

Gaze selects the next speaker in answers to questions pronominally addressed to more than one co-participant

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Like many other languages, but unlike modern (standard) English, German has a distinct second person plural pronoun (*ihr*, ‘you guys’), contrasting with the second person singular pronoun (*du*). The second person plural pronoun addresses a turn to more than one, and possibly all co-present participants. This paper investigates turn-taking after such multiply addressed turns, taking as an example information-seeking questions, i.e., a sequential context in which a specific next action is relevant in the adjacent position. It might appear that in such a context, self-selection applies (Schegloff 1992: 122); more than one co-participant is addressed, but none selected as next speaker. In this paper, I show on the basis of spontaneous interactions recorded with mobile eye-tracking equipment that this is not the case and that TCU-final gaze is employed to select the next speaker. The participant not being gazed at TCU-finally is addressed, but not selected as the answerer in next position and may provide an answer in a sequential position after the first answer. The article demonstrates that gaze is an efficient way to allocate turns in the absence of verbal cues and thus contributes to our understanding of turn-taking from a multimodal perspective.

Keywords: gaze, turn-taking, current speaker selects next, turn allocation, pronouns of address, eye-tracking

1. Second person pronouns, gaze and next speaker selection

This article is part of a larger study using eye-tracking technology (see below, Section 2) in order to investigate the role of gaze for turn-taking in multi-party interaction (see Auer 2018; Auer 2021). The fundamental assumption is that speaker’s gaze *during* the production of a turn is an important way of *addressing* turns to one or (in the case of gaze shifts) various co-participants. However, an



addressed co-participant is not necessarily also the *selected next speaker*; this already follows from the observation that during longer turn-constructional units, speakers regularly use gaze to address them to more than one co-participant, while only one of them can be the selected next speaker. If a current speaker wants to select a co-participant as next speaker, it is gaze during *the final stretch of talk* in a turn-constructional unit, i.e., when approaching a possible transition space, that turns an *addressed co-participant* into a *selected next speaker* (other next-speaker selection techniques being absent). Hence, addressing a turn by gaze and selecting a next speaker by gaze need to be distinguished. While gaze-selected next speakers are also addressed co-participants, the inverse does not hold: Addressed co-participants may, but need not be selected as next speakers.

The sequential-grammatical context in which the validity of this assumption will be investigated here is that of information-seeking questions which include the German second person (informal) plural pronoun *ihr* ('you guys'). Information-seeking questions are highly projecting first actions. But, as already pointed out by Schegloff (1992:122), a first action that projects a second action does not by the same token select a next speaker for performing this action: A question can be asked to a plurality of possible answerers, and a standard way of doing so encoded in the grammar of many languages is the use of the second person plural pronoun.¹ More than one person is addressed, but the question-turn leaves it open who will (have to, and have the right to) answer, or at least answer it first. As Schegloff goes on to argue, this is one of the main reasons for which turn-taking on the one hand, and action formation and sequencing on the other, need to be distinguished:

Although it is true that the organization of turn-taking and the organization of sequences (or speech acts) are not independent (after all, addressing a first pair part to another is the primary mode of selecting them as next speaker), and both are always operating on any talk, they are largely distinct and only partially intersecting. (Schegloff 1992: 124)

While I fully agree with Schegloff's point, I disagree with Schegloff's claim that multiply addressed first pair parts are actions "which do not select anyone as next speaker, but provide for self-selection by intending next-speakers" (123). Rather, it will be shown that after multiply addressed first pair parts, it is systematically gaze that selects this next speaker. First pair parts addressed by the second person plural pronoun to a group of co-participants are well suited to test the efficiency

1. As modern standard English does not distinguish second person singular and plural, the 'plural' is only evident from the plural address term *guys* in Schegloff's example *how're you guys* (1992: 123).

of TCU-final gaze as a next-speaker selection technique in a natural environment, since in their case, action sequencing and turn-taking systematically diverge.

A full appreciation of the role of gaze for next speaker selection has consequences for the turn-taking system that go well beyond the particular sequential-grammatical context of answers to information-seeking questions addressed to more than one co-participant. As shown in Auer (2021), it massively reduces the applicability of sub-rule (IIb) of the well-known “turn allocation component” of Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson’s model (1974: 703–4). The first sub-rule of the model (IIa) gives the current speaker the right to select a next speaker; the second sub-rule (IIb) stipulates that if the current speaker does not exert this right, then any of the other participants may self-select, with the “first starter” acquiring the right to the turn. Finally, if neither the current speaker selects a next speaker, nor any other participant self-selects, sub-rule IIc applies, and the current speaker may continue. The three sub-rules are presented in terms of a hierarchical relationship: (a) applies before (b), and (c) only after (b) has applied.

There are sequential contexts mentioned by Sacks and colleagues in which explicit current-speaker-selects-next techniques are not necessary, as the next speaker is already determined by sequence structure. For instance, repair initiations or confirmation requests will always select the participant whose turn is in the scope of the repair or confirmation request as the next speaker. If, however, first speakers need specific techniques to allocate the turn to a next speaker, the main technique for doing so which Sacks et al. have in mind is the use of names and other referring expressions such as address terms. In addition, they refer to “techniques which employ social identities in their operation” (1974: 718), which can be understood as a special case of recipient design based on social categorization. Gaze is mentioned in passing only.²

Address terms (such as names or kinship terms) and gaze function very differently in terms of turn-allocation: Non-pronominal address terms are a very forceful, explicit way to select a next speaker, but they occur only rarely in this function. They “appear to be deployed to do more than simply specify whom the speaker is addressing” (Lerner 2003: 184; also see Günthner 2019, 2016; Droste & Günthner 2021; Clayman 2010, 2012; among others).³ Gaze, in contrast, is available as a resource for turn-allocation at all points in face-to-face interaction, provided that participants are able to see one another; it is independent of the verbal action performed by the current speaker.

2. “Thus, an important, perhaps the central, general technique whereby current speaker selects next, involves the affiliating of an address term (or some other device for achieving ‘addressing,’ e.g., gaze direction) to a first pair-part.” (SSJ 1974: 717).

