed. Rather, the use of OKAY as an understanding claim may combine with continuer functions. This is the case in Excerpt 10, taken from a phone-call in Italian. A bank employee (PAD) has called a client (BOR) to 'invite him to a meeting at the bank' (not shown), where he would be presented with new products and services (see De Stefani 2018). BOR works towards declining the invitation, mentioning that his second son was just born and that he is therefore unable to make an appointment at this point in time. The excerpt starts with the employee's response to the client's account.

Excerpt 10. *alla banca* 'at the bank' (obfc5, 06:47–07:08), 2008, Italian, telephone, sales call

- 01 PAD: niente [passi[: adesso (.) con calma si:: goda=
fine come now without hurry enjoy
- 02 BOR: [va- [f-
- 03 PAD: =questo momento ((chuckles)) (che è:)
this moment which is
- 04 BOR: [si: adesso:: se
yes now if
- 05 non è questa settimana [sarà nella prossima=
it's not this week it will be the next
- 06 PAD: [no:: ().
no
- 07 BOR: =però boh intanto io:: son sempre di passaggio
but I dunno in the meantime I am always passing
- 08 alla [banca perché poi-
at the bank because then-
- 09 PAD: [sì (.) esatto.
yes right.
- 10 (0.4)
- 11 BOR: eh:: lavoro: lavorando nella ristorazione
uh I work ((since I'm)) working in catering
- 12 ho: abbastanza::
I have enough

- 13 PAD: **↑occhei;=**
 14 BOR: **=contatto colla banca e poi al massimo posso**
 contact with the bank and then at the latest I can
 15 **chiedere anche lì al: ^eh**
 ask also there at uh
 16 (0.5)
 17 PAD: **[ad ((place name)).]**
 in ((place name))
 18 BOR: **[allo sportel]lo**
 at the counter
 19 PAD: **sì sì anche allo [sportello.**
 yes yes also at the counter
 20 BOR: **[ad ((place name)).**
 in ((place name))

PAD's response (lines 1, 3) leaves the initiative to visit the bank to the client and thus displays her orientation that the phone call will be closed without an appointment. BOR accepts the invitation without a definite commitment by affirming that he will visit the bank within the next two weeks (lines 4–5, 7). He explains that he regularly passes by the bank (lines 7–8) because of his work in catering (line 8–14). During BOR's lengthy TCU in line 11–15, PAD produces an **↑okay;** with high onset and falling final pitch (line 13). It is produced at a point at which BOR's talk is incomplete syntactically, prosodically, and pragmatically; the particle therefore clearly is not at a TRP, yet it is produced in the clear, without overlap. With **↑okay;**, PAD acknowledges BOR's working in the catering business as new information (it was not mentioned in previous talk), thus displaying a change of epistemic state. In addition, the precise placement of **↑okay;** after *ho: abbastanza::* 'I have enough' (line 12) may also convey that BOR already anticipates the argumentative point BOR's turn is designed to make: that BOR's work is the reason why he has regular contact with the bank. In this sense, **↑okay;** would not only claim understanding of new information but simultaneously index an understanding of what the turn-in-progress projects and is to accomplish as an action. Yet, the precise positioning of **↑okay;** also indexes that PAD expects BOR to keep the floor. In continuing his turn in line 14 without any delay and by producing a coherent next syntactic constituent (a direct object NP) which fits the clausal frame established by *ho: abbastanza::*, BOR also treats **↑okay;** as a continuer,¹⁴ through which PAD aligns herself with his ongoing turn-production.

14. We use the term 'continuer' here in a rather broad sense, as conveying an understanding that the prior/ongoing turn is not complete and that the prior speaker is expected to continue. We will show and discuss examples of continuer uses as understood more narrowly in Schegloff (1982, 2007) and Heritage (1984a), that is, of OKAY used to simply or primarily pass a turn at talk (and thus distinct from, e.g., newsmarks), in Section 3.

Excerpt 10 has shown that, depending on the sequential position of its production, OKAY can carry out multiple local functions. In the specific case from our Italian data, proposing an epistemic change of state combines with the use of OKAY as a continuer. In addition to this, a claim to anticipating a projectable course of a turn in progress and to understanding its pragmatic import are possibly in play as well.

Prior research has described ‘accepting’ as a core function of responsive OKAY (Beach 1993, 1995b; Schegloff 2007, 128). Section 2 has illustrated a range of uses of OKAY after informings, where ‘accepting’ can be specified as ‘marking a prior turn as sufficiently informative for present purposes’. In this specific context, accepting then amounts to claiming understanding. As a corollary to claiming understanding, these OKAYs propose that sequence closing is appropriate and thus enable a move to pending or next matters.¹⁵ The OKAY uses illustrated here are thus sequentially non-continuative, and this seems to be reflected in the prosodic realization of the particle as well. In the uses illustrated in Section 2, OKAY tends to be realized with falling pitch, which has been suggested as typical of sequence-curtailling responses in some languages (see Golato 2010; Thompson et al. 2015, 55, 135). As highlighted in Chapter 2 of this volume (Betz and Sorjonen), the functional spectrum of OKAY emerges more clearly if OKAY is compared to alternative response types available to speakers in similar sequential environments, such as minimal clausal responses (repeats) or other particles. In third-position uses, especially in informing sequences that involve corrections, OKAY contrasts with (partial) repeats: Repeat responses register information without necessarily showing commitment to it or claiming understanding of its relevance. They are thus not sequence-closing (Svennevig 2004; Betz et al. 2013) or at least equivocal for participants (Schegloff 2007, 126–127; Koivisto 2019). In foregrounding ‘acceptance’ and understanding, non-continuative OKAY also contrasts with particle responses that anchor (now-)understanding in claims to have just retrieved or reactivated existing knowledge, and with particles that foreground the receipt of new or newsworthy information (see Heinemann and Koivisto 2016a). In the next section, we will show that responsive OKAY can also be sequence-continuative. Sequential placement (e.g., at the beginning or in the middle of extended informings) and prosodic design are crucial in distinguishing such continuative uses from those seen in Excerpts 1–9.

