

Lexeme Recycled. How Categories Emerge From Interaction¹

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Abstract

A method of turn construction used in ordinary conversation, recycling with *différance*, is described. By this method, new turns are modelled on old turns in socially and thematically motivated ways. As a consequence, experienced turns get organized into networks of differences, which allow language, including syntactic and lexical categories, to continuously emerge as a feature of social interaction.

0. Introduction

Language is often described as if it were a third party to any conversation, an independent entity, which is pressed into service for interactive purposes. In this article, in contrast, I adopt a different perspective. Here, I want to show how language, i.e. the language system, is a natural consequence of conversational interaction.

Central to my argument is a method of turn construction, which I call recycling with *différance*. I begin by demonstrating, through an extended analysis of a conversational sequence (sections 1 through 7), how this method works. I then show that the same method is also operative across sequences (section 8). The method is then summarized and discussed in section 9.

In the last two sections of the article, I argue two points. First, for recycling with *différance* to work, participants must remember fully detailed experienced exemplar turns, in their sequential and situational contexts. Thus, linguistic competence is best conceived of as a network of experienced exemplar turns. Secondly, in a network of experienced exemplar turns, the component turns are articulated by the method of recycling with *différance* in such a way that their different kinds of parts,

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viewed together, approximate a natural language lexicon of a familiar type. Following Hopper (1987, 1998), Keller (1994), MacWhinney (1998, 2002), and others, I conclude that language is an emergent feature of linguistic practice. Notice, though, that it is an essential ingredient of my argument that the method which allows language to emerge is an interactive method, a method for doing social interaction. Thus, language is best understood as a continuously emerging and co-constructed social fact.

1. An Example: “Oskyldig”

I will start with an extended analysis of a sequence from a conversation among four physicians, one woman and three men, who know each other. They have volunteered to participate in a formal discussion of euthanasia, which they know will be recorded. About an hour before the start of the discussion session, the participants have gathered to plan the discussion. Unknown to all but one of the participants, this planning session, which develops into an informal, free-for-all tossing of topics back and forth, is also recorded.² About ten minutes into the planning session, Arne spots a map on the wall of the room they have borrowed and almost seamlessly changes the topic of the conversation, right then the social dimensions of euthanasia, and starts talking about the map. The other participants join him in trying to figure out what they are looking at. This goes on for a couple of minutes, until the nature of the map has been satisfactorily identified. After that, the map is not further mentioned.

² For background information about this material and the project *Talsyntax* (Syntax of spoken language) of which the material forms part of the data, see Loman, Ed. (1977).

2. “Oskyldig”, Part One

(1) “Oskyldig”, beginning:³

1. Arne: *hhh de där e minsann tillåme sionistisk propaganda.
 **hhh it there is indeed even Zionist propaganda.*
 *hhh that is indeed even Zionist propaganda
2. Daniel: ((MUTTERING))
3. Björn: °() där° (p) ja så
 °() there° (p) yes-so
 °() there° (p) oh
4. X: ((LAUGHTER))
5. Björn: de e inte turiststartat?
 it is not touristy?
 it is not a tourist thing
6. Arne: näej absolut inte.
 no-o absolutely not.
 oh no absolutely not
7. Björn: de e de inte nähä.
 it is it not no-ho.
 it is not, I see
8. Arne: undrar var iallsindar han fått tag i den.
 wonder where in-all-his-days he got hold of it.
 wonder where on earth he got hold of it

The first part of the sequence is shown in (1). After Arne has described the map on the wall as ‘Zionist propaganda’, in line 1, there is some commotion while the other participants focus their attention on the map. Björn, who has first reacted with a non-committed news acknowledgement token, *ja så – ja* (yes) augmented with *så* (so) – in line 3, then proceeds to suggest an alternative interpretation, in line 5, namely that the map is a

³ Transcription conventions follow the system of Gail Jefferson, as modified by Ochs et al. (1996). Overlaps are within []. An underlined vowel indicates primary stress (sentence accent), . indicates a falling intonation, , indicates “continuing” intonation, ? rising intonation and ; a rise stronger than a comma but weaker than a question mark, (p) indicates a pause. Numbers in parentheses (e.g., 0.5) indicate silence, approximately represented in tenths of a second. Talk between degree signs (e.g., °after°) is markedly softer than the talk around it. The up and down arrows (↑↓) mark sharper rises or falls in pitch. > < indicates that the talk is compressed or rushed, < > that a stretch of talk is markedly slower. Hearable aspiration is shown by h. () indicate that something is being said, but no hearing can be achieved.

‘tourist thing’. Björn does this by means of a negative statement with a rising intonation, thus framing his suggestion as a question. Björn’s alternative interpretation is then emphatically rejected by Arne, in line 6 – the negative response item *näej* used by Arne is a strengthened version of the ordinary negative response item *nä* (no) and Arne also qualifies *inte* (not) with a stressed *absolut* (absolutely). Confronted with all this, Björn yields and accepts Arne’s interpretation, in line 7. The first *de* (it) in line 7 is anaphoric, picking up *turistartat* (‘touristy’) of line 5. The final *nähä* in line 7 is another version of *nä*, which is used to acknowledge a fact which is not (or no longer) up for discussion. This first part of the sequence is concluded by an assessment, an expression of surprise from Arne, in line 8. The lexicalized noun phrase *iallsindar* (in-all-his-days), as well as the stress on that particular item, unambiguously marks the turn as an exclamation.

3. Format Tying

Björn produces the alternative description of the map on the wall in line 5 by the method of format tying (Goodwin and Goodwin 1987), that is, he ties his turn “not only to the type of action produced by last speaker but also to the particular of its wording” (Goodwin and Goodwin 1985, 216). As shown in diagraph form (cf. DuBois 1996) in (2), Björn reuses the turn format of Arne’s original description. Furthermore, we see that Arne, in his rebuttal of Björn’s proposal in line 6, and Björn once more, in his acceptance of Arne’s rebuttal in line 7, also orient towards this format.

