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Talking out of turn

(Co)-constructing Russian conversation

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This paper examines the use of co-constructions in spontaneous Russian conversations. Co-constructions are found when one speaker completes another speaker's utterance, that is, a co-construction is a syntactic unit created within a single turn construction unit but by multiple speakers. Co-constructions argue for the existence of a shared syntax and for projection of that syntax by the first part of the construction. They underscore the interactional and collaborative nature of conversation: radio interviews illustrate how co-constructions can be used by interlocutors to influence topic, and more informal conversations illustrate their use in signaling heightened involvement and solidarity.

Keywords: conversational analysis, co-constructions, turn completions, radio interviews, Odessan Russian

1. Introduction

In this paper I investigate the use and distribution of co-constructions in Russian conversation: those instances where one person is speaking and a different person completes that first person's turn. In other words, there is a change of interlocutors within one turn-constructive unit (or TCU). The present study follows a framework based upon conversation analysis, which takes as the basic unit in conversation the turn-constructive unit (or TCU), as defined by Sacks et al. (1974).¹ For the purposes of the current discussion, it is relevant that the TCU was identified in part to analyze how turn taking occurs in conversation, or more specifically, how conversational participants know when to start or stop talking. This system is based on talk in interaction, i.e., talk which is collaboratively

1. The actual definition of a TCU has come under much scrutiny since the publication of Sacks et al. (1974); see Selting (2000) and Ford (2004) for a thorough discussion.

constructed by more than one speaker and, in fact, the collaborative nature of conversation is one of their key premises. The system is designed to account for how interlocutors change turns without any, or with minimal, overlap. Specifically, their turn-taking systems map out the rules by which talk is organized as a series of turns; each speaker is entitled to talk until he or she reaches a point of possible turn completion, called a transition relevance place (TRP). The current speaker may continue talking at a TRP, or there may be a change in speakers. (Talking may also stop, of course.) Cues for possible TRP's include prosodic factors such as falling intonation, pauses, and semantic and syntactic completion. That said, even though syntactic units are ultimately and infinitely expandable, they do reach a point or points of possible completion, and the turn constructional unit is generally understood to reach a transitional relevance place at a moment of syntactic completion. In conversation, syntactic completion occurs when an utterance, in its discourse context, can be interpreted as a complete clause, i.e., with an overt or recoverable predicate. This definition allows answers to questions, elliptical clauses and backchannels to be considered syntactically "complete" (Ford and Thompson 1996: 143). While the turn is a "unit" in conversation, it does not stand outside of a relationship to the rest of the discourse, both the surrounding linguistic text and extralinguistic factors.

Co-constructions illustrate two different but interrelated properties of conversation. First, and perhaps most obviously, interlocutors share a linguistic system that entails a shared syntax; turns can be collaboratively constructed by more than one interlocutor. The resulting conversation can be analyzed as collaboratively built, both topically and structurally. Syntax and conversational structure share a central organizational feature, projection, a formal means to organize projection; clear cues for syntactic projection include rules of government, constituency, adjacency and serialization (Auer 2005). In conversation, there is an interactional projection based on knowledge about the sequencing of activities. Strong evidence for projection is provided by co-constructions or compound turn constructional units, i.e. units which are produced collaboratively by two or more interlocutors (Ford 2004; Ford and Thompson 1996; Helasvuo 2004; Lerner 1991, 1996, 2004; Selting 2000).

Conversation is inherently interactional. In order to understand the use of co-constructions, we need to examine conversation as a collaborative social act: cultural knowledge and identity are collaboratively constructed by interlocutors (Silverstein 2005); this knowledge and identity enters into the structure of a conversation. After examining the linguistic structure of co-constructions, I turn to an analysis of how they are used in different interactional settings. The study of Russian greatly enhances our understanding of co-constructions because it is a morphologically rich language and the morphology of the first part of a

co-construction restricts what follows it, in the second, co-constructed part. Moreover, thanks to this rich morphology word order is not used in Russian to signal morphosyntactic relations but rather information structure. This is in stark contrast to languages like English, where the beginning of a sentence typically contains what must be the grammatical subject. Russian is not bound by such word-order constraints, the verb can precede the subject, and a large number of nouns have homophonous morphology in the nominative and accusative cases, so they can function as subjects or direct objects. On the one hand this opens up the possibilities for co-constructions, while on the other the morphology can restrict them in ways not seen in some other languages.