3. Extract (6) below contains an example of such a pragmatically rich use of a proper name as an address term.

Although ubiquitous, gaze may be an unreliable technique for next speaker selection, as Lerner (2003) points out; this is so because co-participants may be non-attentive, or devote their visual attention to other interactional tasks. It is the combined use of gaze and second person singular pronouns that can remedy this disadvantage. While the second person singular pronoun itself is not able to select a co-participant as next speaker, it is a verbal cue that attracts co-participants' visual attention to the speaker's gaze, which selects the gazed-at participant as the next speaker in turn. Hence gaze in combination with the second person pronoun is the prototypical and best current-speaker-selects-next technique in multiparty interaction (Lerner 2003).

Research on gaze as a next-speaker selection cue has nonetheless remained scarce: Most gaze-research is on dyadic interactions and therefore focusses on its regulatory functions, i.e., for determining the locus of turn transition (Kendon 1967; Rossano 2012, to cite just a few) or the relationship between recipient's gaze aversion and preferred/dispreferred answers (Robinson 2020). Brône et al. (2017), using eye-tracking technology, confirm earlier findings by Kendon (1967) and Duncan (1975) and show that current speakers mostly gaze at (one of) their recipients in two- and three-party interaction when approaching the end of their turns, while gaze aversion is employed as a turn-holding device. However, they are not interested in the question of who takes the turn in three-party interaction. Gaze as a turn-taking cue in dyadic question-answer sequences is investigated across three different cultures (Italian, Tzeltal Mayan, Yéli Dnye) in Rossano et al. (2009). These authors were able to show that across cultures, questioners tend to look at the person from whom they expect an answer much more often than vice versa. Again, however, they do not address turn-taking and gaze in multi-party interaction.

One of the few papers in which turn-taking and gaze in *multiparty* interaction have been studied is Tiitinen & Ruusuvuori (2012), who investigated triadic interaction between two parents and a nurse in a maternity clinic. When the nurse gazed at one of the parents after a question that was verbally addressed at both parents by use of the second person plural pronoun, it was significantly more often this gazed-at parent who answered the question. Vranjes (2018, Chapter 4) studied gaze in triadic interpreting situations and found that the precise onset of the interpreting activity was negotiated on the basis of gaze by the current speaker. In Auer (2021) it is shown that gaze before the (projectable) end of a speaker's turn regularly selects a next speaker even after other than strongly projecting first actions.

Weiß (2018, 2019, 2020) studied cases in which the person gazed at turn-finally by the current speaker did exceptionally *not* take the turn in multi-party interaction; she was able to account for these exceptions in various ways. For

instance, a gaze-selected participant was shown to ‘refuse’ to take the turn and instead gaze-select a third participant, thereby transferring the turn to this participant. Her studies as well as the one by Vranjes (2018) share with the present study the use of eye-tracking technology in spontaneous, non-experimental settings. Weiß’s work is partly based on the same data set as the study reported here.

In their work in Northwestern and Western Australia, Blythe et al. (2018) present an in-depth analysis of the use of gaze in multi-party settings to elicit responses in Australian Aboriginal communities, in which casual interaction typically does not require an F-formation. As in Western cultures, gaze is used – together with other cues such as voice pointing, epistemic skewing, raised voice, or posture – in order to organize turn-taking. Problems may arise when the seating arrangement is disadvantageous to the ability to see the speaker’s gaze. Importantly, they note that there are “non-selecting” questions during the production of which the speaker does not gaze at a co-participant, which changes the pragmatic status of this utterance (similar to “rhetorical” questions in Western cultures). Also different from Western cultures, “prolonged gaze” (Stivers & Rossano 2010) is not used to elicit a response (Blythe et al. 2018: 168).

2. Quantitative results

The hypothesis investigated in this paper is that the participant who answers an *ihr*-addressed questions for information in the subsequent sequential slot does not do so on the basis of self-selection, but is regularly selected by the preceding speaker via gaze during the final part of the turn. This hypothesis can be tested statistically by a simple cross-tabulation in which factual speaker transitions are compared to the gaze-direction before the turn-transition of the speaker who asked the question. Such a quantitative analysis is needed in order to establish the regularity of the pattern. Exceptions then need to be accounted for, which will be done below (Sections 4 and 5). If self-selection were the case, factual next speakers should be independent from current speaker’s turn-final gaze at one or the other co-participant, i.e., both the looked-at and the not-looked-at co-participant should take the turn equally often. If, on the other hand, the current-speaker-selects-next sub-rule of the turn-taking system applies, turn-transition to the gazed-at co-participant should be significantly more frequent than turn-transition to the verbally addressed co-participant who is not gazed at.

2.1 Data

Six encounters, each of approx. 45 to 60 minutes and with three different participants each, were analyzed. The participants were relatively young people (under 35), sometimes familiar with one another, sometimes not. In order to facilitate the analysis of gaze and to identify recurrent patterns, only settings were considered in which non-verbal actions were not dominant. In “multi-activities” (Haddington et al., (Eds.) 2014), gaze takes on a variety of additional functions interacting with and overlaying those related to turn-taking, which will result in more complex patterns (see Stukenbrock 2018a & b, 2020; Stukenbrock & Dao 2019 for the use of eye-tracking in these contexts). Participants were seated in an “F-formation” (Kendon 1990: 209–237). In an F-formation, participants are able to see and monitor each other’s bodily behavior, including their gaze. In constellations in which mutual visual monitoring is more difficult (such as in side-by-side arrangements, for instance while walking) or even impossible (back-to-back arrangements, distance communication), the patterns observed will not hold in the same way.

2.2 Methods

The interactional episodes were recorded with an audio recording device and an external camera. In addition, all three participants wore mobile eye-tracking glasses (SMI or Tobii Pro 2).⁴ The glasses have two in-built infra-red cameras that record the movement of the speakers’ pupils (installed in the frames of the glasses to the left and right of the speaker’s nose) through reflections on the cornea, with a sampling rate of 30Hz (SMI) or 50Hz (Tobii). They capture the movement of foveal (‘best’, or ‘central’) vision. The glasses further include a scene camera that records a part of the speaker’s field of vision (peripheral vision is not fully captured). For analysis, the video of the scene camera and the recordings of the tracking cameras are overlaid. A tracking ‘cursor’ shows the speaker’s fixations on the images of the scene camera. The two eye-tracking recordings, as well as the recordings of the external camera and an external audio device, were synchronized and arranged on a split screen using Adobe Premiere Pro CC. The split-screen video and the audio file were then imported into the video analysis software ELAN (Wittenburg et al. 2006), where speech was transcribed according to GAT 2-conventions (Selting et al. 2009) and where all durational measurements were done.

