Collaborative Decision-Making in Cheerleading Stunt Practice

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Abstract
This paper explores collaborative decision-making in cheerleading stunt practice, with a focus on how a coach and an athlete jointly determine the next skills to practice and how to execute them. Using conversation analysis (CA), the study examines sequences of decision-making in a cheerleading session, where both verbal and non-verbal strategies play key roles. The analysis revealed a structured process including proposal, evaluation, negotiation, and commitment to action. The analysis highlights how the coach encourages the athlete's participation in decision-making. The findings offer insights into how collaborative decision-making strategies in physical education can be applied to language teaching, particularly in promoting student engagement and autonomy. While the small sample size limits generalizability, the research provides valuable strategies for enhancing collaborative dynamics in both sports and language educational contexts.

Introduction

In cheerleading practice, as in language practice, teachers and students need to continually make decisions regarding what will be worked on next in order to develop the students' skills. In cheerleading, a stunt session is a lesson in which a coach trains a student-athlete on new physical skills. This paper focuses on decision-making sequences in which a coach and a student determine what skill to practice next and how to carry it out. A decision-making sequence starts when a participant initiates an invitation for decision making (e.g., "what's next," "what's first") and ends with the participants moving on to actually carrying out the target skill. This type of sequence usually comes after some evaluation of the student's performance. While much conversation analysis (CA) research has focused on decision-making in healthcare, business, and legal settings, to my knowledge, no previous study has analyzed decision-making in physical education practice or cheerleading in particular. This paper aims to fill this gap. It is hoped that the findings from this paper will inform language teaching with strategies for encouraging collaborative decision-making in learning environments.

I will begin with a review of previous research on the practices and resources used in shared decision-making in social interaction, especially in multi-party conversations and in counseling services. Since assessment and perspective-display are an important part of shared decision-making in social interaction, I will also review research on this topic. Following this literature review, I will describe this study's methodology and pose a research question. The data analysis will focus on the interactional practices and resources in cheerleading stunt interactions, and the discussion will touch on implications for language teaching.

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Shared Decision-Making in Social Interaction

Shared decision-making in social interaction can be understood through a synthesis of perspectives presented by Mendes de Oliveira and Stevanovic (2024). Drawing on Huisman (2001, as cited in Mendes de Oliveira & Stevanovic, 2024, p. 5), joint decision-making is described as 'a collaborative effort to establish a commitment to future action. Maynard (1984, as cited in Mendes de Oliveira & Stevanovic, 2024, p. 5) emphasizes the role of proposals and the recipients' acceptance, while Houtkoop-Steenstra (1987, as cited in Mendes de Oliveira & Stevanovic, 2024, p. 5) outlines a three-part structure—proposal, acceptance, and acknowledgment—for decisions involving immediate actions. For more complex decisions with long-term implications, a five-part structure may occur: proposal, acceptance, request for confirmation, confirmation, and acknowledgment.

Stevanovic (2012, as cited in Magnusson, 2021, p. 34) identifies three key components of decision-making: access, agreement, and commitment. Access ensures mutual understanding of the proposal, agreement confirms alignment among participants, and commitment solidifies the decision as binding. Leaders also play a crucial role by facilitating collaboration, encouraging participation, and managing idea ownership (Stevanovic et al., 2020, as cited in Mendes de Oliveira & Stevanovic, 2024, p. 27).

Mendes de Oliveira and Stevanovic (2024) integrate these frameworks into conversation-analytic research, emphasizing how decision-making processes unfold in real-time social interactions. They highlight challenges and paradoxes, particularly in intercultural and multiparty contexts, where achieving collaborative decisions requires balancing inclusivity with efficiency.

Collaborative Decision-Making Practices

Collaborative Decision-Making in Multiparty Conversations

In multiparty interactions, effective leaders play a crucial role in facilitating collaborative decision-making. They can encourage the entire group to contribute proposals, thereby democratizing the process (Mendes de Oliveira & Stevanovic, 2024, p. 6). Techniques such as brainstorming and voting are often employed to manage the ownership of ideas among group members. Additionally, leaders typically initiate the closing of the decision-making sequence, ensuring that all voices are heard and considered before a final decision is made.

In one multi-party setting, collaborative writing, Magnusson (2021) identifies a structured process for joint decision-making that includes proposals, access, agreement, and commitment. These stages are critical for transforming individual suggestions into collectively endorsed actions. A proposal serves as the initiating act in joint decision-making, where one participant invites others to consider and deliberate on a potential course of action. This step establishes shared responsibility: "By proposing a future shared action, the proposer imputes a shared responsibility for a decision" (Stevanovic, 2012, as cited in Magnusson, 2021, p. 33).

Access follows as the second stage, requiring all participants to demonstrate understanding of and engagement with the proposal. Magnusson (2021) explains that this stage ensures participants "establish access to the subject matter of the proposal" (p. 34), allowing them to meaningfully contribute to the decision-making process. Access functions as a precondition for

the subsequent stage, agreement, which involves participants expressing their endorsement of the proposal. Agreement transforms the decision from a proposal to a shared endeavor: "The participants must express agreement by evaluating the subject matter of the proposal" (Stevanovic, 2012, as cited in Magnusson, 2021, p. 34). This stage often includes clarifications, modifications, or extended sequences, as described by Schegloff (2007, as cited in Magnusson, 2021), to achieve genuine consensus.

Finally, commitment represents the point at which participants demonstrate their dedication to carrying out the proposed action. Stevanovic (2012, as cited in Magnusson, 2021, p. 34) highlights that participants must demonstrate commitment to the proposed future action, which may involve explicit steps such as documenting the agreed-upon plan. Magnusson (2021) highlights that the model concludes with commitment rather than execution, as joint decision-making focuses on future-oriented proposals.

