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HOW IS HIERARCHY ESTABLISHED IN PEER INTERACTION?

A CA study of preschool children during free play

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to examine how children create hierarchy in peer interaction when playing freely in a preschool setting. The research question that this study sets out to answer is: How is hierarchy established by four preschool children during free play through the use of *preference*? The main theory of importance is the New Sociology of Childhood whose key argument is that children are a part of the social culture they jointly construct by playing together. Conversation Analysis was used to analyze the material by mapping out the uses of *preference*. This study is thus an explorative and qualitative sociolinguistic study. The material was collected through videotaping four children in a preschool setting and the chosen sequences represent a heavy use of *preference* and a focus on disputes and conflict. The results showed that the children used dispreferred answers to reject and challenge their peers in order to reject and deny their rights e.g. ownership or decide the rules of the game. Dispreferred answers were also used to signal alignment to one or more of their peers by rejecting someone else, thus empowering one member and rejecting another. Preferred answers were mainly used to signal alignment, or to accept a suggestion which in turn affected the hierarchical structure through the distribution of support.

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1. Introduction

A vast amount of research has been done on child communication, but little has been done on child-child communication and there is a lack of research on peer interaction in linguistic research in general. The main focus in research conducted on child communication seems to have been either on very small children, thus concerning language acquisition, or on child-adult conversations where children are portrayed as being dependent on adults to develop their language and become competent members of society. I would therefore like to offer a view of children as not only being adults-to-be, but to recognize their importance in their own environment, in their own language and in their own manner of creating social order. According to Ochs (1979: 47) “Child language was understood to be very different from adults [...] in terms of how interactional contingencies and practices were understood” and “Children do not display the same orientation to the norms of contingency and relevancy that characterize adult’s talk”. It is therefore interesting to study how children use communicative strategies and if they fulfill the same conversational goals that adults do. The use of Conversation Analysis on children’s communication makes it somewhat difficult to fully study their use of communicative strategies since the method is completely customized to fit the interactional behavior of adults. Consequently, this complicates the understanding of how communicative strategies are used by children and what function they have, however, it makes it more interesting and important to study. Many researchers agree that authority and subordination are demonstrated and achieved through use of linguistic features (Thorell 1998, Kyratzis 2007) and that “peer talk offers young children to negotiate complicated social challenges using language” (Blum-Kulka & Snow, 2004: 292). It therefore seems important to study the language of children to further show that children play a big part in each other’s lives when they create social structure e.g. hierarchy.

1.1 Aim and research question

The aim of this study is to examine how children create hierarchy in their peer group when playing freely in a preschool setting. The main idea is that the CA¹-strategy *preference*² will pinpoint how hierarchy is established in the management of conflict. This study sets out to answer the following question:

How is hierarchy established by four preschool children during free play through the use of *preference*?

¹ Conversation Analysis

² Explained in 3.6.1

1.2 The disposition of this study

In the next chapter I will present previous research done on child-child interaction of 4-5 year olds with focus on general points, e.g. their behavior and language, on how they create hierarchy and the importance of play. Chapter number 3 is the method and material section where I explain e.g. the participants and setting, my role as a researcher and the main points of Conversation Analysis. The chapter following the method and material section will be where I present the results and describe them with a CA analysis, and the last chapter, chapter 5, contains the discussion of the results according to the theoretical framework.

2. Theoretical Framework

The current chapter works to provide some important information regarding the communication of children. The theories chosen to inform this study focus on child-child interaction, or peer-interaction³, of children aged between 4-5. Unfortunately, there is a general lack of literature in this field and the studies that have been included are outside the field of linguistics, mainly from the field of sociology (which is closely related to sociolinguistics). This study sets out to use the new sociology of childhood as the main theory when analyzing the results. The other theories included below will outline how children communicate and what means that communication serves them in order to demonstrate dominance and create hierarchical order. This chapter's main goal is thus to: describe how the new sociology of childhood describes children and their social behavior, present some general observations made on how children behave and talk to each other and describe how children create hierarchy through e.g. play and ownership. The factor of individuality is only included in one source (Howes, 1988) as the focus in this study is peer interaction, nevertheless there is no doubt that every child (as every adult) thinks and acts differently. The main line of thought is merely that there is a common set of behavioral features used by every child and the ones mentioned below have been observed as regularities in their behavior. The studies included have thus been judged as relevant and valid to support this thesis, anything found too speculative or irrelevant has simply not been included.

Before beginning this chapter a definition of hierarchy will be presented. The Oxford dictionary defines hierarchy as “a system in which members of an organization or society are ranked according to relative status or authority”⁴. A higher ranking in the hierarchical order would thus represent having more status and authority, or power. More power would include some level of decision making and deciding e.g. rules of the game or which toys to play with. The structure of power thus pinpoints how the hierarchical order is structured. However, it is important to remember that this study does not set out to rank the children according to their status, authority or power levels, but simply wishes to demonstrate how such a hierarchical structure could look. Thus in this study, hierarchy represents a social structure created through different strategies, rather than a system where the members are ranked. This study thus sets out to uncover the hierarchical structure created through reoccurring communicative strategies i.e. to find different levels of dominance and not fixed roles that are ranked.

³ The definition of *peers*: “to refer to that cohort or group of children who spend time together on an everyday basis” (Corsaro, 2011: 119).

⁴ <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/hierarchy>

2.1 The new sociology of childhood

William Corsaro has over the years worked on a theory of sociology specifically referring to children where he explains how children act and studies what that means for their social development. The everyday practices of children consists of their own culture and, partly, of adult culture since “children creatively appropriate information from the adult world to produce their own, unique peer culture” (Corsaro, 2011: 42). His main argument is that children are a part of the social culture they jointly construct by playing together, and this is the idea which this study leans on. In his 2011 edition he addresses (among others) two topics related to children in the preschool years which are of specific interest to this study, namely the effects of: control and conflict.

2.1.1 Control

Corsaro (2011: 150) argues that gaining control over peers is a common theme in the interaction of children. To create shared meaning and organize play is difficult, children therefore spend a lot of time creating, protecting, and gaining access to activities with their peers (Corsaro, 2011: 185). The chief concern they have at this age is social participation and challenging and gaining control over their peers, also called the expression of power. A way to gain power according to Corsaro (2011: 186) is by challenging the superordinate role and thus challenging that person’s right to power. Corsaro (2011: 171) thus states that “children use the transformative power of play to arrange and rearrange the status and power relationships” thus making their interaction dynamic in its structure.

2.1.2 Conflict

Corsaro (2011: 189) describes conflicts as a naturally occurring element of children’s peer relations, as children often compete with each other and try to control one another. Disputes about the conduct of others is a common concern children this age have (Corsaro, 2011: 199) but their conflicts also involves “possession or control of play materials, the general nature of play, access or entry into play, verbal claims” etc. (Corsaro, 2003: 162). Disputes concerning play and objects have a simple structure of reaction-counter reaction that can be repeated various times without elaboration (Corsaro, 2003: 164). More elaborate and serious conflicts are usually in reference to friendship, but sometimes, disputes about possession can become serious too (Corsaro, 2003: 164). Martini (1994), cited in Corsaro (2011: 212), describes different kinds of roles children take in groups which helps them solve disputes and organize their social world through creating hierarchy:

Noisy leaders introduce activities, direct group play and keep players on track. Quiet leaders invent new play, monitor the bossiness of noisy leaders, and care for peripheral toddlers. Initiative members follow the leaders and support each other as they go through the process of hazing. They generally hold the group together from the inside.

When children are left alone to solve a conflict something interesting happens, a “highly complex negotiating settlements occur” and, many times, they do this by using humor as a way of relieving the tension (Corsaro 2003: 162ff). Hence when adults do not interfere the conflicts seem longer, more complex and most importantly, the children seem to work very hard to establish peace (Corsaro, 2003: 189). Collaboration is thus a chief theme in the conflicts of children.

2.2 Language development

In the anthology *Barn utvecklar sitt språk*, Caroline Liberg’s chapter concerns language acquisition in the preschool years (among other ages) and gives a simple and general overlook of the use of language amongst four- and five-year-olds. She argues that the interaction between children is a necessary part of their development to become competent speakers and listeners since they offer a type of support and affirmation not found in their communication with adults (Liberg, 2004: 95). She states that in interaction with each other they have more space to initiate, partake and affect a conversation; which usually would be controlled and steered by an adult (Liberg, 2004: 94). Hence, they make up their own norms that fit their communicative needs and they find it important that everyone who engages in the play follows these norms. They build alliances, create understanding and mother each other; their conversation is much more equal and focused on negotiation than the one with adults (ibid). Through their interaction they try different roles and sometimes process uncomfortable feelings they face in their world (Liberg, 2004: 88). Thus, discussions and disputes, which rules that apply and how to follow them is a big part of the child-child interaction and a part of the strategies they use to explore what is acceptable and not (Liberg, 2004: 89).

2.3 Social organization of peer interaction

The third paragraph I have included in this section is a dissertation which is based on the new sociology of childhood and describes reoccurring behavior from a sociological perspective. Cobb-Moore studied 26 children aged between 4;1 and 5;6 in a preschool environment. She uses a talk-in-talk method, combining ethnomethodology, CA and membership categorization analysis to better understand children’s participation in, and construction and management of, their social worlds through their communicative strategies. She discovered four themes of analytical importance the when the children

constructed and managed their peer interaction: 1) participation in peer interaction, 2) co-constructional work 3) the use of pretense to produce shared understandings and 4) the issue of ownership as a resource of social organisation [sic.] (Cobb-Moore, 2008: 197-205). To participate in peer interaction the children drew upon the interactional resource of justification by using category work (especially within the category of family) and the pretend formulation of place which enabled and disabled participation through pretense (Cobb-Moore, 2008: 198f). The children also used the device of justification to negotiate ownership, since being an owner of an object justifies membership in a conversation (Cobb-Moore, 2008: 199). Children's collaboration is a key theme in their behavior and contributes to the construction of a social order (Cobb-Moore, 2008). Cobb-Moore (2008: 201) argues that "the production of social order is a collaborative activity [...] this included the children's collaboration on pretense, categories and rules". Cobb-Moore (2008: 202) strongly argues that children have a need for shared understanding and that this is accomplished by producing rules everyone agrees upon. These rules are often concerned with pretend categories and objects and "the children acted in ways to make pretense observable or relevant" (Cobb-Moore, 2008: 202). Pretend formulations are 'talked into being' by using references to pretend place in their talk and by following the rules established (ibid.). The issue of ownership is a chief theme in children's interaction and Cobb-Moore considers it a tool the children use to successfully organize their interaction as these issues act to "define and display interactional status" (Cobb-Moore, 2008: 203). An owner of an object of importance therefore automatically gains power and receives a higher ranking hierarchically, being able to steer the play and alter the rules of pretense. Cobb-Moore (2008: 204) states that objects and toys can thus "provide ways for children to forge social relationships and enable participation in interaction". Claiming ownership or denying ownership is thus a way for children to both prevent social interaction and strengthen their own status in the group by denying someone's participation rights (Cobb-Moore, 2008: 205). Cobb-Moore (2008) thus suggests that these specific strategies are used by children to construct and manage social order.