(2) Format tying in the first part of “Oskyldig”:

- | | | | | | | |
|-----------|-------------|--------------|-----------|------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------|
| 1. Arne: | de | där | e | minsann | tillåme sionistisk | |
| | | | | | propaganda. | |
| | <i>it</i> | <i>there</i> | <i>is</i> | <i>indeed</i> | <i>even Zionist propaganda.</i> | |
| 5. Björn: | de | | e | inte | turiststartat? | |
| | <i>it</i> | | <i>is</i> | <i>not</i> | <i>'touristy'?</i> | |
| 6. Arne: | näej | | | absolut inte. | | |
| | <i>no-o</i> | | | <i>absolutely not.</i> | | |
| 7. Björn: | de | | e | de | inte | nähä. |
| | <i>it</i> | | <i>is</i> | <i>it</i> | <i>not</i> | <i>no-ho.</i> |

In a traditional grammatical description, one would treat line 6 as an instance of ellipsis, as a token of *näej de e absolut inte turiststartat* (no-o it is absolutely not a tourist thing), with *de e* and *turiststartat* elided. However, in Dialogical Grammar (DuBois 1996, Linell 2002), where it is explicitly recognized that turns and turn constructional units (TCUs) have systematic relations to their sequential context, we can simply say that the format of line 5 prevails throughout the negotiation of the tentative claim made with that turn. Lines 6 and 7 are construed with the format available as an interpretive resource, providing the source for the ‘missing’ information in line 6, and an antecedent for the anaphoric first *de* in line 7.

The format tyings in the first part of “Oskyldig” are thus done by means of modified recyclings of preceding turns. In the turn in line 5, Björn repeats the initial part of Arne’s turn in line 1 and substitutes a new expression for the final part of that turn. In the turn in line 6, Arne adds a response item (*näej*), repeats *inte*, adds a modifier to it, and retains, without repeating it, the rest of Björn’s preceding turn. In the turn in line 7, Björn recycles his previous turn in line 5, but substitutes an anaphoric pronoun (*de*) for the final

part of that turn. He also provides the turn with a new intonation contour, and repeats, in modified form and in final position, the response item from Arne's turn in line 6.

Björn's and Arne's successive recyclings effectively articulate the turns in lines 1, 5, 6, and 7 into five parts: i) a common format, or frame (Peters 1983, 44-55, Tannen 1989, 37-38, Fillmore et al. 1988), *de (där) e Z R*, running through all these turns; ii) a small paradigm of stance markers, the sentence adverbials *minsann*, *inte*, and *absolut inte*, which fill position Z in that frame; iii) a small paradigm of rhemes, i.e. the part of a turn which is most relevant to the topical progression of a sequence and which typically contains the content words and the accented syllable(s) of the turn, the phrases *tillåme sionistisk propaganda* and *turistat*, which fill position R; iv) a small paradigm of response items, *näej* and *nähä*, which optionally precede or follow the frame; and v) two types of contour over the turn, falling (.) and rising (?). This articulation of the turns in lines 1, 5, 6, and 7 into parts is shown in (3). (The asterisks in line 7 are meant to indicate that the first *de* belongs to the paradigm of rhemes.)

(3) Turn structure in the first part of "Oskyldig":

1.	Arne:		de	där	e	minsann	tillåme sionistisk	
			<i>it</i>	<i>there</i>	<i>is</i>	<i>indeed</i>	propag <u>anda</u> .	
							<i>even Zionist</i>	
							propag <u>anda</u> .	
5.	Björn:		de		e	inte	turistat?	
			<i>it</i>		<i>is</i>	<i>not</i>	' <u>touristy</u> '?	
6.	Arne:	näej				absolut inte.		
		<i>no-o</i>				<u>absolutely</u> not.		
7.	Björn:		de*		e de	inte	*	nähä.
			<i>it</i>		<i>is it</i>	<u>not</u>		<i>no-ho.</i>

Whether we describe this part of “Oskyldig” in terms of actions such as repetition, substitution, and addition (whose affinity to the elementary transformations of Harris 1957 is no coincidence), or in structural terms, it is clear that its pattern of recyclings corresponds quite closely to its interactional structure. The turn in line 5 is both subordinate to and parallel to the turn in line 1, in that Björn both challenges Arne’s contribution and proposes a new descriptive contribution to the ongoing topic. The two turns are united by a common frame and differentiated by unique stance markers and unique rhemes.

In contrast, the turns in lines 6 and 7 are only being used to negotiate the proposed contribution of line 5, and offer no further contribution. These turns are united by a common frame, which is retained in Arne’s rejection of Björn’s proposal in the turn in line 6, and repeated in Björn’s compliance with Arne in the turn in line 7, by a common stance marker, which is repeated and modified in the turn in line 6, and repeated in the turn in line 7, and by a common rheme, which is retained in the turn in line 6, and repeated in reduced, anaphoric form in the turn in line 7. Furthermore, the turns in lines 6 and 7 are united, and differentiated from the turn in line 5, by variations on the same response item and a common contour.

The point that a particular pattern of recyclings corresponds quite closely to a particular interactional structure is reinforced when we also bring the turn in line 8, repeated in (4), into the picture.

(4) First assessment turn:

8. Arne: undrar var íallsindar han fátt tag i den.
wonder where in-all-his-days he got hold of it
wonder where on earth he got hold of it

This turn is used by Arne to make an assessment of the situation and it has no descriptive import. Hence, the turn in line 8 departs from the ongoing descriptive activity, and its unique format can surely be taken as an indication of that.

Very roughly, we might say that recycling is governed by the simple principles that a new frame indicates a new activity, and a new rheme, a new contribution, whereas particular combinations of contour, stance markers, and response items are used to negotiate stance and establish intersubjectivity. However, the use of such rough principles may still lead to subtle results. Consider again the turn in line 7. Here, Björn yields to Arne's objection. In doing that, he recycles the response item and the contour of that objection. But he also repeats, rather than retains, both the frame and (although in reduced, anaphoric form) the rheme of his earlier turn. In this way, Björn manages both, by staying on frame and rheme, to stay within his contribution and, by repeating them rather than retaining them, introduce something new into that contribution, at the same time as he establishes intersubjectivity with Arne, by recycling Arne's response item and contour.

