

UNIVERSITY OF JYVÄSKYLÄ

**COMPETITIVE OVERLAP IN NATIVE FINNISH AND ENGLISH
EVERYDAY CONVERSATION**

A Pro Gradu Thesis in English

by

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Tutkimuksen tarkoituksena on tutkia päällekkäin puhumista suomen- ja englanninkielisissä arkikeskusteluissa. Tutkimus keskittyi yksinomaan kilpaileviin päällekkäisyyksiin, jotka luokiteltiin päällekkäisyyksiksi, joissa seuraava puhuja aloitti vuoronsa päällekkäin nykyisen puhujan vuoron kanssa tarkoituksenaan kilpailla vuorosta. Tutkimuksen tavoitteena oli selvittää 1) millaista päällekkäin puhumista aineistoissa esiintyy 2) kuinka usein kukin kategoria esiintyy aineistoissa ja 3) onko päällekkäisyyksien esiintymisessä eroja tai yhtäläisyyksiä suomen- ja englanninkielisten keskustelujen välillä.

Tutkimusaineisto koostui kahdesta arkikeskustelusta, joista toinen käytiin englanniksi ja toinen suomeksi. Molemmissa keskusteluissa oli osanottajina kolme natiivipuhujaa. Keskustelut olivat pituudeltaan noin 35 minuuttia. Molemmat keskustelut olivat järjestettyjä aikaisempaa tutkimusta varten. Keskustelut litteroitiin äänitteiden perusteella.

Tutkimus suoritettiin keskustelunanalyttisin menetelmin ja siinä hyödynnettiin aikaisempia tutkimuksia. Tutkimuksen tulokset osoittavat, että päällekkäisyyksien määrä oli molemmissa keskusteluissa melko alhainen ja että päällekkäisyyksistä suurin osa oli kilpailevia päällekkäisyyksiä.

Kilpailevat päällekkäisyydet jaettiin viiteen eri kategoriaan ja yleisimpiä näistä olivat yhdenaikaiset aloitukset, keskeytykset sekä vuorovaihtoon liittyvät päällekkäisyydet. Suomen- ja englanninkielisten keskustelujen päällekkäisyyksistä löytyi sekä eroja että yhtäläisyyksiä. Suurimmat erot suomen- ja englanninkielisten keskustelujen päällekkäisyyksien välillä liittyivät vuorovaihtoon, puheen häiriöihin tai taukoihin sekä keskeytyksiin. Suurimmat yhtäläisyydet olivat kilpailevien päällekkäisyyksien, vuoron alkuun liittyvien päällekkäisyyksien sekä keskeytyksien suuri määrä sekä vuoron lopun tunnistamiseen liittyvien päällekkäisyyksien pieni määrä.

Asiasanat: overlap, competitive overlap, turn-taking, conversation analysis, language related differences

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1 INTRODUCTION

“Wait for your turn!” is a phrase that almost every child has heard numerous times when growing up. In fact, one could state that turn-taking is an innate, although learned, ability that humans have. People wait in lines at cafeterias to get their order in, take numbers in banks that tell them when it is their turn to be served and wait for the traffic light to turn green before proceeding with their journey (Mey 2001: 138). Turn-taking occurs everywhere and all the time, also in conversations. Just as when waiting for the traffic light to turn green and give the permission to proceed or waiting for our number to be called up in a bank, all discussion participants will have to wait for signals that enable the change of turns in conversations. Sometimes these signals might be misinterpreted, ignored or anticipated so that two or more participants may opt to take the turn simultaneously. In other words, an overlap of turns happens. An overlap of turns can be considered either as a positive or a negative matter, depending on when, where, how and why it happens. Surely if someone was to cut in line in front of others, the other people involved in this situation would consider it a negative matter. However, if that person cutting in would have a good reason (for example not realizing that there was a line to begin with) for doing so, the negative aspect of the matter might be overlooked. Similarly, overlaps in speech might be considered as a normal aspect of any conversation or as a negative and, more accurately, a rule-breaking matter. However, as the saying goes, all rules are meant to be broken. That is similarly true in conversations as it is in other occasions of turn-taking. There is an unwritten rule of politeness that states that people are to talk one person at a time, but overlaps of speech still happen constantly. Why is it that these rules of turn-taking are not always followed and an overlap of turns happens? Do we really need to wait for our turn? The present study

wishes to seek the answers to these questions, along with exploring some other mysteries of overlapping speech.

In the present study, the term **overlap** or **overlapping talk/speech** are used to refer to simultaneous talk by two or more discussion participants. Overlapping talk can further be divided into two sub-categories: **competitive** and **non-competitive** overlaps (Schegloff 2000: 4-6). In the present study, more attention will be paid to competitive overlaps. These cases of overlaps refer to overlaps where there is competition over turns. Also, the purpose for creating a competitive overlap is to take the floor prematurely, prior to the competition of the on-going turn. In contrast, non-competitive overlaps refer to those cases of overlaps where there is no competition over speakership within the occurring turn. These cases of competitive overlaps will also be further divided into five sub-sections, which will be discussed later in more detail.

This thesis falls in the field of conversation analysis and conversation studies. This study of talk in interaction attempts to investigate the sequential organization of talk (see e.g. Hutchby and Wooffitt 1998). Therefore, I wish to describe conversation analysis in more detail and to concentrate more on its sub-section, the organization of turn-taking. Within the description of turn-taking, terms such as **a turn constructional unit**, **a transition relevance place**, **interruption**, **overlap** and its various types that are relevant for the research will be explained. The focus point of this thesis is on overlap, its categorization and the possible language related differences related to it. The data consists of two conversations. These conversations are studied and compared in the light of competitive overlaps and the language pair of English and Finnish.

Within the field of conversation studies, while turn-taking in various situations has been widely studied, overlap as a phenomenon has not gotten much attention. Most studies on overlap concentrate on seeking the initial point of the overlap, or on searching the reasons why overlaps exist

and how they could be solved (see e.g. Jefferson 1983, 1986, 2004 and Schegloff 2000). Also, some have analyzed overlaps in formal conversations, but everyday conversations have not gotten much attention within the field. As previously stated, Schegloff (2000) has divided overlaps into competitive and non-competitive overlaps. Also, Jefferson (1983) has recognized the types of **transitional**, **recognitional** and **progressional onsets**. Stolt (2008) has further divided the cases of non-competitive overlaps in her material into nine different categories. Kohonen (2004) has created eight categories for the cases of overlap that occur in her material, but this analysis included both competitive and non-competitive overlap. The detailed categorization of competitive overlaps, however, is what is still missing in the field of conversation analysis and exploring this matter is, therefore, one of the aims of the present study.

Moreover, the possible language differences of overlapping speech are an aspect of turn-taking that has not been sufficiently studied. Many studies have been conducted on the linguistic differences of native and non-native speakers of a language. However, almost no comparative studies between the language differences of native Finnish and native English speakers have been conducted in the area of turn-taking or overlap. Sneek (1987) and Halmari (1993) have both studied telephone conversations between native speakers of Finnish and English, but paid little attention to overlapping speech, or at least no valid conclusions were made on the possible language differences of overlaps. Also, the studies conducted by Sneek and Halmari did not address interaction. Nikula (1996) did, however, conduct a comparative study on the language differences of native Finnish and English speakers in a face-to-face situation. Nevertheless, this study concentrated on the use of pragmatic modifiers and no attention was paid to overlapping talk. Also, Nyyssönen (1990) has studied the conversational skills and social competence of Finnish and English speakers, but yet again no attention was paid to overlaps. What these studies have, however,

revealed is that there are indeed some linguistic differences in native Finnish and English conversations.

Therefore, in contrast to previous studies on overlap, the aim of the present study is firstly, to seek the reasons why overlaps in speech occur. Secondly, I wish to categorize competitive overlaps according to the reasons why they happen. And thirdly, the study will concentrate on finding out whether there are any language-related differences in turn-taking and overlaps in everyday conversations. In the present study, turn-taking, and more precisely overlaps in Finnish and English conversations, will be studied. Each case of competitive overlap is analyzed according to the reasons why they occur. Also, this study will aim to find out if there are any differences or similarities in producing or occurrence of overlaps in Finnish and English conversations. If differences or similarities do exist, I hope to search the reasons why. The study is based on two audio taped conversations, each approximately 35 minutes in duration. One of these conversations is carried out by native Finnish speakers, while the other one has people talking in their native language, English. There are altogether three co-locutors in each conversation. Both of the conversations were face-to-face conversations in type and the situation was pre-arranged in both occasions. The conversations were later transcribed for the purpose of this study. The research questions are;

- 1) *What types of overlapping talk exist in the data?*
- 2) *How often does each type occur in each conversation?*
- 3) *Are there any differences or similarities in overlapping talk and its occurrence between the Finnish and English conversations?*

The present study is structured as follows; Chapter 2 is the theoretical part of the study. This chapter explains the key terms of the study and gives a more accurate description of what overlaps are. Also, by looking into the field of conversational studies and, more closely its sub-section the

organization of turn-taking, this chapter situates the study in its theoretical framework. Chapter 3 is then devoted to describing the previous studies that are relevant for the purpose of the present study. Chapter 4 will provide the outlines for the study by describing more closely the methods of research and the data, on the basis of which the analysis has been conducted. Chapter 5 begins the empirical part of the study by introducing the findings and by analyzing the data from a qualitative point of view. This will be followed by the quantitative analysis of the overlaps in the following chapter. Chapter 6 will also connect the findings with the earlier studies conducted and compare these results. This chapter will also reveal the possible problems and limitations of the study and discuss the findings in the light of to the original research questions and previous studies. The present study concludes with Chapter 7 drawing final conclusions and evaluating the present study.

2 CONVERSATION ANALYSIS

Ten Have (1999: 5) writes about the emergence of conversation analysis. In the early 1960s, Erving Goffman introduced the research area of face-to-face interaction to his students, Harvey Sacks and Emanuel Schegloff. At that time, Sacks also had access to the tape recorded telephone calls to the Suicide Prevention Centre and it was with these materials that he developed the approach that is now known as conversation analysis. Sacks realized that conversation participants do not understand each other by mere chance, but that conversations are indeed highly organized activities (Hakulinen 1998: 13). The aim of conversation analysis is to describe and explain this order (Kurhila 2000: 359). Conversation analysts are not, therefore, interested in what is grammatically correct, but they want to know why something was said

and what function that has in that particular context (Hakulinen 1998: 35). After Sacks' accidental death, his work was continued by Schegloff and Gail Jefferson, who created conversation analysis by developing further what Sacks had earlier begun (Hakulinen 1998: 13).

Markee (2000: 25) situates conversation analysis within the field of ethnomethodology, a term that was coined by Harold Garfinkel. Ethnomethodology refers to the study of everyday common-sense activities and the analysis of those activities by their participants. Conversation analysis, or the study of ordinary conversations, is one of these fields of study. For example, the fact that people rarely say exactly what they mean is one of the ideas that have transferred from ethnomethodology onto conversation analysis (Hakulinen 1998: 13). In other words, as Garfinkel states, all lingual expressions include the notions of a symbolic meaning and contextual interpretation (Hakulinen 1998: 13).

Hutchby and Wooffitt (1998: 17) write about Sacks' research program that investigated the levels of social order which was revealed in everyday talk. Sacks's hypothesis was that conversations are deeply and structurally organized and that they could be investigated by using recorded data. Characteristic to Sacks's work and conversation analysis in general, is that authentic, real-world data is always to be used. Another important discovery that Sacks made was that there is "order at all points" in conversation. That is to say nothing in talk-in-interaction can be treated as insignificant before subjecting it to analysis.

Sacks gave life to conversation analysis by becoming interested in the way that people actually converse and interact, how talk is organized and how (spoken) language is used (Ten Have 1999: 6). Hutchby and Wooffitt (1998: 17) summarize the methodological basis for conversation analysis as follows: 1) Talk-in-interaction is systematically organized and deeply ordered, 2) The production of talk-in-interaction is methodic, 3)

The analysis of talk-in-interaction should be based on naturally occurring data, 4) Analysis should not initially be constrained by prior theoretical assumptions.

One of the basic principles of conversation analysis is that the material is to be gathered from authentic situations, since the aim is to find out how people actually converse and co-operate in real life situations (Hakulinen 1998: 15). Conversations are transcribed in great detail to include everything from lengthy sentences to non-verbal gestures such as coughs and gazes. The analysis proceeds from a single phenomenon that is present in the corpus to a more general level (Kurhila 2000: 360). Although Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson used audio tapes, conversation analysts today normally use video-tapings as source material since that also enables the analysis of non-verbal gestures that are a crucial part of any conversation.

The core forms of organization studied by conversation analysis are: **1.Sequence organization**, **2.Repair organization** and **3. Turn-taking organization** (Hakulinen 1998: 16). These three types of organization are unique but also interlocking, context-free and simultaneously context sensitive (Ten Have 1999: 112). They are affected by, for example, the number of discussion participants and other such contextual matters, but that does not change the principles. These three organizations are the precondition for all conversations and the basis according to which conversation participants interpret each other (Hakulinen 1998: 13).

2.1 Sequence organization

Sequence organization sees conversations as consisting of **adjacency pairs**, like for example a question and an answer or a greeting and a response to that greeting (Ten Have 1999: 113). The relationships of and connections between these pairs is the target of analysis in sequence organization (Kurhila 2000: 361). Raevaara (1998: 75) writes about

sequence organization as a phenomenon of conversations. The sequential structure of a conversation refers to the way in which conversational turns are connected and what sort of sequences they create. Every spoken turn is followed by the anticipation of the following turn and each turn is constructed to suit the previous turn. Whether the turn in question requires a certain type of a turn as the next action, is the thing that differentiates adjacency pairs from less constructed and confined turns.

2.2 Repair Organization

Sorjonen (1998: 111) writes about the second organization of conversation analysis that is **repair organization**. This organization deals with the problems of conversations, such as mishearings or misunderstandings (Ten Have 1999: 116). It does not, however, deal with the errors of speech alone, but basically any element of speech can be picked out for repair (Kurhila 2000: 361). The study of repair organization aims to find out how conversation participants deal with the problems and errors that constantly occur in all types of conversations. Conversation analysis alone does not classify something as incorrect or erroneous. It is the conversation participants themselves that make the decision of which problems of the conversation to pick out for repair.

Turn-taking organization and its sub-section **overlap** are described more extensively in the following chapter.

3 TURN-TAKING AND OVERLAP

This chapter will discuss the third organization of conversation analysis, the organization of turn-taking. The purpose of this chapter is to describe what a turn is and how turns change in conversations. In addition, the second section of the chapter concentrates on describing the concept of overlap and the various categorizations of it.

3.1 Turn-taking organization

Turn-taking in conversation is an organized activity, which includes the basic principle of only one person speaking at a time with minimal gaps and overlapping in conversation (Ten Have 1999: 111). In order to have a successful conversation, the speakers need to have knowledge of how and when to take turns in speaking. In other words, the speakers have to agree to follow a set of “rules” of conversation and turn-taking (Oreström 1983: 18). These rules are not preset nor do they exist in written format, but they simply apply to the norms of talk that children learn at young age (Hakulinen 1998: 33). When these rules are misinterpreted or simply not followed, overlapping in speech occurs.

When analyzing the overlapping of turns in a conversation, it should first be defined what actually constitutes as a **turn**. There is no clear definition of a turn in conversation that would suit any given context, time or situation. A turn is defined by the participants in the particular conversation according to the context; the speakers interpret what a turn is and when to respond to it (Hutchby and Wooffitt 1998: 48). Turns can be of different length and appearance, no set patterns exist. A turn can be a single word or a lengthy sentence with gaps, intonations and non-verbal gestures included. A turn does not, however, equal a grammatical sentence, although that might sometimes seem reasonable (Sacks et al 1974: 7). Also, every utterance of a speaker does not constitute as a turn: for example brief utterances such as *mmh*, *uhum*, *yeah*, *hmm* and simultaneous laughter are only a sign of the hearer understanding and recognizing the on-going turn, but not wanting to take the turn themselves. Moreover, it is more likely to be seen as an encouragement for the speaker to continue with his/her turn.

Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson (1974) and Hutchby and Wooffitt (1998: 48) see turns consisting of **turn-constructive units** (TCUs). These units roughly correspond to grammatical units such as sentences, clauses,

phrases or even single words. In other words, TCUs are the pieces of conversation that comprise the turn. Turn-constructional units have a property of **projectability**. The conversation participants can, therefore, predict the type of the on-going turn unit and also proclaim when it is likely to come to an end. **Transition relevance places** (TRPs) signal the points in which speaker change is possible in the conversation, though it is also possible for the current speaker to continue with another TCU. A fluent conversation is based on the assumption that the speakers can define a turn and react to it in an appropriate way. Speakers will have to project when a turn will be over and how to respond to it. Turns and transition relevance places (TRPs) are identified by the speakers through syntactic, pragmatic and prosodic features. Overlaps are also closely related to TRPs; the recognition of a TRP is a major contributing factor in the occurrence of an overlap. Overlaps may occur simultaneously with TRPs, before a TRP, after a TRP or due to a misunderstanding of a TRP.

There are various ways to change or take turns in a conversation. Turn-taking can happen naturally at the end of a turn, in a transition relevance place (TRP) (Have 1999: 111). Every speaker is entitled to one constructional unit at a time and at the boundaries of these turns, TRPs exist (Hakulinen 1998: 42). The rules of turn-taking organization proclaim that every TRP has to be negotiated by the speakers. Sacks et al (1974: 5) provide a set of rules, based on empirical study, for turn taking:

(1) *At the initial transition-relevance place of any turn:*

- (a) *If the current speaker has selected the next speaker, the selected speaker has the right and must take the next turn.*
- (b) *If the current speaker has not selected the next speaker, any potential next speaker may self-select but does not have to. The first speaker to start acquires the right to the turn.*
- (c) *If the current speaker has not selected the next speaker, s/he may continue if s/he wishes unless another speaker self-selects.*

(2) If speaker change has not taken place in a situation where rule c has operated and the current speaker has continued, the rule set a-c applies again for each next transition-relevance place until speaker change occurs.

In other words, speaker change in conversation occurs in one of the following ways: 1.**the current speaker selecting the next speaker**, 2.**next speaker self-selecting** or 3.**current speaker opting to continue** if no other speaker takes the turn (Sacks et al 1974: 5). The speakers follow the conduct of other speakers and recognize the TRPs, so that they can take part in the conversation. Also, non-verbal gestures such as eye-contact or hand-gestures are ways of reinforcing the selection of the next speaker.

The different ways of turn-taking can perhaps best be demonstrated via examples from the data of the present study. It should, however, be noted that since the analysis is merely based on audio, the non-verbal gestures are either presumed or completely missing from the analysis of turn-taking.

In the following extract SOP and JAS are talking about JAS's new hobby of learning how to play the guitar.

Extract 1)

1	SOP	[are you getting] like a book? to follow? to play? o:r
2	JAS	or I use the internet and um (.) I been practicing XX
3	SOP	that's <u>good</u>

JAS has brought up the topic of him learning to play the guitar. He has just been telling SOP about how he has just begun to practice and how it has been going so far. SOP then wishes to know more about JAS's methods of learning by asking him where he gets his information and learning materials (line 1). It is quite clear from the context that SOP is addressing the question to JAS, although she does not name him specifically. Most likely, there is also eye-contact, which would reinforce

SOP's selection of JAS as the next speaker. In other words, SOP is the current speaker, who according to the rule of *the current speaker selecting the next speaker* (Sacks et al 1974:5), selects JAS as the next speaker. According to the rule, JAS then takes the following turn (line 2), after being appointed as the next speaker by SOP, the current speaker.

In the following extract the three Finnish girls are just beginning their discussion that is to be audio taped for research purposes and they are telling their host what they would like to drink or eat while they are talking.

Extract 2)

1	Nina	mä voisin ottaa <u>banaanin</u> jos sä käyt siellä [ä-
2	Sara	[mä haluisin kupin \$kahvia kiihtos\$
3	Anna	°mä ottasin kans kiitos kupin [kahvia°
4	Nina	[tai mielu- †joku hedelmä [kumminki

Nina begins the topic by stating that she would like a banana if somebody is heading towards the kitchen (line 1). This is done by Nina self-selecting herself as the next speaker, since the previous discussion has got nothing to do with the topic in question and it is no way indicated that someone would have selected Nina as the next speaker. Also, the following turn distribution is a self-selection by Sara. She indicates that she would like a cup of coffee (line 2) and self-selects, since Nina in no way indicates that she would have selected Sara as the next speaker. The pattern continues with Anna's self-selection on line 3, when she states that she would also like a cup of coffee. In a way this can also be seen as not being a self-selection, since the other two girls have stated what they would like and in a way it is expected of Anna to tell the others what she would like from the kitchen. However, Sara has not selected Anna as the next speaker (unless it is done via non-verbal

gestures that are not visible in the transcript) and so Anna's turn can be treated as a self-selection. Furthermore, Nina's and Anna's following turns are also conducted according to the rule of *next speaker self-selecting* (Sacks et al 1974:5), since none of them have been selected as the next speaker by the current speaker and the turn also changes from speaker to speaker so that it is also not a case of current speaker opting to continue.

In the following extract the girls are talking about a typing course that Anna has attended.

Extract 3)

1	Sara	osaatteko kirjottaa koneella?
2		(1.2)
3	Nina	↑kahella sormella oikein [sujuvasti
4	Sara	[ei mut osaatsä oikeesti
5	Anna	mä yritin
6		mä hankin (.) >toissa vuonna ei viime vuonna ↑toissa vuonna ku oli tää kirjallisuusmyynti <
7		siellä mä ostin hienosti >konekirjotus< (.) oppaan
8		@@@
9	Anna	↑se oli konekirjotuso- (.) koulu
10		>semmosii tietsä missä on näit< harjotuksii

Sara first introduces the topic by posing an open question to the two other girls on line 1. The question can be identified as an open one, because of Sara's use of plural form "osaatteko", which indicates that the question is indeed addressed to both co-locutors and also simultaneously to neither one of them specifically. After a slight pause, Nina selects herself as the one to answer Sara's question (line 3). Sara is not happy with the answer she gets and attempts to ask the same question again with some specifications (line 4). This time Sara uses a singular form "osaatsä", which would indicate that the question is addressed to someone specifically. In this case, that someone would most likely be

Nina, since Sara's turn is a response to Nina's previous turn. The selection of next speaker is also most likely reinforced via eye contact. Nevertheless, Anna decides to take the turn and to answer the question by telling the story of how she bought a guide book on how to learn how to type properly (lines 5-7). This story raises laughter from all three girls, but no other comments are made. Since nobody wishes to comment on what Anna has said, she self-selects and decides to continue her story on lines 9-10. This is done according to the rule of *current speaker opting to continue* (Sacks et al 1974:5). It is, however, quite clear that Anna was not finished with her story so it could also be stated that her turn has not ended and, therefore, nobody else takes the turn. Her initial turn is, however, cut off by the laughter of all three girls and, therefore, her following turn can be treated as a separate turn with its own turn selection.

As the examples above show, turn-taking is a complex matter that organizes the conversations. The reason why the organization of turn-taking and its various forms are given so much attention in the present study, is that it is very closely related to overlaps, the main focus of analysis of the present study. This topic will be further explained in the following section.

3.1 Overlap

Overlaps in conversation refer to talk by more than one (normally two) at a time (Schegloff 2000: 7). Typical for turn-taking organization is that there is hardly any overlapping among speakers. However, if overlapping occurs, it is usually very short-termed due to the fact that other speakers will drop out as only one speaker will be able to continue their turn (Schegloff 2000: 4). Schegloff (2000) has pointed out the problem of which speaker is to stop speaking when overlapping occurs and sought answers to this question. He (2000: 22) found that short

overlaps are resolved very quickly due to one party dropping out and longer overlaps are resolved after competition over turns.

Schegloff (2000: 10) argues that most overlaps agree with the following terms: "(1) Most overlaps are over very quickly, (2) Some overlaps persist to considerable lengths and (3) Many overlaps are at the site of hitches and perturbations in the production of the talk". In other words, when overlaps happen, they are usually resolved very quickly. Sometimes, however, resolving the overlap is not possible or wanted and the overlap extends until one of the speakers comes to the end of their turn. Also, the reason for most overlaps is that some disturbing factor (for example, talk suddenly cuts off or a change in pitch indicates the end of a turn) has come into play in the conversation and, therefore, enabled the conversation participants to believe that there is a chance for self-selection of turns, which then leads to overlaps.

Schegloff (2000: 4-6) has divided overlaps into two categories. Namely, **problematic** and **unproblematic**. The problematic cases of overlap refer to those overlaps where there is competition over turn, hence also known as **competitive overlap**. In contrast, the unproblematic cases of overlap refer to those cases of overlap where there is no competition in respect to turn-taking. These cases of overlap will be referred to as **non-competitive overlap** in the present study. The non-competitive overlaps refer to, for example, brief utterances such as *yeah, uhuh, hmm* and shared laughter. In other words, these cases of overlap do not interfere with the flow of the conversation nor do they affect the change of speakership in the conversation. Thus, they are also unproblematic in regards to turn-taking. These cases of overlap are merely a way of giving support or showing agreement to the current speaker. Schegloff (2000) also points out that the division between problematic and unproblematic (or competitive and non-competitive) overlap is not always a simple matter. The categorization of an overlap depends highly on how

the conversation participants treat them. Therefore, the reactions of the co-locutors are an important matter to pay attention to when analyzing overlaps.

French and Local (1983) have also described competitive overlaps in more detail. In their opinion, a competitive overlap is defined by its prosodic features. That is to say, competitive overlaps are high in pitch and loud in volume. Also, this change in prosody of the overlapping speaker causes the on-going speaker to increase the volume or to decrease the pace of their talk. In other words, French and Local (1983) define competitive overlaps from the point of view of prosody, not lexical content or positioning within turn construction (in contrast to Schegloff 2000).

Jefferson (1983) has developed three major categories for overlap onsets: 1. Transitional onset, 2. Recognitional onset and 3. Progressional onset. In contrast to Schegloff (2000) and French and Local (1983), Jefferson (1983) concentrates on the onset, not the competitiveness, of the overlap. That is to say, that she wishes to categorize overlaps according to where and why they come to exist.

Transitional onsets have to do with possible TRPs and parties responding to them. In other words, a transitional onset occurs when a discussion participant has (falsely) recognized a TRP and reacted to it by beginning their turn, which then overlaps with the on-going turn. Recognitional onsets happen when the next speaker projects the completion of the current speaker's turn and reacts to it prematurely. These cases of overlap, therefore, happen at the end of the on-going turn and at the beginning of the following turn. The following speaker recognizes that a TRP is about to occur, but instead of waiting for that occurrence, they decide to react to it prematurely by beginning their turn with a slight overlap in contrast to the on-going turn. When the current speaker has some disfluency in their turn and the next speaker tries to

resolve it by completing the turn on their behalf, that overlap is categorized as a progressional onset (Hutchby and Wooffitt 1998: 56). This is a special case of overlap, which occurs quite rarely. The speaker who has the turn has some problems producing their turn, which can be seen as, for example, a slight pause in the flow of the speech or as a search for a particular word or phrase that would suite the context. The following speaker will then recognize this hesitation as a sign of a problematic turn conclusion and will give assistance in a way that they see might be appropriate given the context. A typical case of a progressional overlap would, therefore, be a case where the co-locutor is attempting to come up with a suitable word for the context and another speaker then suggest a word that might seem reasonable to them. These three categories created by Jefferson (1983) will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 6.

Interruptions are also a type of overlapping talk, although often excluded from other types of simultaneous talk. Interruptions are, however, included in the present study, since they are a type of overlapping talk and, moreover, competitive in nature. The definition of interruptions is a complex matter and there are as many interpretations on the matter as there are studies that concentrate on it. In general, interruptions occur when a co-locutor begins their turn in overlap to the ongoing turn without the recognition of a TRP. This is the definition that will also be used in the present study. Interruptions will also be divided into affiliative and disaffiliative subtypes according to Makri-Tsilipakou (1994). These terms will be explained in more detail in section 6.3.

Roger, Bull and Smith (1988) divided interruptions into *simple* and *complex* interruptions in their *simultaneous speech coding system*. These basic types were further divided into seventeen subcategories. Beattie (1983) sees interruptions as successful speaker switches, in which simultaneous talk exists and the current speaker's utterance is not

complete. Lerner (1989) has introduced the term *delayed completion*. This refers to those cases where a discontinued turn (allocated by the rules of turn-taking) is completed after an intervening utterance. In this case, the speakers orient to the rules of turn-taking by projecting the completion of a turn and intervene in order to regain the turn. In other words, the speaker delays the final part of their utterance after the interruptions of another co-locutor. Therefore, the syntactic completion of the prior turn can be seen as a mere continuation of the TCU and the speaker as having the right to “violate the violator”.

According to Hutchby and Wooffitt (1998: 52-53), interruptions are to be defined by the conversation participants. In other words, it is up to the co-locutors to decide whether or not to treat interruptions/overlapping talk as interruptive. Moreover, it should be noted that many cases of overlapping talk that are categorized as interruptions do indeed happen at legitimate TRPs and, therefore, they should not be treated as interruptions but as attempts of gaining the floor (Hutchby and Wooffitt 1998: 117-119 and Jefferson 1986). They (1998: 56-57) also state that interruptions should not be treated as violations of the rules of turn-taking but as a sign of the conversation participants closely orienting to the rules. Hutchby and Wooffitt (1998: 117-119) also point out the fact that interruptions are often related to some interpersonal factors such as power, control and dominance, which is a matter that Goldberg (1990) has studied more widely. Interruptions can be divided into *power-oriented* and *rappport-oriented* interruptions, according to Goldberg (1990). The power-oriented interruptions are defined as being rude, impolite, intrusive and inappropriate. The act of interrupting is also seen as conflictive, competitive and non-involving. In contrast, the rapport-oriented interruptions are seen as showing empathy, affection, solidarity, interest and concern, while the act of interrupting could then be treated as being collaborative, cooperative, elaborative and as providing immediate feedback or filling information gaps. Goldberg (1990) also

stated that interruptions are indeed a controversial matter. She (1990) states that interruptions are affected by many variables and the difference between a power- and rapport-interruptions is a matter of degree with its own parameters. Goldberg (1990) did, however, conclude that power-oriented interruptions are more *face-threatening* than the rapport-oriented interruptions.

Interruptive behavior is quite often considered as being rude and impolite. Politeness in conversations is a matter closely related to interruptions and threat to face. Brown and Levinson (1978) have developed a *politeness theory*, which includes the notion of *face-threatening acts*. According to the theory, positive and negative faces exist universally in every culture. One's face is the public self image that people attempt to convey to others. Positive face includes the desire to be liked and refer to one's self-esteem, as negative face includes the notion of imposing on someone and the freedom of act. A face-threatening act is an act that threatens the face of the current speaker or other co-locutor present in the conversation by acting against the wants and desires of the other co-locutors. The face-threatening acts can damage the speaker or the hearer. In other words, saving one's face includes the notion of being polite towards other co-locutors.

4 COMPARATIVE LANGUAGE STUDIES AND OVERLAP

The amount of previous (and comparative) research on overlap in Finnish and English conversations is not high. In fact, there are no previous studies where overlap in native Finnish and English conversation would have been studied or compared. Some studies have, however, concentrated on comparing different languages according to other aspects than overlap. These studies include the study of both face-

to-face conversations and telephone conversations. Also, there are quite a few studies on overlap and turn-taking as such, although the language pair of Finnish and English has not gotten much attention. For the purpose of the present study, both studies comparing Finnish and English and/or other languages and studies on turn-taking and overlap will be discussed. Firstly, the focus will be on studies on overlap. The studies by Stolt (2008), Kohonen (2004) and Vatanen (2008) will be presented in more detail. Stolt's (2008) study is on non-competitive overlaps in Finnish and English conversations. Kohonen's (2004) study concentrates on competitive and non-competitive overlaps in a French conversation of both native French and Finnish speakers and Vatanen (2008) has studied overlaps in Finnish and Estonian everyday conversations. Secondly, attention will be paid to comparative studies on language differences. This section begins with Steensig's (2001) study on turn-construction methods in Danish and Turkish conversations. This is followed by the telephone studies by Halmari (1993) and Sneek (1987), which both compare the language pairs of Finnish and American English. Moreover, attention will be paid to studies that focus on Finnish students of English and their language use. This section includes studies from Nikula (1995, 1996) and Nyysönen (1990), which concentrate on pragmatic modifiers and conversational skills. Finally, the comparative studies of Tiittula and Nuolijärvi (2000) on the language pair of Finnish and German will be discussed.

