The question–response system of Danish

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ABSTRACT

This paper provides an overview of the question–response system of Danish, based on a collection of 350 questions (and responses) collected from video recordings of naturally occurring face-to-face interactions between native speakers of Danish. The paper identifies the lexico-grammatical options for formulating questions, the range of social actions that can be implemented through questions and the relationship between questions and responses. It further describes features where Danish questions differ from a range of other languages in terms of, for instance, distribution and the relationship between question format and social action. For instance, Danish has a high frequency of interrogatively formatted questions and questions that are negatively formulated, when compared to languages that have the same grammatical options. In terms of action, Danish shows a higher number of questions that are used for making suggestions, offers and requests and does not use repetition as a way of answering a question as often as other languages.

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1. Introduction

This paper provides an overview of the question–response system of Danish based on 350 questions. The questions were sampled from nine video recordings of naturally occurring conversations, each featuring two to four native speakers of Danish. The video recording took place while the participants were having a break from the activity they were engaged in, such as working or taking a bicycle trip on their holiday. The participants consist of 19 female and 5 male speakers, ranging from 3 to 86 years of age and coming from various parts of Denmark. In the following, the overview will be presented as an overview of the Danish question–response system. This does not exclude the possibility of variation based on speakers' gender, age, social class or geographical location within Denmark. However, no significant variation was found between individual speakers of Danish in this study.

The questions were collected and coded according to a coding scheme developed at the Max Planck Institute of Psycholinguistics (Stivers and Enfield, 2010). This entails, among other things, that an utterance was coded as a question (and hence included in the study) if the utterance was either a formal question (lexical, morphological, syntactic or prosodic interrogative marking) or a functional question (an utterance that effectively seeks to elicit information, confirmation or agreement).

The coding scheme forms the base for the following sections, in which I describe the lexico-grammatical options for formulating questions (section 2), the range of social actions implemented through questions (section 3) and the relationship between questions and responses (section 4). I identify features where Danish differs from other languages in the comparative question–response coding project (see Enfield et al., 2010) and discuss possible implications of this variation.

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2. Lexico-grammatical options for question formulation.

According to the coding scheme (Stivers and Enfield, 2010), questions were separated into three main categories: polar or yes/no-type questions, Q-word or wh-type questions and alternative questions. In Danish, as in most of the other languages examined in this project (for an exception, see Hoymann, 2010), yes/no-type questions are by far the most common. Table 1 illustrates the overall distribution of the three different types of questions in Danish.

Yes/no-type questions and wh-type questions together account for 99% of all questions, whereas alternative questions as a category is represented only once in the Danish data.[1] In the following sections I concentrate only on the two larger categories.

Table 1
The distribution of types of questions.

Type	Number	Percentage
Yes/no-type questions	262	75%
Wh-type questions	87	25%
Alternative questions	1	<1%
Total	350	100%

Table 2
The syntax of yes/no-type questions and their distribution.

Form	Number	Percentage
Interrogative	160	61%
Declarative	59	23%
Tag	43	16%
Total	262	100%

2.1. Yes/no-type questions

Yes/no-type questions constitute the largest group of questions in Danish and can be formulated in three basic ways, each with varying distribution, as illustrated in Table 2.

2.1.1. Interrogatives

The basic word order of Danish is S(ubject) V(erb) O(bject). Interrogative inversion is done with the main verb (1) or with an auxiliary (2).

(1)   D008026 (GenbrugsClip02: 0:06:12.1)[2]

```
Sofie: ->1 Gik du alene hjem i går eftermiddag,

           Walked you alone home yesterday afternoon,

           Did you walk home alone yesterday afternoon,
```

---

[1] The one instance of an alternative question found in the Danish data is the following, where Sanne provides two alternative routes for her co-participant:

D005027 (MITHVDP31Aug0605B: 0:24:55.3)

```
Sanne:    Gik    i     a' landevejen     eller gik   i     a'

          Walked you(P) by country-road-the or walked you(P) by

          Did you take the main road or did you take

          den der grusvej?

          that there gravel-road?

          that gravel road?
```

[2] Data examples are labeled as follows: D008026 signifies that the language is Danish, that the extract comes from conversation number 8 and that the question is the 26th collected from that conversation. In parenthesis the name of the recording and the time at which the question occurred within that recording is provided. All names and other features that could lead to identification of the participants have been anonymized. Questions are indicated with ->1, responses with ->2 and turns preceding the question are indicated with ->0, when relevant.

(2)   D007009 (DLAU:SKURVOGN 0:01:52.5)

```
Peter: ->1 Har du fundet ud a' hvordan du aflytter en besked¿

           Have you found out how you of-listen a message¿

           Have you figured out how to listen to your messages¿
```

Unlike English, auxiliary verbs are not essential to construct an interrogative in Danish but are present only to mark modality and tense. Past and present tense are expressed with a main verb only, and consequently so is the interrogative form (as for instance in (1)). By contrast, perfect, past perfect and future tense are expressed through an auxiliary verb and when such structures are formatted as interrogatives, it is the auxiliary verb that is inverted with the subject (as for instance in (2)). Modal verbs have the same effect on the interrogative structure (3).

(3)   D005003 (MITHVDP31Aug0605A 0:25:48.7)

```
Ester: ->1 Ve' du ha: no'et mad me'?

           Will you have some food with?

           Do you want some food with you?
```

2.1.2. Declaratives

Declarative questions are utterances that have no syntactic features that mark them as questions, but are nevertheless treated as such by the participants in an interaction. Declarative questions make up the second largest group of yes/no-type questions. (4) is an instance of such a question.

(4)   D008008 (Red Cross, Clip 04 0:04:44.6)

```
Sofie: ->1 Jæm-  Du  har'kk ringe' sagt Jeg ta'r

           PRT-b- You haven't called said   I take

           Yes but You haven't called and said I'm not

           ikk' de der tabletter¿

           not those there tablets¿

           taking those tablets¿

           (0.2)

Ester: ->  Ne:j,=

           PRT,=

           No,=
```

In addition to full declarative sentences, such as (4), noun-phrases (5), prepositional-phrases (6) and verb-phrases (7) were also included in the category of declarative yes/no-type questions. Though it is in reality impossible to determine whether such phrases are elliptical versions of full declarative sentences or of interrogatives, these questions were coded as declaratives because they are "lacking interrogative morphology or syntax" (Stivers and Enfield, 2010: 2, point 7).[3]

(5)   D001014 (MITHVDP01Jun0601 0:14:52.0)

```
Berit:     .hlll Ve' du ikk' gi' mig (0.8) endnu et dejligt stykke kage.

           .hlll Won't you give me (0.8) yet another lovely piece of cake.

Kat: ->1   en æblekage?

           an applecake?

Berit: ->2 eJah.

           PRT.

           Yes.
```

---

[3] One anonymous reviewer observed that the notion of "ellipticality" is problematic because it presupposes that full sentential clauses are the default. This issue will not be addressed further here, but one way to alleviate the problem could be to assign noun, verb and prepositional phrases that are used as questions their own category in the coding scheme.

