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Epistemically reinforced *kyl(lä)/küll*-responses in Estonian and Finnish: word order and social action

Leelo Keevalik¹, Auli Hakulinen

Abstract:

This paper looks at responsive actions built with different word orders, targeting the element *kyl(lä)* in Finnish and *küll* in Estonian, two close relatives. Depending on the action sequence and syntax, *kyl(lä)/küll* expresses intensity or speaker certainty, thus epistemically “reinforcing” the proposition. Historically the same lexical item, even though a noun, meaning roughly ‘abundance, plentiness’ (German ‘Menge’, ‘Reichtum’), *kyl(lä)/küll* currently occurs in conventionalized patterns which reveal the interface of word order and social action. In both languages, the intensifying *kyl(lä)/küll* initiates reactive assessments. In Finnish, it is also used as an epistemic adverb that marks speaker certainty, building affirming answers in both unit-initial and unit final positions. In Estonian, the epistemic *küll* initially formats consoling responses, while in unit-final positions, it is a regular part of a formulaic (dis)affirmation and functions almost like a clitic. The paper argues that word order regarding what have traditionally been seen as syntactically peripheral elements, such as adverbs and particles, can be constitutive of units implementing social actions. It suggests that the sequential analysis of action is a perfect method for revealing subtle semantic and pragmatic differences between the uses of historically close items in related languages.

Keywords: interactional linguistics, responsive action, word order, adverb/particle, Finnish, Estonian

1. Introduction

In this paper, we trace the use of a single element *kyl(lä)/küll* contrastively in responsive actions in two closely related languages, Finnish and Estonian. By using the interactional linguistic method, we will show how dimensions of relative knowledge and actions such as affirming, assessing, and consoling find a regular grammatical shape in each of the two languages, as reflected in word order patterns. We thereby aim to demonstrate how sequence-based routinization of action is relevant for understanding the meaning of elusive adverbs or particles, and accordingly argue for the relevance of sequential analysis for the comparative study of linguistic relatives.

Finnish and Estonian belong to the Balto-Finnic group of the Finno-Ugrian language family and have a common proto-language, dating back ca. 2500-3000 years. They share much of the vocabulary and the basic morpho-syntax, with Estonian developing towards a fusional type and Finnish representing a more agglutinative type. (For additional information, see e.g., Grünthal, 2000.) Due to a number of phonological and lexico-syntactic changes during the millennia, the speakers do not easily understand each other across the language border today and mastering subtle pragmatic patterns involving similar words, such as *kyl(lä)/küll*, constitutes a true challenge for language learners on both sides. By targeting a historically “same” item in Finnish and Estonian we contribute to the conceptualization of grammatical structures as constitutive of

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sequentially organized actions from a comparative perspective. Our broader aim is to show how the word order related to a 'peripheral' syntactic element, an adverb or a particle, implements different social actions.

Responsive turns have attracted massive interest within the research tradition of conversation analysis (starting with Clayman and Heritage, 2002; Raymond, 2003) and interactional linguistics (Couper-Kuhlen and Selting, 2001; Thompson et al., 2015). In an ongoing talk-in-interaction speakers typically build on what has already been said and/or what is commonly known. At specific moments, a participant may be accountable for providing an explicit response, for example an answer when a question has been asked. At other moments, the contribution is more generally reactive to the prior, such as when the speaker is to evaluate what she has just heard. In the present paper we consider grammatical patterns across different kinds of reactivity, from answers to questions to more generally reactive assessments. A variety of social dimensions, such as degrees of shared knowledge between the participants, accountability, and entitlement, have been shown to play a decisive role in the formatting of responsive actions. Responses to questions and assessments can be designed to achieve specific interactional aims, such as conveying that the speaker has independent epistemic access to the subject matter, or indicating her different perspective (Stivers, 2005; Hakulinen and Sorjonen, 2009; Sorjonen and Hakulinen, 2009; Heritage and Raymond, 2012). The choice between a phrasal or a full sentence response to a *wh*-question in English reveals whether the terms of the question are accepted to the recipient or not (Fox and Thompson, 2010). On the other hand, by choosing between a particle and a verb repeat answer in Estonian, speakers can display their understanding of the status of the question within an ongoing action sequence (Keevallik, 2010a). There are thus a range of basic grammatical choices in different languages available for indexing social and interactional concerns, and guiding how a response is to be heard.

Likewise, the ordering of elements within turns has been subject to interactional analysis. Several studies have targeted the order between particles and clausal units in responsive turns (e.g. Raymond, 2003), others have shown how utterances in spoken language are produced incrementally, on-line (Tanaka, 2000; Auer, 2009; Iwasaki, 2011). Word order in clauses, however, has mostly been investigated from a more pragmatic angle, showing its relevance in larger discourse units (e.g. Auer and Maschler, 2013; Wide, 2014; Maschler, 2015). A remarkable exception is a series of studies on Finnish responses that have demonstrated a close relationship between social action and the ordering of pronominal and verbal elements (e.g., Hakulinen and Sorjonen, 2009; 2011; Sorjonen and Hakulinen, 2009). Similarly, Swedish word order has been shown to be motivated by interactional and sequential concerns (Lindström, J., 2014). The present study will build on this line of research, focusing on word order that involves a distinct epistemic element *kyl(lä)/küll*. We argue that a) the contribution of *kyl(lä)/küll* depends on its position in utterance and sequence, b) the historical origin of *kyl(lä)/küll* is still discernible, to varying degrees, in its current usages, c) differently ordered elements can fossilize into turn-constructional units (TCUs) for distinct kinds of responsive actions, sometimes short (as is often the case for Estonian *küll*-utterances), and sometimes complex (as is mostly the case with the Finnish *kyl(lä)*-utterances). Units are accordingly understood as syntactically, prosodically, and pragmatically potentially complete segments of talk, TCUs, oriented to as such by the participants.

With respect to word order, it is important to note that a great deal of interaction research so far

has concerned Germanic languages with a primarily fixed word order: English, German, Swedish, and Danish. In this paper we will be looking at two languages that feature a relatively free word order (Heinämäki, 1976; Vilkuna, 1989; Lindström, L., 2005). This type of word order has also been called *pragmatic*, as different orders are associated with aspects of information structure. Crucially, they also serve distinct interactional purposes. We will show how different social actions are formulated with distinct word orders and special syntactic patterns in Finnish and Estonian, highlighting the contrasts. We thereby illustrate how local patterns of routinization within language communities essentially shape (spoken and interactional) grammar, and locally define the meaning of *kyl(lä)* and *küll*. In addition, and more crucially, we will demonstrate that responsiveness, which has been argued to be a concern for turn-beginning (Schegloff, 1996: 69), can also be dealt with at the end of a turn.