4.1 Studies on overlap

Stolt (2008) has studied non-competitive overlaps in Finnish and English conversations. Non-competitive overlaps refer to those cases of overlaps when there is no competition over speakership in conversation. In contrast, competitive overlaps refer to those cases of overlaps, where one speaker has begun his/her turn while the previous speaker still has the turn and, therefore, competition over the turn happens. Stolt's (2008)

study was based on one conversation with native Finnish and English speakers. The conversation was conducted in English. Stolt (2008) found that non-competitive overlap occurs more often than competitive overlap in a conversation with Finnish and British participants. Within the non-competitive overlaps Stolt (2008) found **listener response overlaps** that acknowledge the prior speaker's right to their turn. She also identified **conditional-access-to-the-turn overlaps**, which were produced in order to complete a turn, **transitional overlaps** that relate to speaker transition and **accidental overlaps** that refer to cases where the overlap was not produced intentionally. Stolt (2008) found no great differences in the types of overlap produced between native Finnish and British speakers. In fact, more similarities than differences were identified.

Kohonen (2004) studied overlaps and interruptions in a French conversation with native French and Finnish participants. Two of the participants were female and one was male. The conversation was carried out in French and both competitive and non-competitive cases of overlap were included in the analysis. Kohonen found eight (8) types of overlap in her material: 1) **Overlaps related to TRPs**, 2) **Discourse Management Devices (DMDs)**, 3) **Simultaneous onsets**, 4) **Laughter and shared laughter**, 5) **Simultaneous turns**, 6) **Delayed completions**, 7) **Interruptions** and 8) **Third party mediation**. Overlaps related to TRPs refer to those cases of overlap where there are signs of an upcoming TRP and the discussion participants react to it prematurely. Therefore, an overlap occurs at the end of the ongoing turn and at the beginning of the following turn. Discourse Management Devices or DMDs are a case of non-competitive overlaps that provide continuity and do not interrupt the ongoing turn. Their purpose is to show interest and participation to the current speaker and their turn. Simultaneous onsets happen when two or more discussion participants recognize a TRP and decide to react to it simultaneously. Usually only one of the turns will be completed due to the other one dropping out and giving way to the other turn. Laughter

and shared laughter refers to simultaneous laughter in the conversation. Laughter is seen as a non-competitive overlap, since its purpose is not to compete over the turn, but to, for example, merely reinforce the relationship between the participants. When turns have been started at the same time after the recognition of a TRP and no-one wishes to relinquish their turn, simultaneous turns occur. Therefore, both turns will be completed simultaneously. Delayed completions Kohonen (2004: 21-22) classifies as justified interruptions. These are produced when the current speaker has been interrupted before reaching the end of their turn and, therefore, that gives them the right to complete their turn despite producing an overlap and interrupting the ongoing turn. Kohonen (2004: 22) defines interruptions as those cases of overlap where a speaker reacts to an audible overlap or a pause within the conversation and decides to initiate a turn. Interruptions can be distinguished from other cases of overlap by the fact that a speaker has started their turn without recognizing a TRP and, thus, can be seen as interrupting the ongoing turn. Finally, third party mediation is a special case of overlap in Kohonen's (2008: 22) material where two or more participants have begun an argument and a third party reacts to this by attempting to "alleviate the conflict" by initiating a turn of their own and changing the topic.

Kohonen (2004) found that almost half of the turns in her material had some kind of overlap in them. According to her analysis, the most common case of overlap is that of overlaps related to TRPs, followed by DMDs. Therefore, the top two consist of both competitive and non-competitive overlaps. The quantitative analysis continues with laughter and shared laughter, simultaneous turns and delayed completions. Interruptions were the least common type of overlap in this analysis. Kohonen (2004) found that there were no great differences in the number of overlaps produced among the discussion participants. However, she also discovered that the Finnish participant produced fewer DMDs than

the two French co-locutors. Additionally, it was concluded that the female participants contributed to the category of laughter and shared laughter more often than the male speaker. Kohonen's (2004) results show that interruptions are among the least common types of overlap in conversation (in her material) and that most overlaps are produced to maintain "a natural flow of interaction", to show support to the ongoing turn or to participate to the conversation simultaneously. She (2004: 30-31) also concluded that there are indeed differences in the styles of communication between different language groups.

Vatanen (2008) has studied overlaps in native Finnish and Estonian everyday conversations. She (2008) studied altogether six conversations; three Finnish and three Estonian. All conversations were informal, face-to-face, everyday conversations between three or four speakers. Each conversation was roughly 15-20 minutes in duration. The main focus of the study was on qualitative analysis of the overlaps. She (2008) divided overlaps into three major categories; **overlaps due to turn construction**, **collaborative overlaps** and **competitive overlaps**. These categories were also further divided into more detailed sub-categories.

The overlaps due to turn construction refer to overlaps that occur at or close to a TRP and are not seen as problematic. Within this category Vatanen (2008) included short overlaps that happen at the end of a turn, longer overlaps that also happen at the end of a turn and have to do with projectability and simultaneous onsets that occur due to self-selection of turn allocation. Vatanen (2008) sees these overlaps as being alike because they are all closely related to TRPs and turn construction in general.

Vatanen (2008) explains collaborative overlaps as simultaneous talk that is produced in order to show agreement or support to the current speaker or to assist the general flow of the conversation. She (2008) found the majority of overlaps in her data to be of this type. The collaborative overlaps also have to do with story structure, introduced by Goodwin

(1984) and the collaborative construction of it. Within this category, Vatanen (2008) included dialogue particle overlaps, overlaps that show agreement and interest, question overlaps that have to do with checking the meaning of the ongoing turn, word search assistance overlaps, overlaps that are produced in order to team up with the ongoing co-locutor and overlaps of laughter and humor. Vatanen (2008) states, that all of these overlaps are non-competitive in type, but also supportive and collaborative to the on-going turn.

The competitive overlaps in Vatanen's (2008) study included those cases of overlap where there is competition over turns. This category included overlaps which begin in a TRP between multiple TCUs and overlaps that occur in the middle of a TCU. It was concluded that the interruption of a TCU caused some disfluency in the Finnish conversation, while this act was seen as a fluent way of taking the turn in the Estonian conversation. The results of the study show that overlaps are a part of a fluent conversation, a sign of agreement and collaboration and also a sign of turn competition. The overlaps occurred at or close to a TRP or in the middle of a TCU. It was also stated that overlaps occur in different situations and stages of the conversation and that most overlaps are produced in order to create a fluent conversation. Vatanen (2008) found the biggest differences in overlapping behavior between Finns and Estonians to be in the competitive overlaps. While most of the competitive overlaps were produced by the Estonians, the other two categories did not produce any significant differences between languages. She (2008) also stated that collaborative behavior was slightly more common in the Finnish conversation. All in all, overlaps seemed to occur more often in the Estonian conversation. Unfortunately, the study did not include any quantitative analysis.

4.2 Comparative studies on language differences

Steensig (2001) has studied the turn-construction methods in native everyday conversations of Danish and Turkish. The study concentrated on three types of methods in particular: pragmatic, grammatical and prosodic. The results show that because of differences in grammatical structure, these methods contribute to turn-construction in the two languages in different ways. The Danish conversation included more far-reaching projections, trajectories and possible completion points. In contrast, the Turkish turn-construction relied more on prosody in the projection of possible completion. It was also stated that grammatical methods allow for an early projection of the utterance in Danish turn-construction, while the grammatical information for the possible completion is situated at the end of the clause in Turkish turn-construction. It was also noted that grammar does not have the same projection ability in the two languages.

Halmari (1993) has studied telephone conversations between speakers of Finnish and American English. The study was carried out in order to detect intercultural differences. The study consisted of twelve business telephone conversations where one of the calling parties was always a Finnish businessman. Some of the conversations were carried out in Finnish and some in English, but all of the conversations consisted of similar structures; opening, optional non-topical element, business talk and closing. Halmari (1993) found some language differences in interruption behavior and the emphasis given to different parts of the conversations. The Finnish speakers of this study gave more emphasis to the non-topical element, while the English speakers highlighted the importance of the business part of the conversation. Also, the native speakers of English initiated overlaps and interruptions three times more often than the native speakers of Finnish. The results showed that the Finns initiated overlap at the end of the turn or, more precisely, over the

last two phonemes or the last word of the on-going turn. In contrast, the English-speakers initiated overlap in the middle of the on-going turn.

Sneck (1987) has studied the conversation choreography in dyadic conversations where no visual clues were available. A computer application, which was developed for the purpose of the study, measured the lengths and occurrence of vocalizations, pauses, turns, switching pauses and simultaneous speech. The study compared three types of telephone conversations: native Finnish speakers talking in Finnish, native Americans talking in English and Finns and Americans talking to each other in English. Sneck (1987) found that while the Finns allowed more pauses and tolerated silence, the Americans vocalized more and took the turn after shorter pauses. The amount of simultaneous talk was strikingly high in the intercultural conversation, namely because the Finns spoke during their American co-locutor's turn. The difference was explained by a malfunction in the turn-taking system. Simultaneous speech was further divided into interruptive and non-interruptive types.

Nikula (1995, 1996) has studied the pragmatic proficiency of Finnish and English speakers. The aim of the study was to examine how speakers modify their messages in various verbal ways rather than being direct. The reasons for choosing to avoid directness included, for example, politeness and involvement. Nikula (1995, 1996) introduced the concept of **pragmatic force modifier**, which includes the ways in which speakers modify their talk in order to soften or strengthen the impact of their message, i.e. expressions such as *I suppose*, *sort of* or *certainly*. The study examined how advanced Finnish speakers or English mastered the use of pragmatic force modifiers in a conversational setting. These results were then compared with the performance of both native speakers of English and native speakers of Finnish. The results show that the Finnish speakers of English used the pragmatic modifiers less than the native speakers and that they also had difficulties in using the modifiers in

interpersonally salient contexts. In addition, the Finnish speakers of English also favored different types of modifiers; as when the native speakers opted for more implicit modifiers, the learners chose more explicit modifiers. All in all, modifiers were used frequently and especially in face-threatening contexts.

Nyyssönen (1990) has reported on the Oulu Project, which studied the discourse competence of advanced Finnish students in simulated conversations with native speakers. These conversations were compared with the results of some native Finnish and native English conversations. The study concentrated on measuring symmetry, power and social distance. The results show that the native speakers of English talked slightly more than the native Finnish speakers, but no clear tendencies emerged. Also, it was stated that the Finnish learners failed to employ some pragmatic modifiers, such as softeners that would understate or down tone the message. Another pragmatic error for the Finnish learners was not to formulate their messages into questions instead of assertions. In other words, the Finnish learners tended to say things that the native speakers would not say in that particular context. This was seen as a sociopragmatic failure.

Nuolijärvi and Tiittula (2000) have conducted a comparative study between the Finnish and German television conversations. The aim of the study was to find out how television conversations are constructed and how they differ from everyday conversations. The televised conversations were analyzed from various points of view and special attention was paid to the language changes of the Finnish conversation in the institutional setting and the ways in which the conversation participants take part in the televised conversations. The study also aimed to find out whether there are any differences or similarities between the various aspects of the Finnish and German television conversations. Nuolijärvi and Tiittula (2000) found ways in which the

Finnish and German televised conversations differ in, for example, argumentation and public confrontation. The Finnish conversation participants were less eager to create situations where there were possibilities for confrontation, while the German conversation participants had adopted the American ways of argumentative and confrontational televised talk. Nuolijärvi and Tiittula (2000) argue that these differences in confrontational television conversations also apply to other forms of conversation. The differences in these televised conversations were, in other words, cultural and depicted the cultural identities of the conversation participants.

5 THE PRESENT STUDY

5.1 Data

The data of the present study consists of two recorded conversations. In both conversations, the analysis is merely based on audio, since video was not available in one of the recordings. The setting in both of the conversations is informal in nature and the event type is that of a face-to-face conversation. The conversation participants in each situation are all young university students. Both conversations were originally recorded for the purpose of analysis and were, therefore, prearranged and at least partially simulated. The reason why these particular conversations were chosen for this study was that both conversations include a vast amount of overlap and also the fact that the conversations are quite similar with each other. In order to conduct a comparative analysis, the data should also be suitable for comparison. In other words, the conversations should be alike and have the same kind of a setting. Therefore, I have chosen to analyze two conversations where three university students in each conversation discuss informally in their native tongue in a pre-organized

setting. The duration of each conversation is also roughly the same (approximately 35 minutes each). I have transcribed all the material myself, but have also consulted the previous transcripts that have been made on some parts of these conversations. In the transcription process, special attention was paid to marking the various cases of overlap. With both conversations, my analysis is merely based on audio and I will only pay attention to the verbal elements of the conversations. All the participants will remain anonymous as they will be referred to with aliases.

The first conversation comes from the University of Jyväskylä, Department of Languages, English section and it has three university students casually talking about life in Finland. There are two Canadians and one American and they are all exchange students in Finland at the University of Oulu. There are one male and two female participants. One of the female participants is bilingual, but all have English as their native tongue. Therefore, the conversation is also carried out in English. The duration of the conversation is about 35 minutes. The conversation was recorded in February 2003 for the purpose of a previous study. The conversation takes place in a student flat. The conversation participants are all familiar with each other and, therefore, the conversation is quite relaxed in nature. After the technical preparations for the recording were made, the conversation participants were conducting the discussion among themselves, without any audience. The discussion is active and there are a few short pauses. Otherwise the conversation flows naturally and all the discussion participants seem to contribute to it equally. The conversation gets somewhat heated and argumentative at times. In addition to audio taping, the conversation was also taped with two video cameras. The video recordings were not, however, consulted in this study since there was no video available in the second conversation.

The second conversation comes from the data archives of University of Helsinki, the department of Finnish, Finno-Ugrian and Scandinavian Studies (Sg 040 A). The conversation has three female students talking casually about their studies and other everyday topics. However, one of the participants leaves the conversation after 17 minutes and after that, there are only two participants in the conversation for the remaining time of the recording. The overall duration of the conversation is also approximately 35 minutes long. All conversation participants are young university students at the University of Helsinki. The recording was made in 1989 for the purpose of a previous study. All three females have Finnish as their native tongue and, therefore, the conversation is carried out in Finnish. The conversation participants are all familiar with each other and the conversation is very relaxed and informal in nature. There is no audience and only audio taping was available of the discussion. The conversation participants are aware of the simulated situation and it sometimes shows in the flow of the conversation. A few comments are made within the conversation of the microphones and sometimes there are short pauses in the discussion when the participants attempt to come up with new topics for discussion. One of the participants seems to be leading the conversation by introducing new topics for talk when pauses occur, but otherwise all participants contribute to the conversation equally.

5.2 Methods

The aim of the present study is to compare the cases of competitive overlap in Finnish and English conversations. This is done by choosing appropriate conversations for analysis, picking out all cases of overlap, analyzing the overlaps in detail, categorizing all cases of overlap as either competitive or non-competitive overlap, further categorizing the cases of competitive overlap into five categories and by comparing the results of each conversation's overlapping speech. Firstly, the aim was to find out

what types of competitive overlap exists in both of the conversations. This was done by analyzing each case of overlap and by categorizing them according to various aspects. Secondly, the present study concentrates on analyzing the cases of overlap quantitatively. In other words, a comparison is made on the amount of each case of competitive overlap within the Finnish and English conversations. Thirdly, I will draw conclusions on the qualitative and quantitative analysis of overlap and find out if there are any differences or similarities between the overlapping talk of Finnish and English conversations.