4. See Brône et al. (2017) as well as the contributions in Brône & Oben (Eds.) (2018) for a discussion of the technical aspects of mobile eye-tracking in interaction research.

All recorded episodes were searched for information-seeking questions that included the second person plural pronoun *ihr*. In total, 52 instances were found, 31 yes/no-questions and 21 wh-questions. Some cases had to be discarded, because of bad tracking (one case), because the question wasn't answered at all (two cases), or because it was already answered in overlap during its production (two cases). In one case, the speaker consistently looked at an object that he was handling while asking the question, i.e., he did not address (nor select as next speaker) any co-participant by gaze. This resulted in a collection of 46 cases in which the above hypothesis could be tested. In all cases, turn-transition was smooth, i.e., it occurred at a TCU boundary.

The 46 questions were coded for (1) the co-participant gazed at by the current speaker during the final phase of the TCU and (2) for the co-participants who produced the next turn. TCU-final gaze was defined as starting at the point when the current speaker's gaze reached the facial region of a co-participant and ending with their vocalization, with one exception: In the rare cases in which the speaker's gaze shifted to (another) co-participant during the last 200ms of the vocalization, this last shift was considered to be too short to be able to select a next speaker and was not included.⁵

As expected, the duration of TCU-final gaze at one of the two co-participants varied considerably; measured in articulated syllables in order to factor out differences in articulation speed, it ranged from two to 36 syllables, with the distribution skewed towards shorter durations (31 gazes were shorter than 7 syllables). No difference was made between question turns that consisted of one TCU only and those that included one or more TCU boundary. Also, no difference was made between question turns during which the speaker looked at one participant only and those in which the speaker's gaze shifted gaze between co-participants one or more times.

2.3 Results

In 34 of the 46 examples in the collection (74%), the co-participant who was gazed at by the current speaker answered the question in adjacent position, confirming the hypothesis. The co-participant who was *not* gazed at provided the answer in six cases (13%). Both co-participants answered simultaneously in another six cases (13%). The probability of an answer by the gazed-at participant is therefore three times higher than the probability of an answer by the participant not looked at and that of a simultaneous answer of both addressed participants taken together.

5. The duration of gaze must be sufficiently long for the gazed-at co-participant to plan the turn in a timely manner (Levinson 2016).

These quantitative results strongly support the assumption that speaker's gaze at the end of a question turn that is addressed to several co-participants by the plural pronoun *ihr* is an efficient way of selecting the next speaker.

We now proceed to add interactional flesh to the bones of this simple quantitative distribution.

3. First and second answers after *ihr*-questions

As shown in Section 2, the speaker's gaze in the end of the question regularly and systematically selects the (first) answerer. In this section, we will discuss some examples of this pattern. In addition, we ask whether the non-selected co-participants provide an answer as well in a later sequential position. Do they make use of the fact that they were addressed also (but not selected as first answerers) and provide an answer after the gaze-selected participant has answered? In roughly one third of the examples, this was not the case, while in the more frequent case, the second addressee's answer was given later. In this section, some reasons for which second answers are produced at a later point or are missing entirely will be discussed.

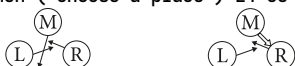
For the following discussion, the semantic distinction between *distributive vs. collective uses* of the second person plural pronoun is relevant. In its distribute meaning, exemplified by Extracts (1) and (2) below, the pronoun refers to the addressees as individuals, in the second case, exemplified by Extracts (3) and (4), it refers to them as a collectivity (for instance, a couple) (see Link 1991 for a semantic discussion of this distinction). While questions with a distributively used second person plural pronoun can be expected to be answered by both addressed participants (one after the other), questions containing a collectively used pronoun can be answered by one addressed participant on behalf of the collectivity.

We start with an extract that shows the pattern of a first answer by the gaze-selected participant and a second answer by the second addressed participant in an almost over-articulated pattern, with the participant who asks the question exerting maximal control over the others by allocating the turns to them sequentially via gaze. We will then move on to an example in which the second answer is not produced, due to the way in which the first answer is treated.⁶

6. Verbal transcription follows GAT 2 (see Selting et al. 2009 and its adaptation for English by Couper-Kuhlen & Barth-Weingarten 2011); where necessary, gestural and bodily behavior is transcribed following Mondada's system (see Mondada 2019). The transcription of gaze follows a system adapted from Rossano 2012. Gaze patterns are iconically represented from a

Extract 1.

Ort aussuchen ('choose a place') 24-08-16, 00:26:28-00:26:41



-01 RIC: {ja; wenn ihr} {JETZT einen ORT aussuchen} könn{tet}=
ok; if you (PL) could now choose a location?=
M L R



-02 an dem ihr jetzt einfach +so:} +WÄRT?{(--)}
where you(PL) would simply be now?
ric: +snaps fingers+



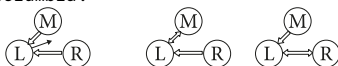
-03 {so: (.) ohne (.) über irgendwas NACHdenken zu müssen?}{(--)}
like (.) without having to think about anything?
M L R



-04 {(-) wo} würdet {ihr SEIN? (-)}
where would you(PL) be?
M L R



05 MEL: Ko{LUM} {bien. (--)}
Columbia.



08 LIN: {<<p>möchte} {nach} {WIEN>;}
(I) want (to go to) Vienna;

09 LIN/: ((laugh[hter])⁷

10 RIC: [echt?
really?

The three participants (two of whom study anthropology) have already talked about their private and study travels for some time; particularly Ricarda is very keen on travelling around the world and on living in far-away places. Linda, the third participant, is studying to become a high school teacher.

bird's eye perspective. White (double-lined) arrows indicate gaze at another participant's face; two-sided arrows hence mark mutual gaze (eye contact). Black (single-lined) arrows indicate gaze at an object or into space in the indicated direction. A broken line refers to downward glances. Absence of an arrow means that tracking was unreliable or absent. The duration of the respective gaze pattern is indicated by {} in the verbal transcription line. Passages not included between curved brackets are phases of gaze movement in which at least one participant's gaze moves from the last to the following gaze constellation. Where necessary, these gaze movements are described using Mondada's system.