4. "Oskyldig", Part Two

In the second part of "Oskyldig", lines 9 to 14, shown in (5), Daniel offers another description of the map on the wall, that it shows battles, in fact air battles. This is done in three steps: line 9, with feedback from Arne, line 11,

with feedback from Carla, and line 13. The second part is, like the first part, concluded by an assessment, an expression of surprise from Arne, in line 14.

(5) “Oskyldig”, middle:

8. Arne: undrar var i allsindar han fått tag i den.
wonder where in-all-his-days he got hold of it.
wonder where on earth he got hold of it
9. Daniel: titta där de e liksom slag,
look there it is like battles,
look there it is like battles
10. Arne: hel:a faderullan.
whole the-fatheroll.
the whole thing
11. Daniel: Israel air-strikes,⁴
12. Carla: jaha.
ye-hes.
I see
13. Daniel: de e luftslage va.
it is the-air-battle what.
it is the air battle eh
14. Arne: de va katten,
it was the-cat,
that was strange

⁴ Here, Daniel reads aloud the legend of the map. Hence, the turn is in English in the original.

What Daniel does in lines 9 – 13 is clearly a new, independent contribution to the ongoing descriptive activity, parallel to Arne’s contribution in line 1. Thus, as we would by now expect, Daniel recycles the frame of the turn in line 1, but substitutes a new stance marker and a new rheme for those of the turn in line 1. Interestingly, Daniel also repeats the *där* (there) of the turn in line 1, although in a different position. It is natural to take this as a further signal of the parallelism between the two turns.

The structure of the descriptive turns in the second part of “Oskyldig” is compared to those in its first part in (6).

(6) Turn structure in the first and second parts of “Oskyldig”:

1.	Arne:		de	där	e	minsann	tillåme sionistisk propaganda. <i>even Zionist propaganda.</i>	
			<i>it</i>	<i>ther</i>	<i>is</i>	<i>indeed</i>		
					<i>e</i>			
5.	Björn:		de		e	inte	turiststartat? 'touristy'	
			<i>it</i>		<i>is</i>	<i>not</i>		
6.	Arne:	näej <i>no-o</i>				absolut inte. <i>absolutely not.</i>		
7.	Björn:		de*		e de	inte	*	nähä. <i>no-ho.</i>
			<i>it</i>		<i>is it</i>	<i>not</i>		
9.	Daniel:	titta där <i>look there</i>	de		e	liksom <i>like</i>	slag, <i>battles,</i>	
			<i>it</i>		<i>is</i>		<i>hel:a faderullan.</i> <i>whole the- fatheroll.</i>	
10.	Arne:						Israel <u>air</u> -strikes,	
11.	Daniel:							jaha
12.	Carla:							<i>ye-hes</i>
13.	Daniel:		de		e		luftslage <i>the-air-battle</i>	va. <i>what.</i>
			<i>it</i>		<i>is</i>			

Note that *hela faderullan* is a set noun phrase, with the meaning of ‘everything’ or ‘the whole thing’, and thus fits into the rhematic position,

and that *jaha* is an elaboration of *ja* (yes), exactly in the same way as *nähä* is an elaboration of *nä*, and with the same function, namely to acknowledge a fact which is not (or no longer) up for discussion.

The type of sequence we saw in the second contribution to the first part of “Oskyldig”, where a first turn of a contribution is followed by a turn which retains the frame of the first turn and continues the contribution, and the contribution is then concluded by a turn which repeats the frame of the first turn, is also seen, in more elaborated form, here in the second part of “Oskyldig”. The initial turn of Daniel’s contribution in line 9 is followed by two turns which retain the frame of the initial turn, before the contribution is concluded by the turn in line 13, in which the frame of the turn in line 9 is repeated.

The shape of this sequence suggests a scale of dependence: new > repeated > retained, which is operative in such a way that a turn, besides always linking to the immediately preceding turn, also depends on the closest preceding turn of higher rank, and is parallel to the closest preceding turn of equal rank. It is through some such principle that a contribution can be concluded and bracketted off by a repeated frame following one or more retained frames, the repeated frame connecting back not only to the immediately preceding turn, but also to the initial turn of the contribution, as well as opening up for a following new contribution.

5. Recycling of Rhemes

We would also expect by now that a single contribution uses a unique, recurring rheme, as in the second contribution of the first part of “Oskyldig”, with some variation as to whether that rheme is retained or repeated, or, if repeated, repeated in anaphoric form or not. Lines 9 – 13 in the second part of “Oskyldig” has, as we have seen, a straightforward single contribution pattern of retained and repeated frames. However, the rhemes in these lines are, as shown in (7), much more varied than we would have expected.

(7) Rhemes in the second part of “Oskyldig”:

9.	Daniel:	titta där <i>look there</i>	de <i>it</i>	e <i>is</i>	liksom <i>like</i>	slag, <i>battles,</i>	
10.	Arne:					hel:a faderullan. <i>whole the- fatheroll</i>	
11.	Daniel:					Israel <u>air</u> -strikes,	
13.	Daniel:		de <i>it</i>	e <i>is</i>		luftslage <i>the-air-battle</i>	va. <i>what.</i>

Clearly, these rhemes center somehow on the same notion. The initial rheme *slag* (battles) is not recycled through repetition and retainment, but through a series of variations on it. To begin with, we can note that *slag* recurs in *luftslage* (the-air-battle) in line 13. The relationship between these two expressions has several dimensions. First of all, *luftslage* is a DERIVATIONAL VARIATION on *slag*, i.e. an expression which is derivationally related to *slag*, in this case through the compounding of *luft* and *slag*. Secondly, *luftslage* is an INFLECTIONAL VARIATION on *slag*, i.e. an expression which is inflectionally related to *slag*, in this case through the addition of the suffix *-e* (NEUTRE DEFINITE SINGULAR) to *slag*. Finally,

luftslage is a SEMANTIC VARIATION on *slag*, i.e. an expression which is (straightforwardly) semantically related to *slag*. In this case, *luftslage* is a hyponym of *slag*.

