

**Why'd You Bring a Salad?: A Multimodal Analysis of Cultural Referencing in Third  
Culture Individual Interactions**

Ester van Twillert

Radboud University

Master's Thesis

Supervisor: dr. Jarret Geenen

Second reader: dr. Afrooz Rafiee

August 18, 2025

10,030 words

## **Abstract**

This study explores how Third Culture Individuals (TCIs), individuals who lived outside of their home countries during (a section of) their formative years, reference culture and cultural experiences in conversation and what these references accomplish in interaction. Audio and video recordings were made of three sessions of conversation between Dutch TCIs. Six cultural references from these conversations were placed along a continuum of cultural alignment and analyzed using Multimodal (Inter)action Analysis (MIA) in order to identify their purposes in the conversation. The analysis reveals that references aligned with *us* primarily generate affirmation and remembering, *we* references encourage sharing and mutual recognition, and *them* references most often result in distancing, occasionally through admiration. These findings suggest that culture for TCIs is not a fixed allegiance to any national culture but an adaptable resource for conversational purposes, enabling affirmation, recognition, and differentiation depending on context.

*Keywords: Third Culture Individuals, Multimodal (Inter)action Analysis, cultural alignment, cultural identity*

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## Introduction

In an increasingly globalized world, individuals are becoming increasingly exposed to cultural experiences from around the world. Among these individuals are Third Culture Individuals (TCIs), who spend a significant portion of their formative years outside of their parents' home countries. Much of the work on TCIs has focused on how they perceive their identities and cultural affiliations, often characterizing them as either plural and shifting or as blended multicultural identities (Moore & Barker, 2012; Kim, 2008). The ways in which TCIs make culture visible in practice, however, remains unclear. While identity has often been examined in terms of self-evaluations, fewer studies have analyzed how culture is actively referenced in conversation and what purposes such references serve.

The present study addresses this gap by examining how Dutch TCIs reference culture in conversation and what these cultural references accomplish in interaction. The present study uses Multimodal (Inter)action Analysis in order to analyze six cultural references made in conversation between TCIs. These references are analyzed along a continuum of cultural alignment—*us, we, them*—in order to illuminate how TCIs position themselves in relation to culture and the roles these references play in conversation.

## Background

The 1990s brought a change in the nature of migration toward the West. It brought about an increasing diversification of diversity, characterized by changes in migrants' countries of origin and ethnicities, as well as the locations they moved to and the manners in which they continued to live their lives (Vertovec, 2007). Not only did this result in changes in practical organization of life, but this also gave rise to new complex multilingual repertoires (Blommaert, 2012). Since then, firmly established collective, cultural identities have become contested, and more culturally hybrid societies have emerged (Wodak, 2002).

Identity formation in multicultural contexts has developed similarly. Adler (1976) describes this multicultural identity formation as follows: “The multicultural style of identity is premised on a fluid, dynamic movement of the self, an ability to move in and out of contexts, and an ability to maintain some inner coherence through varieties of situations” (p. 37). Others have built on this to explore the manner in which identity formation in multicultural contexts seems plural in certain ways, but coherent in others. Some consider this identity to be primarily plural and fragmented (Ainsa, 2002; Reuter, 2006), as individuals who have developed identities in multicultural contexts intuitively shift between identities depending on the context (Sparrow, 2000). Kim (2008) argues that this conception of a dual identity is based on a positivity bias and that it is an oversimplification of the open-ended, adaptive, and transformative identity of these individuals. This merger identity, then, is greater than the sum of its parts (Verkuyten, 2014). Consideration of the attitudes of such individuals found that multicultural upbringing was negatively correlated with self-reported ethnocentrism (Harrison, 2012), suggesting a blended identity of individuals with low ethnocentricity (Arasatnam, 2013).

A specific group of such individuals are Third Culture Individuals (TCIs), individuals who have spent a significant part of their formative years outside of their parents’ home countries. Research has consistently confirmed a pattern of shared experiences between these TCIs, including experience with cultural adaptation (Lyttle et al., 2011; Pollock et al., 2017; Starr et al., 2017) and a sense of confusion about what home is (Gilbert, 2008; Hoersting & Jenkins, 2011; Nette & Hayden, 2007; Pollock et al., 2017). Corresponding with other research on individuals who have spent time in multicultural contexts, studies have also found TCIs to be more open-minded toward other cultures and more respectful and tolerant of others than individuals who have not spent time in their formative years outside of their parents’ home countries (Bikos et al., 2009; Hayden et al., 2000; Lam & Selmer, 2003; Moore &

Barker, 2012). Additionally, TCIs have been found to be respectful and tolerant of others to a greater extent than their peers (Hayden et al., 2000). Moore and Barker (2012) found that TCIs either have multiple cultural identities or a single multicultural identity, depending on the individual. While some have a shifting identity, moving between cultural identities dependent on the context, others have more of a blended identity, as they integrate multiple cultural identities into a stable core identity. While these perspectives provide insight into the ways TCIs perceive themselves, the current study considers the manner in which identity is demonstrated in practice and made visible through forms of verbal and nonverbal communication and demonstrable actions (Baynham, 2006; Blommaert, 2005; De Fina, 2006). More specifically, the current study aims to shed some light on the perception of culture among TCIs through an analysis of cultural references in conversation.

This study employs multimodal (inter)action analysis (Norris, 2004, 2011, 2019, 2020, 2021) as its theoretical and methodological framework in order to gain insight into the manner in which TCIs reference culture and cultural experience in conversation with one another and what they achieve in doing so. Multimodal (Inter)action Analysis (MIA) provides a framework in which human action and interaction are viewed not solely or primarily through the lens of language, but through all those modes that are utilized throughout said (inter)action. Consideration of all available modes allows for a vibrant analysis that brings a broader perspective than traditional frameworks for conversation analysis. Within MIA, all actions are viewed as the acting of social actors with or through mediational means (Vygotsky, 1978; Scollon, 1998, 2001; Wertsch, 1998). MIA's unit of analysis, then, is this mediated action. The smallest (inter)actional units of meaning produced by a social actor – the lower-level mediated actions – chain together into a higher-level mediated action (Norris, 2004). While social actors may coproduce a higher-level mediated action, their individual chains of lower-level mediated actions will differ. Social actors may, for example, coproduce the

higher-level mediated action of eating lunch together. In order to achieve this, each social actor produces their own combination of postural shifts, gestures, utterances, as well as many other movements. All of these lower-level mediated actions and the manners in which they are produced offer insight into the identity of the social actor. By considering each individual mode, all of these lower-level mediated actions can be identified, providing insight into the structure of an (inter)action as well as the identities of their social actors (Norris, 2020).

Social actors, however, often produce more than one higher-level mediated action at a time. In the production of a higher-level mediated action, lower-level actions can be chained together by a specific social actor in various densities. This lower-level mediated action density associated with a specific higher-level mediated action – modal density for short – gives insight into the amount of attention a social actor accords to said higher-level mediated action (Norris, 2009). The more attention a social actor pays to a certain higher-level mediated action, the higher the modal density that they display in regard to the actions and the identity elements. Simultaneously performed higher-level mediated actions can be placed on a modal density foreground-background continuum of attentional awareness (Norris, 2004). Doing so allows for the consideration of the various ways in which attention is distributed between higher-level mediated actions.

As social actors shift focus from one higher-level mediated action to another, they sometimes produce a lower-level mediated action that does not contribute to the previous higher-level mediated action or the next higher-level mediated action. The term *semantic/pragmatic means* is used to describe this indication of an attentional shift (Norris, 2004).

### **Methodology**

Data for this study were collected from a group of Dutch individuals who have been friends for a number of years and who all lived outside of the Netherlands for a portion of

their childhood. Three regular meet-ups between these TCIs were both audio and video-recorded. All individuals in the friend group were invited for all three sessions, with up to six individuals present at a time. Several individuals only joined for a part of the session. Participants were not provided with conversational input of any specific kind and were simply encouraged beforehand to act as they would otherwise. Sessions were centered around or placed before or after a meal, in order to simulate the group's regular meet-ups as closely as possible. Individuals met in the comfort of the homes of one of the individuals. No time restrictions were placed on the sessions, resulting in sessions of two to six hours in length. Session details are provided in Table 1.

After these sessions, all references to culture and cultural experiences were identified. Out of over one hundred excerpts, with some containing multiple different references to culture or cultural experiences, six representative excerpts were selected for analysis. Out of each of these excerpts, a selection of twelve to fifteen seconds was made in order to allow for a detailed multimodal analysis. Some more context for each of these brief excerpts at times allows for a better understanding of the interaction and is therefore provided in Appendix A. In order to provide opportunity for the various manners in which culture is presented and identity is produced in relation to cultural references, this study considers each reference in light of the measure of alignment with the referenced culture with which the reference is

**Table 1**

*Session Details: Length, Corresponding Excerpts and Participants*

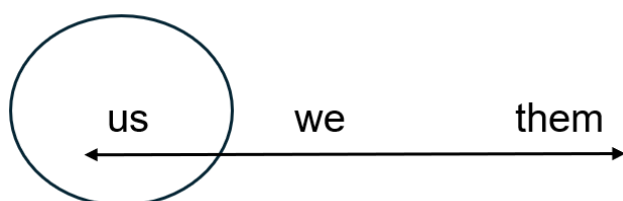
Session	Length	Excerpts	Participants
1	3:01:51	4, 5, 6	Bob, Laura, Larry, Petunia
2	5:26:56	1, 2, 3	Bob, Laura, Scooter, Ernie, Junior, Percy
3	2:15:07		Bob, Laura, Larry, Petunia, Scooter, Annie

made. In order to visualize this, a continuum of alignment is used along which references to culture can be placed (Figure 1). The circle on the left of the continuum represents a close alignment with the referenced culture: this culture is identified as one's own – *us*. A less close alignment with the referenced culture is represented by *we*: the individual does not identify this culture as their own and stands outside of the culture's inner *us* circle, but still considers themselves relatively closely aligned. On the other side of the continuum, *they* represents the cultural other, the cultural place, experience or item that is distant from the individual themselves.

This continuum of alignment offers several benefits. On the one hand, it allows for an analysis of alignment without assuming cultural alignment of any kind as part of the premise. In this way, alignment can be considered case-by-case. At the same time, using a continuum allows for less distinct categorical identification of alignment. While cultural references may align most closely with either *us*, *we*, or *them*, that does not mean that these alignments are always clear-cut. A reference may just as well have elements of both *we* and *them*, whereas other references may very clearly align with specifically *we* or *them*. Use of this alignment continuum provides the opportunity to consider the nuances of references wherever applicable. The six excerpts in this study will be examined as moving along this alignment continuum: beginning with two excerpts with cultural *us* references, followed by *we*

### Figure 1

*Continuum of Cultural Alignment*



references, and ending with *them* references. Each of these excerpts is analyzed individually, and nuances to these categorizations are given – since, ultimately, they are not precisely categorizations, after all.

After evaluating the measure of alignment of each cultural reference, the role of these references in the conversation will be considered in order to discover what these individuals achieve in conversation by referencing culture or cultural experiences.

### Transcription

For the analysis, multimodal transcript conventions are used (Norris 2004, 2011, 2019, 2020). An example is provided in Figure 2. Arrows indicate lower-level mediated actions performed by individuals. Because each interaction includes at least three individuals, arrows and speech are colored to correspond with the individual producing the utterance or performing the action, allowing for differentiation between individuals. No speech has been capitalized. Differing from the audio transcripts, the visual transcripts use a lowercase *i* in

### Figure 2

#### *Multimodal Transcription Example*



order to differentiate between the uppercase *I* and lowercase *i*. Speech curvature indicates intonation. Time stamps are located in the bottom-right corner. For more detail on multimodal transcription procedures and clear examples, refer to Geenen et al. (2021). For readability purposes, full multimodal transcriptions have not been included within the text. Instead, sections of each visual transcription are presented as they are discussed. The description of each excerpt will however, regularly refer to images not presented in the text. Instead, full visual transcriptions are provided in Appendix C.

In accordance with Tannen (1984), the audio transcripts for each of the excerpts include commas indicating phrase-final intonation, question marks indicating yes/no-question rising intonation, periods indicating sentence-final falling intonation, and combined periods indicating short pauses of different lengths. In order to avoid misreading of the transcript, the first person singular pronoun *I* has been capitalized. Apart from this, capitalization has been omitted.

For each of the transcripts, an original transcript was first created, with English translation provided below for those lines including Dutch text. For each of these lines a direct lexical translation (DL) is given, as well as a pragmatically appropriate translation (PA). See the following example from one of the excerpts.

- 1 Bob: omdat ze daar hun kip echt eten met alles
- DL *because they there their chicken really eat with everything*
- PA *because they really eat their chicken with everything there*

In-text inclusion of both of these translations, as well as the original text, would result in more text than is preferable for the reading of the text as an entirety. For this reason, only the original line of text and the pragmatically appropriate translation will be provided throughout the analyses. Whenever the original line is in English, only the original will be provided. See the example below, a later section from the same excerpt.

- 1 Bob: als mensen vragen .. neem je vlees mee .. en je neemt kip mee,  
 PA *if people ask are you bringing meat and you bring chicken*
- 2 dan zeggen ze .. oh .. waarom heb je een salade meegenomen .....
- PA *then they'll say oh why did you bring a salad*
- 3 you know .. why'd you bring a salad

All audio transcripts and their translations are provided in Appendix B.

## Analysis

### Continuum of Alignment: Us

#### *Excerpt 1: And They Have Cup-a-Soup Too on Board Too*

As part of a larger discussion on the food Bob eats for lunch at work, this excerpt begins with Bob's comment *and they do have cup-a-soup on board too, so there* (lines 1-2). While the statement seemingly begins with a supplement to the previous information provided regarding lunch at work, the reference to a ship diverts the interpretation.<sup>1</sup> Bob promptly corrects himself in line 3 *not on board*, resulting in diverging responses from the other individuals. While Laura responds to Bob's assertion that he is also offered Cup-A-Soup at work (lines 4-5), Scooter addresses Bob's misspeaking (line 7, 9). Bob responds to Scooter in line 11 *I know* – the only line spoken in English in the interaction – and begins to tell about another experience he recently had related to his youth on a ship. Within this conversation, the audio seems to indicate the presence of several other relevant higher-level mediated actions. For one, Laura's *well guys* (lines 6, 8), seems to reveal an attentional shift. A little later, Scooter's indication of experienced pain (line 10) and Laura's subsequent caution *careful* (line 12), seem to indicate another higher-level mediated action. Other modals provide a deeper understanding.

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<sup>1</sup> Bob spent part of his childhood living on a ship that travelled around the world.

*Audio Transcript 1: And they have Cup-a-Soup too on board too*

1 Bob: en ze hebben ook cup-a-soup ook aan boord.

PA *and they have cup-a-soup too on board too*

2 dus daar ...

PA *so there*

3 niet aan boord.

PA *not on board.*

4 Laura: a:h,

PA *ah,*

5 heb je toch ..

PA *then at least you've got...*

6 nou,

PA *well*

7 Scooter: aan boord?

PA *on board?*

8 Laura: jongens,

PA *guys*

9 Scooter: bob ... het is ... het is acht jaar geleden

PA *bob it's been it's been eight years*

10 au.

PA *ow*

11 Bob: I know

12 Laura: voorzichtig.

PA *careful.*

13 Bob: ik had er gisteren nog over,

- PA            *I was just talking about this yesterday*
- 14            met iemand in de kerk.
- PA            *with someone in church.*
- 15 Laura:    wat
- PA            *what*
- 16 Bob:        ja, hij had zelf ook op het schip gezeten,
- PA            *yes he'd been on the ship himself as well*
- 17            dus ... toen kwamen we
- PA            *so then we got to*
- 18 Laura:    o:h ja:?
- PA            *oh really*

The visual transcription begins with Bob sharing *and they do have cup-a-soup on board too* (images 1-3), while Scooter and Laura's gazes are aimed at him. While saying this, he swiftly moves his right arm upward (images 1-2), fingers stretched, subsequently moving it back down toward the glass on the table (images 3-4). His entire body shifts forward as he does this. As he continues *so there*, and then briefly pauses, Laura moves her head back and tightens the grip of her left hand around her right hand (images 4-5). She subsequently begins to respond *ah then at least you've got*, at which point her gaze shifts away from Bob, upward (images 6-7). At the same time, Bob provides correction to his statement *not on board*, right arm moving back inward toward his chest, but gaze still set on the table. Scooter begins to respond: *on board*, intonation indicating the interrogative nature of this line, head moving upward as well (images 8-9). Bob's gaze shifts to meet Scooter's, as he begins to laugh and moves backward (images 9-10). In the midst of this interaction between Bob and Scooter, Laura, gaze now toward the table, continues speaking as well, *well guys*. As she begins this,

she produces movement of her arms from her lap into the air and then claps them together as semantic/pragmatic means, indicating her intention to shift the conversational attention to something else (Figure 3). As Scooter continues talking, however, Laura shifts her gaze to

**Figure 3**

*Laura's Use of Semantic/Pragmatic Means*



him and stops speaking. Scooter aims his arm at Bob and calls him by name, admonishing him for the misplaced reference of the ship after all this time (images 10-15). The smile on both of their faces, however, as well as Scooter's posture: legs crossed, leaning back against the chair, one arm on the back of his chair, the other scratching his head, testify to the playful nature of this reprimand (Figure 4). While scratching his head with his right hand, he moves his left arm upward, hitting it against the doorhandle (images 12-13). As he pulls back his arm and rubs his elbow with his hand, he communicates his pain by saying *ow* (images 12-17). Laura, gaze still fixed on Scooter, responds with *careful*. Bob's gaze, still focused downward, begins to speak again, and Laura and Scooter shift their gaze toward him (images 20-21). He leans back to look at his listeners, their gazes fixed on him, as he shares that he had just been discussing spoken with someone at church about the ship. Laura asks him *what*, and Bob leans his head forward, and briefly touches his nose as he shares: *yes he'd been on the ship himself as well* (images 24-28). He raises his hand to continue *so then we got to*, subsequently bringing it back down. Laura responds *oh right*, straightening her posture, and lifts her left arm, moving it behind her ear (images 28-30).

