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Other's Inserts in an Ongoing Turn Some Sequential, Grammatical, and Rhetoric Observations

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1. The object: Other's inserts and the differentiation of speaking rights

The object under study is a specific form of a second speaker's intervention during a first speaker's ongoing turn. The analysis focusses on turn-internal minor contributions, which present more than a mere manifestation of reciprocity, claiming some point of relevance for the first speaker's ongoing turn and should be taken into account by him, and which are placed and constructed in an way to show, that they are not meant to attack the first speaker's right to continue his turn. With these inserts, even when are clearly contradictive, the intervening speakers claim only a secondary, clearly restricted speaking right. This type of intervention will here be called 'other's insert' ("Einwurf").

Together with asymmetric turn repartition as in narratives, other's interventions during an ongoing turn have turned out to be of crucial theoretical interest for the concept of speaking rights and participant roles. The initial turn concept (Sacks/Schegloff/Jefferson 1974), stating that mere reception manifestations have the same status than mayor contributions, had to be revised in order to cope with the fact that members' definitions of turn formats and speaking rights are highly context dependent. Studies about second speakers' interventions generally criticized the definition of overlap (in the environment of a possible completion point) and of interruption (at a point which is in no way a possible completion point) arguing, that interruptions can occur without overlap during an encoding pause in the floor-holder's speech (Beattie 1981, 16) and at a completion point (Bennett 1981, 172-173). The result of this discussion is that "an

interpretation of interruption is crucially dependant on the particular turn-taking procedures deployed in the event being analyzed" (Testa 1988, 291), and that different types of second speakers' turn-internal interventions differ significantly in their affinity to an interpretation as interruptive (Watts 1997). Probably notions like interruption still need more clarification in order to cope with the flexibility of members' interactive behaviour and the rhetoric functionality of their utterances. Such a functional view on other's insertion of minor contributions has been developed already in some articles (Fiehler 1985, Kotthoff 1993, Müller 1995). I will follow this line, taking as a starting point the differentiation of speaking rights.

In order to explain the character of substantial interventions which are not interruptions, one can rely on the differentiation of speaking rights or speaker status in narrative analysis and other domains like topic negotiation. So, in conversational narratives, we have a clearly defined asymmetric repartition of participant roles, but in some cases co-narrators will contribute substantially to the ongoing narration with the consequence that the two narrators have to negotiate the repartition of primary and secondary roles. This differentiation of roles can be applied to other activity types too (see e.g. Wald 1978; Bublitz 1988; Schwitalla 1992). In this perspective the speaking right has to be considered as activity bound in the sense, that a participant claims and gets the turn for some type of activity (and that he risks to loose the turn if he uses it for some unexpected and in this sense non-legitimate activity or if he turns out to be the wrong actor for the expected activity). Consequently, the grounding of speaking rights was analyzed in relation to fundamental principles of competence or responsibility and related ones ("the entitlement to experience" and its relevance for storytelling in Sacks 1992, II, 242-248; "Zuständigkeit" in Quasthoff 1990). This means too, that secondary activities like other's inserts have to be formulated in a way as to manifest their relation to the established activity as well as to give an account of their foundation or legitimacy as intervention.

Other's inserts are marked as secondary, but nevertheless relevant as a contribution to the ongoing turn. Thus, the second speaker normally expects a reaction of the first one, taking the insert into account. And the secondary speaker displays his presence as an active participant; in this way he may prepare the ground for entering on stage as a primary actor. The following example shows in line 215 a rather recurrent variant of an other's insert:¹

(1) "By the price"

212 AN: für unsere kunden ist es ja auch interessant ah: produkte
for our customers of course it's of some interest to have

- 213 AN: zu haben * ←wo: auch sie" nich so faßbar sind * vom
products where they are not so easily got at by
- 214 AN: wettbewerb↓→ vom prei"s↓ * denn das
*competition by the price * because the*
- 215 DE: **vom preis jetzt her mal**↓
by the price now
- 216 AN: besondere wi"rd ah: honoriert * ich meine wir brauchen
*special is paid for * I mean we need*
- 217 AN: einen marktgerechten preis wir können auch
a price that fits the market we can also
- 218 DE: **ich wollt grad sagen der**
I just wanted to say the
- 219 AN: äh * richtig↓
 äh * right
- 220 DE: **preis is also gar nicht mal so" wichtig**
price is not so important