Moreover, *slag* is a hyponym of *hela faderullan* (everything, the whole thing), and *Israel air-strikes* is a paronym of *slag*. Thus, *hela faderullan* and *Israel air-strikes* are semantic variations on *slag*. And *luftslage* is a derivational variation on *air-strikes* (two compounds with the same initial part), if we disregard, as we surely ought to do in this case, the difference between English and Swedish.

So what we have here in lines 9 – 13 of the second part of “Oskyldig” is one contribution, summed up in the turn in line 13, when we look at the pattern of recycled frames, and several related contributions, when we look at the pattern of recycled rhemes. And this is a fairly adequate description of the sequence in lines 9 – 13, where Daniel, with the help of Arne and Carla, tries out several formulations of the same contribution. Whereas a new rheme would signal a new contribution, and a repeated or retained rheme would signal an ongoing contribution, a rheme which is recycled with variation seems to signal a new formulation of a previous contribution. And if the previous contribution, as in lines 10 – 13, is in fact the ongoing contribution, then successive variations on an initial rheme will signal as many reformulations of the ongoing contribution.

Note also that different participants are using different lexical resources. Just as in the first part, *sionistisk propaganda* and *turiststartat* index Arne and Björn, respectively, derivational and inflectional variations on *slag* index Daniel in the second part, whereas Arne uses a formally distinct, but

semantically related, expression, *hel:a faderullan*. However, when Arne contests Björn's contribution in the first part, he retains Björn's rheme. Repeating or retaining another participant's rheme, in contrast to doing a variation on it, may thus indicate not only continuity of a contribution but also trouble of some sort. In fact, Fant (1999) has shown that such a procedure is a normal procedure in open confrontations.

6. "Oskyldig", Part Three

In the third, and final, part of "Oskyldig", shown in (8), Arne, in a longish expansion of the assessment in line 14, summarizes, in his own phrasings, the two descriptions of the map established so far. He then receives surprised feedback from the three others, which gives way to unison laughter, overlapped by a concluding coda from Arne, which gets feedback from Daniel.

(8) "Oskyldig", end:

- | | | |
|-----|--------|--|
| 14. | Arne: | de va <u>k</u> atten,
<i>it was the-cat,</i>
that was strange |
| 15. | | de e tydligen ifrån israeliska propagandaministeriet
<i>it is apparently from Israeli the-propaganda-ministry</i>
it is apparently from the Israeli ministry of propaganda |
| 16. | | å sen e där en <u>l</u> ampa bak som lyser precis (p)
<i>överallt [där] israelerna slogs.</i>
<i>and then is there a lamp behind which lights precisely</i>
<i>everywhgre [where] the-Israelis were-fighting.</i>
and then there is a lamp behind which lights up precisely
everywhere where the Israelis were fighting |
| 17. | Carla: | [hja]
[yes]
yes |
| 18. | Björn: | de va ju som <u>s</u> jut:ton. |

- it was you-know like seventeen*
 well, that was really something
 19. Daniel: va var har vi hamnat riktigt.
what where have we ended-up really.
 hey where are we really
 20. Carla: ja
 yes
 yes
 21. X: [(LAUGHTER)]
 22. Arne: [ja just de ja e oskyldig]
yes right it I am innocent.
 yes right I'm innocent
 23. Daniel: okej vi tror dej.
ok we believe you.
 ok we believe you
 24. Arne: 'hhh mm⁵

In line 15, Arne reformulates his own description from the turn in line 1, and in line 16, he reformulates Daniel's description from the turns in lines 9 – 13. These descriptions are compared in (9).

⁵ *mm* is a minimal response item.

(9) Descriptive contributions to “Oskyldig”:

1.	Arne:		de	där	e	minsann	tillåme sionistisk propaganda. even Zionist propaganda.	
			<i>it</i>	<i>ther</i>	<i>is</i> <i>e</i>	<i>indeed</i>		
9.	Daniel:	titta där <i>look there</i>	de		e	liksom	slag, <i>battles</i>	
			<i>it</i>		<i>is</i>	<i>like</i>		
13.	Daniel:		de		e		luftslage <i>the-air-battle</i>	va. <i>what</i>
			<i>it</i>		<i>is</i>			
15.	Arne:		de		e	tydligen	ifrån israeliska propaganda ministeriet <i>from Israeli the- propaganda-ministry</i>	
			<i>it</i>		<i>is</i>	<i>apparently</i>		
16.	Arne:	å sen <i>and then</i>			e	där	en lampa bak som lyser precis överallt där israelerna slogs <i>a lamp behind which lights everywhere the- Israelis were-fighting</i>	
					<i>is</i>	<i>the</i> <i>re</i>		

In reformulating the two descriptions established in the first and the second part of “Oskyldig”, Arne recycles the format which was used to introduce them. In line 15, the frame *de e Z R* is simply repeated. In line 16, the last descriptive turn in the sequence, the format is slightly altered. A temporal expression is fronted and the subject is placed after the verb. Note also that the subject is *där* (there) rather than *de* (it). This is most likely because Arne speaks a Scanish dialect, where there is a distinction between *de e* and *där e*, which is highly similar to the distinction between *it is* and *there is* in English. However, as I have already noted, *där* is strategically placed in “Oskyldig”. In its first and second parts, *där* is used to introduce the two major descriptions of the map on the wall. In both cases, *där*

precedes the verb. In the third part, *där* is used in the turn which concludes the descriptive part of the whole sequence, and in that turn it is placed after the verb. Thus, we might take the variation on the descriptive turn format in line 16 as a kind of boundary marker, signalling the end of the descriptive phase of “Oskyldig”.

