

Countering Prior Interactional Conduct with Responsive *doch* in German Talk-in-Interaction

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ABSTRACT

This article explores the German response token *doch*, which, as earlier studies claim, rejects negatively polarized utterances and reaffirms the opposite. The study demonstrates that *doch* can be used in response to the Other's conduct to mark a contrast to the Other's understanding or push back against the Other's challenging what the *doch*-speakers said before. When *doch* concerns the speaker's own prior conduct, it indexes a "change-of-mind," contradicts a produced or projected disaligned/disaffiliative/dispreferred action, and (re-)establishes consensus between the participants. The analysis shows that *doch* can be used after turns that do not contain grammatical or lexical negation. The results of the study reveal that a response token *doch* has a core meaning of indexing a contrast, contradiction, or counter to the Other's or the *doch*-speaker's prior conduct. The study concludes by discussing the implications of the results for our understanding of responsivity and negative polarity. Data are in German.

The polarity of an utterance has been shown to grammatically constrain the range of possible response formats (e.g., Couper-Kuhlen et al., 2023; Heinemann, 2005; Heritage, 2002, 2003; Heritage & Raymond, 2021). This becomes especially evident in case of negatively polarized utterances: Across different languages, such utterances have been shown to "prefer" or project grammatically negative responses typically accomplished with negative particles. In this environment, negative responses usually confirm, affirm, or agree with the negative assumptions and thus implement preferred actions (see, e.g., Deppermann et al., 2024 on German; Heritage & Raymond, 2021 on American English; Heinemann, 2005 on Danish; Jefferson, 2002 on American vs. British English). Consider [Extract \(1\)](#) from a cooking interaction, in which Despina requests a confirmation for her hypothesis that the noodles her mother Penelope has are not from Greece (see Gubina et al., 2024 for the analysis of this case). In line 13, Despina formulates a negatively polarized request for confirmation with a negation particle *nicht* ("not"). In response, Penelope *confirms* by producing a negative response token *nee*¹ ("no"; line 14):

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¹In this article, the *doch*-turn is indicated with ' = >', while the reference turn is marked with "> ". The response token *doch* is not translated and is gray-highlighted both in the original and the translated lines.

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Extract 1. FOLK_E_00327_SE_01_T_01_greece

01 DES: soll ich die nudeln holen,
should I get the noodles
 ((10 lines omitted, Despina brings the whole bag))
 12 (3.0)
 13 -> DES: **aber die sind nicht die gleichen wie in**
grIEEchenland.=oder?
but those are not the same as in Greece, are they
 14 => PEN: **!pt nee e,**
no
 15 (1.6)
 16 PEN: normal bringt_s immer der papa aus passau mit(h) (0.4)
*normally dad always brings it back from passau (=*city*
 name))*
 17 (s_m) griechischem lebensmittelgeschäft,=
(from the) greek grocery store

At least, in so-called “yes-no languages” (Sadock & Zwicky, 1985) with a *polarity-based* answer system to negative questions (see Pope, 1976; see also Jones, 1999, pp. 36–41), *no*-responses seem to constitute a “preferred” way to align with negatively polarized utterances. Yet, languages vary in their practices for *disaligning* with negatively polarized utterances—that is, rejecting the negated proposition—thereby “affirm[ing] the opposite of what is being proposed via a negative polarity” (Bolden, 2023, p. 51). Practices in question include specific constructions (like the *do*-construction in English; see Raymond, 2017, 2019), repetitions (see, e.g., Bolden, 2023 for Russian; Weidner, 2023 for Polish), or specific response tokens (like *si* in French, Jones, 1999, pp. 36–37; Couper-Kuhlen & Selting, 2018, p. 248; or *jo* in Danish; see Heinemann, 2005).

German belongs to the last group of languages as it provides a response particle *doch* that has been traditionally claimed to have a meaning of “negating a negation” (Dudenredaktion, 2003, p. 387), or disconfirming, disaffirming, or disagreeing with a negatively polarized utterance (Couper-Kuhlen & Selting, 2018, p. 249). A prototypical example is Extract (2) from a dinner interaction between Zoe, her partner Norbert, and his friend Gero. Here, Norbert (NOR) produces *doch* (line 24) to disagree with Gero’s (GER) negatively-formatted candidate understanding in lines 20–21 (see Extract (5) for an analysis of this case):

Extract 2. FOLK_E_00293_SE_01_T_04_apples

18 (2.3)
 19 NOR: aber die mit äpfeln warn auch mit st[evia.]
but the ones with apples were also with stevia
 20-> GER: [magst du ke]ine
 21 äpfel,
don’t you like apples
 22 % (0.3)
 nor %nods-->
 23 ZOE: [hm.]=hälf[te hälfte.]
yes half and half
 24=> NOR: [doch, %]
DOCH
 nor -->%

Still, the claim that *doch* is used only in response to negatively polarized questions is mainly based on made-up examples or examples from written language. Although in spoken German this is indeed a common environment for responsive *doch*, the collection for the current study reveals that *doch* can also occur in response to utterances (or even nonverbal events) that are *not* negatively polarized. This is demonstrated in [Extract \(3\)](#), in which *doch* responds to the recipient's prior laughter (line 03); and [Extract \(4\)](#), in which *doch* occurs in response to a positively polarized request for information (line 11; see [Extracts \(8\) and \(12\)](#), accordingly, for the analyses of these cases):

Extract 3. FOLK_E_00217_SE_01_T_02_essen

01 (2.5)
 02 PAU: ich find des sieht immer irgendwie aus wie was zu essen,
I think it always somehow looks like something to eat
 03-> TAM: †hih hih†
 04 (0.8)
 05=> PAU: doch,=ich find des sieht echt cool °°aus°°.
DOCH I think it looks really cool

Extract 4. FOLK_E_00084_SE_01_T_01_game of thrones

11-> FIN: **wird die [dritte wieder] spannender?**
will the third one be more exciting again
 12 (0.2)
 13 EVE: .h
 14 (0.4)
 15 EVE: hh
 16 (0.4)
 17=> EVE: **ja doch.**
yes DOCH
 18 (0.6)
 19 EVE: ja. (.)
yes

In contrast to prior research, examples like these show that *doch* is actually not restricted to responses to negatively polarized utterances that contain explicit negation markers (see, e.g., Dahl, 2010; Dryer, 2013, for major typological classifications of negation markers across languages). In fact, I argue that the interactional work accomplished with *doch* cannot be accounted for by focusing only on the grammatical format (in this case, polarity) of the utterance to which *doch* responds. Instead, its description must take into account the different action environments in which *doch* occurs and its precise position within a sequence.

Using the methodology of conversation analysis and interactional linguistics, this article explores the functions that responsive *doch* can implement in different sequential environments. In what follows, I will first present an overview of prior research on (responsive) *doch* in German and similar practices in other languages that can be used to respond to negatively polarized utterances. After describing the data and methods used for this study, I present the analysis of actions accomplished with *doch*. Specifically, I will show how *doch* can be used to contradict, mark a contrast to, or counter the prior interactional conduct of Others or *doch*-speakers themselves. Finally, I conclude by describing the core meaning² of responsive *doch*—

²The notion of the “core” (Rossi, 2015, p. 74) or “context-free meaning” (Heritage, 2010) is used to refer to the (underspecified) meaning (component) of a practice that is present across different uses of the practice regardless of modulations or variants.

indexing a contradiction, challenge, contrast, disagreement with or counter to what was said, implied, or projected by the Other's or Self's prior turns or actions. I will also discuss the implications of the results of the current study for our understanding of responsivity, negative polarity, and possible avenues for future research.