In the course of AN's expanded turn, his interlocutor DE intervenes (215) at a point of internal, non-final and in this sense secondary completion in AN's utterance (prosodically marked by a slightly falling intonation; Cooper-Kuhlen 1983), and after DE's short intervention, AN incorporates this contribution in his own formulation and goes on with his turn. At this point, the relation between AN and DE may be interpreted as one between a primary and a secondary speaker. This relation changes into competition for the floor, when DE in line 218 starts again, this time at a point of a grammatical, but not prosodically marked, completion, and producing an expanded intervention. AN, after his hesitation and agreement, gives up the floor and DE starts a very long turn. Evidently DE's two interventions have a different character, the first being an insert in the defined sense and the second being an interruption. The second intervention is constructed in a way to be recognizable and acceptable as interruption. It is formulated as a second initiative explaining the intention of the first intervention which, by this account, is defined as having failed in the sense that the other misunderstood it or at least displayed an insufficient interpretation of it. The second intervention exploits the first one, using a rather effective type of repair which has the function of assuring mutual understanding. Activities of this type have interactive priority, at least to a certain extent.

An elaborated analysis of other's inserts has to take into account the sequential structure, especially:

- The first speaker’s utterance and its relevant context.
- The insert, positioned and shaped as a secondary contribution and referring back to elements of the primary utterance as “source”, motivating and presenting a chance for a recipient initiative. Of interest is who initiates the insert, recipient (the most recurrent case) or speaker (like in calls for help in utterance production troubles); where it is started, how it is shaped, what its function is a.s.o. Sometimes a relevant question is, to whom the insert is addressed: Other’s inserts are addressed to the primary speaker and are not intended to establish a parallel communication, apart from the official interaction – but this can be the result, when third participants come in and the second speaker begins to talk to them about the first speaker instead of talking to him (Kallmeyer/Schmitt 1996).
- The reaction of the primary speaker to the insert and his continuation, being supported or disturbed in his utterance, integrating the insert element in some way, or ignoring it, maybe with more or less manifest forms of defense like a call to order.
- Secondary speakers further activities, e.g. insisting on the relevance of his first insert; and further activities of the first speaker.

In this short paper I will concentrate on the qualities of other’s inserts which indicate their secondary status and their legitimacy as an intervention; further activities of the participants will only be taken into account in order to contrast secondary inserts with insisting interventions. Besides the mentioned concepts of turn taking and speaking rights, the analysis will rely on the linguistic analysis of grammatical structures as means of interactive turn shaping (syntax for conversation) and a rhetoric analysis of participants’ work in interaction (“Gesprächsrhetorik”; Kallmeyer 1996).

2. Position: How to place an insert

There are two principles for the positioning of secondary speakers’ inserts:

- Link the insert immediately to an element of reference in the primary utterance.
- Respect constructional completion.

The element of reference may be the first speaker’s whole utterance, a phrase of it, one word or part of a word, the proposition or some implication of the utterance. In example 1 the element of reference *vom wettbewerb* has been produced as a prosodic unit and is

easily perceivable in its contour. In the following example the element of reference is more complex:

(2) "Artist"

324 AN: aber der kleine handwerker is da * von der mentalität eben
*but the small-scale craftsman is * still different in his*

325 AN: noch anders und glaubt alles selber machen zu müssen-
mentality and thinks to have to do everything himself

326 DE: **künstler**↓
artist

326 AN: ja künstler↓ genau↓ * aber * wir haben * trotz dieser
yes artist(s) exactly but we have in spite of this

We can assume that *künstler* (which may be singular or plural) refers to the predication of *von der mentalität eben noch anders und glaubt alles selber machen zu müssen* and offers a witty semantic condensation of the element of reference. To find the element of reference can be a bit more complicated when we look at general evaluative comments like *oh no*" or *bravo* or *lies nothing but lies*. But here too, the immediacy principle operates; it will direct our search to the nearest context and thus help us to find a candidate for the reference element (e.g. a scandalous or brilliant element of the preceding utterance).

The principle of immediacy has to be balanced with the preference for constructional completion. In the first example ("By the price") as well as in the second ("Artist") both orientations coincide perfectly. But the insert can be delayed to some extent, when the recipient is waiting for a full stop, leaving out completion points of subordinated units:

(3) "Cancer assistance"

26 CS: das hab ich alles * sehr intensiv verfolgt das hat mich
I followed up all this very intensively it was of great

27 CS: interessiert und ich hab da"mals ich war immerhin erst e"lf
interest to me and I felt at that time I wasn't more than

28 MG: **als das gegründet**
when that was founded

29 CS: jahre alt↑ schon sehr genau gespürt↑ was sie da-
eleven years old↑ already very clearly what she there

30 MG: **wurde nicht**↑ **diese deutsche krebshilfe-**
yes this german cancer assistance

31 CS: ja
yes

32 CS: neunzehnhundertvierundsiebzig- was sie da: schafft und * //
nineteen hundred and seventy four what she there creates and