(6)   D005016 (MITHVDP31Aug0605B: 0:17:40.2)

```
Sanne:     M' så ka' jeg ta' strømper på,
           But then I can wear socks,

           (0.9)

Ester: ->1 i sandalerne.
           in sandals-the.
           in the sandals.

Sanne: ->2 Jerhh.=
           PRT.=
           Yeahh.=
```

(7)   D009001 (JAKOB 0:13:42.2)

```
Birte:     Al'så formålet   me' den   her konkurrence er så  (0.1)
           You know the purpose of this competition is then (0.1)

           at den   der  s:idder længst tid  i bilen
           that the one who stays the longest in the car

           (0.3) v↑inder den,
           (0.3) w↑ins it,

           (0.5)

Anne: ->1  Vi[ n d e ]r Ford[en,  ]
           Wi[ns      ]  Ford[-the,]
           Wi[ns      ]  the [Ford,]

Birte: ->2 [(Å dn-)]        [ Vin]der Forden
           [(Å dn-)]        [ Win]s Ford-the
           [(Å dn-)]        [ Win]s the Ford
```

As declarative questions are syntactically and morphologically unmarked, participants' interpretations of them as questions must be based on other features. A candidate for marking a declarative utterance as a question is intonation. In Danish, question intonation consists of a prosodic curve that is less falling than that applied to bare statements (Grønnum, 2003). However, some studies suggest that question intonation is not always applied in dialogue. Thus, Grønnum and Tøndering (2007) investigated questions in map task dialogue and found that as much as one third of declaratives that were treated by the participants as questions were delivered with the same intonation as true declarative statements. In line with Grønnum and Tøndering (2007), the declarative questions collected from naturally occurring interactions for this study, are not systematically produced with intonation that falls less than that of statements. In fact, more than half of all declarative questions have a prosodic curve similar to statements that do not function as questions, so though intonation may play a role, it does not appear to be the definitive signal. But whereas Grønnum and Tøndering (2007) did not in their map task dialogues find any "contextual difference" between the declarative questions that were not prosodically marked and those declarative questions that were "more prosodically conventional" (pp. 4), the declarative questions collected for this study do show particular contextual traits, in that they are all used for inquiring into "B-events" (Labov and Fanshel, 1977). Specifically, declarative questions are used either when the co-participant has failed to specify some matter (as in (4)–(6)), or, where what has been specified is beyond belief (as in (7)). In both these contexts, the declarative question displays that though its producer has a pretty good idea what the co-participant meant, she acquiesces to the co-participant's greater rights to know by requesting confirmation. This "epistemic orientation" appears to be sufficient for the co-participant to interpret the declaratives as questions, even though they are neither syntactically nor prosodically marked.

Table 3
The distribution of statement + tag combinations.

Type of tag	Number	Percentage
Adverbial	25	58%
Sentential	8	19%
Wh	10	23%
Total	43	100%

2.1.3. Tag-questions

There are three basic types of tags that can be used in Danish to turn a declarative into a formal question: adverbial tags, sentential tags and tags of the wh-type. Table 3 illustrate the distribution of the different types of tags.

2.1.3.1. Polar statements and polar tags. Both sentential and adverbial tags reflect that Danish has what Heinemann (2003, 2005) terms a "perfect polarity system", meaning that the polarity of an utterance is reflected in a subsequent response, so that positively framed utterances are acknowledged with the positive response particle *ja* (yes), whereas negatively framed utterances are acknowledged with the negative response particle *nej* (no) or confirmed with a marked positive response particle *jo* (yes2) (Heinemann, 2005, see also section 4).[4] For tag-questions, this system means that negative tags follow positively framed statements and positive tags follow negatively framed statements. Tags either consist of the adverbs *ikke* (not) or *vel* (probably), (8) and (9), or of full sentential tags (10) and (11).

(8)   D001011 (MITHVDP01Jun0601 0:14:17.1)

```
Berit: ->1 >Det' j' ås:<    flere    år siden vi har været hjemme

           >It is ADV also< several years since we have been home

           >You know it's< several years since we've stayed home


           en hel sommer ikk?

           a whole summer not?

           for a whole summer right?
```

(9)   D008042 (Clip06 0:04:53.3)

```
Kirs: ->1  Du ka' da ikk li=t, vel

           You can ADV not like=it, ADV

           You surely don't like it, right
```

(10)   D009029 (JAKOB: 0:20:16.7)

```
Cari: ->1  Du skal vel ås' aflevere den te'bage på et

           You shall ADV also return it    back on a

           You probably have to return it as well at some

           tidspunkt ska' du ikk' det

           time-point shall you not that

           point don't you
```

(11)   Constructed

```
           Du har ikke adgang til internettet har du det?

           You have not access to internet-the have you that?

           You don't have access to the internet do you?
```

---

[4] Similar patterns has been described for British English (Jefferson, 2002) and Dutch (Mazeland, 1990). In contrast to Danish, in these languages negatively framed utterances can be receipted with either negative or (unmarked) positive response particles, which suggests that Danish has a more consistent, or "perfect" system (see Heinemann, 2003, 2005 for further discussion).

Table 4
The combination of polar statements and polar tags.

	Positive statement + negative tag	Negative statement + positive tag	Total
Adverbial tag	22	3	25
Sentential tag	8	0	8
Total	30	3	33

As Table 4 shows, positive statements followed by negative tags constitute the most common way of formulating a tag-question. In addition, adverbial tags are used more frequently than sentential tags.

That positive statements followed by negative tags are more common than the opposite combination, is presumably a reflection of the fact that positively framed statements *in general* are more common than negative ones (Heinemann, 2003). The bias towards using adverbial tags, rather than full sentential ones could be ascribed to a general tendency for language users to use "the most minimal form" as much as possible (see for instance Jespersen, 1917; Enfield and Stivers, 2007). Individual speakers alternate between using adverbial and sentential tags, so the variation is not due to issues such as speaker style, gender or age. A speaker's choice of tag does however appear to be influenced by the epistemic access that s/he has to the information s/he is inquiring about. Thus, sentential tags are only used to enquire about events that the other participants, the answerer, clearly has greater rights to know about, so-called "B-events" (Labov and Fanshel, 1977). In (10) this epistemic asymmetry is oriented to by speaker using the pronoun *du* (you) and the epistemic adverb *vel* (probably). As Therkelsen (2004) shows, the use of *vel* allows for the possibility that the opposite to what is being said is the truth. By thus showing the speaker's possible doubt, this adverb, when combining with sentential tags, emphasizes the lack of access that the speaker has to what she is inquiring about.

