Directing, negotiating and planning:
'*Aus Spiel*' ('for play') in children's pretend joint play

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Abstract

We are interested in how children organize joint pretend play. In this kind of play, children create an invented world by transforming matters of the real world into matters of a fictional world (e.g., pretending to be a 'giant' or treating a particular spatial area as a 'witch's kitchen'). Since there are no rules and no script, every next step in the game is an improvisation designed here and now. Children engaged in free play have equal rights to determine what should happen next. For that reason, they have to negotiate next steps. We are interested in a particular expression that children often use in joint play: *aus Spaß/Spiel* ('for fun' or 'for play', similar to 'let's pretend'). Based on a corpus of five hours of video recordings of two pairs of twins (the younger children are between 3 and 5 years old, the older ones are 8 years old), we show that children regularly use *aus Spiel* while playing as a method for shaping the activity. Inventing new events, children try to get their co-players to accept them and act accordingly. In that context, issues of (dis-)alignment and deontic rights become relevant. Here, we are interested in the interactional work that *aus Spiel*- ('let's pretend')-turns do and how co-players respond.

Keywords: instructions – children – pretend play frame – negotiation – planning – proposing – rules.

German Abstract

Im Fokus unseres Beitrags steht, wie Kinder gemeinsames, freies Fantasiespiel interaktiv organisieren. In Fantasiespielen kreieren Kinder erfundene Welten, indem sie 'Dinge' der realen Welt in 'Dinge' einer fiktiven Welt verwandeln (z.B.: vorgeben, ein "Riese" zu sein oder einen bestimmten Teil der gemeinsamen Umgebung als "Hexenküche" behandeln). Da keine Regeln und kein Drehbuch existieren, ist jeder nächste Schritt im Spiel eine im Hier und Jetzt entworfene Improvisation. Kinder, die frei spielen, haben grundsätzlich das gleiche Recht zu bestimmen, was als Nächstes im Spiel passieren soll. Aus diesem Grund müssen die nächsten Schritte im Spiel verhandelt werden. Im Fokus unseres Beitrags steht ein bestimmter Ausdruck, den Kinder im gemeinsamen Spiel verwenden: *aus Spaß/ Spiel*. Auf der Grundlage eines Korpus von fünf Stunden Videoaufnahmen von zwei Zwillingspaaren (die jüngeren Kinder sind zwischen 3 und 5 Jahre, die älteren 8 Jahre alt) zeigen wir, dass Kinder die Formulierung *aus Spiel* während des Spielens verwenden, um neue imaginäre Ereignisse und Bedingungen in das gemeinsame Spiel einzuführen. Auf diese Weise versuchen sie, ihre Mitspieler dazu zu bewegen, etwas zu tun oder zu akzeptieren. In diesem Zusammenhang werden Fragen von gegenseitiger Anpassung (*alignment*) und deontischer Rechte relevant. Wir fragen in unserem Beitrag wie *aus Spiel*-Äußerungen eingesetzt werden, und danach, wie Mitspieler darauf reagieren.

Keywords: Instruktionen – Kinder – Spielrahmen – Aushandlung – Planung – Vorschlagen – Regeln.

1. Getting another to do things in children's free play

We are interested in children's free and spontaneous play. Play is a central and ubiquitous human cultural practice. There is evidence for a neurological "play" system (Panksepp 2005): play is an ancient part of the brain, evolved for developing social skills. Following Huizinga (1997), play is freely chosen and intrinsically motivated and thus performed for no external reason. Caillois (1960) differentiates four different kinds of play: alea (games of chance), agon (competitive games), mimicry (role-playing games), and illinx (games of intoxication), each of which can be weakly or highly structured. We focus on low-structured role-playing games. Piaget (1945/1969) has stressed the importance of such games for children's cognitive development. Children are learning to develop rules together; to establish, agree on, negotiate, enforce, and change norms and rules. In contrast to existing games that are already structured, free play has no prior rules. It can be understood – following Sawyer (1997) – as doing improvisation. That is, the play has no script and is created in the moment.

Children's free play is created to some extent by negotiating, establishing and acting out rules while playing ('on the fly'). In contrast to static notions of play, maintaining improvised play involves constantly (re-)negotiating next play moves (Rendle-Short/Cobb-Moore/Danby 2014; Sawyer 2003). Therefore, issues of alignment and affiliation (Lee/Tanaka 2016; Lindström/Sorjonen 2013; Stivers/Mondada/Steensig 2011; Steensig 2013) play a crucial role. Our focus is on turns that are overtly designed to shape next steps in the game. Such turns contain the phrase *aus Spiel* ('for play') or *aus Spaß* ('for fun'), followed by a formulation of an idea for the further development of the play activity. We noticed that children in our data use such turns a lot in the interactive management of free play during a certain age range – roughly, between four and eight years.

We examine what children do with *aus Spiel*-turns during free play. The focus of this special issue is on 'instructions' and, as will become apparent, the *aus Spiel*-turns we examine are an interesting special (boundary?) case of instructions. In contrast to typical instructions, the participants in our data lack the clear hierarchy of an expert and a novice, and the activity of free play lacks the routines and set procedures that are typical objects of instruction. In some respects, the term proposal might better capture what *aus Spiel*-turns do, as these make an accepting/rejecting response relevant next (e.g., Couper-Kuhlen 2014). Nevertheless, other aspects of 'instruction' seem more relevant: Instructions can be a method for getting another person to act in a particular way here and now, and they are a method for conveying the knowledge that is required for attempting some task in the future. It is this pairing of giving here-and-now directions and sharing information for future

action that motivated us to propose the phenomenon of *aus-spiel*-turns in the context of a special issue on instructions. Sometimes, children use *aus spiel* to 'recruit' (Kendrick/Drew 2016; Rossi/Floyd/Enfield 2020) the other for joint play and to get the other to do something here and now (especially younger children), at other times they use it to propose a narrative that can form the basis for later play activities (especially older children). Overall, the interactive work that children accomplish with *aus Spiel*-turns reminds us that we cannot expect the nomenclature of folk terms such as instruction, proposal, request etc. to capture how we build sociality through talk. (As a side note: The more general notion of recruitments does not solve that issue, as that concept is meant to capture interactional moves that lead to here-and-now collaboration or assistance).

Prior work on children's play suggests that phrases such as *aus Spiel* ('for play') or *aus Spaß* ('for fun') are used to establish a play frame (Sawyer 2003:138):

> Before children can play together, a play frame must be created and understood by the participants, containing specific transformations of specific objects, persons, time, space, action, and rules.

– together understood as play features. By inventing, bringing forward and thereby maintaining a play frame, children indicate during their ongoing activities whether play takes place or not. This is done by means of what Bateson (1985[1936]) and Goffman (1977) have called meta-communication. Meta-communication is used both to index and maintain a play frame and to regulate and negotiate the process of playing with one another once a play frame is established.