Previous research on disaligning responses to negatively polarized utterances

Prior conversation-analytic and interactional-linguistic research on the relationship between the polarity of an utterance and the grammatically tilted response has mostly concentrated on question-answer sequences, with a special focus on negatively polarized questions (Heinemann, 2005; Heritage, 2002, 2003; Heritage & Raymond, 2021). In most of these studies, it has been shown that negative polarity grammatically constrains the format of the response and favors a negative response.³ In English, lexical negative polarity items (such as *ever* or *any*; cf., Horn, 2001) have been shown to tilt the question toward a *no*-answer (e.g., Heritage, 2003), although this seems to be the case only for institutional settings and not for mundane talk-in-interaction (see Couper-Kuhlen et al., 2023). A special case constitutes so-called “reverse polarity questions” (e.g., *When have I?*): According to Koshik (2002, 2005), although such questions are formulated with positive polarity, they convey a negative assertion and thus invite a negative response.

As noted, although polarity-based languages seem to be similar in terms of aligned responses to negatively tilted questions (Jones, 1999, pp. 36–41), there is variation in terms of how to disalign with such utterances—that is, how to assert that the negated proposition is true and how to index “a mismatch between expectations put forth by the design of the question and the answer” (Weidner, 2023, p. 125). In her study on repetitional responses to polar questions in Polish, Weidner (2023) reported that such responses can be used to address a mismatch between the presuppositions of the polar questions and their grammatical polarity. Similar results were shown for repetitional responses in Russian: Bolden (2023) showed that this response type is used to disalign with the polar interrogative either in terms of its turn design or the action it accomplishes. Specifically, when used in response to negative polarity interrogatives, repetitions disalign with the negative tilt of the question and disconfirm the negative assumption. A similar pattern is observed in Estonian, in which a full verb repeat serves to provide a disconfirmative answer to negatively polarized *ega*-questions (Keevallik, 2009). English also makes use of repetitional responses to resist the constraints of the negatively tilted utterances (e.g., Couper-Kuhlen & Selting, 2018, pp. 247–248). Raymond (2017, 2019) demonstrated how a *do*-construction can be used to mark a contrast with a prior speaker's understanding, which can be (but does not have to be) formulated in form of a negatively tilted utterance (see also Stivers, 2005).

Languages like French, Danish, and German provide specific response particles for disaligning with prior negative utterances. For example, in French, the response particle *si* is used for disaligning with negatively polarized questions (Jones, 1999, p. 37). Heinemann (2005) showed that in Danish, a response particle *jo* is specifically used to disaffirm/disconfirm negatively polarized utterances—that is, to state that the negated proposition is the case. In German, this function has been traditionally bound to the response token *doch*,⁴ which constitutes the focus of the current study.

³It is important to note that there may be a mismatch between the action preference and the grammatical preference of the utterance: For instance, Schegloff (1995) demonstrated that negatively polarized pre-requests such as, “You're not going downtown, are you?” grammatically favor a *no*-response, although the action prefers granting (see also G. Raymond, 2003, p. 943, on the same point).

⁴Although this study focuses on *doch* as a response token, *doch* can also be used as an adverb, as a conjunction, and as a modal particle, as in line 07 in Extract (10). Interestingly, *doch* in these other uses has also been claimed to have a meaning of “marking a contrast” in the sense of a “contradiction between two reference points or indication of contrast with a previous assumption” (Hentschel, 1986, p. 148, own translation; see also Graefen, 2000; Grosz, 2010; Lütten, 1979). Similar observations concerning a core meaning of a lexical item across its uses as different word classes have been made in case of other response tokens in German as well (see, e.g., Betz & Deppermann, 2018 for *eben*). Thus, it would be important to explore how common semantic-pragmatic features of linguistic resources that can be used as different word classes in different sequential positions afford for the functions accomplished with them in talk-in-interaction.

In formal linguistic approaches, the function of the response token *doch* has been described as “negating a negation”—that is, “removing,” or “canceling” the prior negation or asserting the disputed factual situation (Zifonun et al., 1997, p. 381) and projecting that the negated proposition is correct (see, e.g., Willkop, 1988, p. 156). For instance, according to Couper-Kuhlen and Selting (2018, p. 248), *doch* is used “for disconfirming a *negative* polar interrogative or B-event statement.” Although this is indeed a typical action environment for the use of responsive *doch*, this study will demonstrate that *doch* can also be used in response to turns that are not (overtly) negative, which is why *doch* can also be found in response to positive questions. Spranz-Fogasy et al. (1993) explored what they called “negative reaction cycles” i.e., sequences in conflictual talk between mothers and daughters, in which the interlocutors reject each other’s turns, without giving any reasons; (e.g., “you behave thoughtlessly towards me” – “no” – “*doch/you do*” – “that’s not true” – “*doch/it is*”; Spranz-Fogasy et al., 1993, p. 74). Although such conflict sequences are rare in my data, this article will demonstrate that responsive *doch* can be used for pushing back against Other’s turns or actions that put into question, or challenge what the *doch*-speaker said before (see Extracts (7) and (8)).

Willkop (1988) investigated German response tokens (including *doch*) based on audio-recorded face-to-face interactions and dialogs from novels. In relation to responsive *doch*, Willkop showed that the response token can be used not only after explicit negation in the prior speaker’s turn but also after turns with presumably positive valence, having a (re-)affirming function (Willkop, 1988, pp. 162–4). However, the author does not specify (a) in what interactional environments *doch* can be used in response to positive turns or (b) how the response token *doch* affords to accomplish the interactional work of reaffirming. The current article will address these questions by offering the first systematic, collection-based study of responsive *doch* and actions implemented with this response token across different interactional environments in naturally occurring German talk-in-interaction.

Data and method

The study is based on video-recordings of mundane, media, and institutional face-to-face interaction as well as phone calls from the FOLK-corpus: the Research and Teaching Corpus of Spoken German⁵ (Schmidt, 2016). The data used for this study include settings in which participants are involved in joint activities (such as having breakfast together, cooking, renovating, or playing board games), interactions while driving with friends or a driving teacher, theoretical driving lessons, job application training sessions, emergency drills, physiotherapy sessions, public mediation, and music lessons, among many others. All names appearing in the transcripts have been anonymized. Written informed consent for scientific use of the data was obtained from all research participants.