Ricarda's question turn with which the extract starts has the syntactic format of a conditional clause: 'If you could choose a place in the world without any restrictions, where would you be?'. The second person plural pronoun is used three times (in lines 01, 02 and 04) in order to address the turn to both Linda and Melanie. It is used distributively; a separate answer by each addressee is relevant.

Ricarda's gaze in lines 01–04 alternates between looking down (not at any co-participant) and looking at one of the two co-participants, typical for longer turns. It underlines their status as addressees (Auer 2018), which is already expressed by the plural pronoun. But during the last part of her turn, Ricarda only looks at Melanie, beginning in the brief moment of silence at the end of line 03, and continuing over the apodosis of the conditional clause *wo würdet ihr SEIN?* 'where would you be?'. With the syntactic transition into the apodosis, the end of the TCU is projectable. By gazing at her in this turn-final phase, Ricarda gaze-selects Melanie as the next speaker, giving her the turn to answer the question first.

Certain details in the gaze of Ricarda's recipients demonstrate that they orient to this non-verbal selection of Melanie as the next speaker. One such detail is Melanie's looking away for a short moment after Ricarda has started to gaze-select her, i.e., at the beginning of line (4), when the completion of the TCU is predictable. Various authors (Kendon 1967; Duncan 1975; Brône et al. 2017) found that in two-party interactions, selected next speakers regularly look away from the current speaker shortly before or while starting their turn, preparing, as it were, for the delivery of the utterance. This is what Melanie does. By looking away from Ricarda, she accepts her turn allocation. The second detail, which proves co-participants' orientation at the imminent turn-transition from Ricarda to Melanie, is Linda's gaze. She, the second addressed participant, keeps looking in the direction of the current speaker,⁷ but exactly when Melanie starts to produce her answer (*Kolumbien*), she directs her gaze to her: She acknowledges her role as next speaker and her own role of a recipient (cf. Holler & Kendrick 2015).

After Melanie has answered for herself, the sequential projection inherent in Ricarda's question is still active. Linda could provide an answer now as well, starting in the short pause after Melanie's *Kolumbien*. But she waits, briefly looking in the direction of Ricarda as if to make sure that she has her permission to take the turn (line 05). Ricarda, however, is still in gaze contact with Melanie. This makes Linda look back at Melanie; apparently she is checking whether Melanie wants to expand her one-word answer. This, however, is not the case. Shortly afterwards, Ricarda's *mhm* acknowledges her receipt of Melanie's answer. Ricarda now re-directs her gaze to Linda (line 06). During the following verbal pause (line 07), filled with soft laughter by Melanie, which can be heard as a comment on her wish

7. During most of the sequence, she looks not into Ricarda's face, but slightly to the left of it.

to be in Columbia, the gaze constellation shifts, and so does the participant constellation. Linda again directs her gaze in the direction of Ricarda, and Melanie turns to Linda, prepared to be the recipient of her answer. Ricarda keeps her gaze on Linda, who starts to answer the question ('I want to go to Vienna').

Even though the question was originally addressed to both herself and Melanie, Linda waits until she can be sure that the sequence between Ricarda (question) and Melanie (answer) is closed (acknowledgement token) and until Ricarda gaze-selects her for the next turn. It may be noted that by doing so, Linda optimizes her chances that the answer will be produced 'in the clear', without overlap, and that it will be given full attention by the others. This is all the more important as she construes her answer as a 'very different kind of answer', not just 'another answer'. She does so by producing a full sentence (cf. Auer & Lindström, to appear, for non-elliptical syntax as a way to claim agency in second position), which contrasts with the one-word format chosen by Melanie in her answer. In this way, a contrast between 'Columbia' (a far-away, exotic place) and 'Vienna' (a close enough place, not at all exotic) is established. This leads to joint laughter between herself and Melanie, while Ricarda responds by a surprise-marking request for confirmation ('really?'), retrospectively confirming that this is not a place she would have expected as an answer about 'dream locations'.

But things do not always develop in such an orderly way. Sometimes, the sequential slot in which a second answer can be produced never occurs. For instance, the first answer may trigger a follow-up exchange between the question-asking and the first responding participant, which leaves no sequential slot for a second answer to be produced (cf. Stivers 2021 for the tendency of multi-party interaction to become "partitioned" in such a way). This can be observed in Extract (2):

Extract 2.

Jara-Examen ('Law exam') (27-4-27 3a/00:04:14-00:04:32)

((Maria has Just told the others that she is about to finish her exam. The three participants do not know each other. Gaze transcribed from the end of line 04 to line 10.))





01 GRE: und WAS für n [examen?]
and what kind of exam?

02 MAR: [ich hab] JUra; (-)
I have law;

03 GRE: *AH: o%[KE; gut;]
oh ok good;
gre: *several small nods -->
gre: %smiles -->



04 REI: [+<<p>ah krass.> {(.)+]
oh wow.
rei: +nods+

- 05 GRE: +ja.+*}
yes.
gre: +nods+
- 
- 06 MAR: und &{IHR?} {(-)
and you (PL)?
Mar: &smiles-->
- 07 GRE: +ja;+%eh:
well;=uhm:
Gre: +nods+
- 
- 08 ich HAB jetzt noch_n} {halbes jahr,=
I now have another six months,
- 
- 09 und dann gehts ins} {REP⁸; (0.5)}
and then it's rep time; (0.5)
- 
- 10 AUch {jura;}=
also law;
- 11 MAR: =AH.
12 GRE: ja?;
yes;
- 13 (.) deswegen eh beNEID_ich [dich grade] sEhr;& [((laughs))]
therefore uhm I'm very envious of you right now;
- 14 REI: [<<pp>>krass;>]
wow;
- 15 MAR: [<<f>, laughing>jja,>]
- 16 REI: ((laughs))
- 17 MAR: [das is s0 schon SCHÖN. ((laughs))]
it is actually quite nice.
- 18 REI: [du bist du bist quasi in der VOLLlernphase,=oder-
you are you are more or less in the heavy learning period, or--

Maria states that she just finished her law exam, which leads to an appreciation ('oh, wow') by Reinhard and the production of several acknowledgment tokens by Gregor (lines 03–05). Both recipients nod and look away, which indicates that the sequence is potentially closed. It is now Maria who asks the two men about their study programs (*und IHR?* 'and you guys?', line 06). Although she uses the second person plural pronoun, Maria looks at Gregor during the formulation her question, who is thereby selected as next speaker and first answerer. Reinhard, the third participant, ratifies this next speaker selection by looking at Gregor during the ensuing short silence.⁸ Gregor now starts his answer, which he builds in such a

