

**Turn-taking in collaborative storytelling.**  
***Et puis après* ('and then after that')**  
**as a resource for resuming tellings-in-progress and negotiating**  
**tellership between story episodes\***

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**Abstract**

This conversation-analytic paper investigates the multimodal design and interactional functions of the connective *et puis après* ('and then after that') in a French-language corpus of video-recorded collaborative storytellings. Two similar, yet different, sequential positions are investigated: the juncture between subsequent story episodes and the space between extended side sequences and the return to the story-in-progress. Such juncture positions constitute recognizable moments at which both members of the telling party, i. e., the current teller and the co-teller, must determine the topic of the next story episode as well as its delivery. Thus, juncture positions provide a perspicuous setting for the analysis of how tellership is negotiated and how topic progression is achieved. The connective *et puis après* appears to be a resource for current tellers to establish spaces for coparticipation at juncture positions, closing prior talk and projecting continuation. The multimodal analysis shows that both its prosodic design and co-occurring changes of the embodied participation framework contribute to opening interactive turn spaces and to making telling-specific next actions relevant.

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**1 Introduction**

When two or more people jointly tell a story in conversation, they are faced with a number of practical problems: they need to decide *who* tells *what part* of the story and *how* to deliver the telling for its recipients (Sacks 1992: 437; Mandelbaum 1987). In the case of extended collaborative tellings, such negotiations of tellership and story topics then become a recurrent issue that participants need to accomplish multiple times over the course of the telling activity. This paper identifies two sequential places at which such negotiations become relevant: between subsequent story episodes and upon completion of extended side sequences. Such *juncture positions* constitute recognizable moments at which both members of the telling party must determine the topic of the next story episode as well as its delivery. In these sequential environments,

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one linguistic resource and its multimodal design are investigated: the connective *et puis après* ('and then after that').

This conversation-analytic study examines the multimodal design and interactional functions of *et puis après* in a French-language corpus of video-recorded stories told by couples or close friends who share knowledge about the source events. *Et puis après* appears to be a resource for tellers to establish spaces for coparticipation at juncture positions, closing prior talk and projecting continuation. The multimodal analysis shows that both its prosodic design and co-occurring changes of the "embodied participation framework" (Goodwin 2007) contribute to opening "interactive turn spaces" (Iwasaki 2009, 2011) and to make telling-specific next actions relevant (Dressel/Satti 2021).

The paper is structured as follows: I first provide a brief overview of collaborative storytelling in conversation, focusing on multimodal practices of turn organization (Chapter 2.1) and sequential and structural aspects (Chapter 2.2). I then present the data (Chapter 3), after which I proceed to the analysis of some uses of *et puis après* at juncture positions (Chapter 4). Finally, the findings are summarized and discussed (Chapter 5).

## 2 Collaborative storytelling

There exists a substantial body of conversation-analytic work on storytelling, investigating how participants interactionally achieve this distinct activity and accomplish a range of social actions (cf. Jefferson 1978; Mandelbaum 2012; Norrick 2007; König/Oloff 2018; Zima/Weiß 2020). In contrast to other disciplines that are interested in conversational narratives, Conversation Analysis shifts the focus from the analytic unit of the *story* to the interactive achievement of stories by multiple participants, i. e., the *telling* (Schegloff 1997; Mandelbaum 2012: 492). One key feature of extended tellings is that they constitute a distinctive form of sequential organization: the adjacency-pair-based turn-by-turn talk is temporarily suspended in favor of an extended multi-unit turn by one participant, i. e., the storyteller. In order to support this "structural asymmetry" (Stivers 2008: 34) other participants must align as story recipients, monitoring the storyteller and producing appropriate recipient responses at different sequential positions (Goodwin 1986; Jefferson 1984; Stivers 2008).

One distinctive form of extended tellings is collaborative storytelling (also "shared storytelling" or "co-telling", cf. Mandelbaum 1987; "co-narration", Ochs/Ruth/Taylor 1989; "assisted storytelling" Lerner 1992), in which two or more participants share knowledge of the source events of the story. Collaborative storytellings of couples or close friends provide a "locus for examining ways interactants have of 'doing' their relationship in public" (Mandelbaum 1987: 146). Accomplishing an extended telling as a "collectivity" (Lerner 1993) becomes an interactional issue: when two or more (knowing) participants jointly tell a story to (unknowing) participants, one central task consists of deciding who delivers what part of the telling.

### 2.1 Multimodal practices of turn organization

Faced with the task of negotiating tellership, participants alternately take on the participation roles of *current teller* and *co-teller*. While the current teller delivers parts of the telling, either on their own behalf or on behalf of the telling party, the role of co-teller "encompasses [...] many possible ways to (dis)align and (dis)affiliate with the ongoing telling and to engage with

other present participants” (Dressel/Satti 2021: 58). Such telling-relevant actions and forms of coparticipation are achieved within the distinct participation framework of collaborative story delivery and its reception by the story recipient(s).

In her multimodal analysis of tellership negotiation in collaborative storytelling, Zima (2017) distinguishes current-teller-initiated turn allocations from co-teller-initiated turn-taking, the former of which I am particularly interested in. She finds that gaze is the most central resource for allocating turns (cf. Auer 2021): current tellers gaze at their co-tellers at “pre-possible completion positions” (Schegloff 1996: 87), establishing mutual gaze briefly before transition-relevance places (henceforth TRPs). Hand gestures such as pointing gestures or “offering hand” gestures (Streeck 2007) can support the turn-yielding function of gaze, while prosodic cues such as final-falling intonation indicate turn completion. In addition to turn allocation upon TCU completion, current tellers can also use the syntactic projection of their turn-in-progress to invite their co-teller to co-complete their utterance and to subsequently take the floor.

Such invitations to co-construct an utterance mostly occur at pre-possible completion points at which the last word(s) are highly projected (cf. Auer 2014; Lerner 1996). For French talk-in-interaction, Persson (2017) has demonstrated how participants can establish TRPs prior to syntactic completion points by formatting their utterances as information-seeking “fill-in-the-blank questions” (Koshik 2002; Netz 2016; Szczepek Reed 2007: 201). These *designedly incomplete utterances* (henceforth DIUs) make other-completion by a coparticipant conditionally relevant and they can accomplish different actions such as eliciting information or initiating repair. Persson (2017) shows that, underpinned by the semantic and syntactic projections of the utterance-in-progress, prosodic contextualization cues are central to making upcoming TRPs recognizable. He distinguishes between *bounded* prosody, which encompasses primary stress and rising intonation, and *open-ended* prosody, which involves flat or slowly falling pitch, lengthening, and the absence of primary stress. Whereas bounded DIUs unambiguously set up a TRP, open-ended DIUs create a transition space in a more subtle way, maintaining the possibility of the original speaker completing their own utterance if the coparticipant fails to provide an other-completion.

Open-ended DIUs thus bear a close resemblance to word searches<sup>1</sup> in which a participant halts the progressivity of their turn and possibly invites another participant to assist in its completion (cf. Goodwin/Goodwin 1986; Hayashi 2003; Auer/Zima 2021). Dressel (2020) shows that current tellers can solicit co-teller participation in word searches and delimit its scope: multimodal resources such as the production format of the utterance-in-progress, gaze shifts or withdrawals, as well as specific hand gestures can either mobilize or avoid co-teller participation. But although current tellers can manage coparticipation to a certain extent, disruptions of the progressivity of the story’s delivery can always occasion co-teller entry and lead to a change in tellership (cf. Lerner 1992: 256).