2.1.3.2. Wh-type tags. Despite the perfect polarity system, not all tags are of opposite polarity to the statements to which they are added. Such tags consist of the wh-question word *hvad* (what), either on its own (12) or in combination with *eller* (or) (13).

(12)   D002040 (MITHVDP31Aug0606: 0:16:26.6)

```
Kirs: ->1  .hl Åh den smager jo (ås') godt den her kage hva'r¿

           .hl INT it taste ADV (also) good that here cake what¿

           .hl Oh you know it tastes (also) good this cake huh¿
```

(13)   D007012 (DLAU: SKURVOGN 0:03:10.0)

```
Rene:      De sku' helst vinde næste weekend der ska' vi sp-

           They better win next weekend then we're pl-


           eller næste mandag der ska' vi spille mod Haderslev,

           or next Monday then we're playing against Haderslev,


           (0.6)

Claus:     Nåh¿=

           Oh¿=

Peter: ->1 =A ge ef eller hva',

           =A ge ef or what,


           (0.4)

Rene: ->2  A,

           PRT,

           Yes,
```

The two tags are each used five times in the data collected for this study, by a range of different speakers and they both serve well-defined functions. *Hvad* is used to tag assessments about matters both speaker and recipient have access to, as in (12),

where Kirsten assesses the cake she and her husband are both eating. *Eller hvad* is used to tag a statement where speaker provides a candidate understanding of what a co-participant meant but failed to explicate in previous turns, as is the case in (13), where Rene has not specified that the football team he refers to with *vi* (we) in *der ska' vi spille* is the local football team AGF.

2.2. Observations about the distribution of different types of yes/no-questions

As shown in Table 2 above, interrogatives are the most common type of yes/no-question in the Danish data. Though this is in line with what is found in other languages that have this format available (see, for instance Englert, 2010; Stivers, 2010), interrogatives are used significantly more in Danish. The larger number of interrogatives in Danish is mirrored by a smaller number of declarative questions, suggesting a connection between the two. For instance, the lack of systematic prosodic marking of declarative questions could cause Danes to use interrogatives more frequently to ensure that their utterance is understood as a question. Alternatively, of course, the lack of prosodic marking of declarative questions in Danish could be caused by the tendency to use interrogatives more frequently.

There are other aspects of the high interrogative ratio in Danish that are interesting to point to. First, it is generally acknowledged that interrogatives differ from both declarative questions and tag-questions in terms of how strongly they are biased towards a particular answer (Bolinger, 1957; Quirk et al., 1985). When used as genuine requests for information, interrogatives in principle concede to the recipient as having greater rights to know about the matter inquired about. Thus, whereas the declarative question in (14) displays the speaker's assumption that the answerer remembers, the interrogative in (15) does not display any assumption about whether speaker thinks that the answerer has been on Birkholm or not.

(14)   D005029 (MITHVDP31Aug0605B: 0:27:25.3)

```
Ester: ->  Du  k' godt huske    hun sa' hun fulgtes med Bo hjem,

           You can ADV remember she said she accompanied with Bo home

           You do remember she said she walked home with Bo,
```

(15)   D002048 (MITHVDP31Aug0606: 0:18:56.1)

```
Gunn: ->1  Har du været på Birkholm?

           Have you been on Birkholm?
```

Seen in this light, the prevalence of interrogatives in Danish could suggest that Danes in general pay more attention to each other's epistemic rights and are, in that sense, more polite towards each other (Brown and Levinson, 1987) than speakers of other, comparable languages, like Dutch and English. However, the opposite interpretation is also possible to make. Previous research has established that when interrogatives are *not* used as genuine information requests, they are often morally loaded and are used to challenge the recipient's position on some matter (Heritage, 2002; Heinemann, 2008; Monzoni, 2009). For instance, in the following extract, a speaker uses an interrogative (->1) to challenge the co-participants' prior turn in which she expresses dissatisfaction with the way he makes tea (->0).

(16)   D004018 (MITHVDP31Aug0604 0:17:25.4)

```
Regi: ->0  Jah, for det'jitt så'n en tynd jen som den du lave,

           PRT, because it's=not like-this a thin one as that you make,

           Yes, because it isn't such a weak one as the one you make,

Vagn:      Nå.

           PRT.

           Right.

           (0.6)

Vagn: ->1  A' det nu å' gal me' det?

           Is it now also wrong with that?

           Is that wrong as well now?
```

In contrast to (14) and (15), cases like (16) suggest that the prevalence of interrogatives in Danish is due to Danes being less polite than speakers of other languages in that they use more challenges, complaints and other morally loaded utterances. The coding scheme on which the current study is based does not allow any firm conclusions with respect to why the Danish

Table 5
The distribution of negation across yes/no-type questions.

	Interrogatives	Declaratives	Tag-questions	All yes/no-type questions
Negation	45	10	32	87
Percentage	28%	17%	74%	33%

data produces more interrogative questions than the otherwise comparable languages Dutch and English. Hence, I can, at present, only point to possible interpretations of what causes the prevalent use of interrogatives in Danish and what its effects might be. There are other aspects of the relation between what format questions are in and the actions they are used for that seems to relate more directly to this prevalence. These will be discussed in section 3. Before moving on to that, I will briefly discuss another aspect of question formatting in which Danish differ from the other languages in the comparative project, namely the use of negative marking in questions.

2.2.1. Negatively framed questions

As Table 5, below, illustrates, 33% of all question in Danish contain a negative marker, typically the adverb *ikke* (not).

Compared to the other languages in the comparative project this is a high proportion. This can partly be explained by the perfect polarity system that applies to Danish tag-questions (see section 2.1.3), which has the consequence that most of these are negatively marked either in the tag itself or in the statement preceding the tag (see (8) and (9)). Other languages like English and Dutch have the same *possibility*, but can also use a positive tag (in English *right*, in Dutch *he*) independently of whether the statement it is attached to is negative or positive (see Englert, 2010; Stivers, 2010). Consequently their proportion of negation in tag-questions is somewhat lower than in Danish. Tag-questions, however, represent the smallest category of yes/no-questions (in Danish) and so the overall frequency of negative questions cannot be accounted for only in this way. Another possibility could be that Danes generally use negation more often than speakers of other languages, something that is impossible to determine from the data collected for this study.