The data was analyzed according to the conventions of conversation analysis, that was made familiar by, for example, Sacks et al. (1974) and Jefferson (1979). The analysis of the data began by recognizing each case of overlapping talk from the conversations. Although all cases of overlap were initially picked out for analysis, a few cases had to be excluded from the present study because of poor sound quality and/or inaudible speech. Also, the cases of overlaps where speech was overlapped with coughs, sneezes or background noises were left out of this analysis since they were not significant to the present study.

The analysis of overlaps began by dividing all overlaps into competitive and non-competitive cases of overlap according to Schegloff (2000). The non-competitive overlaps were then excluded from the analysis, as the present study merely wishes to concentrate on competitive overlap. The competitive overlaps were then categorized further by looking at e.g. their placement within the turn, the context, prosodic features and their content. Many cases of overlaps were ambiguous in nature and it would have been possible to place them in various categories. The decision was, however, made that each overlap could only appear in one of the categories in order to make the analysis more clear and accurate. All cases of competitive overlap were also analyzed quantitatively in addition to being analyzed qualitatively, as described above. This was

done in order to find out the occurrence of each type of overlap. All the instances of overlap produced by the native Finnish speakers and native English speakers were then compared qualitatively and quantitatively in order to find the possible differences and similarities within competitive overlap produced in the conversations.

The categorization of the competitive overlaps was conducted on the basis of Jefferson's (1983) pre-existing categories, with some additions to suit the data. All cases of Jefferson's (1983) three categories of competitive overlaps were used in the present study. *Transitional onsets*, *recognitional onsets* and *progressional onsets* make up for three of the five overlap categories in the present study. In addition to Jefferson's (1983) categories, *interruptions* and *simultaneous onsets* were included in the analysis, due to the fact that they were present in the data. These two categories are somewhat modeled after Kohonen's (2004) categorizations of competitive and non-competitive overlaps, with slight alterations and additions. These five categories are further divided into more detailed sub-section, when necessary. Further division was not, however, necessary with each category, since the category itself seemed to describe all cases of overlaps that were included in that particular type of overlap. Further division was only concluded when the overall category seemed to include two or more types of overlaps that could be further explained in their own sub-categories. Namely, the five categories of competitive overlaps in the present study are *interruptions*, *simultaneous onsets*, *transitional onsets*, *recognitional onsets* and *progressional onsets*. These categories will be further analyzed, in the light of the present study and the existing data, in the following chapter.

6 COMPETITIVE OVERLAP IN THE CONVERSATIONS

In this chapter, the various types of overlapping speech will be presented according to the five (5) different categories. In other words, this chapter concentrates on the qualitative analysis of the overlaps. The categories are presented and explained further via extracts from the data. The overlap categories are presented in the order that they most commonly occurred in the data. Extracts from both conversations are used in order to clarify each category. The comparison and the frequency of the categories in the two conversations will be the subject of chapter 7. In this chapter, the categories will be introduced, analyzed qualitatively and further divided into sub-sections, when needed. Overall two categories were seen as needing sub-categories in order to clarify the analysis. Transitional overlaps were further divided into *end of the turn overlaps* and overlaps due to *falsely recognized TRPs*. Interruptions were divided into *affiliative* and *disaffiliative* interruptions according to Makri-Tsilipakou (1994a). The three remaining categories, simultaneous onsets, recognitional onsets and progressional onsets were not seen as needing any further division. In this chapter, these categories and their sub-categories will be analyzed qualitatively. The quantitative analysis and the comparison between the conversations will follow in chapter 7.

6.1 Simultaneous onsets

Simultaneous onsets in speech occur when two or more speakers opt to take the turn at the same time after recognizing a TRP. Typically only one speaker will be able to continue their turn, since other speakers will most likely give up their turn. It is, however, also possible that no one will want to give up their turn and as a result, simultaneous turns occur. Simultaneous onsets usually occur when no next speaker has been appointed by the current speaker and, therefore, the discussion participants

follow the rules of turn-taking and self-select to take the turn. This might happen after a TRP has been recognized and the previous turn has been considered to have ended or at a TRP after an open question, when the current speaker does not appoint anyone as the next speaker and the question is not addressed to anyone in particular. Therefore, two or more discussion participants may opt to answer the question simultaneously. Simultaneous onsets usually occur after a recognized TRP, or in other words, in a place where speaker change is possible. Speakers follow the rules of turn-taking and since the current speaker does not opt to take the following turn nor do they appoint the next speaker, the turn is free for anyone to take and self-selection of turn-taking occurs. Sometimes two or more discussion participants will opt to take the free turn simultaneously and simultaneous onsets at the point of a free turn occur.

In the following example MAR and JAS are talking about microbreweries and the different kinds of beers that they like to drink while their stay in Finland.

Extract 4)

1	MAR	>do they have< dark beer?
2	JAS	stouts
3	MAR	£all ri:ght£
4	JAS	[fantastic]
5	MAR	[I was]hoping
6		that somebody had stouts
7		cause I had-
8		(0.7)
9	JAS	yeah
10		it's-
11		it's a little sweeter than Guinness
12		(.) but [it's]close to Guinness
13	MAR	[mhm]

In this example, JAS and MAR end up creating simultaneous onsets (lines 4-5) and MAR's turn is then cut off because of the distraction. MAR never gets to finish her turn, since after the overlap the situation of turn-taking is somewhat disturbed and no-one wishes to take the turn. A small gap occurs and JAS then goes on to continue the conversation, starting from line 9.

MAR poses a question to JAS about the Finnish microbrewery Panimo. She wishes to know if there is any dark beer in their selection, since she has not been able to find any in Finland so far. JAS then answers MAR's question by simply stating that they do have stouts. MAR responds to this information by doing a sort of a cheer (line 3). This is done through prolonging the first syllable of the word "right" and by using an animated voice (marked with £ in the transcript). On line 4, JAS aligns with MAR and offers assessment to MAR's turn with a positive evaluation (Goodwin and Goodwin 1987). JAS does not, however, realize that after recognizing a TRP, MAR also wishes to self-select herself as the next speaker (on line 5), thus continuing on her previous turn with a follow-up turn, which expands her previous turn. As this example shows, overlaps sometimes distract the flow of the conversation so that turns are left unfinished and gaps happen since the conversation participants are not sure who has the following turn and they wish to refrain themselves from turn-taking in order to avoid any more overlaps. In this example JAS has followed the rule of turn-taking where anyone is free to self-select after recognizing a TRP and MAR also follows the rules of turn-taking by opting to continue on her previous turn. The two discussion participants interpret the situation differently and, therefore, an overlap of turns occurs. This example also shows that overlaps do not always include rule-breaking behavior, since both JAS and MAR followed the rules of turn-taking but, nevertheless, an overlap occurred.

In the example that follows, JAS is trying to remember the name of another exchange student who used to live in the same building with JAS.

Extract 5)

1	JAS	[but Stef-]
2		Steffi was in that room
3		Claudia in this room
4		(0.8)
5		who else lived in here?
6	SOP	[Heidi was here]
7	JAS	[Heidi was here]

JAS raises a question, when he cannot remember the girl's name, but does not address the question to anyone in particular. SOP then answers JAS's question by giving the girl's name, but at the same time JAS also remembers the name and they both end up saying the name out loud simultaneously. SOP and JAS then begin their turn at the same time and also get to finish their turns, which is quite unusual as normally one of the discussion participants tends to give up their turn and only one co-locutor will get to complete their turn. In this case, however, the turns are very short in duration, which enables the completion of both turns. SOP is clearly following the rules of turn-taking by recognizing a clear TRP after a question and by opting to self-select and take the turn. JAS also holds the right to continue on his turn as the current speaker and opts to continue on his turn despite posing a question that would normally mean a change in speakership. They both follow the rules of turn-taking but interpret the situation differently, which causes the overlap of turns.

In the example that follows, the girls are talking about Sara's mother's boyfriend who sells watches.

Extract 6)

1	Nina	minkä: merkkisiä kelloja se tuo
2	Sara	en mä oikee tiä
3	Nina	[mistä se-]
4	Anna	[kuha on kallis] onko [sillä merkillä väliä]
5	Sara	[↑en mä en mä tiä] siitä niinku <u>paljo</u> mittää

Nina wants to know more about the matter and asks Sara where the watches are made. Sara then answers that she does not know (line 2) and after that Nina and Anna begin their turns simultaneously (lines 3 and 4); Nina by further inquiring about the country of origin for the watches since she did not get an answer the first time and Anna by commenting on the topic in general with a humorous statement that implies that the country of origin really does not matter just as the price of the watches is high enough. Both Nina and Anna recognize that Sara has ended her turn and as they identify a TRP, both girls opt to take the turn simultaneously. Nina's turn is cut in short, since she backs away and Anna gets to complete her turn. Nina's turn does, however, get a response from Sara, since she then comments on the question that Nina was about to pose by saying that she really does not know much about the matter. Therefore, Nina does not have the need to complete her turn since the message that the turn was meant to convey was already identified by Sara. Also, Sara's final turn can be seen as a comment to Anna's previous turn and as a way of continuing and/or restating her original turn in line 2, which was cut off by the comments of the two girls.

In the following example Nina, Anna and Sara are discussing their plans for Labor Day.

Extract 7)

1	Nina	mul on osakunnassa työvuoro yöllä (.)
2		kymmenestä eikä ku
3		kahesta- toista kahteen °yöllä°
4	Anna	[mitä sä teet siellä?]
5	Sara	[ai sä oot vieläki siellä] [↑ <u>apuloimassa</u>]
6	Nina	[↑mä myyn kaljaa]

After the two girls have discussed their plans for Labor day, Nina says that she has to work that night. She says that she has a shift from midnight to two o'clock in the morning. This changes the topic of the conversation from Labor day plans to Nina's work. Anna and Sara are both eager to comment on this new piece of information that Nina has brought to their attention (lines 4 and 5). Anna wishes to know what Nina actually does at her working place and Sara just comments that she did not know that Nina still had that job. Anna and Sara both recognize a TRP at the end of Nina's turn on line 3 and since no next speaker has been selected, they both choose to self-select, thus creating simultaneous turns on lines 4 and 5. They both get to finish their turns, since neither of them is that lengthy in duration. Nina then continues on the conversation by answering Anna's previous question. Nina's turn again overlaps with the end of Sara's turn, since Nina has falsely recognized a TRP and thinks that Sara has already finished her turn. In a way, Sara's comment has been left unnoted, since Nina opts to comment on Anna's simultaneous question even before the completion of Sara's turn.

6.2 Transitional onsets

Jefferson (1984) describes transitional onsets as happening when the next speaker is orienting to the up-coming TRP and the *syntactic completeness* of the on-going turn. The next speaker recognizes that the current speaker is about to finish their utterance and/or their turn and, therefore, decides to react to it prematurely with a slight overlap to the ongoing turn. Therefore,

the following turn will begin with a slight overlap in contrast to the previous turn. A transitional overlap may also occur when the next speaker is reacting to what they believe to be the end of a turn and a TRP. Sometimes these reactions might, however, be false and an overlap occurs.

6.2.1 End of the turn overlaps

End of the turn overlaps can be considered as a necessary means of getting one's voice heard in a multi-party conversation. In a conversation where there are numerous participants, there are hardly any gaps in speech, since the co-locutors predict the upcoming TRPs and react to them prematurely, which again leads to end of the turn overlaps. The conversation participants simply do not have the time to wait for the turn to end, since then there is the danger of someone else taking the turn before they have the chance to do so. It is also a way of avoiding gaps in conversations, since by projecting the upcoming TRP, the conversation participants begin their turns even before the TRP has actually come to exist. The end of the turn overlaps also have to do with *projectability* (Hutchby and Wooffitt 1998: 48). The conversation participants predict the up-coming TRP and react to it prematurely, which causes a slight overlap at the end of the on-going turn and at the beginning of the following turn. These cases of overlap are normally solved quite quickly due to the fact that the previous turn is about to end and, therefore, only one of the turns will continue.

In the following example JAS has just told the story of how he uses other people's time slots to do his laundry.

Extract 8)

1	SOP	right
2		so you sneak your clothes in at eight forty
3		and you just go into someone's time
4		for like fifteen [minutes]
5	MAR	[that's the] American way

SOP is commenting on JAS's story by restating what they have just heard. Hutchby and Wooffitt (1998: 152-153) call this *formulation*. The practice of formulating refers to the following speaker summarizing or developing the gist of the previous speaker's utterance. This is quite rare of a phenomenon in everyday conversations, but common in interviews and institutionalized interaction. In other words, SOP is formulating a particular understanding to what JAS has said earlier. It seems as though SOP is not willing to accept JAS's behavior and she is, therefore, checking her understanding on the matter. MAR then comments on both SOP's and JAS's previous turns with an *assessment* (Goodwin and Goodwin 1987). She does this by describing JAS's behavior as the American way on line 5 and thus, closing the sequence. The message that MAR wishes to convey here is that this sort of behavior is very typical to the American way of life in contrast to any other culture. As she does this, she evaluates not only JAS's behavior but also the American way of doing things. On the other hand, she also accounts for JAS's behavior by giving it a clear reason, which would explain it.

MAR's comment slightly overlaps with SOP's turn's final word (lines 4-5). In this case it is quite clear that SOP was not done with her turn by the time that MAR began her turn, but it is clearly projectable that she is about to finish her turn, which MAR has also anticipated. JAS has already stated that he goes over his reserved time to do his laundry and takes the time that he needs to finish from other people that have reserved the time slot after him. So when SOP checks if JAS really goes into someone else's time for fifteen minutes, she does not have to finish the last word of her turn since it is already quite predictable because of the previous context. MAR is then quite justified to slightly cut in on SOP's turn, since she also wants to get her opinion heard on the matter before someone else takes the turn.

In the following example MAR and JAS are talking about the prejudice that they have faced in Finland as Americans.

Extract 9)

1	MAR	you're kidding?
2	JAS	no I'm [°serious°]
3	MAR	[↑sure] they just thought it was weird

JAS has just told a lengthy story on how he had laughed at a wall writing that said "the American way stinks" at a bar in Finland and how everyone else thought that he was strange because he himself is also an American. MAR is, in turn, amazed by this story (line 1) and expresses this by formulating a response to JAS, which expresses her disbelief. JAS then responds to MAR's challenge by stating that he did indeed do that and that he was not kidding at all. MAR can probably guess what JAS's turn will include since the first word of his sentence "no" signals the way in which JAS's turn is heading towards. The ending of JAS's turn is not, therefore, necessary for MAR to hear since her question has already been answered. MAR then begins her turn on line 3 after she feels that she has gotten the information that she requested for and her turn then overlaps with the end of JAS's turn. MAR's overlapping turn is also a comment to JAS's previous turn and a sort of a sequel to MAR's previous turn. MAR's second turn is still expressing the disbelief that she felt after JAS's story even after JAS has informed MAR that the story was actually true.

In the following example the girls are talking about a Latin exam that Nina had attended earlier on the week.

Extract 10)

1	Sara	>entäs sitten< (.) onkos meillä tota (1.4) dydy
2		onks meillä samanlainen latinankoe ku teillä ?
3	Anna	↑sulla sulla oli eilen tentti mitä siellä [kysy
4	Nina	[mulla
5	Anna	mitä siellä kysy
6	Sara	ai latinan [tent-]
7	Anna	[joo]
8	Nina	↑voi hitsi mullei oo sitä paperia mukana
9		se on semmonen (.) ensin oli semmonen <u>aika</u> helppo teksti

Sara brings up the topic of the Latin exam by wondering if the exam that she is going to take will be the same one that Nina has already taken (lines 1-2). Anna then asks Nina on line 3 how the exam was, since she is yet to take the exam. Before Anna gets to the end of her turn, Nina recognizes that Anna's turn is about to end and she begins her turn with an overlap to the current turn. Nina's response to Anna's turn is so rapid mainly because Nina is not sure who Anna is addressing the question to, since she does not name the recipient of that question. Nina then confirms that it is her that Anna is talking to before beginning to answer the question itself. This is shown on line 4, where Nina checks her understanding of Anna's previous turn and to whom it is addressed to. In this case both co-locutors get to finish their turns since Nina's turn is very short in length and Anna's turn is almost over by the time that the overlap occurs. Nina's question is left unanswered since Anna takes the following turn by repeating her earlier question. Sara also then inquires if it is indeed the Latin exam that they are talking about and Anna answers her question on line 7. Finally, Nina gets to answer the original question of the sequence on lines 8-9.