Our focus is the adverb/particle *kyl(lä)/küll*. We suggest that the word has first taken a similar developmental path in the two languages, from the original noun *kyllä* ‘abundance’; German ‘Menge, Reichtum’, to derivational adverbs like Fi *kylliksi*, Est *küllalt* ‘enough’ (cf. Hakulinen, L., 1999 [1951]), but that the further developments into especially particle-like usages of *kyl(lä)/küll* diverged, even though both the utterance-initial and utterance-final usages occur in each language.² The fact that the Estonian form *küll* is monosyllabic is a result of a systematic historical change, apocope, while Finnish preserved the original phonological structure of disyllabic words, also seen in *kyllä*. In speech *kyllä* can nevertheless be shortened to *kyl*, especially in turn beginnings. The letters *ü* vs. *y* reflect mere orthographic conventions. Regardless of the common etymology, the word is used syntactically and pragmatically differently in Finnish and Estonian, but not always in a straightforward way.

Let us consider the following pair of examples (1, 2). Both excerpts come from the beginning of telephone calls and feature a response to the caller’s request for another person. These responses include the particle that is in our focus; in Finnish, it is found at the beginning of the utterance and turn, whereas in Estonian, it is in the final position. (Transcription conventions are found at the end of the paper; the target words are not translated in order not to gloss over their complex meaning potential. Glosses are provided merely for the lines in focus.)

(1) Finnish MK 1989 1/A:10

- 1 V : talokeskus?,
 ‘House center’
- 2 S : .hh onkohan Matti Holkeri tavattavissa,
 is:Q NAME NAME available
 ‘I wonder if I can speak to Matti Holkeri’
- 3 (0.5)

² As our focus is on the current usage, we are not going to present the development in detail here. Suffice it to mention an Estonian example from Wiedemann (1875): *külla juurest võib võtta* ‘von der Menge kann man nehmen’. For Finnish, L. Hakulinen (1999) suggested a detachment from constructions like *hänellä on kyllä kalaa* ‘he has a plentitude of fish’ > *kyllä hänellä on kalaa*. In the present-day usage, we can trace the marking of intensity (‘to a great degree’), which is close to the original meaning, but also the epistemic meaning of a high degree of certainty and factuality.

4 V : → **kyl**lä tässä oli mutta nyt piipahti tuohon
 KYLLÄ here be:SG:PST but now drop:SG3:PST there:ILL
 'KYLLÄ (he) was here but (he) is just dropping in

5 pankille.
 bank-ALL
 at the bank'

(2) Estonian: K3A9

1 E: tere kas: Pille on kodus.
 'Hi is Pille at home.'

2 (0.6)

3 X: → eeee, on **küll**.
 be:SG3 KÜLL
 'Yes she is'

4 E: palun kutsu?
 'Please get (her).'

In these two examples, the responsive unit performs basically the same task: the recipient confirms that the person who is being asked for, is either immediately or in principle available. The two responsive turns differ grammatically, with respect to word order and the syntactic complexity of the answer. An affirming response in Finnish is formatted with an initial *kyl(lä)*, which typically projects a complex turn that ends up problematizing the grantability of the request, while Estonian features a final *küll* in a straightforward affirmation. This reflects interesting differences in function (even with respect to whether the request is granted or not), which is going to be the subject of this paper.

The above mentioned syntactic-pragmatic differences are not easy to explain with any regular word order differences. In fact, comparing languages that both make use of pragmatic word order in greater or lesser extent is a daunting task in itself. Earlier comparative studies on Finnish and Estonian have dealt with abstract patterns (Huomo, 2002) or looked for overall tendencies, such as Estonian featuring more VS than Finnish, which instead favors the SV pattern (Tael, 1988; Huomo, 1994). One major difference is arguably the V2 pattern in Estonian, i.e. that a(n initial) topicalized element, usually an adverb, gives cause to the VS inversion (Tael, 1988: 37-38). These descriptions, based on data from written language and literary translations, do not always correspond to the spoken usage. For example, the Estonian *küll*-patterns discussed below do not adhere to the V2-rule. With the present paper, we are thus only beginning to address the hitherto unexplored field of comparative Finnish-Estonian spoken language syntax.

In the following we will scrutinize responsive actions accomplished by different kinds of utterances involving *kyl(lä)/küll*, as the initial or the final element in a responsive unit. We will show in what ways it underlines speaker certainty or expresses intensity, thereby reinforcing the proposition. On the theoretical side, we will illustrate how dimensions of relative knowledge and actions such as assessing, disagreeing and affirming find a regular grammatical shape in the two

languages, as reflected in the word order patterns.

After the presentation of the data, the analysis will start by targeting the utterance-initial use, where we can trace some commonality across languages, featuring the semantics of intensity, ‘to a great degree’, still relatively close to the original meaning of ‘abundance’. We will then move on to the utterance-final uses, describing first the Estonian and then the Finnish practices, and demonstrate the semantic-pragmatic differences between the two.

2. The data

The Finnish database used in this study derives from the spoken language archive which has been compiled at the Department of Finnish, Finno-Ugric and Scandinavian studies, University of Helsinki (www.helsinki.fi/hum/skl/tutkimus/kesk_arkisto.htm). The data consist of both telephone and video recordings of everyday and institutional conversations, for the most part between speakers from Southern Finland. *Kyl(lä)* is one of the most frequent words in spoken Finnish, especially in conversations. In the Parole corpus, based on written language, *kyllä* holds the 116th position, whereas in Arkisyn, the spoken language corpus developed in the department of Finnish and Finno-Ugric Languages, University of Turku, *kyllä* is No 24 (retrieved 12.11.2015) in the index of word frequencies. There are altogether 228 instances of *kyl(lä)* in our Finnish collection.

The Estonian data include both telephone calls and face-to-face events, collected by the second author since 1998. The telephone call corpus consists of 324 calls of two types: telemarketing calls from a daily newspaper and everyday calls between family members, friends, and colleagues. Additionally, examples of face-to-face interaction have been used from video recordings of dinner preparations (4 hours), and from the Tartu corpus of Spoken Estonian (<http://www.cl.ut.ee/suuline/Korpus.php>), which includes excerpts of talk from a wide variety of situations. *Küll* is a frequent word in Estonian conversation. In the Tartu corpus it held place No 36 in the overall frequency count in everyday spoken interaction, and place No 51 in institutional conversation (Hennoste et al., 2000: 275-283). There are altogether 396 instances of *küll* in our Estonian collection.

As we are interested in the more productive syntactic patterns, we will for the time being discard formulaic phrases, such as Fi *kyllä kai* ‘yes perhaps’ and Est *hea küll*, approx. ‘okay then’ (Example 14 presents, however, a relatively formulaic answer). In addition, we will not be looking at the Finnish *kyllä* as a stand-alone affirming dialogue particle, neither at the initiating actions involving *kyl(lä)/küll*, nor its medial usage. These restrictions allow us to systematically explore the two different eco-systems for *kyl(lä)/küll* and the ways in which they rely on different social-interactional dimensions routinized into grammar.