Bob's reference to his cultural experiences, *and they do have cup-a-soup too on board too* (line 1), from which the rest of this interaction flows, though unintentional, reveals a close alignment with the ship. In his playful reprimand of this, Scooter mentions the length of time since Bob has left the ship as a reason for the reprimand. In this, he communicates a discouragement of this close alignment. Not only does Bob respond to this affirmingly *I know* (line 11) – the only line in English – he also begins to share that he had just been talking about this with someone else, although the nature of that conversation is not disclosed in this brief interaction. Deeper than this misplaced reference, then, the close alignment is playfully disapproved of, both by Bob and Scooter. The attention readily available on the parts of Scooter and Laura as Bob continues speaking about the ship, however, signifies their

Figure 4

*Scooter's Playful Admonishment of Bob*

exceeding sympathy toward this strong attachment to something from such a long time ago. Several things are achieved throughout the conversation by means of Bob's reference to his cultural experience. Initially, he is criticized for his close attachment to something from such a

long time ago, but ultimately, he is offered sympathy, as becomes visible in the nonverbal cues offered by Laura and Scooter. He is also provided with space to continue sharing, communicated through the lower-level mediated actions of gaze shifting toward him and the silence that is presented him. As he continues speaking, Laura asks him for more details and provides affirmation toward what he shares.

***Excerpt 2: I'm Dutch***

This brief interaction is part of a higher-level mediated action of Percy and the other participants saying goodbye to one another before Percy leaves. This segment commences as Laura and Percy orient toward the lower scale higher-level mediated action of giving one another a hug. As Laura reaches up for the hug and Percy bends down, Laura comments *you are so tall oh my goodness* (line 1). The audio transcript of this interaction commences with this comment. Percy responds by laughing (line 2). Laura then elaborates on her initial statement through a comparison of her length to Percy's length in line 3 *I'm like here*. Percy provides an explanation: *I'm dutch* (line 4), upon which the entire group begins laughing. Ernie responds with a series of lines in which she affirms Percy's statement. Consideration of other modals offers a more elaborate perspective on the interaction.

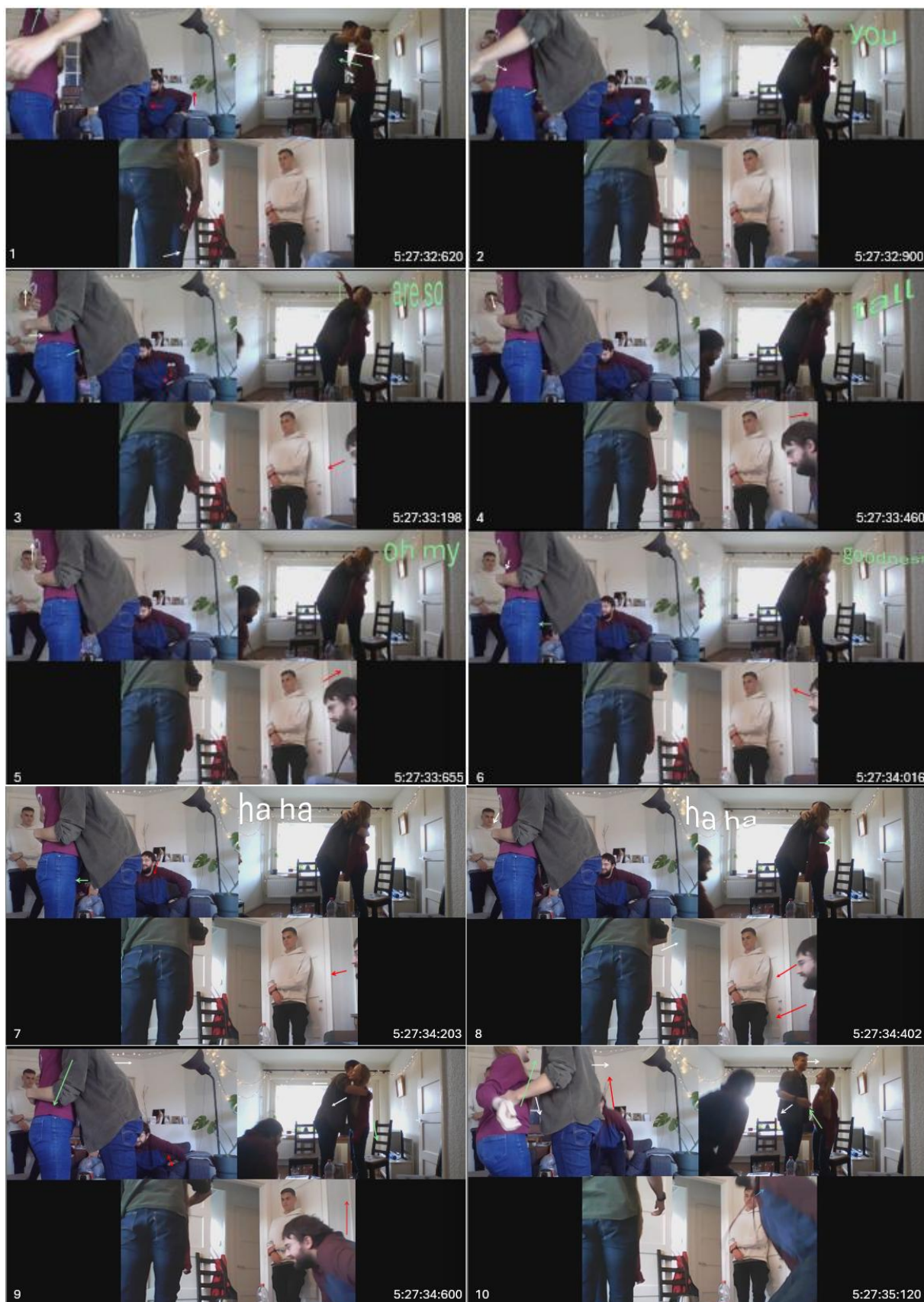
*Audio transcript 2: I'm Dutch*

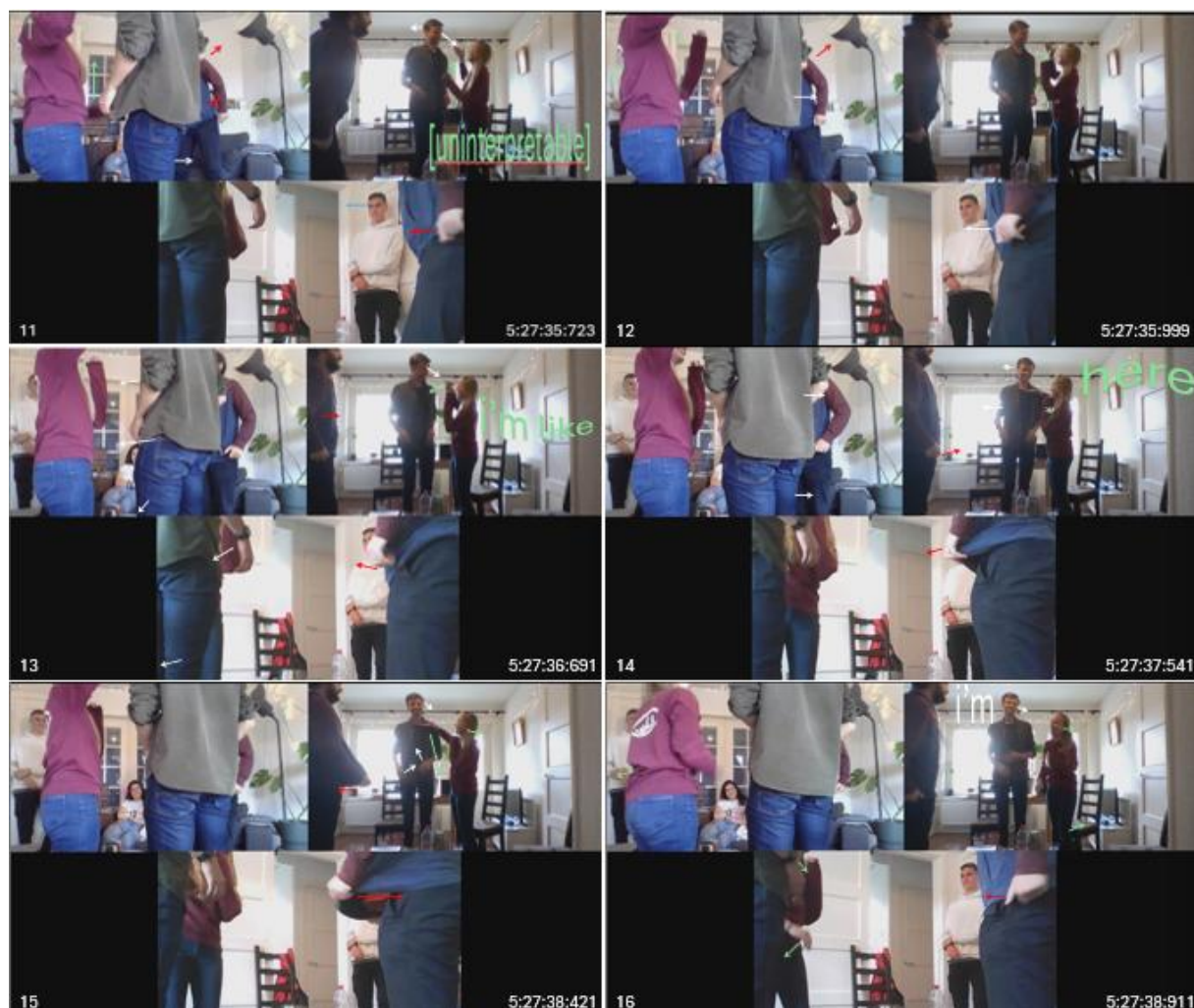
- 1 Laura: you are so: ta:ll oh my goodness.
- 2 Percy: [laughter]
- 3 Laura: /?/ I'm like .. here.
- 4 Percy: I'm dutch.
- 5 Ernie: a:h.
- 6 [laughter]
- 7 Laura: [laughter]

- 8 Percy: [laughter]  
9 Junior: [laughter]  
10 Ernie: he's dutch,  
11 Percy: [laughter]  
12 Ernie: okay.  
13 Percy: [laughter]  
14 Laura: [laughter]

The visual transcription commences with a hug between Laura and Percy, where Laura reaches up and Percy reaches down (images 1-3). Laura stretches her right arm upward and moves it onto Percy's back, while Percy moves both his arms downward, rubbing one hand over Laura's back. During this time, Laura comments on Percy's length *you are so tall oh my goodness* (Figure 5). Percy laughs, after which Percy and Laura both remove their arms from one another. Laura does not drop her right arm all the way back down to her side (image 10), but moves it back upward, at this point also moving her left arm upward. Moving her arms further, she states *I'm like here*, while placing her right hand horizontally at the level of Percy's collarbone, thus indicating her length compared to his (Figure 6). As she removes her hand, he moves his hands briefly, and shifts his body and head back and forth as he offers an explanation for his length, stating *I'm dutch* (images 16-17). Ernie responds with *ahh*, while Laura begins to laugh, after which Percy, Ernie, and Laura all respond by laughing. Laura steps back, moves her head back and simultaneously orients toward Percy, while Ernie moves her head back, and Percy moves his head back and his body forward, during which they are all still laughing. Although their bodies move in different manners, the movement of their bodies in combination with their laughter indicate their interpretation of Percy's comment as humorous in all three cases (Figure 7). Although Percy, at this point, shifts his body and gaze

Figure 5

*Chain of Lower-Level Mediated Actions in Giving a Hug*

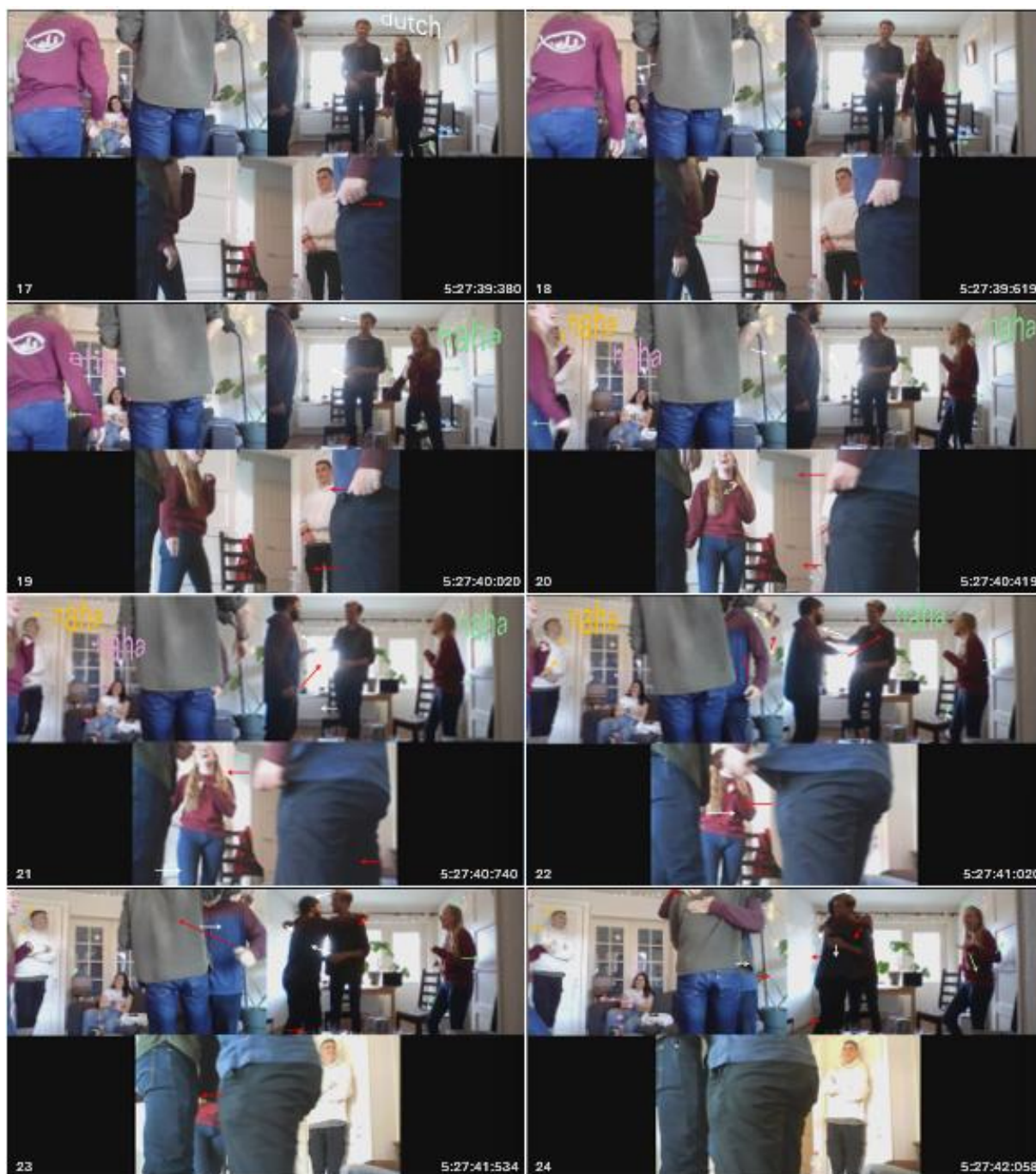
**Figure 6***Chain of Lower-Level Mediated Actions in Laura's Comparison*

toward Bob (image 19), as he orients toward the higher-level mediated action of a hug with Bob, his smile simultaneously broadens with the commencement of laughter, affirming this step away from one another. At this point, Percy shifts his gaze toward Laura, who still has a smile on her face, and begins to laugh. Ernie simultaneously begins to comment *he's dutch okay*, during which her gaze meets Percy's gaze (image 29), after which Percy again laughs. Following this, Laura once again laughs.

On the surface, Percy's comment *I'm dutch*, at the center of this interaction, places him closely aligned with Dutch culture. In fact, he claims this Dutch identity for himself. As his

Figure 7

*Laughter, Facial Expressions and Posture Communicating Humorous Intent*



length is commented on, being Dutch provides a clarifying account for his length. Regardless of the possible truth of his statement, however, the accompanying laughter seems to indicate a faux alignment instead – as though saying: *but not really, of course*. The subsequent laughter

and comments seem to challenge the alignment indicated in the text and support this faux alignment. Ermie's *ahh* (image 19), for example, preceding her laughter, and her repetition of Percy's statement that he is Dutch, do this in two ways. On the one hand, these statements function as a challenge to the literal reading of Percy's comment *I'm dutch*, the laughter and rising intonation indicating that this is not simply an affirmation of his reasoning. At the same time, the laughter affirms Ermie's understanding of Percy's humorous intent. This is validated by Percy and Laura's laughter following Ermie's statement.

On the surface, humor seems to be the primary achievement of Percy's cultural reference. Similar to Excerpt 1, however, analysis of the various modals reveals that this laughter serves another purpose within the conversation. Ultimately, this alignment, serving both as alignment and as a faux alignment, is affirmed by the other individuals by means of laughter. In this way, the laughter, as well as Ermie's comment *he's dutch okay*, provide affirmation to Percy through his cultural reference.

### **Continuum of Alignment: We**

#### ***Excerpt 3: We Got All Our Tom and Jerry From the Ship***

The interaction begins with Bob's recounting in lines 1-3: *we got all our tom and jerry from the ship / my parents bought them sometime in I don't know peru / on one of those markets there / you know*. He receives affirmation from Petunia (line 4) and Larry (line 9). Bob rephrases his earlier *you know* (line 4) in lines 7 and 8, subsequently elaborating further on that which he has communicated he presumes the rest knows: *you buy a movie somewhere and you don't know what's actually in it* in line 13. This is met with affirmation (lines 14-15, 18) and laughter (lines 16-17).