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<sup>1</sup> Persson (2017: 241) insists that open-ended DIUs are different from word searches in that they may constitute opportunistic completions and “the ‘searching’ participant has privileged epistemic access and may ratify or reject other participants’ suggestions”. In collaborative storytellings, however, both participants usually have equal epistemic access and word searches can be used by the current teller to solicit coparticipation from their co-teller (cf. Dressel 2020). Lerner (1992: 256) even suggests that “[t]he sequential structure of word searches bears on the issue of who will end up delivering the story.”

While the above-mentioned practices of multimodal turn allocation and tellership negotiation provide us some insight into how turn-taking works in collaborative storytelling, their sequential placement in the telling activity has remained largely underexplored: At what moments of the telling do changes of tellership occur? What multimodal practices do current tellers deploy to make such transition spaces recognizable for their co-tellers? How do co-tellers then link their talk to the prior telling sequence? In order to tackle these questions, a brief review of some sequential and structural aspects of extended telling sequences is called for.

## 2.2 Sequential and structural aspects of extended tellings

In his lectures, Sacks (1992: 354) introduced the notion of storytellings as “big packages” that are produced in multi-unit turns. In her early work on sequential aspects of conversational storytelling, Jefferson (1978: 245) insists that “a story is not, in principle, a block of talk”, but it is made up of recognizable “segments”, “components”, or “sections” (Goodwin 1984; Jefferson 1978). Such story segments encompass story prefaces, the delivery of background information, and story closings and they make different forms of recipient alignment relevant (Stivers 2008).

When couples jointly tell stories of shared experiences (e. g., *How we met*; *The day of our wedding*; *Our year traveling the world*), their extended “multi-part tellings” (Schegloff 2007: 215) can comprise multiple complex segments that reconstruct the source events as chronologically or topically ordered *episodes*. Such episodes are then big packages themselves, in that they have an internal story structure, including a preface (e. g., a topic prompt or a topic shift) and a closing (e. g., a climax). Upon completion of such episodes within a larger telling activity, at least two tasks become relevant for the telling party: They have to determine the next topic, i. e., the next story episode, and who tells it. Episode completions constitute “juncture points” (Cantarutti 2020: 181) that can furnish spaces for participants to multimodally manage reciprocity and negotiate tellership: both segment and episode transitions have been shown to match gaze shifts by the current teller and the co-teller (cf. Rühlemann/Gee/Ptak 2019), supporting Goodwin’s (1984: 230) observation that gaze is a central resource for participants to display their orientation toward “the distinctive sequential organization for talk provided by a story.” Against this background, the present study focuses on how these juncture spaces are accomplished and made recognizable multimodally and on how turn allocation is achieved here. My analysis focuses on one specific linguistic resource at a recognizable sequential position: *et puis après* (‘and then after that’) between story episodes. I argue participants can use this resource to organize turn-taking and accomplish a number of telling-relevant actions.

## 2.2 *Et puis après* (‘and then after that’) in collaborative storytelling

As a combination of the coordination conjunction *et* (‘and’) and the temporal adverbs *puis* (‘then’) and *après* (‘afterwards or after (that)’), *et puis après* can express both a logical and a temporal connection between structures of talk. Conversational *puis* has been shown to function both as an ‘additive conjunct’ and a ‘discourse connective’: it can connect utterances by the same speaker and rather than expressing temporal succession it can be used to add new information and to elaborate on previous utterances. Moreover, turn-initial (*et*) *puis* can introduce a turn-at-talk and can elaborate on another participant’s prior turn (Mosegaard Hansen 1998: 298–312). TCU-initial (*et*) *puis* can further be used at the local level of metadiscursive

organization, accomplishing topic transition, topic shift, and topic resuming (Degand 2014: 161–162). Thus, (*et puis* can operate as a “transition marker” or “topic shifter” (cf: Degand/Fargard 2011: 36; Deppermann/Helmer 2013: 22 for German *dann*), connecting upcoming talk to preceding talk and establishing topical progression.

Whereas (*et puis* does not necessarily express a temporal succession of events, *et puis après*<sup>2</sup> expresses a temporal relation while maintaining the connective properties of a “sequential conjunction” (Mazeland/Huiskes 2001). In storytellings, participants can use *et puis après* to structure their own multi-unit turn and to connect subsequent story segments. In contrast to such same-teller uses, intra-episode uses of *et puis après*, the present paper investigates some of its uses between episodes and with regard to the involvement of both participants of the telling party.

### 3 Data and method

This study uses data from the *Freiburg Sofa Talks* Corpus (Pfänder et al. in preparation), which comprises 262 video recordings ranging from 10 to 50 min in duration. The corpus encompasses German, Italian, Spanish, French, and Portuguese data, both from European and non-European countries and varieties. It contains 58 recordings in French, amounting to a total of 18 hours. In each video, a couple, two family members, or two close friends jointly recount events they have experienced together. The participants are mostly recorded in their own home and they share stories with a third person (i. e., the addressed recipient).<sup>3</sup> While this conversational setting provides an authentic “opportunity space” (Ochs/Ruth/Taylor 1989: 238) for joint storytelling activities, the data is not strictly naturalistic: the couples are asked to talk about shared experiences. However, they choose freely **what** they talk about and **how** they do so. As a result, the recordings vary greatly in length and they encompass both storytelling activities and other forms of talk. Hence, the first analytic step consisted in identifying telling sequences and the multimodal practices that contribute to accomplishing them.

For my investigation, I have compiled a collection of 26 cases of *et puis après* from seven conversations in French language between native speakers from France and Quebec, of which I analyze – by way of exemplification – five instances in this paper. This collection comprises both prototypical instances of the structure *et puis après* and variations of this construction: *et puis après* (n=15), *puis après* (n=3), *et après* (n=8). In addition to these variations, a more complex variation is analyzed in example (2). Due to the relatively small size of the collection, I cannot make any claims about potential functional differences between these variations. Instead, my analysis focuses on the sequential placement, multimodal design, and turn-organizational features of this structure.

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<sup>2</sup> I find cases of both *et puis après* and *et puis après ça* (‘and then after **that**’). Both realizations of this connective appear to have the same projective properties with regard to the syntactic structure they project.

<sup>3</sup> The story recipients are either students who were tasked to gather data in the course of a conversation-analytic seminar or members of our research team. In either case, they were friends with the couple or related to them, allowing for a high level of familiarity (as opposed to an interview-style setting). They are also the participants tasked with setting up the cameras and obtaining written consent prior to the recording.

The data has been transcribed according to the GAT2 conventions (cf. Selting et al. 2009) and annotated multimodally (cf. Mondada 2016). In order to further visualize relevant embodied practices, I have inserted figures comprising anonymized screenshots from the videos. As for the prosodic analysis, the initial auditory analyses have been verified through acoustic analyses (where sound quality allowed it) and have been visualized using Praat (Boersma/Weenink 2018) and the programming language R. For my multimodal analysis, I draw upon the methods of Conversation Analysis (Clift 2016; Sidnell/Stivers 2013) and Interactional Linguistics (cf. Couper-Kuhlen/Selting 2017).

#### 4 *Et puis après* as a resource for resuming a telling-in-progress and negotiating tellership between story episodes

In the following, I analyze a total of five instances of *et puis après* between story episodes. I first investigate how current tellers can (attempt to) solicit co-teller continuation and they can initiate a change of tellership between two subsequent story episodes (4.1). I then examine how current tellers close side sequences and project story resumption (4.2). This particular juncture position can occasion topic prompts by the co-teller (4.2.1) as well as re-openings of a previous story episode (4.2.2).

At both types of juncture positions, participants can accomplish changes in the embodied participation framework, establishing intersubjectivity within the telling party. In the analysis, I am particularly interested in the multimodal practices that current tellers deploy to establish a participation framework for coparticipation and to make the next relevant action recognizable.