3. Utterance-initial use

In this section, we will focus on utterances where *kyl(lä)/küll* is in the initial position, moving from similar to dissimilar patterns. Section 3.1. presents assessments that have similar routinized patterns in Finnish and Estonian. In 3.2. we take up cases where the usages appear to be next to

identical: the *kyl(lä)/küll*-unit counters, or disagrees with, a preceding or succeeding negative assertion by a co-participant. In our database, this is a pattern that occurs rarely in Finnish, but is amply represented in the Estonian data. In 3.3. we discuss the typical Finnish *kyl(lä)*-initiated affirmation to polar questions. This format in turn has no parallels in Estonian. Finally in 3.4. we take up the Estonian *küll*-initial units in consolings, which do not have a counterpart in Finnish.

3.1. Reactive assessments after extended tellings and discussions

The current section analyses an action that is formatted in a similar way in Finnish and Estonian. Reactive assessments can be used after a telling by the co-participant, or after a longer discussion. The assessment need not be adjacent to its target, and it can also be used as a kind of summarizing comment. In fact, this is a format typically used in both Finnish and Estonian also for observations on non-linguistic states of affairs, e.g., *Kyllä on kaunis ilma* lit. ‘KYLÄ the weather is beautiful (indeed)’. This usage is characteristically routinized in the format *kyl(lä)/küll* (+ subject) + copula + adjective in both languages.

In an excerpt from a Finnish conversation (3) at a hairdresser’s, the client A has told a story of how she succeeded in defending herself when her kiosk was being robbed. When her story has come to a happy end, there is room for amusement at the expense of the robber (lines 4-7). After that the recipient K, the hairdresser, produces a *kyl(lä)*-initial assessment with the whole story in its scope.

(3) Finnish: SG 108

- 01 K: Ja sä sait rahas p[ois,
‘And you got your money back’
- 02 A: [↑ Mä: sain ne pois kyllä³
‘I got them back kyllä
- 03 ihan heti et mä en niinku hävinny tavallaan mitään
quite soon so in a way I didn’t like lose anything
- 04 muuta ku ne mitä se (0.8) mitä hän söi., (.) heh
else other than what it (0.8)what he ate’
- 05 heh hih [.hhh]
- 06 K: [Heh heh] heh
- 07 A: Hänelle tuli näl:kä,
‘He got hungry’
- 08 K: → .mt .hhh **Kyllä** sä olit tavallisen rohkee ihminen
KYLÄ you be:PST:SG2 ordinary:GEN brave person
‘You were really an unusually brave person

³ In this response turn, *kyllä* appears, on the face of it, in the middle of a turn, even clause-medially.

However, as turns-at-talk are produced step by step, incrementally, what is said at line 2 does in fact form a syntactic unit SVOA + *kyllä*, i.e., a potential TCU, thereby yielding the particle a unit final status. The speaker thereafter continues her utterance with an incremental adverb *ihan heti* ‘quite soon’, and subsequently launches in another TCU, beginning with the paraphrase marker *et*.

09 *että rupeet ryöstäjää vast(h)ustam(h)aan? hah hah hah*
 PRT start:2SG robber:PAR resist:INF
 to go an offer resistance to a robber'

When producing the assessment, K emphatically praises the co-participant for her bravery. It is the particle *kyllä* that conveys the intensity in the utterance, in the sense of 'to a great degree', and thereby changes a straightforward statement into one conveying stance. At the same time, K avoids developing the joking sequence: she does not respond to A's assertion about the thief being hungry. In that sense, the *kyl(lä)*-initiated assessment constitutes a junction in the conversation, a move on to the evaluation of the protagonist in the story, and thereby perhaps to the conclusion of the story telling activity. Thus, in this sequential position, the initial *kyl(lä)* does not index that a response is coming; a reaction, yes, but not necessarily a turn that aligns with the prior one.

The corresponding Estonian example (4) is taken from a call between a mother and an adult daughter, who is trying to obtain her skates from her prior home. The mother, her daughter Pille, as well as her sister Kristi have been looking for them in vain. In lines 7-10 Pille says that in case her skates are not found, she will take her sister's. Mother comments on the whole situation as "strange" in a *küll*-initiated reactive assessment, where the intensifying *küll* reinforces the claim about strangeness.

(4) Estonian: P5A2

- 1 Mother: =a *uvitav kus nad küll võivad olla.*
 'But I wonder where they could be.'

- 2 Pille: vot *uvitav*, et ma *imestan* seda et Kristi teadis
 '(It's) interesting, I'm puzzled because Kristi

- 3 [kind]lalt et tema omad on seal *kapi* all, h
 knew for sure that hers were under the shelves'

- 4 Pille: [khm khm]

- 5 Mother: *jah*, ja *olid*.
 'Yeah, and they were.'

- 6 Pille: ja *olid*.
 'And they were.'

- 7 Mother: a *sinu* omad [ei ole.]
 'But yours aren't.'

- 8 Pille: [aga] *minu* omi ei olnud, (0.3)
 'But mine weren't,

- 9 .hh need mis seal *toapõrandal* on nüüd, need *ongi* Kristi
 The ones on the floor are Kristi's.

- 10 omad. et noh et kui *minu* omasid ei *leita*,
 so if mine are not found,

- 11 s ma lähen kasvõi *nendega* sis.

then I shall take hers.'

12 Mother: → **küll** on naljakas. sa ise ei mäleta ka
KÜLL be:3SG strange you self NEG remember either
'This is real strange. You don't remember either

13 et kellelegi oleks andnud.=
that someone:ALL:CLI be:COND give:PPT
whether you gave them to someone'

Mother does not respond to the daughter's proposal in lines 10-11. Instead, she chooses to produce an assessment of the whole situation of lost skates in her home (line 12). Immediately after the *küll*-initiated assessment 'this is strange' she goes on to ask about the possible reason for the disappearance, suggesting among other things that the daughter herself may be responsible. As in the Finnish case, the *küll*-initiated assessment does not align with the immediately prior turn. Instead, it reacts to the larger exchange.

The regular syntactic structure of Estonian reactive assessments is *küll* + (subject) + copula + adjective. The subject is rarely expressed, which is different from Finnish. However, the word *kyl(lä)/küll* in this pattern features clear residues of the original meaning of 'abundance' and 'plentiness' of the focus word *kyl(lä)/küll*, here conveying intensity. Interestingly, this very pattern exists in both languages, possibly reflecting a shared earlier historic development.

3.2. Speaker certainty in disagreements

In both languages, our focus element has another use: it expresses speaker certainty. Parallel cases are found in disagreement sequences, where a *kyl(lä)/küll*-unit is used to oppose a turn by the co-participant that involves negation.