As participants in free play in principle have equal rights to determine the game (symmetry), they must negotiate future moves (Sidnell 2011).[1] Playing together, therefore, always has a deontic aspect (Stefanovic/Peräkylä 2012): who can decide the direction of play? As Sidnell (2011) has shown, new play moves altering the game usually come as meta-communicative proposals which make an accepting or rejecting response relevant in the next move (cf. also Sawyer 1997, 2003). In contrast to what Sidnell (2011) calls 'stipulations', which baldly assert something (e.g. 'this is a X') and thus alter the play world unilaterally, 'proposals' are designed to be open for negotiations (e.g. 'let's pretend we are all…'). As Sawyer (1997, 2003) has shown, activities that alter the play can be achieved via different strategies that can be described with respect to their explicitness and their frame reference. Sawyer (2003:144 et seqq.) differentiates four levels. On the first level, the most implicit strategy, children are totally in-frame and speak in first person singular with a character voice. On levels two and three, both less implicit, children either speak out-of-character but refer to in-game-objects (e.g. 'Let's say an earthquake happens') or they speak in-character but refer to out-game-objects (e.g. '<<speaking in-character> I need some more blocks'>). On level four, the most explicit strategy, children speak as themselves and refer to out-game-objects (e.g. '<<speaking out-character> I put my figure right in here>). As Sawyer's scheme suggests, implicit and in-frame strategies build on pre-established components of the play-frame (for instance a specific role set), whereas explicit and out-of-frame/-character strategies

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[1]　This is not to say that there are no de facto asymmetries in children's play, but that there are no pre-determined asymmetries that could be taken for granted. An indicator that asymmetries need to be negotiated is provided by *aus Spiel/Spaß*-turns that show that children orient themselves to the situation as a fundamentally symmetrical one.

are more likely to invent new features which have to be negotiated and ratified by co-players.

Turns with *aus Spaß/Spiel* (henceforth: *aus Spiel*, 'for play') play an important role in establishing a play frame. However, as our data will show, they are not restricted to that function. *Aus Spiel*-turns are used in some cases to announce verbally what is realized in parallel. Furthermore, children's use of *aus Spiel*, 'for play' can strongly build on components of an already established play frame, such as a pre-established set of roles (e.g. mother and children) or a particular activity frame (e.g. being in a witch's kitchen). This raises the question why children sometimes (re-)mention the play frame when they are already playing and sometimes not. In a nutshell, our findings suggest that children use *aus Spiel/Spaß* when a next move would strongly affect the co-player's scope of action (see also Sidnell 2011). This means that explicitly communicating the play frame (again) builds on children's awareness of the need to coordinate joint play cooperatively, and their skill to detach planning/deciding from playing.

Focusing on those events where a play frame is newly established, one could assume that an explicit, metacommunicative framing is necessary. While *aus Spiel* is often used in such situations, again, our data suggest that this is not necessarily so. Starting joint play may or may not be accompanied by explicit communication of the play frame. Especially in younger children, joint play emerges without being explicitly established. As we will show, one possibility to achieve joint play in younger children is by answering an initial single play activity with a corresponding and fitting play move, thereby establishing a joint play activity (see also Stivers/Sidnell 2016).

In sum, explicit strategies to communicate a play frame (like *aus Spiel*, 'for play') are not only used for inventing and establishing joint play or completely new play moves. Establishing joint play or new play moves in turn does not necessarily require explicit strategies of communicating the play frame. Hence, there must be other motivations for using this turn format. We are interested in where *aus Spiel* occurs, and what functions it fulfills.

In a nutshell, we find that *aus Spiel*-turns transform the possibilities of children's free play in two ways. They create a context for negotiating next steps by making acceptance relevant. This is the deontic dimension. And they introduce an interactional activity track in which plans can be formulated, as ideas for the play are negotiated. While in the case of young children in our data, *aus Spiel*-turns work mostly as a kind of directive, making relevant, where possible, the enactment of the proposed event, in the case of the older children, *aus Spiel*-turns work to 'prepare the scene' for playing in sometimes extended sequences of verbal planning. In these cases, no direct enactment is required or possible; rather the children pursue a verbal ratification of their plans.

In the next section, we present our analyses based on eleven selected cases. We start with embodied invitations to participate in joint play (2.1). In section 2.2, we show how younger children use *aus Spiel* to shape next play moves in their joint play. In the last section (2.3), we contrast this with how the older children use *aus Spiel*-turns to negotiate and plan joint play. We close by discussing the function of *aus Spiel*-turns in children's play in relation to folk and technical terms such as 'proposal', 'directive' and 'instruction'.

2. Analyses

We focus on cases in which children use the phrase *aus Spiel,* 'for play' or *aus Spaß*, 'for fun' to initiate a turn within joint play. In contrast to the English format 'let's pretend' (see Sidnell 2011), the format we discuss is not an imperative but a declarative (e.g. *aus Spaß/Spiel kommt jetzt ein Riese*; literal translation: 'for fun/for play a giant is coming'). Our analyses follow a multimodal conversation analytical approach (Deppermann 2013, 2018; Mondada 2008, 2016; Schegloff 2007) and are based on a corpus of five hours of video recordings of children's play at home. Our participants are two pairs of twins. The younger children are between three and five years old (in different recordings), the older ones are eight years old. The younger children have an older sister, who is present in one of the recordings (Extract 1). The younger children speak German and Polish, the older ones speak German.

We start with a case in which a six-year old and two three-year olds invite each other to participate in play by starting to play in a specific fashion (section 2.1). As we will see, others join in the play with minimal verbal framing. In this case, explicit metacommunication such as *aus Spiel*, 'for play' could have fitted but does not occur, maybe because these frames are not yet available to the younger children. We use these (ontogenetically) early embodied forms of initiating joint play as a comparative basis to show what explicitly meta-communicative verbal practices can achieve (section 2.2.).

2.1. Embodied invitation to participate in joint play

We begin with a fragment that shows that children engage in pretend play without establishing a play frame with a dedicated verbal form such as *aus Spiel*, 'for play'.[2] In this fragment, three siblings are coming together at the kitchen table: Paula and Jakob, both aged 3;4, and Nele, aged 6;8. Nele grabs a toy dog that is lying on the kitchen table. Paula is carrying an inflated balloon. Nele verbally summons Paula, then animates the toy dog, which "walks" on the table and shouts *piłka* ('ball'). Paula places the balloon on the table, 'offering' it to the dog as a ball. The dog starts bouncing on the balloon, until Paula takes the balloon away at line 3.

Extract 1a: *trampoline* (Z20140131_157060)[3]

```
01  Nele:   ZObacz    paula *PIŁka::;&: PIŁka::;*&
            look Paula, 'ball, ball'
                          *dog walks--------->*stops
    paula                         &turns to N->&balloon table->
02          (0.4)&*(0.2)
    paula   --->&holds balloon
    nele         *dog on balloon->
```

2   See Sawyer (1997:102) and Stivers/Sidnell (2016) on similar cases of establishing joint play by embodied means.
3   Transcripts following GAT2 (Selting et al. 2009) and for multimodal details Mondada (2014). Focal lines are additionally provided with interlinear glossings.

```
03  Nele:   *PILka::. BOIn$g JUhu trampo&lina;*
              ball.        boing yippie trampoline
            *dog jumps on balloon------------>*dog lands on table
    paula                                  &lifts balloon
    Fig                    $Fig.1
```
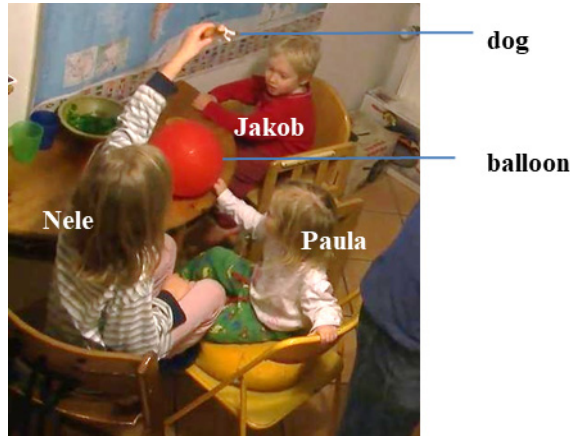
Fig. 1: dog jumps on balloon

```
04          (0.4)

05  Nele:   ↑O:::::::::.
              oh (no)
```

Shortly after this, the children's dad takes the balloon away. Nele takes a plastic cup and uses it upside-down for a moment as an object for the dog to jump on, but then the cup becomes a hideaway place for the dog instead, and then the children turn to other things. Another minute or so later, Jakob grabs the dog and starts jumping it on the table. As he accompanies the jumps with the word *trampolina* (line 4 below), Paula puts her cup upside down on the table, 'offering' it to Jakob as a trampoline (the talk at line 3 is unrelated to the play episode that interests us here).