Both overlaps of the extract are quite similar in style and also justified. They occurred because more information and clarification was needed on the on-

going turn. Lines 3 to 7 can be seen as a repair sequence within the bigger sequence of the original question by Sara on lines 1 and 2 and the answer to that question that follows after the extract. This sequence does not answer the original question, but merely specifies the topic of discussion. The original question remains unanswered until lines 8-9, where Nina begins to explain how she found the exam in question.

In the following example the girls are talking about another exam that they had earlier in the week.

Extract 11)

1	Nina	mä en lukenu \$hehhehe mä en\$ lukenu siihen mitään
2		enneku vasta iltapäivällä kirjastos kattelin niitä
3		mä en jotenkin ees ↑mm muistanu
4		sit (.) niinku aattelin et no (.) säästämpä huomiseks
5		[°kirjastoon°]
6	Anna	[>↑]jotenkin siin on] semmonen tunne< ku et saahan siin käyttää sanakirjaa
7		ei mitää hätää

Nina is telling Anna how she only began to study for the exam that same afternoon that she took the exam. Earlier on in her turn Nina tells Anna that she studied for the exam in the library. She then begins to tell how she did not even remember that they had an exam and how she then thought that she would just do all the studying the following day in the library. In other words, Nina rephrases her previous utterance and gives the same information twice. That is why Anna already knows how Nina's turn is going to end, since she has already heard the story once. Therefore, Anna begins her turn on line 6 with an overlap to Nina's turn and, more precisely, the final word of her turn. Anna also wishes to get her turn in sooner because she wants to comment on what Nina has said and to show support to Nina's turn. Anna agrees with Nina on the matter that it was easy to forget to study for that particular exam since they were allowed to use dictionaries and,

therefore, it seemed like no studying was needed to pass the exam. Another thing to notice in this example is the way that the end of Nina's turn is quieter in volume than the surrounding speech. This is a sign of Nina giving room for Anna's turn. Although Nina gets to finish her turn, she does it in a way that is the least disturbing to Anna's turn. Anna's eagerness to take the turn is also shown in the sudden rise in pitch at the beginning of her turn on line 6. By raising her pitch Anna announces to Nina that she wants to take the turn and that she strongly feels that she is entitled to do so.

6.2.2 Overlap due to misinterpreted TRP

Transitional onsets may also occur when speakers are interpreting the situation differently: a turn might be interpreted to have ended or a TRP might be falsely recognized, when in fact the current speaker is going to continue on their turn. These sort of situations are usually solved quickly, due to the fact that one speaker will give over one's turn to another. Falsely recognized TRP's also very often occur at the end of a grammatical unit, such as a sentence or a clause. It is not very unusual for a person to presume that the current speaker will be finishing their turn at the end of a clause, although turns do not equal grammatical sentences. What distinguishes transitional onsets from interruptions is that there are actual signs of possible TRPs to be recognized and the overlap is usually justified by both participants.

In the following example, the foreign exchange students MAR and JAS are talking about how they are having some troubles sleeping in Finland.

Extract 12)

1	MAR	I never sleep all the way through the night
2		I will wake up several times
3		(2.4)
4		and my <u>d</u> reams are about ten times more <u>v</u> ivid here
5		than they are back home
6		I don't unders-
7		you have that?
8		[have you noticed any more-]
9	JAS	[I never remember my dreams]
10	MAR	never?
11		even here
12		(3.8)
13		I feel like I've been
14		↑walking all night

MAR first describes her sleeping patterns in detail and then addresses a question to JAS on line 7. However, MAR does not end her turn there, despite addressing a question to JAS, which would normally indicate a TRP. Therefore, JAS begins his turn with an overlap of MAR's (lines 8 and 9). JAS then begins to answer MAR's question and to describe his sleeping patterns, but MAR still decided to continue on her turn and to explain her question to JAS in more detail on lines 10-14. In other words, JAS has misinterpreted a TRP according to the signals that MAR has given. Addressing a question usually marks the end of a turn and a TRP, so JAS's misinterpretation is, therefore, quite justified.

In the example that follows JAS and MAR are talking about the upcoming presidential elections in the USA and the possible re-election of George W. Bush.

Extract 13)

1	JAS	[course] he'll get re-elected
2		so then I have to stay [here °for six more years°]
3	MAR	[↑no he's not going]
4		to get re-elected

JAS predicts that Bush will indeed get re-elected. JAS has also earlier stated that he does not wish this to happen and, therefore, his next statement (line 2) about him having to stay in Finland if there will not be a new president in the USA supports his previous statement. MAR is then quite eager to express her prediction about Bush not getting re-elected and the beginning of this turn overlaps with the end of JAS's turn (lines 2-3). MAR has interpreted JAS's turn to have ended and is also quite eager to begin her turn since it is one of an opposing opinion to the previous turn. Also, MAR wishes to get her turn in soon because she wants to comment on the core part of the turn, which is the re-election of Bush, before JAS moves on from the topic. The conversation is somewhat heated in nature and, therefore, MAR does not wait to see if JAS really has finished his turn and if there really is a TRP to justify the change of turns. In this case, both co-locutors get to finish their turns, although due to the rise in pitch at the beginning of MAR's turn, the end of JAS's turn is somewhat quieter in volume than the surrounding speech.

In this next example the girls are discussing how the week has gone by so quickly, due to the fact that they had skipped some classes earlier during the week.

Extract 14)

1	Nina	joo \$mullakih-\$
2		[↑nyt on jo torstai]
3	Sara	[no siitä varmaan] johtuu ku maanantaina ei ollu <u>mitää</u>
4		eikä perjantaina <u>mitää</u>
5		eikä millonkaa <u>mitää</u>
6	Nina	kuvitelkaa nyt on <u>torstai</u>
7		huomenna mullaki on vaan kaks tuntia ranskaa ku
8		suullinen viestintäki loppu viime [viikolla]

The topic has started earlier by Anna stating how she feels like the week has not even begun yet. Nina then attempts to show agreement to what Anna has said (line 1), but suddenly changes the direction of the turn into wondering out loud how the week had already proceeded onto Thursday (line 2). Sara then misinterprets Nina's turn to have ended and falsely recognizes a TRP (lines 1-3). Sara goes on to proceed with her turn (lines 3-5) and after she has finished, Nina takes the turn again on line 6 and restates what she said during her earlier turn. In other words, Sara's turn comes between Nina's two turns and the fact that Nina later restates her turn also implies that she was not finished with her first turn when Sara took the turn. However, Sara clearly has recognized a TRP (although falsely) since Nina changes the direction of her talk in mid-turn, which is quite unusual and in no way predictable.

In the following example Anna and Nina are talking about buying a lottery ticket for the night's lotto raffle.

Extract 15)

1	Anna	hetkinen
2		kerkeeks tänään
3		tänään on torstai
4	Nina	kerkee
5		tossahan on tossa
6	Anna	nii on
7		[mä oon käyny siellä pari kertaa]
8	Nina	[lähellä]
9	Anna	@@@
10		kantapaikka

Anna first begins to wonder what day it is and after she has remembered that it is Thursday, she realizes that they still would have some time to buy the lottery ticket (lines 1-3). Nina agrees and begins to point out that there is a place where Anna could do this (lines 4-5). Anna shows agreement to Nina's turn (lines 6-7), but before she gets to finish her turn, Nina continues on her previous turn on line 8 with an addition. Nina does this because her previous turn (lines 4 and 5) was not grammatically complete before Anna cut in on her and she then wishes to complete her turn. Anna, in turn, wishes to jump in on line 6 because she has relevant information to the topic in question and she requires to express her knowledge. On line 8, Nina begins her turn since she has interpreted Anna's turn (line 6) to have ended. Nina's interpretation is justified because Anna's "nii on" could very well be treated as a complete turn of expressing agreement. Nina is, however, eager to add the information that the place is nearby since she did not get to say that in her previous turn because Anna cut in on her. Both girls get to finish their turns since Nina's turn is so short in length that it does not interfere with Anna's simultaneous turn in great detail.

6.3 Interruptions

Interrupting overlapping occurs when a speaker starts his or her turn as the current speaker is still speaking and no TRP has been recognized. In other words, the speaker who interrupts is not following the rules of turn-taking and takes or attempts to take a turn disregarding the rule of “only one person speaking at a time”. Interruptive overlapping might also be due to a speaker not understanding or not being aware of the rules of turn-taking. In addition, Makri-Tsilipakou (1994) has listed two kinds of interruptions, namely *affiliative* and *disaffiliative*, which will be discussed in more detail in the following sections.

6.3.1 Affiliative

Affiliative interruptions refer to those cases of interruptions where the action is considered a positive matter (Makri-Tsilipakou 1994). The interruption acts as a mean of showing support and ratification to the current speaker (Makri-Tsilipakou 1994). In other words, the act of interrupting is not considered to be a negative matter by the co-locutors, as it usually is. The interruption is merely a way of reinforcing the current speaker and their turn although being interruptive in nature. Affiliative interruptions show agreement and positive politeness without being face-threatening, as interruptions usually are.

In the example that follows, MAR is attempting to describe a movie that she has seen to JAS. She cannot, however, remember the title of the movie or the names of the two brothers who starred in it.

Extract 16)

1	MAR	they're-
2		they're <u>brothers</u>
3		I don't even-
4		(1.1)
5		oh
6		<u>sshoot</u>
7		(1.4)
8		I have no idea
9		[what their names are]
10	JAS	[oh with the long hair]?

MAR makes it clear that she is trying to remember the names of the brothers and before she gets to finish her turn, JAS cuts in by asking if MAR is talking about the brothers with the long hair. There is no TRP to be recognized, but JAS still decides to begin his turn prior to the end of MAR's turn, since he suddenly remembers some information that might help MAR in her quest for the names of the brothers. Therefore, he interrupts MAR's attempts to remember the names because he thinks that he has realized who MAR is talking about. Because of JAS's turn being somewhat helpful to MAR, he sees no reason to wait for the end of MAR's turn. JAS's interruption can be seen as affiliative since JAS is actually attempting to help MAR and in that way to show support to her turn.

In the following example, JAS and MAR are talking about Finnish pubs.

Extract 17)

1	JAS	<u>a</u> ctually we always drank there
2		you can go sometime
3		with us
4		we'll probably [go-]
5	MAR	[this is]the pub?
6		eh-
7		this is the Irish pub?
8		place?
9	JAS	no no
10		that's St. Michaels's probably

JAS begins the topic of Finnish pubs by referring to a pub that he goes to with his friends. He then addresses MAR (probably reinforced via eye-contact) by inviting her to go with them the next time. JAS then begins to tell her the time and/or date of their following visit to the pub (on line 4), when MAR suddenly cuts off with a clarifying question. Lines 5-8 of MAR's turn consist of an attempt to clarify JAS's previous turn and what he is actually talking about. JAS never actually mentions what the place is that he is describing during his turn (lines 1-4), so it is quite understandable that MAR is in need of some clarification. MAR's turn clearly interrupts JAS's turn, since the sentence is left unfinished. However, the topic of talk remains the same and MAR's interrupting turn is in relation to JAS's turn, which makes the interruption an affiliative one. Finally, JAS answers MAR's question on lines 9-10 and gets to continue on his topic of talk. The interruption is categorized as an affiliative one since the topic of talk does not change and the original speaker (JAS) gets to go on after the interruption. Also, the fact that MAR's question was needed in order for her to understand what JAS's turn is about, is another contributing factor that categorizes the interruption

as affiliative. In other words, JAS's turn of describing a place would remain incomprehensible without MAR's clarificatory question.

In the example that follows, Nina is telling Anna and Sara about how she learned to drive in her old home town.

Extract 18)

1	Nina	mä voin kuvitella
2		ku olis tarpeeks
3		@@@
4		vaikeeta Juvallaki
5		ja sitte mun poikakaveri vielä meni
6		vastapäätä tietä kattomaan
7		siihe parkkiin omaan autoon
8		se katto ku mä [lähin ensimmäistä kertaa autolla liikenteeseen]
9	Anna	[@@@ inhottavaah]

The girls have been talking about how difficult it is to learn to drive in a big city like Helsinki with all the traffic lights and different kinds of lanes and junctions. Nina then tells how she learned to drive at her old home town and how her boyfriend always parked his car nearby so that he could watch Nina learn to drive (lines 1-8). Nina expresses that this was very difficult to her and that it was even more difficult to do with her boyfriend watching. Anna interrupts Nina's turn by showing agreement to Nina's turn on line 9. Anna wishes to sympathize with Nina's experience by saying that she also thinks that it must have been very unpleasant for her. Anna's interruption is showing support and agreement to Nina's turn and is, therefore, affiliative in nature. This is reinforced by the laughter in the beginning of Anna's turn. Laughter is usually a sign of agreement and showing support as it also is in this case. Anna's turn is also an assessment (Goodwin and Goodwin 1987) since it includes an evaluative adjective, which refers to Nina's previous turn.

In the following example Sara is telling the girls how her mother has split up with her boyfriend and moved to Helsinki for some time.

Extract 19)

1	Sara	[joo]
2	Nina	[sit] se o yhen <u>tä</u> din luona
3		tai se lähtee [↑kohta pois täältä]
4	Anna	[varmaa rankkaa]

Sara is tells Anna and Nina how her mother is now living with a friend of hers and how she is going to move out in a while. Anna then interrupts Nina's turn on line 4 by sympathizing with Nina's mother's situation. There is no TRP to be recognized but Anna wishes to begin her turn before a TRP because she wants to show her support to what Nina has said. Nina reacts to the interruption with a high pitch in her voice in the beginning of the word "kohta" and she also gets to finish her turn despite the interruption. Since Anna's interruption is affiliative in type, it is possible that she did not even intend to interrupt Nina, but that she was merely so eager to express her support that she ended up doing it even before Nina got to the end of her turn.

6.4.1 Disaffiliative

Makri-Tsilipakou (1994) describes disaffiliative interruptions as being in disagreement with the current speaker and their turn. In contrast to affiliative interruptions, the disaffiliative interruptions can be seen as a negative aspect of the conversation and the current speaker may find it offensive and disrespectful. Disaffiliative interruptions usually show disagreement and can be considered as face-threatening acts of conversational conduct.

In the following example SOP and JAS are talking about a literature class that they will both have the following day.

Extract 20)

1	SOP	ah the literature class is [tomorrow]
2	JAS	[yeah]
3		but I'm missing [it because] I have to do laundry
4	SOP	[at nine-]

SOP introduces a new topic for discussion by thinking out loud how the literature class is tomorrow. JAS then acknowledges SOP's statement and goes on to inform SOP that he will be missing the class because he has to do laundry that same time. SOP, however, wants to add something to her previous turn and decides to do so in the middle of JAS's turn. SOP wishes to add that the literature class will begin at nine o'clock and she does this even though it can clearly be seen that JAS has not finished his turn and that he is about to add something to his turn. SOP interrupts JAS because she wants to add the information of the time to her previous turn before it is too late. The more time that passes from her previous turn, the more difficult it will be to make additions to that turn without actually returning to that turn and restating what she had said earlier on. This is why SOP feels that she needs to interrupt JAS even though she recognizes that JAS has the turn. SOP's interruption can be seen as disaffiliative since her turn does not show any support to JAS's turn, but her own previous turn. JAS is actually attempting to change the topic of discussion to him missing the class, but SOP still wants to continue with the original topic. SOP's turn is also suddenly cut off when she realizes what JAS is saying and when she sees that the information that she wishes to add is of no relevance to JAS since he is missing the class.

In the example that follows, JAS is talking about how he wants to travel the world before becoming a political scientist.