1.1 The data

Data for the present study come from field recordings made in 2010 in Brighton Beach, New York, and from radio interviews on Radiostancija Èxo Moskvÿ (Radio Echo Moscow) available at <http://www.echo.msk.ru/>. Both are comprised of interviews, but the interviews are of markedly different nature due to the speech settings and the participants' communicative goals. The Brighton Beach recordings were conducted in order to record oral histories (and linguistic information at the same time) for a separate study focusing on the use of Odessan Russian. These particular conversations were among people who all self-identified as originating from Odessa. Brighton Beach is often referred to as "Little Odessa," a nickname it has earned due to the high percentage of immigrants from that city living there now. Historically, Odessa was a stronghold of Jewish culture and is often stereotypically portrayed as a Jewish city, as is Brighton Beach. Coincidentally, all consultants for these recordings were Jewish. Not all considered themselves to be speakers of Odessan Russian; many explained that they spoke Contemporary Standard Russian (CSR) but were familiar with some of the phrases and phonology of Odessan Russian. These claims were born out in an analysis of the recordings: many speakers consistently spoke CSR but were able to provide some meta-commentary about Odessan Russian. Further study is needed to determine whether co-constructions in Odessan Russian differ in any way from those in other varieties. The analysis to date does not provide any support for regional differences in co-constructions.

There were several participants present for all Brighton Beach conversations. They were relatively informal in nature; all participants (with the exception of myself) had known one another for years and were well-acquainted. My student assistant is herself a member of the speech community; she had helped set up the interviews and was present during the recording session. The setting was casual; excerpts used in this paper were taken from an hour-long recording made

outdoors, on the boardwalk. These interviews are open-ended. Although I asked specific questions about their lives growing up, one of the primary goals was just to get people to speak.

In contrast, Radio Echo Moscow conducts political interviews on hot topics. The radio station broadcasts the interviews and then posts transcripts. The transcripts are not completely accurate representations of the conversations as they are cleaned up for overall readability, but they are quite good and, with the sound track, very easily fixed to be an accurate representation of the interview. The acoustic quality of the broadcasts is good enough to make judgments based on auditory perception but not really good enough for acoustic measurements. Native speakers of Russian find usage in some of the examples that is not representative of standard Russian; this stems from the nature of the spontaneous interviews as well as from the speakers' own varieties of spoken Russian. Because these are radio interviews, the conversational setting is relatively controlled. The interviews range from 2–4 speakers, and they have clearly defined roles: in each conversation there is one or two interviewers and one or two interviewees. Their conversational roles are predetermined by this setting. Roughly speaking, the interviewers ask questions and direct the topic of the conversation. In general their role is to direct the conversation which, as we see here, has an effect on how co-constructions are used in the interviews.

2. The mechanics of co-constructions

A co-construction is a turn constructional unit (TCU) which is produced collaboratively by two or more participants in a conversation (see Sacks 1992: 647–655; Helasvuo 2004; Lerner 1991, 1996, 2004; Ono and Thompson 1995). In other words, Speaker A is speaking; Speaker B completes A's turn, or partially completes it, and with the first speaker ending it. In conversations with multiple participants, more than two people can collaboratively construct the turn. This definition of co-constructions rests on the participation of more than one interlocutor in the TCU; in this respect they are to be distinguished from what have been called afterthoughts (Chafe 1988: 6) or increments (Walker 2004: 147–148), where a speaker reaches a potential TCU (pragmatically, syntactically and prosodically) and continues, adding something to that (potential) TCU, i.e., what is added is dependent upon the previous utterance. The change in speakers is a defining difference. The second-part component of the completions are evidence of what Lerner (2004: 226) has called *affiliating utterances*. The second component, by virtue not only of being contiguous to the primary component, but more critically, syntactically dependent upon it, maintains the overall flow of the

conversation. The syntactic format of the TCU is unchanged, despite the change in speakers, and the speaker change itself is unmarked.