Extract 1b: *trampoline* (Z20140131_426934)

```
01  Jakob       +ktsktsktskts
                +grabs dog-->

02             (1.0)
    jakob       ---->
03  Paula       +talerz TEŻ ta+k umi[em.]
                the plate I can also do like this
    jakob       +walks dog--->+dog jumps--------->
04  Jakob                      [tra]mpoLIna:::;
                                 trampoline
                                ------------>
05  Jakob       ui:::  tram&poLIna:::;+
                        trampoline
                --------------------->+
    paula                  &cup on table
06  Jakob       +ui:: trampoLIna::::;
                 ui::: trampoline
                +D jumps on cup
```

```
07              (1.1)
    jakob       ---->
08  Jakob       &+>tram*poLIna;<=  +A::::::::::.
                   trampoline
                  +D lands on table+lifts D
    paula       &takes cup away
```

In sum, the children have entered into joint pretend play several times, using first the balloon and then the cup as a trampoline for the dog. The children have accomplished these episodes of pretend play without introducing a play frame in an explicitly meta-communicative way. Such cases therefore make relevant again the question: What is it that children at a later age use meta-communicative phrases such as *aus Spiel* for? Extract 1 can serve as a contrast for such cases, and we want to point to the following observations.

The pretend play in the examples above involves the joint attention and enjoyment of the children, but the scenario that they play out only requires one player: the one jumping the dog up and down. Paula's contribution in both episodes is what we could call purely deontic: She 'allows' for her balloon to be used as a trampoline, and she 'offers' her cup as a trampoline. Note that in both cases, she provides these items only for a short time, and takes the 'trampoline' away after a few jumps. Her role in the play is largely restricted to 'making the trampoline available/unavailable'. In sum, this is a minimally cooperative game in which the children, in contrast to cases we discuss later, take up complementary roles only for short stretches of play.

Paula's collaboration is immediately enacted. In their play moves, Nele and Jakob 'propose' scenarios that call for Paula's collaboration, and this collaboration comes in the form of joining in the game in the relevant way. What is not there is any kind of overt verbal acceptance of the play scenario, or solicitation of such acceptance, which is why we have put the action glosses 'offering' and 'proposing' in scare quotes.

What is it that changes when children use explicit frame cues such as *aus Spiel*? Or maybe better: What kinds of changes in children's free play are expressed and made possible by this format? We now consider the transformations to free play afforded by the articulation of a play frame.

2.2. Using *aus Spiel/Spaß* to direct joint play

Among the younger children in our data, *aus Spaß*-turns are often taken up as directives mobilizing next actions in the continuously emerging free play. Consider Extract 2. Here, and in the other extracts in this section, Paula and Jakob (the same children as in Extract 1, but now two years older) have been playing that Jakob is a giant who keeps attacking Paula and her two dolls. Here, Jakob formulates a next move by the giant (lines 2-4), attacking Paula with a ball, which he acts out at the same time (*sie*, 'she', in line 2 is a misspeaking, repaired to 'me, the giant', in line 3). Extending his turn past possible completion, Jakob directs Paula's reaction (lines 3-4).

Extract 2: *getroffen* (puppen_550853)

```
01  Paula: °hh und ↑HIER ist ein (tunn[el]).
                and here there is a tunnel
02  Jakob:                          [+au]s SPAß macht+ sie so-,
                                      for  fun   make.3SG she  so
                                     for fun she does like this
                                    +swing back---->+forward->
03         >+°hh   +ich der RIEse, °h und- er hat °hh dich
                    I   ART giant      and   he  has.3SG  you.ACC
                   me, the giant, and he has hit
           >+throw>+ball hits P, rolls away
04         geTROffen::, &und [das  tut    dir    sehr    &WE::H,]
            hit.PTCP      and   that does.3SG you.DAT very       pain
             you,              and it hurts a lot
     paula               &straightens touches side------>&
05  Paula:             [ah:: .h::-                              ]
06         &AH:: .H:::+:-
           &other hand touches shoulder->>
```

In a position contiguous to a possible completion of Jakob's turn (*getroffen::*, line 4), Paula reacts in a way that acts out the scenario formulated by Jakob, and she increases the loudness of her 'pain' after Jakob's specification in the next TCU. In cases such as this one, the *aus Spaß*-turn proximally has the effect of directing the co-player's here-and-now actions by formulating a play event that the other person can act out.

How does the *aus Spaß*-framing transform the possibilities for pretend play from the kind of largely non-verbal playing in Extract 1? For one thing, *aus Spaß* turns provide a format for articulating play scenarios that are complex and cooperative, with each player taking on complementary roles, in this case, of an attacker and an attacked, outside of the actual play activity.

Aus Spaß-turns create a 'separate track' of verbal interaction, an activity that is a step (or more, in cases we discuss later) removed from the actual embodied play, and that affords more or less complex narrative scenario building. Consider Extract 3. This is from the beginning of the play line in which Jakob is a giant attacking Paula and the dolls. At the beginning of this fragment, Paula is playing with her two dolls, letting them dance and sing for the camera, while Jakob plays with a ball in the corridor. For a moment, he is *SUperma:n* (line 1). He then articulates the new scenario (from line 7), and after that begins to enact it with a scary voice (line 12). Paula reacts with the appropriate game move: being scared and running away (lines 13-14).

Extract 3: *riese* (puppen_442799)

```
01  Jakob:   HIER kommt der SUperma:n [j↑a::,]
             here comes the superman yeah::
02  Paula:                            [so::- ]
                                      okay
03           DAS ist emma. hehehe:.
             this is emma hehehe

04           &JA: jaJA: jaJA::-
     paula   &dances dolls--->Z.13
```

```
05  Jakob:     Ö:::[::::::    ]
06  Paula:        [EMma ist] w[ieder da:::-                ]
                  emma is back again
07  Jakob:                    [>paula aus spaß< kommt   jetzt] ein
                               NAME    from fun   come.3SG  now      a
                               Paula for fun a giant now

08             RI[ESE und sie haben    ANGST,]
               giant   and  they have.3PL  fright
               comes and they are scared

09  Paula:        [EMma flie:gt          in  ] einen ↑(      )-
                  emma flies into a (   )
10  Jakob:     und d[er .h: hat den BALL ge+klaut,]=
               and he has stolen the ball
                                            +takes steps to Paula

11  Paula:        [u::nd (.) (        a::u).   ]
                  and

12  Jakob:     =ho: ho: h[o::::::.    ]
13  Paula:               [ä:::hm? &↑↑A]:::-
    paula      Z.14-------------->&raises dolls

14             &i_hi °h hi °h hi °h
               &dolls flee------->>
```

This extract illustrates the potential of *aus Spaß* turns even in younger (five-year-old) children's play to articulate relatively complex play scenarios, including persons in the play world (*ein riese, sie*), and cause and effect of a play event ("*they*" are scared because a giant appears). Another transformation that *aus Spaß*-framing brings to pretend play is that *aus Spaß*-turns constitute first-pair parts in a sequence. In Extract 2 (and, with delay, also in Extract 3), the recipient of the *aus Spaß*-turn acted out the formulated scenario, and this might often be the preferred response. However, other responses are possible. *Aus Spaß*-turns are commonly prosodically designed to mobilize verbal acceptance (on prosody in mobilizing response, see Stivers/Rossano 2010). The turn-final prosody of *aus Spaß*-turns is often, as in Extract 2, characterized by elongation of the final syllable, and a rising turn-final pitch. This often gives *aus Spaß*-turns a distinct prosodic shape that we can characterize as 'appealing' to the other to accept the proposed events. This contributes to *aus Spaß*-turns having a recognizably proposal-like design (e.g., Couper-Kuhlen 2014; Houtkoop 1987), providing a space where the co-player can accept or reject the scenario.