2.4 Social competence

In the study *Peer interaction of young children* Howes (1988) explores why some children seem to have more friends and more social competence and some children seem to be constantly struggling to gain play entry. Although her research was conducted many years ago, her results are not outdated – even if some of her speculations are. Her study of interest is social competence and she studies how social competence is created and what it means for the hierarchical order in the group. It therefore seems important to consider her results since she offers a different view on hierarchy and how it is created,

namely through individual factors. This study was thus picked to help broaden the idea of how hierarchical structures appear in the interaction of children. Howes did a longitudinal research on 1-6 year old children with focus on the development of social competence with peers to understand how childhood affects adult life. The part of her research concerning children between 4-5 and with focus on social competence will be used in this study.

Howes (1988: 7f) suggests that friends play in a complex and responsive way which serve the needs of the child. Some children have little difficulty in peer relationships while other children seem to struggle in the interaction with peers, feeling rejected and experiencing the contact as hostile and unpleasant (Howes, 1988: 1). Howes (1988: 1) argues that children who are successful in the effect on their peers, who are sensitive to social cues and have social knowledge of the peer group succeed in social functioning with peers. Social competence, thus, is a question of interactional skill including “ease of entry into play, play with peers and affective expressions [...] that lead to peer acceptance and popularity” (Howes, 1988: 2). Hierarchical structure thus depends on individual differences and social competence, according to Howes (1988: 4). The conclusion should thus be that children who have more interactional skill, more experience with peers, who are sensitive to social cues and who have social knowledge of the peer group succeed in social functioning, are accepted by their peers and perceived as popular. The ideas are interesting, but very categorical when it comes to such an abstract concept as social competence. Whether or not they apply to my material remains to be seen in the analysis.

2.5 Children’s fantasy activities

Marilyn R. Whalen outlines how play is built and what function it has in the interaction of children. Whalen (1995: 319) focuses on communicative strategies children use to build play, and what social means play serves the children’s organization of everyday routines. Whalen (1994: 240) suggests that the systematic organization and accomplishment of fantasy play is socially shared, collaborative activity. She studied children between the ages of 2;6 to 9;6 during their summer vacation. The studies I have chosen to include are in reference to children aged between 4-5 and consist of five problems that emerge in play.

Whalen (1995: 322) describes the five problems as following:

- (a) Selecting materials: at the very last, participant take it that they must come to a preliminary understanding of just what materials (or toys) will be used; i.e. what are they going to play with?
- (b) Defining materials: participants also are oriented to a need to arrive at a somewhat common definition of what the materials actually are – or what they will represent if, during the course of the fantasy play, they depart from their actual physical appearance, and assume a ludic definition in the fantasy game.

- (c) Participant rights: Participants negotiate just who is going to participate – or perhaps more importantly, who is not going to participate.
- (d) Allocation of tasks: participants take it that they need to achieve some common understanding of what each participant will do – what tasks he or she will perform to construct the buildings and arrange the props.
- (e) Development of characters: the task of which character(s) will be assigned or adopted by each participant, and how each character will be developed, is treated by participants as explicitly relevant and important.

Problem (a) suggests that picking toys, and agreeing on what toys to play with creates a mutual understanding in the group. It could also be a source of conflict and a chance to establish dominance; whoever decides what toys to play with would automatically have more power when deciding what they are going to do with them. Whalen (1995: 326) describes play as a process of review, assessment and re-adjustment that occurs when the children are defining the materials. It presents a chance for the children to negotiate both the role of deciding what the toys represent, as in problem (b) but also to challenge the previously determined definition. Exclusion and inclusion are two typical ways of converging and diverging, thus, establishing solidarity by keeping the group tight and not letting anyone else in, as problem (c) suggests. Problem (d) suggests that children prefer having certain sets of roles to help organize their play which suggests something about the actual hierarchical roles in the group. The development of participant roles (problem (e)) is again a question of review, assessment and re-adjustment. The play in general could be classified as in constant review, assessment and re-adjustment since every toy, participant role and development of character is constantly up for discussion. This rearrangement, which the children constantly move in and out of, is a part of their manner of establishing themselves as a social unit (Whalen, 1995: 327). Whalen's simple, yet important conclusion is that "the fantasy play activities are certainly complex enough to permit children to interact with one another, and to display the social world to one another in mutually adaptive, cooperative (and sometimes competitive), but always elegantly coordinated ways" (Whalen, 1995: 341).

2.6 Fantasy and pretend play

Corsaro studies play in his study: *We're friends, right? Inside Kid's Culture*. He addresses many aspects of children's interaction in this study and one chapter is dedicated to the functions of fantasy and pretend play in three different preschool environments.

According to Corsaro (2003: 90) "when it comes to pretend play, make believe and fantasy, kids do not just have a different perspective than adults; they are highly skilled producers and directors of their own imaginary worlds.", three- to five-year-olds are thus skilled at creating fantasy play. Corsaro (2003) defines fantasy play as a reoccurring phenomenon without specific plans of action when children

animate objects, often with building materials or in sand play. This type of play is thus a type of a negotiation where children use “a number of identifiable communicative strategies” like voice quality, pitch, heavy stress at the end of utterances and rising intonation (Corsaro, 2003: 92). The lack of planning the content of play is replaced by actions and responses which function to decide what is appropriate. Appropriateness is thus dependent on the ongoing play and created by accepting, rejecting and expanding on suggestions (Corsaro, 2003: 93). For this to work the children verbally describe their actions, using the communicative strategies described above, and constantly define and redefine the animated objects thus “provide for the organization of behavior and a semantic base on which the other children can build” (Corsaro, 2003: 95f).

3. Method and material

3.1 SPIFFI

The SPIFFI project (*Språkpolicy i flerspråkiga förskolor och familjer: institutionella och vardagliga praktiker*⁵), led by Polly Björk-Willén) concerns language policy in preschools on national, institutional and family related-level and their relation to each other. The projects included in SPIFFI are conducted by doing ethnographic fieldwork in preschools in Sweden with language policies other than Swedish. The research project's chief focus is placed on communication and its functions, e.g. code-switching and on children as active members of society. SPIFFI includes six studies that each have different foci, my thesis is a part of one of these studies led by Sally Boyd, which studies how children relate to language policy in an preschool with a English monolingual language policy. Hence, my research question differs from those of the project even though it is based on data I gathered from the mentioned preschool and my method (i.e. observation, videotaping and conversation analysis) are the methods used in the SPIFFI.

3.2 Setting and participants

The setting in which the material was recorded was a Swedish preschool with an English monolingual language policy. I attended the school four times in three weeks in November 2014. The first two weeks I visited the school on a Friday from 08:00-14:00 and the third week on Wednesday and on a Friday from ca. 12:00-14:00. From 08:00-11:00 they had some organized activities in the classroom, lunch and outside playtime was between 11:00-12:00 and after 12:00 they were allowed to play freely in the classroom. The first two days I was there I discovered that it was much easier to videotape the children during their free-play time since the teacher was not involved in the activities and the surrounding was not as noisy. Moreover, the children I recorded usually played by themselves in a corner where I could videotape them with minor interruption. The choice of class and school was determined beforehand as Boyd and Ottesjö did research with the same children the previous year and have permission from the parents. Therefore I could, very quickly, start collecting data without any administrative issues to deal with. Boyd and Ottesjö did their research before the class was merged with another class; they thus only have permission to record half the preschool class I filmed. Hence, I decided not to include any instances of film where children appeared that I did not have permission for.

⁵ Translation: Language policy in multilingual schools and families: institutional and everyday practices.

Four children between the ages of four and five were videotaped during their free-play time: Eva, Gotfried, Bertha and Anton⁶. The selection of participants happened naturally as Boyd and Ottesjö asked me to collect material of Anton's acquisition of Swedish. They chose him particularly since he used English exclusively with his friends and he was the only one not perceived as bilingual (English and Swedish) by the staff. As Anton showed no sign of trying to learn Swedish the idea of mapping out his acquisition was abandoned. Boyd instead asked me to look at hierarchy and dominance since she had plans to study this herself in an upcoming paper. I thus decided to dedicate my thesis to study how hierarchy is structured in the interaction of Anton, Gotfried, Bertha and Eva. Bilingual aspects could sadly fore not be taken into consideration since the four children used English exclusively in their interaction and the collected material thus gives no proof of the children's bilingual activity. Therefore, I had to rethink my initial idea of studying code-switching.

3.3 Material and method of data selection

The total amount of material collected was 16 hours of video recordings and the material that is used in this study is five video recordings with a total of 25 minutes. As this was my first time doing field research I was not sure what to videotape and what I would be able to transcribe. I was therefore pleased to discover that almost everything filmed after the lunch break was usable. I decided, after collecting my material and after having read Sidnell's introduction to conversation analysis, to use the strategies *preference* and *repair*. Preference seemed to pinpoint the management of conflict⁷, the instances with a heavy use of preference were thus included in this study. Initially self-repairs were included in the analysis and choice of transcription as well as I thought that this strategy would contribute some important aspects of conflict management. However, after conducting the analysis based on the uses of preference and self-repair, I noticed that self-repairs did not contribute with relevant results and I decided to solely focus on preference. The instances I chose from the collected material were also chosen according to where there was a conflict or where there was some level of disagreement, which was essentially in all recordings. The children rarely played without any level of disagreement, I therefore chose the sequences that included many uses of dispreferred answers or sequences where conflict management was marked. The aim of this study is thus not to focus on the actual conflict, but to use conflict as an indicator to where hierarchy is established and visible. The sequences chosen are thus based on *preference*, conflict and the theoretical framework in order to produce a coherent study.