8. It can be argued that her choice is occasioned by Gregor's smile, which accompanies his acknowledgement of the answer. Evidence for this can be seen in the fact that she asks the ques-

way that it can be heard as reporting a ‘surprising co-incident’. He does not simply say that he also studies law (this is only said at the end of his turn, in line 10), but he starts with a more indirect formulation describing his time-schedule. This formulation makes use of background knowledge on the structure of a German law study program, such as that the state exam is preceded by a long ‘repetitorium’ which prepares for the exam, and that the short form *Rep* stands for *Repetitorium*. It is tailored to the epistemic background of Maria, but not to that of Reinhard, and can be heard as an attempt to establish co-membership with her. But Maria does not pick up on these cues (see the silence at the end of line 09), and Gregor has to be explicit (‘also law’) in order to establish co-membership. Once the topic ‘law exams’ is established, Maria and Gregor can use it to expand the sequence (lines 12–13, 15, 17). The way in which Maria and Gregor establish the topic of their law studies as a ‘surprising co-incident’ now requires further talk. Reinhard, the second addressed participant, has no chance to answer Maria’s initial question. He accepts the topic (see his topical comment in line 18) and makes no attempt to bring his own answer into play; nor does Maria insist on her question to be answered by him.

The example shows that second answers after *ihr*-questions are not conditionally relevant in the same way in which (first) answers after questions are. None of the three participants orients to the fact that Reinhard didn’t answer Maria’s question. Its absence is not “noticeable” (Schegloff 1968). In general, second answers are a legitimate next action after an *ihr*-addressed question, but their production may require additional work, such as the questioner’s re-instantiation of the question’s conditional relevance, for which gaze provides again a resource (see Extract (1)).

Not surprisingly, questions that require complex answers are more likely to be answered by one co-participant only, for this very reason; while the first answer is produced, and since it often leads to follow-up questions by the original questioner or other expansions of the sequence, the sequential distance from this original question increases, and its sequential implicativeness for both co-participants weakens. There is neither an obligation nor a slot for the third participant to produce an answer.

While the second person plural pronoun is used in a distributive meaning in Extracts (1) and (2), the following Extract (3) demonstrates its collective use. In this extract, Thomas leaves it up to Lina to answer the question that Norbert asked

tion with a reciprocating smile beginning with the production of the pronoun. As it turns out later, there is a reason for Gregor’s smile, i.e., his discovery (still not disclosed to the others) that Maria and he both study law and that he will soon be in the same situation as her: He already knows something (a ‘surprising coincidence’) which the others do not know, but his smile foreshadows the upcoming telling and its status as ‘surprising’ or perhaps ‘amusing’.

on behalf of him and Lina as a collectivity. This collectivity is based on common experience: they went to the movies to see “The Lobster” together on a previous evening. In this way, the answer is turned into a (co-authored) co-telling (see Lerner 1992; Hayashi et al. 2002; Zima 2018, among others). Thomas displays his status as a co-teller by aligning with Lina’s answer through repeated head nods and verbal alignment tokens:

Extract 3.

Liste (‘List’) 28–6–16, 28:27



01 NOR: und wie {seid ihr} dazu {geKOMmen}?
and what made you (PL)



02 diesen {FILM?} (.) euch {[ANzuschauen]?
watch this movie?



03 LIN: das war {eine (.) einer der ERsten} filme {die}
it was one (.) one of the first movies



+{in dieser liste}+ h h [{KAmem}.
on this list.

Lin: +hand-gesture:downward (‘list’)+



04 THO: [*<<laughing> {hja}. * °h
Tho: *strong head-nod*



05 LIN: und dann {haben wir [gesehen} \${OH} {collin fArell}; (-) ah; %
and then we saw oh! Collin Farrell; (-) oh;

Lin: \$small lateral head movements, ‘deliberating’ \$

Lin: \$right shoulder shrug

06 THO: [ja=(geNAU),
yes (exactly)





07 LIN: &{dann haben wir uns} den TRAILer {angeschaut}; (0.5) &
and then we watched the trailer;

Tho: &slight head nods&



08 <<acc>und {ich dachte auch}> voll gute {SCHAUSpieler};=
and I thought really good actors, too;=






- 09  **{soll}**- **{der film soll GUT sein}; (-)**
should- *the movie should be good;*
- 10 TH0: **{ja}** ?
- 

The fact that Lina and Thomas are a ‘team’ in which one of them can answer on behalf of both is also visible in their gaze behavior. The current speaker (Norbert) gaze-selects Lina as the next speaker at the end of his question TCU (line 01) and also while he incrementally expands this TCU with an infinitival complement (line 02). Neither of the two pronominally addressed co-participants takes the turn at the earliest possibility (the transition space after line 01), however. Rather, the two potential answerers look at each other (toward the end of the incremental expansion in line 02), and their mutual gaze even continues nine syllables into Lina’s answer. This is a gaze-pattern typically found in co-tellings, where co-tellers regularly monitor each other in order to check their common ground. The answer is thereby displayed (to Norbert) not as Lina’s answer, but as the answer of a ‘collectivity’. Nevertheless, it is the gaze-selected participant (Lina) who takes the turn to produce this answer.

Yet answering on behalf of oneself and another person is not a trivial issue, and it may fail. In this case, the second answer may be delivered to correct a first answer, or provide a different perspective on the issue at hand, as can be observed in Extract (4).

Extract 4.

Krasser Schnitt (‘Damned Good Grade Average’) (28-4-17, 00:11:56-12:06)
 ((Renate and Mona just told Hans that they are about to finish their BA in psychology and are looking for a Master’s program in this field.))

-   
- 01 HNS: **{dann}** **braucht ihr auch_n {krassen} {SCHNITT irgendwie ne?}**
then you(PL) need kind of a damned good grade average don’t you?
- 02 REN: **%+ja:,+**
yes
 Ren: +nods twice+
 Mon: %gaze moves from Hns to Ren-->
-  
- 03 MON: **°hhhh% {<<f>hh°}** **{ja:,}**
yes,



04 obwohl} [(.) {je nachDEM}
 although (.) it depends



05 HNS: [um {überhAupt n} {vernünftigen masterplatz zu [KRIEgen
 irgendwie?

in order to get any kind of reasonable master
 study place somehow?