In order to build a collection, only the first 10 contiguously occurring instances of responsive *doch* were extracted from each interaction to ensure sufficient variation of speakers and interaction settings. The data yielded 225 cases of responsive *doch*, with 175 cases from about 50 video recordings (approximately 60 hours) and 50 cases from 11 phone calls (approximately 8 hours). Each case has been subject to detailed sequential analysis in order to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the practice. After thorough qualitative

⁵FOLK is a publicly available scientific corpus, hosted at the Leibniz-Institute for the German Language (IDS). It is accessible at <https://dgd.ids-mannheim.de>.

case analyses, various features identified as important in the case analyses were examined across the collection to check the consistency of the identified patterns, including:

- action of the turn that *doch* responds to,
- polarity of the turn that *doch* responds to,
- whether *doch* refers to actions of Self or Other (or both),
- prosodic realization of *doch* (such as final pitch movement, prosodic integration, pitch jump, and pitch register),
- embodied conduct of the *doch*-speaker during the realization of the *doch*-TCU (such as nodding), and
- expansion after *doch* (both within the turn and after).

Relevant features will be addressed within the analyses in the next section. However, it is important to note that, due to space constraints and the specific focus of this article, the current study will examine only the use of single *doch*, excluding instances of double *doch*. Similarly, these limitations prevent a systematic and comprehensive analysis of all prosodic variations of *doch* in spoken German (cf., for instance, Barth-Weingarten, 2011 and Golato & Fagyal, 2008 for *jaja*, or Groß, 2023 for *joa* in German). Future research will be essential to identify and analyze the *full* range of prosodic variants of *doch*, including both single and double occurrences. The study draws on the methods of conversation analysis (Robinson et al., 2024; Sidnell & Stivers, 2013) and interactional linguistics (Couper-Kuhlen & Selting, 2018). All of the transcripts follow Jeffersonian conventions (Jefferson, 2004), with additional annotations of embodied conduct, where necessary (Mondada, 2018), and a translation into English.

Analysis of functions of response token *doch*

This section will present how responsive *doch* is used in response to Other's turns and/or actions (=other-oriented uses) and in relation to the *doch*-speakers' own prior interactional conduct (=self-oriented uses).

Other-oriented uses

Responsive *doch* in second position

One of the most prototypical uses of *doch* is responding to the Other's displayed understanding of what happened before (e.g., a nonverbal event or the *doch*-speaker's prior interactional conduct). We begin with a case in which Other formulates a negative candidate understanding inferred from the prior sequential context. [Extract \(5\)](#) comes from a dinner interaction between Zoe, her partner Norbert, and his friend Gero. At the beginning of this excerpt, Zoe initiates an informing and tells Gero that last Sunday, she made muffins with apples as well as with nuts and chocolate, and they all turned out extremely good (lines 01–03, 06, 11, 13). In line 14, Norbert says that he only ate the ones with nuts and chocolate, which can imply his lack of preference for muffins with apples. After a short laugh (line 17), which seems to orient to this possible implication, Norbert adds that the ones with apples were with an artificial sweetener (Stevia). In the turn-final overlap, Gero asks Norbert whether he does not like apples (lines 20–21):

Extract 5. FOLK_E_00293_SE_01_T_04_apples

01 (0.2)
 02 ZOE: letzten sonntag hab ich äh muffins gemacht.=
last Sunday I made uh muffins
 03 =die sin mir extrem gut gelungen.
they turned out extremely good
 04 GER: ja,
yes
 05 (0.5)
 06 ZOE: [einmal mit äpfeln,]=un einmal mit ä[hm]
once with apples and once with uhm
 07 NOR: [(unclear)]
 08 NOR: [.ihhh .h]
 09 (0.4)
 10 GER: hm_[hm,]
 11 ZOE: [ɪnu]ss und öh (1.2) schokolade.
nuts and uh chocolate
 12 (0.3)
 13 ZOE: die sin echt gut gewordn.=die waren su[per.]
they turned out really good they were super
 14 NOR: [ich hab nur] die
 15 mit nuss un fschokolade gegessen,
I have only eaten the ones with nuts and chocolate
 16 (0.2)
 17 GER: hn hn hn hn .ihhh
 18 (2.3)
 19 NOR: aber die mit äpfeln warn auch mit st[evia.]
but the ones with apples were also with stevia
 20-> GER: [magst du ke]ine
 21 äpfel,
don't you like apples
 22 % (0.3)
 nor %nods-->
 23 ZOE: [mm.]=hälf[te hälfte.]
yes half and half
 24=> NOR: [doch, %]
 DOCH
 nor -->%
 25 GER: [(n dann leb) ern]ährst du disch net gesund.=
(and then li-) you eat unhealthy
 26 =möschtest du früh sterben.
do you want to die young
 27 % (1.0) %
 nor %nods%
 28 NOR: ((laughs))
 29 (0.5)

With his question in lines 20–21, Gero formulates a candidate understanding, or an inference of what Norbert said before: Thus, the assumption that Norbert does not like apples is framed as a reason for eating *only* muffins with nuts and chocolate. Gero formulates it as a negatively polarized question with a negative determiner *keine* (“no”). In parallel with Zoe’s conditional confirmation in line 23, Norbert first starts nodding⁶ and then produces *doch* (line 24). In my data, nodding typically co-occurs with *doch*-responses and projects an upcoming contrast with the negated proposition, reaffirming the original proposition.

⁶In my collection, 33 cases of *doch* are produced with nodding, whereas 118 cases occur without nodding. In the remaining 74 cases, nodding could not be identified, or was not visible.

In this case, *doch* is used to disconfirm Gero's formulated negative inference and to state that the opposite is indeed the case, namely that he *does* like apples. Furthermore, *doch* marks a contrast between the expectations projected by the design of the polar question and the actual response. The response token is produced with a rising final pitch movement: Whereas *doch* with a falling final intonation systematically occurs in second-positioned disagreements or corrections and projects a sequence closure, rising- and level-intoned *doch* typically marks a re-alignment among the participants and/or reestablishment of the intersubjectivity and invites a sequence continuation (either a turn-expansion by the same speaker or a sequence continuation by Other). This is also what happens in lines 25–26, where Gero continues by producing additional polar questions in a teasing way, challenging Norbert's food preferences and motives for eating unhealthily, which leads to Norbert's subsequent accounts (not shown in the transcript).

In **Extract (5)**, *doch* is used to counter the Other's prior action and to mark a contrast between the expectations put forward by the turn design of Other's polar question formulated from a less knowledgeable position in relation to the *doch*-speaker (Heritage, 2012; Labov & Fanshel, 1977, pp. 100–101) and a response. However, *doch* can also be used in response to the Other's wrong understanding that is not explicitly formulated, but is rather inferred by the *doch*-speaker, as **Extract (6)** will demonstrate.

Here, we return to the cooking interaction from **Extract (1)**. Before the extract begins, Despina and Penelope decide whether they should add the eggs to the dish they are cooking, whether eggs are added in a classic recipe, and what can be treated as a "classic" recipe. In lines 01 and 03–04, Penelope informs Despina that many people, especially in southern Greece, always throw a bit of cinnamon into the ground meat. In her informing in line 01, Penelope uses the verb *hauen* ("throw into"), which has a negative connotation of adding too much of something carelessly and thus can be treated as criticism-implicative in relation to people who do this. This could be a reason for Penelope's replacing the verb with a more neutral verb *reintun* ("add") in line 03.