The material was recorded with a Panasonic hand held camera of the model HDC-SD700 with an attachable microphone of the model Sennheiser MKE 400 (provided to me by Boyd and Ottesjö). The

⁶ Pseudonyms created by Boyd and Ottesjö

⁷ See a more detailed justification of the term in 3.6.1

microphone was sometimes unpredictable in its ability to fully capture the voices of the participants. I tried to stay as close as possible to the participants in order to get a good recording and at the same time not make myself too obvious when recording them. However, sometimes the microphone decided to record other children who were further away, for some reason. I therefore excluded any sequence when it was too noisy and when it was too hard to hear what the children said. A preschool environment is, naturally, always noisy and it was often hard to make out what the children said, consequently I chose the less noisy sequences. I usually sat on a chair nearby, pointing the camera at the children while leaning the camera on my lap to get a stable recording. I tried to keep the camera in the same height as their faces to fully capture gestures and their voices and I avoided, as much as possible, to film them from their back. It was sometimes very hard to get such a recording as they moved often and quickly. Consequently, I chose to include the instances where their facial expressions and gestures were most apparent.

3.4 Method of transcription

The transcriptions were made in CLAN (computerized language analysis) and the conventions used when transcribing were the ones established by Norrby (2004). As I had trouble entering the video into CLAN, I kept it open in QuickTime player as I transcribed and was able to successfully count the pauses on my phone timer. When transcribing the focus has mainly been on *what* the children said to each other, thus *how* they said it has been included when marked or found important for the understanding of the interactional atmosphere. An appendix for the symbols used in the transcriptions can be found at page 37. After fully finishing the transcriptions I had a data session with six classmates and my supervisor where we listened to the recordings and discussed the transcriptions both by analyzing the content and form. After the data session I continued working on my transcriptions.

3.5 My role as researcher and ethical considerations

The first day I visited the school I decided not to bring the camera, but to solely observe and let the children get used to me. My supervisor, Sally Boyd, accompanied me to the preschool and introduced me to the children. Many of them knew her from the year before when she had done some research on approximately half the class. Many of the children approached me that day and seemed to see me as an extra teacher asking me for help with their assignments and asking me to read books for them. In fact, there was not one single day where I was not treated as a teacher and even though I tried to focus solely on filming I could not help but engage with the other children. I quickly understood that it was going to be difficult to record four children whilst at the same time interacting with other children without

dismissing them. I decided that I was going to, as much as possible, interact minimally with them when inside the classroom and while I was recording. It therefore proved useful to me that I had that first camera-free day where I could plan my behavior and how I was going to approach both the children I was filming and the children I was not filming. My strategy worked as the children avoided interacting with me inside the classroom and instead asked me if we could play later outside, or if I could sit with them at lunch. This could also be an effect of my complete focus on recording; since I was so focused on getting a good recording I sometimes did not notice children coming up to me. This is something I have noticed when looking through the recordings. The children might have seen other children approaching me without so much as a reaction from my part, thus noticing that I did not respond or even see them. Because of this I did get outstanding recordings as I rarely noticed if someone approached me while recording, but I feel sorry for the children who did approach me without me noticing. However, I do feel that my approach was the best way to manage the situation since my reason for being there was to record Anton, Gotfried, Bertha and Eva.

Another decision I made, which I had not thought about earlier in the process and which was spontaneous, was telling the four children that I was going to videotape them. I did this the first day that I brought a camera and approached Eva, Gotfried, Bertha and Anton and asked if it would be okay that I filmed them that day and maybe some more next week. I urged them to tell me if they felt uncomfortable and if they did not want to be filmed. Even though I had permission from their parents, and that is all that I need to film them, I felt it my responsibility to ask if they were okay with it as well. After all, I am supporting a view of children as being competent members of society and I felt that they should have a say. Even though they were all okay with me filming them, and many times comfortable with it too, they did seem to wonder why I was filming them. I was even asked at one point by Gotfried “why are you looking at me?”. I answered that I was looking at all of them and if that was okay. Another issue was the camera, which seemed very interesting to them. During the three days that I filmed them there was always a point where it became too obvious to them that someone was filming them and they would run up to me and the camera with many questions, such as “do you see us through this”? or they would stand in front of the camera and dance etc. These episodes lasted about 1-2 minutes each time and after the episodes they would not ask anything until next time I brought the camera. Many other children also approached me and asked if I was going to film them. It was very hard to answer their questions and I tried to explain that I was only going to film some of the children because of some paperwork, which they accepted. I decided not to include any of those instances in the material where other children approached me (when I noticed that they approached me) or when the four children I was filming suddenly noticed me and the camera.

The people I had to inform that I was going to record four of the children were the principal and the teacher in charge of that particular preschool class. As I arrived that first day I was very clear when I explained to them that I wanted to record the children when a) talking only to each other and b) playing freely. I felt that I needed to explain this, not so that they would stay out of my way, but since I thought they should understand my perspective.

3.6 Conversation Analysis

Conversation analysis (henceforth CA) has been my main method of extracting and analyzing the data mainly since it is a part of the SPIFFI project's method of selection. The main reason for its usefulness is its renunciation of analyzing material according to individual, social and cultural factors and thus only taking into consideration what it said in the context of the conversation. This type of analysis is hard to conduct, especially for a sociolinguist. The main intention has thus been to try to use CA as a tool to offer an overview of child language by only taking into consideration the strategies they actually use. Furthermore, its usefulness also consists in its adaptability to each researcher and to each study. It can thus be used e.g. in the way I mentioned above, together with other methods of analysis or with more or less speculative instances involving social or cultural aspects of analysis. CA is thus adaptable to whichever measure the researcher wants, and I have chosen to use CA to analyze and uncover patterns and distributions of *preference* without presuppositions (Norrby, 2004: 46). The introduction to CA written by Sidnell (2010a) has been used as the main source of information since I found it sufficiently detailed and since it clearly explained CA in a simple way both through Sidnell's own pedagogy and through the findings of Jefferson, Sacks and Schegloff.

First, a general explanation of CA and its supposed contribution to this study will be presented and secondly, the strategy *preference* will be explained in detail.

This is an alternative then to the commonsense, "individualist" view, that sees the utterance as the product of a single, isolated individual speaker. It is also an alternative to the "externalist" view which sees the utterance as the product of intersecting, external forces such as the speaker's (or the recipient's) gender, ethnic background, age, class or whatever else (Sidnell, 2010a: 5).

CA thus strives to come closer to examining communication and interaction as a phenomenon separated from social and cultural aspects by uncovering observable patterns that seem to be recurrent in every interaction. My intention when using CA is to:

1. Stick as closely as possible to the data itself. That is, try to describe what the participants actually say (or gesture, or do). Typically this will involve quoting the talk and referencing the line number in which it is represented on the transcript.

2. Avoid motivational and other psychologically framed descriptions such as “she wants to get off the phone”, “He’s trying to make himself sound important”, “He’s not very confident”, and so on. While it is inevitable that we will notice such things they tell us little about the talk itself, which should be the focus of our observations.
3. Describe what a thing *is* rather than what it is like. Avoid descriptions such as “he is doing something like a request”. Although such hedges are sometimes necessary in order to articulate an only partially formed observation, they can lead to a kind of informal coding procedure (Sidnell 2010a: 29).

The results from using CA on naturally occurring speech show one specifically important point: “people negotiate who-we-are-to-one-another in conversation” (Sidnell, 2010a: 14) and this is done by maintaining intersubjectivity, otherwise called joint understanding. In very simple terms intersubjectivity is maintained by a demonstration of understanding by one participant to another (Sidnell, 2010a: 70). Intersubjectivity is the basis of any collaboratively built action and is the state which participants strive to maintain in conversation, i.e. shared understanding. Intersubjectivity, thus, equals understanding that emerges in the development of interaction and is adjustable according to context. I interpret intersubjectivity as sharing an understanding of e.g. what a toy represents or what. The form of intersubjectivity is thus not as abstract as one might think; it is apparent and noticeable and is often expressed through statements that signal alignment.

I have chosen one specific strategy central to CA and to child language judging from the material and previous research. This strategy is preference. Since the material mainly consists of situations where conflict either occurs or is about to occur, the demonstration of preferred answers would point to where there is an agreement and dispreferred responses would work as an indicator to where the conflict starts as the children seem to mark their disagreement with this tool. The main idea is thus to let preferred and dispreferred answers guide the analysis of the material to find out how group hierarchy is established by: a) pinpointing the occurrence of conflict and b) by looking at the management of conflict.

3.6.1 Preference

Preference refers to a strategy used by participants to answer questions either with a preferred answer or with a dispreferred answer. The strategy is used in reference to the maximally cooperative principle i.e. to, with greatest efficiency, convey the intended message adapted to the hearer (Sidnell, 2010a: 81). Although efficiency is important, mitigating the circumstances of a dispreferred answer is more important to avoid losing face (Sidnell, 2010a: 78). However, this seems to be a concern of smaller proportion in the interaction of children which makes their use of dispreferred answers interesting since they use them differently (as we will be evident in the results). Mapping out the use of preference has

been made by observable regularities in naturally occurring speech and these results tells us that there is always an inclination towards immediate compliance in the interaction of adults (Sidnell, 2010a).

Preferred answers

”The preferred response is the one which advances or aligns with the action launched by the first pair part.” (Sidnell, 2010a: 81). A preferred response thus does not have to mean that the addressee is preferred to always answer with a ”yes”; the context and the wishes of the speaker decides what is preferable. Sidnell (2010a: 81) argues that ”there are certain actions that, by their very nature, inherently prefer disaligning responses”. For instance, if the speakers imply that they want a rejection, a rejection would be the preferred answer. The maximally cooperative response then, is always the preferable response. Therefore, a preferred response is a sign of alignment and encourages agreement, which is usually conveyed via second assessments that is an upgrade to the first assessment (Sidnell, 2010a: 81). Hence, when answering according to the listener’s preference it conveys the participant’s wish to make an effort in finding mutual understanding.