06 MON:

[ja:,
 yes,

Shortly before the extract begins, Hans has asked the two co-participants (two female ‘best friends’, whom he meets for the first time), whether they both study psychology. After an intervening joking sequence accompanied by laughter, Hans pursues this topic – in the beginning of Extract (4), line 01 – by asking, in the syntactic format of a declarative clause followed by a question tag, whether this means that they need a very good grade average in their Bachelor’s program in order to get admitted to a ‘reasonable’ Master’s program (see Deppermann & Helmer 2013 for the conversational status of such inferences). Via the second person plural pronoun, the question is addressed to both co-participants. Gaze on the last part of the question TCU, however, selects Renate as the next speaker, who immediately answers and agrees with Hans (line 02), both verbally and gesturally (by nodding twice).

Hans asks a question that is addressed to both co-participants as part of a collectivity, i.e., the collectivity of ‘students of psychology’. Renate’s answer could be sufficient as an answer and close the sequence. Nevertheless, Mona starts to produce an answer as well, beginning in line 03. This second answer is due to the fact that Mona slightly disagrees with Renate’s answer. After formally agreeing with ‘yes’, she expands her turn with *obwohl* ‘although’, a concessive conjunction, which regularly foreshadows (partial or full) disagreement in German (Günthner 2000). The disagreement itself is only indirectly expressed by the formulaic ‘it depends’ (and leads to a follow-up sequence on this topic which is not reproduced here).

4. Simultaneous answers to *ihr*-questions

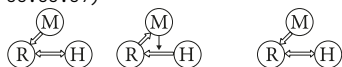
In the large majority of cases, turn-taking after questions addressed to multiple co-participants via the second person plural pronoun is orderly. The gaze-selected co-participant answers first, the third co-participant may answer later or not at all. As we have seen, there are costs involved in this prioritization of turn-taking over sequence structure, as the conversation may develop such that there

is no chance to deliver the second answer in the slot after the first answer (cf. Extract (2) above). The alternative for the participant not gaze-selected by the current speaker is to prioritize sequential implicativeness over turn-taking, and to provide the answer simultaneously with the gaze-selected participant. In six cases in the collection, co-participants chose this solution. How can these cases be accounted for?

Typically (in five of the six cases), the simultaneous answers are short, and the phase of simultaneous talk is therefore minor. The following sequence, which is taken from the very beginning of a conversation between strangers, demonstrates this case:

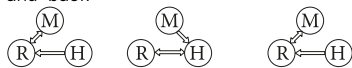
Extract 5.

Kennt ihr Euch? ('do you know each other?') (24-8-16,
00:00:07-00:00:09)



-01 LIN: +{(-)} {KENNT} ihr {eu:ch?}+
know youPL each-other
do you(PL) know each other?

Lin: +left elbow on armchair, small pointing gesture from R to M and back+



02 [{seid} {ihr} {zusammen} (...)] AUCH;
are you also together

03 REN: [*nã?]*
Ren: *shakes head*

04 MEL: [ɔ̃?n ?n&
Mel: &shakes head&



05 Lin: {LUSTig}.
funny.

While Linda makes every effort to engage both co-participants as addressees during her question turn, not only by the choice of the plural pronoun, but also by quickly shifting her gaze from Renate to Melanie and back (line 01),⁹ her turn-final gaze selects Renate as next/first answerer. Nevertheless, the two co-participants produce their answers simultaneously. They are given both verbally (with slightly different forms) and gesturally (both shake their heads), and start without delay, overlapping with Linda's elaboration of her question (line 02).

9. The pronoun occurs twice, once in subject position (*ihr* 'you-guys') and once in object pronoun (*euch*, 'yourself'), since a 'reflexive verb' (*sich kennen* 'to know each other') is used. The reciprocal relationship is also iconically expressed by Linda's pointing gesture, moving between her two addressees. The gaze shift follows/ mirrors the pointing gesture.

The answer to Linda's question 'do you know each other' can be answered by a simple and short 'yes' or 'no', not requiring further elaboration. The encroachment on the territory of the others, always inherent in unlicensed turn-taking, is therefore predictably minimal. That exceptions to the dominant gaze-selection pattern very often occur with predictably short answers of this type therefore supports the "action bias in the organization of conversation", which Lerner (2019: 403) found in a study of "departures" from the ordinary turn-taking mechanisms. When the "departure" from the one-speaker-at-a-time rule of conversation is minimal, providing the relevant next action (the answer) may be given preference over the turn-allocation system.

The sixth case of a simultaneous answer by both addressed parties is considerably more complex:

Extract 6.

illegal ('illegal') (22-6-16 36:02)



→01 RIT: <<p> {wieso} ZAHLT ihr {dafür};> {(0.5)
why do you(PL) pay for it?



02 <<pp>gibt's} {doch} alles (.) illegal;>
it's all available (.) illegally



03 {(1.5)



04 LAR: [ja] {aber} die {a:ber}] [{}HALIo]; die quali{T}Ä{}:T;]
yes but the b:ut hello; the quality;

05 MIR [**hhh* 'L] [A:r`a::;] <<laughing> h>
mir: *playful: astonished face*



06 +(0.5)} {(0.5)+}
rit: +tilts head to right and left: skeptical+



07 LAR: ach {aber} {}HALIo}.
oh but hello!



08 also {die qualiTÄT} is schon ne {GANZ ANdere};
well the quality is totally different;

The topic here is streaming platforms for movies. Lara and Miriam have been talking about their Netflix and Amazon Prime subscriptions and what they cost. Rita's question in line 01 ('why do you pay for it?') attacks the very presupposition of this exchange, i.e., that streaming has to be paid for at all. In this sense, it can be questioned whether the action performed by Rita with her syntactic question aims at eliciting information at all, or rather challenges the two co-participants by expressing surprise about their streaming habits. In any case, the question cannot be answered with a short one-word response, as in the other five cases of simultaneous answers. On the contrary, it requires from Lara and Miriam an account of their habit to pay for the streaming of movies from the two platforms. In addition, it touches face-issues: on the one hand, Rita outs herself as a person involved in illegal activities. On the other hand, she can be heard to blame her two friends for being too stupid to profit from the available cost-free (but illegal) streaming possibilities.