In lines 06–08, Despina responds that she also likes it, but rather in moussaka. She accounts for this preference by stating that eggplant and cinnamon go well together. Her turn in lines 06–08 could thus be understood as implying a contrast with Penelope's preferences. In response, Penelope produces *doch* and a subsequent agreement with Despina, followed by a concessive restriction that it has to be very subtle so that it does not taste like a cake (lines 09–11):

Extract 6. FOLK_E_00327_SE_01_T_02_cinnamon

- 01 PEN: viele haun im hackfleisch grad im südlichen griechenland,
many (people) throw into the ground meat especially in southern Greece
- 02 (0.4)
- 03 PEN: .hh da tun se auch immer en bisschen (0.3) zimt mit
04 rein.
there they always add also a bit of cinnamon into it
- 05 (0.2)
- 06 DES: .h dis mag ich auch.=aber eher in (.) mousSaka,=weil ich
I like it too but rather in moussaka because I
- 07 find dis passt (0.4) ähm (0.7) zimt und aubergine und
think it fits (0.4) uhm (0.7) cinnamon and eggplant and
- 08 hackfleisch passen gut zusammen.
ground meat go well together
- 09=> PEN: doch=ich mag s auch.=aber es muss wirklich dezent
DOCH I like it too but it has to be really subtle
- 10 sein.=net dass man (0.3) .hh (0.6) nich mehr rausschmecken
not that one cannot taste
- 11 kann ob man kuchen isst oder (0.3) essen.
whether one is eating a cake or food
- 12 (0.6)

In this case, *doch* is produced with a level pitch accent, which, similar to a rising final intonation, though even more strongly, “seem[s] to be used in order to hold the turn and project another unit to come” (Selting, 1996, p. 374; see also Groß, 2023 on a similar pattern of *joa*). In producing *doch*, Penelope seems to mark a contrast and push back against an inference that Despina might have possibly drawn that Penelope does not like the taste of cinnamon in ground meat (line 09). The source of this possible inference might lie in Penelope’s potential criticism-implicative assertion (lines 01, 03–04), which, in contrast to Despina’s clear positive assessment in lines 06–08, lacks an explicit positive evaluation and could thus be understood as disaffiliative. This is also what Penelope seems to be orienting to by saying *ich mag_s auch* (“I like it, too”), which explicitly disconfirms the possible inference that Despina’s utterance conveys. Therefore, in producing *doch* together with *ich mag_s auch* (“I like it, too”), Penelope sets aside possible inferences that might jeopardize cooperation, consensus, or agreement between the participants. Nevertheless, we can see that in lines 09–11, the responsive *doch* is followed by a restrictive concession—namely, that it still has to be subtle so that it tastes like food and not like a cake. This restrictive concession retrospectively serves as evidence for the criticism-implicative nature of Penelope’s turn-constructural unit (TCU) in line 01.

Extracts (5) and (6) have demonstrated that there seems to be a systematic, abstract two-step sequential pattern for the use of *doch* after the Other’s displayed negative understanding, as Figure 1 demonstrates.

In these cases, Other first produces a hypothesis, formulates an inference, or displays an understanding of what occurred before. Other’s understanding is either formulated with a negatively polarized utterance (Extract (5)) or conveys possible disaffiliation without explicit negation (Extract (6)). The source of the inference, hypothesis, or display of understanding can lie in the *doch*-speaker’s prior interactional conduct, interactional history, non-verbal event, or—as in Extracts (5) and (6)—in the *doch*-speaker’s prior turn⁷ (see Schegloff, 2007, chap. 11, on “sequences activated from their second position, which invoke what can be called a source/outcome relationship,” p. 217; see also Betz & Deppermann, 2018 on their use of “anchor”).

0	Source:	Prior interactional conduct of the <i>doch</i> -speaker or other participants, interactional history, nonverbal event etc.
1 →	A:	Explicit or implicit negative inference, hypothesis or display of understanding
2 =>	B:	<i>Doch</i> (+ correction, account, concessive restriction etc.) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • contradicts and marks a contrast with the expectations/projections put forward by the Other’s display of understanding • secures/(re-)establishes consensus / agreement, and cooperation among the participants when they are potentially jeopardized by the Other’s false negative understanding

Figure 1. Schematic representation of the prototypical sequential pattern of *doch* after the Other’s displayed understanding or hypothesis.

⁷The cases presented here can be seen as parallel to what Schegloff (1996a) described in cases of “confirming allusions”: Although *doch* in these cases disconfirms rather than confirms the previous speaker’s inference, in both practices, the speaker deals with another participant’s inferences or hypotheses that are generated based on their own prior turns where they *do not explicitly formulate* what the Other ends up inferring or hypothesizing.

With *doch*, speakers counter the Other's display of understanding and what it projects. Furthermore, in cases in which the cooperation, or agreement between the participants is jeopardized by Other's (possible) false negative inferences (as in [Extract \(6\)](#)), *doch* serves to secure and/or (re-) establish cooperation, agreement, and intersubjectivity among the participants (see Clayman & Raymond, 2021; Stivers et al., 2011; see also [Extracts \(11\)](#) and [\(12\)](#) on a similar self-oriented use).

Responsive doch in third position

Differently from what we saw before, *doch* can also respond to the Other's actions that question, or challenge what the *doch*-speaker said in the prior sequential context. An example is [Extract \(7\)](#). Here, Mariola (MAR) and Lisa (LIS) sit in the car and wait for Lisa's parents to come out of the house to have lunch together. Right before line 01, as her mother Zusanna (ZUS) approaches the car, Lisa opens the door and greets her (line 01). Zusanna produces several positive assessments of Lisa's hairstyle and says that it looks really awesome (lines 02–03), before greeting the daughter (line 05). Afterward, she produces two further positive assessments of Lisa's hair and checks her hypothesis whether the hairdresser made her hair a bit darker this time (lines 08–09), which Lisa disconfirms (lines 10 and 12). In line 13, Zusanna reacts with *ach komm* ("oh come on"), and it is this turn that Lisa responds to with *doch* (line 14):

Extract 7. FOLK_E_00291_SE_01_T_02_ach komm 'come on'

01 LIS: hi,
 02 ZUS: (.) ja das is der h:amm<e(h)r(h). (.) d(h)as i(h)s ja der
 03 ham[mer.] .h
yes/well that is awesome that is PTC awesome
 04 LIS: [hi.]
 05 *(1.0)*
 zus *kisses LIS*
 06 ZUS: .h also (.) klasse klasse.=ne?
so great great no
 07 (0.3)
 08 ZUS: †wahnsinn. (.) un diese .h äh (.) äh d die hat dir de-
amazing and this eh eh s- she made it for you
 09 bissele so (.) äh dunkler gemach[t so.]
a bit darker
 10 LIS: [nee_]
no
 11 (0.5)
 12 LIS: das is alles originalhaarfarbe.
it is all original hair colour
 13-> ZUS: (.) ah KOMM.
oh come on
 14=> LIS: †*doch?*
DOCH
 lis *nods-*
 15 (0.2)
 16 ZUS: †hat sie aber spülung irgendwelch gemacht.=[weil]
she has done rinsing then because
 17 LIS: =[n]ö:,
nope
 18 (0.8)
 19 ZUS: buah.=[des sieht °gut aus°.]
wow that looks good