Moreover, the rhemes in lines 15 and 16 are variations on the rhemes in lines 1, 9, and 13. The adjective *sionistisk* (Zionist) in line 1 is recycled as the semantically related adjective *israelisk* (Israeli) in line 15, which in its turn is recycled as the derivationally and inflectionally related noun form *israelerna* (the Israelis) in line 16. The noun *propaganda* (propaganda) in line 1 is recycled as the derivationally related noun *propagandaministeriet* (the ministry of propaganda) in line 15, and the noun *slag* (battles) in line 9, which is recycled as the noun *luftslage* (the air battle) in line 13, is further recycled as the derivationally related verb form *slogs* (fought) in line 16. In fact, all the reformulations in “Oskyldig” combine complete recyclings of previous turns, involving repeated frames and deaccented variations on the original rhemes, with new rhemes. The turn in line 13 is, more or less, a complete recycling of the turn in line 9, with a new rheme (*luft*, air) added. In the same way, the complex turn in lines 15 and 16 is a complete recycling of first the turn in line 1, with a new rheme (*ministeriet*, the ministry) added, and then the turn in line 13, where a variation on the original rheme in line 13 is embedded in a rather elaborate new rhematic expression, which also includes a variation on part of the rheme in line 1.

Thus, the descriptive phase of the third and final part of “Oskyldig” is essentially Arne’s summary and reformulation of his own and Daniel’s

descriptive contributions in its first and second part, but it also serves, of course, to close down the descriptive activity of the entire sequence and open the floor for a new sequence in the ongoing conversation. As we have seen, these differences in sequential placement and impact are rather precisely indexed in the third and final part by a fairly intricate combination of recycled and modified frames, new rhemes, and variations on the original rhemes from the first and second part.

7. Assessment Formats

The third and final part of “Oskyldig” ends with an elaborate construction of intersubjectivity. In line 18, Björn shows his alignment with Arne’s summary. In doing that, he recycles the assessment frame used by Arne in line 14 in the second part. In line 19, it is Daniel’s turn to show alignment with Arne’s summary and he uses a variation on the assessment frame used by Arne in line 8 in the first movement. Then, in line 20, Carla agrees, with a plain *ja* (yes), and after that there is unison laughter, which overlaps with the final coda in lines 22 – 24.

I have already pointed out that descriptions and assessments have different formats in “Oskyldig”. The two assessment formats used in “Oskyldig” are shown in (10) and (11).

(10) First assessment format in “Oskyldig”:

8.	Arne:	undrar	var i <u>allsindar</u>	han fått tag i den.
		<i>wonder</i>	<i>where in <u>all-his-days</u></i>	<i>he got hold of it</i>
19.	Daniel:	va	var	har vi <u>hamnat</u> ríktit
		<i>what</i>	<i>where</i>	<i>have we ended-<u>up</u> really</i>

(11) Second assessment format in “Oskyldig”:

14. Arne: de va katten
it was the-cat
18. Björn: de va ju som sjutton
it was you-know like seventeen

The first assessment format is basically a rhetorical question format, built around the question word *var* (where), a finite form of the verb *ha* (have), which is optional, and a main verb, in the special Perfect form (the so-called supine). The second assessment format – *de va Z E* – consists of *de va* (it was), followed by a stance marker, in position Z, and an evaluative expression, such as *katten* and *som sjutton*⁶, in position E.

One might well wonder why two different assessment formats are used, particularly since turns in the two formats are substitutable for each other. The meaning would not have been drastically different, had the contents of turns 8 and 14, say, been substituted for each other.

What might be relevant is that the assessment made by Arne in the first part follows what is essentially his own descriptive contribution, while the assessment made by Arne in the second part follows Daniel's descriptive contribution. The rather sharp contrast between the descriptive frame *de e Z R* and the assessment frame *var + Perfect* in the first part thus occurs when it is the principal of the descriptive activity who introduces a new activity, whereas the rather small contrast between the descriptive frame *de e Z R* and the assessment frame *de va Z R* occurs when it is not the principal of the descriptive activity but another participant who introduces the new activity.

The two formats are also well used in the establishment of the concluding intersubjectivity in the final part of "Oskyldig". Note that both Björn and Daniel use assessment formats from the parts where they were not active, the second part, in the case of Björn, and the first part, in the case

⁶ Both these expressions are idiomatic. *Katten* means literally 'the cat' and *som sjutton*, 'as seventeen'. However, in this context, they both mean something like 'surprising'.

of Daniel. In this way, they not only support Arne's reformulations in the final part, they also increase the support of the original turns underlying these reformulations.

8. Rhematic Recycling Across Sequences

So far, we have seen how a new rheme indicates progression, a new aspect, of the current topic, whereas a recycled rheme indicates coherence, staying on the same topic. Likewise, we have seen how a new rheme indicates individuality, a unique contribution from the current speaker, whereas a recycled rheme indicates alignment with a prior speaker. And, most importantly, we have seen how the successive rhemes of a conversational sequence can be designed so as to display an unfolding balance of, on the one hand, progression and coherence, and on the other hand, alignment and individuality.

A similar balance of progression and coherence, as well as alignment and individuality, can also be seen across sequences. Just as successive contributions to a sequence are designed from a small and changing set of lexemes, successive sequences sharing a common topical drift can also be seen to cohere around and progress in terms of a slowly changing set of lexemes. To see this, consider another conversation, where three young female friends – Henny, Laila, and Malou – talk over coffee about horrible things that could happen. In the sequence reproduced in (12), Malou concludes, in line 1, 3 and 4, a longish story about accidents by saying that she *gick från de här mötet me skräck alla möjliga hemska skräckinjagande berättelser i huvudet* (went from this meeting with terror all kinds of

horrible terrifying stories in my head). In the next sequence, starting in line 12, Henny picks up the thread and produces what is basically a semantic variation on Malou's contribution in line 1, 3 and 4: *ja får ibland såna här hemska visioner om otäcka saker som kan hända me mina barn* (I sometimes get such horrible visions about nasty things which can happen to my children) .