The question itself (line 01) is not immediately answered by any of the co-participants; Rita has to expand her turn (line 02) and then wait for another 1.5 seconds (line 03), before Lara and Miriam respond, now overlapping each other. Lara starts to justify her own paying for the streaming platforms and at the same time produces a counter-argument against the suggestion inherent in Rita's question, i.e., to watch movies illegally, introduced by *aber* 'but' (line 04) ('the quality is much better'). Miriam simultaneously also starts to respond, but in a different way. She puts on an astonished face, widely opening her eyes in surprise, and produces a long inhaling sound, as if shocked by Rita's suggestion of doing something illegal. The following use of her friend's name as an address term mimics a parent scolding the child, i.e., she takes a moral stance on the implications of Rita's question rather than answering it.

Turn-taking in this case is obviously not smooth. Rita looks at Miriam during the final part of her question in line 01, trying to elicit a response from her; this attempt fails. When she expands her turn and adds an account for her question, she looks at Lara, who also fails to respond. Rita once more shifts her gaze during the ensuing silence and now looks again at Miriam, pursuing (Stivers & Rossano 2010) a response from her. In the end, it is arguably unclear who is gaze-selected by the current speaker, which leads to the simultaneity of the delayed next-turn started by both addressed co-participants. The crucial point is the participants' gaze behavior *after* the end of the original question (and first turn-transition space), which has not been considered in the analysis so far. The point will now be addressed in Section 5.

5. Negotiating speakership in delayed responses

In a small set of six cases, the speaker who was not gaze-selected by the current speaker answered the question. Most of them occurred in the context of delayed responses to the question, similar to Extract (6) (cf. Robinson 2020). The delay can surface in the form of a temporal gap between question and answer and/or in a turn-expansion by the current speaker due to the fact that the gaze-selected next speaker did not make use of the transition space after the question. But other than in Extract (6), the delays in this group are mostly due to a particular reason, which is the co-participants' epistemic status (cf. Heritage 2012). They occur, when the gaze-selected co-participant does not know how to answer. This is the case in the following Extract (7). Jasper asks his two friends whether they know a certain TV series, in an attempt to establish a new discourse topic:

Extract 7.

Four Blocks (Que Co Ma 2, 00:28:32–00:28:49)

- 01 JAS: {a propos FERN} sehen,
talking about TV,
- 02 JAS: {kennt ihr} {diese SErie ähm} (.) f {four BLOCKS?} +(1.0)+
do you (PL) know this series uhm f four blocks?
jas: +gaze moves from V to B+
- 03 [die so: exTR[EM
which is so extremely
- 04 BEN: [<pp> ?m?m;>}
- 05 VAL: [=n{:nee,}
no::
- 06 BEN ich nich {WIRK[lich.]
me not really
- 07 JAS: [<più f>kr{ass (.) geFElert} {wurde>} so
glaringly celebrated like
-



{[vom feuilleton?>:
in the culture supplements?

08 BEN: [was davon ge]HÖRT.}
heard of it.

Jasper's question gaze-selects Valentin as the answerer (end of line 2, the first, syntactically projected transition point into the answer). Apparently, Valentin does not know the series; while a positive answer (the preferred answer-type, see Raymond 2003) would be produced on the spot, the negative answer (the dispreferred alternative, if only because it won't allow the topic to develop) is treated as dispreferred and delayed.¹⁰ The gaze-selected next participant is visibly not in a position to answer. He looks away into the open space, as is typically done to indicate an epistemic stance of 'not knowing' or 'deliberating' during hesitations (Ehlich & Rehbein 1982). This makes Jasper switch his gaze to the second co-participant, Ben, starting during the emerging silence (end of line 02). When his gaze has reached Ben, Jasper expands the question by adding further information about the TV series, pointing out that it has been 'celebrated' in the intellectual newspapers (see lines 03/07). At the same time, Ben answers the question negatively, and three words into this incremental expansion, Valentin does so as well. We leave aside the problem of whether Ben's answer is a response to Jasper's gaze shift from Valentin to him; Jasper's gaze only reaches Ben at the point in time in which he already produces his answer, which means that gaze fixation on him cannot have elicited it. He may have perceived the relatively long gaze movement from Valentin to himself though. But independently of this question, Ben, the first answerer, was not the gaze-selected co-participant after the non-expanded question, i.e., turn-taking deviates from the pattern according to which next speakers are selected by gaze during the last part of the turn. Yet Valentin's non-response is easily explained: It serves to contextualize the negative and therefore dispreferred answer as one given only after 'due deliberation'. Exceptions to the general pattern of gaze selection that occur in the context of dispreferred answers to epistemic questions mostly find their explanation in the "K-" stance of the selected answerer (Heritage 2012) in my data.







Even in these cases, co-participants' gaze can reveal their orientation at the speaker's gaze as a next-speaker-selection device, both on the part of the selected speakers (who do not know the answer and delay a response in order to show the state of deliberation they are in) and on the part of the non-selected speakers (who respond but signal that they are not selected) (see Weiß 2020 for an exten-

10. But see Robinson (2020) for a critical discussion of the relationship between delayed and dispreferred answers to information-seeking questions.

sive treatment of such cases). In Extract (8), the non-selected participant answers first (in line 03, stating that he can't tell Ludwig the name of the movie director he wanted to know), but while doing so, he displays his orientation at the selection of Rachel as the selected and therefore legitimate first answerer:

Extract 8.

Regisseur ('director') (1-7-16, 49:49)
 ((gaze transcribed lines 01-05 only))

- 01 LUD:     {wisst ihr} {(--)} {wisst ihr} {wer regisSEUR war?}
 do you (PL) know who the director was?
- 02 (0.5)
- 03 MAR:  <<pp>{[?]m[?]m}>
- 04 RAC:  n:::{ee,+
 no::,
 rac: +changes position in her chair+
- 05 *(0.1)*(1.0)
 rac: *shakes head*
- 06 LUD: ich weiß nich johnny depp ARbeitet jetzt nich;=
 I don't know Johnny Depp isn't working at the moment;=
 07 =also ich MEIN des wär-
 well I mean this would-
 08 es KÖNNT sogar sein dass des-
 it could even be that it-
 09 IS des nich ähm (--) tom BURTon oder so?
 isn't it uhm (--) Tom Burton or someone?
 10 heißt glaub ich der regisSEUR der ((etc.))
 that's the name of the director who..