Dispreferred answers

Dispreferred answers function to reject someone, to decline an offer, to challenge someone’s standpoint and to show that the speaker’s desire is not accepted. It is a type of answer the speaker does not prefer to receive and is usually constructed to act mitigating (in adult conversation); it is a rejection, but a carefully constructed set of phrases that act as rejections but sound positive. Different contexts call for different types of uses, especially when it comes to how important the intersubjectivity is in that given context. Since children rarely use these mitigating responses I will be looking at how their dispreferred answers are constructed. Nevertheless, it is important to have some knowledge of how a mitigating response is constructed. Sidnell (2010a: 78f) presents four types of dispreferred answers that all function to reject, decline, challenge and not accept a proposal:

1) Delays

Delays can be used in two ways, either they introduce a rejection or explanation, or they introduce another dispreferred answer. Using a delay is thus a common way to initiate another dispreferred answer. Delays are usually initiated by audible breathing and phrases that do not offer a real answer to the question but function as a way of delaying the actual answer, e.g. by saying: “well” + dispreferred answer. This type of dispreferred response is thus delayed both by inter-turn gap and turn-initial delay.

2) Palliatives

Pallatives usually include some kind of "appreciation, apology and/or token agreement by which the overwhelmingly "negative" valence of the turn is mitigated". When using a pallative it shows that the addressee is focused on avoiding creating a negative atmosphere. Even though pallatives represent a rejecting action it creates a somewhat friendlier atmosphere. Examples of such uses are: "that's awfully sweet of you but...", "I am sorry but..." or "I understand but...".

3) Accounts

The use of accounts involves a strategy "explaining why the addressee is unable to grant the request, not simply unwilling". This type of dispreferred answer goes even further in mitigating the negative valence of the turn by offering an explanation to the rejection. Not only is it a sign of not wanting to affect someone negatively, but it is also about face-work; this way the addressees reject their peers and justify their declination by offering an explanation.

4) Pro-forma agreement

Pro-forma agreement is a dispreferred answer which poses as a preferable answer. Pro-forma agreement is a function usually preceding a dispreferred and disagreeing response and the most common form is "yes but + rejection". A pro-forma agreement is thus a dispreferred and disagreeing response initiated by an agreeing phrase that delays the actual rejection, and it is a way to both agree and disagree at the same time.



3.6.2 Summary: CA strategies

- . **Preferred answers** are used when the addressee wishes to align with the speaker which usually makes the maximally cooperative response the preferable response.
- . **Dispreferred answers** are used when the addressee wishes to reject, decline, challenge someone in a mitigating way or to not accept a suggestion:
 - 1) Delays: "hesitating sound/well" + rejection
 - 2) Pallatives: appreciation, apology and/or token agreement + rejection
 - 3) Accounts: explanation following the rejection
 - 4) Pro-forma agreements: "yes but" + rejection

4. Results

In this section I will present the transcriptions I have decided to include and describe the communicative strategies the children use in their interaction. Each paragraph will be centered around one transcription. The transcriptions all show different situations, some where conflict occurs and some where conflict is avoided and/or managed.

4.1 The battle of the fours

This first example below is a sequence marked by conflict as Gotfried and Anton build fours with wooden sticks (kapla) and they cannot find a joint understanding of what a four looks like. The conflict escalates between Gotfried and Anton as Gotfried takes Anton's toy, which they refer to as a jet, and it breaks. Anton does a four like this:  and Gotfried does his four like this: .

```
1 @Begin
2 @Languages: eng
3 @Media: Clip#22, video
4 @Options: CA
5 @Participants: A Anton, G Gotfried, B Bertha, E Eva
6 @Dependent: com
7 @Date: 2014/11/22
8 *A: a four looks like °dis° (2.0) and de-den i just nee:d (1.6) this
9 *B: no
10 %com: G grabs a kapla and puts it across one of A's kaplas
11 (3.1)
12 *A: >there< ((moves G's kapla))
13 *G: no (0.2) a four look like this (1.6) ((mumbles)) <look at this>
14 %com: takes A's kaplas and starts building
15 (0.9)
16 *A: no look- a- look like dis ((fart noises))
17 *G: oh no it goes like diss
18 (1.8)
19 *B: yeah it <rilly> does
20 (1.1)
21 *A: NO
22 *G: yeah
23 *B: im- you need to [m- get xxx] ((starts moving the sticks))
24 *G: [no- oh yeah it has to be m- (0.7) there]
25 (1.0)
26 *A: <dats (.) not m: (.) l:ook (.) like fou:r>
27 *G: actually its xxx
28 *A: dats not even a four [it-]
29 *G: [ >it is]
30 *A: it doesnt even look like a fou:r (2.1) dis is a four
31 %com: A takes back his sticks and starts building
32 (0.4)
33 *G: %OH no thats not a four (.) anton dis is a four
34 %com: takes the sticks
35 *B: anton (.) [gotfrieds a four]
36 *G: [e:hm]
37 *B: gotfrieds doin a right four
38 *A: no
39 *E: FOURS CAN LOOK HOWEVER YOU LI:KE (.) DEY CAN LOOK LIKE
40 = ANTONS OR gotfrieds
41 (5.1)
42 %com: A stands up on his knees and shouts something
43 angrily to answer E, hard to hear due to noisy surrounding
44 *A: NO it is not [xxx]
45 *G: [THATS how you do a four anton]
46 %com: A takes the sticks and G takes A's toy rocket in return
47 *A: no WAY dats NO:T (.) DIS is ha- GOTfri:e:d → gimme [dat] ((angirly))
48 *G: [i (.) @make- m- your jet@]
49 %com: as they fight over the rocket/jet it breaks
50 *A: gotfri:e:d → ((sad voice))
51 %com: Anton leaves to tell a teacher what happened
52 *G: oh all the time you xxx like babies okay its aldready fixed
```

In his sequence Gotfried and Anton use many dispreferred answers to directly reject the preceding statement. This is clear in e.g. line 16 where Anton rejects Gotfried's first rejection of his four and e.g. on line 33 where Gotfried directly reject Anton's version. They continue to answer each other's statements with dispreferred responses which directly reject the previous statement without mitigating the circumstances. They both use this strategy to reject the other person's claim by insisting on their own version of a four. Anton tries different ways to answer with disagreement, which is what this conversation is marked by, but without providing any arguments and neither does Gotfried. Anton's uses shift between direct rejections in form of a simple "no" (evident on e.g. line 21 and 38) to more complex constructions as e.g.: on line 26, 28 and 30 where he uses negations and on line 47 where he claims that Gotfried's version of a four is impossible by making the statement "no way that's not". These complex constructions are all (except for line 26) followed by a demonstration or a suggestion as to how a four looks according to his understanding. The same strategy can be seen in Gotfried's statements e.g. on line 13 where he urges Anton to look at how he builds a four. The children present their version visually as it is hard to present a relevant argument as to how a four looks. These visual demonstrations thus work as arguments to their claims and challenge the listener to present a version himself, as they keep answering each other's demonstrations with more demonstrations. Furthermore, the dispreferred answers they use also function as a way to support their own claims. Supposedly, by rejecting the listener's claim the speaker supports his own claim, just as Gotfried does on e.g. line 17 and as Anton does on line 30. Another strategy Gotfried uses can be found on line 29 where he confirms his own version by contradicting Anton's rejection instead of rejecting his four.

When looking for preferred answers there are only one use in this sequence which is Gotfried's statement on line 24 as he accepts Bertha's partially inaudible alteration of his four. Bertha's statements on line 19 did at first glance look like a preferred answer, but I judge it as an isolated alignment since it follows a declarative direct speech act. Bertha's strategy in this sequence is to align with Gotfried, which is what all of her statements do by directly opposing Anton and rejecting his four. She does this e.g. on line 37 where she states that Gotfried's four is the right one and on line 35 where she simply states that Gotfried's four is a four which makes Anton's four not a four at all, and consequently, denies Anton's ability and knowledge to present a "right" four or a four at all. Bertha's strategy to reject Anton's claims is through aligning with Gotfried and confirming Gotfried's claims by stating that his perspective is right and Anton is wrong.

Eva's statement on lines 39-40 is a suggestion to a solution to the problem where both boys would be right. However, her suggestion is not accepted as Gotfried does not react at all, he does not turn around to look at Eva nor does he answer, and Anton answers with a very clear "no", as can be seen on

line 44 where he stands up on his knees and shouts at her. Anton thus rejects Eva's statement, and possibly her involvement in the disagreement. Anton's shouting, however, has no effect since no one addresses his reaction.

The sequence ends in a conflict which is not resolved but is simply left to culminate. Anton pretends that he has told the teacher, which Gotfried seems to notice and their interaction ends with a friendly swordfight⁸. The intersubjectivity in this sequence would represent their understanding that they have a difference of opinion. Thus, even if an agreement is never reached they share an understanding for each other's statements, which is evident is their complete rejection of each other. They would not be able to reject each other in such a direct way without having knowledge of the thing they are rejecting. Another level of intersubjectivity, which has reached agreement and is marked with cooperation, is the one between Gotfried and Bertha judging from her supportive statements on lines 19, 35 and 37. Even though they do not solve or manage the conflict they succeed in having a fully functioning conversation where they find joint understanding of the other persons' perspective. They maintain intersubjectivity by denying their peers' suggestions and by providing support to their arguments through visual demonstration and by aligning to each other.