The Estonian turn-initial *küll* is restricted to responses that disagree with what the prior speaker just said/claimed. In example (5) the speakers are packing a car and talking about whether a mattress fits in a certain space. Eve claims that it will not fit and Siim disagrees with a *küll*-initial response (line 5). The sequence consists of an assertion and a disagreement. The *küll*-initiated reaction claims exactly the opposite to what the prior speaker said, even though it is socially affiliative in the sense that Eve probably also wants the mattress to fit in the luggage space. A verb repeat response *mahub* 'fits' is a minimal structure to turn around the polarity of a negative claim in Estonian, and thus *küll* clearly emerges as the epistemic reinforcement in this unit.

(5) Estonian: Tartu 631_2

1 Siim: no=näe peaaegu hakkab kõik kotid juba saama ära pakitud.
'See, almost all the bags are getting packed.'

2 Eve: palun kuhu sa paned [selle madratsi:.
'Excuse me, where will you put this mattress.'

3 Siim: [ma panen selle siia alla]
'I'll put it under here.'

4 Eve: see ei mahu sinna:.
it NEG fit there:ILL

'It won't fit there.'

5 Siim: → **küll** ta mahub.
KÜLL it fit:3SG
'Sure it will.'

6 (...)

7 Siim: näed ku=mahtus.
'See: it fits.'

As responses to assertions, *kyl(lä)*-initial turns are relatively rare in our current Finnish data set but quite well established in the system. In these cases *kyllä* goes against the negative claim of the co-participant's turn: It can be used to project a disagreeing response as well as to occasion a(n almost predictable) disagreeing answer within an ongoing argument. In (6) a couple are arguing whether Jaska, the husband, can go out for a cigarette before the interaction is recorded. At line 1, he asks for a permission to leave (for a smoke); this is gently denied by his wife Jaana⁴. A more explicit disagreement ensues.

(6) Finnish: SG 355

01 Jaska: kai mää saa ny lähtee, ↓
'I guess I may leave'

02 Jaana: ↓ et sä[ä ny, ((lempeästi))
NEG you PRT ((gently))
'You can't now'

03 Jaska: [kotona[ni,
'in my own home'

04 Jaana: → [↓ **kyllä** sää kakskytä
KYLÄ you twenty
'You can surely manage another

05 → minuuttia viä jaksa[t,
minute:PL:PAR still last:2SG
twenty minutes'

06 Jaska: → [en jaksa
NEG:1SG last:INF
'I can't'

To her own previous turn, Jaana produces a *kyllä*-initial one (lines 4-5), an epistemically strong claim that Jaska can indeed manage without a cigarette. The disagreeing continues with Jaska's negative-initial assertion (line 6) countering Jaana's claim.

Finnish and Estonian thus share the disagreeing use of a *kyl(lä)/küll*-initial utterance. Both focus turns are reinforced by the word *kyl(lä)/küll* that indexes a high degree of speaker certainty, 'without doubt'. The target word is used utterance-initially, and it is incorporated into the

⁴ The exchange is somewhat cryptic, as the turns are elliptical, but uniquely understandable in the context.

upcoming prosodic unit. Both *kyl(lä)* and *küll* occur in one of the possible syntactic positions for adverbs, they carry major utterance stress, and can therefore be analyzed as epistemic adverbs in this context.

From now on, we are going to specify the pragmatics and sequential aspects of each language separately, as the rest of the patterns turned out to be divergent.

3.3. Finnish reassuring affirmation/confirmation

In Finnish, initial *kyl(lä)* is widely used in answers to polar questions: among the 50 *kyl(lä)*-initial cases in the database, 47 represent answers. One typical use of *kyl(lä)*-initiated utterances in Finnish is in answers to requests, as was illustrated in (1). Likewise, it is used in responses to interrogatives that ask for information. Examples (7-8) are cases in point. The talk in (7) is about how to fit an old-fashioned mirror on its pedestal, and the speakers are experimenting with fixing it. To Mikko's interrogatively-formatted proposal, which ends with a disjunctive marker *vai* 'or' two responses are given. First, Jaana admits that she does not know, and partly overlapping with her, Jaska presents an answer beginning with *kyl(lä)*. The answer is thereby marked as positive, complying with the hesitant question functioning as a proposal. We would like to suggest that *kyllä* also, at the same time, attends to Jaana's turn and disagrees with her.

(7) Finnish SG 355

- 01 Mikko: laitetaaks se nyt tohon noi vai,
 put:PAS:Q it now there PRT or
 'Is it going to be put there now or'
- 02 Jaana: †em mää t[iä,?
 'I don't k[now'
- 03 Jaska: → [kylä se voitaa laittaa,
 KYLLÄ it can:PAS:COND put:INF
 ['KYLLÄ it could be put (there)'

Initial *kyl(lä)* in this pattern is an index of affirmation but it displays also, from the very beginning of the turn, that the answer will be provided in a manner that takes the terms of the question into account. As Hakulinen (2001) has argued earlier, the *kyl(lä)*-initial full clause answer is therefore more explicitly forthcoming and aligning than a 'plain' SV-formatted response (*se voitaa laittaa*) would be. An alternative, in fact the default affirmative response type, to a polar question in Finnish would be the repeat of the verb from the question: *laitetaan* 'is going to be put' (Hakulinen and Sorjonen, 2014).

Crucially, when initiating his/her answer with *kyl(lä)*, the speaker modifies it somewhat instead of simply complying with the terms of the question.⁵ The employment of the initial *kyl(lä)* in answers to polar interrogatives that perform different functions, enables the recipient to change the course set by the preceding turn while still providing an affirming or strongly aligning response. In addition to this quite frequent practice, *kyl(lä)* is used to reinforce a positive answer

⁵ In English conversations, a full clause answer format instead of a particle answer, has been claimed to convey the 'agentivity' of the recipient (cf. Enfield 2011; Raymond and Heritage 2012). In Finnish, at least a *kyllä*-initial full clause answer does not carry the sense of agency.

to a negatively formulated question. This may be done in the same way as in answers to positive questions. In (8), Sami expresses his doubts about his friend keeping up with the newspaper, employing a negative declarative formatted question, which projects an agreement (cf. VISK, §1203). The response provided by Veke counters the challenge of the question with a *kyl(lä)*-initial answer that includes qualifications ('I do try; almost every morning').