15. Transitional uses of OKAY, that is, OKAYs that project and prefigure next moves, topics, and activities, are described in depth in Chapter 4.

3. OKAY marks understanding of prior informing as preliminary or not complete

OKAY can, as we saw in Excerpt 10, be used (and taken) to propose an understanding of the prior action as preliminary to further talk and thus as projecting more. Such OKAYs are followed by more talk by the prior speaker. In this section, we look more closely at uses of the particle that convey an understanding of the prior talk as not (yet) complete. Incompleteness may already have been indexed by the prior speaker themselves (e.g., by continuative prosody), but OKAY can also suggest that the prior turn is in need of expansion when the prior speaker did not project turn-continuation. A primary case is the use of OKAY as a continuer during extended tellings (Schegloff 1982, 2007), which we illustrate with the next two excerpts. In Excerpt 11, taken from an American English phone conversation, Debbie is responding to her friend Sara's query (line 1) by explaining what she does on her part-time job. The explanation proper is launched in line 3 with a *well*-prefaced unit but then discontinued for a parenthetical insert sequence (lines 4–10). It is resumed with *we:ll* in line 11, a preface which contributes to projecting an expanded response (Heritage 2015).

Excerpt 11. *Scheduling* (Call Friend Engn 6239, 1669.808), 1996/97, American English, telephone, informal conversation

```

01 SAR:  what are you doing.
02      (0.9)
03 DEB:  !p well I- I'm working in (0.8)
04      >I mean< it has nothing to do with fi:lm;
05      (.) °at a:ll.°
06      [°you kno:w°]
07 SAR:  [↑I know    ] is it like secretarial stuff?=
08      =or [what.   ]
09 DEB:  [yea:h; ]
10      it's (0.3) it's secretarial;=
11      =↑we:ll_ .hhh I- ↑what I do ↓m:ost of the ti::me;
12      i:s u:m (0.5) I: (1.1)
13      ↑each (.) ↑they bring in like these people
14      to interview, for high level positions,
15 SAR:  [mhm:,]
16 DEB:  [.hhh ] and (0.2) when they come in
17      to interview;=the:y (.) have to interview
18      with like eight peopl:e,
19      (0.6)

```

20 SAR: [°m:↓kay_°]
 21 DEB: [!t they] have to do like
 22 eight hours of interviewing.
 23 ↑and the(y) these people come from
 24 all over the country;=
 25 =so I have to arra:nge schedules so that a:ll
 26 of the panel members, a:nd the (.) candidate?
 27 .hhh are free: on the sa:me da:y,=
 28 =and then I have to arra:nge the schedules
 29 with the panel members,
 30 .hhhh and then I have to li:ke (.)
 31 se:nd documentation to the candidate
 32 and °to the panels.°
 33 (0.2)
 34 so ↑that's what I do most of the time
 35 is sche:duli:ng?
 36 SAR: [↑O:↓kay;]
 37 DEB: [.hh] but- (0.3) but I also do::-
 38 like whatever else °they need me to do:..°

In line 18 Debbie has not yet reached a point of possible pragmatic completion. The slightly rising pitch, and possibly the lengthening on *people*, project continuation of the telling (Ford and Thompson 1996; Wennerstrom and Siegel 2003); however, she leaves a little room for a response (line 19). After a brief pause, Sara uses a soft, level-intoned *m:kay_* in line 20.¹⁶ This particle does not mark the informing as complete and does not propose that the sequence can be closed; rather, it conveys that Sara is following and Debbie should continue, and it is understood as such. In her continuation, Debbie provides further background information necessary for appreciating the scope of her work in arranging schedules (lines 25–35). Debbie's continuation comes in overlap with Sara's continuer (line 21). In line 34–35, Debbie reinvokes the frame with which she started her explanation (cf. line 11), indicating that this explanation has now come to a point of possible completion. Sara receipts this with a falling-intoned ↑O:↓ *kay*. in line 36 (see Section 2 above), thereby proposing closure of the sequence she initiated in line 1 with *what are you doing*.

16. See Couper-Kuhlen (this volume) on recurrent prosodic patterns for sequence-internal continuer uses of OKAY in American English spontaneous interactions. Gravano, Hirschberg, and Beňuš (2012), using data from American English task-oriented dialogues, also find distinct patterns in word-final intonation for OKAY with “backchannel function” (rising) v. “agreement” OKAY (plateau or falling) (p. 17).

Excerpt 12 is also drawn from an extended telling/reporting on the phone, but it is taken from an institutional context: a volunteer breast-feeding support helpline in Sweden (Bertils 2016). We see below the mother's (MOT) problem presentation to the call taker (CTA) at the beginning of the interaction. In lines 5–6, the mother reports taking her child to the children's health center (*Bevece* 'BVC', line 5), where, as a matter of course, the boy was weighed. The mother's *men*: 'but' in line 6 projects a problem formulation; *dom/rom* 'they' (lines 8, 10) and *sa* 'she' (line 15) refer to the staff at the health center.