We do not have in our recordings of the younger siblings a single case in which an *aus Spaß*-turn would be simply rejected. We do, however, have several instances where the response space of an *aus Spaß*-turn is used to negotiate the next move with an *okay* followed by a modification. Extract 4 provides an example. At lines 1-3, Paula uses the *aus Spaß*-format to present a possible next scenario. As she does so, she moves her two dolls to a seat upholstery that is a 'lake' (see Fig. 2). Jakob accepts and modifies this 'proposal' (line 4). His modification also involves articulating next possible game moves. However, he does not present them as 'possible' moves in a description, but depicts (Clark 2016) and thereby enacts them alongside his verbal turn.

Extract 4: *see* (puppen_456227)

```
01  Paula:   aus sp-  (0.4) aus spaß kann    er nicht
             from f-         from fun   can.3SG  he  not
             for f-      for fun he can't
02           in_n SEE .h und des&halb gehen          &
             in.ART lake  and therefore  go.3PL
             into the lake and therefore they go
                                     &dolls on upholstery&
03           die schnell [in SEE:, ]
             they quickly   in lake
             quickly in the lake
04  Jakob:              [okey aber] °h er (.) macht (+so)
                         okay but    he does like this
                                                    +drops
05           TSCHIU:. +(0.6) und (.) +jetzt macht $er SO::,+$
             'chooo'            and now he does like this
             to floor>+              +ball attack--------->+
     Fig                                          Fig. 2$
```


Fig. 2: Jacob attacks dolls in the 'lake'

```
06  Paula:   +ja aber er trifft &NEb+en& sie,
             yes but he misses them
                              &points&
     jakob   +ball on doll--------->+raises ball-->
07  Jakob:   mhm-         +
             redoes attack+
08  Paula:   &uh .h u::h .h
             &lifts dolls->>
```

Paula modifies this enacted proposal (line 6), and Jakob acquiesces and repeats his attack, with the ball-weapon this time landing just next to the doll. Paula now responds 'in-game' (line 8), vocalizing what seems to be the response of the hurt doll, while taking the doll up and moving it around.

Aus Spaß-turns then provide for a sequence in which the deontic rights to decide the course of the game can be managed 'in parallel', as it were, to the sequential relationship of play directive and acting out. See also Extract 5. Again, we see that modifications/counterproposals are designed as 'stipulations' (Stivers/Sidnell 2016). The negotiation of the scenario is a way in which the planning of a next game

move can become detached from the actual playing. At the beginning of this transcript, Jakob has kidnapped the dolls and has taken them to another room. He comes back and engages in a facing formation with Paula at line 12.

Extract 5: *gefängnis* **(puppen_900878)**

```
01   Jakob:    PAUla:::?
02             (0.6)
03   Jakob:    a[us spaß ha]b  ich denen ein geFÄNgnis gemacht, (.)
                 for   fun  have.1SG I them  a    prison    made.PTCP
               For fun I have made a prison for them
04   Paula:    [JA:?       ]
                yes
05   Jakob:    den GAR kein SIE::ht,
               that PTCL none  see.3SG
               that no-one sees
06             (0.8)
07   Paula:    okey aber ich FINde die:,
               okay but I find them
08   Jakob:    NÖ:::.=
               no:::
09   Paula:    =DOCH.
               yes.
10             (1.0)
11   Jakob:    ich SA:G dir dann wo sie si::nd.
               I will tell you where they are
12   Paula:    oKEY weil weil d- weil du nich weil du nix mehr
               okay because because because you can't can't do
13             MACHen ka:nnst,
               anything anymore
14             (0.2)
15   Jakob:    m:,
16   Paula:    wo hast du meine KINder hinge(steckt)
               where have you put my children
```

If the proposed scenario is such that the other cannot immediately enact it, as in the next case, 'okay' responses signal acceptance-in-principle without any direct embodied implementations. In Extract 6, Paula and Jakob have split in their play. Paula is picking up and commenting on various toys and objects in a 'silly' voice (line 1). Jakob has just discovered a new prop, a piece of cloth that can be used as a sleeve. He picks it up (line 1) and then puts it on (line 5), while beginning to articulate what this new prop might be (beginning at line 3). He has some difficulties summoning Paula's attention (lines 3, 6, 9), who has turned to her doll Emma (line 4) and is taking her 'home'. Jakob finally completes the articulation of the proposed new game element at lines 9-10: *aus spass kommt hier laser raus und hier erde* ('for fun laser comes out of here and soil (out of) here'). Paula accepts this (line 12), before continuing on her way with her doll. Here, in the context of a phase of separate play, there is nothing that Paula needed or could do with the proposed new play element in terms of directly acting it out. Still, she has given her acquiescence to a proposal that might impact on the joint play at some later stage.

Extract 6: *laser* (puppen_749501)

```
01   Paula:   +KOmisches scha+f
                 strange sheep
     jakob   +grabs cloth-->+
02           (0.7)
03   Jakob:  paula:: auf &SPAß (0.1) [aus SPA::s,]
             NAME       on   fun             from fun
                 paula, for fun, for fun
     paula                 &turns away to dolls
04   Paula:                         [KOMM emma ]jetzt
                                     come emma now
05           müssen wir aber na+ch HAUse
                 we have to go home
     jakob                     +cloth on arm->
06   Jakob:  paula:: aus spaß+ &(0.2) kommt  hier& (0.6)
             NAME       for  fun          come.3SG here
                 paula for fun, out of here comes
             --------------->+touches cloth section-->l.8
     paula                         &takes emma----->&
07           [öhm läi              ]
                 erm la-
             -------------------->
08   Paula:  [aber &ich WILL nich na]ch hau[se     ]
                 but I don't want to go home
                         &gets up------------------->
     jakob                         ------>
09   Jakob:                         [aus spaß] kommt hier
                                     for  fun      come.3SG here
                                         for fun out of here
                                         ------------------->
     paula                             ------------------->
10           LAser raus+ und hier& ER          +de.
             laser  out   and here  soil
                 comes laser, and here soil
             --------->+touches different section+
     paula   ------------------&halts---------->
11           (0.1)
     paula   ---->
12   Paula:  ok&a::y,
             ->&walks away
```

In sum, *aus Spiel*-turns transform the play in certain ways: First, they frame next moves in the play as requiring consent and, thus, being open for negotiation. Thereby, they open a separate track of proposing-accepting (the deontic aspect). At the same time, negotiating the scenario becomes detachable from the play activity in time (the planning aspect). In most of the cases shown above, *aus Spaß*-prefaced proposals were implementable in the next play moves. The only exception, and a rare case in the younger children's data, was the last case (Extract 6), where the proposal made no immediate embodied implementation possible, and verbal confirmation was sufficient as a response.

