Overlapping talk in Greek conversations

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There has been a considerable amount of research on overlapping talk in English within the conversation analysis framework. Researchers have studied the placement of overlapping talk, the number of syllables over which it could extend, how speakers react to it and if and to what extent it disrupts the flow of conversation. Further work on the interface between phonetics and conversation analysis has explored the phonetic resources people use when finding themselves in overlap, as well as when they are recovering from a stretch of overlapping talk. Results coming out of both those research fields, have shown that the majority of instances of overlapping talk in English is minimal (1-2 syllables) and even if it is more extensive, its placement with respect to a pitch accent usually predicts whether such talk will be treated as competitive and potentially disruptive or not. To date, there has been no research on overlapping talk in Greek, which is a language that allows different syntactic structures and has a different phonetic system from English. This paper explores the interactional and phonetic structure of Greek overlapping talk which spans over 3 or more syllables in a corpus of telephone call data. Results so far suggest that most instances of such overlapping talk in Greek are not 'disruptive', with both speakers' turns running to completion, and incoming talk occurring soon after a pitch accent has been produced. The interactional sequences they are found in are mainly 'collaborative actions' such as exchanging wishes/greetings or collaborative completions which suggest that, as in English, overlapping talk is regularly used by speakers to achieve collaborative actions.