#### ***Audio transcript 3: We got all our Tom and Jerry from the ship***

1 Bob: al onze ... tom en jerry hebben wij van het schip meegekregen

- PA *we got all our tom and jerry from the ship*
- 2 dat hebben mn ouders ooit een keer in ... weet ik veel .. peru gekocht,
- PA *my parents bought them sometime in I don't know peru*
- 3 op zo'n markt daar,
- PA *on one of those markets there*
- 4 je weet wel
- PA *you know*
- 5 Petunia: oh ja
- PA *oh right*
- 6 [laughter]
- 7 Bob: ja
- PA *yeah*
- 8 je weet hoe dat gaat,
- PA *you know how it is*
- 9 Larry: oh ja
- PA *oh yeah*
- 10 Petunia: [laughter]
- 11 Bob: [laughter]
- 12 Larry: [laughter]
- 13 Bob: je koopt ergens een film en je weet niet wat er eigenlijk inzit.
- PA *you buy a movie somewhere and you don't know what's actually in it*
- 14 Petunia: ja
- PA *yeah*
- 15 Laura: ja
- PA *yeah*

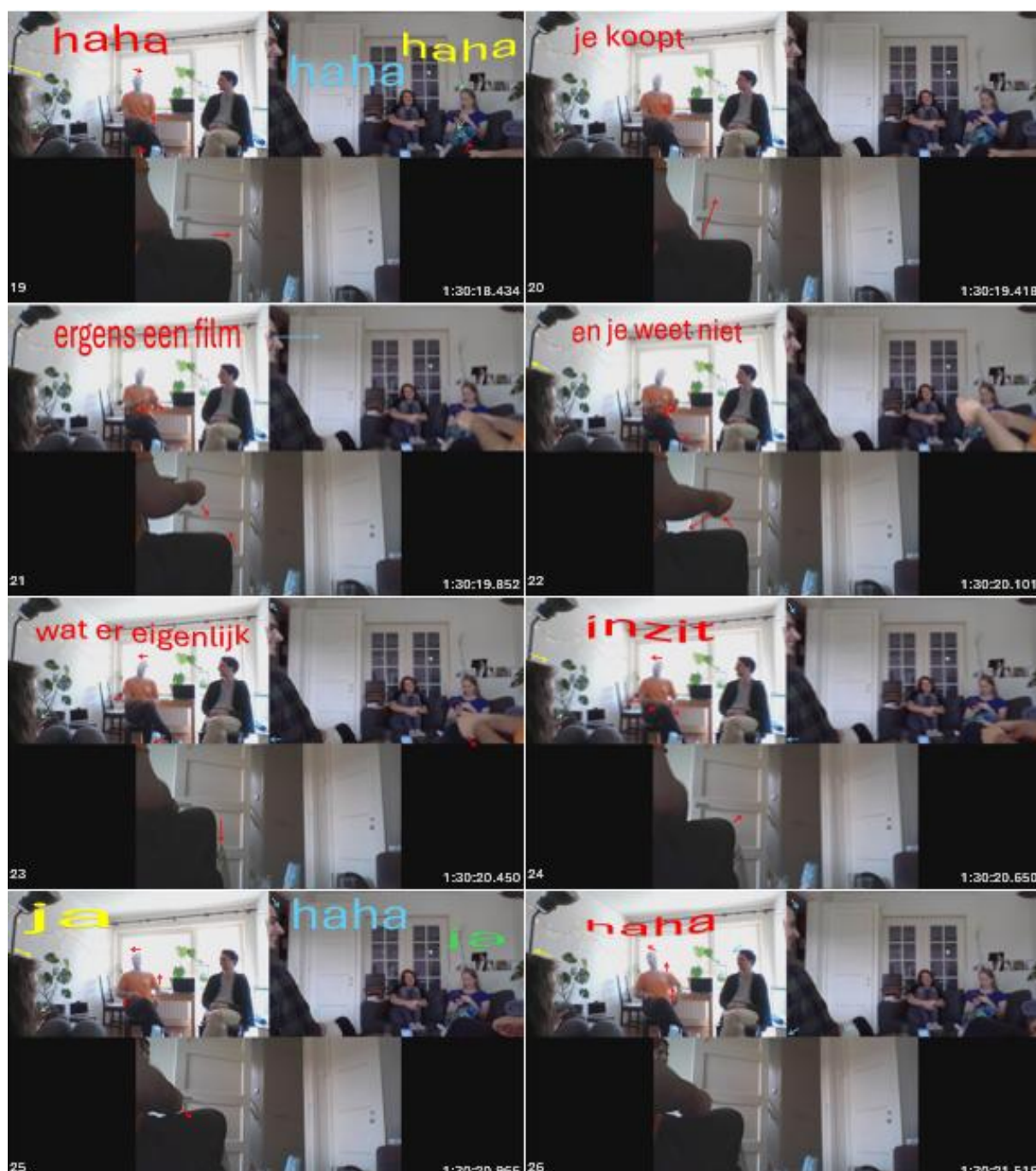
- 16 Larry: [laughter]  
 17 Bob: [laughter]  
 18 Larry: in roemenië was dat precies hetzelfde.  
 PA *that was the exact same in romania*

As part of a bigger discussion on Tom & Jerry, a children's television show the participants were familiar with, this excerpt begins with Bob sharing where his parents got their Tom & Jerry episodes from: *my parents bought them sometime in I don't know peru* (images 5-8). As he begins speaking, Petunia and Larry shift their gazes to him, while Laura is focused on the phone in her hand (images 1-2). Bob continues: *on one of those markets there / you know,* moving his hands up and down (images 9-12). Petunia confirms her familiarity with the experience (image 13). Bob again mentions his expectation that the others are familiar with the process, after which Larry also confirms this expectation, resulting in laughter from all three parties (images 15-19). Bob continues: *you buy a movie somewhere and you don't know what's actually in it,* once again moving his hands up and down as he explains (images 20-24). Both he and Larry begin to laugh, and Bob begins to stretch his arm behind his back and scratch his back (images 25-27). Petunia and even Laura, eyes still set on her phone screen but a smile appearing on her face, confirm the experience (Figure 8). As Larry begins to speak, recalling his similar experience in Romania, Petunia shifts her gaze toward him (Figure 9).

At the center of this interaction is Bob's statement recalling the market in Peru where his parents bought him a video. While on the one hand, he does not claim this culture as his own, presenting it as another place where something potentially unusual tends to occur, he does not distance himself from it entirely, presenting the experience as an experience he has had and which he expects others will be able to share in. In this way, he does not place himself on

Figure 8

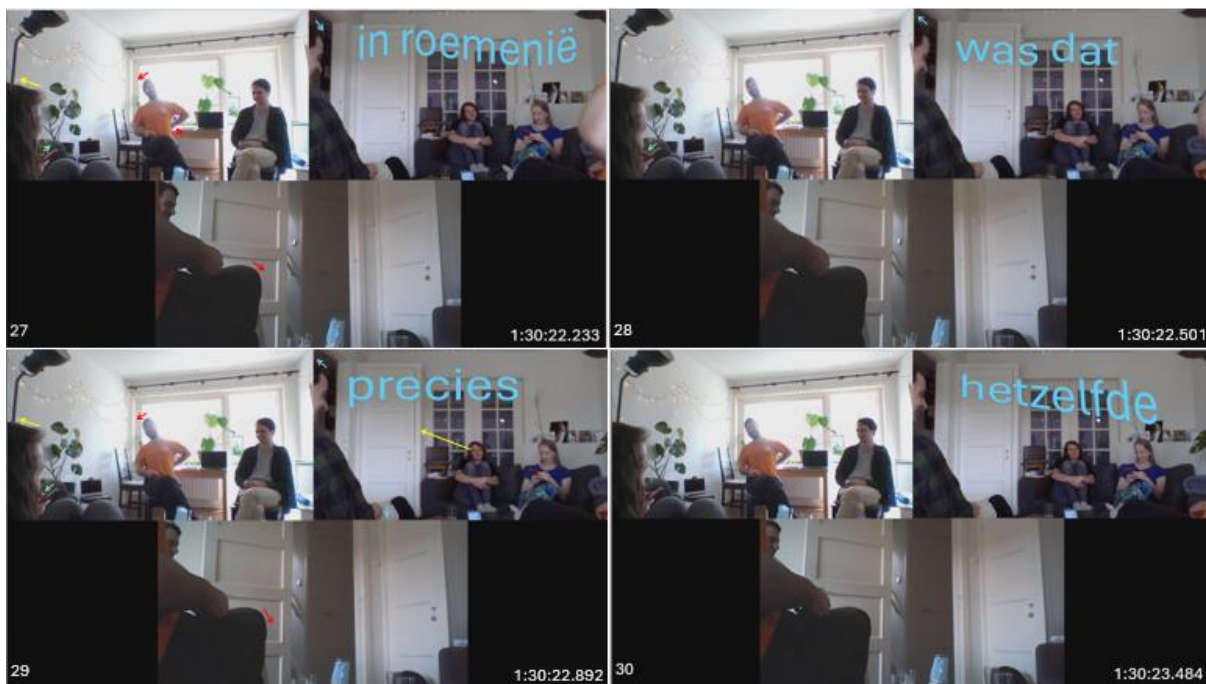
*Petunia, Larry, and Laura Confirming Bob's Experience*



either extreme of the cultural alignment continuum, as he allows for sharing in the cultural experience without claiming it, close to *us*, while retaining a *we* distance. This sharing in experiences, precisely, is what Bob achieves through his statement. On the surface, Bob, as occurs regularly with the various individuals in these excerpts, is met with laughter. The

**Figure 9**

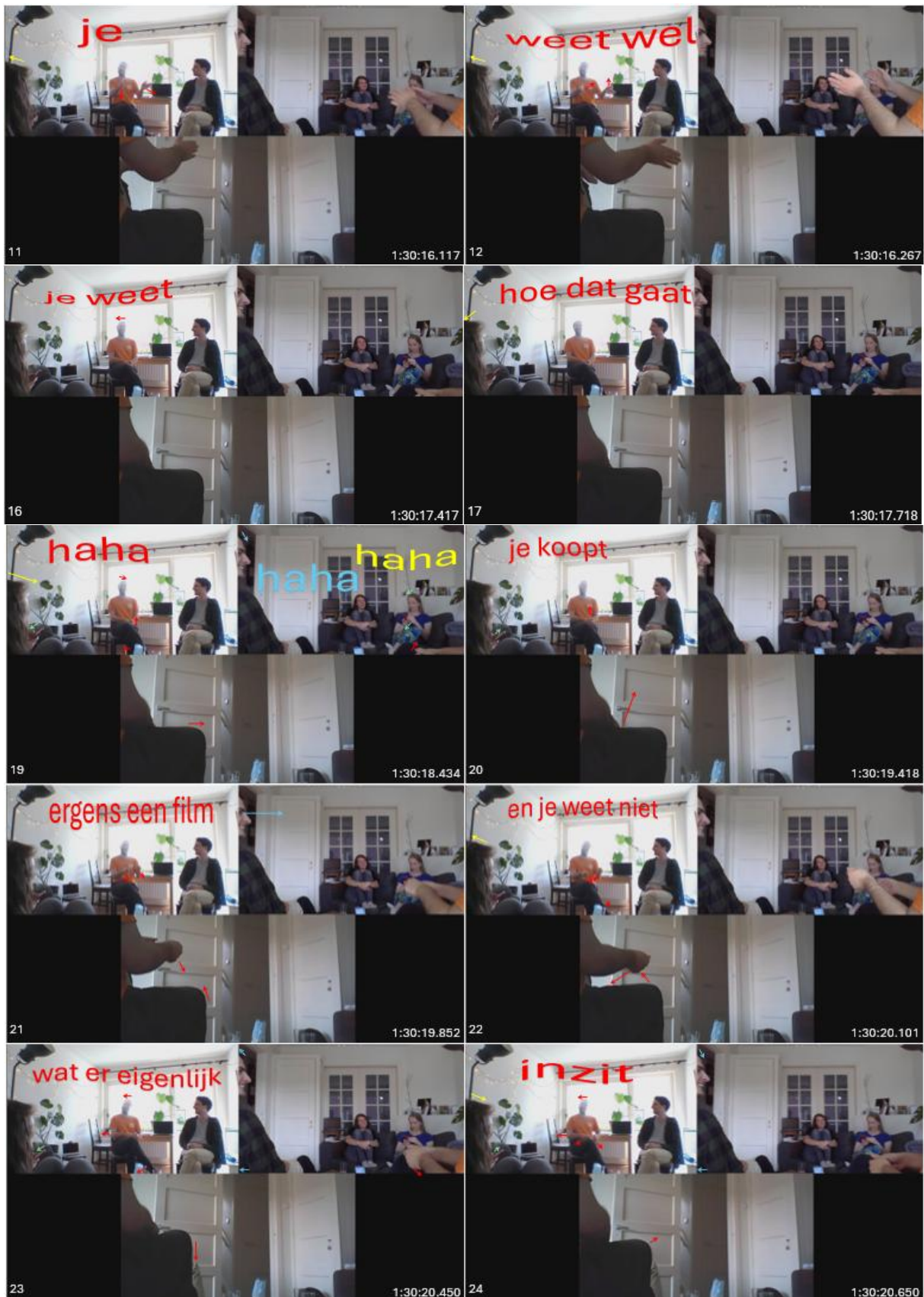
*Gaze Shift Produced by Petunia During Larry's Affirmation*



affirmative utterances that are produced as a result of his sharing where his family obtained these videos, however, are not simply an affirmation of Bob's experience, but a confirmation that the other individuals have shared this experience. This is made clear through Bob's repeated request for affirmation and continued provision of further detail (lines 4, 8, 13; Figure 10), which is met with laughter, affirmation, and a direct statement of recognition from Larry. Bob's cultural reference, then, provides opportunity for mutual recognition and sharing of similar experiences.

Figure 10

*Bob's Repetition of Affirmation Requests and Provision of Detail*



***Excerpt 4: Because They Really Just Eat Chicken With Everything There***

Prior to the commencement of this segment, Bob claims that chicken is a vegetable to people in South-Africa (see Appendix A). After multiple responses of surprise and questions about his reasoning from the other individuals, this segment begins with Bob providing his reasoning: *because they really just eat chicken with everything there* (line 1). Larry affirms that Bob has mentioned this before (line 2), whereas Laura challenges the provided reasoning in line 3 *that doesn't make it a vegetable does it*. Bob continues, either following-up on his thought or in response to Laura, in line 4 *there that's*. Following this, Laura continues her thought (line 5), which she does not complete: *that just makes it a meatloving loving*. Bob continues to elaborate on his statement in lines 6-10.

*Audio transcript 4: Because they really just eat chicken with everything there*

- 1 Bob: omdat ze daar gewoon kip echt .. eten met .. alles  
 PA *because they really just eat chicken with everything there*
- 2 Larry: dat heb je weleens verteld ja  
 PA *yeah you've mentioned that before*
- 3 Laura: dat maakt het toch niet een groente,  
 PA *that doesn't make it a vegetable does it*
- 4 Bob: dat is daar  
 PA *there that's*
- 5 Laura: dat maakt het toch gewoon een vleeslievende .. lief .. hebbende  
 PA *that just makes it a meatloving loving*
- 6 Bob: kip is daar,  
 PA *there chicken is*
- 7 kip wordt daar niet beschouwd als vlees

- PA        *chicken isn't considered meat there*
- 8           als mensen vragen .. neem je vlees mee .. en je neemt kip mee,
- PA        *if people ask are you bringing meat and you bring chicken*
- 9           dan zeggen ze .. oh .. waarom heb je een salade meegenomen .....
- PA        *then they'll say oh why did you bring a salad*
- 10          you know .. why'd you bring a salad

Similar to the previous excerpt, this segment also takes place during a meal and therefore contains many movements centered around the meal – moving hands to and from plates, biting, chewing, setting things down, picking things up, etc. Not every movement will be described in-text, but those potentially relevant to the interpretation of the conversation will be included. All movements, however, are visible in the visual transcription.

At the beginning of the excerpt, Larry and Laura's gazes are set on Bob. After he shares that *they really just eat chicken with everything there* (images 1-4), Laura performs the lower-level mediated action of moving her gaze to look at her plate. As Larry begins to respond in affirmation of what Bob has just shared, he does the same (images 8-9). Laura responds in disagreement, but does so while focusing her attention on the plate in front of her, producing many lower-level mediated actions in relation to her meal, and not even finishing her sentence (images 9-14; Figure 11). The modal density of the higher-level mediated action of eating a meal is higher than that of her higher-level mediated action of having a conversation, indicating that she is focusing her attention on eating to a greater extent than on confronting Bob's statement. As Laura takes a bite of her food, Bob continues to explain, *chicken isn't considered meat there* (images 13-15). As he continues speaking, Laura shifts her gaze back references. Explaining his reasoning, he does not present this aspect of South-African culture to him, as does Petunia (Figure 12).

**Figure 11***Modal Density of Eating a Meal Versus Having a Conversation*

Previously having explained why his wife considers herself vegetarian, but does eat chicken, Bob's cultural reference here aligns him closely with the South-African culture he as his own. Instead, he presents it as the other that he feels closely connected to. Initially, Bob seems to receive mixed responses to his statement – recollection from Larry, disagreement from Laura, and silent observation from Petunia. Laura's disagreement, however, is placed on the lower end of her modal density foreground-background continuum of attentional awareness, indicating that she does not place great value on disagreeing at this moment in time. She then joins the other individuals in listening, allowing Bob space to continue sharing.

**Figure 12***Petunia and Laura's Gaze Shifts Toward Bob*

Bob's cultural reference ultimately allows him to share more and receive acceptance of that which he is sharing.

### **Continuum of Alignment: Them**

#### ***Excerpt 5: They've Become Really Dutch***

The audio transcript for this excerpt begins as Ermie shares that she has shown a previously mentioned schedule to her brother Junior as well (line 1). She shares his response *he was like yeah they've become really dutch* (line 2) and subsequently laughs. She is joined in this by Scooter, who responds in laughter and affirms Ermie's recounting of Junior's response to her that the other individuals have become really Dutch (line 4). Junior strengthens Ermie's statement in line 5 *too dutch*, resulting in laughter on his and Ermie's parts. Different from the other individuals, Laura responds in defense, stating that the reasoning for this schedule was because of something Ermie had said and that they had done it for her (lines 9, 11). This results in a defensive response from Ermie (lines 10, 12). While

Scooter initially showed agreement with Ermie (line 4), he now begins to agree with Laura's reasoning (line 13), even adding to it in line 14 *what do you mean too dutch*.