##### 4.1 Soliciting co-teller continuation between story episodes

The first telling-relevant action that participants can accomplish between subsequent story episodes is to collaboratively determine the topic of the next episode. I argue that current tellers can use a recognizable format of designedly incomplete *et puis après* at this juncture position to invite their co-teller to prompt the next topic and to take the floor.

In the following extract, François (FRA) and his girlfriend Lise (LIS) recount their year abroad. On their way to New Zealand, they had a five-day layover in Hong Kong, which they used to explore the city. Although they found Hong Kong interesting, they were not keen to stay any longer and all the happier to continue their travels to New Zealand. It is at this juncture between story segments that current teller François offers the floor to Lise and provides her with the opportunity to prompt the next topic.

(1) “New Zealand” (fgoe201601\_01-45)

```
01 FRA: +c'était_intéres*sAnt à vOir ce que *c'était comme PAYS et-
      it was interesting to see what it was like as a country and
      fra                               *gaze to recipient--*avert up-->
      lis +gazes down-->
02      *°h comme enDROIT;*% (0.6)
      as a place (0.6)
      fra *down-----*recipient-->
      fra %shoulder shrug
      fra %pulls down corners of mouth
03      voiLÀ; *(1.4)
      PRT (1.4)
      fra -->*avert up-->
```

```

04      #1 $et puis::s a*%#2PRÈ:S? (-)#3
        and then after that
fra          -->*to LIS-->
fra          %turns head to LIS
fra          %pulls right arm back
lis          $scratches head with right hand-->
05 LIS: après on est parti.e.s en nouvelle zé$LANDE, *(0.8)$
        after that we left for New Zealand
fra          *averts gaze up-->
lis          -->$
lis          $tilts head up$to the right
06 FRA: %oui-*% #4(0.6)
        yes (0.6)
fra          -->*gazes at LIS-->
fra          %nods %turns head to LIS-->>
07 LIS: $e:t +$(0.7) $au débU:t on était à auckLAND, (1.1)
        and (0.7) in the beginning we were in Auckland (1.1)
lis          $strokes head$hand down$
lis          -->+gazes up toward FRA-->
08      +e::::t_m on a chErché le +VAN hm, +*(1.0)
        and we looked for the van uhm (1.0)
lis          -->+gazes down toward FRA----+at FRA--+averts gaze
fra          -->*averts gaze

```

Current teller François recognizably closes the story segment by means of an assessment (01, 02) and the particle *voilà* (03) followed by a pause. He then produces the target structure *et puis::s aPRÈ:S?* (05), yielding the turn to his co-teller Lise. Without delay, she takes up the latent structure and prompts the next topic: “traveling to New Zealand” (05). Upon completion of Lise’s utterance, François ratifies it with a simple acknowledgement token (06), providing Lise with the opportunity to keep the floor and to resume the telling. And in fact, Lise assumes the role of current teller, as she elaborates on the story prompt (07) and produces a preface for the next episode (08, “looking for a campervan”).

Upon closer inspection, one finds that it is the multimodal design of this *et puis après* that makes specific telling-relevant next actions recognizable for the co-teller. Prosody and gaze appear to be the most salient resources that contribute to the local accomplishment of turn allocation and story continuation. François produces *puis::s* (05) with a marked hesitation, possibly flagging an upcoming trouble. The adverb *aPRÈ:S?* (05) carries a strong accent and lengthening as well as a distinct rising intonation on the accented syllable.

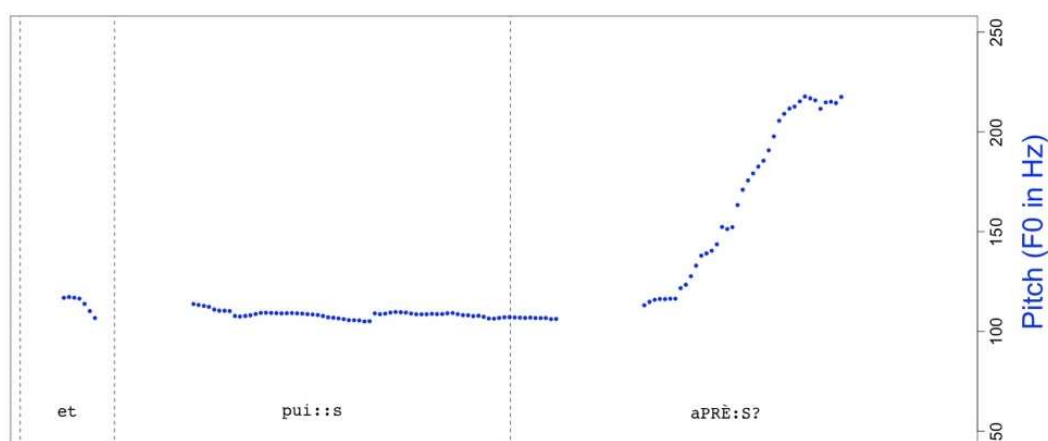


Figure 1: Pitch trace for *et puis après* in extract (1)

Such lengthening on a vowel in the incomplete intonation unit and utterance-final rising intonation have been described as prosodic contextualization cues in information-seeking incomplete utterances (cf. Szczeppek Reed 2007: 201). For French, Persson (2017: 232) has shown that such a “bounded” prosody contributed to unambiguously ending the turn and creating a TRP, while keeping the projective force of the syntax in place for the response turn to come.” In contrast to DIUs that establish TRPs at pre-possible completion points at which the terminal item is highly projected, the TCU-initial *et puis après* here sets up a TRP at a “post-beginning” point (Persson 2017: 233). Similar to “increment elicitors” (Lerner 2004), *et puis après* appears to function as a kind of **continuation elicitor**: the current teller prompts a continuation of the telling-in-progress by the co-teller, while providing a syntactic frame for the co-teller to connect their utterance to.

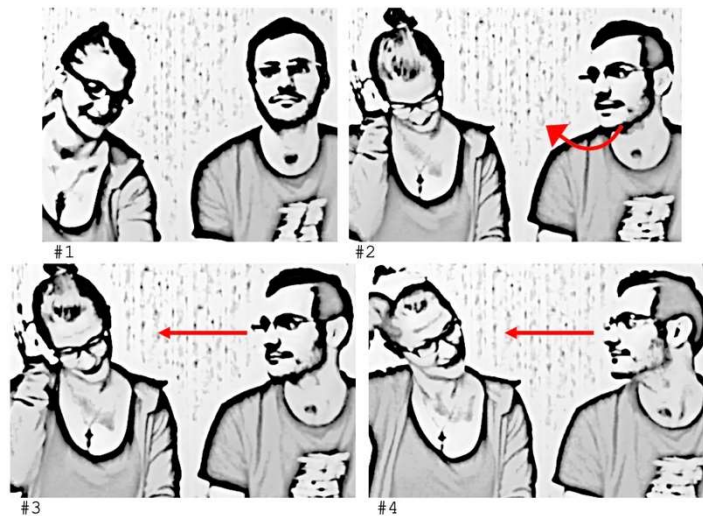


Figure 2: Gaze shift and head movement in extract (1)

While the prosodic design of *et puis après* suggests a TRP prior to syntactic completion, other bodily cues contribute to making this TRP recognizable for the co-teller and to mobilizing the co-teller’s response. Throughout the sequence closure (01-03), François gazes at or toward the story recipient (screenshot #1). It is on the last accented syllable of *et pui::s aprè:s?* (05) that François shifts his gaze to Lise (#2, #3). This gaze shift is made even more salient by his head movement toward Lise, which co-occurs with the prosodic accent and rising intonation. Simultaneously to his gaze shift and head movement, François pulls his right arm back, brushing against Lise’s thigh. All of these bodily resources contribute to accomplishing a shift in the embodied participation framework and make the TRP recognizable as such.