4.2 The battle of the rocket

In the following sequence there is small conflict. Eva and Gotfried are playing together and Bertha sit beside them. She claims ownership of a toy she holds in her hands and Gotfried turns around to challenge her ownership by claiming ownership of a small part of that toy. They disagree on who owns the toy.

```

1      @Begin
2      @Languages: eng
3      @Media: GoldenGate, video
4      @Options: CA
5      @Participants: B Bertha, G Gotfried, E Eva
6      @Dependent: com
7      @Date: 2014/11
8      *B:    I ALWAYS cuntrol dis on (mun-day-days)
9            = i alywas control [dis on (fridays)]
10     *G:    [no cus dat- dat rocket was mine so we both cuntrol it]
11     *B:    noʔ i- i build i:t
12     *G:    yeah but dat rocket was [mi:ne]
13     *B:    [no]
14     *G:    <yeah
15     *B:    dis wasnt you:rsʔ in fact yours xxx [yours- dis was yoursʔ these [connected]]
16     *E:    [this]
17     %com:  E slams a toy into the ground, G is trying to listen to both B and E
18     *G:    [evaʔ is dat mine?]
19     %com:  reaching for a toy in her hand
20     *E:    ʔno no >gotfried<ʔ ((hugging her toys))
21     *G:    noʔ
22     *B:    these two pieces (that are) connect[ed]
23     *G:    [oh this is mine]
24     *B:    yeah (.) so

```

⁸ The end of the transcription was not included since it would need much further analysis and there is limited space in this thesis.

Gotfried's many uses of dispreferred answers in this sequence function similarly as in the previous one, to reject the previous statement, but in this case it concerns ownership. This is evident by his disagreeing response on line 10 where he directly rejects Bertha's claim without mitigation and, furthermore, offers an argument as to why he should have right to ownership of the rocket. Additionally, on line 12 he uses a pro-forma agreement which functions to mitigate his rejection of her statement by using a "yes but" + rejection construction. This is a way to show both agreement and disagreement by posing a dispreferred answer as a positive response (Sidnell, 2010a: 79). On line 11 Bertha uses a dispreferred answer to reject Gotfried's rejection, and at the same time declines his desire to own a part of her toy. Dispreferred answers sometimes do function to decline someone's desire (Sidnell, 2010a: 77). Thus, by rejecting his claim of ownership, Bertha does not accept his desire to be an owner of the toy. Bertha's uses of dispreferred answers on lines 11 and 13 create an atmosphere where Gotfried easily can understand her view on the matter: the toy she has claimed ownership of is hers only, and he has no right to ownership when it comes to that particular toy. On line 15 she uses a dispreferred answer in the form of a negation following a suggestion which functions to solve the problem, namely "this was yours". She picks up a toy and offers it to him which proves efficient after a second try on line 22. Gotfried accepts her proposal on line 23 by claiming ownership of the toy Bertha offered him and Bertha accepts his claim on line 24 with a simple "yeah". The interaction between Gotfried and Bertha includes an argument-counter argument structure which cannot be found in the previous sequence. Gotfried argues that he has as much right to own the toy as Bertha by stating "we both control it" on line 10, and Bertha responds "no, because I built it" on line 11, hence by using a dispreferred answer preceding a counter argument to Gotfried's claim. This sequence is thus more focused on argumentation rather than contradiction which could be the determining factor that helps them solve the problem and find a mutual understanding of the rights of ownership.

The interaction between Gotfried and Eva is also different from the previous sequence, and very different from the interaction between Gotfried and Bertha. Eva's dispreferred answer on line 20 is an answer to Gotfried's question "is that mine?" on line 18, which she answers with a straightforward "no". Gotfried does not challenge Eva's ownership but instead asks if she has his toy. Thus, even though Eva uses a dispreferred answer it is the maximally cooperative answer as it quickly dismisses Gotfried and gives him an opportunity to return to looking for his toy. On line 21 Gotfried accepts Eva's rejection by answering his own question "is that mine?" with a "no".

Consequently, in this sequence there are two types of interactions and two ways to manage the conflict by cooperating in very different ways. Bertha slowly steers the interaction with direct rejections and later with suggestions, as Gotfried does not comply immediately, and Eva only has to reject Gotfried

once for him to accept her rejection. Gotfried’s strategy is thoroughly different in this sequence in comparison to the previous one, which could be an effect of the context that includes some vital differences: this time Bertha does not align with his statements, Eva does not make suggestions to try to solve the issue, Anton is not present to directly challenge him and there is an apparent argument-counter argument structure. The most interesting aspect of their management of the conflict in this sequence is that there are no uses of preferred answers that signal alignment. There are some agreeing responses, on lines 23-24, however they do not function aligning, nor are they preferred answers according to Sidnell’s criteria (Sidnell, 2010a: 81). They thus manage to solve the conflict by using dispreferred answers that do not mitigate the circumstances.

4.3 The battle of another rocket

Another conflict revolving around ownership can be seen in the sequence below as Gotfried builds Anton a toy rocket but decides to keep it for himself. This particular sequence only includes one dispreferred answer and no preferred answers, but is a perfect example of how conflict is managed in a way typical for children according to Corsaro (2003: 162).

```

1 @Begin
2 @Languages: eng
3 @Media: Clip#10, video
4 @Options: CA
5 @Participants: A Anton, G Gotfried, E Eva, B Bertha
6 @Dependent: com
7 @Date: 2014/11/19
8 %com: G is building A a toy
9 *G: do you want it bigger than dis? cus small is betta
10 %com: holds the toy up for A to see
11 (1.4)
12 *A: °i° want it bigger than dat
13 *G: >@ouh [A:ntonʔ@]
14 *A: [its- (still) @sma:hll@]
15 *G: I want dis one bicus its (small)
16 *A: GOTFRI:EDʔ> (1.2) gotfried its xxx that-
17 = <gotfried> that one is yours- ([°mine°ʔ])
18 *G: [dis one you can have]
19 (0.7)
20 *A: no im get the same <you got that>
21 (1.8)
22 *B: i get the same- desame as gotfried
23 = <ea:sy [peasy]
24 *E: [easy °peasy° lemon >squee:zy< (0.9) >easia hh peasy lemenn squeeze<]
25 %com: they all keep playing by themselves for a while with
26 minimum interaction. 42 seconds later A approaches G to confront him
27 *A: xxx
28 *E: [easy]
29 *B: [EASY] [peasy p-easy lemon squeeze]
30 *G: [ʔpeasy @peasy lemon squeeze@]

```

Gotfried builds Anton a toy and asks for his opinion on which size to make it according to Anton’s wishes, and suggests that “small is better” on line 9. On line 12 Anton very clearly states that he wants it bigger than what Gotfried has so far built. On line 15 Gotfried decides that he wants the toy “because it is small” thus denying Anton’s ownership by explaining that the toy fits his needs, since it did not fit

Anton's. Anton gets upset on lines 16-17, raising his voice and repeating Gotfried's name several times to get his attention, as Gotfried keeps looking away. Anton then makes, what looks like, a suggestion on line 16, "that one is yours" and another suggestion on line 20 where he states "you got that" whilst pointing to another toy. Gotfried does not accept Anton's suggestions, but does not reject them either as he did in the first sequence and as he did when questioning Bertha in the previous sequence. He uses a different strategy in this sequence, namely, offering Anton another toy without responding to his opposition on line 17. Anton then answers with a dispreferred answer in terms of a direct "no" on line 20 thus rejecting Gotfried's suggestion and offer him a counter-suggestion. The suggestions are used as a form of argument-counter argument structure instead of using dispreferred answers back and forth as in the first sequence.

The first dispreferred answer is on line 20 when the conflict already has been launched as Anton understands that Gotfried will take his toy and he is trying to, unsuccessfully, prevent it by denying Gotfried's right to ownership. On line 23, directly after Anton's use of a dispreferred answer, which directly rejects Gotfried, Bertha starts rhyming which puts a stop to the development of the conflict. After a long pause Anton approaches Gotfried to continue the dispute, his choice of words are inaudible on line 27 but it is clear from his tone of voice and from his intonation that he is upset, as he points to the toy Gotfried built. Eva reuses Bertha's strategy and starts the rhyme once again on line 29. The strategy is equally effective as it was the first time, if not more effective, and this time they all join in and Anton does not address the issue again. This particular sequence is thus especially interesting since there are few dispreferred answers and no preferred answers that signal alignment, but there is a conflict and the conflict is managed. In the previous sequence it was noticeable how dispreferred answers helped the children to solve the dispute and in the first sequence it was made clear that alignment is important to maintain intersubjectivity, both strategies are not present in this sequence. Nevertheless, the conflict is managed through the use of humor and solved by implicitly declaring Gotfried the owner. Thus a joint understanding is created as to who has the right to own the toy by simply preventing Anton from challenging Gotfried in order to make his claim on the toy. The sequence above is thus a valid example of how three children jointly construct an idea of how to control a possible development of a conflict without using a vast amount of dispreferred answers and without alignment through preferred answers.

4.4 The battle of the Golden Gate

The sequence below shows how Eva initiates a game where she has built a long toy with building blocks which she refers to as the Golden Gate. She attempts to engage Gotfried and Bertha into playing with

her and they all try to decide what the game is going to be. The situation is free of conflict however, it is marked by some level of disagreement which could have easily evolved into a conflict if it had been managed like e.g. in the first sequence. I thus judge this as a situation where conflict is avoided.

```

1      @Begin
2      @Languages: eng
3      @Media: GoldenGate, video
4      @Options: CA
5      @Participants: B Bertha, G Gotfried, E Eva
6      @Dependent: com
7      @Date: 2014/10
8      *E:      >be:rtha:< (0.9) look (2.6) be:rtha: i know >dis cud be<
9              = a- the (.) golden daꝑm:?
10     *B:      ya
11     *E:      <dis cud be de golden ga:ꝑte (0.1) at the chocolate factori:?
12     %com:    showing the toy she constructed to G
13     *G:      <uuh there is no chocolate factory
14     %com:    G smiles at B
15     *E:      <Okayꝑ this- thats- <this cud be the golden gai:t>
16     *B:      an- [and]
17     *G:      [i know dey @stole the golden gait@]
18     *B:      [yeah-]
19     *E:      [yeah den dey- took all the (.) the golden gate]
20     *B:      (he xxx) stole the golden gateꝑ
21     *G:      ((making motor noises))
22     (1.0)
23     *E:      ha ha ha ha
24     %com:    laughting with "evil" voice, drawing the attention
25             of B and G while buildning the golden gate
26     *B:      we haven- we [havent]
27     *G:      [nodebadi stole it]
28     *B:      <no
29     *G:      nooo: dont take- no no no we- we dont make the gate now
30             = <nonono> eva eva dis ones- is stand there and den dey shoot
31     %com:    approaches E after "we- we" and starts touching the golden gate