*Audio transcript 5: They've become really Dutch*

- 1 Ermie: ik heb hem aan junior ook .. laten zien,  
PA *I showed it to junior too*
- 2 hij zo van, ja, ze zijn echt nederlands geworden  
PA *he was like yeah they've become really dutch*
- 3 [laughter]
- 4 Scooter: [laughter]
- 5 ja  
PA *yeah*
- 6 Junior: te nederlands.  
PA *too dutch*
- 7 [laughter]
- 8 Ermie: [laughter]
- 9 Laura: dat hebben we voor jou gedaan .. he,  
PA *we did that for you you know,*
- 10 Ermie: ja: ja:, weet ik maar  
PA *yeah yeah I know but*
- 11 Laura: omdat jij: zei:  
PA *because you said*
- 12 Ermie: ja weet ik  
PA *yeah I know*
- 13 Scooter: ja ja ja,

PA            *yeah yeah yeah*

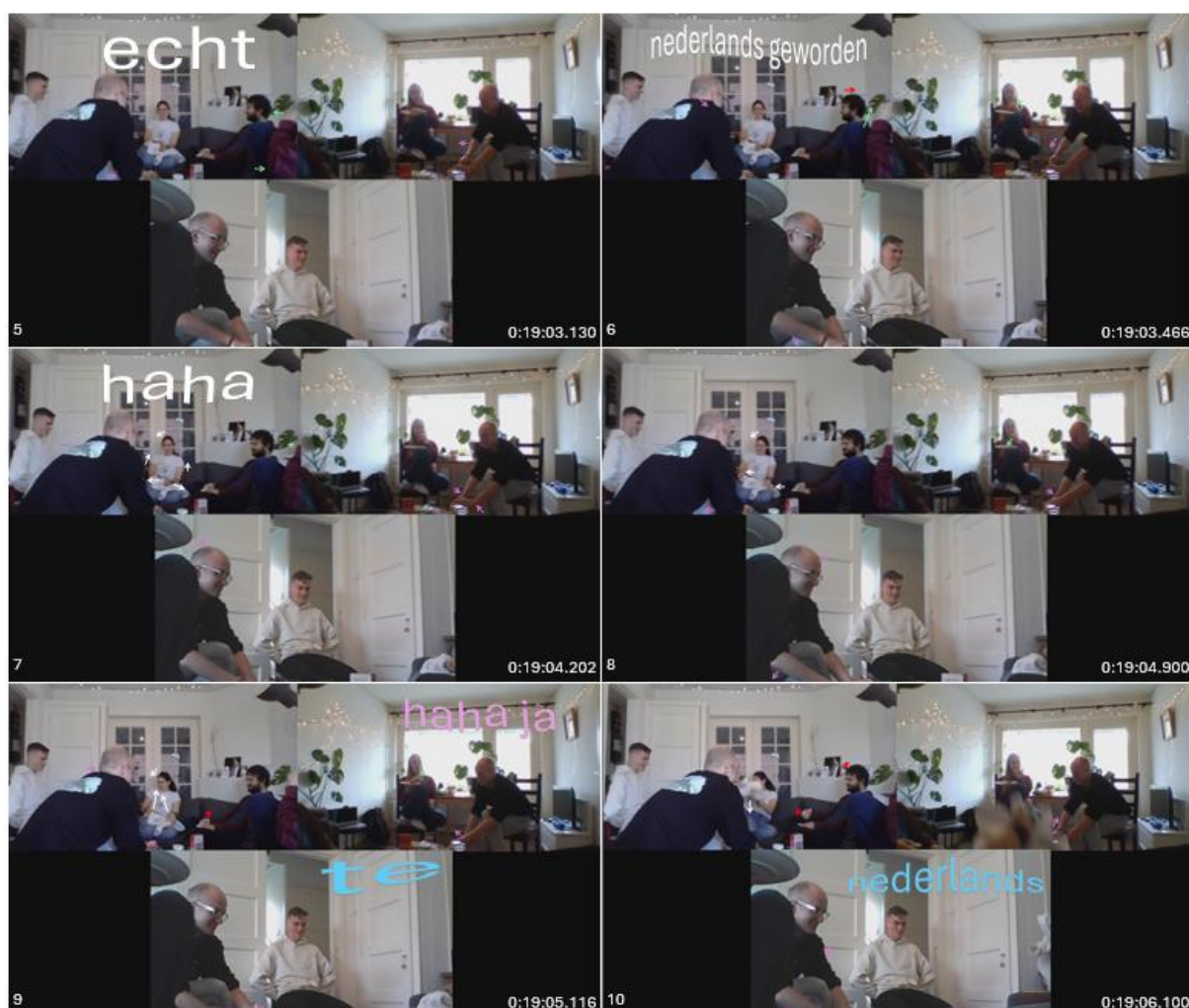
14            hoezo te nederlands

PA            *what do you mean too dutch*

The visual transcript indicates that this interaction is taking place during the higher-level mediated action of eating a meal. While Ermie and Junior do not seem to partake in this higher-level mediated action, Bob and Laura are holding plates and eat throughout the excerpt, and Scooter prepares food for himself, moving various items around on the table. Within this context, Ermie begins speaking about a previously referenced schedule. She has shown it to her brother Junior and shares his response that the other individuals have become very Dutch. She laughs, shifting back slightly, moving her head back, and lifting her sweater to place it on her lap again (images 7-11). Without looking up, Scooter responds in laughter and affirmation of this evaluation of himself and his peers (image 9; Figure 13). Junior adds onto this, *too dutch*, emphasizing *too* as revealed in the rising intonation within this word (images 9-10). As he does this, Ermie shifts her gaze to Junior, commencing her own laughter, during which she moves her body back and forth (images 11-13). In the midst of this, Laura moves her food toward her mouth and takes a bite (image 9). After Junior finishes speaking, unlike the other instances of taking a bite where Laura moves her hand back down within a second of biting, she now keeps her hand in front of her mouth, loosening her grip and stretching out several fingers partially (images 11-12). She holds her hand there for three seconds. After nearly two seconds where none of the individuals speak, Laura moves her left hand outward, aims it at Ermie, and begins to speak (Figure 14). *We did that for you*, she begins, emphasizing *you* by way of a rising intonation (images 20-23). Ermie raises her eyebrows, angles her head a little further up, and smiles: *yeah yeah I know* (images 25-26). She begins to present a defense *but*, while Laura turns her head, gaze still focused on Ermie,

Figure 13

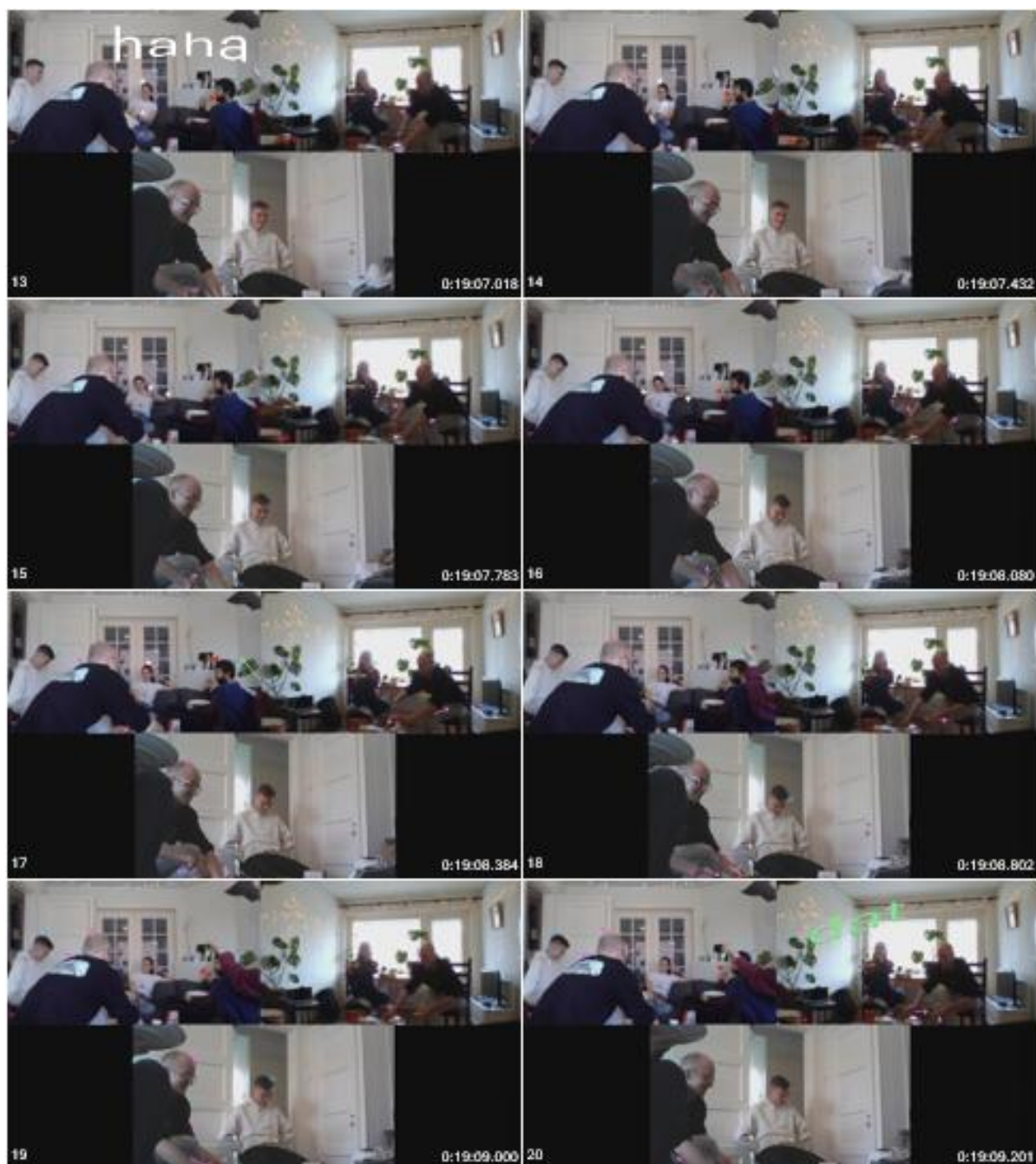
*Modal Density of Higher-Level Mediated Actions of Eating and Having a Conversation*



arm still stretched out, and continues: *because you said*, emphasis on *you* (images 26-28). Ermie responds, repeating her earlier words: *yeah I know* (images 29-30), moving the arm that her head was resting on outward and straightening her head. As Scooter begins speaking, strengthening Laura's argument with a triple affirmative, Ermie's gaze moves to Scooter, while Laura's gaze moves away from him as she reaches back down to the food on her plate. Scooter continues, for the first time in the excerpt lifting his head to look at Ermie: *what do you mean too dutch*, the rhetorical nature of the question revealed through its context and intonation (Figure 15).

**Figure 14**

*Lower-Level Actions Preceding Laura's Response*



At the heart of this interaction is a remark presenting Dutch culture as the other, indicating a core disalignment with the Dutch culture. In fact, Ermie and Junior accuse the others of an overalignment with Dutch culture. Both Scooter and Laura's responses also indicate this disalignment with Dutch culture. In Scooter's primary affirming response, he

Figure 15

*Scooter's Secondary Response*

does not disagree with this assessment, but accepts being labeled as *too dutch*, affirming that this is not purely the right amount of Dutch, but an excess. Laura, on the other hand, does not accept this claim of alignment with Dutch culture, but indicates that Elmie is the one for whom this “Dutch” schedule was created, even continuing her reasoning when Elmie has already affirmed her counterargument. After this, Scooter strengthens Laura’s claim. Ultimately, both Elmie and Junior’s original statements and Laura and Scooter’s responses communicate a viewpoint of Dutch culture as the other that none of the individuals feel inclined to claim as their own. Scooter’s initial response to Ernie’s cultural reference is one of agreement, but

agreement certainly is not the main response Ernie receives. Above all, in this excerpt, other individuals respond by distancing themselves from the culture she suggests they are affiliating with. As Laura responds in strong defense, continuing even as Ernie responds in agreement and begins to elaborate further, Scooter shifts his stance on the matter and turns the argument back on Ernie. At the core, Ernie's cultural reference results in distancing from the Dutch culture she references.

***Excerpt 6: With Cumin All the Way From Morocco You Know***

In the broader context of this interaction, the individuals are discussing the foods they like to make and eat. This excerpt begins with Laura describing her thought process in deciding to make the meal she has made for the group (lines 1-4). After this, her *mmm* (line 5) seems to indicate the beginning of another thought. Not responding directly to Laura's retelling of her decision-making process, Petunia then asks a question (line 6): *what's your go-to meal to make*. Disregarding the question posed, Laura follows up on the thinking that seemed to commence in line 5, with the statement *with cumin all the way from morocco you know / is in this* (lines 7-8). As this information is presented, it receives a response of wonder from Petunia and Bob (lines 8-10), which Laura confirms (line 11).

*Audio transcript 6: With cumin all the way from Morocco you know*

- |   |        |  |
|---|--------|--|
| 1 | Laura: | ik dacht,  |
|   | PA     | <i>I thought</i>                                     |
| 2 |        | oe dat is eigenlijk wel                              |
|   | PA     | <i>oo it's actually been</i>                         |
|   |        | best wel lang geleden dat ik weer pasta heb gemaakt, |
|   | PA     | <i>a pretty long time since I last made pasta</i>    |
| 3 |        | laat ik dat weer eens een keer doen.                 |

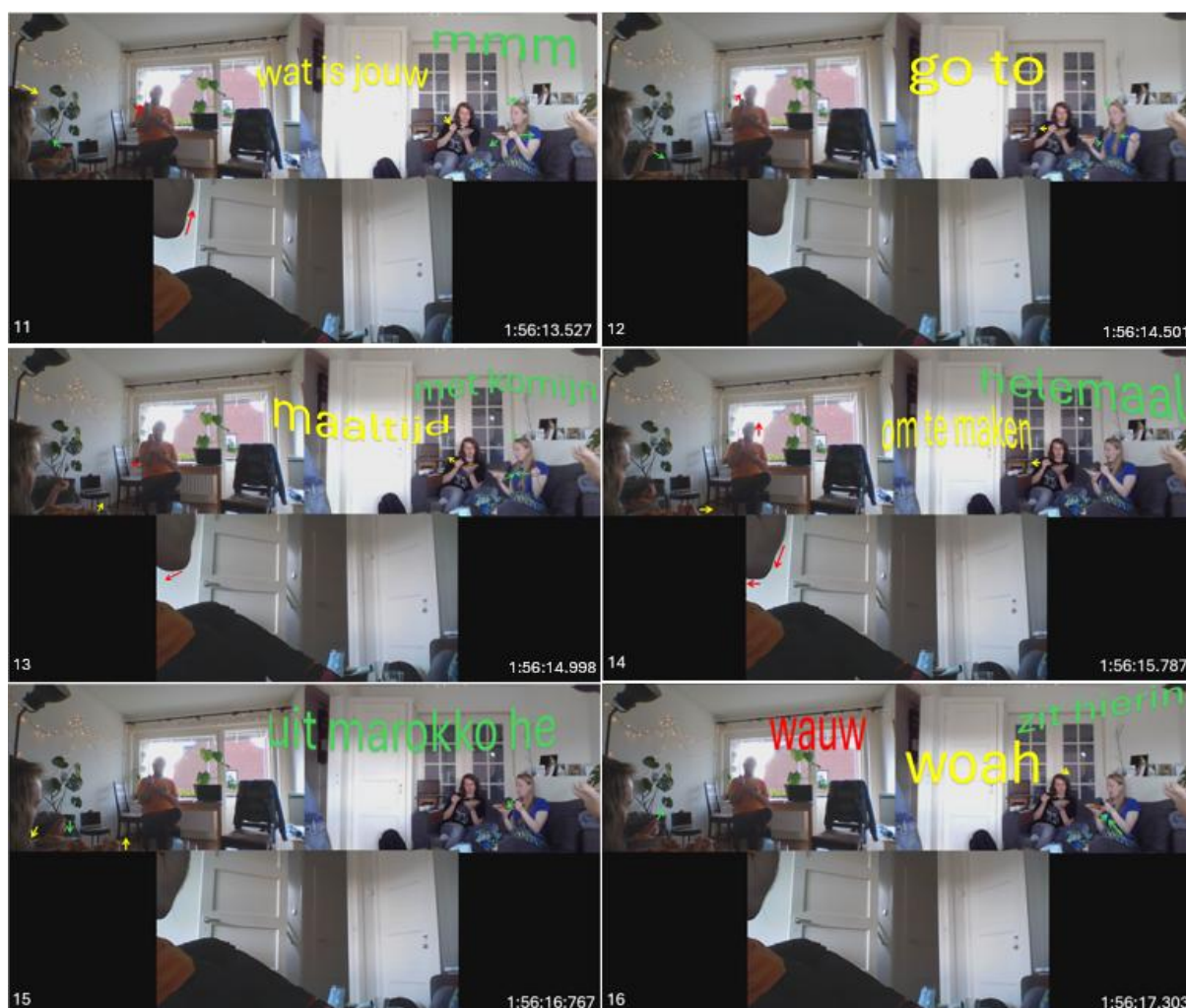
- PA            *let me do that again sometime*
- 4                mmm
- 5    Petunia:    wat is jouw go-to maaltijd om te maken
- PA            *what's your go-to meal to make*
- 6    Laura:        met komijn helemaal uit marokko he,
- PA            *with cumin all the way from morocco you know*
- 7                zit hierin
- PA            *is in this*
- 8    Petunia:    woah
- 9    Bob:            wauw
- PA            *wow*
- 10   Petunia:    wat cool
- PA            *very cool*
- 11   Laura:        ja
- PA            *yeah*

As Laura begins speaking – *I thought* – Petunia turns her head toward Laura, seated next to her on the couch (images 1). As Laura continues, Petunia moves her head toward her plate of food and orients herself toward the lower-level mediated action of moving a bite of food toward her mouth (images 2-3). By the time Laura finishes sharing *let me do that again sometime* (images 5-6), Petunia has again shifted her head to look at Laura. Both Bob and Laura now take a bite, and Petunia looks back at her plate. Following two seconds of silence, Laura's *mmm* indicates a thought she is planning on sharing, as revealed by several lower-level mediated actions and lack thereof. Having put food in her mouth less than a second earlier, Laura is unable to fully speak yet. She does, however, provide this *mmm* as a filler, as

though to reserve space for her to speak. This is also indicated by the outward movement of her arms and the turning of her head following the *mmm*, as well as the apparent disregard of the question that is asked of her by Petunia in the meantime (Figure 16). Petunia, gaze fixed on her plate the entire time, does not respond to these signals and asks *what's your go-to meal to make*. As Laura continues speaking (images 14-16), sharing the origin of the cumin she has used in cooking, Petunia and Bob respond with *woah* and *wow*, Petunia's gaze still set on her plate (image 16). After a moment of silence, Petunia vocalizes *very cool*, which Laura confirms (Figure 17).