In the next section, we will see how *aus Spiel*-turns become more detached from the actual playing and are used for different interactional purposes by the older children. In contrast to the younger children, the older children use *aus Spiel* to

introduce more abstract play scenarios, which do not require an immediate embodied implementation. They use *aus Spiel* to upgrade their efforts to pursue an aligning response and, by that, to achieve cooperation (section 2.3.1). Furthermore, they deploy *aus Spiel* in second position (SPP) to counter interventions of co-players (section 2.3.2). Finally, *aus Spiel* is used to initiate an extended planning phase which lasts over a minute without ever being acted out (section 2.3.3). This raises questions about the scope of *aus Spiel*-turns and about the status of planning and narrating as a mode of playing in its own right.

2.3. Using *aus Spiel* to navigate joint play

2.3.1. Pursuing an aligning response to ensure cooperation

In the following extract, two 8-year-old twins, Mara (M) and Susan (S), pretend that they are in a witch kitchen. They have adopted witch identities und negotiate what magic abilities their characters have. In the immediately preceding context, M was using a large branch as a magic wand, which – as it turned out – was too unwieldy to hold in her hand the whole time. For that reason, M decides to 'only be able to do water' (line 1) in order to get rid of the branch/magic wand:

Extract 7: *ich konnte nur wasser* (Hexenküche 2; 2:45-3:04)

```
01  M    ich KONnte nur- (-) *ich KONnte lieber (-) nur #WASser
          machen ja,=
         yes I only was able to do water okay?
                              *picks up branch-->*
    Fig                                              #Fig.3
02       =weil das ist irgendwie doof wenn man* das die ganze zeit
          HALten muss.#=verSTEHst du?
         cause that's kind of stupid if you have to hold it all the time
         ------------------------------ -->*moves to kitchen-->*
    Fig                  #Fig.4
03       (1.0)
04  M    ich konnte        nur      WASser *aus spiel.=ja?
         I    can.1SG.PST   only.PART water   for play     yes.Q
         let's pretend I could only do water okay
         -------------------------------*builds branch into the
          kitchen-->>
05  S    du äh: konntest auch so (.) BLUBber blasen.#=okee?
         you uh you could also blow such bubbles okay
    Fig                                               #Fig.5a/b
06  M    ja wie CLEO:.
         yes like Cleo
```

M states what magic powers she has (line 1: *ich konnte lieber nur wasser*, 'I was only able to do water'). Three times she requests a confirmation from her sister (lines 1, 2 and 4). Initially she uses a declarative format and a tag (line 1) followed by an account and a more explicit invitation to align (line 2: *verstehst du*, 'you know'). After a pause of one second (line 3) and still no uptake from S, M produces a simplified reformulation of her initial proposal (*ich konnte nur WASser*, 'I'm only able to do water') adding *aus Spiel* and a tag (line 4). Only now does S take up M's proposal. She does not accept or reject it directly; instead, she introduces a new

element of M's magic powers: *du konntest auch so blubber blasen*, 'you could also blow such bubbles' supported by a gesture that shows how these bubbles are created (see fig. 5a). Thereby she implicitly accepts M's proposal (in particular by the use of *auch*, 'also'). M agrees by comparing her abilities with those of a fictional character, Cleo, from a TV series (line 6: *ja wie CLEO*, 'yes like Cleo').

Fig. 5a: S shows how bubbles are created

Aus Spiel is deployed here by M to upgrade her attempts to solicit an (accepting) uptake of her intervention from her sister. In contrast to the cases before, *aus Spiel* is added here incrementally in turn-final position together with a tag. Its use is similar to a tag and asks the co-player to confirm, which is what S finally does in line 5. Due to a lack of uptake, the initial proposal is transformed into a more egalitarian format to solicit acceptance and ensure cooperation.

At the same time, and while negotiating with her sister, M picks up the branch/ magic wand (line 1), carries it to the kitchen (line 2), and builds the branch into the kitchen (line 4) to get rid of it (see Fig. 3-5b). That means that during her verbal attempts to obtain agreement from her sister, M continuously realizes by embodied means what she verbally indicates as requiring approval. When S agrees in line 5, the branch is already part of the kitchen. This case shows particularly well how children balance deontic rights by using the *aus Spiel*-format. On the one hand, and in parallel with her verbal negotiations with her sister, M already gets rid of the branch, without an obvious orientation to her sister (see Fig. 5a). On the other hand, and although she has already accomplished her project of getting rid of the branch before her sister's acceptance, she pursues an accepting response by upgrading her attempts three times.

Fig 3: M picks up branch…

Fig. 4: …moves to kitchen and…

Fig. 5b: …builds branch into kitchen

In the next fragment, *aus Spiel* is used again to pursue a response. However, this time, it is additionally used by S to ensure a shared understanding (line 09).

Extract 8: *Ich konnte meine hand so lang machen* (Hexenküche 2; 00:48-1:09)

```
01  M   ich konnte meine hand SO lang machen,
        i could make my hand this long
02      (0.5)
03      bis ein MEter;
        to one three feet
04  S   du WUSstest_s noch gar nicht okee
        you didn't even know it yet, okay
05  M     WA[S denn?]
          what is it?
06  S   (-) [aber du] k- h° (-) hast jetzt erFUNden s-
        but you just figured it out
07      du wusstest es (.) jetzt.=okee
        you knew it now okay
08  M   ich kann ALle:s.
        I can do everything
09  S   aus spiel hast    du   mich     jetzt
        for play  have.2.SG  you  me.DAT    now.ADV
        [(-) (xxx)  aus versehen;]
             (verb)   by mistake
        let's pretend you (xxx) me now by mistake
10  M   [aber ich kann ALles.    ]
         but I can do everything
11      ich kann ALles.
        I can do everything
```

M states what magic abilities she has (lines 1/3: *ich konnte meine hand so lang machen, bis ein meter*, 'I could make my hand this long to three feet'). S accepts implicitly by proposing that M has not yet realized her abilities (line 4: *du WUSstest_s noch gar nicht okee?*, 'you didn't even know it yet okay') but is just beginning to be aware of them (lines 6/7: 'but you just figured it out, you knew it now'). M's uptake (line 5: repair; line 8: not fitting response) shows her lack of understanding. In response, S produces a declarative TCU prefaced by *aus Spiel* which proposes a possible next action by M (*aus spiel hast du mich jetzt XXX aus versehen*, 'let's pretend you have me XXX by mistake', line 09)[4]. In this way, S reduces the abstractness of her proposal from a more abstract scenario (building on the ignorance of M's knowledge concerning her magic abilities) to a possible next action (which is one possible effect of the proposed ignorance). Like in the case before, *aus Spiel* is used to pursue a response to the proposed play scenario. Again, there are several attempts (all with tags) by S to achieve uptake from M, changing the initial format (concerning the knowledge of M's character: *du WUSstest_s noch gar nicht,* 'you didn't even know it') to a simplified one (concerning a possible next action of M: '…you have me XXX by mistake'). This time, however, the *aus Spiel*-turn is additionally used to repair a lack of understanding in order to ensure an aligning response that – however – fails, as M still insists on 'being able to do everything' (lines 10/11).

As the extracts so far have shown, *aus Spiel*-turns are deployed to obtain alignment/acceptance of ideas from co-players, often in an insistent manner. In both cases, the children deployed different practices to achieve an uptake (attention getter, tags, reformulations, simplified repeats, accounts, repairs). In particular, they used *aus Spiel* to upgrade their pursuit of a response. In both cases, proposals prefaced by *aus Spiel* were not plainly and explicitly accepted, but lead to negotiations which resulted in modifications of the original proposal. So far, *aus Spiel*-turns have solely been used as initiatives (FPPs) to propose new events and conditions in the play world. In the next section, *aus Spiel*-turns are used to counter previous interventions from co-players.