Through these stages, Magnusson (2021) emphasizes the importance of shared actions and mutual recognition in achieving joint decisions. This structured process provides valuable insights into how decisions are negotiated and finalized, fostering collective responsibility and improving outcomes in instructional and organizational environments.

Collaborative Decision-Making in Counseling Settings

Since counseling involves a professional working with a client, at the start of the decision-making process, a challenge is to identify what the client or student needs. Weiste et al. (2022) showed the importance of goal setting in mental health rehabilitation, particularly within Clubhouse Communities. The study reveals that clients may not initially know what decisions or goals are appropriate for their recovery. This lack of initial clarity is addressed through a collaborative process where counselors guide clients using various practices.

Clients' *initial uncertainty* is a common phenomenon. The authors note that "clients' wishes rarely translate straightforwardly into joint, written goals" and that "they may not know what could be considered an appropriate goal in a given context" (Weiste et al., 2022, p. 411). This uncertainty highlights the need for counselors to facilitate the goal-setting process by helping clients identify and articulate their goals. Counselors' practices to guide clients include:

- *Proposing goals*: Counselors initiate the goal-setting process by making proposals. These proposals are designed to be inclusive and open-ended, allowing clients to engage with and modify them. Counselors may use conditional questions to suggest potential goals, such as "Should we put that the main goal is recovery, and I think the regular participation at the Club would also be a goal" (Weiste et al., 2022, p. 414).
- *Highlighting competence and interest*: Counselors provide positive evaluations of the client's competence or interests to justify why a particular goal is suitable. A counselor might say, "You can cook very well. Everybody always compliments your cooking" to highlight competence, or "As you've been so extremely interested in those Transitional Employment places and this work at [the name of the place]" to highlight interest (Weiste et al., 2022, p. 414).

Counselors can use these practices to facilitate a more collaborative and effective goal-setting process, ensuring that clients feel involved and capable in their rehabilitation journey.

To guide clients in goal setting, Toerien et al. (2013) discussed methods such as 'recommending' and 'option-listing' for initiating decision-making in neurology consultations, along with response types such as full commitment and non-committal responses.

- *Recommending*: The clinician makes a proposal for a specific course of action. For example, "My suggestion would be that we stop the Keppra" (Toerien et al., 2013, p. 876). The clinician takes a more authoritative role by suggesting what they, as the expert, believe is the best course of action. Recommendations are often accompanied by justifications, such as "The fact that the Keppra seems to have worked was a coincidence" (Toerien et al., 2013, p. 876).
- *Option-listing*: The clinician presents multiple possible courses of action for the patient to choose from. For example, "Option one is: we leave things as they are and I'll just see you again in case of changes," "Option two: we try to change your medication a bit," and "Option three: we try to get to the bottom of it and see whether there are any other treatment options" (Toerien et al., 2013, p. 879).

By using these methods, clinicians can help patients feel more engaged in the decision-making process, offering a structured way to navigate options and making the process more collaborative.

Land et al. (2017) provided further insights into patterns and methods that either encourage or constrain shared decision-making in healthcare. The following actions are part of this process:

- *Broaching decision making*: In this initial step, healthcare providers "make an announcement to indicate an approaching commitment point" (Land et al., 2017, p. 1230).
- *Putting forward a course of action*: Following the first step, healthcare providers "put forward a course of action, often accompanied by accounting for the proposed action" (Land et al., 2017, p. 1230).
- *Committing or not*: Once a proposal is on the table, patients may produce a commitment to the proposed course of action, which moves the consultation to the next stage. A patient may respond with agreement, such as "Yeah", "Okay" or "So I'll go for the therapy" to show a clear acceptance of the proposed action (Toerien et al., 2013, p. 881).

Healthcare providers may employ the following methods to encourage clients' participation in shared decision-making:

- *Eliciting perspectives*: Encouraging patients to share their views about the proposed course of actions before decisions (Land et al., 2017, p. 1232).
- *Encouraging agreement*: Using practices such as long turns, bright-side formulations, and logical inferences to foster agreement (Land et al., 2017, p. 1232).

    - Long turns involve detailed explanations that minimize opportunities for disagreement as the turns unfold. They are usually projected with prefacing or expressions that need unpacking (Land et al., 2017, p. 1232).
    - Bright-side formulations involve focusing on positive aspects to encourage agreement, such as positive evaluations (Land et al., 2017, p. 1232).
- *Addressing resistance*: Producing constructive responses to resistance to help maintain engagement (Land et al., 2017, p. 1232). A patient's responses with minimal acknowledgments or expressions of uncertainty such as "mhm" or "I don't know, I'm just scared of," indicating hesitation or lack of full agreement, often lead the clinician to elaborate or adjust their recommendation (Toerien et al., 2013, p. 881).

Together with the above interactional practices, participants in collaborative decision-making might also use specific linguistic resources, authority, interactional cues, and non-verbal resources. These will be reviewed in the next section.

Resources Used in Collaborative Decision-Making

Linguistic Resources

Stevanovic (2013) discussed the strategy of using "thinking" as a method in joint decision-making. This approach is especially useful in collaborative settings like classrooms or coaching sessions, where the goal is to engage participants without imposing decisions on them.