(12) "Hemska berättelser", sequences 1 and 2:

1. Malou: hh ja så man gick från de här mötet me <skräck>.
hh yes then you went from it here meeting with terror
hh yes then you went from this meeting with terror
2. Laila: hm hm ((giggle)) (0.8)
3. Malou: eh-h all(h)a möjlia (eh) hemska skräck-i- in-jagande
eh-h all possible (eh) horrible terrif-fying
eh-h all kinds of horrible terrifying
4. berättelser ↓>i huvudet å<. ↓
stories in the-head and
stories in the head and
5. Laila: mm,
6. Malou: nu tänker ja på allt som kan >hända hela tiden<. (0.4)
now think I on all which can happen whole the-time
now I think about everything which can happen all the time
7. Henny: *mm:. ((*softly)) (1.0)
8. Henny: viss[t_i]
sure
9. Malou: [>elle< (0.2) ↑tänker man på de då blir man↑(0.4)
or thinks one on it then becomes one
or if you think of it then you get
10. liksom a:vrubbad efter ett tag. (1.0)
like dulled after a while
like dulled after a while
11. Malou: °>om man<° (0.4) <när man haft barn >(i) nåra år>_i (2.2)
if one when one had children in some years
if you when you have had children for some years
12. Henny: ↑ja vet inte ja brukar tänka på det ja får ibland↑
I know not I use-to think on it I get sometimes
I don't know I use to think of it I get sometimes
13. såna här hemska visioner om otäcka saker

14. *such here horrible visions about nasty things*
 such horrible visions of nasty things
 som kan hända me mina barn, (1.0)
which cn happen with my children
 which can happen to my children

Then follow six more horror story sequences. In these sequences, a number of lexemes are recycled from the sequences in (12). Together with lexemes which are introduced in later sequences and then subsequently recycled, normally as deaccented parts of new rhemes, these lexemes form a slowly changing set of keywords, which become unifying devices for the several horror stories told by three participants, tying different rhemes from different sequences together in ways which reflect the general drift of the successive stories. The lexemes involved include:

hemska (horrible, PLURAL), with its inflectional modification *hemst* (horrible, NEUTRE SINGULAR),
otäcka (nasty, PLURAL), with its inflectional modification *otäckt* (nasty, NEUTRE SINGULAR),
tänker (thinks), with its inflectional modifications *tänka* (think) and *tänkte* (thought) and its derivational modification *tvångstankar* (compulsive thoughts),
tvångs in *tvångstankar* (compulsive thoughts) and its derivational modification *tvångsmässigt* (compulsively),
stup (precipice), with its inflectional modification *stupen* (the precipices),
svindel (vertigo), with its semantic modification *höjdskräck* (fear of heights),
äcklit (disgusting, NEUTRE SINGULAR), with its inflectional modification *äckliga* (disgusting, DEFINITE SINGULAR), and
nagel (nail), with its inflectional modification *nageln* (the nail).

The distribution of these keywords across the eight sequences are shown in (13) below. The episodes are indexed after their main speaker (M = Malou, H = Henny, L = Laila).

(13) Distribution of selected keywords in “Hemska berättelser”:

M	hemska		tänker		
			tänker		
H	hemska		tänka	otäcka	
	hemst		tänka		
		tvångs	tankar		
		tvångsmässit	tänker		
L	hemst	tvångs	tankar	otäckt	stup
					stup
					stupen
H					svindel
					svindel
L			tänkte	stup	höjdskräck
H					svindel
					äcklit
M					svindel
					äckliga
					nagel
					nageln
H				otäckt	äcklit
					na:gel

A few observations throw some light on the balance between progression and coherence, and between alignment and individuality, which are achieved by these keywords over these eight sequences. Typically, each keyword extends over two or three sequences, and is then replaced by a semantically related keyword. In this way, keywords form long-standing semantic fields. Progression, a new keyword, is thus nicely balanced by coherence, same semantic field, over long stretches of conversation.

Since keywords are introduced by particular participants, their distribution over a series of sequences also reflects patterns of alignment and individuality. Note for example that *stup* (precipice) is used several times by Laila, in two different sequences, but not by any of the other two participants. Instead, Henny generalizes Laila’s story about precipices in the third sequence to a story about *svindel* (vertigo) in the fourth sequence. Then, Laila reciprocates with a similar story, but just as Henny does not use

Laila's word, Laila does not use Henny's word, but a synonym: *höjdskräck* (height anxiety). In the sixth sequence, Henny contributes another story about vertigo, sticking to her own word *svindel* and also introducing a new assessment term, *äcklit* (disgusting). This time, it is Malou who continues the series of vertigo stories, and she chooses to forcefully align with Henny, by using both *svindel* and *äcklit*. And this alignment is reciprocated by Henny in the eighth sequence, where she produces another story about disgusting nails, picking up the word *nagel* (nail) which was introduced by Malou in the seventh sequence.

9. The Method: Recycling With *Différance*

The method used in the construction of both “Oskyldig” and “Hemska berättelser” is essentially a poetic method. It fits nicely Riffaterre's description of the method by which poetry is made: repeated transformation of a core expression (Riffaterre 1978, based on Jakobson 1960). In “Oskyldig”, there are three core turns which get repeated and transformed, the turns in lines 1, 8 and 14.

(14) Core turns in “Oskyldig”:

- | | | |
|-----|-------|--|
| 1. | Arne: | <p>*hhh de där e minsann tillåme sionistisk propag<u>anda</u>.</p> <p><i>*hhh it there is indeed even Zionist propag<u>anda</u>.</i></p> <p>*hhh that is indeed even Zionist propag<u>anda</u></p> |
| 8. | Arne: | <p>undrar var i<u>all</u>sindar han fått tag i den.</p> <p><i>wonder where in-<u>all</u>-his-days he got hold of it.</i></p> <p>wonder where on <u>ear</u>th he got hold of it</p> |
| 14. | Arne: | <p>de va k<u>ät</u>ten,</p> <p><i>it was the-<u>cat</u>,</i></p> <p>that was strange</p> |

The details of the repeated transformations of these core turns have already been presented. Basically, what is happening is that new turns are made from recycled old turns, in such a way that the overall format, the frame, of the old turn is kept, but a new expression is substituted for a part of the old turn, normally its rheme and/or its stance marker. The method used is thus what we might call recycling with *différance*. Each new recycling of an old turn also introduces a difference, or sets into play *différance*, in the sense of Derrida, difference as it unfolds, or is constructed, in time (Derrida 1981, 10).