There are two basic types of co-constructions: *extensions* and *completions* (Ono and Thompson 1995). In extensions, A speaks and reaches a potential TCU; B speaks and continues A's turn. Thus the preliminary component constitutes a complete syntactic unit and a complete TCU; the affiliating utterance "extends" or lengthens this component by adding onto it, creating a new (and longer syntactic unit). This is seen in (1):

(1) *Extension, from Brighton Beach, Alla and Irina (1:13–1:18)*

1 A Moj otec byl ranen;
 2 i ego èvakuïrovali kak ranenogo
 3 i on nas zabral s soboj↓(.)
 4 I → na paroxode.

1 A My father was wounded
 2 and he was evacuated as a wounded [person]
 3 and he took us with him↓(.)
 4 I → on the steamer.

With extensions, syntactically dependent material occurs after a transition relevance place, that is, after the possible end of a turn-constructional unit, as defined by Schegloff (1996); see also Thompson and Couper-Kuhlen (2005:495). Extensions are simply tacked onto the prior utterance. Prepositional phrases often serve as extensions, as in (1): they do not require a specific syntactic host but can be added as long as they are semantically and pragmatically felicitous. Another frequent strategy is to conjoin an additional phrase or clause with a conjunction. (Whether these should be considered extensions of the first speaker's turn or a new turn construction unit is not always clear; for this reason, such extensions are excluded from the present discussion. They in no way affect the analysis here.)

Completions are syntactically different. The first speaker does not reach a possible transition relevance point, and the TCU is incomplete – not just semantically, but syntactically – when the second speaker starts speaking. The first component typically projects the second component but is not a typical place for speaker transition. A clear example is in (2), where the relative pronoun *kotorye* 'they' in line 4 introduces a relative clause, which speaker B completes in line 5. The penultimate vowel /y/ is lengthened, which could be interpreted by other interlocutors as a hesitating device while the speaker thinks of how to complete the clause. Note that there is no pause between this speaker change, although a relatively long pause occurs after line 5:

(2) *Completion, Boardwalk interview* (Boris and Alla)

- 1 B Nikto ne smotrit.
 2 istoričeskie ne vosstanavlivajut (0.9)
 3 a vosstan[↑]avlivajut paru kvartalov[↓] (1.4)
 4 → kotory::e:=
 5 A → =dajut pribyl'. (0.5)

- 1 B Nobody is paying attention.
 2 the historical ones they don't restore (0.9)
 3 but they restore a couple of blocks (1.4)
 4 → which
 5 A → make a profit. (0.5)

Note that both extensions and completions do not constitute turn-constructural units in and of themselves, independent of a TCU uttered by another speaker. Significantly, morphosyntax carries across speaker changes. For example, in line 4 in example (2), the relative pronoun *kotorye* 'which' is morphologically ambiguous: it can reference either a nominative plural subject or an accusative plural inanimate object; the co-construction must be built around this morphosyntax (and in fact treats it as subject of the verb *dajut* 'they give').

Not all cases of completion are of this kind; in my corpus, it is more frequent to have a co-construction where the preliminary component is less restrictive: it projects a second component, but does not dictate its form as strictly as in examples (2). Auer (2005) argues that projection is a central organizational feature of syntax. Rules of government, constituency structure, adjacency and serialization all operate within the syntax of a conversation to enable interlocutors to anticipate what may come next (and what cannot come next). Syntax provides a formal mechanism for organizing projection within an ongoing conversation. At the conversational level, the turn-taking system (as described by Sacks et al. 1974) is a resource for projecting the next turn. For example, as an utterance can be ratified, questioned, cancelled; a question can be answered, ignored, and so on. The turn-taking system and syntax work together in projecting possible completions of TCUs, which have an internal structure, a syntactic, semantic and prosodic structure that projects termination.