Excerpt 12. *hundraåtjugo* 'one hundred and twenty' (Bertils ARUU6, 00.38–1.21), 2016, Swedish, breastfeeding support helpline interaction

- 01 MOT: ja födde barn för ungefär tre vecker sen,
I gave birth about three weeks ago
- 02 eller a tre- jaa den sextonde så att de e
or well three yeah the sixteenth so that it is
- 03 #ju: #- han e tre veck(h)er å en d(h)a här nu då,
well he is three weeks and one day here now then
- 04 CTA: mm,
- 05 MOT: ä:h och=ä::h så va ja på: bevece i torsdas,
and I was at BVC on Thursday and he had
- 06 [å så hade han- han hade: gått upp men:=
and so had he he had gone up ((in weight)) but
- 07 CTA: [mm,
- 08 MOT: =äh (0.3) #ä::h:# hhh dom räkna me äh
uh uh hhh they counted with uh
- 09 hundrafemti ti tvåhundra# #ä::h# per vecka
a hundred and fifty to two hundred uh per week
- 10 eller va re va rom sa;
or what it was they said
- 11 CTA: mm,
- 12 MOT: äh äh och han hade gått upp hundraåtjugo,
uh uh and he had gained one hundred and twenty
- 13 .h[hh så då tyckte- #äh#=
.hhh so then ((she/they/I)) thought- uh
- 14 CTA: [°okej, °
- 15 MOT: =så då=äh då sa hon att=
so then uh then she said that
- 16 MOT: =a:men då kan du ge han en flaska
well then you can give him a bottle
- 17 t:vå gånger per dygn.
twice every twenty-four hours
- 18 MOT: .h [ä::hm:
- 19 CTA: [°oke:j, °
- 20 MOT: ä:h .hh Å:=äh >så sa ja< Å:, oke:j men de- kommer
and .hh so uh I said yeah okay but it- will

- 21 *de störa min amning nu då eller >liksom såhär<*
 it disturb my breastfeeding now then or like this
- 22 MOT: *ne:j nej nej, de behöver du inte va orolig för.*
 no no no you don't need to worry about that
- 23 *.hh ä:h men nu så: hah har de gjort de.*
 .hh uh but now it has
- 24 CTA: *mhm: .*

Within the mother's report, the call taker produces two OKAYs (lines 14 and 19). Both are rather quiet and produced after the completion of the prior turn but not of the whole telling. Specifically, they appear in overlap with or shortly after an in-breath of the mother, who continues or projects continuation of her telling in overlap with the particle. These features indicate that both OKAYs are indeed heard as continuers, that is, as supporting the progressivity of the current telling. However, the call taker produces different vocal continuers before *okej*, and *okej:*: in lines 4, 7, and 11, *mm*, is produced. One may therefore ask how continuer OKAY differs from other continuers available to speakers.

As already noted, the excerpt is a telling in which the mother introduces a problem, which is that the baby refuses to take the breast after having been bottle-fed for a few days (not shown in excerpt). One can note that both instances of continuer OKAY are produced after turns in which the mother reveals something that can be heard as problematic and as foreshadowing further problems: In line 12, the mother presents the first possible key issue, which is that the baby has been found to have gained less weight than expected. In lines 16–17, the information/problem solution that the mother reports as having received (namely to introduce the bottle) might be understood by the call-taker, based on her professional knowledge, as projecting a troubles telling. Thus, continuer OKAY seems to index a speaker's understanding of certain pieces of information within a larger telling as particularly salient; in contrast, scene setting and background information (lines 1–3, 5–6, 8–10) are followed by more minimal acknowledgement tokens. We suggest that the choice between continuers enables recipients to distinguish between foregrounded and backgrounded information.

Excerpt 13 illustrates a similar OKAY in a different sequential environment. In contrast to Excerpts 11 and 12, the particle is not used mid-telling but is in this German conversation employed as a response to an elicited informing, possibly facilitating the expansion of this informing into a telling. It thus shows a different type of orientation to non-completeness. Anna (ASC), a student interested in a room-for-rent in a shared apartment, is meeting with prospective flatmates. Three other participants have shared that they are studying to be teachers. With *du auch?* 'you too?' (line 1), Anna is inquiring whether Marvin (MLA) is also a teacher in training.

Excerpt 13. *technikerschule* ‘technical school’ (FOLK_WGCA_01_A01, 02:36–02:55), 2012, German, face-to-face, informal conversation

01 ASC: +du auch? [((starts to laugh))]
you too
+gaze to MLA ----->>

02 MLA: [ich?=n]ee nee.
me no no

03 SLU: [thh HH HÄ] HÄ HÄ

04 ASC: [hä hä hä]

05 MLA: >ch ma[:ch die technikerschule g]r+ad_
I'm studying at a technical school right now

06 SLU: [.hhh]

07 (0.22)

08 ASC: o*kee,*
head nod

09 *(.)
asc *slight head nod-->

10 MLA: für da*ten und informati+onstechnik_
for data and information technology
asc --->*

11 *u:nd* bin jetzt im abschlussjahr;
and am now in my final year
asc *slight nod*

Marvin expands his response to Anna's polar question in line 5. His turn is ambiguous in status: It may be pragmatically complete (its syntax and the subsequent pause would suggest this) or it may be a first item in a longer informing, projecting more (the level intonation maintains this possibility). Anna's OKAY-response to Marvin's turn (line 8) carries slightly rising intonation and is accompanied by a head nod during and another slight nod after OKAY (line 9). It treats the prior turn as a first bit of information rather than as a complete informing. Speakers maintain eye-contact throughout the sequence, and after OKAY, Marvin indeed expands his turn with a syntactic increment: He specifies the referent *technikerschule* 'technical school', thus offering more detail about his field of studies, and then adds information about his degree progress.