**Figure 16**

*Different Higher-Level Mediated Actions for Each Individual*



With the cultural reference in this excerpt – *with cumin all the way from morocco you know* – Laura presents herself as significantly distant from this culture. So much so, that her boast is that she has used spices *all the way from* this far-off place. The affirmative response provided by Petunia confirms her interpretation of the facts provided. In this way, this excerpt presents a strong disalignment with the culture discussed. As Laura shares a cultural reference in this excerpt, Bob and Petunia respond positively, producing utterances of admiration and wonder. Although they respond positively, their responses indicate a distance between them

**Figure 17**

*Repeated Utterances of Admiration and Affirmation*



and the cultural that is referenced, just as Laura has presented her cultural reference as a far-off other.

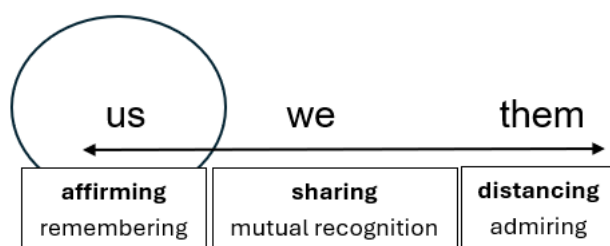
### Discussion

This study revealed patterns in the effects of cultural references in conversations between Third Culture Individuals (TCIs), individuals for whom a significant part of their formative years have been shaped significantly by a variety of cultural experiences. By considering these cultural experiences along a cultural alignment continuum instead of through national categories of culture or as shaped by previous experiences of the individual, the individual's perspective could be examined case-by-case. Consideration of the manner in which the individuals chose to present the culture or the cultural phenomenon that they were bringing into the conversation allowed for identification of the contribution of this cultural reference to the conversation. Use of Multimodal (Inter)action Analysis facilitated the uncovering of more details and deeper layers in the conversation.

The cultural references in these excerpts were made for a variety of reasons. The way in which they are made, however, gives an indication of their purposes in the conversation. Each of the excerpts was identified as most aligned with one section of the continuum (Figure 18). Doing this allowed for the evaluation of the role each cultural reference played

**Figure 18**

*Continuum of Cultural Alignment and Conversational Achievements*



within the context of the conversation, revealing similarities between excerpts. These will be discussed per section of the cultural alignment continuum.

Excerpt 1 and 2 were identified as most strongly correlating with the left section of the continuum, where individuals present a culture as their own. In both excerpts, these *us* references primarily fulfill affirmative purposes within the conversation. In Excerpt 1, as Bob unintentionally refers to the ship he has spent time on as a child, this affirmation is provided in several ways. For example, throughout the second half of the excerpt, Scooter and Laura shift their gazes toward Bob as he continues sharing a related experience, their postures indicating their focus on him. As he pauses for a moment, Laura asks him to elaborate, and as he continues speaking, she communicates her understanding of what he is sharing. Even the admonishment Scooter initially provides at the beginning of the excerpt is communicated in a humorous and light-hearted manner, providing Bob with encouragement of this strong alignment instead of a true discouragement. Similarly, in Excerpt 2, when Percy presents himself as aligned with Dutch culture as an explanation for his height, he also receives support as well. Support, in this case, however, takes on a different form. As Percy presents himself as Dutch, both accurately and simultaneously insincerely, the primary manner in which affirmation is communicated throughout the conversation is through laughter. As he himself also laughs, the laughter of the other individuals communicates an understanding of his intent and support for what he is communicating. His argumentation is not countered in any way throughout the segment. Additionally, Ernie repeats Percy's sentence and affirms the truth of his statement while laughing. In this way, it is not only Percy's statement that is confirmed by the other individuals, but he himself is also affirmed. Comparing these two excerpts reveals this affirmative role that the cultural references play within these conversations.

Apart from this affirming, another, less prominent result is achieved: remembering. In Excerpt 1, the manners in which the other individuals respond when Bob misspeaks: laughing, but also asking questions and paying attention to him, allow for Bob to naturally continue remembering experiences he has had and sharing these with the other individuals. This is less prominent but not entirely absent in Excerpt 2, where the laughter, as well as the silence, provides the possibility for sharing. While this does not happen within the excerpt itself, Ermie does begin affirming Percy *he's dutch okay*, after which she begins telling about her brother after the excerpt ends. Thus, presenting a cultural place, experience, item, or other as their own, results in affirming and, to a lesser degree, and opportunity for remembering in the conversation that follows.

Excerpts 3 and 4 were most strongly associated with the middle range of the cultural alignment continuum, correlating with the cultural *wē*. Here, individuals presented a culture or cultural experience as one that they felt close to, without presenting it as their own. In both excerpts, the primary function of the cultural reference in the conversation is to encourage sharing, both by the original speaker and by the other individuals involved in the conversation. In Excerpt 3, as Bob begins to tell about the Tom and Jerry videos his parents bought in Peru, most of the other individuals in the conversation pay attention to him and respond to him, encouraging him to continue sharing. As he continues, even Laura, who is primarily focused on the higher-level mediated action of searching for something on her phone, begins to smile and confirms her familiarity with Bob's experience. After Bob has shared about this experience that he expects others will be familiar with, Larry recounts his similar experience in Romania. The cultural reference in Excerpt 4 similarly encourages sharing, although in a different manner. As Bob shares a potentially controversial opinion, linking this to his cultural experience, his statement results in affirmation of this from Larry and disagreement from Laura. Even this disagreement from Laura, however, ultimately serves

as a catalyzer for Bob's argument, providing him with the opportunity to elaborate and continue sharing about his experiences and the knowledge he has of meat etiquette in South-Africa. Afterwards, the moment of silence also allows Bob to continue sharing his thought. In this way, sharing of experiences is the primary purpose of the cultural *we* references in these conversations.

Apart from this, however, the cultural *we* also results in mutual recognition in these excerpts. In Excerpt 3, Bob does not only present his cultural reference as a culture that is *we* for himself, but as something that the other individuals will most likely be able to share in. He mentions this explicitly several times, encouraging a mutual recognition of this experience between him and the other individuals. He does not seek this recognition in vain, with other individuals confirming that they recognize this experience multiple times throughout Bob's sharing. As he finishes, Larry explicitly mentions that he had the exact same experience in Romania. Excerpt 4, to a lesser degree, also presents this aspect of mutual recognition. Here, what Bob shares is not an experience he expects others to be able to relate to. Instead, what he shares throughout the excerpt is aimed at explaining his position and encouraging others to agree with it. In this way, he is inviting them to share in his understanding of and position in the situation, even if they do not agree with it entirely. The other individuals, then, do not recognize this cultural stance for themselves, but recognize it through Bob. This is also made clear through Larry's recounting that Bob has shared this before. In these excerpts, the primary result of presenting a cultural reference as a cultural *we* is that of further sharing, both by the primary speaker and by other individuals, and less prominently, mutual recognition between individuals.

The cultural *them* was presented most clearly through Excerpt 5 and Excerpt 6, and most significantly resulted in distancing from the culture that was being referenced. In Excerpt 5, as Ermie and Junior suggest that the other individuals have become too Dutch, they

present this culture as one that they do not want to associate with too strongly. Apart from this initial representation, however, the final responses provided by Laura and Scooter reinforce the distance between themselves and Dutch culture. Laura is silent for a moment, but then begins her defense against this accusation. Instead of accepting this culture as her own or accepting an association with Dutch culture regardless of it being her own, she distances herself from it, even accusing Ernie of being too Dutch. Scooter, who initially laughs and affirms Ernie, then also distances himself from this accusation. In this way, the initial cultural reference is presented as a cultural *them*, but the responses result in even more distancing. Excerpt 6, although an altogether different situation, shows elements of this same distancing. As Laura tells the other individuals about the cumin she has used that comes from Morocco, presenting it as the far-off cultural *them*, she receives responses of wonder and admiration. This wonder similarly functions as an element of distance. While distance is created in Excerpt 5 by presenting the referred to culture as something none of the individuals want to be associated with, distance is created in Excerpt 6 through an admiration this cultural element. Nevertheless, the cultural references in these excerpts both result in distance between the individuals and the cultural places that are presented them. These excerpts show that presentation of a cultural reference as a *them* culture results in extra distancing in the conversation that follows, at times through admiration.

Several of the aspects found in this study appear to be representative of the group of individuals taking part. For example, the affirmation that was provided follow *us* representations of culture and the mutual recognition found among *we* representations of culture may be specifically relevant to Third Culture Individuals. Although these individuals all spent time in non-Dutch cultural environments, these environments differed between them. In a sense, one might expect for Dutch individuals who have not spent any time living outside of the Netherlands to be able to have more cultural overlap. For these TCIs, then, the

affirmation, sharing, and mutual recognition, may not be indicative of identical experiences, but rather of an open-mindedness toward other cultures and a respect for these cultures (Bikos et al., 2009; Hayden et al., 2000; Lam & Selmer, 2003; Moore & Barker, 2012). Additionally, their shared experience with cultural adaptation may result in an ability to adjust to different cultures and affirm cultural experiences they have not personally encountered (Lyttle et al., 2011; Pollock et al., 2017; Starr et al., 2017).

Culture, then, to the TCI, appears to be shared even when it is not the same. Where one individual presents a culture as their own, others are able to affirm this and encourage sharing even when they have no personal association with this cultural reference. Additionally, cultural experiences between countries overlap at times in a certain way even when they are not entirely the same, which individuals use as an opportunity to share and bond.

Culture, also, does not appear to be fixed to labels of national culture. While Dutch culture, for example, is presented as something positive that individuals are willing to associate with in one instance, at a different point in time it is presented as the other than none of the individuals want to associate with. Analyzing these instances case-by-case allows for a recognition of this. These differences in cultural alignment correspond with the difficulty TCIs often have in linking the concept of *home* to a specific location (Gilbert, 2008; Hoerstring & Jenkins, 2011; Nette & Hayden, 2007; Pollock et al., 2017). Allegiance to any specific culture does not appear to be a leading factor in the choice of manner in which culture is presented by TCIs. Instead, cultural alignment differs, seemingly regardless of specific national culture. Future research may consider the ways in which other groups of people align with culture in conversation or other contexts, and whether or not this cultural alignment continuum produces similar results.

## Conclusion

This study set out to investigate how Third Culture Individuals (TCIs) reference culture in everyday conversation and what these references achieve in interaction. Cultural references in six excerpts from conversations between Dutch TCIs were placed along a continuum of cultural alignment and analyzed using Multimodal (Inter)action Analysis. The findings demonstrate that *us* references often function to affirm identity and elicit remembering, while *we* references encourage sharing and mutual recognition, and *them* references typically result in distancing. These patterns indicate that culture for TCIs is not necessarily a fixed commitment to any national, cultural identity, but, instead, a flexible resource that individuals use to achieve a variety of things in conversation.

Beyond TCIs specifically, the study confirms the value of analyzing culture through demonstrable actions and considering a variety of modals to discover deeper layers in conversation. For TCIs in particular, whose identities are shaped by a variety of cultural contexts, cultural alignment offers some insight into the purposes of cultural references. This insight contributes to a more nuanced understanding of identity in intercultural communication and highlights the importance of examining culture in practice, as it is actively referenced, interpreted, and redefined in (inter)action.

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## Appendix A: Contexts Excerpts

### Excerpt 1: Cup-A-Soup

1 Bob: en ze hebben ook cup-a-soup ook aan boord.

PA *and they have cup-a-soup too on board too*

2 dus daar ...

PA *so there...*

3 niet aan boord.

PA *not on board.*

4 Laura: a:h,

PA *ah,*

5 heb je toch ..

PA *then at least you've got...*

6 nou,

PA *well,*

7 Scooter: aan boord?

PA *on board?*

8 Laura: jongens,

PA *guys*

9 Scooter: bob ... het is ... het is acht jaar geleden

PA *bob it's been it's been eight years*

10 au.

PA *ow*

11 Bob: I know

12 Laura: voorzichtig.

PA *careful.*

13 Bob: ik had er gisteren nog over,

- PA *I was just talking about this yesterday*
- 14 met iemand in de kerk.
- PA *with someone in church.*
- 15 Laura: wat
- PA *what*
- 16 Bob: ja, hij had zelf ook op het schip gezeten,
- PA *yes he'd been on the ship himself as well*
- 17 dus ... toen kwamen we
- PA *so then we got to*
- 18 Laura: o:h ja:?
- PA *oh really*
- 19 Scooter: oh wat goed
- PA *oh this is great*
- 20 we zitten hier minder dan tien minuten
- PA *we've been sitting here for less than ten minutes*
- 21 en we hebben het schip al gehoord
- PA *and we've already heard the ship*
- 22 dit wordt een goede
- PA *this is going to be a good*
- 23 Laura: goede dag
- PA *good day*

### Excerpt 2: I'm Dutch

- 1 Laura: you are so: ta:ll oh my goodness.
- 2 Percy: [laughter]
- 3 Laura: /?/ I'm like .. here.

- 4 Percy: I'm Dutch.
- 5 Ernie: a:h.
- 6 [laughter]
- 7 Laura: [laughter]
- 8 Percy: [laughter]
- 9 Junior: [laughter]
- 10 Ernie: he's Dutch,
- 11 Percy: [laughter]
- 12 Ernie: okay.
- 13 Percy: [laughter]
- 14 Laura: [laughter]
- 15 Ernie: ahh .. he's dutch
- 16 okay.
- 17 it's not that bad.
- 18 I have another small one.

### Excerpt 3: We got all our Tom and Jerry from the ship

- 1 Laura: twintig afleveringen van tom en jerry?  
PA *twenty episodes of tom and jerry*
- 2 Bob: destijds  
PA *back in the day*
- 3 Laura: mijn destijds is anders dan jouw destijds he  
PA *my back in the day is different from your back in the day you know*
- 4 ik kom uit 2000  
PA *I'm from 2000*
- 5 Bob: ja dat klopt

- PA *yes that's true*
- 6 Larry: nou
- PA *well*
- 7 Bob: en al onze ... tom en jerry hebben wij van het schip meegekregen
- PA *and we got all our tom and jerry from the ship*
- 8 dat hebben mn ouders ooit een keer in ... weet ik veel .. peru gekocht,
- PA *my parents bought them sometime in I don't know peru*
- 9 op zo'n markt daar,
- PA *on one of those markets there*
- 10 je weet wel
- PA *you know*
- 11 Petunia: oh ja
- PA *oh right*
- 12 [laughter]
- 13 Bob: ja
- PA *yeah*
- 14 je weet hoe dat gaat,
- PA *you know how it is*
- 15 Larry: oh ja
- PA *oh yeah*
- 16 Petunia: [laughter]
- 17 Bob: [laughter]
- 18 Larry: [laughter]
- 19 Bob: je koopt ergens een film en je weet niet wat er eigenlijk inzit.
- PA *you buy a movie somewhere and you don't know what's actually in it*

- 20 Petunia: ja  
PA *yeah*
- 21 Laura: ja  
PA *yeah*
- 22 Larry: *[laughter]*
- 23 Bob: *[laughter]*
- 24 Larry: in roemenië was dat precies hetzelfde.
- 25 PA *that was the exact same in Romania*
- 26 Bob: ja
- 27 PA *yeah*
- 28 Larry: maar wij hadden toen een dvd set van tom en jerry en
- 29 PA *but we had a dvd set of tom and jerry at the time and*
- 30 en dat waren best wel veel afleveringen
- 31 PA *at that was quite a lot of episodes*
- 32 uhh
- 33 PA *uhh*
- 34 want op elk .. op elke dvd waren vijf aflevering ofzo
- 35 PA *because on every ... there were five episodes or so on each dvd*
- 36 en die bestonden weer uit subverhalen
- 37 PA *and then those each consisted of substories*
- 38 maar dat waren echt dan wel uren aan afleveringen
- 39 PA *but then those were definitely hours of episodes*
- 40 en er waren daarbuiten ook best nog wel die die daar niet opstonden
- 41 PA *and there were a bunch outside of those that weren't on there*

**Excerpt 4: Because they really just eat chicken with everything there**

1. Bob: ze eet vis en kip is een groente,  
PA *she eats fish and chicken is a vegetable,*
2. dus in principe  
PA *so in essence*
3. Larry: kip is een groente?  
PA *chicken is a vegetable?*
4. Bob: ja  
PA *yes*
5. dus in principe  
PA *so in essence*
6. Petunia: ik vind kip geen groente,  
PA *I don't think of chicken as a vegetable,*
7. maar oké  
PA *but okay*
8. Laura: dus ze eet gewoon geen rood vlees eigenlijk  
PA *so really she just doesn't eat red meat*
9. Bob: nee,  
PA *no,*
10. geen rood vlees of geen pork  
PA *no red meat and no pork*
11. Petunia: oh  
PA *oh*
12. Laura: ja  
PA *yeah*
13. Bob: umm