The morphosyntax of the first part of an utterance carries across the speaker change into the second part of the utterance. This is one feature which distinguishes co-constructions from interruptions: the second part builds upon the first part. A clear example is (3), where the genitive noun *vlasti* 'power' in line 2 is adnominal to the noun *idiotizm* 'idiocy', the last word in line 1:

(3) *Bankrotstvo JuKOSa* (27.06.2006; A. Venediktov and V. Geraščenko)

1 AV → Vy upotrebili v raznyx interv'ju takoe krepkoe slovo kak idiotizm.

2 VG → vlasti.

3 AV → Vlasti, idiotizm vlasti,

4 ja dumal,

5 skažete sami,

6 ili mne pridětsja podskazyvat'.

7 VG A ja ne bojus'.

1 AV → In various interviews you have used such a strong word as idiocy.

2 VG → of power.

3 AV → of power, idiocy of power,

4 I thought,

5 you would say it yourself

6 or I would have to suggest it.

7 VG I am not afraid.

The first line is itself a possible TCU, and the speaker concluded it with a falling, typically sentence-final intonation. The extension of the turn is ratified by the first speaker (Venediktov) which he repeated, first in just the genitive and then as a full phrase (*vlasti, idiotizm vlasti* 'of power, the idiocy of power') in line 3. Technically, this could be analyzed in one of two ways: (1) *vlasti* is adnominal to the noun in the preceding line, *idiotizm*; or (2) *vlasti* is adnominal to an elided noun (*idiotizm*) which is not overt in line 2. That the first intepretation is more accurate is indicated by the fact that Venediktov repeats the bare genitive *vlasti* in line 3, and then follows with a repetition of the full noun phrase *idiotizm vlasti*, followed by an explicit statement that he might have had to suggest these words to Gerasimov himself.

This section provides a brief summary of some of the structural constraints and possibilities for co-constructions in Russian; for more detailed discussion and examples, see Grenoble (2008). Completions provide strong evidence for projection in conversation and in syntax. This brief overview is sufficient to understand the interactional nature of co-constructions in conversation, where each participant contributes and determines not only the topic, but the structure of the overall conversation. This is taken up in Section 3.

3. The interactional nature of co-constructions

Co-constructions serve a number of different communicative and social functions in conversation. Conversation is inherently interactive and collaborative; in

this respect it differs from monologues and other genres where the addressee(s) is a recipient of the speech but not an interlocutor. But conversation does more than communicate information: it is social interaction. Cultural knowledge and identity are collaboratively constructed by interlocutors.

Co-constructions fulfill a number of different communicative functions. Sometimes they “fill in” missing words, when the second interlocutor helps the first “find” a missing word, as in (4):

(4) *Razvorot* (31.08.2006; Sergej Buntman, Tina Kandelaki and Petr Lanskov)

- | | | |
|---|------|-----------------------|
| 1 | TK | no polučaetsja |
| 2 | | prosto vsě: že::: |
| 3 | SB → | prodal (.) |
| 4 | TK → | prodal. |
| | | |
| 1 | TK | but it turns out |
| 2 | | he just everything že |
| 3 | SB → | sold (.) |
| 4 | TK → | sold [everything]. |

The first speaker (TK) begins by extending the vowel in the particle *že* for a full second with sustained, level pitch in line 2. (This particle is not glossed here as there is no equivalent in English.) The vowel in *vsě:* is somewhat elongated; this is the first linguistic clue of hesitation. The very long continuation of the vowel in *že* occurs at a point which could not possibly be a transition relevance place; the clause is syntactically and semantically incomplete. Finally, after a full second, the second speaker (SB) supplies the word she appears to be searching for (*prodal* ‘sold’) in line 3. The suggestion is then ratified in line 4.