- *Proposing using thinking as a strategy*: This strategy involves presenting a proposal as a thought rather than a direct suggestion. By doing so, it reduces the pressure on recipients to accept the proposal immediately and encourages their participation in the decision-making process. According to Stevanovic (2013), "the practice of constructing a proposal as a thought is an interactional device by which participants can mitigate precisely the type of imposition associated with proposals and the initiation of joint decision-making." (p. 538). For instance, a participant might say, "I was thinking that what if you would play the violin here," which frames the idea as a thought rather than a command (Stevanovic, 2013, p. 522). Another example is, "I was thinking that I would do it just in this way," which allows the recipient to consider the proposal without feeling pressured (Stevanovic, 2013, p. 522).
- *Asking conditionals*: This method involves framing proposals as questions with conditional structures to invite joint decision-making. For example, asking "What if we would first sing that first hymn?" presents the proposal as contingent on the recipient's approval, encouraging their input (Stevanovic, 2013, p. 525).
- *Stating conditionals*: This technique presents proposals as statements with unreal conditionals about future actions, implying a plan without seeking immediate agreement. An example is, "I would continue with them let's say with the history of the Hymnal for two hours," which suggests a course of action without demanding an immediate response (Stevanovic, 2013, p. 534).

Authority

Ripatti-Torniainen and Stevanovic (2023) examined the negotiation of authority within university teaching development workshops, identifying specific practices and language forms used in these negotiations. The study differentiated between epistemic authority, which is based on expertise in a field, and deontic authority, which is the power to determine actions. Participants invoked both forms of authority depending on the context in joint decision-making. For example, in one group, deontic authority was established through pedagogical standards. Participants also used their pedagogical expertise to unify the discourse.

- *Formulating proposals*: Participants used specific formulations to convey understanding and refine proposals. For instance, a 'so-initiated formulation was employed to build on the initial proposal (Ripatti-Torniainen & Stevanovic, 2023). Interactional cues also played a crucial role in negotiating proposals.
- *Silence*: Silence can play a significant role in the negotiation of authority. Marking moments of hesitation or contemplation provides space for participants to reflect on proposals or gather their thoughts before responding. In one example, a participant elaborated on her proposal after a silence and a confirmation token from another participant (Ripatti-Torniainen & Stevanovic, 2023). The silence allows the group to process the information and can indicate agreement or the need for further discussion.
- *Laughter*: Laughter can mark the negotiation as delicate, signaling the sensitivity of the discussion and the collaborative effort to maintain a respectful and supportive environment (Ripatti-Torniainen & Stevanovic, 2023).

Multimodal Action Packages

Stevanovic (2021) identified multimodal action packages as crucial for joint decision-making, which integrated verbal and non-verbal behaviors to create a coordinated and mutually understood process.

- *Gaze*: Gaze direction can indicate attentiveness, agreement, or the need for clarification, thus playing a critical role in coordinating joint decisions (Stevanovic, 2021).
- Nodding: Nodding is often used by participants to affirm their acceptance of a proposal or to encourage the speaker to continue (Stevanovic, 2021).
- *Body orientation*: Leaning forward or turning towards a speaker generally signifies interest and agreement, while turning away may indicate disagreement or disengagement (Stevanovic, 2021).
- *Hand and arm gestures*: Hand and arm gestures are utilized to emphasize points or to illustrate concepts during discussions (Stevanovic, 2021).

The study also emphasized the role of non-verbal cues in reinforcing verbal proposals. Synchronous body movements, such as nodding and aligning body orientation, played a crucial role in indicating agreement and facilitating joint decision-making (Stevanovic, 2021).

- *Role of synchronous body movements*: Agreement and commitment to the decision are signaled by synchronous movements, such as simultaneous nodding or aligning body orientation (Stevanovic, 2021).
- *Coordinated actions*: The timing of gestures and body movements in relation to speech is critical for the smooth progression of joint decision-making (Stevanovic, 2021).

In addition to the above practices and resources, an important part of the process of collaborative decision-making involves assessments and perspective-displays. In the next section, I will review research on these phenomena to shed light on the data analysis below.

Assessment and Perspective-Display Sequences in Conversations

Maynard (1989) discussed the method of first assessment, which is crucial for understanding how decisions are introduced and negotiated in conversation. This method is particularly relevant in coaching contexts, where initial assessments can set the stage for collaborative decision-making.

Maynard explained that the first assessment provides an initial viewpoint or opinion that others can either align with or contest. For example, a participant might start with, "I think the project is going well," prompting others to share their perspectives (Maynard, 1989, p. 92).

First assessments play a vital role in directing the focus of the conversation. By offering an initial comment or evaluation, the speaker encourages others to participate by responding, agreeing, disagreeing, or elaborating. These early evaluations help create a foundation for either agreement or further negotiation. The initial stance taken in a first assessment often serves as a reference point for subsequent contributions, helping participants build a shared understanding and demonstrating the importance of assessments in collaborative decision-making (Maynard, 1989).

Research Question

Informed by the above literature and given the gap in current research, in this paper, I aim to answer this question: How do a cheerleading coach and a student negotiate decision-making responsibilities in a stunt session?

Methodology

Context

The study was conducted in a cheerleading gym located in Honolulu, Hawaii. This gym is typical of many cheerleading facilities, featuring a foyer at the entrance that leads into the main practice area. The main room has high ceilings and is equipped with a soft carpeted foam mat with springboards underneath, providing a safe surface for stunting and tumbling. One wall is entirely covered with mirrors, allowing athletes to observe their movements and techniques. Fans are positioned in corners to ensure adequate ventilation. Unlike conventional workout gyms, this cheerleading gym has minimal machinery or equipment, focusing instead on open space for cheerleading activities.

Cheerleading is a team sport typically involving around 16 participants. However, not all aspects of cheerleading require the entire team to practice simultaneously. The sport includes various components such as tumbling (flipping and twisting the body), jumping (executing shapes

mid-air), dancing (moving through multiple body positions and formations), and stunting (lifting and holding individuals in the air). A typical cheerleading team practice involves all members working together, while specialized sessions focus on individual skills or small group interactions.