2.3.2. Countering interventions by rendering possible play moves invalid

Aus Spiel-turns are not only used in first position to initiate a new play move or to introduce a new feature of the joint play world. They are also used in second position to counter interventions by co-players. Sacks (1992) has pointed out that a prominent feature of play/game is the division of actions in valid/possible and invalid/impossible. The former are permitted moves in the game, the latter are not, i.e. "you can't accomplish the action you undertake" (Sacks 1992, Vol. I:475). In the next two cases, *aus Spiel*-turns are used in responsive position to avoid certain play moves by rendering them invalid. In Extract 9, M counters (line 5) an imperative by S (lines 1-3):

---

[4]   The verb is not intelligible in the video, probably S is saying something like 'you touched/hit me by mistake'.

Extract 9: *die haben immer zusammen geritten* (Barbies 3; 18:40-18:55)

```
01   S    *<<figurenstimme> ich REIte auf dich.
             <<character voice> I will ride on you
         *removes her doll from a pram, puts it on a horse-->*
02   S    schieb mal wEIter das KLEIne baby an.>
          keep pushing the little baby>
03        #sonst wird_s noch TRAUrig.*
          or it will get sad>
     Fig  #Fig.6
04        (2.0)
05   M    !NEE!  aus +SPIEL (.) haben      DIE beiden immer-
            no.NEG for play           have.3.PL    they both      always.ADV
          no let's pretend the two have always
06        (0.7)
07        !DIE! °h haben      DIE  beiden immer      zusammen
          they       have.3.PL    they  both    always.ADV   together
          geRITten,
          ride.PTCP
          the two always rode together
```

```
((M adds further descriptions of the play world, which are all
ignored by S; after all, neither M is pushing the pram nor is this
explicitly noticed or sanctioned by S))
```

A rough play frame is established (going on a trip with several dolls/figurines). In line 1, S speaks as her doll (*Ich*, 'I'), and tells her horse (*dich*, 'you') that she will ride on it. Simultaneously, S removes her doll from a pram with a baby in it and puts her doll on a horse (see Fig. 6). With this, she also tells and shows M that *her* doll will now ride (and will not keep pushing the pram). Consequently, and still in a character voice, S lets M's doll know that she is now responsible for pushing the pram with the baby in it (line 2: 'keep pushing the little baby') adding an account (line 3: 'or it (the baby) will get sad'). M shifts footing (she uses her own voice) and rejects S's request (*nee*, 'no'), continuing her turn with an *aus Spiel*-TCU that introduces a condition in the play world according to which *both* dolls/children usually ride (lines 05/07: 'let's pretend the two always rode together'; on the relation of negation to turn continuation, see Ford, 2001). Instead of directly addressing S's prompt to push the pram, M introduces another feature of the play world, namely that the two dolls (the German *beide*, 'both' and *die*, 'they' are referring to the dolls) ride together. This implies that her doll cannot be responsible for pushing the pram. With her *aus Spiel*-turn, M is not initiating anything new but countering a previous request from S to do something now. At the same time, M's *aus Spiel*-turn shapes the play world in a broader sense, delimiting (im)possible future actions or events.

The comparison between S's direct request (in line 2) and M's *aus Spiel*-prefaced counter-proposal sheds light on the function of the *aus Spiel*-format. In contrast to direct instructions to do something in the play world (e.g., in an imperative format, line 2), *aus Spiel*-turns are used to propose events and conditions (in a declarative format) with a broader scope. In the case above, M uses the *aus Spiel*-turn to legitimize a counter-proposal in terms of the play world; she does not reject the requested action directly (e.g. 'I don't want to push the pram); instead she alters the framework of their joint play and – by that – also develops the play world. In updating the joint play world in this way, S's request has become contradictory and

'invalid' (i.e. if both dolls ride, it is not possible for one of them to push the pram at the same time.).

Fig. 6: S removes her doll from the pram and puts it on the horse

Consider the next case in which *aus Spiel* is also used in second position to counter a previous intervention by the co-player into the play world. Here, *aus Spiel* is used again in a response turn (lines 4/5), this time however to reject a co-player's claim (lines 1/2):

Extract 10: *Die pakete waren gar nicht so fern* (Eisenbahn 3; 19:54-20:08)

```
01  S    jetzt MACH doch ma:;=
         get on with it
02       *=ich will jetzt auch mal paKEte tra#gen [mara. ]*
         I also want to deliver parcels now mara
         *puts her train on the tracks--------------------*
   Fig                                             #Fig.7
03  M                                              [nee  su]san::.
                                                    no.NEG VOC
                                                    no susan
04       aus spiel waren      diese pakete  aus
         for play  be.3.PL.PST DEM   parcels from
         rüdesheim °hh gar   nicht so   FERN;
         name           PART  NEG  PART ADV
         for play the parcels from x-town wasn't that far
05       °h da musste man nur EIne stunde fahren.
         you only had to drive one hour
```

(short negotiation follows and S finally accepts M's rejection)

The sisters play that their toy trains deliver parcels. In the immediately preceding context, M was delivering parcels with her trains. The extract starts with S prompting her sister to speed up so that she can deliver the parcels now (lines 1/2). While claiming to take over the delivery, S puts her train on the tracks (see Fig. 7).
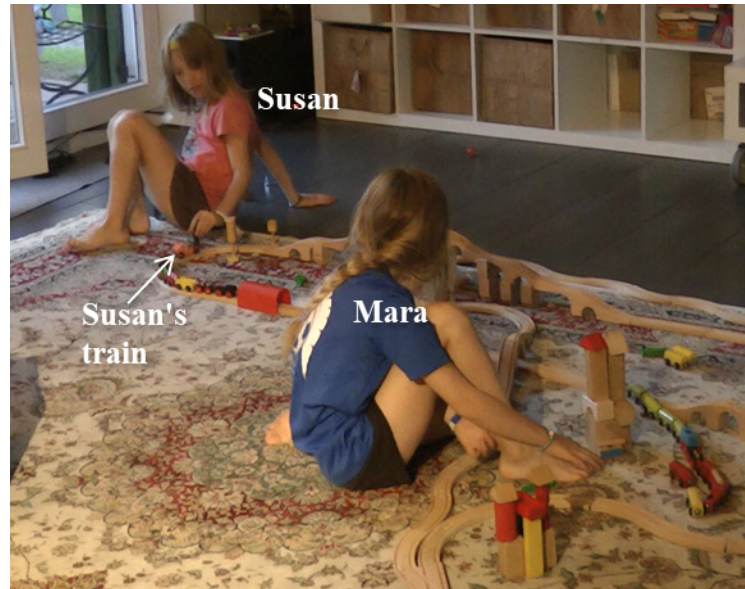

Fig. 7: S puts her train on the tracks

M frustrates S's wish to take over the delivery of the parcels (lines 3-5). As in Extract 9, by using *aus Spiel*, M does not simply reject, but introduces a new condition of the joint play world, namely the short delivery distance/time (line 4/5: 'the parcels from x-town wasn't that far…you only had to drive one hour'). In this way, M blocks S's attempt to take over the play activities. Again, the *aus Spiel*-proposal does not make particular follow-up actions relevant, but changes the play frame so that certain activities (whether past, present or future) are preferred over others. In this case, by determining the time frame of deliveries in their joint play world, M makes S's attempt 'invalid' in terms of the play world, as the parcels are already delivered.

In the extracts so far, the children used *aus Spiel*-turns to negotiate und manage their ongoing play activities. In the next and last extract, *aus Spiel* prefaces an extended planning phase for future play, including narrative elements. Since the planned scenario is never put into action, planning replaces acting out and moves the play towards telling a story.