(8) Finnish: SG S94-7 Esiviritys

- 01 Sami: Et sä lue Hesaria enää nykyää,
NEG you:SG2 read Hesari anymore nowadays
'Don't you read the paper anymore these days.'
- 02 (1.7)
- 03 Veke: → **Kyl** mä: pyrin, (0.7) miltei joka aamu sen lukemaan aina,
KYL I try:SG1 almost every morning it:GEN read:INF always
'I do try (0.7) as a rule to read it almost every morning.'
- 04 Sami: Ai jaa, et sä oo kattonu nyt näit meijän
'oh I see you haven't been looking at these offers
tarjouksii yhtää mitä meil on ollu viime aikoina,
of ours at all which we have had recently'
- 05 Veke: em mä (nyt) tarjouksii ehtiny kattoo, hyvä ku uutiset
'I haven't had time to look at special offers, it takes
ehtii lukemaa ja sarjakuvat,
enough time to try and read the news and cartoons'

We have now seen how a *kyl(lä)*-initial answer is used for a reinforced affirmation in Finnish as a response to polar interrogatives used for requests for information (8), simple requests (1), and proposals (7). *Kyl(lä)*-prefaced responses can either replicate the material from the question and thereby accomplish a (strong) affirmation of it, or reformulate the material to different degrees. With respect to the grammatical format of the response, *kyl(lä)* at the beginning of the turn gives a clear signal that the first unit of the answer will take a clausal format, and that the answer will be an affirming one. Besides this basic alignment, the answer may involve delays in turn-onset (see line 2 in (8)), as well as modifications later in the utterance, such as the use of modal elements, which qualify the answer as not-quite-aligning in a straightforward manner.

3.4. Estonian reinforced foretelling

Initial *küll* is used in a markedly different manner in Estonian. A unit with the format *küll* + pronoun + verb constitutes a disaligning answer that undermines some aspect of the prior turn, or even of the entire on-going sequence. In example (9) the mother is talking about the evening meal, telling her adult daughter what is available at home and possibly implicitly advising her to eat it. Instead of receiving the information about different food items, the daughter (Mai) breaks in with a *küll*-initial response that undermines the relevance of the informing as well as of the advice. The contrastive turn-initial *no* supports the challenge. In the target line (6) the daughter addresses the implication that she would not find the food on her own.

(9) Estonian: M1A11

- 1 Mai: ü- õhtul jah, tulen mingil ajal.
'I will come some time in the evening.
- 2 Mother: mmmm mina tulen ka täna väga hilja. (0.5)
'Uhuh. I will also come very late tonight.
- 3 no üldiselt on seal koorega keedetud kartulisi,
Well anyway, there are unpeeled cooked potatoes,
- 4 ja neid pihve on ka veel eilseid järgi.
and there are some meatballs left over from yesterday.
- 5 [()]
- 6 Mai: → [no **küll** ma nään mis seal on.]
NO KÜLL I see:1SG what there be:3SG
'I can for sure see what there is.'
- 7 Mother: kumb siis ennem (XX) koju jõuab.
'Depending on who will come home first.'

As in the Finnish usage, the Estonian use is indicative of a high degree of certainty. Interestingly, however, the *küll*-format points to future events (future is not morphologically marked in Estonian). Furthermore, the future is in this pattern always formulated as something positive – an initial *küll* cannot even be combined with negation in the same utterance. This specific format is dedicated to confronting the prior, but also to underlining speaker certainty about the claim (‘I can for sure see’), thus epistemically reinforcing it. Excerpt (10) is another illustration of the same pattern, this time with a consoling value. The speaker T has been complaining about having lost a cassette. He states that he has no more ideas where to look for it (lines 1-3, 7). P disaligns with this complaining activity by uttering a comforting optimistic *küll*-initial statement in line 8. It is prefaced by the contrastive particle *a* ‘but’, which supports the analysis of these turns as disaligning.

(10) Estonian: P3A8

- 1 T: jah, siis mul on kuradi: (0.3) kuradi need, h
'Yeah, then all my damned (0.3) damned,'
- 2 (0.7)
- 3 T: noh mis: mis mis mis, niidiotsad ammendunud.
'what what what what, I have no clues left.'
- 4 P: n@iidi@otsad.
'Clues.'
- 5 T: mmmh?
'uhm?'
- 6 (0.2)
- 7 T: [et] kust otsida kassetti.
'Where to search for the tape'
- 8 P: → aa. (.) a **küll** ta sul välja ilmub.

Oh (.) but KÜLL it you:ADE out appear:3SG
 'Oh. (.) But it will certainly reappear.'

Reactive *küll*-initiated utterances in Estonian constitute one kind of reinforced action, namely future-oriented positive foretelling. Typically, the state of affairs has been described or implied as a problem in the prior conversation (the mattress not fitting, the daughter not finding food, having lost a tape). The *küll*-initiated reactive unit provides a positive statement that can undermine the prior speaker in either a confronting (example 9) or a consoling manner (example 10). In fact, there is a slight but systematic pragmatic difference between clauses where the agent is the speaker vs. where s/he is not. While the construction *küll* + 1st person pronoun underlines the speaker's own conviction of her capacities and displays a challenging stance with respect to what the other just said ('I already know what I will be doing', cf. example 9), *küll* + 2nd or 3rd person pronoun expresses certainty about something or somebody else and offers a reassuring stance for the recipient ('I am sure it/you'll be fine', cf. example 10). It makes a difference in pragmatic function whose future is formulated as certain.

With respect to the responsive unit structure, *küll*-initiation in Estonian projects a full clause. The reinforcing turn often recycles lexical material from the prior one, such as repeating the verb *mahub* 'fit: 3SG' (example 5), *seal on* 'there is' (example 9), thereby displaying a tight relationship between the turns. The pattern furthermore indexes shared knowledge with 'exophoric' pronouns (such as *ta* 'it' for the cassette being talked about, the 1st and 2nd person speech act pronouns for the participants). The unit obligatorily exploits the XSV word order, with the subject position, in most cases, filled by a pronoun, which reflects their responsive nature. Full noun phrases are rare: There were only two instances in the current database (out of 41 cases of turn-initial *küll*). As was pointed out in section 3.3, this is also the case in Finnish. The Estonian *küll*-initial format counters the recipient's prior pessimism and foretells a positive future with a high degree of certainty, implying that this is also what the recipient would want, e.g. that the mattress fits in, that the daughter will not go hungry, and that the tape will be found. Supporting the analysis of this pattern as disaligning is the fact that it often takes contrastive particles as prefaces (*ei* 'no', *a* 'but', *no* 'but, well'), as also shown in examples (9,10). Accordingly, instead of simply calling *küll* an emphatic word, as is customary in the dictionaries, the close syntactic-sequential analyses reveal its interactional potential of underlining speaker certainty as well as challenging the other's agenda.