A stunt session, which is the focus of this study, involves a group of 2-4 people working on stunting techniques. These sessions can occur between friends, teammates, or even cheerleaders from different regions. It is common for athletes from different countries to meet and practice stunting together for fun. The coach observed in this study has in his experience identified four types of participation frameworks in stunt practice sessions:

Type 1: An experienced participant paired with a less experienced participant, where the experienced participant makes almost all of the decisions.

Type 2: An experienced participant paired with a less experienced participant, where the experienced participant promotes joint decision-making.

Type 3: All participants having equal levels of experience, necessitating joint decision-making.

Type 4: Participants having differentiated experiences in different areas, with each acting as an experienced participant for specific skills in joint decision-making.

These are the coach's own categorizations, not commonly recognized labels of cheerleading interactions. Also, the types are not listed in any particular order; each session with each participant could be done depending on the participants' needs.

These participation frameworks bear consequences to the process and outcomes of the stunt practice. If students are in a Type 1 session with someone who is actually not capable or qualified and this 'experienced participant' asks the 'less experienced participant' to do something they are not ready for, or in the wrong way, then there can be dangerous consequences such as injury or death. This then creates an importance for collaborative decision-making in cheerleading stunt practices.

Participants

The participants in the recorded stunt session were KJ (the coach and author of this paper) and AW (the athlete).

At the time of data collection, KJ had been involved in cheerleading for 14 years, fulfilling roles as an athlete, coach, judge, event worker, and paid professional. He had competed and won at various levels, including state club, national club, national college, national university, and international competitions. He had 12 years of stunt coaching experience and had participated in each participant role in all four types of stunt interaction listed above. His coaching strategy aimed to be Type 2 from the beginning of cheerleading stunt interactions. He believed that stunt sessions Type 1 can be boring and potentially dangerous for some pairs, and may even limit growth in skill areas, as the experienced participant often makes most of the decisions and performs much of the work, leaving gaps in the less experienced participant's understanding and performance. Therefore, he recommended a coaching style that fosters joint decision-making as soon as it is safe to do so (Type 2). In addition to teaching stunt skills, he also aimed to use interaction in stunts to support the safety of the student should they ever stunt with someone else.

At the time of data collection, AW had been involved in cheerleading for 10 years, competing at state and national high school levels. She was transitioning to college-level

cheerleading, where partner stunts (one person holding another) are highly popular and eagerly pursued. Although experienced in cheerleading, she was relatively new to this specific stunting style. She began training with KJ three months before data collection and progressed from the expert-novice asymmetry to a more collaborative decision-making dynamic. KJ's goal was to prepare her to confidently engage in sessions with other athletes at college, aiming for stunt sessions of Types 3 or 4 with these other athletes.

Data Collection

Data was collected during a regular stunt session at the cheerleading gym. A camera and microphone were positioned to the side of the session on a small rise, far enough away to remain unobtrusive and safe. The stunt sessions usually last approximately 45 minutes, However, with the initial setting up and conclusion, there are about 39 minutes of usable data. Four excerpts, each around one minute long, were selected for detailed analysis because they contained decision-making sequences. Permission to video-record and to share the videos in publications was obtained from the athlete.

Analytical Approach

This paper used Conversation Analysis (CA), a microanalytic method for studying how people talk and understand each other in everyday conversations. It looks at how conversations are structured, including how people take turns talking, managing topics, achieving actions in talk, and so on. CA uses transcribed video and audio data to see how people use both words and body language at the micro level to communicate effectively (Sidnell, 2010).

Analysis

In this analysis, I will show that the collaborative decision-making process in cheerleading stunt practice included stages such as pre-invitation, invitation, proposal, evaluation, agreement, negotiation, and commitment to action. Strategies used included encouraging proposals, proposing using thinking, using embodied actions, addressing resistance, and option-listing. I showed that the coach (KJ) used strategies such as option-listing, encouraging proposals, using embodied actions, and addressing resistance, focusing on invitation, evaluation, and negotiation stages. The athlete (AW) used non-committal responses, agreement, and proposing using thinking, focusing on proposal, negotiation, and commitment to action stages. (I did not observe strategies such as democratizing techniques and recommending in my data.)

Excerpt 1: Toe Pitch (@11:32) [link to video]

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1 KJ: ↑that's ↓good. cause there was bits relaxed but still too tight,
2     (1.0)
3 KJ: moving a little.
4     (7.0) ((KJ finishes drinking and moves into the stunting area))
5 AW: 'kay what's ne:xt.
6     (2.0)
7 KJ: hhhhh.((sigh))
8     (2.0) ((AW moves into the stunting area))
9 KJ: probably you answering that question yourself?
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10 AW: hih hah HAH h.
11 (.)
12 AW: [that]'s ↑why i <u>asked</u> it to you.
13 KJ: [yi just-]
14 KJ: tried to get it- [hh.] ((nods))
15 AW: [yea:h.]
16 (6.0)((KJ and AW gaze at each other while rotating their heads))
17 AW: ((points to KJ with two index fingers)) you've got <u>th</u>is one.
18 KJ: if you've DONE(0.2) your regular basics.
19 ((hands moving up and down))
20 and then you['ve done your <u>t</u>icks.]
21 AW: [so start spinning.]
22 KJ: start spinning. ((extends open palm in downward motion toward AW))
23 AW: can we do: <u>hands</u> full around first?
24 KJ: hands full around f[irst]?
25 AW: [yeah.]
26 KJ: no <u>ha</u>lves we're going straight for the full?
27 AW: na:h i don't like halves, hh.
28 (1.0)
29 KJ: hh <↑not many people ↓<u>DO</u>> (.) and it's usually
30 because if their body (0.2)
31 ↓doesn't work a lot. >but if ↑you're< <u>ve</u>ry good at <u>hal</u>ves
32 AW: okay:,
33 KJ: then you can become >very good at fulls.<
34 AW: i guess [i'll do halves, we'll do halves first.]
35 KJ: [but we can start hands full >°if you like.°<]
36 AW: this one? ((moves hands vertically up))
37 (.)
38 KJ: that one?
39 AW: and then? ((spins hands)) right?
40 KJ: >it just depends.< we could do:
41 do you like the half, with (0.2) from ha:nds?((spins hands))
42 AW: yeah.
43 KJ: just as long as you don't ↓↓butt out on these ones.
44 ((moves hand away from body))
45 AW: okay I won't.
46 KJ: so we'll [go:]
47 AW: [it's] called (.) pick?
48 ((hands move up))
49 °°yi know: this one?°°
50 KJ: pitch? ((moves hands vertically up))
51 AW: <u>pitch</u>. ((points to KJ with both index fingers))
52 KJ: toe pitch?
53 AW: toe pitch, and then ((moves hands vertically up, then spins hands))
54 KJ: half to the top? ((KJ spins hands, AW spins whole body half))
55 AW: <u>yeah</u>!
56 KJ: >feet together?< or: >feet apart.< ((points to feet))
57 AW: together,
58 (0.2)
59 KJ: °good.°
60 AW: °okay:.°
61 ((AW & KJ set up for the 'Toe Pitch' routine))