After Lise has completed the latent structure (05) and thus accomplished the responsive second pair part to François’ continuation elicitor, François ratifies the response and briefly averts his gaze. He then immediately moves his head back toward Lise and gazes at her, displaying his preference for her to continue to talk (#4). And in fact, Lise subsequently produces a preface for the next episode (08, “looking for a campervan”) and assumes the role of current teller while François aligns as knowing recipient.

The following extract is similar to the previous one in that the current teller attempts to mobilize their co-teller’s assistance at the juncture between two story segments. Prior to this extract, Claire (CLA) and her husband Robert (ROB) jointly recounted their first dates. Claire closes



this first episode of their shared story in line (01) and then launches a search for continuation (02), which she subsequently transforms into an explicit request (03). When she fails to mobilize Robert's assistance, she introduces the next topic and resumes the telling herself.

(2) "Travel agency" (fgrem201701\_03-12)

```

01 CLA: +on *s'e:<<creaky> e::st> (-) on s'était+ vU.e.s #lcomme ÇA,+
      we had seen each other like this
      cla      *gazes at story recipient-->
      rob      +gazes down-----+toward CLA-----+down-->
02      °h et %pu*Is eu::hm:- #2*h° %(0.5)+#3(0.5)%
      and so uhm (1.0)
      cla      -->*toward ROB----*at ROB-->
      cla      %turns head to ROB----%thinking face%
      rob      -->+gazes at CLA-->
03      <<p> qu'Est-ce qui %s'est passé aPRÈS?>+ (0.4)%
      what happened after that
      cla      %head/upper body toward ROB%
      rob      -->+averts gaze
04      %((laughs))$ (-) #4*          $°hh (0.4)%
      cla      %head/upper body away down-----%
      cla      -->*averts gaze, middle-distance
      rob      $corners of mouth down$
      rob      $eyebrows up-----$
05      euh (.) %*aprÈs#5 en FAIT +euh- +
      uh after that actually uh
      cla      *gazes at story recipient-->>
      cla      %turns head to story recipient
      rob      +at CLA+toward CLA, monitoring-->>
06      le le sameDI moi je travaillais dans un magaSIN,
      on on Saturdays me I worked in a shop
06      °h j'ai j'exposAis pour l'agEnce de voYAGE,*
      I have I did the displays for a travel agency
07      °h et il est venu me voir avec ce fameux coPAI:N,
      and he came to see me with this famous friend
08      de nouvEau à:: (0.6) °h (.) cOmme par hasard à CE guichEt;
      once again to (0.6) like by coincidence to this counter
09      voiLÀ;
      PRT

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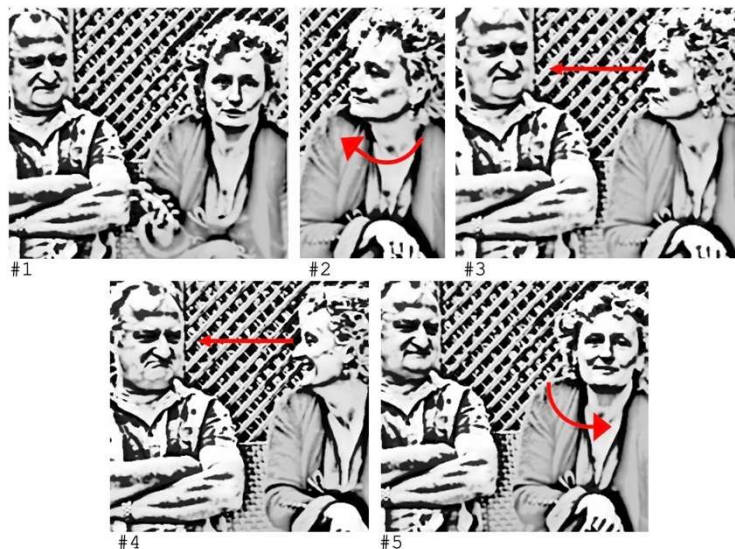


Figure 3: Gaze shift and head movement in extract (2)

After closing the previous episode by means of a summarizing utterance (01), Claire produces *et puis* ('and then', 02) and launches a search at this "post-beginning" position (cf. Persson 2017: 233): she produces a stretched hesitation marker *euh::hm:*, followed by a second-long pause. As she produces the adverb *puis*, Claire shifts her gaze from the story recipient toward

her co-teller and she gazes at him (#1, #2, #3). She thereby changes the embodied participation framework and establishes an action space for her co-teller to assist in the search and to possibly take the floor. Robert reciprocates the gaze, but does not verbally respond. Lise reacts to this delayed response of a response by transforming the search into an explicit request: *qu'Est-ce qui s'est passé APRÈS?* ('what happened after that', 03). She thereby disambiguates the relevant next action (i. e., prompting the next topic) and pursues her co-teller's assistance in continuing the telling by making this next action conditionally relevant as a response to a request. Robert, however, does not verbally respond and instead produces a distinct facial display: He pulls down the corners of his mouth and raises his eyebrows, possibly displaying his not-knowing or not wanting to take the turn (#4).

As Robert fails to provide a response to Claire's request, she laughs and averts her gaze (04, #4, #5). She re-establishes the previous participation framework by directing her gaze back at the story recipient and by prompting the next episode (05, 06, #5). Interestingly, she resumes the telling in a fashion that focuses on her own perspective (06, 07), assuming the role of current teller and projecting an extended telling sequence. Robert's lack of engagement and uptake at the junction thus leads to Claire remaining the current teller and determining the trajectory of the story.

Whereas in extract (1) ("New Zealand"), the current teller solicits co-teller continuation by means of a designedly incomplete *et puis après* with bounded prosody, the current teller in extract (2) ("Travel agency") doesn't immediately succeed to mobilize her co-teller's response. She transforms a search for continuation with unbound prosody into an explicit request for continuation, pursuing her co-teller's response. In both examples, the current teller changes the embodied participation framework: they shift their gaze from the story recipient toward their co-teller and only avert their gaze when the co-teller has taken the floor (extract 1) or when the attempt to mobilize response is abandoned in favor of story progressivity (extract 2).

#### 4.2 Closing side sequences and projecting story resumption

A sequential environment that is very similar to the juncture position between two subsequent episodes is that between a side sequence and the subsequent return to the abandoned story. However, the latter juncture position is more complex as it requires participants to close the ongoing side sequence and to "back-connect" or "backlink" (cf. Local 2004; De Stefani/Horlacher 2008) to the telling level, i. e., determine the place in the suspended telling at which they can anchor its resumption. The prosodic design of *et puis après* is different from the bounded format between subsequent story episodes: current tellers use an open-ended format of this connective to launch searches for continuation and to project a transition back to the story level. I first analyze one instance of such a juncture position at which no co-teller participation occurs, before I investigate two distinct co-teller actions that can be observed upon the closure of a side sequence: co-teller topic prompts (4.2.1) and reopenings of a previous story episode (4.1.2).

The following extract is an example of story resumption after a collaborative assessment sequence. Friends Emma (EMM) and H el ene (HEL) recount the day they spent together looking for an apartment and exploring the city they had just moved to. Having visited an apartment in a neighborhood called Saint-Michel, they got a snack at a bakery and then went to a furniture store.

