

The Logic of Clarification: Some Observations about Word-Clarification Repairs in Finnish-as-a-Lingua-Franca Interactions

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We analyse a specific type of repair in the talk of adult learners of a foreign language: the clarification of a word that causes trouble for the interlocutor. In SLA terms, we are doing a fine-grained analysis of issues which have earlier been subsumed under the heading of communication strategies (Kasper and Kellerman 1997). We will characterize alternative ways of doing a clarification and examine some of the ways in which this type of repair is organized interactionally. Finally, we explore the relation between the semantics of the expression that is explained and the constructional and sequential design of the repair. We focus on word-clarification repairs that are initiated by the recipient. Extract 1 is an instance.

Extract 1 *Where-your-capital?*

Abdul is a Kurdish man who has already been in Finland for three years; Juan is from Guatemala and has only been in Finland for three months at the time of the recording (his wife is Finnish).

- 1 Abdul: missä sinun pääkaupunki?
where your capital ((pääkaupunki: 'head' (pää) – city.)
- 2 (0.8)
- 3 (): ((smacks))
- 4 (0.8)
- 5 Abdul: pääkaupun^oki^o?
capital
- 6 (0.4)
- 7 Juan: pääkaupunk[i]
capital
- 8 Abdul: [°joo↑:°]
yes
- 9 Juan?: (°ko°)

- 10 (0.5)
- 11 Juan: >en tiedä.<
I don't know.
- 12 (0.3)
- 13 Abdul: miksi en teeä,
why I don't know
- 14 (0.6)
- 15 Abdul?: hh ((??))
- 16 (0.4)
- 17→ Abdul: minun pääkaupunki Bagdad.
my capital Baghdad
- 18 (0.4)
- 19 Abdul: m[issä sin]un pääka[u°punkki°°]
where your capital
- 20 Juan: [A:=jaa.] [°joo joo<]=
oh yes yes yes
- 21 =>ymmmäärän. ymmmäärän.<
I understand I understand
- 22 (.)
- 23 Abdul: °j[o(o)°]
yes
- 24 Juan: [jah-,] (>°ö°<) Guatemala, (0.3)
and Guatemala
- 25 on sama [nimi kaupunki. sama,
is same name city same

Juan does not immediately provide an answer to Abdul's question in line 1 ('where (is) your capital'). After several attempts to repair the trouble (lines 5–13), Abdul eventually solves the problem by exemplifying the word 'capital': 'my capital (is) Baghdad' (line 17). All the repairs we will discuss in this paper display this pattern: they are initiated by the recipient in next turn and subsequently repaired through clarification by the speaker of the trouble-source turn him- or herself. From a sequential perspective, this type of repair can be characterized as other-initiated self-repair (cf. Schegloff, Jefferson and Sacks 1977).

Note that Abdul does not just exemplify the class of capital names by mentioning a member of that class when he is clarifying the meaning of the word *pääkaupunki* ('capital'). The utterance as a whole ('my capital (is) Baghdad') exemplifies the *type* of answer Juan should give to Abdul's question ('where your capital'). Abdul demonstrates the kind of utterance that would work in this particular environment of use. Clarification thus is not just accomplished at the propositional, descriptive level of utterances: it is primarily achieved through and via pragmatic exemplification at the sequential level.

Understanding a word amounts to more than knowing what it represents: the recipient should be able to understand what the word is used for and what action is implemented by the utterance in which it is used.²

We will discuss three aspects of other-initiated word-clarification repairs: their *conceptual*, their *interactional* and their *semantic* logic. At the level of the conceptual logic, the focus is on the mode of problem solving. In Extract 1, for instance, the clarification is done by exemplifying the word *pääkaupunki Bagdad* ('my capital Bagdad'). But exemplification is just one of the ways in which a word may be explained. In theory, Abdul could have used other methods, e.g. by circumscribing the meaning of *pääkaupunki* as 'the main city of your home country'. A speaker can explain the meaning of a word in different ways – by exemplification, by specification or by contrast. Each method that is used to clarify the meaning of an expression displays a specific type of reasoning about how a word could be explained in the easiest, most effective and/or most appropriate way.

The second aspect has to do with the interactional logic of the repair. This is investigated by an examination of its sequential trajectory. Word clarifications may be done as a one-step move that is implemented in a single turn (as in line 17 of Extract 1) or as a multi-step project that is interactionalized in a series of turns. The number of steps, their order and the way they are packaged mark the path along which the speaker tries to guide the recipient towards recognition of the word in question.