3.5. Summary

In sections 3.1.-3.2., we established a reactive assessment and a disagreement pattern that is similar across Finnish and Estonian. Sections 3.3.-3.4. illustrated patterns of epistemically reinforced affirming responses to polar questions and complying to requests in Finnish, and the reassuring and consoling expressions that follow neutral information or complaints in Estonian. The *kyl(lä)/küll*-initial patterns were shown to be grammatically similar but pragmatically different: For the most part, they were used in different sequential positions and they accomplished different actions. It is impossible to use an initial *küll* in Estonian to provide an affirming answer to a positively formulated question, as shown in 3.3. for Finnish. At the same time, the Finnish initial *kyl(lä)* can challenge the prior turn when it provides an opposing answer to a negative question, as shown in example (8). Thus, Finnish displays a more flexible sequential and interactional use of *kyl(lä)* than the Estonian *küll*, which seems to be more restricted to

specific formulaic responses, also reflected in the relatively formulaic syntax in the *kiüll* + pronoun + verb pattern used for foretellings. With respect to semantics, the words *kyl(lä)* and *kiüll* both currently feature a subjective epistemic sense, which typically develops in the process of grammaticalization (Traugott, 1989; Hopper, 1991; Traugott and Dasher, 2002; Hopper and Traugott, 2003). By offering a reassurance to the other who has just spoken, it simultaneously displays an intersubjective dimension, something that typically develops later in the grammaticalization process (Traugott, 2003). Accordingly, the usage described in this section is likely to feature a semantically later stage of the development of *kyl(lä)* and *kiüll*, where the meanings of ‘abundance’ and intensity have faded.

4. Utterance-final use in Estonian: (dis)affirmation

We will next turn to Estonian responses where *kiüll* is used in utterance-final position, as was illustrated in example (2) at the beginning of the paper. For comparison, we will be drawing on the Finnish affirmative pattern illustrated in example (1) and discussed in section 3.3. We are arguing that a) the affirming function is basically the same across the two languages, albeit with slightly different opportunities for modification and expansion; b) in both languages, the speaker can index responsiveness later than at the very beginning of the responsive unit; c) Estonian *kiüll* seems to be developing into a clitic while the Finnish typically disyllabic *kyllä* in the final position is an epistemic adverb.

The utterance-final *kiüll* regularly participates in verb repeat responses in Estonian⁶. Verb repeats are used in both Finnish and Estonian as answers to polar interrogatives (cf. above in 3.3.; Keevallik, 2010a; Hakulinen and Sorjonen, 2014). The final *kiüll* yields a reassuring function in the Estonian verb repeat answer, as shown in example (11), a telemarketing call from a newspaper office. M = salesperson, K = client.

(11) Estonian: S1A1

- 1 M: e *Liivi Linnaleht Tallinnast tülitab* [teid].
 ‘Liivi Linnaleht from Tallinn calling.’
- 2 K: [jaa?]
 ‘Yeah?’
- 3 M: .hh ee *ka:s* te nüüd olete: tutvund ka
 QUES you:PL now be:2PL acquaint:PPT too
 ‘Have you become acquainted
- 4 meie Linnalehega.
 we:GEN NAME:COM
 with our paper now.’
- 5 K: → *olen kiüll,*

⁶ A reviewer pointed out that a turn corresponding to the Estonian target line 5 seems also possible in Finnish. It did not occur in our data base, however – possibly as the data did not include institutional talk. An interesting observation can be made here: whereas *kiüll* can be attached to any verb in Estonian, the verb ‘be’ seems to be the only one in Finnish, thus *olen kyllä* amounting to a formula. As was previously mentioned, the default answer is a verb repeat.

be:1SG KÜLL
'I have indeed,'

6 M: ja kuidas rahulolu on.
'And are you satisfied.'

In the target line (5) the client affirms the content expressed in the preceding question, which initiated a pre-sequence. *Küll* reinforces the answer, featuring remnants of the meaning of intensity, and possibly displaying an orientation to the hedged question (the verb 'become acquainted with' is used instead of something less vague, such as 'read'). The speaker strongly affirms the content but does not explicitly show any understanding of what kind of action sequence was initiated in the prior turn. If anything, it treats the prior question as having been asked in its own right, not as a preliminary to the ensuing one on satisfaction.⁷ As in all the patterns discussed above, *küll* is uttered from the position of a knowledgeable speaker: It imports a high degree of certainty. It thereby marks that the question has been answered beyond any doubt and constitutes a reinforced affirmation.

Besides affirmatively responding to a positively formulated question as was just shown, the *küll*-reinforced answer is the only grammatical format that can provide a straightforward disaffirming answer to a negatively formulated question:

(12) Estonian: K3B11

1 E: .hh ega sa ei tea Veiko ja Ermeli: (.)
NEG you NEG know NAME:GEN and NAME:GEN
'I suppose you don't know Veiko's and Ermel's

2 telefoni või midagi.=
phone:GEN or something
phone number or something.'

3 V: → =tean küll⁸ oota üks moment.
know:1SG KÜLL wait:IMP:2SG one moment
'I do indeed wait a moment.'

The question about the phone number is here formulated in a conventionally polite negative *ega*-format (Keevallik, 2009:150-155), and it receives a positive answer, reinforced with the utterance-final *küll*. In this example, it is also clear that the *küll*-final unit merely responds to the content of the prior question, while the action import still needs to be dealt with. In the ensuing turn-constructive unit the speaker states that she is going to leave the phone to look for the number, which was implicitly the main aim of the question. While the *küll*-answer deals with the proposition of the polar question, the second TCU in the turn addresses its action implication. Most importantly, the current polarity-reversing pattern shows that *küll* functions indeed as a reinforcement of the positive answer: It takes more effort and epistemic certainty to contest a negative proposition in the question. On the other hand, without *küll* the answer would be ungrammatical. This situation is close to being identical with the Finnish example (8) that also

⁷ These answers emerge as reassuring even after (hesitant, sceptical) information questions, E.g. *Kas üldse saab teha nimodi. – Saab küll.* 'May one really do that? – 'You may indeed'; lit. May KÜLL.

⁸ There seems to be a prosodic regularity in the verb repeat response pattern: the stress is on the verb in case the question was formulated in positive (ex. 11), and on *küll* in case it was in negative (ex. 12).

reversed the polarity of the question, but deployed a characteristically different word order.

However, in addition to verb repeats, other elements in a polar question can be affirmed in a *küll*-response in Estonian. Here is an example (13) where the adverb *aeg-ajalt* ‘occasionally’ is repeated from the question. The excerpt also comes from a telemarketing call.

(13) Estonian: RA21

1 M: =kas teie loete ka aeg-ajalt Liivi Linnalehte.
QUES you:PL read:2PL also time-to.time NAME:PAR
'Do you occasionally read our NEWSPAPER.'

2 (0.6)

3 K: → .h mm, @@ aeg-ajalt küll. jaa. @ .h
time-to.time küll PRT
'Occasionally in fact. yeah'

By repeating the adverb, the potential client K underlines the fact that she only reads the paper occasionally. Accordingly, *küll* holds a final position in this unit, followed only by the confirmative *jaa* ‘yeah’, which constitutes a separate intonation unit and offers an alternative answer to the question. All in all, we are beginning to see that there is a relatively fixed response format X + *küll* used for answering polar questions in Estonian.

As it happens, several other modifications regularly occur in the *küll*-response, such as the lexicalized modal phrases *ma arvan* ‘I think’ (Keevallik, 2003), *ma usun* ‘I believe’ (Keevallik, 2010b), and *ma loodan* ‘I hope’. This is illustrated in (14). The example comes from the beginning of a phone call, where the caller is apparently trying to get hold of a person at home during work hours. In line (5) he formulates a guess that the person is at work, which receives the modified *küll*-answer.