Ludwig gaze-selects Rachel as the first answerer/next speaker after his question 'do you(PL) know who the director was?' (line 01). He continues to look at her during the ensuing silence (line 02), while Rachel delays her answer. At the end of this silence, Raquel's gaze goes off into open space, displaying her state of deliberation. At this point, it is Marcus who provides his answer to the question, which is negative (line 03). Marcus was not selected by the current speaker as next speaker by turn-final gaze. While he produces a soft negation particle as an answer, his gaze goes to Rachel,¹¹ not to Ludwig (who asked the question); he makes it clear that he has no intention to take away her turn and that he still is in the role of a recipient waiting for her answer. She starts to produce this answer in line 04. Compared with Marcus' soft and short [?]m[?]m, her elongated *ne::* in combina-

11. His gaze is on her chest, marked by the broken arrow (downward).

tion with a small head-shake and a shift of position in her chair, her negative response has markedly more physical substance than Marcus': although Marcus has responded already, she presents her own answer as the one that was due and needed to close the sequence.

But we also observed the opposite, i.e., a gaze-selected participant can actively delegate/forward the turn to the non-gaze-selected co-participant for an answer (see again Weiß 2018). This can be observed in Extract (9). In this case, the pattern that finally emerges is the expected one (turn-transition to the co-participant who was gaze-selected), but a close analysis reveals a considerable complexity that leads to it.

Extract 9.

Weg von München ('away from Munich') (28-4 A2T1, 04:41-5:11)
 ((gaze transcribed in lines 01-03 only))



01 ANA: warum {kOmmt ihr dann} aus {MÜNchen} nach EXb{erg; (-)}
why did you (PL) come from Munich to Exberg;



02 *das is +sehr* {Ungewöhnlich} #glaub ich;#

man: +smiles -->

ana: *gaze shifts to MAN*

man: #shifts gaze into open space#

ron: #shifts gaze to MAN#

that's quite unusual I believe;



03 MAN: {*hh+ (---)} {(wa)} (.) {gAr=nich} (.) {SO ungewöhnlich oder? hm} +
not quite that unusual is it?

04 RON: (-) °h viele MÜNchner haben [schOn die] tendEnz in MÜNchen zu bLEiben,
many people from Munich have a tendency to stay in Munich,

05 MAN: [ja;]

06 ANA: [mhm,]

07 RON: [°h vor]allem wEil s halt auch die guten Unis gibt.=

[also Elemu:] teeU; ;

mainly because there are very good universities.

08 Ana: [ja (m,)]

09 MAN: gibt s SCHON [abe]r:

there are, but

10 RON: [und so?]

and therefore

11 MAN: (-) es gEhn ja doch auch einfach VIEle: (.) wÖllen ja
 zum stUdium auch einfach AUSziehen? ((etc.))

but there are also many who want to move out to study?

Ana wonders why Ronald and Manuel, two first year students, decided to leave together an interesting large city such as Munich in order to study in the small town of 'EXberg' (line 01), where the conversation takes place. The pronoun here has a collective meaning, and the question could be answered by either Ronald or Manuel on behalf of both of them.

Ana gaze-selects Ronald as the answerer first (end of line 01), but Ronald does not take the turn. After the first transition space after the question has remained unused, Ana expands her question with an account: she thinks that this is 'quite unusual' (line 02). One syllable into this expansion, she shifts her gaze from Ronald to Manuel with whom she is in eye contact from the word *ungewöhnlich* 'unusual' onward. Manuel takes the turn but delays an answer by uttering several pre-starters (inhalation, pause, and broken-off articulation start at the end of line 03), before he produces a TCU that disagrees with Ana's opinion ('not quite that unusual'). During this TCU, which can be heard as a presequence to an answer, he turns to his friend Ronald (gaze contact at the end of line 03) and, by appending a question tag (*oder* 'isn't it'), he asks him to confirm his view. (This is a pattern we already know from other answers to questions with a collectively used second person plural pronoun, cf. the discussion of Extract (3) above.) Ronald now eventually answers Ana's question by conceding that many want to stay in Munich because of the good universities there, but many also want to leave for personal reasons (implying that this was also their case). Thus, the participant gaze-selected to answer the question (at the first transition space, end of line 01) is finally also the one who answers it; but he only does so because his co-teller in the team has delegated the answer to him via gaze.

The discussion in this section has shown that delayed answers – often, but not always due to the selected next speaker's 'not knowing the answer' – may lead to complex re-negotiations of whose turn it is next.

6. Conclusions

Eye-tracking via mobile tracking devices offers the advantage of a precise gaze analysis that is almost impossible to achieve on the basis of video-recordings, at least outside laboratory-like settings. In video-based analyses of interaction, gaze is usually inferred on the basis of head movements instead of being directly observable, which is insufficient when high precision in gaze recording is needed.

Using eye-tracking data of spontaneous three-party interactions, it was the aim of this study to test the validity of the assumption that gaze during the last phase of a speaker's turn selects the next speaker in multi-party interaction. The test was done in a natural environment: in question/answer sequences involving

information-seeking questions addressed to two co-participants. The verbal practice employed for such multiply addressed question turns is the second person plural pronoun German *ihr* ‘you guys’. An answer is required in the next turn, but the personal pronoun does not select one or the other addressed participant as designated (first) answerer. In the absence of other next-speaker selection cues, this context is therefore highly suited to investigate the efficiency of gaze as a selection cue. The results show that in a vast majority (74%) of cases, the next speaker (first answerer) is also the participant gazed at by the participant asking the question at the end of the turn. Hence, the turn after multiply addressed first pair parts is not open to self-selection but highly sensitive to gaze-selection by the current speaker.

Despite this strong quantitative confirmation of the hypothesis, several diverging cases were found. On the one hand, there was a group of Examples (13%) in which both participants answered simultaneously (which can be interpreted as evidence for self-selection). This mostly occurred with very short, monosyllabic answers (‘yes’, ‘no’); here, addressed co-participants arguably prioritize the sequential obligations resulting from the adjacency pair format over smooth turn-taking. In another group of cases (13%), it was the participant not gaze-selected as next speaker who answered the question first. In these examples, the gaze-selected participant often lacked the knowledge to answer the question and therefore delayed it, with the second addressed co-participant stepping in. Despite their divergence from the usual pattern, close investigation of participants’ gaze behavior in these cases often showed an orientation at the questioner’s gaze as selecting the next speaker.

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