## (3) "Furniture" (fmon201901\_02-13)

01 HEL: **et mOi c'était un cookie trois euh chocoLAT;**  
*and I had a triple chocolate cookie*

02 (2.8)

03 HEL: **\*°h c'était très bon d'ailleurs,+**  
*°h it was very good by the way*  
 hel \*gazes at EMM-->  
 emm +gaze shift....+at HEL-->

04 EMM: **%c'était très [BON;%**  
*it was very good*  
 emm %nods-----%

05 HEL: **[\*c'était à (.) \*saint-michel,]**  
*it was in Saint Michel*

06 EMM: **on y retourneRA,]**  
*we will go back there*  
 hel -->\*shift.....\*at recipient-->

07 HEL: **si tu v[eu:x (0.7) manger,]**  
*if you want to (0.7) eat*

08 EMM: **+ [une petite adresse à %saint michel,] %1**  
*a little address in Saint Michel*  
 emm +gazes at recipient-----+at HEL-->  
 emm %nods-----%

09 **<<laughing> on ty \*re[tourneRA;>]+ ((laughs)) #2+**  
*we will go back there*

10 REC: **[((laughs))]**  
 hel -->\*averts gaze down-->  
 emm -->+averts gaze-----+at recipient +averts down-->

11 (1.0)

12 HEL: **\*#3°h et aprÈ::s+ #4on avait été à \*((furniture shop))\$#5**  
*°h and after that we went to ((name of furniture shop))*  
 hel -->\*gazes at EMM-----\*at recipient-->  
 hel \$point-->  
 emm -->+up-->

13 EMM: **+ah OUI-**  
*ah yes*  
 emm -->+toward recipient-->>

14 **on a re\*pe\$ré déjà des éléments de déco;**  
*we already located decoration elements*  
 hel -->\*at EMM-->>  
 hel -->\$right hand down-->>

After Emma and Hélène describe the baked goods they had (line 01), Hélène initiates a side sequence in the form of a collaborative assessment (03, 04) and a subsequent recommendation of the bakery (05-08). This side sequence is closed through recipient laughter (10) and a pause (11) and it is at this moment that Hélène produces a turn that connects back to the story and that projects the continuation of the telling activity (12). Hélène achieves this back-connecting by producing a turn-initial **et\_aprÈ::s** (12), treating the side sequence as closed and projecting a continuation of the suspended telling sequence. She produces this back-connecting device with a strong rising intonation and lengthening, projecting a continuation of this turn and establishing a space for the introduction of the next topic.

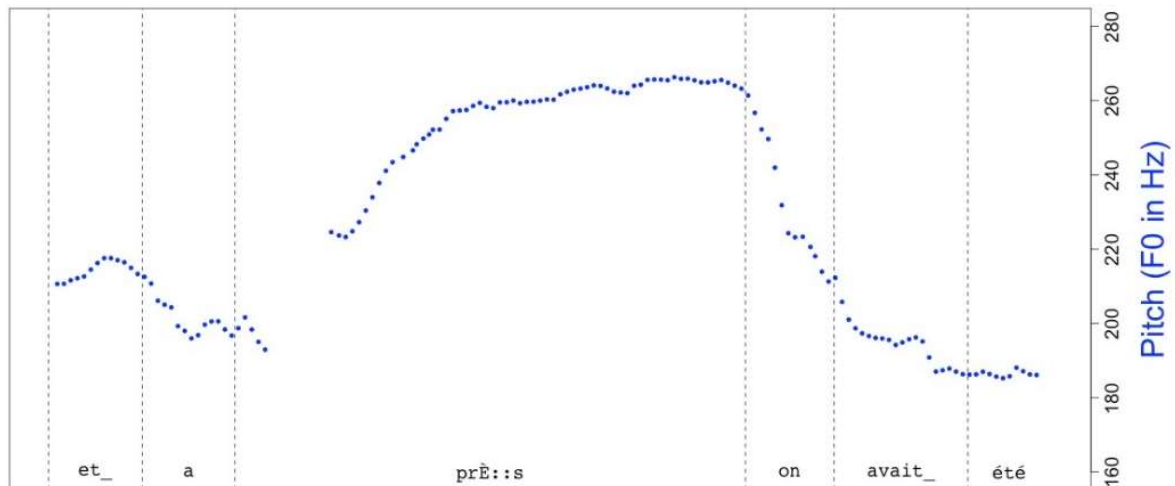


Figure 4: Pitch trace for *et après* in extract (3)

The salient prosodic design of *et après* is accompanied by a visible change of the embodied participation framework, which suggests that H el ene not only projects continuation of the telling activity, but also creates an opportunity for Emma to coparticipate in determining the next topic. As they close the side sequence, H el ene (08, #1) and Emma (09, #2) gaze at the story recipient and then avert their gaze. Thus, upon closure of the collaborative assessment, both the activity-bound issue of continuation and the turn-organizational issue of speaker selection become relevant.

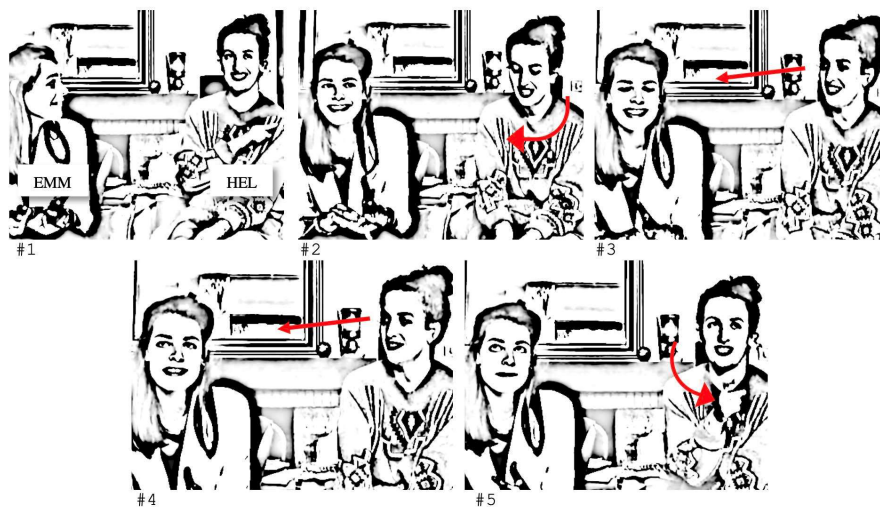


Figure 5: Gaze shifts and head movements in extract (3)

As H el ene self-selects and initiates the return to the telling activity, she shifts her gaze at Emma and maintains this gaze throughout the stretched *apr es* (12, #1, #2, #3), monitoring her co-teller throughout the interactive turn space. Emma, however, does not reciprocate H el ene’s gaze (#4, #5), and does not coparticipate in H el ene’s back-connecting turn. Following this lack of (immediate) uptake, H el ene shifts her gaze back to the recipient and prompts the next topic herself (12, “Going to a furniture store”). It is only upon completion of this topic prompt that Emma rejoins the telling activity as incipient teller: she gazes at the story recipient as she produces the change-of-state token *an ou i* (14) and she takes the floor in order to elaborate on H el ene’s topic prompt (16).

This extract demonstrates the challenge of connecting back to the telling activity after a longer side sequence: the telling-in-progress is halted as both members of the telling party engage in a collaborative assessment and a subsequent recommendation of the bakery addressed at the story recipient. Upon completion of this side sequence, the participants must accomplish a recognizable return to the story-in-progress and they need to negotiate tellership. Here, one of the potential tellers produces *et après* as turn-initial back-connecting device. It projects a continuation of the telling activity and, through its prosodic design and a gaze shift, creates an opportunity space for the co-teller to coparticipate in the back-connecting turn. As the co-teller does not immediately respond, the teller produces a topic prompt herself, which is then taken up by the co-teller. The introduction of the next topic itself thus appears to further accomplish back-connecting to the story-in-progress, as it provides the co-teller with sufficient information to subsequently take the floor and rejoin the collaborative telling activity.

In what follows, we observe that, when co-tellers do in fact respond to the back-connecting device *et puis après* within the subsequent interactive turn space, they can accomplish at least two sequentially implicative actions: they can prompt the next topic and encourage the current teller to develop on it (4.2.1) and they can reopen a previous segment of the telling to add omitted elements and to elaborate on them (4.2.2).

#### 4.2.1 Co-teller topic prompt

In this extract, Élise (ELI, from France) and her boyfriend Manu (MAN, from Québec) recount Élise's arrival in Montreal. She moved into Manu's apartment and was initially disappointed by her room. She then went on to change rooms a couple of times. Having relived and assessed Élise's self-described emotional rollercoaster, the couple then starts to recount Élise's first days in the new city.

##### (4) "Discovering Montreal" (flin201601\_07-35)

27 MAN: ouAis (-) tu\_as fAit les trois chambres de l'apPART,  
 yeah (-) ou did the three rooms of the apartment

28 ELI: [<<-> °h]

29 MAN: [dans ] (-) TRÈS peu de tEmps, (0.5)  
 in (-) very little time (0.5)

30 ELI: \*\$(smacks lips) +voilà;\*\$ \$  
 that's right<sub>prt</sub>  
 eli \*gazes down right-----\*at recipient  
 eli \$nods \$  
 eli \$puts left hand down behind MAN\$  
 man +gazes at ELI-->

31 \* (0.7)  
 eli \*at recipient-->

32 ELI: \* [°h ] #1 (0.7)

33 MAN: +[ouais]+  
 yeah  
 eli \*gazes at MAN-->  
 man +averts +gazes at ELI-->

34 ELI: <<p> (c'est vrai)> (-) \*puis #2 aPRÈ:S+\_euh<creaky>\$::>- \$  
 it's true (-) then after that uh  
 eli -->\*averts gaze down-->  
 eli \$shakes head\$  
 man -->+averts down-->

35 aprÈs be:n <<creaky> [c'étais:t-> ] #3  
 after that well it was

36 MAN: [après tu \*+dé]couvres montréal,  
 after that you discover Montreal  
 eli -->\*at MAN-->  
 man -->+at ELI-->