(14) Estonian: K1A5

1 T: halloo, Ene kuuleb,
'Hello, Ene listening, '

2 H: tere päevast. öelge palun kas ärra Kelder ka kodus on. h
'Good morning. tell me please is Mister Kelder at home.'

3 (1.0)

4 T: mm, miks ta peaks kodus olema.
'Why would he be at home.'

5 H: ta on tööl.
he be:3SG work:ADE
'He is at work.'

6 T: → ma arvan küll.
I think:1SG KÜLL
'I should think so'

7 H: ahhaa.
'Okay.'

The pattern *ma arvan küll*, approx. ‘I think so’ comes close to being a fixed expression, which we chose to leave out in this study (see section 2). To summarize, we can see a clearly formulaic response pattern in Estonian, consisting of X + *küll*, where X is usually a verb or an adverb, rarely an adjective. A *küll*-final response affirms (a part of) the proposition in the prior turn and does so from an epistemically strong speaker position. On the basis of the systematicity outlined above it is possible to argue that *küll* is morphologically developing into a clitic in Estonian: It can be added to a variety of syntactically initial elements, and is phonologically attached to them, even though it still carries the main stress. This is in sharp contrast to the Finnish usage of initial *kyl(lä)* in affirmative responses, which allows for considerable syntactic variation in the ensuing talk. In both languages, the target item conveys epistemic certainty but its syntactic position and grammatical status are different. In Estonian it seems to be emerging as a more dependent element syntactically.

One outcome of this difference is that the Finnish responses regularly provide an occasion for expansion, specification and elaboration after *kyl(lä)* (as shown in example 1, and in section 3.3.). Instead, in Estonian many *küll*-responses are formulaic, while same-clause elaboration is still possible before *küll*. This is illustrated in example (15), where Tiia proposes a meeting and asks whether Piret has time on Sunday, to which Piret responds with a modified clausal answer. The unit-final *küll* is here combined with *jah*, which is a reasonably frequent combination.

(15) Estonian: K1A9

- 1 Tiia: aga::, saame siis pühapäeval kokku, sis vaatame, hh
 ‘But, let’s get together on Sunday, and see,
- 2 .h kas sul on pühapäeval aega.
 QUES you:ADE be:3SG Sunday:ADE time:PRT
 will you have time on Sunday.’
- 3 (1.2)
- 4 Piret: → mul peaks olema küll jah,
 I:ADE must:COND be:SUP KÜLL PRT
 ‘I should indeed have yeah,’

In contrast to Finnish, elaborations and modifications are accomplished before the affirmatory *küll*. This means that Finnish speakers will know from the beginning of the unit that the response will be basically affirming, while Estonian speakers are bound to wait until later, when the affirmatory verb repeat or *küll* is uttered. Affirmative patterns in Finnish and Estonian thus seem to display opposite word orders in responsive units, featuring initial *kyl(lä)* in Finnish and final *küll* in Estonian. (cf. Section 5, however.) Whether this leads to different recipient behavior and real-time interactional consequences, remains to be studied. What we would like to underline in our present analysis, is the fact that indexing affirmation can also be accomplished later in a turn. Thus, explicit back-linking to a prior turn with a response particle is not handled only at the beginning of turns, as suggested in e.g. Schegloff (1996: 95).

5. Utterance-final use in Finnish: epistemicity

While Estonian final *kiill* was shown to be a regular element in relatively formulaic answers, the Finnish final *kyllä* is more flexible in terms of syntax as well as with respect to pragmatics. In the current section, we will be illustrating a Finnish utterance-final usage that is altogether non-existent in Estonian.

In Finnish, the responsive *kyllä*-final utterances and turns are used in both negative and positive answers to polar interrogatives. In example (16), from the beginning of a call, a positive answer is projected or presupposed by the question. Siiri's question in line 5 offers a possible explanation to the weak connection between the speakers: Missu is using the old landline phone. However, the answer she receives is a negative one, ending with the adverb *kyllä*.

(16) Finnish: SG 112_A6

- 01 Siiri: Mitä:h fäh kauhee .hh juu,hf .hh Kuuluu tosi
 what PRT awful PRT be.heard:3SG real
 'What fPRT awful .hh yes .hh Really difficult
- 02 huanosti.
 badly.
 to hear.'
- 03 (0.3)
- 04 Missu: Ai[jaa.
 'Oh I see'
- 05 Siiri: [Ook sää teiän vanhassa puhelimessa.
 ['Are you on your old telephone.'
- 06 Missu:→ Ei ku uudessa **kyllä**.
 NEG PRT new:INE KYLLÄ
 'No but on the new one actually'
- 07 (0.2)
- 08 Siiri: oota vähän mää laitan vähän kove:mmalle tä[tä.
 'Wait a sec I'm going to set it a bit louder'
- 09 Missu : [juu.

A negative answer without the final *kyllä* would be a simple, straightforward disconfirmation of the primary alternative ('on the old phone') conveyed by the question. Here, instead, the final *kyllä* is used to target the presupposition in the question that the bad sound is due to her using the old phone and reassure the recipient that this is not true. *Kyllä* thus adds the meaning of 'in fact', or 'actually' ('contrary to what you were surmising') to the answer.

In example (17), two middle aged sisters are chatting in Tuula's kitchen. A previous topic has been closed, and the speakers search for a next one. Jaana accomplishes this with a 'by-the-way' question, bringing up something that meets the eye in the context (cf. Bergmann, 1990). She enquires about the acquisition of the kitchen curtains (lines 1-2). There is an extensive exchange between the question and the *kyllä*-final answer (lines 20-21). During the exchange, Tuula first

confronts Jaana at line 8: it was Jaana herself who had sewn the curtains years ago. Despite being formatted as an affirmative declarative, Tuula's answer in lines (20-21) implies a negative response: the curtains were not sewn for the kitchen. This way of conveying a negative response is reminiscent of non-corrections described by Jefferson (1987).