This may be the most obvious use of a co-construction: here it is used to help the first speaker find a missing word. But note that this strategy entails the addition of information by the second speaker, and therefore potentially directs the course of the topic. Thus co-constructions can be used to prod the interlocutor to adopt or articulate a topic, point, or point of view that might not have been introduced otherwise. Not surprisingly, this is a relatively common strategy in the radio interviews, where the interviewer’s role is to direct the course of the conversation. Radio Echo Moscow is known for having controversial discussions and disagreements, and co-constructions are one device for manipulating the conversation. This is exemplified in example (3) where the interviewee (Geraščenko) supplies the politically charged noun *vlasti* ‘of power’, expanding the interviewer’s own statement in line 1. Here the interviewer acknowledges that he was trying to get the interviewee to say this, an overt recognition of how the topic of the conversation is not only collaboratively constructed but also manipulated.

Consider the following excerpt from the same interview, where Venediktov uses the co-construction in line 3 to influence the content of the conversation:

(5) *Bankrotstvo JuKOSa* (27.06.2006; V. Geraščenko and A. Venediktov)

1 VG I Iosif skazal
 2 požalujsta, vot plan Maršalla Ukraine i Belorussii
 3 oni strany, to est' respubliki, gde, v osnovnom, šla
 4 AV → vojna.
 5 VG vojna↓. i agresija.
 6 Poskol'ku opjat' že v OON krome Anglii vstupila Kanada i Avstralija
 7 xotja oni byli dominiony i tuda-sjuda

1 VG And Iosif said
 2 please, here's the Marshall Plan for Ukraine and Belarus
 3 they're countries, that is, republics, where, primarily, there was
 4 AV → war.
 5 VG war and aggression.
 6 Since again besides England, Canada and Australia stepped into the UN
 7 though they were dominions and what have you.

The verb (*šla* 'went' or less literally 'was') in line 3 projects a feminine singular subject. In line 4 there is a completion, with the nominative noun *vojna* 'war' provided as a subject for the verb. Note that this TCU, stretching across a speaker change, follows the norms of Russian word order topic-comment structure. When Geraščenko resumes speaking in line 5, he repeats *vojna*, thereby ratifying it, and extends it with *i agresija*. That said, it is unlikely that this is what he had originally planned, inasmuch as the compound subject, *vojna i agresija* 'war and aggression'; in Russian *šla* does not collocate with *agresija*. Rather, some other verb is required for this to be felicitous (e.g. *proisxodila agresija* or *imela mesto agresija*, 'aggression happened' or 'took place'). Thus the phrase *gde šla vojna* a more felicitous TCU than the TCU with the extension, *gde šla vojna i agresija*. One way to analyze this is to say that the distance between the predicate in line 2 and the "new" subject in line 4 makes this combination possible, with the rationale being something like the intervening change in speakers and proposed subject (*vojna*) makes it more acceptable. In general research shows that the farther apart the elements are, the more likely agreement is to not occur. That said, the distance between the subject and verb is not great, and this explanation is shaky. A better analysis is that Venediktov actually succeeds in redirecting the topic, perhaps only slightly, but quite specifically to war.

Such manipulation of the topic of conversation is a noticeable feature of the radio interviews. This is even clearer where the completion is rejected by the first interlocutor, as in (6):

(6) *Čelovek iz televizora* (02 September 2006; I. Petrovskaja and K. Larina)

1 IP → Nu, vot, daj Bog, čtoby programma=

2 KL =vernulas'↓=

3 IP =ne rekonstruirovalas' do takoj stepeni=

4 KL =čtoby my eë ne uznali↓=

5 IP =čtoby my eë ne uvideli.

1 IP → Well, there, God willing, may the program

2 KL return

3 IP not be reconstructed to such a point

4 KL that we don't recognize it.

5 IP that we don't see it anymore.

This is an interesting excerpt because there are multiple speaker changes across what is one single TCU. The completion in line 2 is rejected by the first speaker, who simply continues talking and completes line 1 in line 3 with *ne rekonstruirovalas'* 'not be constructed'; both lines show verb forms which are projected by the complementizer *čtoby* 'so that', 'in order' in line 1. This complementizer requires a verb in either the infinitive form or in what is called the L-participle in Russian grammatical tradition; this L-participle is seen in the verbs in lines 2 and 3, where projected by *čtoby* in line 1, and in lines 4 and 5, projected by *čtoby* in each of these lines. Note that the TCU was potentially completed in line 2, prosodically, syntactically and semantically; this is a TRP. Petrovskaja's rejection of this completion reopens the turn unit, inasmuch as line 3 is syntactically incomplete. At this point Larina provides her own completion in line 4, which is again rejected by Petrovskaja who supplies a different completion in line 5. It is an interesting example in that it illustrates failed attempts by Larina to divert the content of the conversation.