However, in a similar manner to that of interrogatives, the presence of negation in questions has been shown to be of consequence for what action a question is employed to do, as well as the strength of this action (see, for instance Bolinger, 1957; Quirk et al., 1985; Heinemann, 2006) and so its prevalence in Danish may be connected to a tendency in Danish to perform more of the kind of actions that negatively framed questions are used to employ. Heritage (2002), Heinemann (2006) and Monzoni (2009) all argue that negative interrogatives are more assertive than their positive equivalents (but see Koshik, 2002; Heinemann, 2008 for a more nuanced view), because they are biased towards receiving a positive, confirming response. This is the case in the following extract, where Peter uses the negative interrogative *Sa' du ikk' han ville ringe <indenfor> et kvarter?* as an assertion that implies that Claus is somehow responsible for the fact that "he" (i.e. the "Møller" referred to in Peter's first turn) has not called back.

```
(17)     D007017 (DLAU:SKURVOGN 0:05:38.5)

    Peter:    Jeg har ikk' hørt (fra din Møller), så::

              I have not heard (from your Møller), so::

              (1.2)

    Peter:    enten   så   ta'r han pis på os eller ås' så ska'

              either he's taking the piss or else I need to

              °(  ) ringe te' ham igen°

              °(  ) phone to him again°

              (0.5)

    Claus:    Mh,

              (0.5)

    Peter: ->1 Sa' du ikk' han ville ringe <indenfor> et kvarter?

              Said you not he would call <inside> a quarter?

              Didn't you say he would call <within> fifteen minutes?
```

The comparative coding scheme used in this study does not provide the kind of detail needed to determine whether Danes use more assertive (and challenging) questions than speakers of other languages. However, more than half (45/87) of the negative questions in the Danish data serve a function similar to that of (17) above, so Danish, when seen in isolation, does

Table 6
Matters inquired about with *hv*-words.

Matter	Number	Percentage	Hv-words used
Object	24	28%	Hvad (What is that)
Event	6	7%	Hvad (What happened)
Prior talk	18	21%	Hvad (What did you say)
Place	11	12%	Hvor (Where)
Amount	11	12%	Hvor meget/Hvad beløb (How much/What amount)
Person	4	5%	Hvem/Hvad for (Who/Which kind)
Time	4	5%	Hvornår/Hvad år (When/What year)
Manner	2	2%	Hvordan (How)
Reason	7	8%	Hvorfor/Hvordan kan det være (Why/How come)
Total	87	100%	

have a high number of these "assertive questions". Further research is required to determine whether this number is significantly higher in Danish than it is in the other languages; and if it is, whether this is because Danes in general are more "assertive" or whether it is because the other languages use different formats for asserting or challenging.

2.3. Wh-questions

In Danish, wh-questions are initiated with *hv*. Table 6 provides an overview of the matters inquired about with *hv*-words, as well as what *hv*-words are used.

The most common matter that wh-questions inquire about in Danish is Object (e.g. "what is that"). This is done with the *hv*-word *hvad* (what), as in (18).

```
(18)      D009030 (JAKOB: 0:20:21.3)

          Cari: ->1  Hva' hedder hans bofælle,

                     What is-called his live-friend,

                     What's his house mate called,
```

Hvad is the most commonly used *hv*-word in Danish[5] and can be employed to inquire about almost any matter (see Table 6). In addition to Object, inquiries about Event (19) and Prior talk (20) are also done exclusively with *hvad*.

```
(19)      D006001 (THV3HH32 0:02:15.0)

          Birte: ->1 Hva' skete    der   me' bækken    derne'e  så?=

                     What happened there with brook-the there-down then?=

                     What happened to the brook down there then?=
```

```
(20)      D008046  Clip 07: 0:01:37.7

          Ester:     Det ka' da ikk' gå det var så'n hver gang,

                     It wouldn't be good if it was like this every time,

                     (0.5)

          Kirst: ->1 HVA'R,

                     WHAT,

          Ester: ->2 Nej det ku' aldrig gå det var så'n hver gang,

                     No it wouldn't be good if it was like this every time,
```

---

[5] The *hvad*-tags described in section 2.1.3.2 were coded as tag-questions and hence not represented in Table 6.

Two other frequent wh-inquiries in Danish concern Place (21) and Amount (22). The former is typically formulated with the *hv*-word *hvor* (where), the latter by combining *hvor* (here translated more adequately as how) and a mass-reference like *meget* (much) or *langt* (far).

(21)   D001048 (MITHVDP01Jul0602 : 0:10:12.1)

```
Katrine:->1Hvor ska' vi lave blomsten henne¿

          Where shall we make flower-the at¿

          Where shall we put the flower¿
```

(22)   D009018 JAKOB: 0:03:28.6

```
Birthe:->1 =.lhhh Hvor meget ka' du høre dine: naboer

           =.lhhh Where much can you hear your neighbours

           =.lhhh How much do you hear your neighbours


           >å' så no'et,<

           >and so some,<

           >and stuff,<
```

Person (except for "what is his name inquiries") is inquired about with *hvem* (who), as in (23).

(23)   D006002 (THV3HH32 0:03:44.3)

```
Birte: ->1  [>>Jahm' hve- hvem<< >a' det< der h]ar marken da?

            [>>PRTbut wh- who<< >is it< there h]as field-the PRT?

            [>>Yesbut wh- who<< >is it< that o]wn the field then?
```

In principle, objects and animals (except for very beloved pets) would be inquired about with *hvilket/hvilken* (which, inflected for gender), as in (24) (Allan et al., 2000) but in the data collected for this study, such inquiries were absent.

(24)   Constructed

```
Hvilken bus tager du med?

Which bus are you taking?
```

Instead, speakers use *hvad* (what) in combination with various other linguistic items, as in (25). This further contributes to the overall frequency of *hvad*-questions.

(25)   D005008 (MITHVDP31Aug0605A : 0:32:14.1)

```
Sanne: ->1 For hva'ffor en kage ka' man tænke på som ikk'

           Because what-kind one cake can one think on that not

           Because what kind of cake could you think of that


      ->1 går i stykker.

          goes in pieces.

          doesn't go to pieces.
```

Time and Manner are inquired about with *hvornår* (when) (26) and *hvordan* (how) (27), but for both these matters, *hvad* can also be used (see Table 6).