Extract 21)

1	JAS	yeah
2		all over
3		and then
4		I just wanna get a feel for Europe
5		and more-
6		because I don't wanna be-
7		I mean-
8		I don't wanna be a political scientist
9		and say things about Europe
10		when I haven't experienced certain aspects of Europe
11		'cause
12		[you know-]
13	MAR	[↑do you really] think that
14		travelling around to all of the countries

JAS is describing the things he feels are necessary for him to do before actually beginning his work as a political scientist (lines 1-12). He feels that he needs to experience the countries first hand before giving out statements concerning those countries. MAR then suddenly interrupts JAS's talk on line 13 by asking him if he really thinks that visiting the countries will give him an idea of what is actually happening in the countries in question. There is no TRP to be recognized and JAS's speech is cut off because of MAR's interruption. MAR interrupts JAS because she does not agree with what JAS is saying and she wishes to express this. However, she formulates her opinion into a question so that the action is not that face-threatening as it would be as a statement. MAR's eagerness to express her opposing opinion can also be seen in the sudden rise in pitch at the beginning of her turn. MAR's interruption can be labeled as disaffiliative since she is disagreeing with JAS and cutting him off before he gets to finish his turn.

In the following example the girls are talking about driving school and young drivers.

Extract 22)

1	Nina	sit ne erottaa siit kolmiosta
2		eikö oo kumma juttu
3		että niistä kaikista tulee sit
4		tähän liikenteeseen nuoret jotka
5		ajaa tällästä kauhee kovaa ja [taitavasti ja-]
6	Anna	[↑ei kaikista]
7		ei kaikista kuule

Nina is talking about young drivers and how they stand out in traffic because of their driving conduct. She is wondering how it is possible that all these bad drivers will eventually become good drivers and blend into the mass of other experienced drivers. Anna interrupts her with her opposing opinion, which can be seen in the use of negation “ei” in the beginning of her turn on line 6. She wishes to express that she does not think that all young drivers will eventually become good drivers. Nina’s talk is cut off by Anna’s interruption in the middle of her utterance. Anna shows her eagerness to express her opposing opinion by raising her pitch at the beginning of her turn. Anna’s interruption is disaffiliative in nature because she is expressing disagreement to the turn that she is interrupting and by doing so, she performs a face-threatening act. This example is similar to the previous extract (Extract 22), in regards to disagreement. In both cases the disaffiliative overlap is produced because of a disagreement that the following speaker wishes to show to the on-going speaker and their turn.

In the following example Sara introduces a new topic for discussion by asking the two other girls if they can type. This extract was previously introduced from the point of view of turn-taking. This time the focus is on overlap.

Extract 23)

1	Sara	osaatteko kirjottaa koneella?
2		(1.2)
3	Nina	↑kahella sormella oikein [sujuvasti-]
4	Sara	[ei mut osaatsä] oikeesti
5	Anna	mä yritin
6		mä hankin (.) >toissa vuonna ei viime vuonna ↑toissa vuonna ku oli tää
7		kirjallisuusmyynti <
8		siellä mä ostin hienosti >konekirjotus< (.) oppaan
9		@@@

Nina goes on to answer Sara's question by saying that she can only type by using two fingers. Sara then interrupts Nina's turn on line 4 by asking her if she really can type the proper way (by using all ten fingers). In this case it is clear that Nina was not finished with her turn when Sara cuts in on her turn. Nina's talk is suddenly cut off after her last word and Sara goes on to finish her turn. The reason why Sara interrupts Nina's turn without recognizing a TRP is that she is not happy with the answer that Nina gives to her question. This can be seen in the use of negation "ei mut" in the beginning of Sara's turn on line 4. Sara then wants to restate her question in order to get a proper answer on line 4. However, Sara never gets her answer from Nina, since Anna takes the following turn from line 5 onwards with a lengthy story about her attending a typing class some time ago. Sara's interruption can be labeled as disaffiliative since her turn does not show any kind of support to Nina's turn. In contrast, Sara's turn shows dissatisfaction and negative evaluation to Nina's answer.

Schegloff (1997) refers to these types of sequences as *third position repairs*. A conversation participant produces an utterance in the first turn of the sequence. The following turn consists of a response from a second party to that turn, which is seen as problematic in regards to understanding. The

original and misunderstood speaker may then take the third turn in order to explain the original turn and/or to rephrase it for better understanding. In this case, Sara was the original speaker, who was misunderstood by Nina. Sara then rephrases her first turn in order to be understood and to get an answer to her original question in the third turn of the sequence.

6.4 Progressional onsets

Progressional onsets come to exist after a hitches, disfluencies or perturbations of talk (Jefferson 1984: 23). The next speaker will interpret the turn to have ended because of a sign within the turn that they see as a sign of an upcoming TRP. These signs include silences, which can happen even in the middle of an utterance or hitches/perturbations that happen e.g. when the current speaker is lost for words or attempting to come up with the correct way of creating their turn. In many cases, silences or hitches do not signal the end of the turn and the existence of a TRP and, therefore, overlaps occur. Progressional onsets happen due to the co-locutors interpreting the situation differently; the current speaker feels that they still have the turn even though creating a mid-utterance silence or a hitch in speech and the next speaker sees these same signals as chances for possible turn change. Progressional onsets may come to exist after a silence in the current speaker's turn. The silence may happen even mid-sentence if the current speaker is in search of a word or attempting to come up with the correct way of expressing themselves. Sometimes the next speaker may see this silence as an opportunity for a TRP and they decide to take the turn. The following turn might be helpful to the previous turn or even take a whole new direction in the flow of the conversation. The next speaker might see the silence as a request for help in word search or as a sign of the turn being over. Progressional onsets also occur after hitches, perturbations or disfluencies in speech. These include things such as word search, stuttering and false starts. Sometimes the next speaker interprets the disfluency as a request for help from the current speaker and they then begin their turn in order to help the

current speaker with their turn. The next speaker may also sometimes interpret the situation falsely and create an incorrect help for the current speaker. An overlap usually occurs because the next speaker interprets that the disfluency is a sign of the current speaker requesting help for their turn and they then begin their turn in order to provide that help. However, the current speaker may also get to finish their turn and actually need no help, so that an overlap occurs.

In the following example JAS is telling a story of the time he had a night out with a couple of his friends.

Extract 24)

1	JAS	yeah
2		so much random stuff happens
3		to all of us
4		that- like you could-
5		make a <u>movie</u>
6		like like Go out of it
7		you know
8		it's °that random°
9		(0.7)
10		but it's like
11		four thirty in the morning and like
12		there are a <u>hhundred</u> people
13		in a line for a <u>taxi</u>
14		(1.2)
15		and like
16		me and <u>Mark</u>
17		>no not Mark<
18		(.) it was me and <u>Marco</u> : and Jave: and Tim
19		(0.9)
20		like so a German an American a: (.) [Spaniard]
21	MAR	[Spaniard]

JAS is beginning to tell the story but before he gets to the actual story he decides to describe his friends who were with him that night. JAS gives the names of these people and then attempts to remember all their nationalities. He remembers the first two and then creates a short pause before the third one. MAR is familiar with the people that JAS is talking about and because she knows the nationality of the third boy that JAS is talking about, she decides to remind JAS. MAR sees JAS's short pause as a sign of him not remembering the last nationality and she then decides to help him by giving him the correct word. However, JAS also remembers the last nationality at the same time as MAR creates her turn and, therefore, the end of JAS's turn ends up being similar to, and overlapping with, MAR's turn. Lerner (2004) calls this *a collaborative completion* of the turn in progress.

The following example is again an extract of the conversation on JAS's laundry conduct.

Extract 25)

1	MAR	[↑yeah]
2		it is your fault
3		you signed up for cla- [for laundry when you had class]
4	JAS	[no no what I'm gonna do though is]
5		I have laundry time at eight
6		so I'm gonna go and wash them

MAR first points out to JAS that it indeed is his fault that the person who has reserved the time that JAS uses will have to wait for their turn. MAR then goes on to explain her opinion further by telling JAS that he himself reserved the laundry time for when he actually had class (lines 1-3). MAR, however, cuts off in the middle of her utterance and JAS sees this as an opportunity for beginning his turn. The conversation is somewhat heated in nature since MAR and JAS are expressing differing opinions on the matter in question and that is another reason for JAS to jump at the chance to begin his turn

when he sees an opening for it. As a result of this MAR also finishes her turn because she is also eager to get her opinion said and JAS also finishes his turn since neither of them is willing to give up their turn to the opposing co-locutor. In this case, the disfluency in MAR's turn gives JAS the opportunity to jump in and begin his eagerly awaited turn.

In the following example the topic of the conversation is a Latin exam that two of the girls have already taken and the third girl is asking them questions about it.

Extract 26)

1	Nina	mut ei me- oliko meillä verbi
2		meillä oli ↑tunnistam- tunnistettavana [verbejä]
3	Anna	[joo tunnistamana]
4		niit ei tarttenu sillei taivuttaa

Nina recalls that they had to identify some verbs in that exam, but she is not quite sure. Therefore, Anna reinforces Nina's turn by stating that they indeed did have some verbs to identify in that exam. It is clear that Nina's turn was not over by the time that Anna begins hers, but still Anna wishes to begin her turn by causing an end of the turn overlap. In this case Anna is eager to begin her turn since she wishes to reinforce Nina's recollection of the matter in questions and, therefore, she sees no reason to wait for the end of the turn. Anna's turn can be seen as supportive and helpful to Nina's turn and quite useful for the flow of the conversation. Nina's self-repair on the word "tunnistettavana" raises a response from Anna, who is attempting to help Nina in her word search as well as confirming Nina's recollection on the exam. Although Anna's response is not grammatically correct, it is still an attempt to help Nina with her word search and the hesitation gives Anna the signal to jump in with her turn. In other words, the progressional onset occurred because of the self-repair in the middle of Nina's turn on line 2. The

self-repair can be seen as a hitch, which signals the following speaker of a possible TRP.

In the example that follows, Anna and Nina are talking about how only wealthy people can afford to go on a holiday.

Extract 27)

1	Anna	[ne on jotka lähtee ulko-]
2		ulkomaille ni ne on mitkä on varakkaita
3		eihän <u>köy</u> hillä oo koskaa varaa matkustaa
4		korkeintaa tommosii etelän mm- [matkakohtei-]
5	Nina	[nii etelänmatkoja]
6	Anna	mihi ↑mihi viedää niinku

Anna is telling Nina how she thinks that poor people can only afford to go on the common arranged beach holidays that the tourists prefer. She is, however, having some problems producing a word and Nina then sees the hesitation as a sign of Anna needing assistance with her turn. Nina attempts to give Anna the word that she thinks she is searching for, but her guess ends up being not quite correct. Anna, however, finds the word that she was looking for and then gets to complete her turn despite Nina's overlap. Nina's turn does not interfere with Anna's turn because she gets to finish her turn without any further hesitation. Anna also shows that she still has the turn by increasing her volume after Nina's overlap.

6.5 Recognitional onsets

Recognitional onsets also have to do with speakers orienting to an upcoming TRP (Jefferson 1983: 4). In contrast to transitional onsets, the recognitional onsets mostly refer to those cases of overlap where the next speaker is reacting to the *adequacy* of the utterance or the turn (Jefferson 1984: 4). In other words, the ongoing utterance may not have yet ended, but the message of that utterance is already clear to the discussion participants and,

therefore, the next speaker decides to begin their turn since they feel that the message that the ongoing turn is meant to convey has already been completed (Jefferson 1983: 4). Whether or not the current speaker feels that they have finished their turn, has no meaning, since the next speaker is the one who decides to begin their turn with an overlap to the on-going turn. A recognitional onset may occur when a speaker who has the turn says something that raises rapid responses from other speakers. Especially in a heated discussion this is quite a typical phenomenon, since the conversation participants are eager to get their say in and cannot wait for the previous turn to completely finish. A recognitional onset can also be a sign of mutual understanding between the speakers if another speaker continues on what the previous speaker has said and that way shows support. A recognitional onset is usually merely a sign of a fluent conversation and it does not affect the flow of the conversation in great detail.

The category of recognitional onsets also includes anticipatory and collaborative completions (Lerner 2004). That is, the cases of overlaps where the following speaker has recognized the direction (or thrust) of the turn and enters into talk with an anticipatory utterance, which follows the flow of the previous turn. In these cases, the utterance is often completed in unison. Naturally, sometimes these recognitions might be false and the utterance might have been going another way than the next speaker presumed, but an overlap of turns has, however, been created.

Jefferson (1983) has further divided recognitional onsets into item-targetted onsets and thrust-projective onsets. Jefferson (1983) sees item-targetted recognitional onsets as being targeted to an "item" or a word within the turn. The next speaker's turn will come to overlap the current speaker's turn without recognition of a TRP. The word or item has, however, been recognized by the next speaker and there is no need for the current speaker to finish their turn. Thrust-projective recognitional onsets have more to do with overall thrust and sense of the conversation (Jefferson 1983: 20). Again,

the next speaker will begin their turn before a TRP, but instead of a single word, the general thrust of the utterance has been recognized. In other words, there is no need for the current speaker to finish the utterance, since the ending is already clear to the next speaker or at least they might think that they know how the turn is going to end. In the present study, item-targeted and thrust-projective onsets were not separated into their own sub-categories, since the recognitional onsets of the data seemed to very often fit both categories. Also, in the data of the present study, the amount of recognitional onsets was so small that further division did not seem necessary. Therefore, all recognitional onsets are categorized under the same category and no sub-sections were needed.

In the following example MAR and JAS are talking about JAS's reserved laundry time.

Extract 28)

1	MAR	if somebody-
2		you have from what
3		eight [till]
4	JAS	[eight till] nine

JAS has just been telling how he has booked some time slots to do his laundry. MAR then is confirming what she has heard by asking if JAS's reserved time is from eight onwards. JAS recognizes what MAR is about to say and decides to jump in with his turn. JAS decides to help MAR because she expresses that she is not quite sure at which time JAS's reserved time slot was. JAS then completes MAR's turn on her behalf. Instead of MAR beginning to guess what time JAS had reserved, JAS moves the conversation onwards by giving the correct time information.

In the following example MAR and Sop are talking about the different kinds of beer that they like and do not like.

Extract 29)

1	SOP	[no]
2		I don't like that stuff either
3		but you gotta admit that stuff is [better]
4	MAR	[is better] [than-]
5	SOP	[than your] Bud

SOP first says that she does not like a certain brand of beer that has been mentioned earlier. She then goes on to add that it is still better than some other brand of beer. MAR then attempts to jump in on SOP's turn because she recognizes what SOP is about to say. MAR is trying to guess which brand of beer SOP is about to name, but before she gets to do this, SOP cuts in on her turn and names the brand of beer herself. MAR and Sop both end up creating recognitional onsets, because they both can guess how the other person's turn is about to end and they decide to finish their turns on their behalf. MAR does not get to succeed with her attempt because SOP wants to say the brand herself.

In the following example Anna and Nina are talking about the intense atmosphere that they feel is going on in banks.

Extract 30)

1	Anna	[joo ja sit] ku sä rupeet kattomaan sitä <u>ilmapiirii</u> siellä
2		siellä on tota ne tytöt istuu siinä niinku
3		tai työt ne naiset istuu siinä ka- kassalla ja
4		ne vilkuilee taaksepäin
5		siellä kulkee semmosii (.) miehii
6		jo- edestakasin [siel-]
7	Nina	[pankinjohtajia]
8	Anna	↑joo pankinjohtajia

Anna begins by describing the atmosphere of the banks and the actions of the people working in the banks (lines 1-4). She is then going on to describe

these men that walk by in the banks, but does not identify the men in any way (lines 5-6). Anna's hesitation can be seen on line 5, where she briefly pauses before the word "miehii". This can be seen as an indication of Anna looking for the appropriate term for those men in the banks, but does not seem to be able to find one. Nina then jumps in on Anna's turns by suggesting that these men might be the bank managers (line 7). Anna accepts Nina's suggestion by stating that they indeed are the bankers (line 8). Anna even seems to be quite pleased with Nina's assistance judging by the rise in pitch in the beginning of her turn on line 8. Nina's suggestion for Anna's word search can be seen as helpful to the flow of the conversation since it seems that Anna cannot remember the term for the men that she is attempting to describe and, therefore, Nina's turn is quite helpful to Anna. Anna's turn is cut off by Nina's turn, but it cannot be seen as an interruption since Nina's turn is helpful to Anna's turn and because Anna gets to continue her turn after Nina has expressed hers. Also, since Anna's turn seems to be grammatically complete (ending with the word "edestakasin" on line 6), this overlap cannot be treated as an interruption, although being affiliative in nature.