Similar to the OKAY uses described in Section 2, these kinds of OKAY responses to actions that inform seem initially to function as news receipts (Maynard 2003; Couper-Kuhlen 2012b; Koivisto 2015a) in that they are minimal and acknowledge the prior as news or new information. However, in orienting to the prior as *not* complete, OKAYs such as the one in Excerpt 13 invite more, and in this, they contrast with news receipts, which mark the potential completion of a sequence. They instead advance an informing sequence, a function they share with newsmarks and with what has been termed continuers in existing research (Schegloff

1982; Heritage 1984a, 339–344; C. Goodwin 1986; Gardner 1997, 1998; Sorjonen 2001, 2002; Maynard 2003). Using a response particle that, through lexical choice and placement, can be heard as “inviting” continuation or elaboration (rather than as either marking the informing sequence as potentially closed or as simply passing the floor) certainly fits a context in which, as is the case for Excerpt 13, a larger purpose for the speaker is to show interest in her co-participants and thus potentially increase her chances of being selected as the new roommate.¹⁷

The specific selection of OKAY in this context may be motivated by an additional consideration: the structuring of information.¹⁸ In our discussion of Excerpt 12, we suggested that OKAY may be used to foreground information within a larger telling.¹⁹ This may also be the case here. Research on responses to informings shows that lexical choice and prosodic design in particle responses matters for its function in a particular sequential context: For example, Heritage, summarizing Jefferson, notes that “all newsmarks project further talk by the news deliverer/newsmark recipient by reference to the news, but [...] different newsmarks project different trajectories for such talk” (1984a, 340). Similarly, Thompson et al. (2015, 68–69)

17. We describe Marvin’s turn in line 05 as ambiguous with respect to whether it *projects* more. It is the following OKAY that treats it as not complete (cf. Sorjonen 2001, Chapter 8). Here is an example from English in which the turn which is receipted with OKAY itself clearly projects more. OKAY again follows a question-elicited informing, and the data (presented and analyzed in Heritage and Raymond 2012) come from a pediatric visit:

[Pediatric Visit], Extract (17) in Heritage and Raymond (2012, 191), original transcription retained

```
01 DOC: Has he been coughing uh lot?
02       (0.2)
03 MOM: .hh Not uh lot.=h[h
04 DOC:      [Mkay:?,
05 MOM: But it- it <sound:s:> deep.
06       (1.0)
07 MOM: An' with everything we (heard) on tee v(h)ee=hhhh
08       fwe got sca:re.f
09 DOC: Kay. (And fer i-) It sounds deep?
10       (.)
11 MOM: Mm mm.
```

Here, the clinician’s *Mkay:?* (line 4) is produced in third position after an answer to a question that by design (through a negated repetition response) projects expansion, specifically the introduction of information that was not directly asked about (ibid., 190–192; cf. Stivers 2007). The particle carries rising intonation; it shows an understanding of the prior turn as projecting, indeed as launching, an expansion.

18. This echoes calls for further specification of the term ‘continuer’ (see, e.g., Sorjonen 2001), that is, a description of the varied context-specific work continuers do in addition to passing on an opportunity to take a full turn.

19. See also Helmer et al. and Koivisto and Sorjonen, both in this volume, and Oh and Park’s (2017) analysis of the differential interactional import of acknowledgement tokens *ung* and *e* in tellings in Korean.

show that particle responses in English can be produced with “affective lamination, cued [...] via prosodic upgrading or downgrading” and can additionally convey an assessment or appreciation of the information responded to. We suggest that selecting OKAY among other resources that speakers have to respond to informings in the language of the conversation is a device for contextualizing a piece of information as important or substantial within the current activity.

Excerpt 14, taken from a phone interaction in Québécois French, shows another example in which a speaker uses OKAY to invite elaboration. SIM is updating MAN on his (professional) activities since leaving the Navy. In line 3, SIM begins an announcement of news with *j’suis passe-* ‘I have gon-’, which he reissues in the clear in lines 8–9.

Excerpt 14. *responsable du niveau deux* ‘teaching level two’, (CLAPI_Fraq_appel_5136_01:49–02:10), 2004, Québécois French, telephone conversation

- 01 MAN: o:h mon dieu.
oh my god
- 02 ouais, c’est [l’fun.]
yes that’s fun
- 03 SIM: [ouais] !p j’suis [passe-]
(well/yes) I have gon-
- 04 MAN: [il] est
he’s a
- 05 commandant lui?
commander right?
- 06 SIM: ouais.=
yes
- 07 MAN: =[ah ouais.]
oh I see
- 08 SIM: [j’suis] pa:ssé de p’tits entraîneme::nts
I have gone from little trainings
- 09 à: responsable du niveau deux.
to responsible for level two
- 10 (0.3)
- 11 MAN: **okay,**
- 12 (0.5)
- 13 MAN: hUH.
- 14 (0.4)
- 15 SIM: c’fait que j’ferais rien fuck all
but actually I’d do (nothing) fuck all
- 16 (0.3)
- 17 MAN: c’est pas trop=h+ein,=
that’s not too much, right?
- 18 SIM: =j’avais plus de responsabilité
I had more responsibility

- 19 quand j'étais (*@lop*) à baie comeau.
 when I was (a student) at baie comeau ((=place name))
- 20 MAN: ((laughs)) ((laughs))
- 21 SIM: [pis j'faisais rien.
 then I was doing nothing
- 22 MAN: U[gh HU:GH.
- 23 SIM: [pis là j'vais avoir mai capitaines ben vite;
 and now I'll have the rank of captain really soon
- 24 MAN: facque ((=fait que)) là tu fais moins que rien_
 so now you do less than nothing
- 25 SIM: là j'fais crissement rien_
 now I do absolutely nothing

Through the formulations *j'suis passé* 'I have gone/moved' and *niveau deux* 'level two', SIM's announcement is recognizable as good news, specifically of his recent professional advancement. Relevant responses to this include a positive assessment by MAN or, alternatively, a newsmark validating the announcement's status *as* news and encouraging its elaboration (Jefferson 1980; Heritage 1984a; Maynard 1997, 2003). The latter would also advance the sequence toward a fitted (that is, more particularized) appreciation of the news, for example in the form of an assessment (cf. Maynard 2003, 108). In line 11, MAN produces an OKAY with prominence on the second syllable and slightly rising intonation. As in Excerpt 13, the OKAY allows its speaker to treat the prior as informative but the sequence as not complete. In this case, MAN's OKAY conveys that she expects (and needs) more to provide a fitted appreciation of the announcement.