(26)　　　D009004 (JAKOB 0:14:30.7)

```
Anne:->1   Hvornår a' denne her konkurrence begyndt,=

           Where-then is this here competition begun,=

           When has this competition started,=
```

(27)　　　D003029 (MITHVDP01Jun0610 : 0:18:30.1)

```
Line: ->1  Hvordan se[r   han   ud?]

           How    loo[k   he    out?]

           What does [he look like?]
```

Inquiries about Reason are typically done with *hvorfor* (why) (28), but can also be formatted with the *hv*-word usually depicting Manner, *hvordan* (how) (29).

(28)　　　D009024 JAKOB: 0:07:18.2

```
Carina: ->1                 [Hvorfor ha'de han ingen b]il?

                            [Why      had  he   no    c]ar?

                            [Why didn't he have a      c]ar?
```

(29)　　　D006006 (THV3HH31 0:00:40.7)

```
Birt: ->1  Jahm' hvordan ka' det være du allerede har

           PRTbut how can it be you already have

           Yesbut how come you've already had


           fået pyntet juletræet da?<

           got decorated christmas-tree-the PRT?<

           the christmas tree decorated then?<
```

Some wh-questions combine with a yes/no-question to construct a "multi-question". By combining these two types of questions, speakers manage to narrow the possibilities for responding, as in (30), where Ester first enquires into how big a piece of cake her co-participant, Sanne, wants, then immediately narrows Sanne's options for responding by providing a possible candidate piece of cake which Sanne needs only accept or decline.

(30)　　　D005020 (MITHVDP31Aug0605B: 0:19:29.3)

```
Ester: ->1 Hvor stor en ve' du ha'?=så'n en?

           Where big one will you have?=Like-this one?

           How big a one do you want?=one like this?
```

2.4. Summary

This section has provided an overview of the range of lexico-grammatical options available in Danish to form questions. Overall, Danish patterns with the other languages in the comparative project in terms of how the various forms, if available, are distributed. However, syntactically marked questions – in particular interrogatives – are more prevalent in Danish and questions more frequently contain negation. Though some of the possible reasons for this variation were discussed, the scope of the current study does not allow drawing final conclusions on these matters. The next section provides an overview of the range of social actions that are commonly performed with questions in Danish. Again, I will point towards possible variations between this and the other languages.

Table 7
The distribution of action types across questions.

Action	Number	Percentage
Requesting confirmation	107 *51 interrogative* *30 declarative* *25 tags* *1 wh-question*	31%
Requesting information	95 *40 interrogative* *55 wh-question*	27%
Initiating repair	68 *20 interrogative* *22 declarative* *4 tags* *46 wh-question*	19%
Requesting Offering Suggesting	32 *29 interrogative* *3 declarative*	9%
Assessing	15 *1 interrogative* *13 tags* *1 wh-question*	4%
Rhetorical question	9 *4 interrogative* *5 wh-question*	3%
Outloud	7 *2 interrogative* *1 declarative* *4 wh-question*	2%
Other	17 *14 interrogative* *3 declarative*	5%
Total	350	100%

3. Range of actions

This section describes the range of social actions that questions are used for as well as their distribution, as provided in Table 7.

3.1. Requesting information

As Table 7 attests, requesting information, as in (31) and (32), is not the most frequent action that questions are employed to do. This is the case for all languages in the comparative project, but is perhaps more surprising in a language such as Danish with its bias towards using syntactically marked questions – and in particular interrogative questions (see section 2.2). Table 7 also illustrates that when a question *is* primarily produced to request information, speakers (of Danish) consistently use syntactically marked questions, i.e. either interrogatives or wh-questions.

(31)   D002048 (MITHVDP31Aug0606: 0:18:56.1)

```
Gunnar:->1 Har du været på Birkholm?

           Have you been on Birkholm?
```

(32)   D009018 JAKOB: 0:03:28.6

```
Birthe:->1 =.lhhh Hvor meget ka' du høre dine: naboer

           =.lhhh Where much can you hear your neighbours

           =.lhhh How much do you hear your neighbours


           >å' så no'et,<

           >and so some,<

           >and stuff,<
```

3.2. Requesting confirmation

Most questions in the database are employed to request confirmation. The difference between this action and requesting information is, that the speaker displays that she *already* has some idea of the answer and is merely requesting that the other confirm this. Requests for confirmation are in Danish overwhelmingly formatted as yes/no-type questions, as in (33).[6]

```
(33)      D005004 (MITHVDP31Aug0605A : 0:27:51.0)

          Sanne: ->1 Du si'r a- hvis jeg ta'r det her påd- *e-eh-æ: h* .hhh
                     You say th- if I take this here *e-eh-æ: h* .hhh


                     så' jeg inde i København ve' (0.2) syvtiden ikk'¿
                     then'm I inside in Copenhagen by (0.2) seven-time-the not¿
                     then I'll be in Copenhagen around (0.2) seven right¿


          Est: ->2  Jo.
                    PRT.
                    Yes.
```

3.3. Repair-initiation

Another large action category that questions are used for is to initiate repair. As shown in section 2.3, repair can be initiated with *hvad* (what) (20), but it can also be done as a yes/no-question, where speaker provides a "best guess" of what the other meant – but failed – to say, as in (34). In contrast to repair initiated with *hvad* such "best guesses" specify more clearly what is the trouble source of the prior turn.

```
(34)      D004016 (MITHVDP31Aug0604 0:17:15.9)

          Regi:      (Den) a' speciel,
                     (It) is special,


                     (1.0)


          Vagn: ->1  Kage?
                     Cake?


                     (0.5)


          Regi: ->2  Nej. Te,=
                     No. Tea,=
```

Initiations of repair of the "best guess" kind take the form of a noun, verb or prepositional-phrase that are coded as declaratives. Another way to initiate repair is to repeat (part of) prior speaker's turn. To do this in Danish, subject-verb inversion must take place, which means that all such repairs are interrogative (35). This contributes to the higher proportion of interrogatives in Danish, as compared to other languages, like English, where repair through repetition can also take the form of a declarative, like "you did?" (see Stivers, 2010).

---

[6] The only wh-question applied to request confirmation is in fact the multiquestion illustrated in (30), above.

(35)　　　　D008030 Clip02: 0:07:20.3

```
Ester:    (Vi har fået) frikadeller I går,

          (We have got) frikadeller yesterday,

          (We had) frikadeller (for dinner) yesterday,


          (0.8)


Sofie: ->1 Fik i frikadeller i går?

          Got you(P) frikadeller yesterday?

          Did you have frikadeller yesterday?
```

3.4. Suggesting/offering/requesting

The actions suggesting (36), offering (37) and requesting (38) all involve some future transfer and are thus coded as one category.