In Excerpt 1, the sequence of collaborative decision-making begins with the *pre-invitation* phase. KJ provides feedback (first assessment, Maynard, 1989): "that's good, cause there was bits relaxed but still too tight" and "moving a little" (lines 1-3), setting the stage for a new decision-making process. Seven seconds of silence follow (line 4) while the two participants are moving to the stunting area. KJ's silence here allows the interactional space for AW to make a proposal. AW's silence indicates hesitation.

The *invitation* phase starts when AW breaks the silence with a question, "'kay what's next?" (line 5), prompting KJ to propose the next action. This question uses the encouraging proposals strategy (Mendes de Oliveira & Stevanovic, 2024), encouraging KJ to initiate a new activity. A pause and a sigh from KJ (lines 6-7) serve as non-verbal cues, indicating KJ's hesitation to produce a decision. KJ then responds with, "probably you answering that question yourself?" (line 9), invoking epistemic and deontic authority (Ripatti-Torniainen & Stevanovic, 2023) by pushing AW to engage in the decision-making process and shifting the responsibility back to AW. AW, using laughter to decline making a proposal (Ripatti-Torniainen & Stevanovic, 2023) and turns it back to KJ with, "that's ↑why I asked it to you" (line 12).

While KJ continues to distance himself from making a decision, he guides AW's decision-making by reviewing what AW has done up to that point, starting a conditional but not completing the second clause: "if you've done your regular basics and then you've done your ticks" (lines 18-20). This suggestion is similar to the proposing using thinking strategy Stevanovic (2013), as KJ frames the next steps based on AW's past activities. Finally, AW responds with the second part of the conditional that KJ started, and names a next action as an upshot of KJ's review, "so start spinning" (line 21). In doing so, AW demonstrates her understanding of what KJ was projecting in his review and aligns with that projection. KJ agrees with a hand gesture and verbal repetition of what AW just said, "start spinning" (line 22). Thus, the decision on what to do next was done collaboratively with silence, the athlete's invitation, the coach's restraint in producing a response to the invitation, followed by the coach's guidance in the first part of a conditional, the student's production of the second part of the conditional, and the coach's confirmation.

Once the next action has been collaboratively decided upon, the pair needs to decide on how exactly to carry it out. This opens up a next phase in the decision-making sequence. After AW proposes, "can we do hands full around first?" (line 23), KJ does not affirm or reject, but repeats her question, "hands full around first?" (line 24). He lets a brief pause pass, perhaps for evaluation, and then continues negotiation by questioning AW's proposal, "no halves we're going straight for the full?" (line 26). This question immediately after AW's proposal is hearable as a non-acceptance of AW's proposal and a counter-proposal. In response, AW does not accept KJ's proposal but gives an account for her proposal by expressing her personal preference, "nah I don't like halves hh" (line 27). She seems to treat her implicit refusal to accept KJ's counter-proposal as a delicate matter, with laughter to minimize the tension.

Now it is KJ's turn to give an explanation for his counter-proposal: "not many people do...but if you're very good at halves, you then become very good at fulls" (lines 29-33). This is a long turn, used for blocking resistance. It also uses bright-side formulation strategies to encourage AW to reconsider her stance. This seems to work: AW agrees to KJ's suggestion, "okay I guess I'll

do halves, we'll do halves first" (line 34), showing commitment to the negotiated proposal. KJ's overlapped statement, "but we can start hands full if you like" (line 35), suggests a willingness to agree to AW's preference, consistent with the collaborative nature of their interaction. Although the final agreed-upon skill is to do halves (indicated by their hand motions and verbal confirmations), KJ's concession shows that he is open to AW's preferences while guiding the final decision.

The commitment to action phase is marked by AW and KJ confirming specific steps of the just-selected stunt, which involves further collaborative decision-making and ensuring mutual understanding. AW first seeks KJ's confirmation with a question, "this one?" (line 36), and KJ confirms with "that one?" (line 38). AW seeks KJ's instructions with, "and then?" (line 39). Instead of giving instructions, KJ first checks AW's preference with a question, ">it just depends.< we could do: do you like the half, with (0.2) from ha:nds?" (lines 40-42). Only after AW confirms, "yeah" (line 42) does KJ offer advice on how the move is to be carried out, "just as long as you don't butt out on these ones" (line 43). AW's commitment to the method of the move suggested by KJ "okay I won't" (line 45) shows her readiness to proceed. KJ also indicates his readiness by saying, "so we'll go" (line 46), but AW overlaps with his turn to seek clarification on terminology, "it's called pick?" (line 47). This opens up a pedagogy sequence in which KJ provides the technical terms for the moves they are about to carry out (lines 50-60).