```

37 ELI: découvErte *de mont*$ré+A:L, #4
      discovery of Montreal
      eli      -->*averts *gazes up-->
      eli      $nods
      man      -->+averts gaze, middle-distance-->
38     donc *[eu:h   ] ;#5*(0.5)
      so uh (0.5)
39 MAN:      [comment,]+
      how
      eli      -->*at recipient *at MAN-->
      man      -->+at ELI-->
40 ELI: ((smacks lips)) *°hhh il y avAi:t_eu:h genre le le: le sameDI:,
      °hhh there was uh like the the Saturday
      eli      -->*averts gaze, middle-distance-->
40     qui *sui+VAIT,
      that followed
      eli      -->*at recipient-->>
      man      -->+averts down-->>
42     donc le premiEr weekend (où/quand) je suis arrivÉE, (0.6)
      so the first weekend when I arrived

```

This return to the chronological telling of their story is accomplished through a co-teller topic prompt: both participants jointly close the prior assessment sequence (27–33) and during the pause that ensues they establish mutual gaze (#1). Élise initiates the return to the story-in-progress by producing a turn-initial *puis après* (34) with a lengthening and rising-falling intonation and followed by the stretched and creaky-voiced hesitation marker *euh* : . .

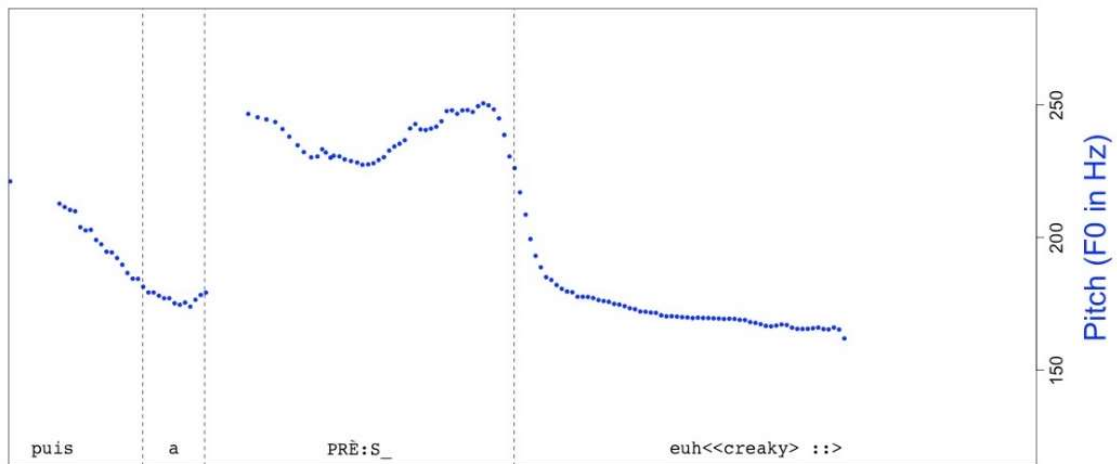


Figure 6: Pitch trace for *puis après* in extract (4)

Both the lengthening and the creaky voice suggest that Élise initiates a search of some sort, which additionally becomes visible by her gaze aversion and her head shake (#2). As Élise maintains her bodily orientation toward Manu, the halt of TCU-progressivity through a search initiation establishes an embodied opportunity space for her co-teller to potentially assist in the search. He does not immediately provide a candidate solution (i. e., a topic proposition), but when Élise repeats the adverb *après* (35) and re-initiates the search, Manu takes the turn and provides a topic prompt (36, “Discovery of Montreal”).

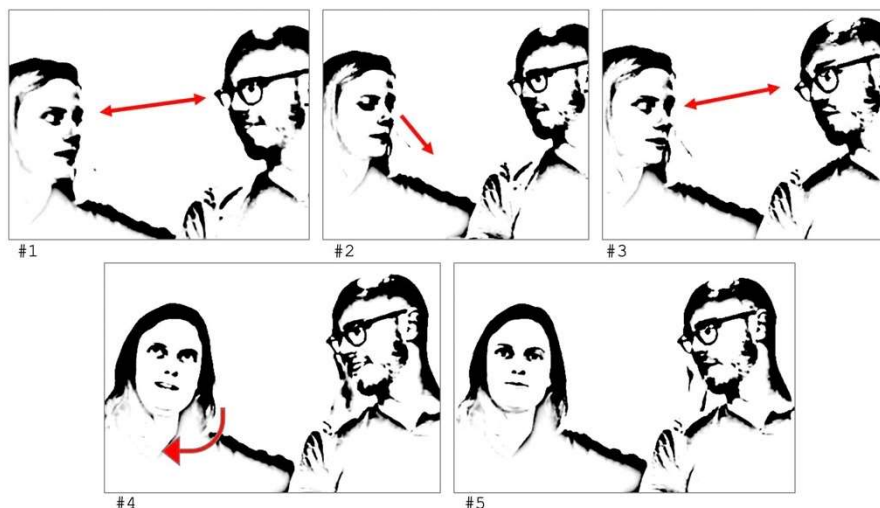


Figure 7: Gaze shifts in extract (4)

Through the repetition of *après* the topic prompt is syntactically designed as a continuation of Élise’s back-connecting turn. At the same time, its production format suggests that Manu’s topic prompt is not a bid for tellership: rather than introducing the next topic as incipient teller, he uses the personal pronoun *tu* (‘you’) while gazing at Élise (#3), selecting her as next speaker, i. e., teller of the next story segment. Élise acknowledges Manu’s topic prompt by repeating it (38). As she averts her gaze and sets on to start the telling sequence (38, #4), Manu re-enters the floor and extends his topic prompt (**what** is told next?) by a telling prompt (**how** to tell it?): he produces the interrogative adverb *comment* (‘how’, 39) with rising intonation, transforming his previous topic prompt into an explicit request for his coparticipant to tell the next segment of their story. And in fact, Élise subsequently assumes the role of current teller, as she introduces relevant background information (40–42) and gazes at the story recipient (#5).

Through the formatting of the topic prompt and the telling prompt, Manu clearly signals that he wants Lise to tell the next story segment, and he subsequently aligns as knowing recipient. Manu’s floor yielding is consequential for the perspective Élise subsequently adopts: instead of constructing a *we*-telling from the start, she emphasizes her own view of the recounted events (42) to which Manu will add his perspective later on.

In this way, Élise’s search for continuation upon completion of an extended side sequence allows Manu to assume the role of “interviewer”, encouraging her to continue the telling and to recount her experience of arriving in Montreal in detail. His telling prompt (39) creates a space for her to produce an extended telling sequence without him competing for tellership. This strategy of [topic prompt + floor yielding] allows Manu to prompt a telling sequence of which he can anticipate the trajectory, without actively telling it himself. The tellability of this story segment and Manu’s insistence on Élise’s telling becomes evident later: The “Discovery of Montreal” leads to the couple’s first kiss and constitutes an important milestone in their shared story.

In this extract, we have observed that the back-connecting *puis après* initiates a collaborative search sequence which occasions a co-teller topic prompt. In the next and last extract, a similar search for continuation is used by the co-teller to reopen a previous story segment and to add omitted elements to the part of the telling, which was abandoned in favor of a side sequence.

#### 4.2.2 Going back to a previous story episode

François (FRA) and Lise (LIS) recount the three weeks they spent equipping their van on a parking lot in Auckland, New Zealand. They had no prior experience with this and it turned out to be hard work to create their “cozy nest” with only a handful of simple tools. Prior to the back-connecting sequence that I am interested in, the couple recounts the three weeks they spent on the parking lot (lines 01–42). François then describes their van as their *nid douillet* (‘cozy nest’, 43), an expression that Lise does not know (44) and which François then explains in a long side sequence (lines 45–82).

##### (5) “Campervan” (fgoe201601\_03-32)

01 FRA: on a mis (-) trois semaines,  
it took us (-) three weeks  
02 [à peu PRÈS?]  
approximately  
03 LIS: [ouais- ]  
yeah  
04 FRA: (0.7)  
(0.7)  
05 on étai::t (-) sur un parking,  
we were (-) on a parking lot  
((story continues for 27 seconds))  
43 FRA: on s'est fait un petit nid douillet;  
we made ourselves a little cozy nest  
44 LIS: un QUOI?  
a what  
45 FRA: un nid d'ouillet;  
a cozy nest  
((side sequence 46 seconds: FRA explains LIS what 'nid douillet' means))  
83 FRA: on s'est fabriqué notre propre petit nid douillet; °hh  
we made ourselves our own little cozy nest  
84 LIS: ouais-  
85 FRA: \*+euhm (0.6) et du coup on a mis trois semaines à peu \*PRES,=  
and so it took us three weeks approximately  
fra \*gaze toward LIS-----\*story recipient  
lis +gaze up left-->  