In contrast to **Extracts (5) and (6)**, *doch* does not respond to Other's understanding. Instead, it responds to *ach komm* ("oh come on"), which belongs to a special group of displays of ritualized disbelief that treat the prior informing as not credible, like *labber net* ("don't babble"), *hör auf* ("stop"), *ach geh* ("come on/it's impossible"), *ach Schmarn* ("oh nonsense") *nee* ("nein"), and so on (see Heritage, 1984a). In doing so, such practices (a) challenge the truthfulness of what the *doch*-speakers said before by displaying different degrees of disbelief and (b) appeal to stop the initiated course of action and/or to stick with something assumed to be shared knowledge for both participants (see Proske, 2014, on such practices in German). Thus, here *doch* is used to push back against Zusanna's displayed disbelief and challenge of credibility of Lisa's words as well as to mark a contrast with the expectations projected by the ritualized disbelief, to cut short the initiated line of action. Furthermore, Lisa's *doch* insists on what the *doch*-speaker claimed before and retrospectively frames it as true, or accurate, which is also supported by Lisa's nodding while producing her *doch*-turn. This aligns with the prosodic realization of *doch*, which features a rising final pitch and a high onset—prosodic characteristics that, in my data, can be used to convey a meaning of obviousness and insisting on what the *doch*-speakers said before.

Finally, *doch* can also respond to more subtle practices for challenging what the *doch*-speakers said before. Consider **Extract (8)** from the interaction between two sisters—Paulina and Tamara—while renovating Paulina's room. During the excerpt, Paulina is putting paint into her paint tray. After a lapse in line 01, Paulina produces a registering, or noticing about the paint (Pillet-Shore, 2021)—namely, that she believes that it looks like some kind of food, which in this position can serve as a lapse-resolution (Hoey, 2018). In response, Tamara does not say anything but only laughs (line 03; see **Figure 2**). In line 05, Pauline produces *doch* with a subsequent assessment that it looks *echt cool* ("really cool"):

Extract 8. FOLK_E_00217_SE_01_T_02_essen

01 (2.5)
 02 PAU: ich find des sieht immer irgendwie °aus wie was zu essen°,
I think it always somehow looks like something to eat
 03-> TAM: †hih †hih †#
fig #2
 04 (0.8)
 05=> PAU: doch--ich find des sieht echt cool °°aus°°.
DOCH I think it looks really cool
 06 TAM: so was wie brei irgendwie.
something like porridge somehow
 07 (0.9)
 08 PAU: †na ja,=eher so! (1.7) sahnequark °oder †so°°
well more like cream quark or something like that
 09 (1.3)
 10 TAM: sahnequ[ark,]
cream quark
 11 PAU: [oder] halt irgend so_n (.) nachtisch.
or like some kind of dessert
 12 (0.3)
 13 TAM: hm:.
 14 (0.7)



Figure 2. Tamara laughs in response to Pauline's registering about the paint.

Paulina's registering in line 02 does not express a clear or unambiguous stance toward the paint; it is neither positive nor negative and is not designed as a "laughable." In responding to it with laughter, Tamara treats Paulina's assessment as humorous and nonserious. Thus, Tamara's laughter can be seen as disaffiliating with Paulina's registering and assessment and putting Paulina's turn into question (Clift, 2012, 2016; Sacks, 1992). Paulina responds with a level-intoned *doch*, which, as in Extract (6), projects "more to come," and an assessment that has a clear positive valence specified with *cool* and the intensifier *echt* ("really"; line 05). With *doch*, Paulina counters Tamara's interpretation, or understanding and treats her reaction as disaffiliative and inapposite. In doing so, Pauline pushes back against Tamara's perceived lack of seriousness in her understanding of Paulina's prior turn and reaffirms the seriousness of her prior assessment: She insists on her turn in line 02 being indeed meant in a serious way. Interestingly, afterward, Tamara aligns with Paulina's registering that the paint indeed looks like something to eat by comparing the paint with porridge (line 06). Tamara's immediate alignment with Paulina serves as evidence that Paulina may have misinterpreted Tamara's laughter.

As this section has demonstrated, Extracts (7) and (8) follow a different sequential pattern than the one shown in Section (4.1.1). In particular, such sequences are characterized by a *three-step* structure: First, the *doch*-speaker produces a turn that accomplishes some action (e.g., an assessment, an informing, or a statement of an opinion). In response, Other questions or even challenges the correctness, appropriateness, or truthfulness of what the *doch*-speaker said in the prior sequential context. In the third position, *doch* is produced (a) to push back against Other's disagreement, challenge, or other disaffiliative action and (b) to mark a contrast with what the Other's action is implying or projecting. In doing so, *doch*-speakers reaffirm or reassert the correctness, appropriateness, or truthfulness of what they said in the first position. Figure 3 summarizes this abstract sequential pattern:

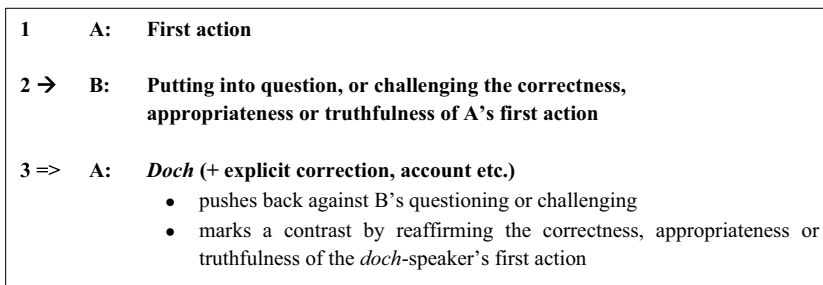


Figure 3. Schematic representation of the prototypical sequential pattern of *doch* after the Other's questioning or challenging of what *doch*-speakers said before.

To summarize, the analyses have shown how *doch* can be used to counter Other's prior action and the expectations put forth by it. Specifically, it has been demonstrated that *doch* can mark a contrast with the Other's understanding and, in doing so, secure and (re-)establish cooperation, agreement, and intersubjectivity among the participants (Extracts (5) and (6)). Furthermore, responsive *doch* can be used to counter Other's prior questioning or challenge by reasserting the correctness, appropriateness, and truthfulness of what the *doch*-speakers said before (Extracts (7) and (8)).