(36)　　　　D001049 (MITHVDP01Jul0602 : 0:10:42.5)

```
Hanne:->1  Men ska' da:men >der lånt' d'< tusserne ikk'

           But shall la:dy-the >that leant y< ink-pens-the not

           What about the lady >who leant y< the ink pens doesn't


           ås' ha' en tegning?

           also have a drawing?

           she get a drawing as well?
```

(37)　　　　D005001 (MITHVDP31Aug0605A : 0:24:19.3)

```
Ester:->1  Ve' du ha' kaffe Sanne?

           Will you have coffee Sanne?

           Do you want coffee Sanne?
```

(38)　　　　D002041 (MITHVDP31Aug0606: 0:16:58.0)

```
Kirsten:->1.mst Gi'r du lidt mere kaffe,

           .mst Give you little more coffee,

           .mst Would you give me a little more coffee,
```

Compared to the other languages in the question-coding project, a high proportion of requesting/offering/suggesting were found in the Danish data and as these actions are all typically formatted as interrogatives, this contributes further to the large proportion of interrogative in Danish more generally (see section 2.2). The coding scheme does not allow for an investigation into whether the higher number of requesting/offering/suggesting in Danish is due to the data, or whether this category of actions is typically employed through a different format in the other languages and hence has not been coded as questions there.

3.5. Assessing

When assessments are formatted as questions in Danish, they typically take the form of a tag-question, as in (39) (see also (12)).

(39)　　　D003019 (MITHVDP01Jun0610 : 0:14:38.2)

```
Mette: ->1 Ås' et fantastisk navn ikk',=
           Also a fantastic name not,=
           It's a fantastic name as well right,=


Line: ->2  Uh huh huh
```

3.6. Rhetorical questions

Rhetorical questions are questions that are not designed to receive an answer, but are rather challenging the recipient. Because these can be shaped either as interrogatives (see for instance (16) above) or as wh-questions (40) they have been included in the coding scheme. In (40), Berit has teasingly inquired whether Katrine, her teenage daughter, is the one who taught her younger daughter Liva that she can buy all the candy she wants when she gets old enough to decide for herself. Katrine first denies this accusation (->0), then uses a wh-question to challenge her mother on making this accusation (->1).

(40)　　　D001030 (MITHVDP01Jun0601 0:17:40.5)

```
Kat: ->0  Det har jeg da aldrig lært Liva,
          I really haven't ever taught Liva that,


Berit:    Nåh.
          Right.


          (0.5)


Berit:    Eh heh heh [heh]


Kat: ->1              [Hva]' [tror   du om   mig?]
                      [Wha]t [think you about me?]
                      [Wha]t [kind of person do you take me for?]


Liva:                        [DET'   JEG     LÆ]RT JO,
                             [I'VE LEARNED THAT Y]OU KNOW,


          (0.4)
```

3.7. Outlouds

Like rhetorical questions, outlouds are syntactic questions but are designed not to be responded to. Typically, outlouds are produced with low volume and with the speaker gazing into the air, rather than at any of the co-participants, thus avoiding selecting a recipient (see section 4.2). The wh-question *Hvor bli'r mormor a'* (What's keeping grandma) produced by Berit in (41) is a case in point and as is evident, neither of the co-participants, Katrine and Liva, treat this as a genuine question that they are expected to answer. Correspondingly, Berit herself does not orient to an answer as lacking by for instance pursuing it (cf. Pomerantz, 1984b).

(41)   D001016 (MITHVDP01Jun0601 0:15:24.5)

```
Berit: ->1 Hvor bli'r mormor a',

           Where becomes mother-mother of,

           What's keeping grandma,


           (1.5)


Liva:      Ej, Der a' der (  ) no'en kaniner

           Oh, There there are some rabbits
```

3.8. Other

The last kind of action that was coded for in the coding scheme is Other, which represent a variety of different actions that each occur too infrequently to categorise independently. A number of these other actions in the Danish data have in common, however that they serve as preliminaries (Schegloff, 1980) to other actions, as in the following case where Carina uses the question >*Erh har i set*< *forsiden på EkstraBladet i dag,* to check the newsworthiness of her subsequent telling before it is launched (->3).

(42)   D009012 (JAKOB 0:17:05.1)

```
Cari: ->1 >Erh  har i    set< f[orsiden      på EkstraBl]adet

          >INT have you(P) seen< f[rontpage-the on EkstraBl]adet

          >Yeah have you seen< the[ frontpage of   EkstraBl]adet


Birthe:                          [den       værste   ]

                                 [the       worst    ]


Cari: ->1 i dag,

          today,


Anne: ->2 Nej.

          PRT.

          No.


Cari: ->3 T:elefonstorm (0.2) ø:h hos Robinsonstjernen.

          T:elephone-storm (0.2) e:h at Robinson-star-the.

          Telephone storm (0.2) e:h at the Robinson star.
```

3.9. Summary

This section described the range of actions that questions can be used for in Danish. In this respect, Danish questions do not differ in any significant way from the other languages in the comparative project. However, Danish questions are more often employed to do suggesting, requesting and offering. As these actions are shaped as interrogatives, it was suggested that this further contributes to the higher number of interrogatives in Danish. In the following section I focus on the relationship between questions and responses and describe some of the various types of responses that can be given to questions.

4. The relation between questions and responses

This section concerns what happens after a question has been produced, and how questions and responses fit together. Previous research has documented that as first pair parts, questions have a preference for receiving an answer (Schegloff and Sacks, 1973) that is both confirming and type-conforming (Raymond, 2003). Moreover, that when a specific person has been selected as the recipient of a question, she is also the one who provides the response (Sacks et al., 1974; Stivers and Robinson, 2006). These preferences are overwhelmingly oriented to in the Danish data, just as they are in all the other languages in the comparative study. Below I describe the general pattern in more detail and discuss the exceptional cases where the pattern is deviated from with regard to whether a response is provided or not, who provides the response, and what kind of response it is.

Table 8
Recipients' treatment of questions.

	Number	Percentage
Answer	211	60%
Non-answer response	77	22%
Lack of response	62	18%
Total	350	100%

4.1. What happens after a question has been asked

Table 8 illustrates the distribution of the three basic ways in which recipient treat questions.

The most common thing to happen after a question has been posed is, of course, that a co-participant provides a response. A response can be either verbal or non-verbal, but in Danish non-verbal responses are typically accompanied by a verbal response. Only in 9 cases is the response only delivered non-verbally and consists of a head-shake or nod, a shrug or a point. Throughout this paper there are ample illustrations of responses (see, for instance (33), (34), (39)). Hence, I focus only on the other alternatives, i.e. lack of response and non-answer responses, in the following two sections.