There is every reason to suppose that “Oskyldig” and “Hemska berättelser” are typical in the way they were constructed. Work by Sacks (see the references under “poetry” in the index to volume I and the references under “‘poetics’ of ordinary talk” in the index to volume II of Sacks 1992), Tannen (1989, ch. 3), Goodwin (1990), DuBois (1996, and as yet unpublished work), and others (e.g., the works collected in Johnstone, Ed. 1987 and 1994) have provided massive support for Tannen’s conclusion that “at least some (and probably all) of conversation is a system of pervasive parallelism – though not necessarily rigid in the same way as poetry” (Tannen 1989, 97). In fact, this conclusion may hold true of discourse in general, as evidenced by such diverse studies as Propp (1968) on folk tales, Lévi-Strauss (1978) on myths, and Harris’ initial work on discourse analysis (Harris 1952a, b) and subsequent work on “science sublanguages” (summarized in ch. 2 of Harris 1988). However, at least in conversation, the poetical method is not primarily driven by aesthetic, but by social considerations. As I have shown, retainments, repetitions,

variations, substitutions, and additions of frames, stance markers, rhemes, response items, and contours respond to and change a dynamic pattern of participants, topics, activities, contributions, and their interrelations, and, as we saw in the analysis of how keywords were established and changed over a series of sequences in the same conversation, such a dynamic pattern is by no means restricted to single sequences.

Each frame will frame (in another sense of the term; cf. Goffman 1981, Linell 2002, Goodwin 2002, Anward 2002) the current activity in a different way. We have also seen evidence in “Oskyldig”, when description is followed by assessment, that a simultaneous change of speaker and activity is indexed by a closer fit between successive frames. This may indeed be a generalizable observation. Fast, heavily dialogical, and goal-directed activities, such as auctions (Kuiper 1996), typically seem to select a narrow range of frames, as well as an extensive use of retainment, whereas slower, more monological and less goal-directed activities, such as story-telling, typically seem to allow for more repetition, and for a broader range of frames.

Just as a new frame indicates a new activity, a new rheme indicates a new contribution. Rhemes are also clearly authored, which means that a variation on a rheme, or a repeated or retained rheme, not only projects a particular balance of progression and coherence, but also a particular balance of alignment and individuality⁷, which is then further elaborated on by successive combinations of contour, stance markers, and response items.

⁷ For further demonstrations of the subtle interplay between progression, coherence, alignment, and individuality achieved by means of repetition and ‘ellipsis’, see Fox (1987) and Öqvist (2002) on reference and topic, Pomerantz (1984) and Linell (2002, § 8.2) on (dis)agreement, and Schegloff (1987) on recycled turn beginnings.

However, recycled frames and rhemes seldom come back in exactly the same form. This is in fact precisely the temporal dimension of *différance*, an indication of the fact that a recycled turn never comes back as itself, but always in a new sequential context. We have, for example, seen several respects in which the last descriptive turn of “Oskyldig”, the complex turn in lines 15 and 16, differs from the other descriptive turns, and taken that as an index of its special position as concluding turn in the descriptive phase of the sequence. Thus, a recycled turn typically uses *différance* in order to both create a past and project a future.

10. An Exemplar Model of Linguistic Competence

“Nothing that happens to us is ever lost.” (Auster 2002, 271)

For recycling with *différance* to work, participants must thus remember fully detailed experienced exemplar turns and use them as models for new exemplar turns. And they must remember them in their sequential contexts, as situated events, embedded in an ongoing social activity, and a particular dynamic cluster of participants, topics, activities, and contributions.

Sarraute’s description of her recall of *nein, das tust du nicht* in her novel *Enfance* (Sarraute 1983, 10-13), where she remembers not just that turn, but the whole dramatic sequence in which it was embedded, complete with her thoughts at the moment, comes close to the kind of memory we must assume that people have of old turns (see also Jusczyk 1997, particularly 208-209).

Thus, when a new sequence opens, as in the first turn of “Oskyldig”, participants can use a relevant combination of topic and activity to find a collection of remembered exemplar turns on which to model the turns of that sequence. In producing turns actually modelled on these prior turns, participants will both align with that prior activity and that prior topic, and, at the same time, make a contribution to the current activity and the current topic. By tuning the chosen collection of prior exemplar turns to social domain, context, and participants involved, as well, participants will also align with, and contribute to, a tradition of languaging (in the sense of Becker 1995), in which the sequence thus becomes embedded, and ultimately to the ongoing concerns of a social group.⁸

This means that linguistic competence can no longer be regarded as something extracted from our collected experience of languaging. Rather, it is precisely our collected experience of languaging, of situated conversations and texts, which constitutes our linguistic competence (Pawley and Syder 1983a,b, Peters 1983, Hopper 1987, 1998, Becker 1995, Gasparov 1997, Jusczyk 1997, Bod 1998, Anward and Lindblom 2000, Barlow and Kemmer, Eds. 2000, Wray 2002). Grammar and lexicon then become emergent features of linguistic practice. Grammatical structure and lexical items emerge as aspects of a turn, when that turn is matched with previously experienced turns. In other words, turns become organized as structured strings of phrases and lexical items as a consequence of their resonance with a pool of experienced turns. Moreover, already experienced turns are restructured by their resonance with new incoming turns. Thus, our

⁸ For studies of what it means not to be able to align with a tradition, see Firth (1996) and Anward (2003).

collected linguistic experience forms a dynamic network of related expressions, where each node in the network is structured by its similarities to and differences from other nodes in the network. In such an exemplar, or usage-based, model of linguistic competence, core turns are also recycled old turns. The only difference between core turns and other turns is that core turns are turns recycled from previous conversations or sequences.