SIM, however, does not immediately treat the *okay*, as showing MAN's understanding that a news telling is underway, that is, as a kind of newsmark designed to advance a fuller telling. A gap emerges in line 12. MAN then produces what is hearable as a small laugh token in line 13. In its specific sequential context, the laugh token comes off as a generic assessment of SIM's announcement. In being ambiguous as to the stance it conveys, the laugh token is an apt solution to the issue MAN seems to be facing in this moment: The stance conveyed by SIM in lines 8–9 is not unambiguous. By describing his path as *de p'tits entraînements à: responsable du niveau deux*. 'from little trainings to responsible for level two', SIM highlights a contrast between what one would expect as the normal course of advancement and what he himself experienced. It is thus not yet clear what exactly should be treated as newsworthy here: *that* he was promoted or *how* this happened. As SIM has not indicated a readiness to continue or elaborate (lines 10, 12), MAN finds herself in a position to appreciate the news without having enough information to provide a particularized uptake. She does this with an equally ambiguous *hUH* (line 13).

In line 15, SIM formulates the import of his announcement: What makes the news newsworthy is the contrast between SIM's advancement to a *more* demanding level and the fact that he is actually doing *less* work. An extreme-case formulation (Pomerantz 1986) foregrounds this contrast, and this allows MAN to provide a fitting uptake, appreciating the irony conveyed (line 17, 20, 22, 24). In the present example, OKAY treats the prior as news but does not convey a particular stance (e.g., surprise) toward the news. In its placement and through its prosodic shape (slightly rising intonation), it encourages more talk from the prior speaker, specifically talk that advances a fuller delivery of the news and provides the basis for a fitting appreciation.

4. OKAY marks discrepancy of expectation

Whereas Section 2 dealt with cases of sufficient understanding and Section 3 dealt with cases in which some new information or action was registered but indexed as not yet complete for local practical concerns, this section will show that OKAY can also index *a lack of* understanding by marking a prior informing as counter to expectation (cf. Heritage 1984a; Robinson 2009; Persson 2015; Thompson et al. 2015, 75–85; Seuren, Huiskes, and Koole 2018). The aspect of epistemic discrepancy between the OKAY-speaker's expectation and the information gleaned from the interlocutor's prior turn can be layered with additional affective and/or evaluative aspects, such as surprise, skepticism or perplexity. These OKAYs are thus often delivered with marked prosody.

Excerpt 15 from a Polish business phone-call illustrates this. In line 1, the client (CLI) announces her intent to place an order and inquires as to whether this is possible on the phone. The salesperson (SAL) then informs her that the company needs to have a confirmation of every order via email (lines 3–4). The long silence in line 5 points to a problem on the part of the client.

Excerpt 15. *złożyć zamówienie* 'place an order' (PhoneVN680234_QA okeeeeeeej), 2009, Polish, telephone, service encounter

- 01 CLI: ja: chcia¹łam zło²żyć zamówie³nie.
I wanted to place (an) order
- 02 czy mo⁴gę to zro⁵bić telefonicznie:?
can (I) do it (on the) phone
- 03 SAL: .hh ym potrzebu⁶jemy m:ie⁷ć (.) potwierd⁸zenie
.hh uhm we need to have (a) confirmation
- 04 takiego zamówienia na me⁹jla:.
of such (an) order in (our) email.

```

05      (1.8)
06  CLI:  <_::ke::j,> a:: (2.4) h_y::: (2.4) .hh (1.0)
           and PRT .hh
           and huh .hh
07  SAL:  a p_rószę mi p_owiedzieć c_o p_ani d_okładnie
           and please tell me what exactly you
08      chce z_a_m_ówićto od r_azu może (.) m_oglibyśmy
           want to order then maybe at once (we) could
09      m_oglibyśmy u_st_a_lic k_oszty t_ransp_ortu.
           determine transport costs

```

The salesperson's informing in lines 3–4 could be taken to imply that placing an order on the phone is not possible at all, or that it is possible but requires an additional record in the form of an email sent by the client after placing the order. The salesperson's information may be contrary to what the client could have expected: that it would be possible to place an order over the phone. In any case, from the client's point of view, there is trouble with "the sequential import of the utterance or turn as a whole [...], and accordingly what type of talk/action is relevant or appropriate next" (Schegloff 1987, 206). After a pause of 1.8 seconds, the client produces an OKAY (line 6). Its formal realization is highly marked: Both syllables are stretched and accentuated, and it is delivered with slightly rising intonation. The client continues her turn with *a::* 'and', which may project a follow-up question designed to clarify the procedural consequentiality (Schegloff 1991) of the salesperson's informing for her future action, namely the ordering procedure; yet, this projection is not fulfilled. Instead, further pauses and the hesitation marker *hy* point to trouble with the action implications emerging from the salesperson's response. The caller clearly has trouble proceeding with the reason for the call. In the next turn (lines 7–9), the salesperson offers steps that can be taken on the phone now.

Excerpt 16 provides another example of OKAY making visible a mismatch between prior expectations and just-received information. It comes from the beginning of a phone call in Danish between MOR (mother) and BO (daughter). An earlier call had been interrupted by BO's phone turning off. The call below resumes this earlier conversation, and with *hva* ↑ *sker der*. 'what's going on' (line 2), MOR is eliciting an explanation for the interruption.