- PA *umm*
14. Petunia: zou ze eend eten?  
PA *would she eat duck?*
15. Larry: hoe is kip een groente  
PA *how is chicken a vegetable*
16. Bob: dat weet ik niet  
PA *I don't know*
17. cultureel gezien  
PA *culturally*
18. Petunia: oh  
PA *oh*
19. Laura: is cultureel gezien een reactie op Petunia of op Larry  
PA *is culturally a response to Petunia or to Larry*
20. kip is cultureel gezien een groente?  
PA *chicken is a vegetable culturally?*
21. Larry: huh  
PA *huh*
22. Bob: ja  
PA *yes*
23. Larry: oh wacht,  
PA *oh wait,*
24. dat heb je weleens verteld ja  
PA *yeah you've mentioned that before*
25. Laura: kip is echt niet op alle punten een groente,  
PA *chicken definitely isn't a vegetable on all fronts*

26.           toch?  
PA           *right?*
27. Bob:       dit hebben we uit zuid-afrika gepikt  
PA           *we got this from south-africa*
28. Petunia:   ja  
PA           *yeah*
29. Bob:       omdat ze daar gewoon kip echt .. eten met .. alles  
PA           *because they really just eat chicken with everything there*
30. Larry:     dat heb je weleens verteld ja  
PA           *yeah you've mentioned that before*
31. Laura:     dat maakt het toch niet een groente,  
PA           *that doesn't make it a vegetable does it*
32. Bob:       dat is daar  
PA           *there that's*
33. Laura:     dat maakt het toch gewoon een vleeslievende .. lief .. hebbende  
PA           *that just makes it a meatloving loving*
34. Bob:       kip is daar,  
PA           *there chicken is*
- 35             kip wordt daar niet beschouwd als vlees  
PA           *chicken isn't considered meat there*
- 36             als mensen vragen .. neem je vlees mee .. en je neemt kip mee,  
PA           *if people ask are you bringing meat and you bring chicken*
- 37             dan zeggen ze .. oh .. waarom heb je een salade meegenomen .....
- PA           *then they'll say oh why did you bring a salad*
- 38             you know .. why'd you bring a salad

- 39 Larry: ja  
PA *yeah*
- 40 oh kut  
PA *oh shoot*
- 41 oh, sorry  
PA *oh sorry*
- 42 Bob: dus daar wordt het in ieder geval beschouwd als een groente  
PA *so at least it's considered a vegetable there*
- 43 en groente /?/ sowieso niet,  
PA *and vegetables aren't /?/ anyway,*
- 44 dus,  
PA *so,*
- 45 wat dat betreft,  
PA *as far as that's concerned*
- 46 Petunia: ja  
PA *yeah*

### Excerpt 5: They've become really Dutch

- 1 Ermie: ie maar ik was zo confused wanneer jullie de tijden begonnen te doen  
PA *ee but I was so confused when you guys began doing the times*
- 2 ik was zo van  
PA *I was like*
- 3 what is happening  
PA *what is happening*
- 4 Scooter: ja  
PA *yeah*

- 5 Laura: ik dacht  
PA *I was thinking*
- 6 waarom is ermie  
PA *why is ermie*
- 7 ermie is op zich invested in ons  
PA *ermie's usually pretty invested in us*
- 8 maar waarom is ermie zo invested in ons  
PA *but why is ermie this invested in us*
- 9 Scooter: ja  
PA *yeah*
- 10 dat dacht ik ook  
PA *that's what I was thinking too*
- 11 Ermie: nou  
PA *well*
- 12 at that point
- 13 wist ik niet dat ik zou komen  
PA *I didn't know that I would be coming*
- 14 Scooter: oh  
PA *oh*
- 15 Laura: oh oké  
PA *oh okay*
- 16 Ermie: want ik had nog dingen gepland enzo,  
PA *because I still had some things planned and stuff*
- 17 en ik .. ik ben nu om documenten te regelen  
PA *and I .. I'm here now to arrange some documents*



- 32 Junior: te nederlands.  
PA *too dutch*
- 33 [laughter]
- 34 Ermie: [laughter]
- 35 Laura: dat hebben we voor jou gedaan .. he,  
PA *we did that for you you know,*
- 36 Ermie: ja: ja:, weet ik maar  
PA *yeah yeah I know but*
- 37 Laura: omdat jij: zei:  
PA *because you said*
- 38 Ermie: ja weet ik  
PA *yeah I know*
- 39 Scooter: ja ja ja,  
PA *yeah yeah yeah*
- 40 hoezo te nederlands  
PA *what do you mean too dutch*
- 41 Ermie: ja  
PA *yeah*
- 42 want ik was helemaal confused  
PA *because I was totally confused*
- 43 ik was van wat  
PA *I was like what*
- 44 Laura: ja  
PA *yeah*
- 45 dus volgens mij ben jij te nederlands geworden

- PA *so I think you've become too dutch*
- 46 Ermie: ja:
- PA *yeah*
- 47 Scooter: ja
- PA *yeah*
- 48 volgens mij wel
- PA *I think so*
- 49 Laura: ja ja
- PA *yeah yeah*
- 50 Scooter: een echte TCK'er was niet verward geweest
- PA *a real TCK wouldn't have been confused*
- 51 Bob: ah ja
- PA *ah yes*
- 52 Ermie: en ben ik de enige die zomaar komt binnenwandelen
- PA *and am I the only one who just walks in*
- 53 heel nederlands
- PA *very dutch*
- 54 Scooter: ja goed punt goed punt
- PA *yeah good point good point*

**Excerpt 6: With cumin all the way from Morocco you know**

- 1 Petunia: het is erg lekker trouwens
- PA *it's very nice by the way*
- 2 Bob: ja
- PA *yeah*
- Laura: gelukkig.

- PA *I'm glad*
- 3 ik dacht,
- PA *I thought*
- 4 oe dat is eigenlijk wel
- PA *oo it's actually been*
- best wel lang geleden dat ik weer pasta heb gemaakt,
- PA *a pretty long time since I last made pasta*
- 5 laat ik dat weer eens een keer doen.
- PA *let me do that again sometime*
- 6 mmm
- 7 Petunia: wat is jouw go-to maaltijd om te maken
- PA *what's your go-to meal to make*
- 8 Laura: met komijn helemaal uit marokko he,
- PA *with cumin all the way from morocco you know*
- 9 zit hierin
- PA *is in this*
- 10 Petunia: woah
- 11 Bob: wauw
- PA *wow*
- 12 Petunia: wat cool
- PA *very cool*
- 13 Laura: ja
- PA *yeah*
- 14 heeft jimmy voor me meegenomen.
- PA *jimmy brought it with him for me*

## Appendix B: Audio Transcripts

### Audio transcript 1: And they have Cup-a-Soup too on board too

- 1 **Bob:** en ze hebben ook cup-a-soup ook aan boord.  
 DL *and they have also cup-a-soup also on board*  
 PA *and they have cup-a-soup too on board too*
- 2 **DL:** dus daar ...  
 DL *so there*  
 PA *so there*
- 3 **DL:** niet aan boord.  
 DL *not on board*  
 PA *not on board*
- 4 **Laura:** a:h,  
 DL *ah*  
 PA *ah*
- 5 **DL:** heb je toch ..  
 DL *have you still*  
 PA *then at least you've got*
- 6 **DL:** nou,  
 DL *well*  
 PA *well*
- 7 **DL:** aan boord?  
 DL *on board*  
 PA *on board*
- 8 **Laura:** jongens,  
 DL *boys*  
 PA *guys*

9 **Scooter:** bob ... het is ... het is acht jaar geleden

DL *bob it is it is eight years ago*

PA *bob it's been it's been eight years*

10 au.

DL *ow*

PA *ow*

11 **Bob:** I know

12 **Laura:** voorzichtig.

DL *careful*

PA *careful*

13 **Bob:** ik had er gisteren nog over,

DL *I had it yesterday still over*

PA *I was just talking about this yesterday*

14 met iemand in de kerk.

DL *with someone in the church*

PA *with someone in church*

15 **Laura:** wat

DL *what*

PA *what*

16 **Bob:** ja, hij had zelf ook op het schip gezeten,

DL *yes he had himself also on the ship sat*

PA *yes he'd been on the ship himself as well*

17 dus ... toen kwamen we

DL *so then came we*

PA *so then we got to*

- 18 **Laura:** o:h ja:?  
 DL *oh yes*  
 PA *oh really*

### Audio transcript 2: I'm Dutch

- 1 **Laura:** you are so: ta:ll oh my goodness.  
 2 **Percy:** [*laughter*]  
 3 **Laura:** /?/ I'm like .. here.  
 4 **Percy:** I'm Dutch.  
 5 **Ermie:** a:h.  
 6 [*laughter*]  
 7 **Laura:** [*laughter*]  
 8 **Percy:** [*laughter*]  
 9 **Junior:** [*laughter*]  
 10 **Ermie:** he's Dutch,  
 11 **Percy:** [*laughter*]  
 12 **Ermie:** okay.  
 13 **Percy:** [*laughter*]  
 14 **Laura:** [*laughter*]

### Audio transcript 3: We got all our Tom and Jerry from the ship

- 1 **Bob:** al onze ... tom en jerry hebben wij van het schip meegekregen  
 DL *all our tom and jerry have we from the ship gotten*  
 PA *we got all our tom and jerry from the ship*  
 2 dat hebben mn ouders ooit een keer in ... weet ik veel .. peru gekocht,  
 DL *that have my parents ever a time in know I much peru bought*

- PA            *my parents bought them sometime in I don't know peru*
- 3            op zo'n markt daar,
- DL            *on such a market there*
- PA            *on one of those markets there*
- 4            je weet wel
- DL            *you know do*
- PA            *you know*
- 5    **Petunia:** oh ja
- DL            *oh yes*
- PA            *oh right*
- 6            [*laughter*]
- 7    **Bob:** ja
- DL            *yes*
- PA            *yeah*
- 8            je weet hoe dat gaat,
- DL            *you know how that goes*
- PA            *you know how it is*
- 9    **Larry:** oh ja
- DL            *oh yes*
- PA            *oh yeah*
- 10 **Petunia:** [*laughter*]
- 11 **Bob:** [*laughter*]
- 12 **Larry:** [*laughter*]
- 13 **Bob:** je koopt ergens een film en je weet niet wat er eigenlijk inzit.
- DL            *you buy somewhere a movie and you know not what there actually is in*

- PA            *you buy a movie somewhere and you don't know what's actually in it*
- 14 **Petunia:**    ja
- DL            *yes*
- PA            *yeah*
- 15 **Laura:**        ja
- DL            *yes*
- PA            *yeah*
- 16 **Larry:**        [*laughter*]
- 17 **Bob:**            [*laughter*]
- 18 **Larry:**        in roemenië was dat precies hetzelfde.
- DL            *in romania was that exactly the same*
- PA            *that was the exact same in romania*

#### **Audio transcript 4: Because they really just eat chicken with everything there**

- 1 **Bob:**            omdat ze daar gewoon kip echt .. eten met .. alles
- DL            *because they there just chicken really eat with everything*
- PA            *because they really just eat chicken with everything there*
- 2 **Larry:**        dat heb je weleens verteld ja
- DL            *that have you occasionally told yes*
- PA            *yeah you've mentioned that before*
- 3 **Laura:**        dat maakt het toch niet een groente,
- DL            *that makes it still not a vegetable*
- PA            *that doesn't make it a vegetable does it*
- 4 **Bob:**            dat is daar
- DL            *that is there*
- PA            *there that's*

- 5 **Laura:** dat maakt het toch gewoon een vleeslievende .. lief .. hebbende  
 DL *that makes it still normal a meatloving loving*  
 PA *that just makes it a meatloving loving*
- 6 **Bob:** kip is daar,  
 DL *chicken is there*  
 PA *there chicken is*
- 7  
 kip wordt daar niet beschouwd als vlees  
 DL *chicken is there not considered as meat*  
 PA *chicken isn't considered meat there*
- 8  
 als mensen vragen .. neem je vlees mee .. en je neemt kip mee,  
 DL *if people ask take you meat with and you take chicken with*  
 PA *if people ask are you bringing meat and you bring chicken*
- 9  
 dan zeggen ze .. oh .. waarom heb je een salade meegenomen .....
- DL *then say they oh why have you a salad brought*  
 PA *then they'll say oh why did you bring a salad*
- 10  
 you know .. why'd you bring a salad

### Audio transcript 5: They've become really Dutch

- 1 **Ermie:** ik heb hem aan junior ook .. laten zien,  
 DL *I have it to junior also shown*  
 PA *I showed it to junior too*
- 2  
 hij zo van, ja, ze zijn echt nederlands geworden  
 DL *he so of yes they are really dutch become*  
 PA *he was like yeah they've become really dutch*
- 3  
 [laughter]
- 4 **Scooter:** [laughter]

- 5                   ja  
DL                *yes*  
PA                *yeah*
- 6   **Junior:**   te nederlands.  
DL                *too dutch*  
PA                *too dutch*
- 7                   [laughter]
- 8   **Ermie:**   [laughter]
- 9   **Laura:**   dat hebben we voor jou gedaan .. he,  
DL                *that have we for you done huh,*  
PA                *we did that for you you know,*
- 10 **Ermie:**   ja: ja:, weet ik maar  
DL                *yes yes know I but*  
PA                *yeah yeah I know but*
- 11 **Laura:**   omdat jij: zei:  
DL                *because you said*  
PA                *because you said*
- 12 **Ermie:**   ja weet ik  
DL                *yes know I*  
PA                *yeah I know*
- 13  **Scooter:** ja ja ja,  
DL                *yes yes yes*  
PA                *yeah yeah yeah*
- 14                   hoezo te nederlands  
DL                *why too dutch*

PA *what do you mean too dutch*

**Audio transcript 6: With cumin all the way from Morocco you know**

1 **Laura:** ik dacht,

DL *I thought*

PA *I thought*

2 oe dat is eigenlijk wel

DL *oo that is actually well*

PA *oo it's actually been*

best wel lang geleden dat ik weer pasta heb gemaakt,

DL *pretty well long passed that I again pasta have made*

PA *a pretty long time since I last made pasta*

3 laat ik dat weer eens een keer doen.