Self-oriented uses

This section will demonstrate that the response token *doch* can also be used by speakers to counter their *own* prior interactional conduct. Consider Extract (9) from the same fondue dinner among friends as Extract (5). Here, Gero and Norbert recollect the time when they were on a trip together. Before the extract begins, they talk about the poor quality of the internet at the hostel where they stayed. In lines 02–03, Gero repeats that he could nevertheless use FaceTime every evening. In

response, Norbert states that none of his apps were working, which, due to an extreme case formulation *überhaupt nix* (“nothing at all,” line 04; Pomerantz, 1986), could be seen as an *overstatement*:

Extract 9. FOLK_E_00293_SE_01_T_05_skype

01 (0.2)
 02 GER: ging j- j- (.) es ging (.) apple ging jeden abend (.)
worked j- j- (.) it worked (.) apple worked every evening
 03 konnt ich facetimen.
I could FaceTime.
 04-> NOR: **bei mir überhaupt nix.**
((out of my apps)) for me nothing at all ((worked))
 05 (0.5)
 06=> NOR: **doch==skype, (.) stimmt?=[skype.]**
DOCH skype right skype
 07 GER: [du hast j]_eden abend_s
 08 telefon gehabt.
you had a phone call every evening

After a 0.5-second lapse, Norbert produces *doch* and names Skype. With a level-intoned *doch*, Norbert indexes “change-of-mind” (see Clift, 2001) and contradicts what he claimed before in line 04. In doing so, he initiates a self-repair of what he stated in line 04, which was a negative extreme case statement about a memory of his past experiences. Specifically, *doch* is used to mark a contrast with his prior statement and frame it as wrong: In producing *doch*, the speaker challenges his prior overstatement and initiates a concessive repair (Couper-Kuhlen & Thompson, 2005) by formulating an application that did work on his phone despite a poor internet connection. His turn in line 06 is also designed with *stimmt* (“right”), which indexes an *autonomous* change in epistemic access (Betz, 2015) or a “just-now” recollection (Küttner, 2018) as a reason or an account for the undergone “change-of-mind.”

Similarly to *doch* responding to Other’s talk, the speakers’ turn addressed with *doch* does not have to contain explicit negation markers, as will be shown in Extract (10) from a guitar lesson. Here, the student learns to play the song “Father and Son” by Cat Stevens. The song is in 4/4 time, but with a twist, because Stevens adds a beat in one particular measure of the song. The teacher does not seem to be familiar with the song and with an addition of one 5/4 measure, which is why he is looking at the tablature of the song for a relatively long time. In line 01, he formulates this additional measure used for playing one part—namely a quintuple, or a 5/4 meter, which contains five beats in a measure. He does not attend to the student’s repair initiation (lines 02/04) and proceeds to sing the melody. In line 07, he initiates a turn that projects the problematic nature of the meter by prefacing it with *aber* (“but”) and a modal particle *doch* (see footnote 4), which indexes problems of expectations. Still, he abandons his turn, which, along with other features of turn design, can be interpreted as a display of confusion. In line 09, he assesses it as stupid. His turn is produced as a self-talk (Goffman, 1981; Keevallik, 2018), with a very low volume and no visible orientation toward the student. In line 13, he announces that he should take a quick look at that (=how to play this part) and proceeds to play this part. Finally, at line 15, he stops playing and produces *doch*:

Extract 10. FOLK_E_00378_SE_01_T_01_stupid

01 INS: fünf viertel takt.
five four time
 02 STU: was, hh
what
 03 (2.0)
 04 STU: fünf viertel.
five four
 05 (0.3)
 ((INS sings for approx. 4 seconds))

06 (1.6)
 07 INS: °aber #dann is es doch#°
but then it is PTC
 08 (2.5)
 09-> INS: °°des is doch blö:d°°
it is PTC stupid
 10 (0.5)
 11 STU: hh
 12 (1.2)
 13 INS: #(ah okay)#.=ich muss mal kurz nach dem da schauen (.)
 14 kurz,
(well okay) I have to take a quick look at that briefly

((INS plays the guitar and sings for approx. 30 seconds; several lines of self-talk/counting the beats omitted))

15=> INS: *ah doch,*=s macht sinn,
oh DOCH it makes sense
 ins *leftward head tilt and hand gesture away from the guitar*
 16 STU: okay.=
 17 INS: =kann ma machen,
one can do (it this way)
 18 (1.8)

In this case, *doch* does not address the instructor's previous turn designed with explicit negation markers but, rather, a turn that conveys a negative, or challenging *evaluative stance*: By referring to the meter as stupid, the instructor not only assesses it in a negative way but also questions the meter from the sheet music and the possibility or appropriateness of playing the part this way—that is, whether it makes sense. In producing *doch* with a rising final intonation (line 15), which projects a turn-expansion, the instructor contradicts his prior position toward an approach for playing based on the “change-of-mind,” which he orients to with a change-of-state *ah*-preface (line 15; Golato & Betz, 2008).

In contrast to the previous extract, this change is not based on “just now”-recollecting but, rather, on “research” or “investigation” that had led to this change—that is, the speaker has undergone this change as a result of playing this part and testing the way to play this meter. Thus, in producing *doch*, he concedes that what is noted in the tablature is a possible way of playing it and does, in fact, make sense (line 15). This is also in line with his turn in line 17, where he says that one can do it this way, as well as with his embodied conduct during the production of the *doch*-TCU (i.e., a leftward head tilt and a hand gesture away from the guitar, which could mark his turn as conceding as well; see Couper-Kuhlen & Thompson, 2005 on concessive repair). This extract also demonstrates that the *doch*-turn does not have to be adjacent to what it responds to.

The sequential pattern of such self-oriented uses of *doch* is as follows: The *doch*-speaker produces a turn that contains explicit negation markers (Extract (9)) or conveys a negative, or challenging stance (Extract (10)). The following *doch* indexes a “change-of-mind” (as a result of a “just-now” remembering or “try/investigation”), revises what the *doch*-speaker said before, and initiates a self-repair (see Figure 4):

1 →	A:	Turn/action with negative markers or conveying a negative/challenging assumptions
2 =>	A:	Doch + Self-repair <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marks a contrast with the speaker's own prior action • Indexes a 'change-of-mind'

Figure 4. Schematic representation of the prototypical sequential pattern of *doch* after Self's prior turn.

The following case demonstrates how *doch*, differently from Extracts (9) and (10), marks a contrast or counters possible *projections* or *implications* that could be conveyed through the speaker's own prior interactional conduct. Extract (11) comes from a conversation between German student Sven and an international student Adam. Before the extract begins, Sven has been talking about his studies. In lines 01–03, he says that in economics, they have many tests where they just have to tick the right answer with a cross. In the turn-final overlap, Adam asks whether Sven means “fifty fifty,” or true-false tests (line 04):

Extract 11. FOLK_E_00370_SE_01_T_02_fifty fifty

01 SVE: *und ähm zum beispiel in (.) wirtschaft haben wir auch
and uhm for instance in economics we also have
sve-g *gaze at ADA-->

02 sehr viele tests wo wir einfach nur ankreuzen
03 müss[en.]
very many tests where we just have to (tick the right answer with a) cross

04-> ADA: [**fif**]ty **fifty** so,#
like fifty-fifty/true-false
fig #5

05 (0.4)

06-> SVE: .h
07 (0.2)

08-> SVE: **&fif*ty fifty.**
fifty-fifty/true-false
sve-b &iconic gesture-->
sve-g -->*gaze away-->

09-> **#(0.7)**
fig #6

10=> SVE: **unge*fähr. &=#ja doch, \$**
kind of yes DOCH
sve-g -->*gaze at ADA-->
sve-b -->&
sve-h \$2 nods -\$

11 (0.3)

12 SVE: [s komm]t hin.=ja.
you are right yes

13 ADA: [hm hm.]



Figure 5. Sven gazes at Adam.