2.3.3. Planning joint play

Our last extract is again from the witch kitchen episode (see extracts 7/8 above). An extended planning phase, which lasts over a minute (1:20), is initiated by M with *aus Spiel* (line 2) and is mainly carried out by her. M's extensive multi-unit turn (lines 1-27) is, during its production, partly accepted and partly contradicted by S. At the end of the fragment, S makes a proposal of her own (lines 28-31) that is rejected by M (lines 32/33). S's acquiescence finally leads to a compromise (line

33). The whole extract represents a negotiated planning of the conditions under which their future play could take place. At the end of the fragment (from line 34), the activity frame is changed (the children talk about animals that their imaginary family has, and start looking for them in the garden). The plans are never put into action.

   We join the activity when M – after a lapse of almost five seconds (line 1), during which both children follow their own trajectories (they both are engaged in tidying up 'the kitchen') – starts to reestablish a joint focus addressing her sister by name and making a proposal prefaced by *aus Spiel*, 'for play' (lines 2/4):

Extract 11: *Hier wär unser wohnzimmer* (Hexenküche 1; 5:46-7:06)

```
01      +(4.4)
   s    +bends down, handles a box--->Z.3
02  M   susan::[aus !SPIE::]L! (-)[wär   !HIE::R!  ] (.) unser
        VOC      for play            be.COND here.ADV       our.POSS
        susan let's pretend here were our
03  S          [WEISST du- ]        [ich+ war ECHT gut] f-
                you know             I was really good
        ------------------------->+ stands up, looks to M->Z.5
04  M   hier    wär    unser    WO:HNzimmer-
        here.ADV be.COND our.POSS  living room
        here were our living room
05  M   und !O:BEN! (.)* ähm ha- (-) ähm war unsere Küche,+
        and above        uh           uh was our kitchen
06  M   =aber hier war auch ne KÜche;
        but here was also a kitchen
07      also O::ben war unsere norMA:le küche
        so upstairs was our ordinary kitchen
08      und hier ist unsere HExenküche.=ja?
        and here is our witch kitchen okay?
09      (1.0)
10  S   nee (.) nee [o:-]
        no      no
11  M               [und] oben wohnen auch unsere BA::bys
                     and above live also our babies
12      von unser MUTter,
         of our mother
13      [aber] die ist ja jetzt ge[STO:Rben].
        but she has died now
14  S   [ja- ]                 *+[und was ] ma- +
         yes                       and what ma-
                                +points forward +
15  S   +des war ma mein ZIMmer das hier, =o[kee?    ]
          this was my room this one okay
        +indicates room with both arms-->+
16  M                                     [und heu-;]
                                           and today
        und heute war die MUTter+ und unser* (0.6) der (-) unser
        and today our mother was                       the       our
                                  *sits down-->Z.22
        sch (-) und unser+ schwester waren zum KI:no gegangen,
        sch-      and our sister   went to the movies
17  M   °hh (grad)-
            just
```

```
18   M    NEIN;
          no
19   M    ähm (-) die geht fast immer WEG,
          uhm       she almost always goes away
20   M    und (-) ähm (0.4) und die (.) ähm: (.) [ANdere  ] geht
          and     uhm          and the     uhm          other one goes
21   S                                            [DAS war-]
                                                   this was
          fast immer (1.4) zum: ähm:- (1.3)
          almost always        to    uhm
22   M    also    (0.4) die (-) hat ja n_PRINZ* oder
          so            she      has a prince
23   M    die kimberly.
          that kimberly
24   S    ja ja ä:[hm ]-
          yes yes uhm
25   M            [ä:h] (.) die geht fast immer zum PRINZ,
                   uhm she almost always go to the prince
26   M    und die andere geht fast immer so: spaZIEren und so
          and  the other one almost always goes for a walk and so on
27   M    die will nich so hier bl[eiben.]
          she doesn't want to stay here
28   S                            +[ähm  ](.) guck mal HI:ER,
                                     uhm         take a look here
                                   +shows space with both arm->Z.30
29        (0.5) und HIER?#
                 and here
     Fig                  #Fig. 8
30        des war mein ZIMmer,+
          this was my room
31   S    und du hast ähm immer dein zimmer und mein zimmer
          and you have always your room and my room
          AUFge[räumt.okee?]
          tidied up okay
32   M         [ne:in ich ] mag auch hier ich mag auch hier
                no I also would like to have here     I also would like to have here
          [ein ZIMmer ha:ben; ]
           a room
33   S    [okee wir hatten ähm] BEIde ei ein [ZIMmer zusammen;  ]
           okay we had           uhm both a a room together
34   M                                        [wir hatten auch ne]
          (-) ente und ne EUle,
              we had also a duck and an owl
35   M    ich weiß nur ni- nicht mehr wo diese eule IST,
          I just don't know where that owl is
36        =und wie hatten noch ne KATze;*
           and we also had a cat
                                          *runs off-->>
```

After a short phase of competing for the floor, M prevails and formulates her proposal in the clear (line 4). Getting the turn here also means to be in the position of 'going first' after a short phase of independently conducted play activities, and thereby 'setting the agenda' for what may follow. As the continuation of the fragment shows, S is put in a position to relate to M's proposals/plans (only in line 28 she is able to get more active again and make a proposal of her own).

M's proposal concerns relevant features of the future play: the distribution of rooms (lines 4-8), relevant persons/figures (lines 11-13) and events (lines 16-27) in the joint play world. In the third part of her expanded proposal, M invents current events of the play world (Z16: *today the mother and our sisters were gone to the movies*) that get more and more typified and generalized (especially through the frequent use of the temporal adverb *immer*/'always' in lines 19, 21, 25 and 26). In contrast to the first two parts, her proposal now has clear narrative elements (events, people's actions, motives as for example in line 27: *die will nich so hier bleiben*, 'she doesn't want to stay here'). This makes M's imaginary development of the play world more complex (than for instance the more descriptive proposals of rooms, persons and their whereabouts in the beginning). One indicator for increasing complexity are the frequent self-repairs, filled pauses/hesitation markers, cut-offs, rephrasings and an insertion sequence (lines 22-24: in which a piece of the play world's common ground is clarified),[5] which permeate her descriptions in this phase. With the beginning of her narrative, M also sits down on a chair (from line 16: *und unser schwester*, 'and our sister'). Despite these difficulties in articulating her (narrative) proposal, M holds and defends (e.g. in line 21) the turn until this part of her proposal has come to a possible completion in line 27 (falling intonation on *bleiben.*, 'stay'*;* pragmatically/semantically complete: all introduced persons are now equipped with typical actions/characteristics).

Fig. 8: S indicates a specific area of the 'witch kitchen'

---

[5] It is not clear from the data where this piece of common ground comes from resp. whether M introduces it here as a new element but treat it as common ground by marking it as known by the particle *ja*/'yes'.

When S takes the turn, her response does not specifically address the immediately preceding narrative part of M's proposal (e.g. by confirming, rejecting or modifying it). Instead, S takes up the earlier parts of M's proposal in which M defined rooms. S adds a separate proposal, namely who of them occupies which room and who has the duty to keep it clean (lines 30/31: *des war mein ZIMmer, und du hast (0.6) immer (0.7) dein zimmer und mein zimmer AUFgeräumt.=okee?*, 'this was my room and you have always tidied up your room and my room, okay?'). After M strongly disagrees (line 32), S proposes a compromise (line 33) that is not taken up. Instead, M abruptly changes both the topic and the kind of activity they were engaged in previously by introducing pets that the imaginary family has (line 34) and starts looking for them in the garden (line 36). When M returns from her search, the previous discussion of the distribution/possession of rooms is not taken up again or enacted in the whole episode of the remaining play.