DL *let I that again once a time do*

PA *let me do that again sometime*

4 mmm

5 **Petunia:** wat is jouw go-to maaltijd om te maken

DL *what is your go-to meal to make*

PA *what's your go-to meal to make*

6 **Laura:** met komijn helemaal uit marokko he,

DL *with cumin all out of morocco huh*

PA *with cumin all the way from morocco you know*

7 zit hierin

DL *sits herein*

PA *is in this*

8 **Petunia:** woah

9 **Bob:** wauw

DL *wow*

PA *wow*

10 **Petunia:** wat cool

DL *what cool*

PA *very cool*

11 **Laura:** ja

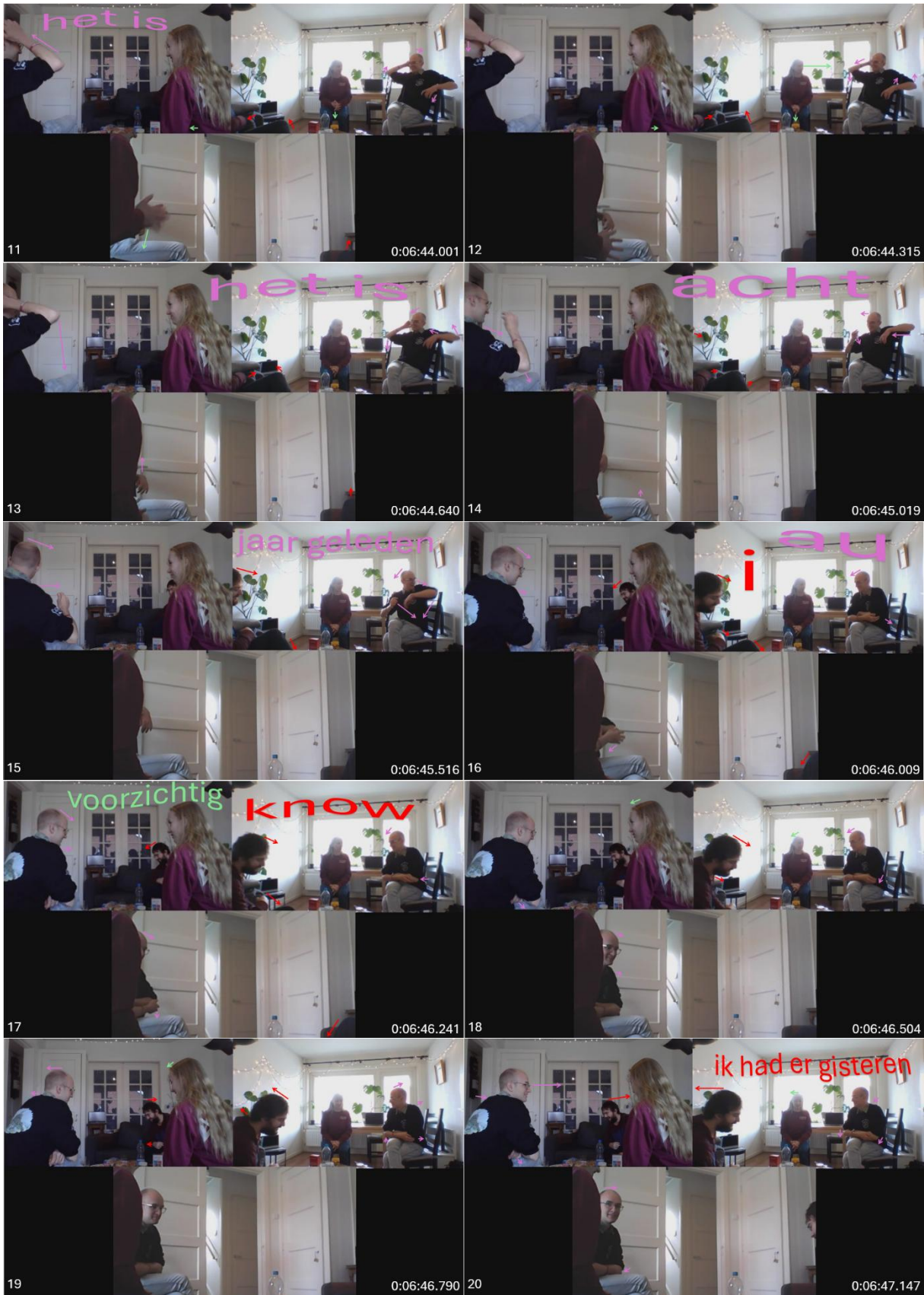
DL *yes*

PA *yeah*

## Appendix C: Visual Transcriptions

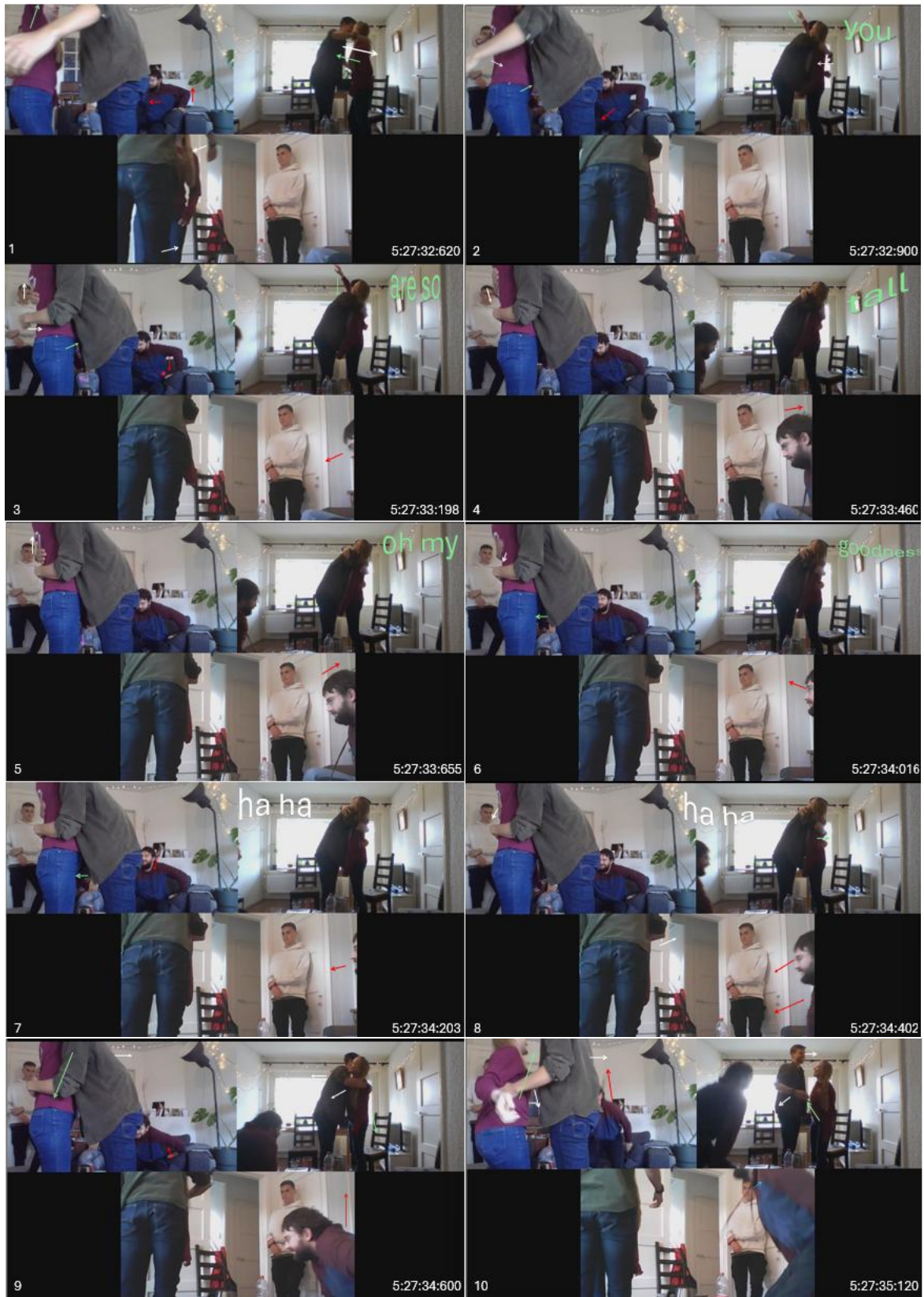