86 ==<<p> \$et #1puis \*\$aPRÈS#2\_+o::n->#3\$ \*  
and then after that we  
fra -->\*gaze aversion toward LIS\*at LIS-->  
fra \$lh up....----down-----\$  
fra \$head toward LIS--\$  
lis -->+down-->  
87 LIS: %et\_on %a #4+ %jUste %uti+lisé% (-) une SCIE,  
and we have only used (-) a saw  
lis -->+recipient---+avert middle-distance-->  
lis %lh up,%point-%lh down-%  
88 un marteau,  
a hammer  
89 E:::t un tournevis;  
and a screwdriver  
90 FRA: et un mètre-  
and a ruler  
91 LIS: <<p> ah oui [un mètre ] ouais->  
ah yes a ruler yes  
92 FRA: [pour mesurer;]  
to measure

François closes the extensive explaining side sequence in (83) by repeating the turn that launched it (43) and he subsequently closes the previous story segment by repeating the turn that prefaced it with turn-initial *du coup* ‘thus’ (01, cf. Bolly/Degand 2009: 7). The closure of the side sequence makes a return to the story-in-progress relevant and the closure of the previous story segment provides a topical anchor for back-connecting. At this juncture position, François produces *et puis après o::n* (86, ‘and then after that we’), launching a search for



continuation. This back-connecting device is produced with low intensity, a rising-falling intonation and a lengthening on the personal pronoun *on* (informal ‘we’, literally ‘one’).

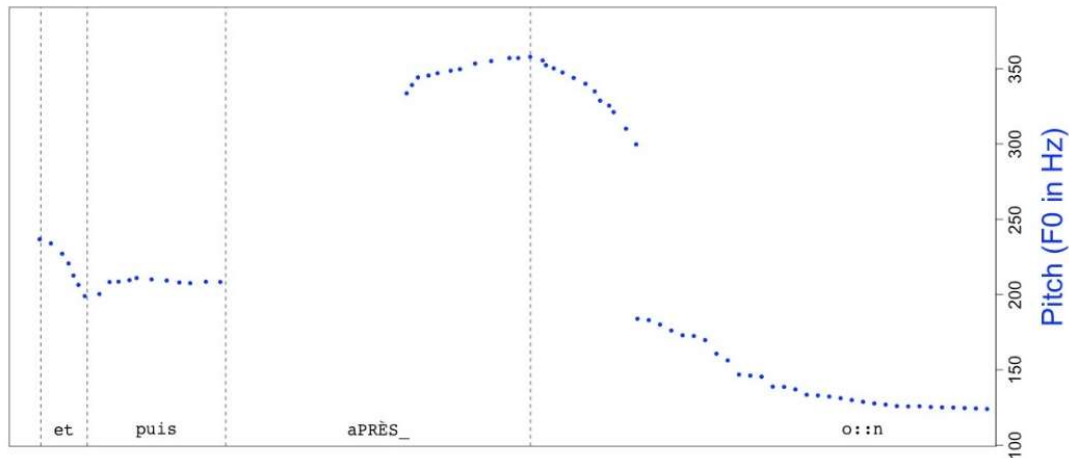


Figure 8: Pitch trace for *et puis après* in extract (5)

The production format of François’ syntactically incomplete utterance projects a *we*-telling and as he produces this back-connecting device, he changes the embodied participation framework and establishes an opportunity space for his co-teller to assist in the search and to prompt the next topic: He averts his gaze from the story recipient and shift his gaze at Lise (#1-#3).

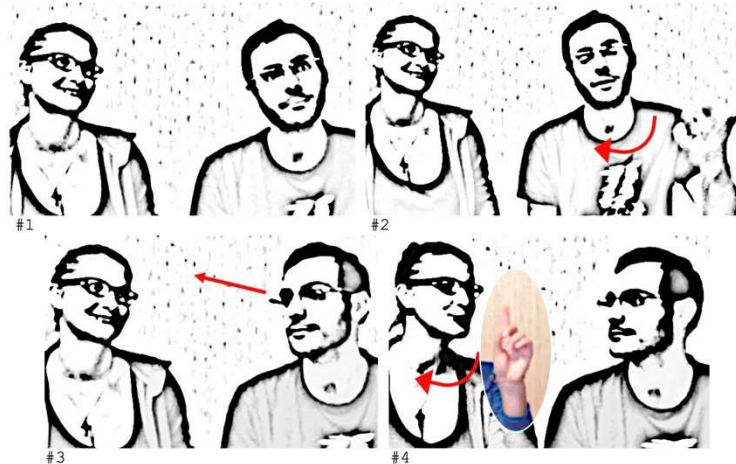


Figure 9: Gaze shift and head movement in extract (5)

At the moment François gazes at his co-teller Lise, she enters the floor and reopens the previous story segment (“Equipping the van”), that was interrupted by the side sequence and that François closed in his prior turn. Instead of prompting a new topic and forwarding the story progressivity, she shifts the focus back to the previous topic and provides a more detailed account of their experience: She enumerates the tools they used to equip their van (87, 89) and thereby establishes the scarcity of their resources as a tellable element of their story.

Lise’s structural disalignment at this juncture place, i. e., her going back to a previous segment instead of prompting the next one, manifests itself both in the design of her turn and her embodied conduct. She does not “smoothly” continue the syntax of François incomplete utterance: the turn-initial *et* (‘and’, 87) makes her turn understandable as adding omitted elements (cf. Dressel/Satti 2021; Lerner 1992). Moreover, she turns to the story recipient and performs a

pointing gesture, which makes her turn recognizable as not being a (ratifiable) candidate solution to François' search for continuation, but as implementing a different telling-relevant action at this juncture place. This form of co-teller entry has been described as a “now or never” situation (Satti (forthcoming)), in which the co-teller seizes the last structural opportunity to enter the floor and modify the story-in-progress. In this instance, it is the search for continuation initiated by means of turn-initial *et puis après* at the juncture place between a side sequence and the next story segment that create a brief action space for the co-teller to reopen and elaborate on the previous story segment and to take over the role of current teller. Once she has established the return to the target story segment (here in the form of an emergent list construction (cf. Dankel/Satti 2019; Dressel/Dankel/Teixeira (in press))), her co-teller joins the reopened telling sequence and co-produces elements of the list (90, 92).

While the topic prompt (extract 4) can be described as structurally aligned co-teller action that contributes to resuming the telling activity and forwarding story progressivity, the co-teller-initiated return to a previous story segment (extract 5) (partially) disaligns with the current teller's projected story resumption. Although the co-teller accomplishes a resumption of the telling activity, she does not forward the progressivity of the story. In both cases, *et puis après* is designed to launch a search for continuation, halting turn progressivity at the juncture position between a side sequence and story resumption. While this search design creates a space for potential co-teller entry, it does not function as a turn-yielding device in the same way it does between subsequent story segments. Rather, it consolidates the closure of the side sequence and projects some form of back-connection to and resumption of the abandoned telling activity.

## 5 Results and Conclusion

In this paper, I have analyzed the multimodal design and interactional functions of *et puis après* (‘and then after that’) in collaborative storytellings. Two similar, yet different, sequential positions have been investigated: the juncture between subsequent story episodes and the space between a side sequence and the return to the story-in-progress. Such juncture positions make the prompt of the next topic and its back-connection to the story-in-progress relevant. If the current teller does not immediately resume the telling themselves and maintain their role, such juncture positions can provide a site for co-teller entry and possibly a change of tellership. *Et puis après* can be a resource for current tellers to establish interactive turn spaces in these sequential environments and they can mobilize their co-teller's assistance.