Here the insert “comes late”: The appropriate place in accordance with the immediacy principle would be after *jahre alt* ↑, at the completion of the grammatical construction in the parenthesis. MG’s waiting for CS’s continuation shows an orientation to the preference of self repair (Schegloff/Jefferson/Sacks 1977), giving CS a chance to produce the “missing element”. But CS doesn’t repair, and the next segmentation point in her utterance turns out to present only another subordinated completion in the construction which started with *ich hab da*’mals; this is not an ideal place for an insert, but now MG has to start if he doesn’t want to miss definitely the immediacy. Waiting implies the risk to lose the best occasion in terms of immediacy, but in the meantime creates in a systematic way a potential of legitimation for an intervention: The non-occurrence of a first speaker’s self repair increases the legitimacy of a second speaker’s insert.

3. Format: Shaping a secondary contribution

Other’s inserts have different grammatical formats ranging from single words to complete sentences or even more than one sentence. But generally the essential features of typical insert formats are: shortness and subordination.

Shortness is realized by:

- Elliptic constructions; see the examples “By the price” and “Artist”.
- Simple constructions without internal segmentation points; limitation to one sentence, no complex sentences; no prefaces.
- Limitation to the obligatory construction elements; or at least minimalization of expansions.

The orientation to shortness is often to be seen operating in the sequential structure of the stepwise expansion of inserts too. In the example “Cancer assistance” such an expansion is part of the turn internal interaction. The first unit of MG’s insert is a subordinated adverbial sentence with a grammatically minimal realization (*als das gegründet wurde*). It could stop with the tag (*nicht* ↑) as an invitation to take the turn back. When CS agrees without taking the turn, MG expands the insert with a right hand expansion (a

lexicalization of the proform in the first part; *diese deutsche krebshilfe*). This expansion finally triggers a reaction which apparently is appropriate from MG's perspective: CS produces a temporal identification, using a classic format for it (a date).

One consequence of the primacy of shortness for the information processing is a tendency to place the focus at the beginning ("focus first"). In the first example "By the price" the insert is slightly expanded and shows a rather unusual word order (*vom preis jetzt her mal*). This can be explained by the speaker's selection of two phrase constructions: a formula of perspectivation (*vom preis her*) and a formula of particularization, consisting of a temporal discourse deixis in combination with a degree limiting particle (*jetzt mal*) which could be paraphrased by "here and now, in this specific local context of our actual talk". Both formulae exist in a reduced (but operative) form (*vom preis*; see *vom wettbewerb*; and *jetzt*). The two minimally expanded phrase constructions are intertwined:

| | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------|
| formula of perspectivation: | <i>vom preis.....her</i> |
| formula of particularization: | <i>jetzt.....mal</i> |

My hypothesis is that the speaker first realizes the head of both constructions and afterwards the rest of both in their order of appearance. The specific information structure is highlighted by the prosodic feature: with the main accent on *preis* and the peak of the intonation contour on *jetzt*, and the rest (*her mal*) is low and fading out.

Interactive subordination is expressed by:

- Syntactic integration in the grammatical construction of the primary utterance. Syntactic integration may have the character of substitution (in the examples 1 and 2 above) or of completion, like in example 3 or in 4 below, line 272.
- Semantic reduction by the use of proforms, which refer to elements of the primary utterance; see e.g. "Cancer assistance".
- "Low profile" prosody with rather flat or lingering intonation, without expressive accents; see below example "Strength".
- Pragmatic features which are bound to reciprocity and imply restrictions of initiation rights, like explicitation of understanding (see "Strength").
- The incorporation of some turn offering device (mainly in expanded inserts; see "Cancer assistance" and "Strength").

Interventions which exceed the normal format of inserts have to be marked very clearly as subordinated. In the following case, taken from a talk show about problematic experiences of "people like you and me", the talkmaster's interventions are triggered by

the guest's severe problems of utterance production; the guest CG is talking about her aggressive husband from whom she hid out in a women's house and who suddenly appeared at the porch with one of her children:

(4) "Strength"

262 CG: glauben gelassen äh daß mein sohn →also daß ich← mein sohn zu
he let me believe that my son well that I get my son back