```

In comparison to the other transcriptions there are a handful of preferred answers in this paragraph. Bertha's preferred answer on line 10 is a classic example of the question-answers type. Even though Eva received this preferred answer she changes her definition of the toy on line 11 from "the golden dam" to "the Golden Gate". She continues developing her idea by adding the chocolate factory to the concept and as she has completed her version of the definition she shows the toy to Gotfried on line 12. He rejects her idea of the chocolate factory on line 13, a rejection Eva accepts on line 15 by responding to Gotfried's alternation with a preferred answer in terms of an "okay" and a repetition of her initial idea "this could be the Golden Gate". Eva thus redefines her initial idea according to Gotfried's statement. Neither Bertha nor Gotfried answer Eva's suggestions on lines 11 and 15 with preferred or dispreferred answers, but they start to build on Eva's concept and add features and happenings revolving around the Golden Gate on lines 16-17. Eva thus manages to engage both Bertha and Gotfried which is evident from Bertha's attempt to expand on Eva's statement on line 16 before being cut off by Gotfried's statement on line 17, which similarly shows that he accepts the idea of the Golden Gate (since he expands on the concept by suggesting that "they stole the Golden Gate"). Both Bertha and Eva agree with his suggestion on lines 18-19 by aligning with him though the use of preferred answers. Bertha

further supports Gotfried by repeating his statement on line 20. On line 23 Eva does an “evil” laugh thus continuing the game and drawing the attention of Bertha and Gotfried which proves an effective strategy as Bertha tries to expand on the idea before being cut off by Gotfried’s statement on line 27 when he introduces a new concept “nobody stole it”. Bertha accepts his new alternation by answering with a “no”, which functions as a preferred answer and thus as an alignment, just as it did on line 17.