## Excerpt 1

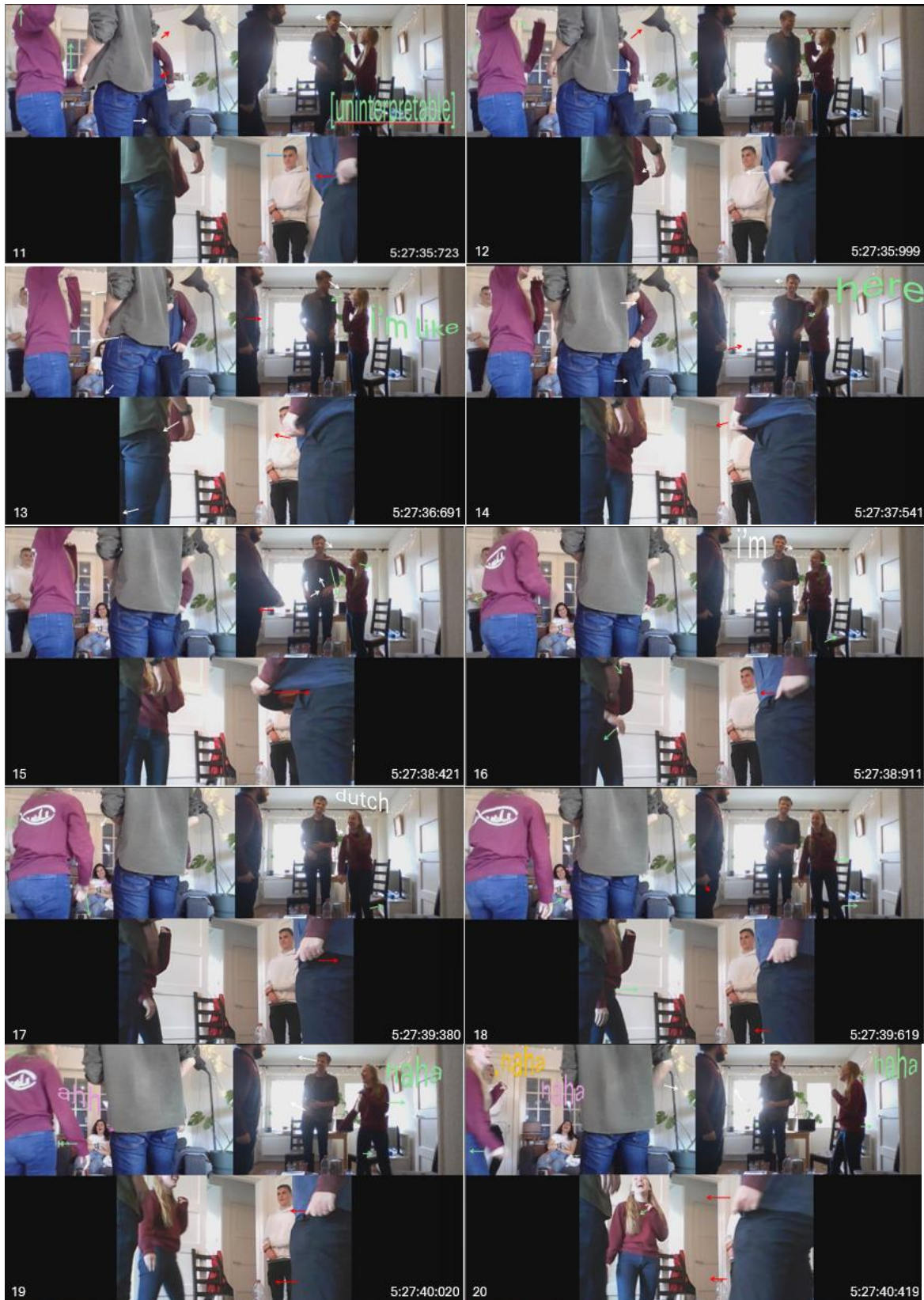






Excerpt 2







## Excerpt 3

1:30:09.368

2:30:10.349

3:30:10.900

4:30:11.716

5:30:12.312

6:30:13.268

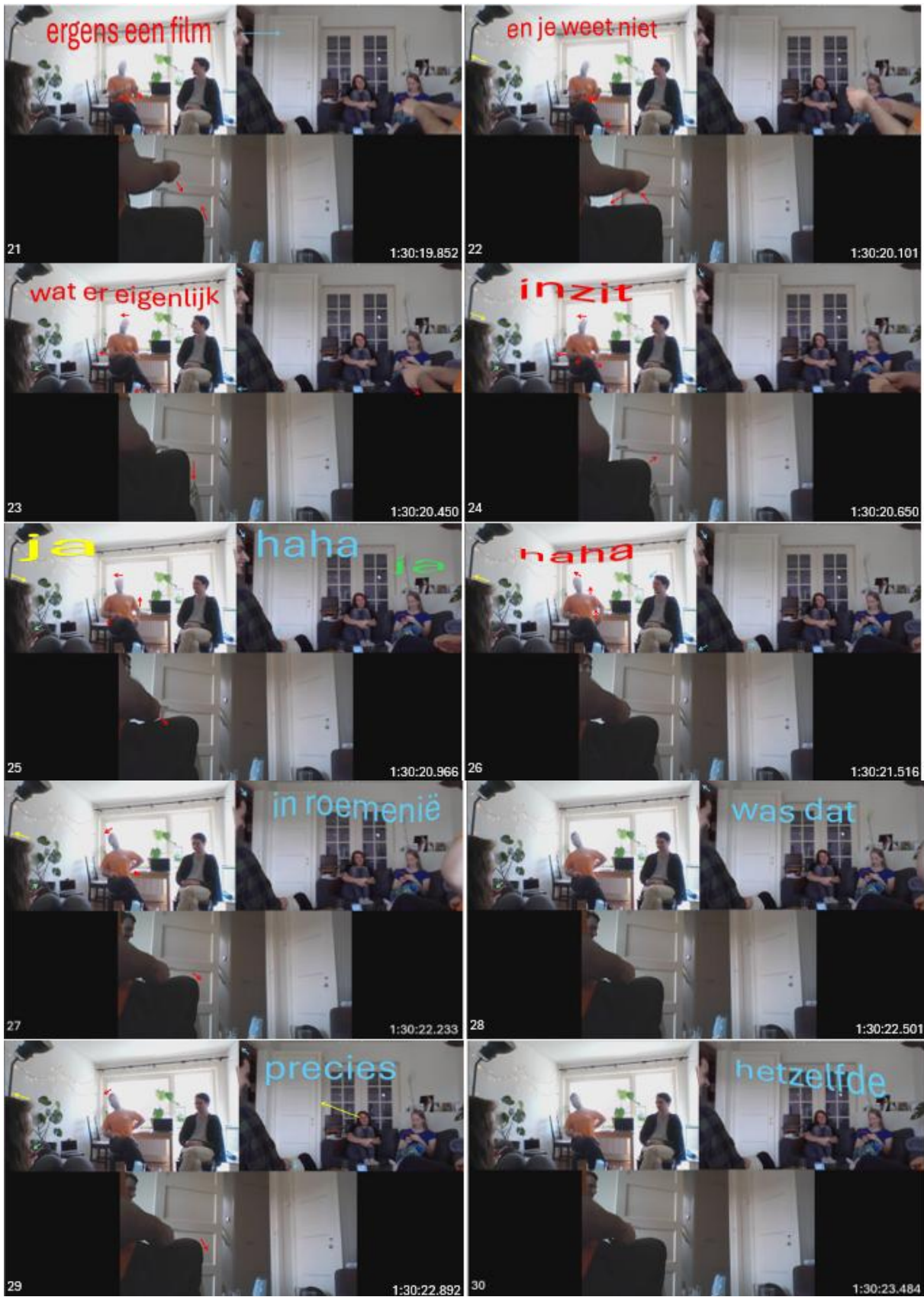
7:30:14.416

8:30:15.204

9:30:15.553

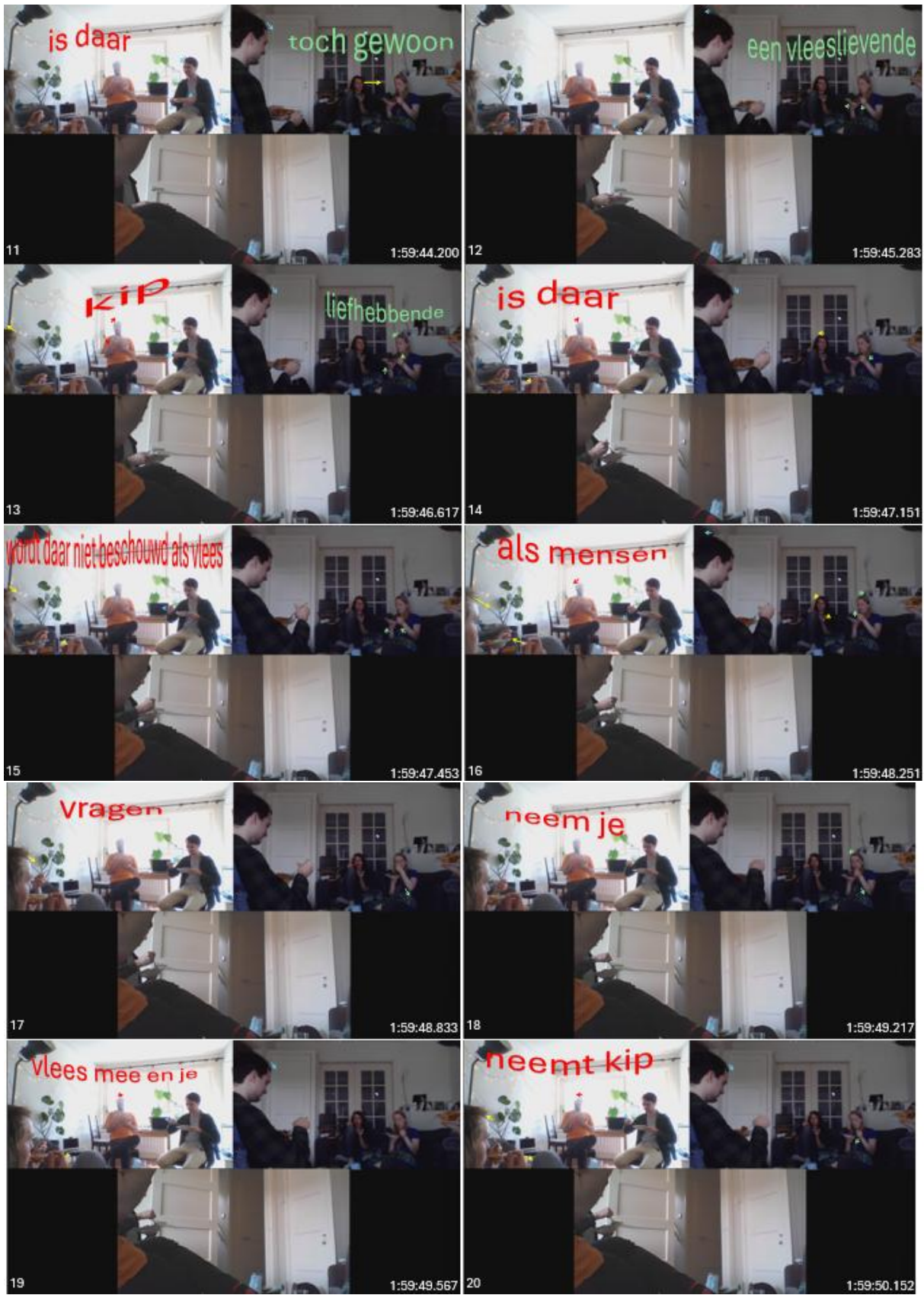
10:30:15.934

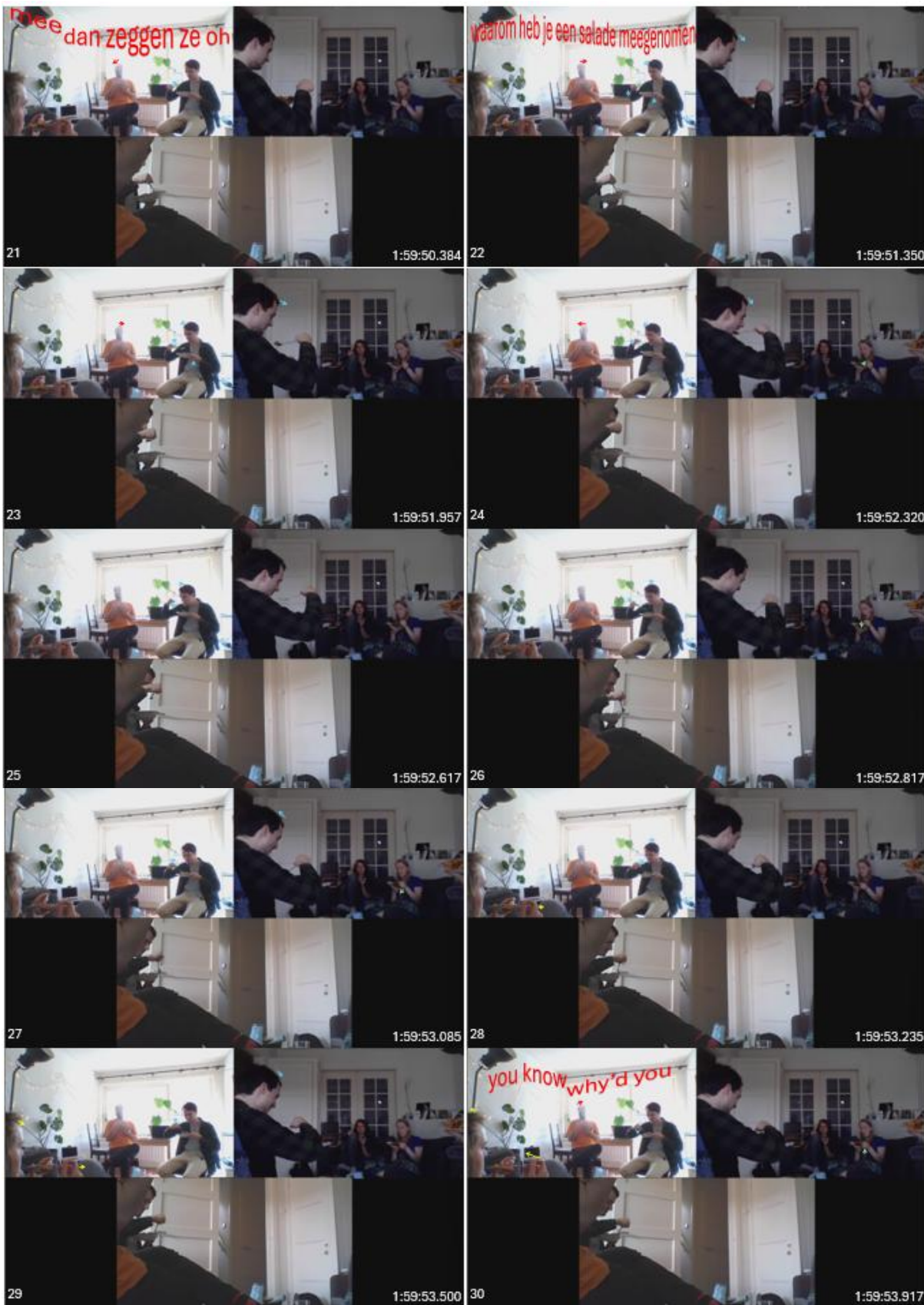


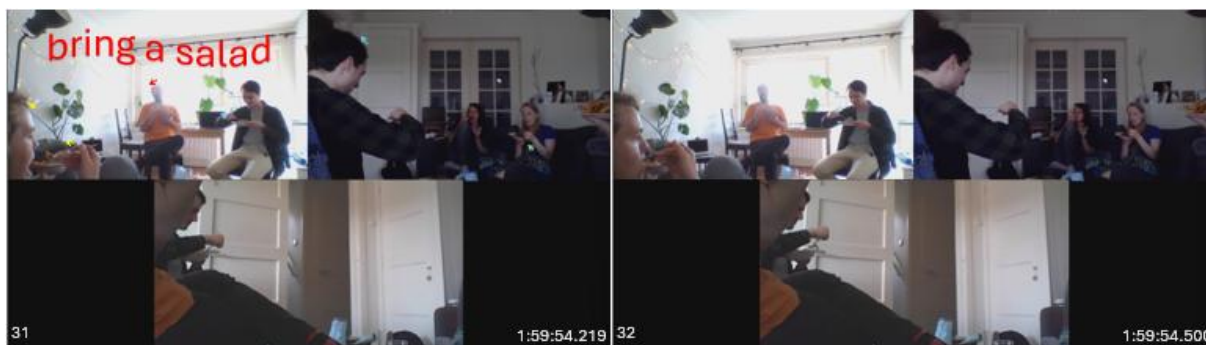


## Excerpt 4

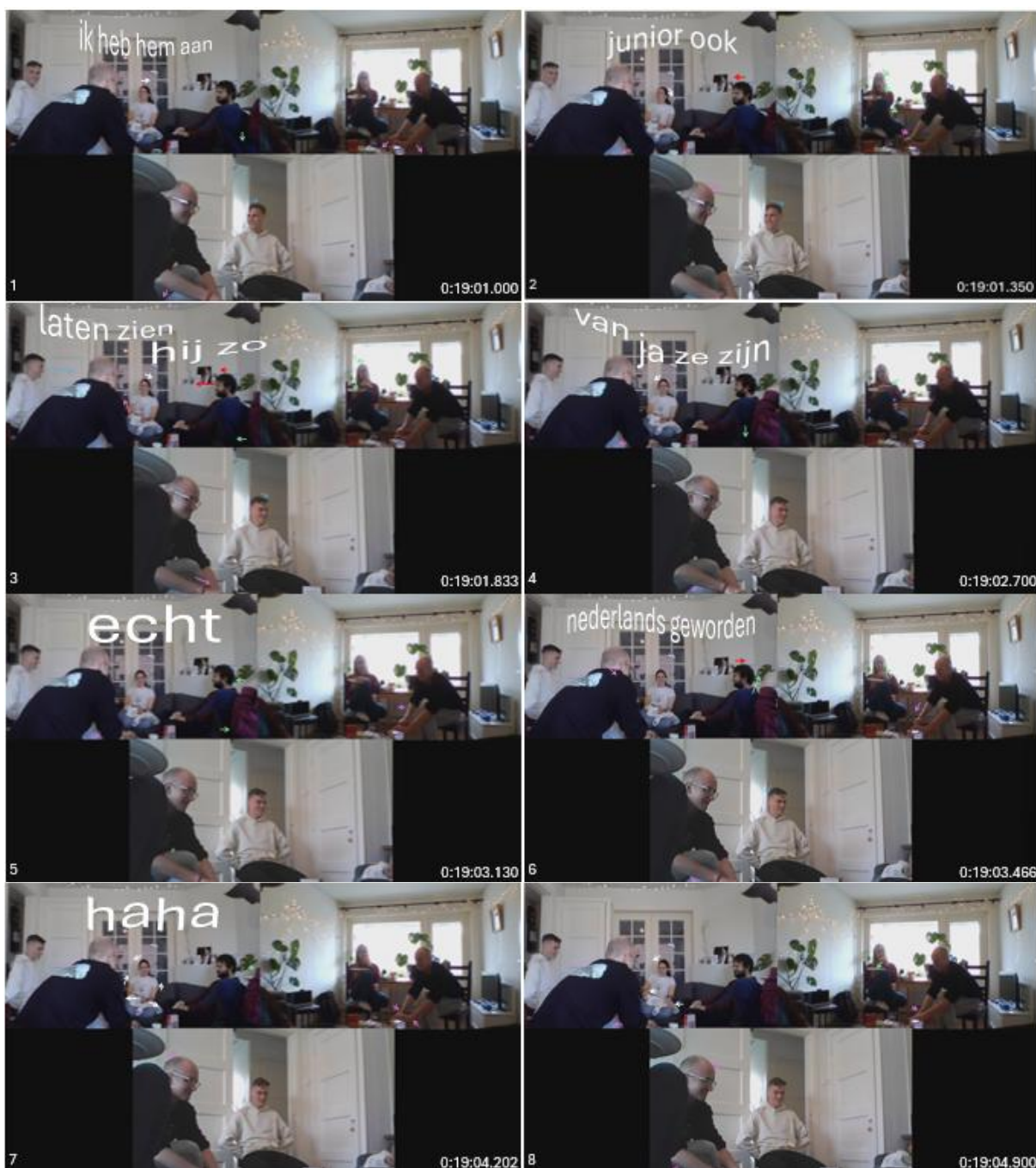


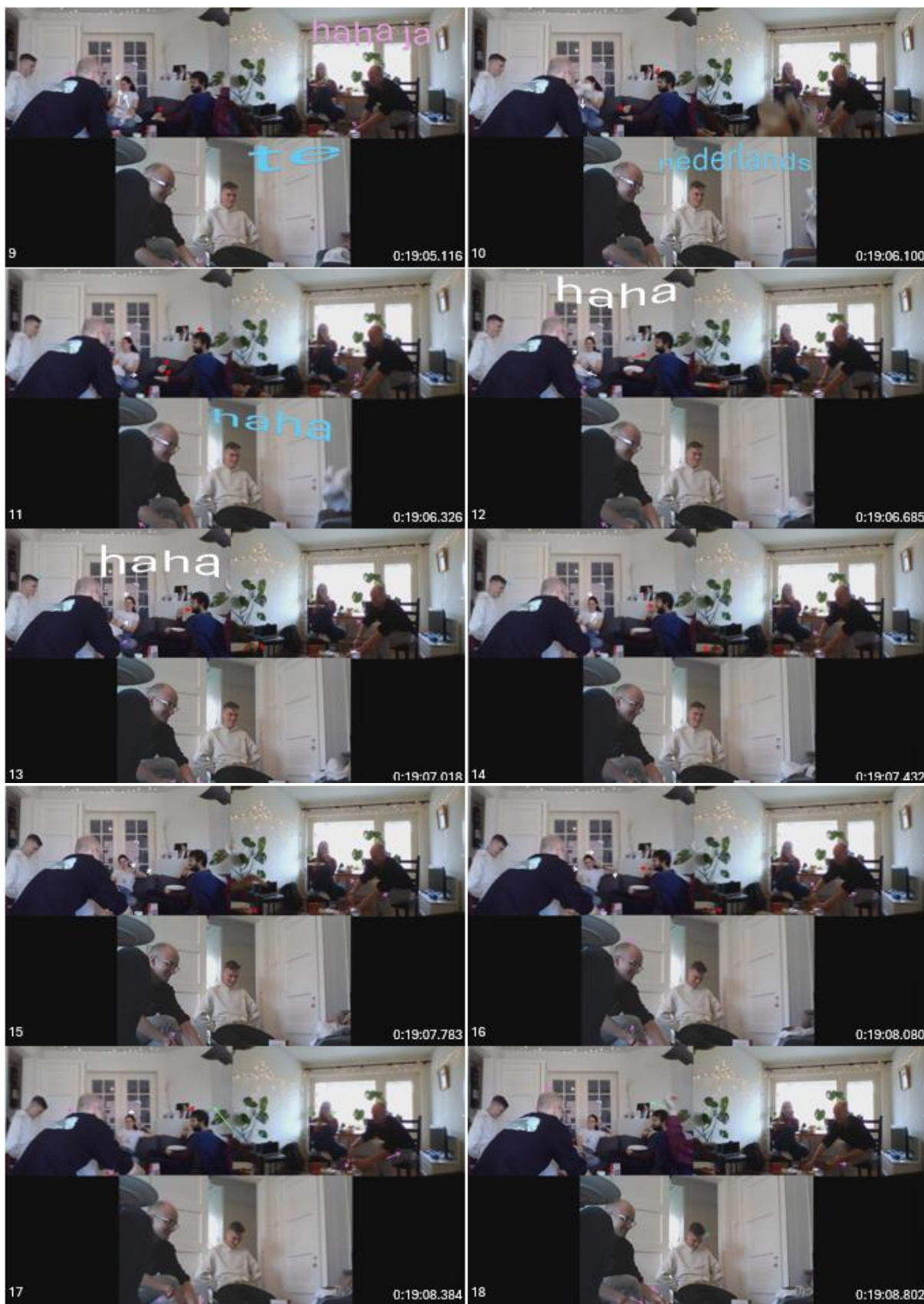


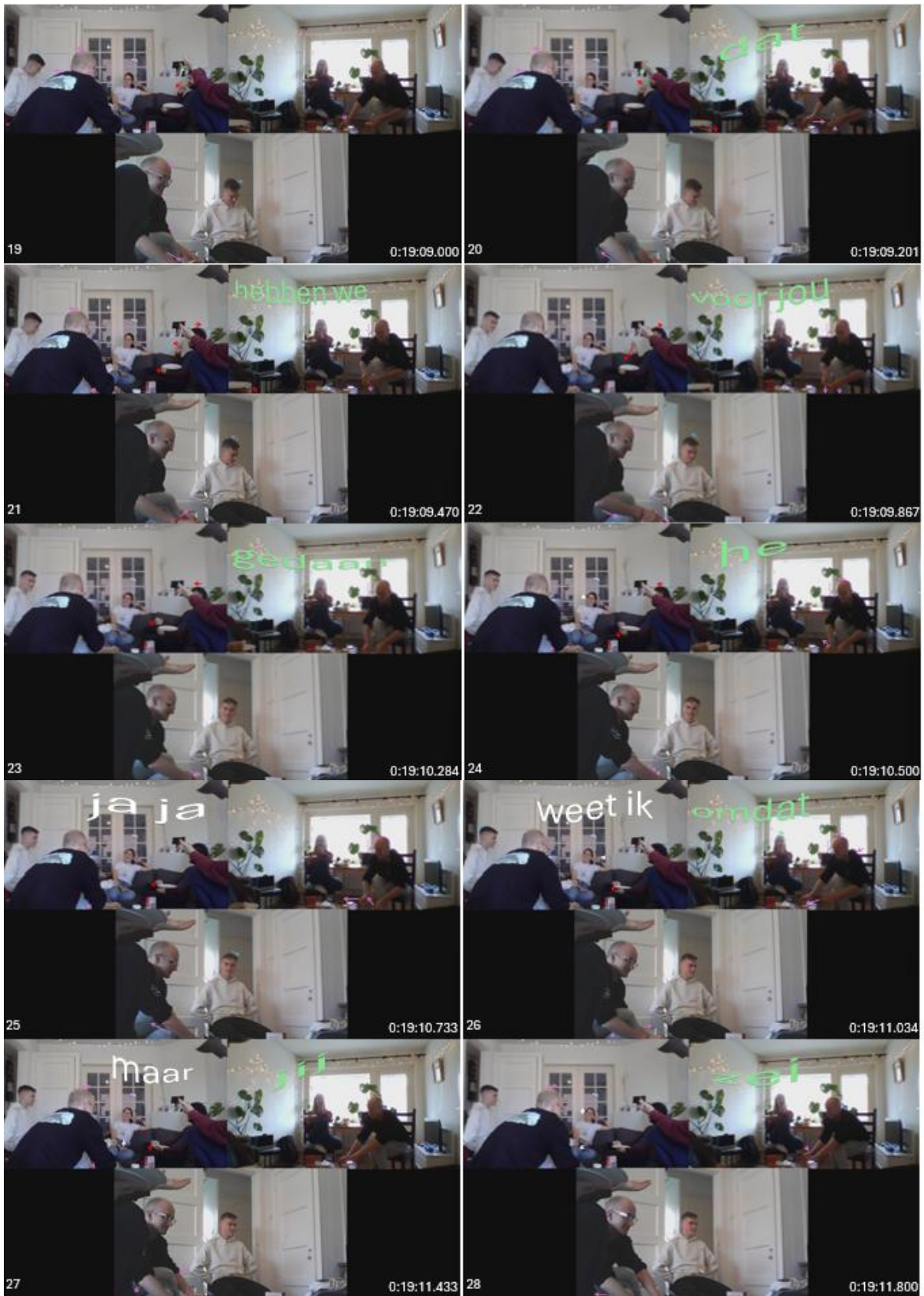


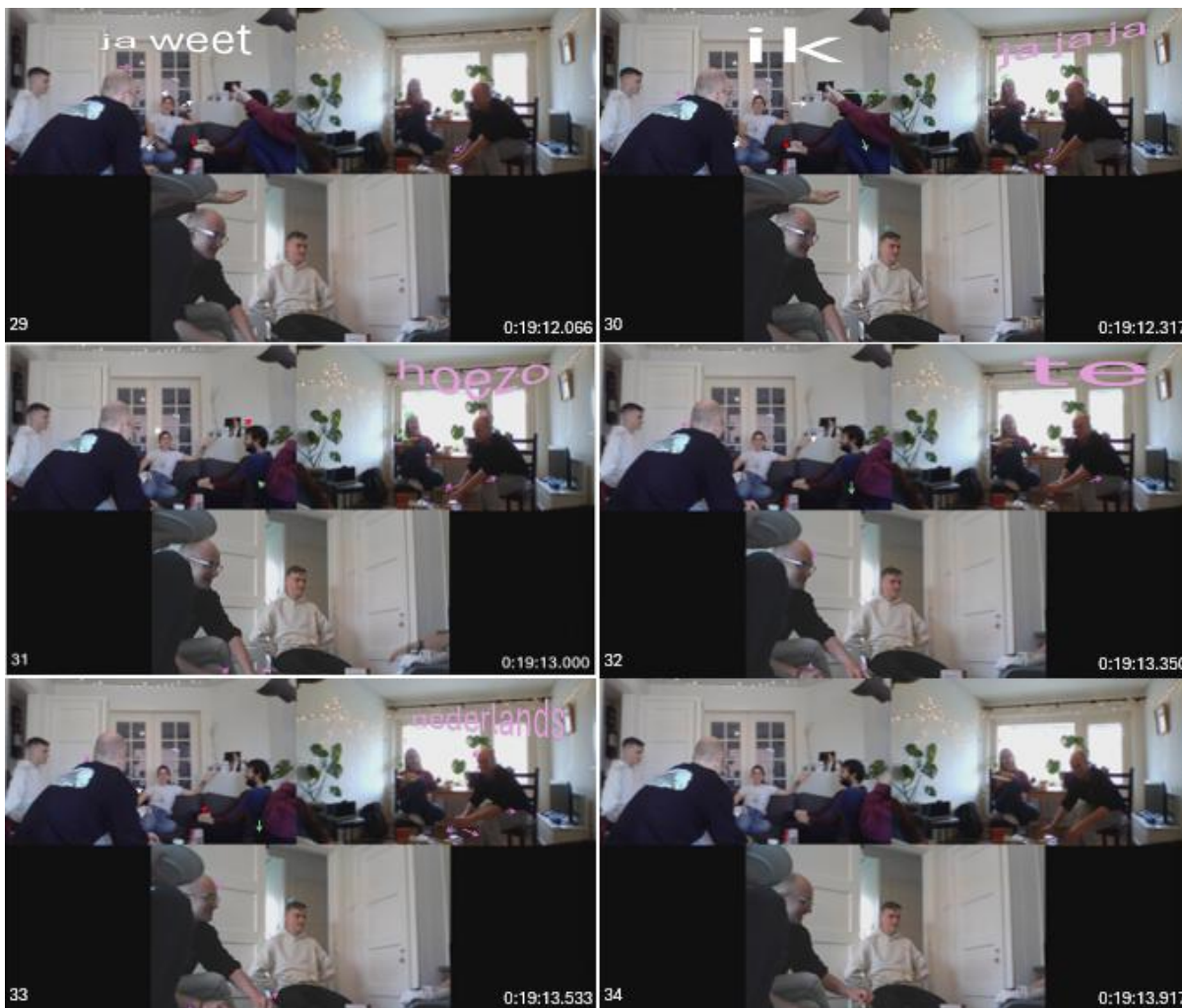


### Excerpt 5









Excerpt 6