Excerpt 16. *tænder å slukker* ‘turns on and off’ (samtalebank:bilen:00), 2009, Danish, telephone, informal conversation

01 (1.0)
02 MOR: hva ↑sker der.
what's going on
03 BO: jamen min telefon den slukkede;=hhh heh °heh°
well my telephone it turned off hhh ((laughs))

- 04 (0.2)
- 05 BO: .hhh
- 06 (0.2)
- 07 BO: ja[m (ve' du hv]a:) jeg ska ned me' den=
well (you know what) I am going down with it
- 08 MOR: [ná::?]
oh
- 09 BO: =her en af dagene=
one of these days
- 10 BO: =fordi: dn den tænder å slukker sån i ↑utide_
because it it turns on and off like out of control
- 11 #å:# den sætter alarmen sådn .hhh (.) til: her;
an' it sets the alarm like .hhh here
- 12 å den slår den fra: å:=hhh
an' it turns it off an' hhh
- 13 (0.5)
- 14 MOR: [ja: men det da]
yeah but that's certainly
- 15 BO: [(å jeg har jo) () alarmen sat te'
(an' I have) () the alarm on
- 16 BO: når jeg ska op om morgenen=
when I need to get up in the morning
- 17 BO: =hhh hnh [h(n)]
- 18 MOR: [hnh] heh heh heh he-=
=.hnh
- 19 BO: =.hnh
- 20 MOR: f_o[:↑`kay,f
- 21 BO: [(hm:./hnh.)
- 22 (0.8)
- 23 BO: °så_°=
so
- 24 MOR: =ja: ↓ja:,
yeah yeah
- 25 (0.3)
- 26 MOR: #a:rh'm'# der må da være noget garanti på (.)
well there must surely be some guarantee on
- 27 BO: ja[:]men det er der oss_
yeah but there is
- 28 MOR: [den_]
it
- 29 BO: =faktisk h[am jeg] har købt den af nede i butikken.=
actually the guy that I bought it from in the shop
- 30 MOR: [ja:_]
yeah
- 31 BO: =ham har jeg på et hold nede i °håndboldklubben°_
I have him on a team in the handball club

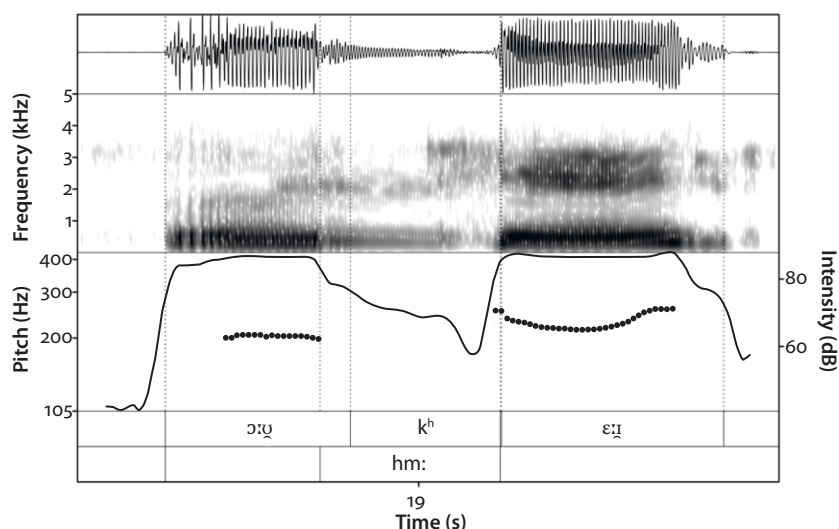


Figure 6. Pitch, intensity, spectrogram and soundwave of $\varepsilon_o: \uparrow$ 'kay', in line 20

BO's answer in line 3 provides a first explanation, followed by laugh tokens and a short silence. MOR's delayed $n\hat{a}::?$ 'oh::?' (line 8) receipts BO's explanation as news. In overlap, BO expands her answer by describing plans to solve the problem (going to a repair place, lines 7, 9) and characterizing her phone issues as recurrent (lines 10–12) and potentially significant (lines 15–16). When troubles are relayed, participants tend to indicate how seriously these should be taken (Jefferson 1984c). BO produces laughter tokens in line 17 and can thus be seen to downplay the trouble (ibid.). This opens up for MOR the option of either joining the troubles-resistant line, taking a “time-out” from the trouble (ibid., 351) or treating the trouble as serious, being “troubles-receptive.” MOR chooses the former option and joins the laughter (line 18). She then produces an OKAY in line 20.

The particle is produced with smile voice, and its prosody is ‘marked’ for Danish: It has a pitch upstep from the first to the second syllable and a slight fall-rise contour on the second, stressed, syllable (see Figure 6). In overlap with OKAY, BO produces what could be a further laugh token, and after a silence (line 22), she expands her prior turn with a stand-alone $^{\circ}s\hat{a}_o$ ‘so’ (line 23), possibly projecting an upshot that will not be produced (cf. Raymond 2004 for such uses of *so* in English). MOR then formulates an assumption (lines 26, 28) which can be heard as a suggestion for solving BO's problem. It is also hearable as a sort of objection to the implicit claim that BO's trouble is just something she has to live with, an impression MOR could have gotten from the way in which BO has presented her troubles as ‘no big deal.’ Additional evidence for MOR's at least slightly disaffiliative stance on how the problem should be treated can be found in the repeated *ja* ‘yes’ (line 24; see

Heinemann 2009) and the turn-beginning item *a:rhm* (line 26), a variant of *ja men* ‘yes but’ or *nej men* ‘no but’ (Steensig and Asmuß 2005; Pedersen 2015).

MOR’s smile voice on OKAY resonates with a ‘no big deal’ interpretation of BO’s stance. The particle is produced with rising intonation, however, which seems to indicate some kind of counter-expectedness and thus *non-affiliation* with BO’s trouble-resistant stance. This is corroborated by the fact that MOR shifts to a serious mode after OKAY by treating BO’s trouble as in need of a solution. OKAY can be said to index a discrepancy of expectation in the sense that the OKAY-speaker has, on the basis of her interlocutor’s account and her own assumptions, arrived at an assessment of the seriousness of the trouble that is different from the troubles-teller’s. While MOR’s OKAY indexes this discrepancy, it does not explicate its precise nature or its basis. Therefore, in order to enter into a negotiation of how to deal with and how to assess the trouble, a more explicit account is in order, as it is given by MOR’s turn-continuation.