The dispreferred answers in this sequence are mainly used by Gotfried as he suggests an alternation of the chocolate factory (line 13) and the starting point of the game (line 29). He challenges the existence of the chocolate factory by using a delay which functions to postpone the actual rejection. A delay is usually followed by an explanation and then a rejection (Sidnell, 2010a: 78), however, Gotfried does not offer an explanation for the rejection which makes the listener fully focused on the negation. I would therefore not judge this as a completed delay as the strategy does not contribute to mitigating the message. The message is clear: there is no chocolate factory. He thus rejects the chocolate factory completely whilst making it clear that it does not exist, according to him. He uses a similar technique in another sequence where Eva has decided that the Golden Gate has turned in to a snake. As she stands up and flies the snake around the air she offers Gotfried to play with it, he then questions that the toy in fact is a snake and they come to a mutual agreement on what the toy is.

```

1      @Begin
2      @Languages: eng
3      @Media: GoldenGate, video
4      @Options: CA
5      @Participants: G Gotfried, E Eva
6      @Dependent: CA
7      @Date: 2014/11
8      *E:   gotfried YOU CAN HAVE A GO Y- YOU CAN HAVE A GO YOU CAN HAVE A GO
9           = driv- driving the snai:k> (0.3) you want to?
10     *G:   uuh this is not supposed to be a snake
11     *E:   .hh [ii-]
12     *G:   [<oh this could be a- (0.6) this could be a spaceship]
13     *E:   <no its not (tis) a snaik (1.9) it can turn> in to a spaceship> for a little wiol>
14     *G:   OKAY then

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Just as in the previous sequence Eva shows the toy to Gotfried thus giving him an opportunity to join the game. In this sequence, on lines 8 and 9, she also offers him to use the toy and asks whether he wants to play with it. He does not answer her offer to “have a go” or the question she asks on line 9, but instead rejects her definition of the toy, just as he rejected the existence of the chocolate factory, by using a false delay as a dispreferred answer. His rejection could furthermore be a way to show an interest in the toy and in her game since he does not explicitly decline her offer, but instead redefines the toy before playing with it. Eva’s does not have time to react on line 11 before being cut-off by Gotfried’s suggestion on line 12 that “this could be a spaceship”, but on line 13 she produces a reaction different to the previous sequence by directly rejecting his suggestion. There is a 1.9 second long pause on line 13 after Eva’s rejection of Gotfried’s suggestion, and after the pause she accepts his suggestion

with the condition “for a little while”. Her condition is accepted by Gotfried on line 14 with a preferred response in terms of an “okay”.

These two sequences thus follow a very similar pattern; Eva initiates a game and invites Gotfried to play but re-arranges the conditions of the play as Gotfried rejects her definitions with dispreferred answers and also clearly demonstrates that Eva’s decision to include a chocolate factory and to define the toy as a snake is not accepted. These sequences show that Gotfried and Eva have different apprehensions of three things: 1) if there is a chocolate factory or not, 2) whether the toy is a snake or a spaceship and 3) when they are going to play with the Golden Gate. In order to avoid conflict and in order to play together the children need to share a common understanding of the play norms. Together, they negotiate and come to an agreement of what the toy should be. It is thus not only the use of dispreferred answers that decide how a situation is going to play out, but the reaction to the dispreferred answers, as both Eva and Bertha has demonstrated in this sequence. This sequence thus demonstrates that answering a dispreferred answer with alignment (through preferred answers) helps the game grow in a completely different manner than in the other sequences and furthermore, creates a supportive atmosphere.

4.5 Summary

In “the battle of the fours” the conflict was not solved and not managed. There were many uses of dispreferred answers which did not act to mitigate the circumstances, but were used to directly oppose the previous speaker with a “no”. Moreover, there was no argumentative structure in the conversation as Anton and Gotfried exchanged dispreferred uses exclusively amongst each other, which worked both to reject and challenge the other person but equally to support their own claims by denying the validity of the other person’s claim. Bertha’s strategy was to align with Gotfried by using dispreferred answers to reject Anton’s statements and Eva’s strategy was to make a suggestion which could have stopped the conflict from evolving if it had been accepted.

In “the battle of the rocket” the dispreferred answers were similarly used to challenge and reject the previous turn, by denying ownership. The dispreferred answers were also used to decline someone’s desire. This conflict was both managed and solved in a cooperative manner without having any uses of preferred answers.

In “the battle of another rocket” the children used rhyming to manage the conflict and solved the issue of ownership. There were no uses of preferred answers and only one use of a dispreferred answer which was used by Anton to reject Gotfried’s claim of ownership.

In “the battle of the Golden Gate” a conflict never occurred, but could easily have done if the dispreferred answers had been answered differently. There were a handful uses of preferred answers in this sequence that functioned to show support and alignment, but were also used to accept ideas. This made the game evolve differently from the other sequences. The dispreferred answers in this sequence were used similarly to the uses found in the other sequences, to reject, challenge and deny someone, but in this sequence more specifically to reject someone’s idea and to challenge and deny someone’s definition of a toy.

It is thus evident that four different ways were used to manage, or not manage, a conflict which was about to occur or could have occurred. The first sequence was the most marked by disagreement and had the most uses of dispreferred answers, nearly no uses of preferred answers and no argumentation structure. The last sequence was least marked by disagreement and had some uses of dispreferred answers, many uses of preferred answers and no argument structure. The second and third sequence, the rocket sequences, were both marked by a clear argumentative structure and few preferred answers. The result section demonstrates how preference is distributed in peer interaction through the infinite number of ways to manage conflict.

The result section also demonstrates that the childrens’ use of dispreferred answers is strategically different to what Sidnell describes as typical for adult conversation. The children only used one strategy he described (a pro-forma agreement). Adults are furthermore described as always having “an inclination towards immediate compliance” when responding to first pair parts (Sidnell, 2010a: 77), a compliance only found in Eva’s reaction to Gotfried’s rejections. However, their way of demonstrating disagreement through a simple “no” did function the same way as Sidnell’s mitigating responses do, namely: to reject someone’s statement, to challenge someone’s standpoint and to demonstrate that the speakers desire is not accepted (Sidnell, 2010a: 77). Only one function was not used: declining an offer. The dispreferred answers thus take another form than in adult communication, but they seem to function the same. On the other hand, the children’s uses of preferred answers are used similarly to adults, when compared to their uses of dispreferred answers. These differences and similarities could be due to what the children currently are acquiring, as pragmatics usually comes last in the learning process. It is thus easier to learn how to say yes to something you want to say yes to, since that structure is simpler in its construction, than saying no to something while at the same time mitigating the circumstances and supporting face-work. Conclusively, is evident from the result section that the communicative structure of peer interaction is thoroughly different on some matters when compared to adult-adult conversation, and similar in other instances. Therefore, it is important to create appropriate terminology for CA specialized for child-child communication.

5. Discussion

How do the dispreferred answers guide us to understanding how these children create hierarchy in the group? How does this communicative strategy pinpoint how dominance is demonstrated? As we have seen above, the different uses of dispreferred answers can pinpoint where conflict occurs and how it is managed. It is in this management that hierarchy seems to be established, arranged and constantly re-arranged (Corsaro, 2011).

In “the battle of the fours” we saw how the two boys Anton and Gotfried struggled to prove their own point and to convince each other of their perspective. Their attempts failed, despite the fact that Bertha agreed with Gotfried and Eva tried to settle the dispute through making a suggestion encouraging cooperation and the two boys kept persisting that their version was the right one. It is clear that they wanted to be right, evidence of this can be found in one of Bertha’s utterance “Gotfried’s doing a right four”. Her utterance can thus be seen as an interpretation of the situation, that it is in fact a matter of who is “right”. The communicative strategies the boys use in order to convince one another were to directly oppose each other by challenging the knowledge of the speaker with dispreferred answers. It is possible that knowledge plays a big role in this sequence i.e. whoever has the most knowledge is right, wins the dispute and, consequently, gains power. Whoever wins the argument would seemingly decide what the agreement would look like i.e. what a four looks like, and this comes with unknown power. It could affect the right to decide the upcoming play by claiming the dominant role. Their uses of dispreferred answers can thus demonstrate their way of strategically challenging the other person’s right to power. It is evident from the level of disagreement and the manner of rejection that there is no effort to negotiate in order to find an agreement but instead a sole focus on contradicting each other. Almost all research state that children are more focused on negotiating (Liberg, 2004) and keeping the peace (Corsaro, 2011) than adults, but this sequence shows no such efforts from the boys. This sequence is more focused on control. Corsaro (2001) describes that efforts to gain power always seem to be arranged and re-arranged as a method to manage power relationships by challenging the superordinate role. He argues that challenging and gaining control over peers is a chief concern children this age have and that children often compete and try to control each other, which is evident in the interaction between Anton and Gotfried. The conflict is not solved, just as many conflicts seem to be left to either evolve to the breaking point or, as Corsaro (2011: 189) describes it, simply let to culminate since the structure of many conflicts in child-child interaction consist of a very simple reaction-counter reaction structure. Thus, this interaction between Anton and Gotfried is not focused

on negotiation but rather focused on challenging each other to arrange or re-arrange the power structure within the group.

Eva's suggestion to a solution would thus represent the focus on negotiation Liberg describes. Her attempt to settle the dispute is unsuccessful, but her effort is interesting, demonstrating her participant role in the group. Anton almost immediately rejects Eva's statement with a direct "no" on line 44 by shouting at her, hence, denying her right to have a say in the matter and, possibly, to the power of ending the dispute. Bertha shows a similar focus on negotiation by aligning with Gotfried and, also, a focus on support and affirmation which is a typical aspect of peer interaction according to Liberg (2004: 95). Thus, negotiation and support can be shown by preferred answers that act aligning and it is the participants which receive and give the support that signal the hierarchical structure in the group. The person who receives the most support in this sequence is Gotfried and the person distributing the most support is thus Bertha, Gotfried also supports Bertha at one point by accepting her alternation of his four on line 24. Eva supports both Gotfried and Anton equally thus becoming the only one who does not receive any support as her statement is ignored by Gotfried and completely rejected by Anton. Not all children support their peers, it seems as if only some children support each other (Bertha and Gotfried) and only some children support more than one of their peers (Eva), consequently this increases the possibility for negotiation as there almost always seems to be an offer of support at hand for any child in peer interaction, except for Eva in "the battle of the fours". She does, however, receive a great amount of support in "the battle of the Golden Gate" from both Gotfried and Bertha through their expansion on her ideas and through Bertha's alignment by using a preferred answer on line 10. The management of conflict and thus the establishment of hierarchy could depend on how the support is distributed, since more support would suggestively come with greater possibility to dominate. The participant roles in this sequence are thus quite clear, Gotfried has the most support and Eva has the least, Bertha gives the most support and Anton gives not support at all. It is very hard to speculate on what this could mean, however it does demonstrate some kind of hierarchical structure within the group.

"The battle of the rocket" demonstrates that ownership status can cause a conflict. Corsaro (2011: 162) argues that the possession of play materials is a common theme in children's conflicts and Cobb-Moore (2008: 199) elaborates on his statement by claiming that acquiring the role as owner justifies membership in interaction. It is possible elaborate a bit further, that being an owner not only justifies membership but also includes some level of power. Being an owner of an object, thus, could come with a higher ranking in the hierarchical structure and with the right to determine the rules of the play. This is perhaps why the children constantly challenge each other when it comes to ownership, just as

Gotfried challenged Bertha's ownership rights in "the battle of the rocket" and just as Anton challenged Gotfried's ownership in "the battle of another rocket". By challenging their peers the children "define and display interactional status" through the issue of ownership (Cobb-Moore, 2008: 203). The reason that toys cause conflict could be since the image of the world the child has learnt at home becomes mirrored once the child arrives at preschool where rules of ownership and sharing are completely different. At home the child learns that sharing is temporary and ownership is not, since most things belong to a specific person, however at preschool, ownership is temporary and sharing is not, sharing is eternal. This makes the temporary ownership of toys and material depend on negotiations and, sometimes disputes. Suggestively, it is through these negotiations and disputes that children establish the power relationships in the group. Denying ownership is thus a way for the children to strengthen their own status in the group by denying someone's rights (Cobb-Moore, 2008: 205). Whalen (1995: 327) argues that every definition of a toy (including ownership) is constantly re-definable and could be challenged by re-arranging the rules that apply. Accordingly, if e.g. a toy has been established as a snake, but is challenged by someone who decides that it should become a spaceship, the participant roles are being re-arranged and if e.g. Anton has been appointed owner of an object but Gotfried decides to deny his ownership rights and claim ownership himself, the participant role "owner" is being re-arranged. It is thus through the use of dispreferred answers that the children challenge and deny the ownership right of other's, and in extension, affect the power structure and the hierarchy in the group which is challenged and established anew.

According to Howes (1998) social competence is an important aspect in the establishment of hierarchy. Bertha's statements and strategies are the most successful in their effect on her peers. Her different uses of strategies seem to be adapted to the different contexts in order to handle the conflict in the best possible manner. An example is when the whole group acquired her rhyming technique to stop the conflict from developing in "the battle of another rocket" on line 23. She thus used humor as a way of relieving tension, a common strategy to settle a conflict in a complex manner (Corsaro, 2003: 163). Another example is in "the battle of the fours" where her alignment to Gotfried supposedly stopped Anton from winning the argument. Evidently, Eva is also very socially competent judging from Howes' criteria, but her strategies are not as effective as Bertha's as is evident in "the battle of the fours" where her attempts proved unsuccessful. However, she uses some effective strategies to manage disagreement in "the battle of the Golden Gate" where she accepts the rejections made by whoever was challenging her (in these cases Gotfried). Judging from Howes criteria Bertha would be the most "popular" as she seems the most sensitive to social cues (according to the effectiveness of her strategies of managing a conflict) and has social knowledge of the peer group which makes her succeed in social functioning with

her peers (Howes, 1998: 1). However, Howes also states that effectiveness on peers is a sign of social competence, something they all seem to have. Bertha is effective in supporting Gotfried and in keeping Anton from creating a conflict, Eva's effect on her peers is clearly demonstrated in "the battle of the Golden Gate" where she manages to entice both Bertha and Gotfried to play with the Golden Gate. Anton's effect on his peers is by his constant rejection of them all. His effect is furthermore evident by Bertha's tries to stop him from challenging Gotfried by e.g. rejecting his statements and rhyming to stop the conflict from developing. Gotfried is effective in his rejecting and denying his peers, however, he could not have such an effect if he would not be constantly supported by Bertha, the child with most social competence according to Howes' criteria (1998). Sometimes, their cooperation is successful, just as when Berta started rhyming to stop Anton from creating a conflict thus letting Gotfried acquire ownership of the toy, and sometimes she supports Gotfried just enough to let the situation culminate so that no one else can acquire the powerful role by creating a lose-lose situation, just as in "the battle of the fours". Even though Howes' criteria for being "popular" and socially competent is somewhat categorical and should not be followed blindly, it uncovers an important aspect of conflict management: the reaction to dispreferred answers is what proves important in managing a conflict, and the person best equipped to handle these types of rejecting and denying answer proves the most effective in controlling the situation, and perhaps in extension, to control the outcome of the conflict and thus re-arrange the hierarchical structure.