Between subsequent story episodes, current tellers can solicit co-teller continuation and they can initiate a change of tellership. *Et puis après* here functions as a **continuation elicitor**, i. e., a stand-alone connector used for prompting an extension of a prior turn, here the next segment of the shared story. The prosodic design of these syntactically incomplete connectors is similar to what Persson (2017) calls “bounded” prosody (see extract 1): The final rising “interrogative” intonation and strong accent on the last syllable contribute to creating a TRP, “while keeping the projective force of the syntax in place for the response turn to come” (ibid.: 232). This recognizable prosodic design coincides with a change in the embodied participation framework: The current teller shifts their gaze from the story recipient to their co-teller, further disambiguating the TRP and mobilizing their co-teller's response. In extract (1), we have observed that the co-teller immediately takes the turn and produces a syntactically fitted response, prompting

the next topic and assuming the role of current teller. In extract (2), the current launches a search for continuation with *et puis*. When her co-teller does not respond, she transforms this search into an explicit request to prompt a topic by asking what happened next. This two-part attempt to mobilize co-teller response [*et puis euhm/qu'est-ce qui s'est passé après*] ('and then uhm/what happened after that') provides insight into what actions the components of *et puis après* accomplish between story segments: *Et puis* appears to function as a transition and structuration marker (cf. Bolly/Degand 2009; Degand/Fagard 2011; Deppermann/Helmer 2013), maintaining progressivity and projecting continuation of the ongoing activity. It is often produced with lengthening and precedes hesitation markers, initiating searches for continuation and thus establishing spaces for potential co-teller participation. *Après*, on the other hand, projects a progression on the story level, i. e., **what happened next?**, and can be used to elicit a topic prompt for the next story segment. Thus, *et puis après* between story episodes can ensure the closure of the previous story segment, project continuation of the telling activity and make relevant a topic prompt for the next episode. As a multimodally achieved continuation elicitor it can establish a space for coparticipation at this juncture position while maintaining story progressivity.

While story continuation between episodes is mostly achieved rather seamlessly, story resumption after (extended) side sequences requires participants to re-install "the position from which the abandoned telling can be 'continued'" (Mazeland/Huiskes 2001: 147). Whereas between story segments, participants are faced with the issue of determining "what happened next?" and "who tells it?", they must additionally resolve the question of "where were we?" upon completion of side sequences. At these juncture positions, stand-alone *et puis après* can be a resource to consolidate the closure of both the side sequence and the preceding story segment and to project story resumption. In my data, I find that participants multimodally design *et puis après* as **searches for continuation** that establish spaces for different types of coparticipation. In contrast to the "bounded" prosody between story segments, an "open-ended" (Persson 2017: 241) prosodic format can be observed: *et puis après* is produced with lower intensity, rising-falling intonation, with a lengthening of the final vowel sound and creaky voice, and it is often followed by hesitation markers. While this format indexes both prosodic and syntactic incompleteness of the utterance-in-progress, bodily cues can establish this search as a space for potential coparticipation. In my data I observe that the participant who initiates the search shifts their gaze from the story recipient to their co-teller either prior to the onset of the search (extract 4) or at the onset of the search (extract 5), establishing an embodied participation framework that allows the co-teller to enter the turn. Whereas word searches during story segments are mostly designed to solicit specific lexical elements or pieces of information (cf. Dressel 2020), searches for continuation can occasion different forms of co-teller involvement: for instance, the co-teller can prompt the next topic (extract 4) or they can reopen a previous story segment and add omitted elements (extract 5). Thus, post-side sequence *et puis après* can project story resumption and create a space for both participants to collaboratively determine at what point precisely to reinstate the halted telling activity.

To sum up: As continuation elicitor between episodes, *et puis après* makes a topic prompt relevant and it can offer the floor to the co-teller. After side sequences, *et puis après* can launch a search for continuation, projecting story resumption and creating a space for the co-teller to

enter the turn. At both sequential positions, *et puis après* functions as a back-connecting device to a previous episode, while projecting continuation of the telling-in-progress. Similar to discourse markers such as *alors* ('so, then', cf. Degand 2014: 159), *et puis après* thus expresses both a metadiscursive meaning, in that it refers to the story structure, and a temporal one, in that orders the told events.

Between story episodes, *et puis après* makes recognizable juncture positions as sites for the collaborative accomplishment of episode closing and opening, topic progression and tellership negotiation. At these juncture positions, the participants' joint orientation toward the macro-structure of the telling activity becomes visible, all while they collaborate on the level of the turn space. In this sense, investigating multimodal turn-taking practices at juncture positions can shed light on how co-telling is achieved moment-by-moment. At the same time, these public negotiations of tellership and story topics accomplish a form of recipient design: the structure of the telling, the order of the source events, and their treatment by the telling participants become visible for the story recipient and the readjustments of the participation framework contribute to guiding the recipient through the telling. The question of what forms of recipient alignment are made relevant at these juncture positions could be the object of further research.

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