In Excerpt 15, an informing which is discrepant with the OKAY-speaker’s expectations leads to a cooperation problem. In Excerpt 16, OKAY indexes that its speaker does not share a co-participant’s assessment of a reported state of affairs. An unexpected informing can, however, also affect the intelligibility of a story. This is the case in the next excerpt from a phone-call between two female friends in German. EG has just told FR that her cat had to be saved from falling off the roof by EG’s boyfriend. FR’s responds to this in lines 1–3.

Excerpt 17. *gekipptes fenster* ‘window ajar’ (FOLK_E_00084_SE_01_T_01_DF_01_c130), 2014, German, telephone, informal conversation

- 01 FR: .h jet jetzt weißte ja dann kannst du des
 .h no- now you know well then you can’t
- 02 fenster ja nochmal me:hr hier auf ↑kipp machen
 even partly open the window any more
- 03 wenn [der ()]
 if the
- 04 EG: [ja=ABER DAS] WOLLT ICH
 (well/yeah) but I wanted that
- 05 ich w² äh=hä(n) °wollt ich ja auch nie;° (.)
 I w² uh=huh(n) never wanted that (y’know)
- 06 also grade in der küche. weil das=äh
 I mean especially in the kitchen. cause that=uh
- 07 [weil da eben] das dach is;
 cause there’s obviously the roof
- 08 FR: [okay,]
- 09 EG: un dann: (.) die fchecken des ja nich_f
 and then (you know) they don’t get that
- 10 dass es da runtergeht. (.) .h
 that it goes down there .h

- 11 (0.4)
- 12 EG: weißt[e,]
you know
- 13 FR: [(un²)] (0.5) wie: ist des dann: passiert?=hh
(and) how did that happen then hh
- 14 (0.2)
- 15 EG: ja: keine ahnung. (.) das w² äh=also s war
well ((I've)) no idea. it w uh=(so) it was
- 16 ja (0.2) des war halt äh (0.5) °en stückchen
(y'know) it just was uh slightly
- 17 offen °
open
- 18 (1.3)

In response to EG's story, FR remarks that EG can now, as a result of the reported event, no longer keep the kitchen window open (line 1–3). She thus shows that she presupposes that an open window must have been the reason why the cat managed to escape onto the roof. In lines 4–7, EG responds that she never wanted to open the window, especially not in the kitchen (from where the cat escaped). Still in overlap with EG's explanation about her intentions, FR produces *okay*, (line 8) with rising intonation, realized as a diphthong, with a stress on the first vowel of the diphthong. It indexes that FR claims to have understood EG's statement about her intentions on a propositional level, but not how it matches the context of the story so far.²⁰ From EG's statement in lines 4–7, FR seems to have drawn the inference that, because of EG's stated intentions, the window was in fact closed. This inference, however, is discrepant with FR's assumption that the cat must have escaped through the window.

As Seuren, Huijckes, and Koole (2016, 183) note, the *okay*, only “indexes but does not identify a problem”, that is, it does not indicate why the new information is at odds with FR's understanding of EG's story so far. Yet, after EG has finished the account of intentions concerning keeping the windows closed (line 12), FR topicalizes the problem (that which *okay*, had only indexed) with *wie: ist des dann: passiert* ‘how did that happen then’ (line 13). Because EG had continued the account of her intentions after FR's *okay*, without attending to the epistemic discrepancy that the particle had marked, FR's explicit query now asks EG to resolve the epistemic puzzle. In response to this query, EG explains that the window was open after all (lines 15–17), which confirms FR's earlier assumption. This explanation reveals that in saying ‘I never wanted that [the window is open]’ (line 5), EG had implied the opposite implicature

20. See Betz et al. (2013) concerning the difference between registering new information and claiming to understand its pragmatic relevance.

(+>²¹ the window was open) from the one which FR had inferred (+> the window was not open). The misunderstanding and consequently the discrepancy of expectation in this case thus rest on competing inferences from a narrative.

The prosodic shape (a rising pitch contour) seems to be a crucial feature of OKAYs marking a discrepancy of expectation (cf. Selting 1988, 1996, on repair-initiation in German). It is a stable feature across the different languages in which we could find OKAY in this function.²² In many cases, there is additional prosodic marking by heightened volume, strong accentuation of one or both syllables of OKAY, high onset and/or an especially high rising contour.²³ These kinds of OKAY responses mark an epistemic mismatch between already communicated, known, or expected information and just-conveyed information. They are not sequence-closing but engender elaborations and accounts in next turn. They are thus similar to next-turn “open class” repair-initiators (Drew 1997) such as *huh?* (Dingemanse, Torreira, and Enfield 2013) or English *what?* (Robinson 2014). However, in contrast to these items, OKAY does not index ‘not understanding’ but rather conveys that the prior information has been registered (i.e., understood on a propositional level), but is not sufficient for present purposes, because it is at odds with what was expected.

Non-sufficiency can operate on a pragmatic, interactional level (as in our Polish example), if the OKAY-speaker cannot glean a sufficiently clear projection for their own next action from the prior turn or if the prior turn interferes with projected next actions or an interactional goal of the OKAY-speaker. It can also operate on a topical level (as in our German example), if new information cannot be accommodated within the OKAY-speaker’s prior assumptions about the state of affairs talked about, thus leading to contradictions, incoherence, or lack of motivation for reported events. The epistemic mismatch is both temporal and interpersonal: Temporally, the

21. ‘+>’ denotes ‘implicates’ (see Levinson 1983, 104–108).