In the following example Sara has been asking the other two girls about a class that she had missed earlier on the week.

Extract 31)

1	Anna	nii tota @@
2		sä et onneks [turhaan tullu sillon]
3	Sara	[ei mä en tullu hehhe]

Anna has just informed Sara that the class was actually cancelled and so they did not attend it either. Anna then humorously points out to Sara that it is a good thing that she did not come to the class, because it would have been a waste of time for her. Sara sees where Anna is going with her turn and begins to comment on Anna's turn even before she gets to the end of her

turn. The beginning of Anna's turn is enough for Sara to guess what Anna is about to say and because of that Sara sees that it is not necessary for her to hear the end of Anna's turn. Both girls get to finish their turns and it confirms that Sara's guess was actually correct and she did indeed know what Anna was about to say. Sara's overlap can be seen as helping the overall flow of the conversation since she does not wait for a TRP, but decides to jump in after she has recognized where Anna's turn is going.

7 FREQUENCY AND COMPARISON OF OVERLAPS

In this chapter the overlap categories are examined according to their frequency in the data. This includes a comparison between the frequency of the different overlap categories in the Finnish and English conversations. The frequencies are presented through various tables, which clarify the distribution of the different overlap categories in the data. These findings will also be analyzed in the light of previous studies. The quantitative analysis is based on a very basic level of analysis, which includes adding up the occurrence of each overlap category and comparing these numbers. No statistical methods were used to test the significance of differences found, since the level of analysis used seemed adequate in this context. As Chapter 6 answered the first research question of introducing the various types of overlapping talk in the data, Chapter 7 will concentrate on answering the two remaining research questions. This chapter will analyze the overlap categories quantitatively, as opposed to the previous chapter which concentrated on the qualitative analysis. Section 7.1 will concentrate on analyzing the frequency of the different types of overlaps in both conversations as a whole. This will correspond to research question 2, of exploring how often each type of overlapping talk occurs in the data. Section 7.2 will then compare these two conversations and present the possible

differences and/or similarities between them. Section 7.3 will then draw together the results of the present study. This chapter as a whole will then answer the third and final research question by comparing the occurrence of different overlap types in the two conversations.

7.1 Frequency of overlaps in the conversations

The quantitative analysis of the different types of overlap in the data will first begin with an overall view of the overlaps. In other words, the overall frequency of each overlap type will be presented and the possible differences of the two conversations will, in turn, be explored in the following section. The purpose of this is to find out how often overlaps occurred in the data in general and how often each category was present when the frequencies of both conversations were added up. This is done in order to get a more detailed picture of the nature of the two conversations and to get an idea of how common turns with overlaps actually are. Also, the overall occurrence of each overlap type will provide some grounds for comparison when it comes to examining the two conversations separately.

Table 1) Overall frequency of the overlap categories in the data

CATEGORY	OVERALL FREQUENCY
Simultaneous onsets	28,2 %
Transitional onsets	22,8 %
<i>End of the turn overlaps</i>	61,7 %
<i>Falsely recognized TRP</i>	38,3 %
Interruptions	22,8 %
<i>Affiliative</i>	34,0 %
<i>Disaffiliative</i>	66,0 %
Progressional onsets	13,6 %
Recognitional onsets	12,6 %

There were altogether 1435 turns in the Finnish and English conversations and 206 or 14,4 % of those turns had competitive overlap in them. The number of overlapping turn is surprisingly low when compared to, for

example, Kohonen's (2004) results that showed 1016 turns altogether and 422 or 41,5% overlapping turns. The difference in numbers can, however, be explained through the categorization of overlaps. Kohonen's study included both competitive and non-competitive overlaps while the present study only concentrates on competitive overlaps. Therefore, the number of overlapping turns in this case is understandably lower. When adding together the amounts of non-competitive and competitive overlaps in the data of the present study, the amount of overlaps rises to 377. That is to say that 26,3 % of all turns had some kind of overlapping talk in them. This amount is yet somewhat lower when compared to Kohonen's (2004) study. It could, therefore, be stated that the amount of overlapping talk is perhaps even surprisingly low in the data. Nevertheless, the amount of competitive overlaps (and overlaps in general for that matter) in the data is quite considerable and it can be stated that overlaps are a significant part of both conversations.

The division between competitive and non-competitive overlaps was also quite surprising. The numbers show that out of all the overlaps, 54,6% were categorized as competitive overlaps, this category accounting for the majority of overlaps in the two data sets. In contrast, 45,4% were categorized as non-competitive overlaps, which were not included in the analysis. These numbers are quite striking when compared to, for example, the results of the study by Stolt (2008). She found 72% of all overlaps in her data to be non-competitive and only 28% to be competitive in type. That is to say, that in her data, the non-competitive overlaps were in clear majority. The division was, therefore, quite significantly more even in the two data sets of the present study. However, it should be noted that Stolt's (2008) study was based on the analysis of conversations carried out in English by native Finnish and English speakers whereas the present study examines both native Finnish and English conversations. Perhaps the difference can, therefore, be explained by language related differences or perhaps by the different ways and idiosyncrasies of conversing of the co-locutors. Nevertheless, it would

seem that the co-locutors in the two data sets of the present study created competitive overlaps quite more often than it would have been expected. It should, however, be noted that the high amount of competitive overlaps is quite common for multiparty conversations since there is more competition over turns than, for example, in conversations between two participants.

As *Table 1* reveals, the most common types of overlap in the data were simultaneous onsets with the frequency of 58 overlaps (28,2 %). Transitional onsets (47 overlaps / 22,8 %) and interruptions (47 overlaps / 22,8 %) shared the slot for the second most common type of overlaps in the two data sets. These three categories were then followed by progressional onsets (28 overlaps / 13,6 %) and recognitional onsets (26 overlaps / 12,6 %), which were the two least common types of overlap in the data.

Simultaneous onsets being the most common type of overlap in the data can be at least partially explained by the nature of the conversations. Both conversations were informal face-to-face conversations between three friends. Simultaneous onsets were bound to happen since there was no formal distribution of turns (as for example in interviews) and all the conversation participants were equal in the situation. In many cases, two or more people opted to comment simultaneously on something that a third co-locutor had said and simultaneous onsets occurred. Also, when pauses and silences occurred within the conversations, it was not predetermined who would be the one to break the silence. Therefore, sometimes two or more co-locutors opted to break the silence simultaneously. Also, the fact that all co-locutors were familiar with each other and considered to be friends, the topics of talk were mostly familiar to everyone, which enabled everyone to comment and make observations all through the conversations.

Transitional onsets and interruptions were the second most common types of overlapping speech in the present study. Both categories amounted to 22,8 % of all cases overlaps in the data. The high number of transitional onsets in the data corresponds to the findings of Kohonen (2004), who found overlaps

"related to TRPs" to be the most common type of overlapping speech in her study. This category can be seen as corresponding to the category that is titled as transitional onsets in the present study, or at least it is the one closest to Kohonen's (2004) category. Kohonen (2004) describes her category of overlaps related to TRPs as including the types of overlapping speech where an up-coming TRP has been recognized and the following co-locutor will then begin their turn with a slight overlap to the on-going turn. This description would roughly correspond to the end of the turn overlaps in the present study, which were categorized under transitional onsets. The high number of interruptions in the conversation can be considered as being surprising when compared to the results of Kohonen's (2004) study. She found only 0.9 % of all the overlaps to be interruptive in nature. In fact, interruptions were the least common type of overlaps in her data. The differences in results can, however, at least partially be explained by the definition of an interruption. Kohonen's definition was somewhat narrower than the definition used in the present study. Kohonen (2004) excluded *delayed completions* or *justified interruptions* from the category of interruptions. This category refers to the cases where the co-locutor producing the justified interruption had been interrupted before the end of their turn, which would then give them the right to interrupt and finish their turn. These cases of interruptions were included in the category of interruptions in the present study and roughly correspond to the sub-category titled as affiliative interruptions. Also, the fact that Kohonen's study included both competitive and non-competitive overlaps will have again affected the results. Nevertheless, it should be notable that interruptions were the least common type of overlap in her data, as compared to the present study, where interruptions shared the place for second most common type of overlapping talk. Despite the fact that the present study only included competitive overlaps, the difference between these two studies is notable, when it comes to the amount of interruptive overlaps.

Table 1 shows that the majority of transitional onsets happened at the end of a turn. In fact, 61,7 % of the transitional onsets happened at the end of the turn, while 38,3 % were categorized as occurring because of a falsely recognized TRP. The co-locutors being familiar with each other can also explain the high amount of transitional onsets in the data. The co-locutors could react to an up-coming TRP prematurely since they could predict that the current speaker would be coming to the end of their turn. As conversation participants are familiar with each other, they are also familiar with each others' ways of talk and interaction and, therefore, they are able to recognize up-coming TRP's more precisely. Also, the co-locutors were not that worried about the possible misinterpretation of a TRP because of the relaxed nature of the talk and because of the close relationship between the co-locutors. In other words, if a misinterpretation would occur, these situations would most likely be solved quite quickly and no problems would arise.

The amount (22,8 %) of overlaps categorized as interruptions was also fairly high in the data of the present study. This can also be at least partially explained by the nature of the conversations and the relationship between the co-locutors. Interrupting the current speaker is normally considered as a rude and face-threatening act when done in a formal conversation, such as interviews or other conversations that are carried out in a professional setting. In informal conversations, however, the degree of rudeness is not that high since the co-locutors are familiar with each other. The relationship between the interruptor and the interruptee is strong enough to stand the interruption. The need for formal politeness decreases the more familiar the co-locutors are with each other. Also, the conversations got somewhat heated at some points of the interaction, which again explains the high amount of interruptions. Interruptive behavior often happens when a conversation is heated in nature and the co-locutors wish to get their turn in quickly, even before the current speaker has finished their turn.

As *Table 1* shows, the majority (66,0 %) of interruptions in the data were disaffiliative in type and that only 34,0 % of all interruptions were categorized as being affiliative. This would indicate that the interruptive behavior was mostly face-threatening in type and performed despite the negative aspects of it. This corresponds to the analysis of the co-locutors not being that worried about interrupting one another, since they were so familiar with each other. The high number of disaffiliative interruptions also corresponds to the occasionally heated nature of the conversations. In heated conversations, people tend to interrupt more often in order to get their opinion heard.

Progressional onsets was among the two least common types of overlap in the conversations with 13,6 % of all overlaps. This is most likely explained by the fact that hitches and perturbations were not common in the conversations. The talk was quite fluent in both cases and, therefore, there were not many opportunities for progressional onsets to occur. The fluency of the conversations can perhaps also be explained by the relaxed nature of the talk. There was no pressure of performing, saying the right things or of formulating one's sentences in an accurate manner. Since the pressure of talking correctly was reduced, the talk indeed became more fluent. Also, the familiarity of the co-locutors again comes into play with this particular category. When hitches or perturbations existed in the conversations, the co-locutors could interpret the situation correctly and see that the present co-locutor was not finished with their turn despite the hitch or perturbation. Therefore, the situation was interpreted similarly by all co-locutors, no overlaps occurred and the present co-locutors could finish their turn. This result is in contrast to Schegloff's (2000: 10) study of overlaps in multiparty conversations. He (2000: 10) states that most overlaps are at the sites of hitches and perturbations. In fact, this would not seem to be the case in the data of the present study since the category that would include these kinds of overlaps was among the least common types of overlapping speech in the conversations. Naturally, it is the speakers who create the hitches and

perturbations within the conversations and the differences in their occurrence can simply be explained by different ways of talking and different speakers. Some speakers might create these disfluencies of speech more often, while some might speak more fluently. It would also seem that when hitches or perturbations of talk occurred in the data, many overlaps did not occur out of those opportunities. These disfluencies of speech were mostly left to the current speaker to solve and the other co-locutors rarely offered any overlapping help.

Recognitional onsets were the least common type of overlap in the conversations with only 12,6 % of all overlaps being of this type. This is perhaps a bit surprising considering the nature of the conversation and the relationship between the co-locutors. Recognitional onsets have to do with prediction or *finishing each other's sentences* as the saying goes. With the co-locutors being familiar with each other, it could be presumed that recognitional onsets would occur quite often within the conversation. This was not, however, the case in the data of the present study. Since the conversation was quite relaxed and slow in tempo, there was no need to rush and to begin one's turn prior to the end of the previous co-locutors turn.

7.2 Comparative analysis of overlaps

This section will concentrate on the comparative analysis of the data and on finding the possible differences and/or similarities of overlaps in the Finnish and English conversations, thus, answering research question 3. As section 7.1 concentrated on analyzing the conversations together as one data, this section of the study will look at the two conversations separately, thus comparing them in the light of overlap occurrence. These results will also be compared to the overall results presented in section 7.1.

Table 2) Frequency of competitive overlap types in Finnish and English data

OVERLAP CATEGORY	FREQUENCY IN FINNISH CONVERSATION	FREQUENCY IN ENGLISH CONVERSATION
Transitional onsets	17,2 %	27,4 %
<i>End of the turn overlaps</i>	62,5 %	61,3 %
<i>Falsely recognized TRP</i>	37,5 %	38,7 %
Recognitional onsets	10,8 %	14,2 %
Progressional onsets	18,3 %	9,7 %
Interruptions	25,8 %	20,4 %
<i>Affiliative</i>	33,3 %	34,8 %
<i>Disaffiliative</i>	66,7 %	65,2 %
Simultaneous onsets	28,0 %	28,3 %

There were altogether 812 turns in the English conversation, with 113 or 13,9 % of those turns including competitive overlapping speech. The Finnish conversation was conducted of 623 turns and in 93 or 14,9 % of those turns included competitive overlaps. Therefore, it can be stated that competitive overlapping speech existed slightly more often in the Finnish conversation than in the English conversation. The difference in numbers is not, however, so high that one could draw any definite conclusions of any possible differences between the competitive overlapping behavior of interaction between English and Finnish conversations. In fact, the amount of competitive overlapping speech in both conversations can be seen as quite similar, not different. The amount of overlaps in both conversations is, however, notable. These results are in contrast to Halmari's (1993) findings of the native speakers of English initiating overlaps and interruptions three times more often than the native Finns in her study. However, the results are similar to Stolt's (2008) findings of Finns creating overlapping talk slightly more often than their English co-locutors (330 to 295 cases of overlapping talk). Nevertheless, it should be noted the Finns in Stolt's (2008) study conversed in English, not in their native tongue Finnish.

As *Table 1* shows, simultaneous onsets were the most common type of overlapping speech when analyzing both conversations together. This was also the case when looking at the two conversations separately. *Table 2* shows that out of all the overlaps in the Finnish conversation, 28,0 % were categorized as simultaneous onsets. The number of simultaneous onsets in the English conversation was 28,3 %. The difference is, therefore, very small. Simultaneous onsets occurred in both conversations quite often. The number of pauses in both conversations might explain the high number of simultaneous onsets; after a pause, no one was sure who would have the following turn and, therefore, two or more conversation participants opted to take the turn simultaneously. Also, the conversation participants did not tend to name the following speaker that often. That is to say, the following speaker could quite often self-select, since the next speaker had not been appointed by the current speaker, which again enabled simultaneous onsets. It is, however, possible that the selection of next speaker was sometimes reinforced with non-verbal signals, such as gaze, but these signals were not included in the analysis due to video footage not being available. Nevertheless, there were quite a few occasions in both conversations where someone would raise a new topic of talk after a pause. This was done with an open question, which opened the new topic but did not signal who was to answer that question. Therefore, two conversation participants often opted to answer that question simultaneously.