Another way of looking at this would be through Corsaro's description of the different roles children take in groups which help them solve disputes and establish hierarchy. He introduces three different roles: *noisy leaders*; which introduce activities, direct group play and keep players on track, *quiet leaders*; invent new play and monitor the bossiness of noisy leaders, *initiate members*; follow the leaders and keep the group together from the inside (Corsaro, 2011: 212). According to the results Gotfried would be the noisy leader who seems to direct play and keep players on track when it comes to establishing rules. He uses non-completed delays of an "uh + rejection" construction which have an effective outcome on Eva and he uses rejecting constructions by directly denying the previously made claim in terms of a simple "no". This is the method he uses to direct play and to keep players on track when establishing or re-defining rules by direct opposition. His way of gaining power could thus be by taking control of the toys, either physically or by redefining what they represent. Challenging a peer who has initiated a game is thus a common pattern in Gotfried's interactional behavior. Initiating a game is a threat to the power structure as an initiator supposedly has the power to decide what happens next. Bertha would be a quiet leader who monitors the bossiness of Gotfried by rejecting him when he challenges her and by aligning with his statements by accepting his rejections of their peers and by supporting him with

preferred answers. Eva likewise has quiet leader attributes as she often invents new games (such as the Golden Gate and the snake-game) but she is also an initiate member who keeps the group together from the inside by making sure that everyone is comfortable with the game rules. This is demonstrated by her way of making suggestions suitable to everyone, accepting the suggestions of others and accepting when someone rejects her ideas through alignment and preferred answers. Eva's role as initiate member is as most apparent in "the battle of another rocket" where she follows the quiet leader Bertha in her rhyming and in the battle of the four. Anton does not seem to have a role according to Corsaro's categorization, his role would thus be categorized as constantly challenging his peers through his uses of dispreferred answers e.g. when he opposed Gotfried, and his direct rejection of Eva's involvement in "the battle of the fours". It is also important to remember that Anton receives little support from his peers, especially in comparison to the amount of support Bertha and Gotfried offer each other in form of alignment through preferred answers. Despite the fact that he receives less support he does not divert from his rejecting strategy and proves consistent in his tries to challenge Gotfried in e.g. "the battle of another rocket" and in "the battle of the fours". Corsaro's categories are thus not fully applicable, as it seems that there is a vast grey area that is not described. Furthermore, the four children have more qualities than described in his categories. His categorization does, however, offer another perspective even if it is a categorical way of looking at participant organization. Corsaro's classification tells us one thing; there seems to be a pattern to the roles the children take in peer-interaction. These roles sometimes seem more fixed than anything else in their interaction as any other aspect of their communication e.g. play material, play-rules and ownership are constantly arranged and re-arranged, or as Whalen (1995: 326) calls it "the process of review, assessment and re-adjustment". The roles thus establishes group hierarchy and it seems hard to divert from them as they follow a consistent pattern where e.g.: Anton rejects Gotfried's position by using dispreferred answers but Bertha's support hinders his attempts (evident in both "the battle of the fours" and "the battle of another rocket") and where Eva aligns with Gotfried through preferred answers thus accepting his rejection of her statement's and hence her right to decide play rules (evident in both "the battle of the Golden Gate" and when the snake turned in to a spaceship"). However, it is noticeable that these roles, which at first glance appear to be fixed, in fact are re-arrangeable. Even though Eva accepts Gotfried's rejection of the snake on line 13, Gotfried also accepts Eva's condition "for a little while" on line 14 through a preferred answer and accordingly, accepts not receiving full power over the toy and over deciding the rules of the game. Another example is when Gotfried challenged Bertha's right to ownership in "the battle of the rocket" and was not supported by neither Bertha nor Eva. Instead, he was challenged by Bertha the same way he challenged Anton and Eva many times in the transcriptions through dispreferred answers. The structure of power, thus, seems to be constantly changing and the hierarchy

in the group seems to change accordingly depending on the context and, as mentioned before, depending on how the participants react to each other's uses of dispreferred answers. The patterns noticeable is thus that sometimes Gotfried dominates, and sometimes Bertha does, sometimes Eva manages to steer Gotfried's rejection to an agreement that fits them both, and sometimes Anton appears to powerful for Gotfried to handle and Bertha starts rhyming to stop him from challenging Gotfried.

Another important aspect of establishing hierarchy is through the organization of play (Whalen, 1995 and Corsaro, 2003). As demonstrated earlier, selecting and defining materials is an area where conflict occurs and is managed in cohesion with the establishment of group hierarchy (which is Whalen's first two problems that emerge in play). No real conflict revolving around play entry (problem number 3) occurred in my material. Problem number 4, revolves around allocation of tasks i.e. creating a common understanding of what each participant will do. This is, supposedly, rooted in a preference of having a certain set of roles to help organize play, roles which suggest something about the actual hierarchical roles (Whalen, 1995: 325). According to Whalen (1995) the roles established in play are in fact closely tied to the actual roles in the group, which seems a reasonable claim since the time children spend together mainly consist of play. Hence, the discussion in the previous paragraph is supported by Whalen's fourth problem, establishing the roles in peer-interaction or play are in fact the roles the children actually take since they become interchangeable. The fifth problem has to do with re-adjusting the already established play-rules and this problem is closely tied to Corsaro's main argument when it comes to play, namely, that actions and responses decide what is appropriate and interesting for everyone (Corsaro, 2003: 93). This adaptation to everyone's needs through e.g. alignment depends on accepting, rejecting and expanding on the previously made contributions material by challenging a statement through e.g. a dispreferred answer. The use of dispreferred answers could thus be a way to explore what would be a better definition of the play rules by rejecting the established rules and thus suggesting an alternation. Whalen (1995) argues that this type of rearrangement is a part of the children's process when establishing themselves as a social group. My interpretation is linked to the previous discussion that the children constantly challenge each other by using dispreferred answers and react to the dispreferred answers with either other dispreferred answers or by preferred answers that signal alignment. Moreover, it is evident in the result section that the use of dispreferred answers is not always a strategy that provokes disagreement, but it is sometimes a useful tool to let the participants know, in a very direct way, what the message is. Consequently, this type of directness makes it easier to cooperate and create understanding. This is a thoroughly different way to manage a conflict

compared to adult conflict management strategies which would include some face-work, requiring the participants to mitigate the messages and thus not be as direct (Norrby, 2004: 210).

5.1 Concluding remarks

The discussion above has demonstrated that there are many uses of dispreferred and preferred answers that seem to have a vital part in the establishment of hierarchy. The most recurrent and consistent use when it comes to dispreferred answers is when they are used to reject the previous statement and challenge the speaker. There are two main outcomes of this use, firstly: whether that rejection denies ownership, knowledge or play suggestions it could also deny the right to some level of control or dominance and secondly: rejection can be used as alignment. When rejecting someone's right to power the person who initiates a game or who claims a toy is usually targeted, as can be seen in all transcription. The person who e.g. owns a toy of importance therefore has the power to decide anything revolving around that toy, in theory. However, since almost every aspect of the game is constantly challenged the power is constantly re-arranged and the hierarchical structure in the group changes accordingly. If a specific child has been appointed owner of a toy, that child will have some power for as long as he/she is not challenged. Thus taking control of the toys (either physically or by redefining a representation), of knowledge and of deciding play norms is a way to gain power and establish hierarchy by strategically challenging and denying someone else's right to power. The other outcome, signaling alignment through the use of dispreferred answers i.e. aligning to someone through the rejection of someone else can be seen in "the battle of the fours" as Bertha rejected Anton's four and hence supported Gotfried's four. This is a strategy not as focused on negotiation as the other uses of alignment, but instead it works to distribute power to whoever has the most support. By supporting Gotfried, Bertha rejects Anton which makes Anton's claims rejected from two different directions. Gotfried and Bertha's support thus affects Anton's attempts to successfully persuade them. The amount of support could thus be an indication as to who has control of the situation and who could re-arrange the hierarchical structure.

Another important use of dispreferred answers is the way it encourages direct and honest communication. It is a tool the children use to communicate their opinions to their peers in a very direct way. If Gotfried had answered Eva with a "well, perhaps there is no chocolate factory but..." instead of "uh... there is no chocolate factory", the message would have been harder to process in an equally effective manner. The point is not that the children knowingly do this, but that this is a consequence of their way of using dispreferred answers. Hence, the fact that they do not use dispreferred answers such as e.g. accounts and pallatives that act mitigating creates a communication clear in its statements. This

could be the reason that so many researchers judge peer interaction as more focused on negotiation, since there simply is a greater possibility to understand each other and hence a greater possibility to negotiate on everyone's terms, since everyone's terms are very clear. This openness and directness thus encourages the children to challenge each other; it creates a communicative atmosphere where it is acceptable to directly oppose one another. Consequently, by challenging each other they make alternations to the previously made suggestions, which also, signal negotiation. The power structure is thus constantly re-arranged and the hierarchy established and re-established according to the current context.

The use of preferred answers signals other functions, preferred answers were mostly used to agree with the previous turn or to align with the speaker. Alignment was shown as an answer to a dispreferred response by accepting the rejection, as Eva did when Gotfried rejected the existence of the chocolate factory. Her alignment in this case could signal acceptance of Gotfried's try to acquire power by rejecting the person already in power, Eva (since she has initiated the game and thereby has more power to decide the rules). This form of alignment shows that Eva supports the rearrangement of the hierarchical structure, and thereby makes sure that the game rules are adapted to her peers' needs by accepting suggestions and accepting when someone rejects her ideas.

Another form of alignment was used through preferred responses e.g. when Gotfried accepted Eva's condition "it can turn in to a spaceship *for a little while*" and thus accepting the fact that he did not receive the whole power but shares it with her. Gotfried's alignment was an answer to Eva's alignment, making this a very equal and cooperative manner to distribute power.

Alignment through preferred answers can thus both signal an acceptance of someone's attempt at seizing power and thus arrange the hierarchical structure, it can be used to create terms where the power is shared and it can be used to distribute support. Conclusively, all these uses do the same thing but in different extensions, namely: encourage negotiation and support, which consequently develops the game in a more equal manner when compared to the sequences with less uses of preferred answers.

This discussion thus shows that the four children seem to use preference in many different ways to establish and re-arrange the hierarchical structure in the group according to context by using dispreferred answers to reject, challenge and align to someone and by using preferred answers to accept ideas, align to someone and to show support. All these strategies either deny the right to power or support someone else's attempts at acquiring power. According to my material, hierarchy seems to be a social structure any of the children can change, establish and re-arrange as they have all shown dominance in different ways. Whether or not they are successful seems to be a question of support. This

is the beauty of child-child interaction that almost everything (except for Bertha's loyalty to Gotfried) seems to be re-arrangeable and is constantly challenged. The structure of power, thus, is constantly changing and the hierarchy with it.

5.2 Suggestions for future research

Suggestions for future research with this material would be to study the use of gestures and prosody. Suggestively, gestures have power to signal dominance, especially as the children often point to things or stand up to make themselves bigger. Gestures could thus prove an important tool to create hierarchy and uncover strategies that create subordination and dominance. Prosody would be interesting to study in relation to hierarchy, but also to study in a more explorative manner as it is noticeable that children use prosody differently than adults. It would be very interesting to see how children use their voice and what means that would serve them in their peer interaction, and consequently, to include the use of prosody as a CA strategy.

Another, equally important aspect that is important to study is different strategies girls and boys use to manage conflicts. This fall I will analyze my material, together with Ottesjö, through a gender perspective and present the results at the *Språk och Kön*⁹ convention in Växjö, Sweden. The main idea is to uncover reoccurring patterns of how conflict is managed by girls and by boys in this material. This would indicate how children this age act according to their gender. This particular age is of special interest as it is often described as being "in-between" i.e. the children have acquired many "adult-like" communicative strategies but their interaction is still marked by a use of strategies typical for children. To map out how gender effects their interaction, or how to demonstrate reoccurring patterns according to gender, could thus uncover some vital aspects of how children are affected by gender roles while finding themselves "in the middle". This could, if further research is done, perhaps uncover how these roles are created in society in terms of expectations on the behavior according to gender and thus how these expectations affect children who are in the transition space.

Nevertheless, whichever aspect of children's interaction or communication is studied it demonstrates an important point: children talk differently to each other than adults talk to each other, and they talk differently to one another than they seem to do with adults. Consequently, they perceive the world differently and they organize social order differently. It is thus vital to describe their interaction to further understand how they function in a social context. The more that is studied about children and

⁹ Translation: Language and gender

their manner of understanding the world, the more importance we can give them in their everyday life and this would present an opportunity to adapt the general approach to children's learning abilities.

Appendix

The following features were used in the transcripts. I will use "talk" as a word for describing the different transcription features.

xxx	words spoken but not audible
[talk]	marks the points when an overlap of talk begins and ends
TALK	high volume of speech
tal-	abrupt cut-off of the prior word
ta:lk	the sound before the semicolon is prolonged
↗	intonation rising slightly
(0.3)	pause in duration marked in seconds
?	very high rise in intonation, a question
.hh	audiable inhale
hh	audiable exhale
<talk	indicates a fast start
(talk/speech)	indicates a word or a suggestion of words not entirely audible
<u>talk</u>	indicates stress
↘	intonation falling slightly
>talk<	slow pace
(.)	micro pause
↗	intonation rising to high pitch
<talk>	indicates fast pace
[[talk]]	marks multiple overlaps
°talk°	low volume
((talk))	a comment regarding something specific on that line
h	laugh in a word
=	indicated that the turn continues
@talk@	smiling while talking

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