In sum, co-constructions in the radio interviews not only supply missing or forgotten information but are also used to direct the topic of conversation. (They have the added rhetorical effect of articulating a thought even if it is rejected by the other speaker.) The boardwalk interviews are markedly different from the Radio Echo Moscow interviews in several key ways. First of all, they differ in terms of participants. In the radio interviews, there is one or more guest and one or more interviewer; guests are often selected for their controversial positions and it is the job of the interviewers to elicit lively conversation. Still, they are relative strangers. In the boardwalk interview, the interviewees are family members and

know each other well. Moreover, the student interviewer knows them as personal friends. Thus there are very high levels of background and shared knowledge. The family has been asked about their time growing up in Odessa, and specifically about the use of language there. The conversation is marked by heightened involvement, laughter, and a general spirit of collaboratively constructing not just the conversation but the memories. There are multiple examples where the first interlocutor (in any sequence) ratifies a co-construction supplied by a second interlocutor, as in (7):

(7) *Brighton Beach*, Boris and Irina (38:2–38:26)

- 1 B interesno èto tak (.)
 2 načinaeš' (.)
 3 I zadumyvət'sja.
 4 B zadumyvət'sja. Èto interesno.
- 1 B it's interesting this way (.)
 2 you start (.)
 3 I to think.
 4 B to think. It's interesting.

It is not the case that one speaker has a preferred role in this respect: in (6) Irina completes Borja's turn, while in (8) Borja completes Irina's:

(8) *Brighton Beach*, Boris and Irina (6:13–6:19)

- 1 I Nu govorili normal'no
 2 ne bylo vot takogo specifičeskogo kak vot=
 3 B =kolorita=
 4 I =kolorita u nas
- 1 I Well [we] spoke normally
 2 we didn't have that specific=
 3 B =local color=
 4 I =local color.

These are both straightforward projections, although (8) is more restricted morphosyntactically. In (7), the verb *načinaeš'* 'begin' requires a dependent infinitive, while in (8) the partial phrase *takogo specifičeskogo* 'that specific' requires a genitive singular masculine or neuter noun for completion. In both excerpts there is some hesitation before the affiliating utterance: there is a slight pause after *načinaeš'* in (7) and *takogo specifičeskogo* is followed by hesitation markers or fillers (*kak vot*) in (8).

A very elaborate co-construction is seen in (9). Whereas the previous examples have demonstrated the use of completions and expansions, this example also illustrates the use of the lexical items in one utterance for the next interlocutor to build upon the previous speaker's utterance:

(9) *Brighton Beach*, Boris and Irina (38:08–38:15)

- 1 I v osnovnom èto bylo intonacija
 2 kotoraja vyražala vsë=
 3 B =nepravil'naja intonacija russ [kogo jazyka
 4 I [i rukami govorili
 5 B žestiku [lirovat' rukami kogda ty govoriš'=
 6 I [žestikuljacija=
 7 =oni vsegda=
 8 B =čto-to dokazyvali.
- 1 I in general it was the intonation
 2 which expressed everything=
 3 B =incorrect intonation [of the Russian language
 4 I [and they spoke with their hands
 5 B gesticu [late with your hands when you speak=
 6 I [gesticulation=
 7 =they always=
 8 B =were trying to prove something.