4.1.1. Lack of response

The category "lack or response" covers those questions that receive no reaction whatsoever, whether verbally or in terms of physical actions. In some cases, co-participants provide no response, either because the question was not designed for one, as is the case for Outlouds and Rhetorical questions (see section 3) or because the question is challenging and hence in principle unanswerable (see (16) and Heinemann, 2008). Most instances where a response is not provided, however, occur in non-dyadic situations, i.e. where more than two participants are interacting. Though a particular recipient is usually selected in such situations, selection does not *ensure* a response because the questioner is in competition with other participants for the recipient's attention, as in (43).

```
(43)        D007042 (DLAU:SKURVOGN 0:19:11.7)

     Claus:     Jerhm' nu ska' vi te' å' køre alle de der

                Yes but now we'll have to drive all those


                orienteringslys å' klodser å' °ting å' sager [te']°

                orientation-lights and bricks and °stuff     [to ] °


     Rene:                                        [Nej]men det'

                                                  [No ] but it's


                al det vi har der står langs: jeg syn'[s vi]

                all that stuff we have along:  I  thin[k we]


     Peter: ->1                                [Hva'm] Hva' me' de

                                               [What ] What about these

            ->1 her,=f[orsvinder de¿  ]

                do    [they disappear¿]


     Rene:          [Jeg syn's vi sk-]=Jeg syn's vi ska' rytte den

                    [I think we  sh- ]=I think we should clear that


                parkeringsplads deroppe,

                parking lot up there,
```

The deviation from the preference for responding thus seems to be mostly linked to the presence of multiple participants and in particular the effect this presence has on the turn-taking system (Sacks et al., 1974).

4.1.2. Non-answer responses

Recipients can provide responses that do not answer the question but either delay the actual answer or provide evidence that such an answer cannot be provided. Unlike a total lack of response, with this type of reaction the recipient orients to the relevancy of responding and thus treats the question as a first pair part that requires a second pair part. Non-answer responses take the form of repair (44) or are accomplished by claiming insufficient access to the matter that is questioned (45).

```
(44)      D005011 (MITHVDP31Aug0605B: 0:15:43.2)

      Ester: ->1 Men s:- Men så no'en som du rejser hjem i ka' de

                 But s:- But so some that you travel home in can they

                 But s:- But such as those that you're travelling home in


          ->1  ikk' tåle lidt a' hver?

               not bear little of each?

               can't they take a little of everything?


               (0.2)


      Ester:    .hhh [S:-]


      Sanne: ->2     [Du ] mener kondisk[oene? ]

                     [You] mean  trainer[s-the?]

                     [You] mean the trai[ners? ]


      Ester:                          [   Jer]h.

                                      [   Yea]h.


      Sanne:    .hh Al'så vandet går li' igennem,

                .hh Well the water goes straight through,
```

As (44) attests, when the trouble source has been repaired, recipients provide an answer to the question. By contrast, non-answer responses such as the one in (45) are specifically designed to show that an answer will not be provided.

```
(45)      D004029 (MITHVDP31Aug0604 0:22:08.4)

      Vagn: ->1  Men så' det vist socialistisk æ' det'tt det?

                 But then's it ADV socialistic is it-not that?

                 But then it's probably socialistic isn't it?


      Regi: ->2  Det ve' jeg ikk' (ven).

                 That know I not (friend).

                 I don't know (love).
```

Table 9
Delivery of response in relation to selection of recipient.

	Number	Percentage	Lack of response
Selection	320	91%	15% (49)
Non-selection	29	8%	41% (12)
Not applicable[a]	1	<1%	n/a
Total	350	100%	

[a] Gaze is one of the ways in which recipients can be selected but the quality of the video recordings did not always make it possible to determine whether a speaker was or was not gazing at a co-participant.

Non-answer responses occur at approximately the same ratio in Danish as it does in the other languages in the question-coding project and is a reflection of the kind of problems that recipients can have when faced with a question, i.e. that they either didn't hear or understand or that they are unable to answer because of insufficient knowledge.

4.2. Recipiency and the delivery of a response

In addition to the fact that not all questions get responded to or answered, it is also the case that some questions are answered, by another person than the one who has been selected to do so. Table 9 illustrates the frequency with which recipients are selected, whether selection ensures a response and who responds.

Selection can be done with gaze (i.e. questioner gazes at one person while asking the question), an address term (i.e. names, terms of endearments, etc.) or domain of authority (i.e. who has the knowledge required to answer the question—or the strongest rights to that knowledge). Selection is typically accomplished through a combination of two or more of these options. The Venn diagram below illustrates the possible combinations and their distribution (Diagram 1).

As Table 9 illustrates, 320 questions in this study were in some way marked to signal that a particular co-participant should answer and questions that do select a recipient are more likely to be responded to. The Venn diagram in turn illustrates that most of the questions that are selecting a specific recipient, do so, by combining gaze and domain of authority. Thus, it happens only three times in the Danish data that someone other than a selected recipient answers a question. In these cases, the selection is done only through gaze and the person who self-selects to respond clearly portrays herself as having either equal or superior rights to the knowledge that is required to answer the question.

4.3. Types of answers (to yes/no-questions)

Aside from the exceptions described above (sections 4.1.1 and 4.1.2), questions overwhelmingly get answered. Answers can take various forms and the different forms are of consequence to how the answer is understood. In the coding scheme for the current project, we focused only on the different types of answers that are delivered in response to yes/no-questions, as illustrated in Table 10.
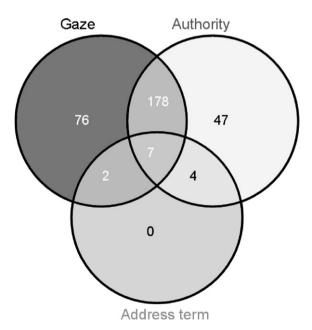

Diagram 1. The co-occurrence of different ways of selecting recipient.

Table 10

Types of answers (to yes/no-type questions).

Answer	Number	Percentage
Conforming	154	95%
Non-conforming	9	5%
Total	163	100%
Confirming	119	73%
Disconfirming	28	17%
n/a	16	10%

4.3.1. Type-conforming answers

Type-conforming answers are answers that take the simplest form with which to answer a yes/no-question, either yes, no, a variation thereof or a head nod or shake. Such answers display that the answerer accepts the terms of the question as unproblematic (Raymond, 2003). Yes/no-answers can occur on their own and constitute the whole of the answer, or they may preface further elaboration. (46) and (47) are instances of a yes-response and a no-response.