The final commitment is confirmed with a collaborative decision about the detailed setup. KJ gives two options using option-listing (Toerien et al., 2013), "feet together or feet apart?" (line 56), and AW chooses one, "together" (line 57). This is followed by mutual acknowledgment and agreement, "°good°" and "°okay°" (lines 59-60) by both participants, and finally, the pair set up for the agreed-upon toe pitch stunt (line 61).

In Excerpt 2, the pre-invitation phase begins with KJ initiating a new decision-making sequence following the previous stunt's evaluation.

Excerpt 2: Toss Lib High High (@15:09)[link to video]

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1  KJ: ↑not ↓bad.
2      (1.0)
3  KJ: slow it down a little bit=don't >try to give me< the foot.
4  AW: okay:.
5      (2.0) ((KJ taps one hand on the other several times))
6  KJ: u::m
7      (1.5)
8  KJ: ↓let's add something to it.
9      (0.9)
10 AW: to the toss lib?
11 KJ: yup.
12     (3.0) ((JK and AW gaze at each other,
13            then KJ lowered his head while still gazing at AW))
14 KJ: we hit the toss lib, what should we do.
15     ((KJ raises arms above his head with palms open
16      and holds that position))
17      (1.0)
```

```
18 AW: a tick.
19 KJ: a tick?
20     (.)
21 KJ: high high?
22 AW: yup,
23 KJ: okay,
24     ((AW turns around and AW & KJ set up for
25       the 'Toss Lib High High' routine))
```

KJ's statement, "not bad" (line 1), provides positive feedback to AW, which sets a collaborative tone. This feedback can be seen as part of broaching decision-making, as it leads into the decision process (Land et al., 2017). KJ follows up with, "slow it down a little bit, don't try to give me the foot," (line 3), providing further evaluation and setting the context for the next decision.

After a brief pause (lines 5-7), KJ uses the statement "Let's add something to it" (line 8) which is an explicit pre-invitation, employing the encouraging proposals strategy (Mendes de Oliveira & Stevanovic, 2024) by prompting AW to think about the next step. AW responds with "to the toss lib?" (line 10), seeking clarification, which indicates AW's engagement in the decision-making process (Ripatti-Torniainen & Stevanovic, 2023). KJ confirms with "yup" (line 11), reinforcing AW's engagement and moving towards the invitation phase. KJ then asks, "we hit the toss lib, what should we do?" (line 13), making an invitation for AW to make a specific proposal. This invitation is similar to the strategies of encouraging proposals (Mendes de Oliveira & Stevanovic, 2024) and proposing using thinking (Stevanovic, 2013).

In response, AW proposes "a tick" (line 15), marking a clear proposal. KJ's repetition of AW's turn, followed by a brief pause, indicates a delayed acceptance of AW's proposal. KJ then follows up with "high high?" (line 18), moving into the negotiation phase, as this question seeks to refine and confirm the specifics of the proposal. AW confirms with "yup" (line 19), demonstrating agreement. KJ then accepts her proposal by responding with "okay" (line 20), moving the decision into the commitment to action phase.

This sequence shows a smooth transition through the decision-making process with minimal negotiation, as both participants quickly align on the next steps. The final stage involves both AW and KJ preparing for the agreed-upon stunt, indicated by "((AW turns around and AW & KJ set up for the Toss lib high high))" (line 21). This action demonstrates their mutual commitment to the decision, completing the sequence.

In Excerpt 3, the pre-invitation can be identified in a brief exchange.

Excerpt 3: Hands Lib (@00:15) [link to video]

```
1 KJ: just for the first part.
2 AW: uh huh.
3     (1.0)
4 KJ: alright what's first.
5     (1.0)
6 AW: warm up.
7 KJ: what's warm up.
8 AW: u:m toss, targe:t.
9     (0.8)
```

```
10 AW: wait. (.) yeah.
11     (0.9)
12 AW: hands [(.)]     [lib ] (.)
13 KJ:       [hands]   [lib.]
14 AW: hands (.) other lib, (0.2) hands (.) cupie, (.)  hands other
15     cupie hands pop off. ((AW demonstrates skills
16     with hands while talking and KJ nods for each skill))
17     ((KJ nods))
18     ((AW turns around and they try to set up for the 'Warm Up' routine))
19 AW: ((breathy)) yes!
20     ((AW holds two thumbs up and lines up facing sideways from KJ))
21     (0.2)
22 AW: i remembered it.
23 KJ: °we're facing this way.°
24 AW: oh yeah.
25     ((AW turns around and they set up for the Warm Up' routine))
26 AW: heh heh heh
```

The stage for the upcoming decision-making process is set with AW's acknowledgement of KJ's instruction ("uh huh" in line 2), followed by a pause (line 3). KJ then initiates the invitation by asking, "Alright what's first?" (line 4), using the encouraging proposals strategy (Mendes de Oliveira & Stevanovic, 2024) to prompt AW to actively participate in the decision-making process.

AW responds with "warm up" (line 6), making the initial proposal. KJ evaluates this proposal by asking, "What's warm up?" (line 7), moving the sequence into the evaluation phase and utilizing the formulating proposals strategy (Stevanovic, 2013) to seek clarification and ensure mutual understanding. AW elaborates on the warm up, listing specific stunts: "um toss target wait yeah [hands lib] hands other lib hands cupie hands other cupie hands pop off" (line 7-15). During this description, AW demonstrates the skills with her hands, while KJ nods in agreement. This use of non-verbal cues falls under the using embodied actions strategy, specifically nodding, to indicate agreement and reinforce the decision. KJ's continued nodding shows ongoing agreement, moving the sequence into the agreement phase. AW celebrates her memory with "yes. I remembered it" (lines 19, 22), marking her confidence in the proposed plan.

As they turn to set up for the warm-up (lines 18-25), KJ instructs, "we're facing this way" (line 23), which is a logistical note due to the filming setup rather than a part of the decision-making process. This marks the commitment to action, as both AW and KJ prepare to execute the agreed-upon warm-up routine.

Excerpt 4 shows a similar pattern of invitation to decision-making by the coach.

Excerpt 4: Toss Lib Pop Down (@04:07)[link to video]