Just as in (6) there was a rapid exchange of speakers, here too the speaker role switches back and forth from Borja to Irina. But the overall topic is collaboratively built, unlike in (6), where the speakers are sharing morphosyntax but in some metaphorical way running two parallel conversations. Irina begins this excerpt by discussing the intonation which is stereotypically associated with Odessan Russian (line 1); Borja picks up on the word *intonacija* 'intonation' repeating it with expanded modifiers, i.e. *nepravil'naja* 'incorrect' and *russskogo jazyka* 'of Russian' (line 3). Irina continues with a new thought, that they spoke with their hands (line 4); Borja paraphrases this with the verb 'gesticulate' but switches grammatical subject to 2nd person singular (line 5). This is repackaged as a noun in line 6, but a noun which is morphosyntactically independent from the surrounding discourse. It is interesting that Irina's utterance begins by overlapping with the verb in line 5, and it appears that the first three syllables of the verb in line 5 suggest enough for her to introduce the noun, which sets a topic frame. She continues with the beginnings of a full clause (*oni vsegda* 'they always') which Borja completes in line 8, completing not only the clause but the TCU as well. The result is an intricately interwoven, collaboratively constructed TCU.

Reviewing the boardwalk interview in its entirety, it can be seen as a series of social and linguistic moves. The interview begins in a format fairly standard for this register, with me (as interviewer) asking questions which individual interlocutors answer. This is linguistically encoded as relatively straightforward adjacency pairs. All interlocutors use Contemporary Standard Russian (CSR), and the turns initially proceed with very little overlap. The longer we speak, the more one speaker (Borja) speaks Odessan Russian. As the conversation progresses, my own role becomes less of an interviewer and more of audience; the conversation is directed to me as a listener but I am a less active participant. The other interlocutors show heightened involvement, with significant overlap, interruptions and turn completions. Example (9), which begins 38 minutes into the conversation, is a good example of this.

Finally, a completion need not be as semantically and syntactically complicated as in examples (6) or (9). Example (10) provides a nice illustration of how collaborative the conversation is; here it is unlikely that the speakers had ever had prior occasion to define *doktor-šmoktor*, but they share knowledge of the culture in which such a phrase is possible, and share enough daily information to know how the other would interpret this:

(10) *Brighton Beach*, Borja and Alla (21:53–22:00)

- 1 B Meždu soboj kogda my govorili by
 2 my by èto ponimali (.)
 3 → doktor-šmoktor značit èto prinižaetsja, što:=
 4 A → =èto ploxo^o doctor
- 1 B among ourselves when we would speak
 2 we would understand this(.)
 3 → doktor-šmoktor means this belittles, that:=
 4 A → =it's a bad doctor.
 {laughter}

In terms of the syntax of projection in this example, there is little of interest. The complementizer *čto* 'that' in line 3 simply requires a subordinate clause; the elongated vowel may be interpreted as enough of a hesitation that Alla completes the turn, or perhaps she completes the turn so as to be a participant in the conversation. Note that the co-constructions in the boardwalk interview could be characterized as supportive moves in the sense that they build the conversation, expanding on what the current interlocutor says, without in any way constituting attempts to direct or redirect the topic of the conversation. Rather, they are interactive, participatory moves which keep all interlocutors actively engaged in the current topic, contributing to it.

Note that this excerpt comes at a point when the interlocutors have begun to relax and are less conscious of how they are speaking; Borja's speech in lines 1–2 shows influence from English, translating 'when we would speak, we would understand' into a Russian conditional (*my by govorili, my by ponimali*) instead of the imperfective past (*my govorili, ponimali*) as would be expected in CSR. This excerpt shows no overlap, but the completion in line 4 is an indication of the other interlocutors' engagement. Example (10) precedes (9) in the conversation. As the conversation continued, interruptions, overlaps and co-constructions increased in frequency, signaling heightened involvement.