Figure 6. Sven averts his gaze and initiates an iconic hand gesture by moving the palm from side to side.

In response to Adam's candidate understanding in line 04, Sven first initiates an iconic gesture with his right hand, moving the palm from side to side to depict the meaning of “approximately” (see Figures 5 and 6). Furthermore, he averts his gaze and establishes an “out of focus ‘middle-distance’ look” (Goodwin, 1987, p. 117), which together have been described as constitutive parts of a *thinking face* (Goodwin & Goodwin, 1986). In this case, this embodied display of hesitation as well as the delay in response (lines 05–07) can be interpreted as projecting a dispreferred response (Heritage, 1984b, pp. 265–280; Schegloff, 2007, chap. 5). This is also in line with the meaning of the partial repeat in line 08, which constitutes thinking out loud, orients to Adam's request for confirmation as problematic, and projects a potentially dispreferred response (see Bolden, 2009).

After another gap in line 09, Sven first produces a qualified, noncommittal, conditional response *ungefähr* (“approximately”, line 10; see Robinson, 2020 on conditional affirmations). Immediately following this, Sven nods and starts as latched a new TCU with a turn-initial *ja* (“yes/well”) and *doch* with a rising final intonation projecting a turn-expansion (see line 12) and a (re-)alignment with Other. Both particles are uttered within the same intonation contour—that is, the particle *ja* is not produced as a separate TCU but rather as prosodically integrated into *doch* (see Szczeppek Reed, 2015, for similar observations regarding *ja aber* “yes but”). In her study on turn-initial *ja* in responses to confirmables, Betz (2017) demonstrated that such *ja* displays that a response “will depart from the preceding turn's formal expectations,” like preference and type-conformity (Betz, 2017, p. 183; on *type-conformity*, see Raymond, 2003).. In case of *ja doch*, the turn-initial *ja* can be seen as orienting not only to the problem of fit between the request for confirmation along with its formal expectations and the response (being *non-type-conforming*) but also between what the speakers themselves have so far *projected* (namely, a disaligned or dispreferred response) and what they are *actually doing* now (namely, a preferred, agreeing response).

With *doch*, Sven contradicts his own observable display of doubts as well as dispreferred response (*ungefähr*, “kind of”; line 10) and marks a contrast with what was projectable before his response. In doing so, he reflexively frames his *own* conduct before as having projected a disaligned, disaffiliative, or dispreferred response. Furthermore, in setting aside possible inferences that could be drawn by Others, *doch* additionally indexes (re-)establishment of consensus, or agreement as well as intersubjectivity among the participants. Thus, the response token marks that the participants are, indeed, on the same page, despite what might have been projected by the interactional conduct of the *doch*-speaker before.

Instead of marking a contrast with the prior projectable *and* produced dispreferred response, as in Extract (11), *doch* can also be used when a potentially dispreferred response is only *projected* and could only possibly be seen as coming, as in Extract (12) from a phone call between two friends: Finja (FIN) and Evelyn (EVE). Before the extract begins, Finja announces that she has started watching the third season of the series *Game of Thrones*. After telling how much fun watching *Game of Thrones* is (lines 01–05), Finja concedes that the first season was much better than the second one, which was somehow

more boring (lines 07–09). In overlap with Evelyn’s agreement (line 10), Finja asks whether the third season will be more exciting again (line 11):

Extract 12. FOLK_E_00084_SE_01_T_01_game of thrones

01 FIN: w- äh weiß i nich.=
uh I don’t know

02 FIN: =also man (.) is ja dann total drin
so one is PTC like totally into it then

03 FIN: (.) un des is auf jeden fall cool,
and it’s in any case cool

04 (0.2)

05 FIN: macht auch spaß
it’s also fun

06 (0.3)

07 FIN: <p>game of thrones>_ .h NUR ich muss sagen die erste
Game of Thrones I just have to say the first

08 staffel war auf jeden fall viel besser .h als die
season was in any case much better than the

09 zweite. =die zweite is irgendwie langweiliger.
second one the second one is somehow more boring

10 EVE: [h ja.]
yes

11-> FIN: **wird die [dritte wieder] spannender?**
will the third one be more exciting again

12 (0.2)

13-> EVE: .h

14 (0.4)

15-> EVE: hh

16 (0.4)

17=> EVE: **ja doch.**
yes DOCH

18 (0.6)

19 EVE: ja. (.)
yes

20 FIN: ja,
yes

21 (0.6)

22 EVE: ja.
yes

Finja’s request for information (and stance) in line 11, which would be based on Evelyn having already watched the third season, does not get an immediate response from Evelyn: After a 0.2-second gap (line 12), Evelyn first draws an in-breath (line 13) and after 0.4 seconds (line 14), she sighs and does not reply for another 0.4 seconds (lines 15–16). Evelyn’s behavior can be interpreted not only as indicating doing “thinking” (Goodwin, 1987) and projecting an answer in a pre-beginning position (Schegloff, 1996b) but also as indexing the problematicity with the response or even projecting possible negative affect, which is typically associated with sighing (Hoey, 2014). As in [Extract \(11\)](#), Evelyn responds with *ja doch*.⁸ In doing so, she contradicts her own prior display of hesitation and sets aside possible inferences that could be drawn by the Other. However, in contrast to [Extract \(11\)](#), *doch*

⁸It can be assumed that the particle *ja* responds to Finja’s question in line 11, whereas *doch* reflects Evelyn’s struggle in formulating a response (see, e.g., Szczepek Reed, 2015, for similar observations regarding *ja aber* “yes but”). However, in [Extracts \(11\) and \(12\)](#), *ja doch* is produced as a single unit or a prosodically integrated format. Thus, *ja* acts as a turn-initial particle that does not constitute a TCU on its own (see Betz, 2017).

does not counter a prior *produced* dispreferred response. Instead, it counters a *projection* of a possible dispreferred response. Moreover, the means that can be interpreted as possibly projecting a dispreferred response (=sighing) are, in this case, much more indexical and ambiguous than in the prior extract, where both verbal and embodied resources indicated a problem with confirming Adam's question.

In all of the extracts presented in this section, *doch* marks a contrast with what the speakers themselves said or projected before and indexes a "change-of-mind." However, Extracts (11) and (12) still differ from other self-oriented uses in Extract (9) and (10) in terms of their sequential pattern (see Figure 7):

1	A:	First action that solicits a yes/no-response from B
2→	B:	Display of doubts/hesitation → projectable disaligned, disaffiliative or dispreferred response
3 ⇒	B:	<p>(Ja) Doch (+ explicit affirmation/confirmation)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • counters a projection of a disaligned, disaffiliative, or dispreferred response in l. 2 • (re-)establishes consensus/agreement, cooperation, and intersubjectivity between the participants

Figure 7. Schematic representation of the prototypical sequential pattern of *doch* after the *doch*-speaker's projectable disaligned, disaffiliative, or dispreferred response.