The conceptual and interactional design of clarification repairs are not independent from each other. There is a finely tuned interdependency. A primary level at which they meet is the semantics that is built into an expression through the process of clarifying it. This is the semantic logic of the repair. We explore this aspect by examining the clarification of state-modifying categories (expressions such as 'divorce', 'repair', 'restore', 'recover', etc.). We describe how a state-modifying category is clarified by locating its position in a little semantic system of categorically organized knowledge. The way this system is ordered for the purpose of clarifying an element of it clearly figures in the sequential design of the repair.

Before our discussion of the conceptual, the interactional and the semantic logic of the design of word-clarification repairs, we will first describe the environment of use of clarification repairs. Our students did not engage in clarification work after just any type of repair initiation. They never do word-clarification as a first attempt to solve a recipient problem with prior turn. All word-clarification repairs in our

data are subsequent attempts to solve the problem. We will refer to this feature as the non-firstness property.

The data

Our data were collected by Minna Zaman-Zadeh in the spring of 1996. She collected the recordings of 12 conversations between adult learners of Finnish in an immigrant-education school (the Adult Education Center of Oulu, Finland). The students, who migrated to Finland as adults, came from Ethiopia, Germany (2), Guatemala, Iraq (2), Russia and Thailand; their first languages are respectively Somali, German, Spanish, Assyrian and Kurdish (the two Iraqis), Russian and Thai. The participants had lived in Finland from 2.5 months to 3 years. The teachers characterized their students' command of Finnish as still very elementary; they were 'real beginners'.

Pairs of students were asked to talk Finnish with each other during a break between lessons and to record this interaction. It indeed turned out to be a rather laborious task for the students to speak in Finnish to each other. The interaction was frequently formatted as a kind of interview, with one party asking questions and the other answering. Both the introduction of topics and their elaboration turned out to be hard work. There were many long silences within and between turns and many forms of repair could be observed.

Our data are semi-elicited. The talk we recorded was not 'naturally occurring'. Although the participants had local control over turn-taking and the topical and sequential organization of the talk, the exchange itself was arranged for research purposes. Almost all of the reservations that should be held against the use of elicited data apply to ours too.

The non-firstness of word-clarification repairs

Before discussing the clarification repair itself, we want to point to a remarkable sequential feature of this type of repair in our data. Our word-clarification repairs are not done as a first option for doing repair. The speaker of the trouble-source turn first tries to solve the problem by other types of remedies. In the 'where-your-capital?' extract, for example, the trouble is first dealt with as a hearing or recognition problem. Abdul tries to solve the problem by simply repeating a segment from the trouble-source turn (see his *pääkaupunki* in line 5) and by confirming its correctness when it is subsequently repeated one more time by the recipient (line 7). In

Extract 2 below, we see this non-firstness property of word-clarification repairs one more time.

Extract 2 *He-repairs-car*

Asha is a 19-year-old woman from the Somalian minority in Ethiopia. Melbi is a 25-year-old Thai woman who is married to a Finn. Each of them has been in Finland about one year at the time of the first recording round.

- 1 Asha: sinun mies on suoma[lain]
your husband is Finnish
- 2 Melbi: [minun-]
my
- 3 (0.6)
- 4 Melbi: [joo↑o,
yes
- 5 (0.3)
- 6 Melbi: suomalainen.
Finnish
- 7 Asha: hy:vä.
good
- 8 (0.3)
- 9 Melbi: joo. hän:(0.9) kollejaa³ (0.3) autoh.
yes. he [repairs] car
- 10 (1.5)
- 11→ Asha: [>°mi]täh?
what
- 12 Melbi: [kol-]
re-
- 13 Melbi: <kollejaa.>
[repairs]
- 14 (0.5)
- 15→ Asha: kolle [↑jaa?]
[repairs]
- 16 Melbi: [joo,]
yes
- 17 (0.2)
- 18→ Melbi: (jos:) sinää o a: (1.2) auto rikki (0.4) jahän °tämä°
(if) you car broken and he this
- 19 (1.1)
- 20 Asha: (°m:h:n:°)
- 21 (0.4)
- 22 Melbi: korjaa,
repairs
- 23 (1.6)
- 24 Asha: °joh°
yes

- 25 (0.5)
- 26 Melbi: °autoh,°
car
- 27 (0.6)

When Melbi tries to tell Asha that her husband works as a car mechanic, Asha indicates that she is having a problem (*mitäh?*: 'what?', line 11). Again, the speaker of the trouble-source turn at first deals with the trouble as just a hearing problem. Melbi merely repeats a specific segment of her turn, perhaps in a more carefully pronounced mode (*kollejaa*, line 13). Only after her recipient has signalled this does not solve the problem (see the questioning repeat in line 15: *kollejaa?*), she deals with the trouble as something that can be solved by doing a word-clarification repair (lines 18–22).