22. We did not find this use of OKAY in all the languages that we investigated. Existing research (see, e.g., the discussion in Keevallik 2003 on Estonian) suggests that the prosodic form – interactional function patterning we observe here may be less clearly binding in other languages and/or limited to certain language families.

23. See also Selting (1987, 130–140) on prosodic marking of TCUs indexing a discrepancy of expectation and Thompson et al. (2015, 75–83) on certain rising-intoned particle responses in English and counter-expectedness. In an experimental study on the prosody of American English OKAY in particular, Van Zyl and Hanekom (2013) identified word duration as an important cue for interpreting a response as reluctantly (v. unreservedly) agreeing. Similarly, Beach (2020) identifies increased syllable length, accentuation, final rising pitch movement, and high pitch onset as recurrent features of OKAYs that “accomplish a range of incongruous actions” such as projecting disagreement or indexing that some statement or state of affairs is odd, bizarre or incredible.

new information is in contrast to given information or prior existing assumptions on the part of the OKAY-speaker; interpersonally, there is a mismatch between the prior speaker's and the OKAY-speaker's epistemic states. While OKAY indexes this mismatch (without, however, explicating its nature and its sources), it strongly makes relevant a resolution of the mismatch by the prior speaker as the next turn. By assigning the responsibility to solve the mismatch to the prior speaker, it can carry a more or less acute moral connotation of blaming the prior speaker for producing a turn that was not intelligible, credible and/or acceptable and for having failed to prevent the discrepancy of expectation from developing.

In contrast to the use of OKAY as a continuer or newsmark, the prior speaker is not expected to proceed as they planned independently from the OKAY, but the OKAY acts as a kind of repair-initiator (Schegloff 1997), calling for an account or additional information which provides for the intelligibility, credibility and/or acceptability of the prior turn, thus restoring intersubjectivity in terms of its action-projecting potential and/or its informative value.

5. Summary and conclusion

Uses of OKAY within and across languages can show different orientations to a prior informing action and thus have different sequential implications. This overview chapter, and the in-depth individual studies that follow in this volume, illustrate that the sequential implications of OKAY responses to informings rest on a combination of contextual, prosodic, and sequential factors, as well as its positioning in the larger activity (Thompson et al. 2015, 52; cf. Gardner 1998, 2007; McCarthy 2003).

We have shown that OKAY is directly implicated in managing matters of understanding and intersubjectivity in interaction. There is a continuum of uses in terms of the degree to which an understanding which is locally sufficient with regard to the practical concerns of the interaction at that moment has been achieved. OKAY in second position or third position, closing a question-answer or some other adjacency-pair sequence, produced with falling intonation, can index sufficient understanding. "Sufficiency" means that the understanding gained allows for interactional progression, that is, for the closing of a topic and/or the move to next actions or topics. In this sense, sufficient understanding paves the way for closing (see Chapter 4). These next actions may be scheduled on an agenda or emerge from the prior sequence, pragmatically or logically building on it.

OKAY with level or rising intonation, however, indexes that some action or new information has been registered (i.e., understood on a propositional level) but is not yet sufficient for local pragmatic concerns. "Insufficiency" means that the prior action is incomplete, because it does not fulfill the informational needs

of the OKAY-speaker or the conditional relevance which has been set up by the informing speaker comprehensively enough, or because its relevance to the larger project, argumentation or discourse topic is not yet evident. This epistemic expression of insufficiency combines with the interactional projection/expectation that the prior speaker continue their turn in order to remedy this insufficiency. OKAY thus serves to invite, encourage, or even push for continuation. Thus, in contrast to what have been described as *continuers* (C. Goodwin 1986; Gardner 2001; Schegloff 1982; Sorjonen 2001), these OKAYs are not just a floor-pass to the prior speaker to continue what they have projected or planned, but more specifically require them to provide for the means to engender a pragmatically sufficient understanding of what they have already said.

The other extreme of this continuum ranging from sufficient over yet partial, incomplete understanding to non-understanding in a pragmatic sense is inhabited by OKAYs which display a discrepancy of expectation. These OKAYs are also produced with rising intonation, but tend to have a more expressive design, which means that they are louder, cover a greater pitch range, or are stretched (cf. Beach 2020). Like the other two variants, they index propositional understanding as well. Yet, they do not only indicate that something is missing but also convey that the interlocutor's prior turn runs counter to an expectation which the OKAY speaker has had and maintained, given the sequence so far. This expectation of the OKAY-speaker may have existed already before the interaction, or it may have been touched off by more remote prior turns of the interlocutor or even by the prior turn of the interlocutor, seeming self-contradictory to the OKAY-speaker. Relevant expectations can concern different cognitive and interactional orders: Assumptions about events and states of affairs, about the partner's assessments and emotions tied to reported events, or about expectations about possible, appropriate, or required next actions. OKAY indexes that expectations which the OKAY-speaker claims to hold accountably are not fulfilled. Again, this cognitive, expressive component combines with pragmatic and interactional properties: OKAY here projects disaffiliation or disalignment with the prior speaker, which again can concern different levels: propositional credibility, interactional cooperation, emotional and/or evaluative stances. OKAY creates an interactional projection that the interlocutor remedy this discrepancy, for instance by giving an explanation or offering a justification, or by backing down from their position. Yet, as OKAY does not by itself specify the nature and the source of the problem which prevents the accomplishment of intersubjectivity, it is often only an initial index of an intersubjective mismatch. It requires subsequent clarifying explications by the OKAY-speaker in order to resolve (or to accentuate) the rupture of intersubjectivity.

Acknowledgements

Thanks to Betty Couper-Kuhlen for her close reading and insightful comments and to Sam Schirm and Johanne Léveillé-Schirm for additional help with transcription.

Funding

Emma Betz's work was supported by *Canada Foundation for Innovation* funding for the creation of a *Social Interaction, Language, and Culture Lab* at the University of Waterloo (CFI-JELF project #37510).