(46)   D003037 (MITHVDP01Jun0610 : 0:21:58.1)

```
Line: ->1  Ska' vi ta' det her med?

           Shall we take this here with?

           Should we take this with us?



Mette: ->2 >.mJah.< .fnnt Let's do that.

           >.mPRT.< .fnnt Let's do that.

           >.mYes.< .fnnt Let's do that.
```

(47)   D005032 (MITHVDP31Aug0605B: 0:30:37.4)

```
Ester:          [Den] hed vel P:eters blomster >det=1 ved

                [It ] was-called PRT P:eter's flowers >that=1 know

                [I g]uess it was called Peter's flowers >I don't



                jeg ikk' om den gør mer.< Men han har den ikk' mer.

                I not if it does more.< But he has it not more.

                know if it still is.< But he doesn't own/run it anymore.



                (0.7)



Ester:    Der' no'en ander der har overtaget den.=

          There's someone other there have over-taken it.=

          There's somebody else that's taken over.=



Sanne: ->1 =Peter har den ikk' mere,=

           =Peter has it  not more,=

           =Peter doesn't own/run it anymore,=



Ester: ->2 =Nej.

           =PRT.

           =No.
```

As a result of the perfect polarity system (see section 2.1.3), Danish has two options for responding with a positive response particle. Thus, when a negative question is designed to receive a yes as the confirming response, a marked version *jo* (yes2) is used (48) (see also Heinemann, 2003, 2005).

(48) D002043 (MITHVDP31Aug0606: 0:17:13.6)

```
Kirs: ->1  Der' ås' mange så no'en s:tedsegrønne planter ikk´?

           There's also many so some e:ver green plants not?

           There's also many of these ever green plants right?



Gunnar:->2 Jov.

           PRT.

           Yes2.
```

Head nods and shakes are usually accompanied by verbal components (except in 4 cases), which suggest that non-verbal responses are generally not sufficient in Danish.[7]

4.3.2. Non-conforming answers

As Raymond (2003) has shown for English, non-conforming answers, while confirming or disconfirming, at the same time treat some aspect of the question as problematic. This applies to Danish as well, as the following case attests. Here, Regitse in essence agrees with Vagn's suggestion of buying a summerhouse, while taking issue with his inclusion of her in the project.

(49) D004008 (MITHVDP31Aug0604 0:01:56.3)

```
Vagn:->1   >D'ka'< vær' vi sku' køwe't lille sommerhus

           >It-can< be we should buy-a little summerhouse

           >Maybe< we ought to buy a little summer house



      ->1  herovre, me' havu'sigt,

           here-over, with ocean-view,

           over here, with ocean view,



           (0.5)



Regi: ->2  °Det syn's jeg da du sk[u',°   ]

           °That think I ADV you s[hould,°]

           °I really think you    s[hould,°]
```

4.4. Confirming and disconfirming answers

Both type-conforming and non-conforming answers deal with the fact that a question has been asked and provides the information that is required by the questioner, though they do so in different ways, where one (type-conforming) is preferred over the other (non-conforming). This is reflected in the distribution of these two types of answers (Table 10). Another aspect of preference organization that is mirrored in distributional results is the preference for questions to receive an answer that confirms the information questioned. In the Danish data, as in all the other languages in the comparative study,

---

[7] Another recent study also suggests that non-verbal components, like gaze, are not ascribed the same importance in Danish as in other languages (Stivers et al., 2009).

confirmations such as the ones in (46)–(49) are much more frequent than disconfirmations such as the one in (50). Here, Birthe describes a new reality-show about to be launched in the Netherlands and claims that there will be cameras everywhere, except in the bathroom. When Anne disagrees with that claim (*Nej der' ås' på toilettet,*), Birthe requests confirmation of the fact that the bathroom is the only place where there are no cameras. This is disconfirmed by Anne (->2).

(50)   D009007 (JAKOB 0:15:55.3)

```
      Birthe:    så' det   kamera i   alle rum. undtagen toilettet,

                 then's it camera in  all rooms. except toilet-the,

                 then there's cameras in every room. except the bathroom


      Anne:      Nej der' ås'   på toilettet,

                 PRT there's also  on toilet-the,

                 No  there's in the the bathroom as well,


                 (0.2)


      Birthe:->1 Ej a' det ikk' det eneste sted der ikke er¿

                 PRT is that not the only place there not is¿

                 No isn't that the only place there isn't¿


                 (0.8)


      Anne: ->2  Ej det sag'e de nemlig at- eller så' det i hver

                 PRT that said they you-see that- or then's it in any

                 No they said that you see- or else it's definitely


                 fald  s[ejl    t   v  , ]
                 case mi[rror    t   v  , ]
                     mi[rror    t   v  , ]
```

Just as has been attested for English (Pomerantz, 1984a; Heritage, 1984), Danish disconfirmations are oriented to as dispreferred answers. In (50) Anne's disconfirming answer is delayed by (0.8) seconds, it is initiated with a marked version of the negative response particle *nej*, *ej* (Heinemann, 2003), and it is followed by a mitigating statement in which Anne attempts to account for her disconfirming answer.

For some answers, it has been impossible to determine whether they were confirming or not (see Table 10). A good example of that is when answerers provide a response that lies somewhere between a yes and a no (a "nyem") and thus seems to be specifically designed for ambiguity (Jefferson, 1978). (51) is a case in point.

(51)   D007001 (DLAU:SKURVOGN 0:00:07.5)

```
      Peter: ->1 Men den der den virker (.) så'n-

                 But that there that works (.) like-

                 But that one works (.) like-


                 (0.2)


      Claus: ->2 °m:°Mja:,

                 °m:°Myeah,
```

4.5. Summary

This section has provided examples of the different types of response – or lack of response – that are given to questions. In this, Danish patterns with the other languages in showing a strong orientation to the relevance of answering a question when asked, of doing this in a type-conforming, fitted manner that confirms the information inquired about and of letting the selected recipient respond.

5. Conclusion

This paper provided an overview of the question–response system in Danish. Focusing on the lexico-grammatical options for formulating questions, the range of social actions that can be employed through these formats, and the relationship between questions and responses, I have demonstrated that Danish in general patterns with most other languages in the comparative project on these three issues. Danish has, however, a slightly higher frequency of syntactically marked questions, in particular interrogatives, tends to use more negation in questions and has a higher occurrence of actions such as requesting, offering and suggesting. I have tried to point to various possible reasons for and consequences of these differences, but more extensive and detailed studies are required before anything conclusive can be said on this matter.

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