In such cases, Other formulates a turn accomplishing some action that invites or solicits a *yes/no*-type response, or a *polar answer* (Bolden et al., 2023; Enfield et al., 2019) from the *doch*-speaker. However, these actions are not followed by an immediate response. Instead, we regularly find the *doch*-speaker's displays of doubts or hesitation, which can project a disaligned, disaffiliative, or dispreferred response. Finally, speakers respond with *doch*, often prefaced with a turn-initial particle *ja*, which aims at disambiguating a realigning nature of the upcoming response. In responding with *(ja) doch*, speakers set aside possible negative inferences of the upcoming disaligned, disaffiliative, or dispreferred response that could be drawn by Others. Additionally, *(ja) doch* serves as an affirming response to Other's initial action. With this response, speakers (re-)establish consensus/agreement, cooperation, and intersubjectivity with Other (see Clayman & Raymond, 2021; Stivers et al., 2011).

This section has shown that *doch* can concern not only the Other's interactional conduct but can also relate to what *doch*-speakers said or projected themselves. In particular, the analyses have demonstrated that self-oriented *doch* can be used to contradict the speaker's own prior conduct (Extracts (9) and (10)) and also negative assumptions of a possibly projected disaligned, disaffiliative, or dispreferred response (Extracts (11) and (12)). Furthermore, we have seen that in these latter cases, *doch* marks the (re-)establishment of intersubjectivity, consensus, and affiliation among the participants in the sense of supporting the action and/or stance of the Other (see Clayman & Raymond, 2021; Stivers et al., 2011). Finally, self-oriented uses of *doch* (especially as in Extracts (11) and (12)) raise a question of the degree to which *doch* in such cases can still be seen as responsive (and responsive to *what*), which will be discussed in more detail in the next section.

Conclusions and discussion

This article has explored how the response token *doch* is used in German talk-in-interaction. In contrast to prior research, which has claimed that *doch* is used only after negatively polarized utterances—that is, utterances containing explicit negation markers—this study has demonstrated that *doch* is systematically used after turns *without* explicit or overt negation as well. In all these cases,

the core function of the response token *doch* is to index a contradiction, challenge, contrast, disagreement, or counter to what was said, implied, or projected either by the Other or by the *doch*-speaker themselves in the immediate prior sequential context.

Regarding the turn design, although no specific prosodic features or nonverbal resources have been found to consistently correlate with the demonstrated functions of the response token *doch*, the analysis illustrates how these elements still shape the interactional work that *doch* accomplishes. For instance, nodding along with *doch* appears to serve as an additional contextualization cue (Gumperz, 1982), signaling a realignment with others or a reaffirmation of what the *doch*-speakers had asserted or considered shared understanding (Clark, 1996) among participants. Additionally, the study highlights how various pitch movements influence the projections that *doch* can create, further contributing to its range of functions. Future research will be crucial in identifying and analyzing the complete range of prosodic variations of *doch* and their interactional work.

We have seen that when used in response to Other's actions, *doch* can disconfirm and mark a contrast with the Other's displayed understanding (and affirm the opposite), which can either be formulated as a negatively polarized utterance (Extract (5)) or without any negation at all (Extract (6)). Moreover, *doch* can be used to push back against the Other's turns, or actions that (to different degrees) question or challenge what the *doch*-speakers said before and to reassert the correctness, appropriateness, and/or truthfulness of their prior talk (Extracts (7) and (8)). In these cases, such challenging can again be accomplished either with the Other's explicit, negatively polarized disagreement or the Other's turns that do not contain explicit negation (Extracts (7) and (8)) respectively. In producing *doch*, speakers block the sequential trajectory launched by Other's prior turn and reaffirm what *doch*-speakers said previously.

When *doch* refers to the speaker's own prior interactional conduct, the response token is used for marking a "change-of-mind" (Clift, 2001) and initiating a self-repair of the speaker's own prior turn, which can either contain explicit negation markers (like the adverb *nichts* "nothing" in Extract (9)) or accomplish an action with a negative, or challenging stance or connotation (like a negative assessment without negation markers in Extract (10)). Furthermore, Extracts (11) and (12) have demonstrated that *doch* can also be used to challenge, contradict, or counter a speaker's own prior conduct that either constitutes or projects a disaligned, disaffiliative, or dispreferred response. In producing *doch*, speakers reject a possible inference that Other might have drawn from the *doch*-speaker's conduct—namely, that the social consensus among the participants is put into question and that the *doch*-speaker might produce a dispreferred response. In addition, they accept the sequential trajectory projected by the Other and revise, set aside, or "withdraw" possible inferences that the Other could draw from the *doch*-speaker's prior interactional conduct. In doing so, they index the (re-)establishment of intersubjectivity as well as consensus, or affiliation among the participants by going along with the action/stance projected by Others (Clayman & Raymond, 2021; Stivers et al., 2011). Thus, in such cases, *doch* can be seen as a marker for reestablishing consensus and intersubjectivity in situations in which the speaker is or can be seen as (possibly) jeopardizing social contract and cooperation among the participants either on a structural or affective level (Stivers et al., 2011).

The results of this study also raise a question about the notion of responsivity: Especially in self-oriented uses, *doch* seems to have a double-barreled function. On the one hand, in such cases, *doch* is used in an auto-reflexive way (Auer, 2020)—that is, it indexes the "externalization of internal dialogue" (Auer, 2020), as if the speakers would talk and respond to themselves. Thus, it is often only in producing *doch* that the speakers *reveal* the prior existence of negative assumptions and the undergone "change-of-mind" (Clift, 2001). On the other hand, in producing *doch*, speakers still orient to other participants, because *doch* either serves as a response to the Other's questions (see Extracts (11) and (12)) or ensures the intelligibility of their actions for the recipients.

A remaining question, however, is how *doch* affords to respond not only to utterances containing linguistic negation but also to practices that do not inherently convey negation or negative meaning, such as laughter (Extract (8)) or a sigh (Extract (12)). In all the cases shown in this article, *doch* appears to respond to conduct—whether from Other or Self—that articulates and projects a form of *contrast* or

opposition to prior statements, actions, knowledge, or expectations. Thus, the frequent use of *doch* in response to explicitly negative utterances may reflect the pervasive role of negation as a marker of opposition, contradiction, and denial (Horn, 2001). This also goes in line with the interactional work accomplished with similar practices for disaligning with negatively polarized utterances in other languages: In his study on language (non-)concordance between questions and particle answers in Spanish-English bilinguals, Raymond (2023) showed that language-nonconcordant particles (i.e., code-switched particles) “are produced and understood as resisting the terms established more broadly through the questioner’s turn” (p. 251). In particular, he showed that, just as *doch* in German, language-nonconcordant answers can be used to disconfirm a negative proposition of the prior question or to resist the displayed disbelief or doubt (see also Raymond, 2017, 2019, for similar functions of the English *do*-construction).

The latter function was also described by Bolden (2023) for repetitional answers that can also be used to “resist the stance of disbelief or doubt enacted by newsmarks” (Bolden, 2023, pp. 41–2; see also Sorjonen, 2001, pp. 53–56 for a similar pattern). Thus, future research could examine similar practices in other languages and whether such practices can also be used after utterances without explicit negation (see also Schegloff, 1995, on description of complaints). This would be important for our understanding of negative polarity and what the participants treat as opposing or contradicting in social interaction.

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