(17)Finnish:SG 437_1_10

- 01 Jaana: .hhh hei mä- asiast viidentee .hhh onks noi
'Hei I- from one thing to the fifth were those
- 02 muuten ihan ni, (.) ostettu keittiöverhoiks
by-the-way just like(.) bought as curtains for the kitchen'
- 03 (1.8)
- 04 Tuula: mt Jaana hei; (0.8) ku me, (.) oltiin Janin kans
'Jaana hei as we, were with Jan
- 05 mihi me ↑muutettiin, (0.8) Myyrmäkeen. (0.2) ks
wherever w edid move to Myyrmäki
- 06 me <muutettiin>=joo sillo ennen vanhaa >ennen< Ninaa.
we moved=indeed earlier once before Nina's time'
- 07 Jaana: mm[m,
- 08 Tuula: [ni sä ompelit nää verhot meille,
'And you sewed these curtains for us'
- 09 (0.2)
- 10 Jaana: ompelinkoh.
'Did I'
- 11 Tuula: .joo
'Yes'
- 12 (0.6)
- 13 Tuula: nää on sieltä asti. .h >ja nää< on niinku
'These are from that (time) and these were like
- 14 väliaikasesti >mukamas aina laitettu<; .h
always temporarily put up'
- (five lines omitted)
- 20 Tuula: → ostin ne ihan a- @olohuoneen
buy:PST:SG1 these quite living.room:GEN
'I bought them rather as curtains for
- 21 → verhoiksi **kyllä**h@.
curtains:TRA KYLLÄ
the living room in fact'
- 22 Jaana: no ku mä aattelin kans >justii - - kato
'Well I was also thinking - - see'

Instead of a negative answer that would refute Jaana's memory about the curtains (lines 1-2), Tuula at first launches a story about the situation of curtains in her household, and then presents a positive declarative utterance (lines 20-21) that describes an alternative version and ends it with *kyllä*. Here, the turn-final epistemic adverb conveys the implication that Jaana's question can be viewed as not completely wrong.

The clear difference between the cases in (16, 17) and the modified *kyl(lä)*-initial affirming answers discussed in 3.1 is that the *kyllä*-final ones convey a different, even an opposite standpoint but as if camouflaged in a positive statement of a fact owned by the speaker. In addition, a *kyl(lä)*-final response does not have to be contiguous, as shown in (17). In sum, while the *kyl(lä)*-initial turn immediately indexes that what follows is an aligning affirmation, a *kyllä*-final one as it were leaves it to the co-participant to infer the pragmatic import of the response. Crucially, whereas 'intensity' is still profiled in the Estonian *küll*-final answers, the Finnish ones clearly convey the sense of speaker 'conviction', i.e. a high degree of certainty.

6. Concluding discussion

In this paper, we accounted for the responsive and reactive units encompassing *kyl(lä)/küll* in Finnish and Estonian, and showed how a responsive element can occur in the initial as well as in the final position in a unit (cf. Schegloff, 1996). We argued that in both languages, *kyl(lä)/küll* basically expresses intensity and speaker certainty, featuring a distinctly epistemic meaning, and functioning as a reinforcement of the proposition.

Two of the utterance-initial usages were similar: where *kyl(lä)/küll* occurs in disagreeing units, and where it is a part of a reactive assessment after a longer telling or discussion. The assessment pattern features syntactic structures that are routinized in a similar way across the two languages and the word *kyl(lä)/küll* has here preserved clear features of its original meaning. The noun 'abundance' and the intensity adverb 'to a great degree' are semantically close. We also found two major differences. First, in Finnish, *kyl(lä)*-initial utterances are predominantly affirming answers to polar questions, while in Estonian *küll*-initial utterances are only used as future-oriented positive foretellings. In these, the target word expresses epistemic certainty. Second, utterances with a final *ky(llä)/küll* differ with respect to the degree of reinforcement in the response. In Estonian, *küll*-final turns may convey a strong disaffirmation to a negatively formatted question, featuring intensity and certainty, whereas in Finnish, they yield an indirect way of going against the presupposition of the preceding question, featuring the highest degree of certainty, conviction. While the Finnish *kyl(lä)* is mostly used in turns where alignment is profiled, the Estonian *küll* is regularly also deployed for disaligning actions: the *kyl(lä)/küll*-initial utterance is an affirming response in Finnish and a disaligning foretelling in Estonian. Apparently, similar syntactic patterns can become routinized in divergent functions when regularly deployed in different sequential positions. In short, by comparing the initial and the final utterance positions, and looking closely at the action sequences, we were able to demonstrate systematic connections between word order, lexical meaning, and social action across two related languages.

Likewise, we could reveal subtle similarities and differences in the meaning of *kyl(lä)/küll* across

the two languages. The etymologically shared original noun *kyl(lä)/küll*, documented with the meaning ‘abundance’, ‘plentiness’, has currently come to indicate intensity and a high degree of certainty as an adverb, while the Finnish final *kyllä* conveys a further sense of ‘conviction’. *Kyl(lä)*-use in Finnish is syntactically more flexible, as it can be used as a preface or an increment (Schegloff, 1996: 91). In contrast, the Estonian *küll* figures in succinct, almost formulaic clauses and phrases, and may be losing its status as an independent word in the unit-final patterns. More broadly, Finnish *kyl(lä)* is mostly cooperative in initial position and slightly more disaligning later in the turn (Hakulinen 2001), while Estonian *küll* is the other way around. The Finnish final *kyllä* emerges as an epistemic adverb that conveys its speaker’s knowledgeable status, while the Estonian final *küll* may also confirm that the prior speaker was right, and thereby places the current speaker equal with respect to mutual knowledge. In all the above cases, the target word displays usages beyond its original meaning that reflect the particular nuances of the sequential social action that it is part of. Action and word-meaning are thus in a mutually reflexive relationship.

This study illustrates the importance of studying lexis and grammar in a positionally sensitive manner: We were able to show how language structure can be systematically dependent on its immediate interactional context. We focused on one conversational position at a time, and discovered differences between sequences initiated by polar questions, assertions, informings, complaints and requests, across as well as within languages. Even though the current analysis only outlines one segment of all the uses of *kyl(lä)/küll*, it enables us, for the first time, to establish clear contrasts between superficially similar syntactic patterns and words that appear to carry similar pragmatic meanings in Finnish and Estonian. These findings complement traditional studies on lexical relations in genetically related languages, showing how conversational function may feature in them.

Transcription conventions

<u>underlining</u>	– emphasis
-	– truncation
[]	– overlaps; timing of embodied action
=	– latching of turns
(0.5)	– pause length in tenths of a second
(.)	– micropause
:	– lengthening of a sound
<@>	– laughing quality
.h	– breathing in
(m)h	– breathing out
°	– low volume
boldface	– the focused particle and repeated materials in the excerpt
.	– pitch fall at the end of an intonation/prosodic unit
?	– pitch rise at the end of an intonation/prosodic unit
,	– level pitch at the end of an intonation/prosodic unit
-	– unfinished (intonation) unit

↑	– sharp rise in tone
(not in the original)	– the part is not expressed in the original
(X)	– unhearable syllable

Abbreviations

1, 2, 3	– person
ADE	– adessive
CLI	– clitic
COM	– comitative
COND	– conditional
DET	– determiner
GEN	– genitive
ILL	– illative
IMP	– imperative
INF	– infinitive
INS	– inessive
NAME	– name
NEG	– negation
PAR	– partitive
PAS	– passive
PL	– plural
PPT	– past participle
PRT	– particle
PST	– past
Q	– question clitic
QUES	– question particle
SG	– singular
SUP	– supinum
TRA	– translative
Other capital letters	– an untranslatable particle

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