```
1  AW: it was like fat. it was like this bi:g. and this bi:g.
2      (.)
3  KJ: al:right=what's next.
4      (2.0)
5  AW: er::::: i dunn(h)o heh
6      (2.0)
7  KJ: if (.) i was NEW:
```

```
 8 AW: okay:,
 9 KJ: or someone else what would you do.
10     (2.0)
11 AW: hands.
12     (0.9)
13 AW: °°lib.°°
14 KJ: hands lib. (0.3) we've already done hands lib.
15 AW: okay
16 KJ: that's in the middle of the: ah [warm up. ((KJ gestures with arms))
17 AW:                                [yeah that's true.
18     (1.0)
19 AW: uh::::::m (0.9) toss lib.
20 KJ: toss lib. okay.
21     ((AW turns around))
22     (1.0)
23 KJ: anything after it or that's it
24 AW: toss li::b (1.0) ha:nds. >wait. no we basically did that.<
25     ((AW partially turns)) no. toss lib pop down.
26     ((KJ nods))
27     ((AW turns around, AW & KJ set up
28      for the 'Toss Lib Pop Down' routine))
```

KJ initiates the invitation by producing a transitional token ("alright") then asking AW "what's next?" (line 3), employing the encouraging proposals strategy (Mendes de Oliveira & Stevanovic, 2024), where KJ prompts AW to participate actively in the decision-making process. This invitation also involves time management, as KJ directs the focus away from AW's storytelling (line 1) and back to the training session.

AW responds with uncertainty, "errrr i dunno" (line 5), demonstrating a lack of commitment to decision-making and requiring further prompting. KJ follows up with a more specific invitation, using a hypothetical scenario, "If I was new or someone else what would you do" (lines 7, 9), utilizing both the broaching decision-making (Ripatti-Torniainen & Stevanovic, 2023) and the proposing using thinking strategy (Stevanovic, 2013). This combination encourages AW to consider potential actions and engages her in the decision-making process. AW proposes "hands lib" (lines 11, 13), marking the transition to the proposal phase. KJ evaluates this proposal, noting "We've already done hands lib" (line 14), thus pointing out a problem with AW's proposal and as such, rejecting her proposal and moving the sequence into the evaluation phase. After AW's acknowledgement (line 15), KJ supports his rejection with a reminder of when they did the hands lib (lines 16, 17). This reminder demonstrates both KJ's memory and knowledge and his deontic authority as the coach in charge of the session.

AW's acknowledgement ("yeah that's true" in line 17) shows her acceptance of KJ's knowledge and role, and subsequently, she revises her proposal to be about a different type of lib, "uhm toss lib" (line 19). KJ accepts this proposal, indicating agreement and moving the decision to the agreement phase. However, as with the above cases, instead of accepting AW's proposal as is, KJ continues with "anything after it or that's it" (line 23), engaging further in the negotiation phase. This question allows for further refinement of the decision, inviting AW to consider aspects of the stunt and elaborate on her proposal. AW first proposes a "toss lib hands" but

quickly self-repairs ("wait") and, perhaps orienting to KJ's earlier reminder, she gives the account for the self-repair ("we basically did that") (line 24). AW produces the repair solution and finalizes the decision with "toss lib pop down" (line 25). AW's turn exemplifies the practice of proposing using thinking, as we can see her thinking process (Stevanovic, 2013) as the turn unfolds (line 26). KJ's nods of agreement complete the negotiation and signal mutual agreement. The sequence concludes with the commitment to action as AW and KJ set up for the agreed stunt (line 27).

The excerpts above have provided insights into collaborative decision-making in cheerleading, highlighting stages of decision-making and the use of non-verbal cues. It shows how athletes move from expert-novice asymmetry to collaborative interactions, offering practical strategies for coaches and teachers to enhance engagement.

Summary

The Organization of Decision-Making Sequences

A possible organization of the decision-making sequence could involve the following actions:

- Pre-Invitation: Before the invitation there is typically something that encourages an invitation to occur. This could be something like an assessment of the previous performance.
- Invitation: If a decision needs to be made, this sets the stage for it to be collaborative. It could be a direct question or it could be more subtle.
- Proposal: Either participant can mention a suggested course of action that could be agreed upon or could lead to negotiation.
- Evaluation: Participants' assessment of the proposal occurs.
- Negotiation: Refinement of the proposal occurs and changes may be made to the initial proposal.
- Agreement: Once negotiation is finished, the participants can agree.
- Commitment to action: The agreed upon final proposal is put into action.

A clear example for this sequential organization can be found in Excerpt 2.

Excerpt 2: Toss Lib High High (@15:09)[link to video]