The second most common type of overlapping speech, when looking at the two conversations together, was transitional onsets (with interruptions). *Table 2* shows that this was also the most common type of overlapping speech in the English conversation with 27,4 %. In the Finnish conversation, this category was the fourth most common type of overlapping speech with only 17,2 %. This is the one category with the largest difference in numbers between the two categories. The high number of transitional onsets in the English conversation can perhaps be explained by the conversation participants and their familiarity with each other. The co-locutors in the

English conversation seemed to be more relaxed with each other and perhaps that can be interpreted as a sign of familiarity between them. The conversation was also somewhat more heated in nature than the Finnish conversation. In a heated conversation the end of the turn is often left unheard since the following co-locutor is so eager to begin their turn that they do so even before a TRP comes to exist. In the English conversation, 61,3 % of the transitional onsets happened at the end of a turn, while only 38,7 % happened due to a misinterpreted TRP. This shows that most transitional overlaps in the English conversation indeed happened prior to the completion of the previous turn. In the Finnish conversation the difference between these two sub-categories was also quite notable; 62,5 % of the transitional overlaps in the Finnish conversation were categorized as happening at the end of a turn while 37,5 % resulted from a misinterpreted TRP. All in all, the English conversation was somewhat quicker in tempo than the Finnish conversation. This would in part explain the high number of transitional onsets for two reasons. Firstly, the quick tempo of the talk indicates that the following turns were often started before the completion of the on-going turn in order to get one's voice heard in the conversation. Waiting for one's turn, and a possible TRP, was not always possible if one wished to get a turn in the conversation. Secondly, the quick tempo would also indicate the lack of pauses that enable the occurrence of falsely recognized TRPs. Since there were fewer pauses, also the chance to falsely recognize a TRP remained smaller. Also, this result is in contrast to Halmari (1993), who found that Finns mostly overlap at the end of the turn, while the English-speakers mostly overlap in the middle of the turn.

Interruptions shared the slot for the second most common type of overlapping speech when looking at the two conversations together. *Table 2* shows that this was also the case with the Finnish conversation, where 25,8 % gave interruptions the slot for the second most common type of overlapping speech. In the English conversation, interruptions were the third most common type of overlapping speech with 20,4 % of all overlaps. It should be

noted that the amount of interruptions was surprisingly high in both conversation, which would indicate that interruptions are more common than presumed in both Finnish and English conversations.

As *Table 2* shows, the difference in percentage is not that high, although the numbers equaled to the second most and third most common types of overlapping speech respectfully in the two conversations. The difference can, however, be treated so significant that it would need some kind of a reason to explain it. The high number of interruptive overlaps in the Finnish conversation can most likely be explained by the Finnish conversation participant Anna and her eagerness to interrupt. In fact, 58,3 % of all the interruptions in the Finnish conversation were initiated by Anna. Also, it seemed like the Finnish women did not mind interrupting or being interrupted that much. That is to say, interruptions rarely caused any reactions within the conversation, but the flow of the conversation was carried out as normal. The Finnish girls did not seem that eager to fight for their turn as when the English conversation participants would quite often object to being interrupted by taking their turn back after being interrupted. Perhaps the fact that interruptions were given more attention within the conversation restrained the English conversation participants from producing them that often.

Table 2 shows that out of all the overlaps categorized as interruptions, the English conversation showed 34,8 % being affiliative and 62,5 % disaffiliative in type. Out of the Finnish conversation's interruptions, 33,3 % were affiliative and 66,7 % disaffiliative. This shows that disaffiliative interruptions were more common in both conversations and that a fairly low number of the interruptions were categorized as being affiliative. Again, the figures are quite similar when it comes to different kinds of interruptions in English and Finnish conversations. It can, therefore, be stated that the interruptive behavior is quite similar in both conversations when it comes to the data of the present study.

Progressional onsets were the second least common type of overlaps when looking at the two conversations together. *Table 2* shows that in the Finnish conversation, where 18,3 % of all the overlaps were categorized as being progressional onsets, this category accounted for the third most common type of overlaps. In the English conversation, only 9,7 % of all overlaps were categorized as progressional onsets. This type was the least common type of overlaps in the English conversation. Therefore, the difference between the two conversations when considering progressional onsets, can be considered as being quite noticeable. In fact, it is the second biggest difference when looking at the percentage of the different overlap categories between the two conversations.

The Finnish conversation had considerably more cases of progressional onsets because there were also more chances for them to occur. In other words, the Finnish conversation included more hitches, perturbations and pauses than the English conversation. Most of these disfluencies in speech were produced by the Finnish co-locutor Anna, which in turn enabled the occurrence of progressional onsets. Since there were very few hitches or perturbations in the English conversation, the number of progressional onsets in that conversation was also low. Also, the Finnish conversation participants seemed to be more eager to help with word searches or to jump in to the conversation when disfluencies occurred. As when the English co-locutors more often refrained themselves from helping the current speaker or offering suggestions for word searches and instead waited for the current speaker to resolve the problem themselves.

Recognitional onset was the least common type of overlap when looking at the two conversations together. The Finnish conversation had 10,8 % recognitional onsets of all the overlap types and the English conversation included 14,2 % of overlaps this type. In other words, recognitional onsets were the least common type of overlaps in the Finnish conversation and the second least common in the English conversation. As stated in the previous

section, the low amount of recognitional onsets in both conversations was perhaps quite surprising. Since the nature of the conversation and the familiar relationship between the co-locutors was a major contributing factor all through the analysis, it could be presumed that these factors would also contribute to this category. It could be proclaimed that since the co-locutors have so close relations, they would also be able to finish each other's thoughts and sentences and create collaborative completions more often.

The difference between the two conversations considering recognitional onsets was again notable enough to require some kind of an explanation. As the occurrence of collaborative completions remained quite low in the Finnish conversation, this phenomenon was somewhat more common in the English conversation. The English conversation participants seemed to talk more about subject and events that were familiar to everyone. They tended to think back on some things that they had all done together, which enabled the occurrence of collaborative completions since everyone could very well guess what the other was about to say. As in the Finnish conversation the women tended to discuss topics that were not already familiar to others. That is to say, they topics of talk were new to the other two participants and, therefore, it was much more difficult to predict what the current speaker was about to say and collaborative completions and progressional onsets altogether were much harder to create.

7.3 Summary of results

The results show that overlapping talk does indeed exist in everyday conversations and that it is in fact quite a substantial part of talk. Moreover, it can be stated that overlapping talk can be further divided into competitive and non-competitive overlaps as also into more specific and descriptive categories to correspond to the needs of any given context and/or study. These categories help in exploring the matter further and in making more detailed analysis of the overlaps. The categories can be created based on the reasons why they occur or on the way that they come to exist. In the present

study, both of these reasons were utilized when creating the five categories for the overlapping talk in the data. Surely it would be possible to create various kinds of categories for overlapping talk, but these categories were chosen for the present study for the reason that they existed in the data and also to support previous studies that had identified some similar categories.

The initial analysis showed that the two data sets included quite a striking number of competitive overlaps when compared to, for example, the study by Stolt (2008). The qualitative analysis of the categories of overlapping speech showed that most overlaps happen at the point of a possible turn change or in other words at the site of a possible TRP. In addition, and perhaps even quite surprisingly, the results show that overlaps also happen in places where no TRP has been recognized and an interruption occurs. When the two conversations were analyzed as one data, it was revealed that overlaps most commonly occur at the beginning of a turn, at the very end of a turn or in a place within the turn, where a TRP had been falsely recognized. It can, therefore, be stated that overlaps mostly happen due to the co-locutors reacting to a possible TRP. This TRP can either be correctly recognized (simultaneous onsets, end of the turn overlaps) or falsely recognized (falsely recognized TRP). Also, the amount of interruptions in the data of the present data can be seen as surprisingly high. That is to say, that overlaps also often occurred although no TRP had been recognized. Therefore, it can be concluded that overlaps can happen in two different places of a turn; at the site of a TRP (either falsely or correctly recognized) or in the middle of a turn without the recognition of a TRP.

Simultaneous and transitional onsets corresponded to 51 % of all the competitive overlaps in the two data sets. This shows that over one half of all the overlaps orient to the rules of turn-taking. Also, 26,2 % of competitive overlaps were progressional or recognitional in type, which would indicate that a fourth of all overlaps were co-operative towards turn-taking. This shows that although these overlaps were titled as competitive in the presents

study, 77,2 % of those overlaps can be seen as supportive towards the turn-taking system, instead of constituting breaches to it. In other words, it could be stated that the majority of these competitive overlaps were, in fact, supporting the rules of turn-taking although being competitive in type.

The quantitative analysis of the overlapping speech in the data revealed that competitive overlapping talk existed in 14,4 % of all 1435 turns of the two conversations. The results show that the corresponding percentage is slightly smaller in the English conversation (13,9 %) than in the Finnish conversation (14,9%). Therefore, it can be stated that overlapping speech existed slightly more often in the Finnish conversation than it did in the English one. However, the difference is so small that it cannot be seen as being notable. Though it can be stated that overlapping speech exists in both conversations and that it indeed plays an important role in the flow and nature of the conversations. When looking at two conversations separately, it was concluded that the recognition of a TRP still played a significant role in the occurrence of the overlaps. Both conversations coincided with the results of the overall analysis by having simultaneous onsets as the most common type of overlapping talk. Also, the English conversation had transitional onsets as the second most common type of overlapping talk, similarly to the overall results of the study. In contrast, the Finnish conversation had interruptions as the second most common type of overlaps, which also coincides with the overall results, since the two categories shared the slot for the second most common type of overlapping talk overall.

Both conversations included a high amount of simultaneous onsets. This category was quite notably the most common type when analyzing the two conversation separately as also when looking at the two conversations together as one combined data. This concludes that the single biggest reason for the occurrence of overlaps is the simultaneous recognition of TRP by two or more co-locutors. This result also reveals that overlaps mostly happen at the very beginning of a turn.

The number of transitional onsets in the Finnish conversation was surprisingly low (17,2 %) when compared to the overall analysis of the two data sets. In fact, the difference of occurrence in the category of transitional onsets was the single biggest difference in the two conversations with the difference being a notable 10,2 %. That is to say that transitional onsets are quite more common in the English conversation than they are in the Finnish conversation. It can also be noted that transitional onsets mostly happen at the end of a turn instead of due to a false recognition of a TRP.

The second biggest difference was in the category titled as progressional onsets with the difference being 8,6 % for the Finnish conversation. This results shows that progressional onsets are more common in the Finnish conversation than they are in the English conversation. In fact, hitches and perturbations of talk was the least common reason for competitive overlaps to occur in the English conversation.

The third biggest difference in the overlaps of the two conversations was in the category titled as interruptions, with the difference of 5,4 % to the Finnish co-locutors. In fact, interruptions was the second most common category of overlapping talk in the Finnish conversation. It should also be noted that most interruptions were disaffiliative in type and in disagreement to the ongoing turn, in contrast to being affiliative and showing support to the current speaker. Therefore, it can be concluded that, in addition to simultaneously recognizing a TRP, the most common reasons for the occurrence of an overlap are quite different in the two conversations. While the Finns mostly overlap because of interruptions, the English co-locutors tend to overlap at the end of a turn or after a false recognition of a TRP.

Recognitional onsets was the following category with the difference of 3,4 % for the English conversation. The difference in numbers in the final category, simultaneous onsets, was a mere 0,3 %, which, in fact, speaks more for the similarity of the two conversations than for the possible differences in overlapping talk. Therefore, this can be seen as the single biggest similarity

between the two conversations, in addition to the overall occurrence of competitive overlaps.

8 CONCLUSION

The aim of this thesis was to study overlaps in native Finnish and English conversations. Firstly, attention was paid to the different kinds of overlapping talk found in the data. Altogether five different categories were identified; simultaneous onsets, transitional onsets, interruptions, recognitional onsets and progressional onsets. Two of these categories were further divided into more detailed sub-categories in order to clarify the analysis of overlaps. Secondly, the aim was to find out how often each type of overlapping talk existed in the data. This was achieved by simply picking out each case of overlap in the data, analyzing each overlap, applying the analysis in order to create categories and adding up the numbers that correspond to the occurrence of each type. Also, the occurrence of each category was studied in the light of both conversations as a whole and as separate conversations in order to explore the possible language differences, which was the third and final aim of the present study.

All in all, it can be stated that there are some differences in the occurrence of the different types of overlapping speech in the data sets, but also many similarities can be recognized. To summarize, the major difference is the occurrence of the category entitled transitional onsets. That is to say that the English co-locutors overlapped at the end of a turn or due to a false recognition of a TRP more often than the Finns. The second biggest difference was in the category entitled progressional onsets. This would indicate that the Finns overlap due to hitches and perturbations of talk more often than the English co-locutors. The third biggest difference was the amount of interruptions in the two conversations. While it can be stated that

the Finns interrupted each other slightly more often than the English co-locutors, it can also be stated that the overall amount of interruptions was quite high in the overall results of the two data sets. This results can, however, at least partially be explained by the somewhat broad definition of the category used in the present study. The biggest similarities between the two conversations include the similar number of competitive overlaps, the high number of simultaneous onsets and interruptions and the low number of recognitional onsets. In other words, there are both similarities and differences as it comes to the analysis of overlaps in native Finnish and English conversations. Other findings of the analysis include the surprisingly high number of competitive overlaps and the surprisingly low number of overlapping turns in both conversations, when compared to previous studies (e.g. Kohonen 2004).

It should be noted that these results and this analysis is merely based on 35 minutes of talk and the speech of three co-locutors in each language. Therefore, no definite conclusions can be drawn based on such a small amount of data, considering the overall number of all the English and Finnish conversations in the world. Naturally, the analysis of these two conversations does give some guidance as to what to expect when looking at the differences in overlapping speech in native and informal conversations of English and Finnish. It can definitely be stated that overlapping speech does occur in both languages and that it plays a significant role in everyday conversations, as previous studies have clearly shown. Also, it can be noted that although overlaps and interruptions are perhaps mostly seen as negative aspect of a conversations or even as being rude, this is not always the case when analyzing the conversations further. The occurrence of overlaps may also be to help the overall flow of the conversation or to offer support to the current speaker. In addition, although being competitive in type, most overlaps in the present study orient to the rules of turn-taking. Also, many overlaps have to do with misunderstandings and false recognitions of TRPs, which are matters that both the current and the next speaker of the

conversations contribute to. Naturally there are also those cases of overlaps, or more specifically interruptions, where the action may be considered face-threatening, but even so the overlaps and interruptions yet contribute to the overall flow and nature of the conversation and they cannot merely be seen as negative aspects of it, but as a significant part of any conversation, which make the conversations into what they are. Moreover, it should be noted that all co-locutors have different ways of talking and so it is the discussion participants, together with the setting, that makes the conversation into what it is. In other words, the present study is an analysis of these six co-locutors and the two conversations that they were having at that time and place. Nevertheless, the analysis can, for at least some parts, be seen as adapting to a more general level of the analysis of English and Finnish speech and more specifically, the analysis of overlapping talk that exists in those conversations. The present study is, therefore, an analysis of the occurrence of overlaps in these two particular conversations of English and Finnish, but also an attempt to shed some light into what overlaps are, how they come to exist and whether or not there might be some differences and/or similarities in overlaps when comparing Finnish and English conversations. It is a starting point, but not the absolute truth. In order to create more definite conclusions, the data should be far more extensive. In fact, too extensive for one study to cover.

To conclude, the aim of the present study was to clarify the concept of overlapping talk in conversations and, in particular, to compare Finnish and English conversations in this light. Hopefully, this aim has been fulfilled and that the nature of competitive overlaps in conversations has become more familiar. It is also hoped that the present study would arise more interest towards the topic since overlaps and the language differences related to that matter is a subject that deserves more attention.

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APPENDIX

Appendix 1: Transcription conventions

?	rising intonation
.	falling intonation
↑	marked rise in pitch
↓	marked fall in pitch
ye:::s	sound stretch
<u>indeed</u>	stress
yes	emphasis
[]	speech overlap
(.)	very short pause
(0.5)	pause in seconds
hh	inbreathing
.hh	out breathing
><	speech that is quicker than the surrounding speech
<>	speech that is slower than the surrounding speech
◦◦	speech that is quieter than the surrounding speech
ye-	cut-off sound
\$	laughing production of an utterance
£	animated production of an utterance
(xx)	incomprehensible item
@@	laughter