263 CG: mir kriege↓ und da's war e:gentlich och der anlaß gewesen
and actually this had been the reason

264 FL: **verstehe↓ ich bring dir deinen**
I understand I bring your

265 CG: warum ich rausgegangen bin
why I went out

266 FL: **sohn↓**
son

267 CG: ja↓ *2* ich *2,5* bin dann auch rausgegangen aber * es
yes I finally went ou but first

268 CG: stand mein sohn ers ganz alleine vor=m tor- SCHNIEFT ich
there was my son standing alone at the porch SOBBS I

269 CG: mein=n bißchen skeps/ skeptisch war ich schon aber * es is
mean shure I was a bit suspicious but it is

270 CG: es war mein ki"nd HOLT LUFT #und das hat mir eigentlich mehr
 271 K #WEINEND
it was my child BREATHEs #and that gave me more #WEEPING

272 FL: **gege"ben als die fu:rcht vor meinem mann↓ im**
than the fear of my husband at

273 CG: kraft ge/# *

274 K #
strength#

275 FL: **augenblick war die liebe zu meinem ki"nd größer *2,5* als**
this point the love for my child was stronger than

276 FL: **die furcht vor meinem mann↓** >mhm↓< *3,5* ich
the fear of my husband mhm I

277 CG: ja↓ *1,5*
yes

278 FL: würde das gern auch so ma belassen denn: ähm: daß ihr mann
would like to leave it at this point because ähm that your husband

The first insert (*verstehe*↓ *ich bring dir deinen sohn*) has a preface defining the intervention as an explicitation of understanding, and this function is marked too by FL's perspective change to a position within the story: He formulates CG's situational understanding of what her husband was communicating to her. The second intervention is extraordinary by its length, but it clearly displays rhetoric practices of subordination: FL starts with a syntactically integrated completion of CG's utterance construction; FL maintains the empathic perspective taking; and both interventions are prosodically marked by a lingering tone without strong accentuation. Producing long pauses, FL offers the floor to CG and, in reaction to her inability or unwillingness to speak, takes the role of a substitute speaker, speaking for her. In this case too, the expansion of the insert is the result of a turn internal negotiation.

4. Insisting: Further interventions of the secondary speaker

Secondary speakers' further interventions often have the quality of insisting and display an orientation shift from secondary to competing contributions:

- The construction completion principle loses its force and the principle of immediacy dominates.
- The orientation towards shortness and subordination is given up in favor of grammatically self-contained, expanded and prosodically expressive constructions.

The sequential dynamic of this orientational shift is to be seen in the following example, taken from a talk show about smoking, with two antagonistic participants, TR and KR. TR argues that to smoke or not is part of the individuals' more or less rational decisions. In line 647/9 KR places an insert (*beso"nders von drei"zehnjährigen schü:"lern*) which fulfills the requirements of the positioning principles as well as those of shortness and subordination. KR uses the rhetoric device of expressing an antagonistic position in form of a completion of the primary utterance. This practice is relatively strong insofar as the addressee has great difficulties to take the insert into account during his ongoing turn without giving up his own utterance plan. Like in most cases where this rhetorical practice is used, the speaker specially underlines the conditional relevance of his contribution for the ongoing utterance with prosodical means like strong accentuation (see the three strong accents in KR's insert), thus aggravating the primary speaker's dilemma. TR ignores KR's insert, and KR insists with two competing interventions:

(5) "Thirteen years old pupils"