11. Emergent Syntax and Lexis

Let us now look more precisely at which grammatical and lexical patterns will emerge in a network of turns from a repeated use of recycling with *différance* (for this notion of emergence, see Holland 1998, particularly ch. 7). By modelling new descriptive turns on old descriptive turns, the participants in “Oskyldig” create, as we have seen, a network of descriptive turns, in which each turn is articulated into at least three parts: a frame, followed by a stance marker, followed by a rheme. Clearly, then, descriptive turns are provided with a syntactic structure, consisting of three ‘slots’. And for each of these slots, the network provides a paradigm of fillers, the concrete frames, stance markers, and rhemes used in the sequence, quite simply. In this way, a single frame (or a set of variations on a single frame) gets associated with a paradigm of stance markers and a paradigm of rhemes. In other words, a construction emerges, consisting of three syntagmatically related paradigms, members of which have the capacity to combine in new ways.

The descriptive construction which emerges in “Oskyldig” is tentatively formalized in (15). Note that the last variant of the frame, *de e de*,

incorporates a rheme, the initial *de*, and can thus only combine with a stance marker.

(15) A descriptive construction

de (där) e sen e där	minsann (absolut) inte liksom tydligen	till å me sionistisk propaganda turjstartat slag h _e l:a faderullan Israel air-strikes luftslage ifrån israeliska propagandaministeriet en lampa bak som lyser precis överallt där israelerna slogs
de e de		

This construction, which is based on just eight turns, actually allows the construction of 125 different turns. Three variations on the frame (*de e*, *de dār e*, and *sen e dār*) combine with five possible stance markers and eight possible rhemes. A fourth variation on the frame combines with five possible stance markers. Summing up, we get $3 \times 5 \times 8 + 1 \times 5 = 125$ possible (simple) turns.

Since frames are used for rather general activities, such as description and assessment, which recur in sequence after sequence, an entire network of turns will need to support only a comparatively small number of constructions. Moreover, since frames are typically varied as they are recycled, each construction will contain several variations on a single frame. Such variation need not be particularly large, though, only large enough to provide sufficient variation for one sequence. Thus, a construction will typically contain a small paradigm of similar frames, which often are syntagmatically analyzable, as in (15).

Since frames are few and frequent, they will tend to be phonetically reduced and semantically bleached (Bybee 2003), both in the course of single conversations (Fowler and Housum 1987, Bard, Lowe and Altmann 1989) and as a long-term effect over several successive conversations (Zipf 1935). As a consequence, component expressions of frames will also be phonetically reduced and semantically bleached.

Rhemes, on the other hand, tend to be unique for each contribution which means that a network of turns will support fairly large paradigms of rhemes. Hence, rhemes are infrequent and many and will stay comparatively unreduced and semantically unbleached. However, as we have seen, rhemes

are also partially recycled, within sequences and across sequences. And just as participants are doing syntax, fitting turns with syntactic structures, in recycling old turns⁹, they are also doing syntax in partially recycling old rhemes. For example, when Arne uses *israeliska propagandaministeriet* (the Israeli ministry of propaganda) in line 15 of “Oskyldig”, partially recycling *sionistisk propaganda* (Zionist propaganda) in line 1, the two phrases become syntagmatically analyzable as in (16).

(16) Articulation of two rhematic expressions

sionist	isk	propaganda	
israel	iska	propaganda	ministeriet

In doing rhematic recyclings, participants are also doing other aspects of grammar: inflecting an old word in a new way, deriving a new word from an old word, creating a compound involving old lexical material, promoting old lexical material from part of a compound to an independent word, extending a word or a larger unit to a new function, and finding a semantically related expression for an expression used so far. Moreover, by rhematic recyclings, participants create keywords, such as *propaganda*, for a sequence or a succession of sequences. And such expressions also tend towards phonetic reduction. In line 1, *propaganda* is pronounced with a [d] in the final syllable. In line 15, the last two syllables of the word are pronounced as [an:a].

Recycling with *différance* will then order component expressions of turns on a scale from strongly reduced and grammaticalized form words

⁹ For more details, see Anward and Lindblom (2000, sections 8 and 9).

with high text frequency to phonetically full and semantically unbleached content words with very low text frequency. Frames and parts of frames will be found at the reduced end of the scale, rhemes and parts of rhemes typically at the unreduced end, with keywords occupying an intermediate position. Stance markers, which have much the same flexibility as frames, being usable in sequence after sequence, yet have some of the individualizing force which rhemes have, may also occupy an intermediate position, but closer to the reduced end of the scale.

However, as Curl (2002) has shown, repetition does not always mean reduction. There are interactive contexts where repeated items retain their phonetic and prosodic properties, as well as interactive contexts where repeated items rather become more prominent prosodically and phonetically. The context for *ÄR* (is/are) in line 6 of example (17) is one obvious instance of the latter case. Thus, recycling might be better viewed as a source for a hypo-hyper scale (Linell 1979, ch. 3, Lindblom 1986), creating a range of variants of expressions, from strongly reduced (hypo-) to over-articulated (hyper-)versions. Form words will then have their most frequent versions near the hypo end of the scale, while typical content words stay close to the hyper end of the scale, with only occasional excursions away from that end.

(17) Blåslagna

1. Laila: nä men (0.2) [(de e ju) f:u_lla människor som faller]_ç
 no but it is you-know drunk people who fall
 no but you know it is drunk people who fall
2. Malou: ja_ç (0.6)
 yes
3. Laila: d_om: (0.4) kan ju klara vasomh_elst, (1.4)

- they can you-know manage anything*
they can you-know survive anything
4. Henny: hmf[:
5. Laila: [förutom att dom blir hemst blåslagna dan efter men, (0.4)
except that they get terribly bluebeaten the-day after but
except they get beaten black and blue the day after but
6. Laila: eller att dom ÄR [hemst blåslagna dan °efter°?
or that they ARE terribly bluebeaten the-day after
or they ARE beaten black and blue the day after

12. Conclusion

As I hope to have shown in this article, conversation provides us with a unique window on how a working system of syntactic and lexical resources is created and maintained. By a single method of turn construction, interacting participants in a conversation can be observed to jointly articulate turns into a differentiated set of expressions, with different functions, and different phonetic, morphological, syntactic and semantic properties. And the reasons for doing grammar in that way are not language internal. Language, the system, is what happens while we are busy with more vital concerns.

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