In sum, in this fragment, one of the older children uses the *aus Spiel*-format to initiate a kind of narrative planning. As in the extracts before, scenarios of the joint play world are realized mainly as declaratives, but this time by frequent use of past/conditional (indicating that they are talking about a fictitious world). In contrast to the previous cases, especially from the younger children, where acting out proposals/scenarios was predominant, the older children in this fragment completely separate planning from acting out (the latter even disappears entirely in this case). While producing her description, M repeatedly seeks for confirmation/ acceptance from her sister, which is recognizable from the frequent use of tags. This indicates the proposal-like status of her whole turn.

M designs her proposal as a multi-unit turn using practices to maintain the floor (e.g. rush throughs; competitive turn taking: overlap/ interruptions; hesitation markers; talking louder; recycling of turn beginnings; *and*-conjunctions; being non-responsive to interventions of S) until she has created a (in her view) sufficient/complete picture of their future play world. The *aus Spiel*-preface seems to comprise M's entire multi-unit turn. Only in the end, when she has arrived at a possible completion of her vision of the play world, does she pay attention to S's suggestions. In this case, then, the scope of the *aus Spiel*-format seems very broad and includes not only an extended complex scenario but also embedded negotiation and confirmation sequences.

Interestingly, the planned scenario is never played out or renegotiated. Planning and creating play worlds apparently can be an end in itself for the children (at least for M in this case). This becomes especially obvious when M sits down and transforms her descriptions into a narrative (starting with the temporal adverb *heute*, 'today' in line 16; introducing characters and their typical behavior). In this phase, she changes also the kind of her involvement: In the beginning of the fragment, she moves through the space, which she simultaneously verbally and gesturally constructs; in the end, she stops moving and starts to create a story sitting down. Telling a story instead of enacting a story (together) is not only detached from physical playing (like making proposals, plans etc.) but is an activity with the potential to replace physically enacting a story altogether. The rights and duties of recipients also shift: while one partner tells a story, co-players are expected to become (more or less active) listeners (such as S in this case).

3. Conclusion

From an interaction theoretical point of view, play or games are particular realms of reality that are constructed and maintained in and through interaction (Goffman 1973). Playing means establishing and maintaining a *frame with specific properties*. In the case of pretend play, the children invented characters (such as "a giant"), places (such as "a lake"), non-consequential actions (an "attack" of "a giant") as well as activity types (such as "going on a trip with horses"), circumstances and conditions ('there is our living room'; 'our mother is dead'). What children 'get done' when they are playing is, thus, not only the joint accomplishment of a practical task (such as building a tree house together or planning a joint trip), but an *in situ* joint creation of an invented world by transforming matters of the real world into matters of a fictional world (Sidnell 2011). Play frames are created through 'keying' (Goffman 1977): Participants display to each other that their actions are to be understood as moves in an invented play world. This can be done more or less explicitly (Sawyer 1997, 2003), for example, by using a modulated 'character-voice', by formulating an 'impossible' scenario (*a giant is coming*) or by explicitly designating the frame (*aus Spaß/Spiel*, 'for fun'). Play frames are always embedded in the real world. They are "anchored" in the current stream of events (Goffman 1977), for example, by the fact that "the giant" is played by a real person (Jakob), that the dolls can only "feel" and "express" pain by being animated by a real person (Paula) or that the "rooms" inhabited by the "witches" are places in real space (in a courtyard).

Children orient to their activities as *transformations*. This becomes obvious when children negotiate matters which are not usually open for negotiation. In one instance in our data an eight-year-old girl produced the following utterance:

```
01  S   ich hab mich nicht SCHLIMM verletzt; nur ein BISschen okee
        mara?
```
I didn't hurt badly, just a little bit okay Mara

The severity of an injury is not usually up for discussion. In this case, however, the epistemic rights associated with a person's knowledge of herself are treated as detached from that person. It is 'passed on' to the character and has thus become a feature of the joint play world. Consequently, it is presented as negotiable, also because both know that there is no real injury.

This shows that children's transformations in the joint play are *performative acts* that create an unprecedented world and not just name or describe an existing world. Searle (1976:13) has called those acts *declaratives* "(…) where one brings a state of affairs into existence by declaring it to exist, cases where, so to speak, 'saying makes it so". Declaratives/Performatives in this sense have been interpreted to mean that they usually require an institution and a certain power position of the speaker to be effective (Searle 1989). In children's pretend play, it is the mutual agreement of a "willing suspension of disbelief" (Coleridge 1817) that gives the performatives their reality-constituting power.[6] Those 'worlds' cannot be wrong or right; rather

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[6]   Searle (1989:549) makes a similar observation: "Fairy stories, by the way, are full of declarations performed by witches, wizards, magicians, etc. We ordinary humans do not have the ability to perform supernatural declarations, but we do have a quasi-magical power nonetheless of

they are invitations how to see the world (Sidnell 2011:151 et seq.). To agree to (temporarily) 'see' a real person as 'a giant' or to frame a current situation as 'a trip on horseback' means accepting certain consequences that are relevant for future activities. That also means to establish 'facts' which are valid for some time primarily in the play world but also affecting the real world especially in terms of possibilities to participate in the play (Cromdal 2001; Cobb-Moore/Danby/Farrell 2010).

This doubling of frames in and through play makes play frames prone to be *regulated from 'the outside'*. Instead of conducting a next play move, future actions in the play can be announced or proposed before they are enacted. In addition, when children are engaged in joint pretend play, they are always involved in a double sense: as players and as characters. When they act as characters, they can conduct moves 'in the play' (e.g. attacking somebody as a giant); when they act as players, they can verbally refer to their play and try to shape it from 'the outside' (e.g. announcing/proposing: 'a giant is coming'). In contrast to acting 'in the play', shaping the play from 'the outside' provides for sequences in which both the deontic rights to decide the course of the play can be managed and the cognitive efforts to plan the game can be compensated. Intervening 'into the play' from 'the outside', then, creates a *separate 'track' for negotiation (deontic rights) and (cognitive) planning* of the play. This involves the use of language as a means to regulate play moves. As we saw in section 2.1, this ability to separate playing from its verbal organization can be present to different degrees at different points in development.

In terms of action, *aus Spiel*-turns in our data can be seen as a kind of proposal (Sidnell/Stivers 2016), as they commit the speaker to the proposed development of the play world (Houtkoop 1987) and depend on acceptance from the recipient (Couper-Kuhlen 2014). The proposal can concern an idea for a here-and-now next move in the play, in which case the co-player is recruited to collaborate in enacting a new idea (Kendrick/Drew 2016, Rossi/Floyd/Enfield 2020). In other cases, the proposal can be to modify or narratively build a pretend play world, without this proposal making any particular next action relevant 'now'. It is this functional versatility of *aus Spiel*-turns, which can 'direct' next moves (Goodwin, 2006, Goodwin/Cekaite 2013) or build common ground required for future action that links them to the theme of this special issue: instructions. For us, the upshot of our analyses is that folk terms such as 'proposal' or 'instruction' only selectively shed light on aspects of situated conduct. What impresses us about *aus Spiel*-turns is that for a period of four to five years in children's lives, they work as an interactional niche for the changing requirements of free play, from recruiting co-players to enact ideas here and now, via the modification and negotiation of the direction of play, to narrative world-building as a form of play in its own right.

Acknowledgments

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bringing about changes in the world through our utterances; and we are given this power by a kind of human agreement."

4. References

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