646 TR: s=ein →i"ndividuelle← verha"ltensentscheidung↓ * →wie wir
it's an individual behavioural decision as we

647 KR: >→**beso"nders**
specially

648 TR: sie in vielen andern bereichen au"ch >finden<
find them in many other domains too

649 KR: **von drei"zehnjährigen schü:"lern**↓<
with thirteen years old pupils

650 TR: **ja und da-** geht die fr/ der
yes and there is the que/ the

651 TR: fra:ge is↓ * wie weit man: >eine so"lche entschei"dung<
question is to what point such a decision

652 KR: <**nei"n**>↑ **des sind** >**zwo"lf**↑
no they are twelve

653 TR: >eines erwachsenen me"nschen↑ sofe:rn sie an das
of an adult person if you think at the

654 KR: **zehn**↑ **jä:hri:ge schü"ler die rau"chen**↑→<
ten years old pupils who smoke

655 TR: **erwachsenen/ darf ich-** **la"ssen sie mich vielleicht**
adult/ may I would you please let me

656 KR: +<**ja da:mit sie eben hier mal**> * ←**nicht**
yeah that you don't simply tell here

657 TR: mal #ausre:den#
#finish#

658 K #GEREIZT#
ANGRY

659 KR: **einfach sagen erwa"chsen-** >→**fangen an zu**
that adults begin to

660 XM: **TROCKENES HUSTEN**

661 KR: **rau"chen**↑←< * →**sondern**← * **a"nfangen zu rau"chen**↑ * **tu:n**
smoke but who begin to smoke are

662 KR: **die kinder und ju:"gendlichen**↓<
the kids and teenagers

663 TR: +→ich wei"ß:← * äh * dazu
I know äh to that point

664 TR: kann ich auch noch was sagen↑←<
I can say something too

KR's second intervention is oriented towards immediacy, starting in overlap just after the cue word *erwachsenen*. The utterance is grammatically self-contained and expanded by the opening interjection (*nei''n*↑), a list construction (*zwölf*↑ *zehn*↑ *jährige*) and a relative clause (*die rau''chen*). In overlap with an ongoing utterance, this type of intervention has competitive function. After TR's stopping his utterance construction to place a call to order (*la''ssen sie mich vielleicht mal ausre:den*) KR continues with an explication of intention (the construction with *damit* expresses the finality of the precedent interventions). This sequence presents an antagonistic equivalent to the cooperative interaction in example 1 where nevertheless the orientational shift from subordination to interruption operates as well.

5. Functions and reasons: What makes an insert worthwhile and legitimate

As the few examples already show, other's inserts can serve a variety of supportive, competitive, subversive or overtly antagonistic purposes. All interventions, even the most supportive ones, alter the balance between speaker and recipient and can create troubles for the primary speaker (obviously some of them are meant to do so, like in example 5). Thus, whatever secondary speakers aim at, they have to make their interventions accountable as something which is worthwhile and legitimate. For their definition of interventions the participants in the examples orient towards some basic functions like:

- To assure the validity of the primary utterance by contributing to word search, correcting or completing the produced utterance;
- to assure mutual understanding by making explicit one's own interpretation;
- to assure the transparency of recipients' perspective (position/opinion) by commenting on the primary utterance and its speaker.

Another rather recurrent function is not represented by the chosen examples: To assure participants' orientation to established situational relevancies by forms of interaction management (like hints to go on, to drop a topic or to turn to other participants).

Often two of these functions are combined in the way that one function serves as vehicle for another. All interventions display one's understanding; and this function can be dominant (like in example 4), or secondary (like in example 2 where the affirmative comment dominates), and it can be put forward in order to implicate a correction or a comment; in example 1 e.g., DE's displaying his understanding may imply a device of "smooth correction". In an analogous way the contributions to the validity of the other's

utterance can be dominant (like in example 3) or can be used to transport comments (like the negative one in example 5).

Reasons for interventions are deficits or exploits in the speaker's and recipient's performance in relation to situationally relevant frames. But the manifest diagnosis of deficits and exploits may be problematic (as dispreferred), questionable (as idiosyncratic), and superfluous (in relation to what is really relevant). In example 2 e.g., MG's intervention may seem a bit superfluous because CS's temporal reference *damals* which MG chooses as reference element for his insert is not really unclear in the context of CS's precedent sentences; MG risks to appear unattentive or even awkward as talk show host.

Generally, other's inserts may have strong interactional implications, and, as a consequence, normally they don't come up just like that. To discover the whole "history" of these interventions we have to look at broader contexts which can not be exposed in this paper. In example 5, KR's antagonistic insert continues and accentuates a dispute, where both participants already exposed their arguments. In example 4 the talkmaster's extremely supportive participation is embedded in his dominant strategy presenting the special case of a woman who is stirred to the core by her personal experience and is supposed to be unable to talk about it without help. In example 3, previous to the talk show host's insert we can find a small incident, and later on there are further activities which serve to define the relation between the talkmaster MG and his guest CS and thus gives an account for the prior intervention too: In reaction to MG's first question CS hesitates, turns her gaze away and paws, displaying problems with the task of answering. Later on MG reveals his definition of the situation, presenting CS explicitly as an unconfident talkshow newcomer and himself as protecting her. In this context MG's intervention which, considered locally, may give the impression that MG "does more than necessary" can be seen as a protective activity demonstrating that the talk show host does not leave his guest alone.

Participants use rather complex account strategies, attenuating problematic implications and linking their activities to multiple occasions and reasons (Kallmeyer/Schmitt 1996). In this sense, following a principle of rich contextualization can be considered as a key element for the analysis of rhetoric practices in verbal interaction.

Note

- 1) The transcription uses the signs of the German alphabet in analogy to the rules of pronunciation in German for the representation of the phonological and phonetic features of the spoken language, including dialectal speech. In addition, we use the following notation for prosodic features:

| | |
|---------|---|
| * | short pause |
| ↑, ↓, - | rising, falling and middle intonation |
| ←, → | slower, faster tempo |
| <, > | louder, softer voice |
| ” | strong accent |
| : | strong lengthening |
| = | slurring manner of articulation, linking different words. |

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