```
1  KJ: ↑not ↓bad.
2      (1.0)
3  KJ: slow it down a little bit=don't >try to give me<
       the foot.
4  AW: okay:.
5      (2.0) ((KJ taps one hand on the other several
       times))
6  KJ: u::m
7      (1.5)
8  KJ: ↓let's add something to it.                    Pre-Invitation
9      (0.9)
10 AW: to the toss lib?
11 KJ: yup.
12     (3.0) ((JK and AW gaze at each other,
       then KJ lowered his head while still
```

		gazing at AW))	
13	KJ:	we hit the toss lib, what should we do.	**Invitation**
		((KJ raises arms above his head with palms open and holds that position))	
14		(1.0)	
15	AW:	a tick.	**Proposal**
16	KJ:	a tick?	**Evaluation**
17		(.)	
18	KJ:	high high?	**Negotiation**
19	AW:	yup,	**Agreement**
20	KJ:	okay,	**Agreement**
21		((AW turns around and AW & KJ set up for the 'Toss Lib High High' routine))	**Commitment to Action**

Practices for Collaborative Decision-Making in Cheerleading Stunt Practice

Effective collaborative decision-making in cheerleading involves various practices by coaches and athletes, ensuring efficient and collaborative decisions.

Coach's Practices in Decision-Making

Using practices like invoking shared knowledge, encouraging proposals, using embodied actions, formulating proposals, invoking epistemic and deontic authority, and addressing resistance, participants can foster a collaborative decision-making environment. Rather than making all decisions themselves, participants aim to include each other in the process, promoting engagement and ownership. By using these practices, the participants not only guide each other through technical skills but also develop their decision-making abilities, ensuring a more interactive and effective learning experience. The ultimate aim is to create a partnership where all participants contribute to the decision-making process, enhancing both performance and learning outcomes.

The following practices illustrate key strategies coaches employ to foster collaborative decision-making while balancing authority and engagement:

- *Invoking shared knowledge*: Participants reference previous experiences and known techniques to guide decision-making. Example: "If you've done your regular basics and then you've done your ticks," said while moving hands up and down.
- *Using embodied actions as implicit suggestions*: Participants use non-verbal cues, such as gestures and body movements, to suggest actions or decisions. Example: Hand gestures while explaining a move.
- *Encouraging proposals*: Participants encourage each other to make suggestions, fostering a collaborative environment. Example: "Let's add something to it," followed by a suggestion and affirmation.
- *Formulating proposals*: Participants construct suggestions in a way that guides the decision-making process. Example: "If you've done your regular basics and then you've done your ticks."

- *Invoking epistemic and deontic authority*: Participants utilize their expertise and authority to guide the decision-making process, ensuring safety and effectiveness. Example: "Probably you answering that question yourself?" to push engagement in decision-making.
- *Addressing resistance*: Participants provide explanations and justifications to encourage reconsideration of initial reluctance. Example: "Not many people do...but if you're very good at halves, you then become very good at fulls."

These practices illustrate how coaches balance their authority while fostering an environment where participants take ownership of their decisions, contributing to their learning and performance outcomes.

Athlete's Practices in Decision-Making

Participants can also engage in the decision-making process by using practices such as proposing actions, seeking clarification and confirmation, engaging in negotiation, and demonstrating commitment. By actively participating and sharing their ideas, participants contribute to a more collaborative environment. These practices help participants to not only understand and execute their tasks better but also to develop critical thinking and decision-making skills. Through this collaborative approach, participants become more invested in their training, which can lead to improved performance and a deeper understanding of the techniques involved. The aim is for participants to feel empowered and responsible for their progress, making the training sessions more dynamic and productive.

The following practices highlight how athletes contribute to collaborative decision-making by actively participating and sharing responsibility in the process:

- *Proposing actions*: Participants actively propose actions based on their understanding and experience. *Example: "Can we do hands full around first?" followed by acknowledgement.*
- *Seeking clarification and confirmation*: Participants ask questions and seek confirmation to ensure their understanding aligns with each other's instructions. Example: "This one?" while moving hands vertically up, followed by further clarification.
- *Engaging in negotiation*: Participants participate in the negotiation process, discussing and refining proposed actions. Example: "Toss lib," followed by acknowledgment.
- *Non-committal responses*: Participants use minimal acknowledgments or expressions of uncertainty to indicate hesitation, prompting further discussion or clarification. Example: "Errrr I dunno."
- *Demonstrating commitment*: Participants show their commitment to the agreed-upon actions through verbal and non-verbal cues. *Example: "Okay I won't," followed by mutual acknowledgment of the agreed action.*

Discussion and Conclusion

The analysis of collaborative decision-making in cheerleading stunt practice showcases several strategies that can be adapted to educational settings. The findings above can be applied to both physical education and language teaching. They offer a framework for language teachers to enhance collaborative decision-making, promoting a more interactive learning environment.

First, encouraging student proposals is key. Like the cheerleading coach, language teachers can invite students to suggest topics or activities, fostering ownership and engagement. This approach fosters a sense of ownership and engagement among learners, making the educational experience more interactive and student-centered. Second, non-verbal cues in cheerleading, such as nodding and hand gestures, highlight the importance of embodied actions in communication, which can aid less vocal students. Language teachers can incorporate similar strategies to reinforce verbal instructions and provide additional layers of meaning, enhancing comprehension and participation. Additionally, AW's transition from expert-novice to collaborative interaction suggests a pedagogical shift language teachers can adopt. Initially guiding students with clear instructions and gradually involving them in decision-making processes can build their confidence and autonomy over time. How would a student know what to work on next if they have never been involved in such a process? Finally, this study also shows the importance of addressing resistance and encouraging engagement. Coaches' strategies to handle hesitations with explanations and reinforcement can be mirrored in language teaching.

The study's limitations include a small sample size and a single location, which may limit generalizability. The author is also the coach, which, while enabling access to necessary background information, may also bias the analysis. Future research should include a larger, more diverse sample.

Despite these limitations, this study shows that collaborative decision-making processes in cheerleading stunt practice can offer insights for language education. By drawing parallels between physical education and language teaching, the research identifies strategies to help collaborative dynamics. These strategies can create a more engaging and participatory classroom environment, fostering student confidence and autonomy.

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