4. Conclusion

Conversation is inherently interactive and collaborative. This is one fundamental difference between conversation and monologue, and it is mistaken to construe conversation as a sequence of alternating speaker and hearer roles. Rather, the structure of a conversation is collaboratively built. Both the lexicon and the syntax project, and these projections can be built up and/or manipulated. A number of studies of conversation in a variety of languages have shown that interlocutors anticipate an upcoming TRP with remarkable accuracy; both speakers and hearers project the end of a turn. Exactly what kind of information is used in projecting TRP's has been a matter of debate, and all of the cues mentioned here in Section 2 (intonation, pauses, and semantic and syntactic completion) have been argued to be crucial in such projections. In an experiment designed to test these competing theories, Ruiter, Mitterer and Enfield (2006) altered Dutch stimuli to mask intonation patterns, with lexical information intact, or to mask lexicosemantics but with intact intonational contours. They found that removing pitch information had no influence on projection accuracy, but removing lexical content did have a significant impact and greatly altered the ability of listeners to project an upcoming turn end. As the discussion of co-constructions has shown, the syntax provides a frame for the second part of a co-construction, either an extension or a completion, but the pragmatic effect of the co-construction is to add or change lexico-semantic information and, therefore, topic.

The data presented here have shown a number of different types of co-constructions. One basic division is into extensions and completions. The extensions in this corpus – and there are very few – most typically add a PP to the prior TCU. This is seen example (1) with *na paroxode* 'on the steamboat'. This is a relatively

straightforward extension, picking up on the template in the preceding utterance. Another common device is to simply extend the turn by using a coordinating conjunction (*i* 'and') and attach something onto the prior utterance. This device frees the speaker from any morphosyntactic frame established by the first utterance, as long as it is syntactically complete.

Completions differ from extensions. A simple completion is illustrated in (2), where the first interlocutor does not complete a TCU and does not reach a TRP. Rather, his sentence is syntactically incomplete; the second interlocutor finishes it. Completions provide evidence of projections: the first part projects the second part. This is obvious in example (6) where the use of *čtoby* 'in order to' in line 1 projects the use of the L-participle in each of the attempted completions (lines 2 and 3); this preliminary part quite clearly projects the syntactic form of the second part. In other words, the preliminary part sets up clear morphosyntactic constraints. It also establishes lexico-semantic constraints, and at the same time can be used for building completions (see example 9). In fact, it is the overall feature of projection which enables completions.

Beyond the mechanics of co-constructions, we need to consider their interactional dynamics. Conversation is a collaborative *social* interaction. Cultural knowledge and identity are jointly constructed by interlocutors. Co-constructions serve both communicative and social purposes. The two sets of data show different interactional purposes achieved through the use of co-constructions. In both sets of data, there is a consistent usage: they often supply a forgotten word or string of words. But in the radio interviews, they frequently function as a device used to (re)direct the topic of conversation. Although the discourse roles are defined by the very nature of the radio interview – there is at least one interviewer and one interviewee – both are vying for a position in the conversation and both often want to make a particular point. These interviews are platforms for political statements, explanations, exposés and so on. In the Brighton Beach interviews, the interview dynamic is entirely different. The interviewees are reflecting on their lives and language; there is no sense of taking a political stance or making a point in an argument. Here the interlocutors have extensive shared knowledge and shared life experiences, and co-constructions serve a different social function. They are used to enhance participation and to signal heightened involvement. They show solidarity and function to align one interlocutor with another. Despite these differences, co-constructions are collaboratively built in both sets of data and provide strong evidence for viewing conversation as a whole as a fundamentally collaborative, interactional, communicative and social enterprise.

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Appendix

Transcription conventions (from Ochs et al. 1996)

Note: following standard practice in Conversation Analysis, punctuation marks are used to indicate intonation, not grammar.

- . Falling, or final, intonation, not necessarily at the end of a sentence.
- , Continuing intonation, not necessarily at a clause boundary.
- ˆ A rise that is stronger than that of the continuing intonation indicated by a comma, but not the same rise as question intonation.
- ↓ Sharp fall in pitch.
- = No perceptible pause between lines. Equal signs are used in pairs, one at the end of a line and the other at the beginning of the next line,
- (.) A "micropause," one that is perceptible but not easily measurable, generally lasting less than 0.2 seconds
- (0.9) Numbers in parentheses indicate the duration of a pause or silence, measured in tenths of a second
- : Lengthening of the sound preceding the colon. The more colons, the longer the sound.
- [Overlap.