As in Extract 1, word clarification is dealt with as a non-first option. Other methods of doing the repair are tried first. In our data, almost all cases of other-initiated word-clarification repair have this feature of non-firstness. The clarifications we will look at thus occur in a sequentially specifiable environment: they follow an other-initiation of repair indicating that this prior, less strong method of doing the repair was not successful.

It is tempting to explain the non-firstness of word-clarification repairs in terms of a kind of communicative trust which even beginning foreign language users rely upon. As long as no counter-evidence is given, the speaker assumes that his/her recipient is able to develop a working understanding of the words and constructions that are being used.

This account can be seen as compatible with the possibility that the non-firstness of our clarification-repairs is an artefact of the recording situation. Our conversations are recorded in a foreign-language learning setting. The students may have seen the recording situation as an assignment, or perhaps even as a test. Other types of accounts might be worth considering, however. The non-firstness of word clarification may be a side effect of an orientation to a problem-solving strategy that favours easy solutions first (cf. Pomerantz 1984b). The speaker of the trouble-source turn first deals with the trouble as just a hearing or recognition problem. When a speaker treats a trouble as a hearing problem, s/he still can be aware of the possibility that the expression in question is not known by the recipient. The speaker just tries to avoid less preferred interactional trajectories.⁴ Repair outside the borders of the trouble-source turn causes discontinuities in the sequence that is in progress. It may even become the primary activity for a longer stretch of talk. The repair temporarily suspends the current

business at hand, even at the risk of losing it wholly (cf. Jefferson 1987). The participants may anticipate this by trying to minimize this type of discontinuity. Particularly in the kind of interaction that is examined here, solving the problem as only a hearing problem might be considered as an alternative that is less discontinuous than the laborious difficulties a beginning foreign-language learner might foresee when forced to clarify the meaning of a word to another beginner.

But whatever the origins of its initial dispreferredness may be, it suffices for our current purpose to observe that the word-clarification repairs in our data are non-first, next attempts to accomplish repair. At least one previous attempt to solve the problem in a different way has been unsuccessful.

The conceptual logic of the design of word-clarification repairs

All clarifications in our data explain world-describing words. When a speaker tries to clarify a word, he has to solve the problem of how to present information about it in such a way that the recipient is able to grasp what it is doing. The speakers in our data use various methods to achieve this. In Extract 1, Abdul solves the problem by giving an example from the set of names of capital cities. The example is supposed to do the work of enabling the recipient to develop a working understanding of the problematic expression. We have already referred to this type of solution as *clarification-by-exemplification*.

In Extract 2, Melbi solves the problem by describing the kind of work her husband does: 'when a car is broken, he repairs it' (line 18–22). We call the conceptual logic of this type of repair *clarification-by-description*.

Extract 3 illustrates a third type of conceptual logic. We call this type *clarification-by-script-link*. Juan is explaining that his wife is in hospital, and when his recipient does not understand, he says 'doctor' (line 8). The reference to the professional category ('*doctor*') is somehow supposed to do the work of enabling the recipient to identify the setting he is talking about ('*hospital*').

Extract 3 Where-your-wife?

Juan and Abdul

- 1 Juan: e:nyt, |minun vaimoo| on, (0.2) *hospital*.
uh now my wife is hospital
2 (0.8)
3 Abdul: (m-) missä- (.) missä sinun vaimo?
(m-) where where your wife

- 4 (0.5)
5→ Juan: °*hospital*°.
6 (0.5)
7 Abdul: [(ei-)]
(no-)
8→ Juan: [LÄÄ] käri,
doctor

The types of clarification we have seen up to now – by exemplification, by description or by script-link – have in common that they all resort to world-describing, encyclopedic knowledge. In Extract 1, the recipient not only has to know that Baghdad is a city, but also that it is the main city of a country in some relevant respect. In 2, the recipient is assumed to know that broken cars are repaired by a professionally specialized category of persons, 'car mechanics'. And in 3, the recipient is supposed to be able to make a link to one type of setting in which doctors relevantly act. In all these extracts, the clarifier relies upon the recipient's ability to make a knowledge link from familiar knowledge to the target knowledge.

The procedure for locating knowledge for constructing meaning may rely more heavily upon linguistic means, however. See, for instance, Extract 4, particularly lines 20–24. Hanna explains the Finnish word for 'be free' (*vapa*, here: 'have a holiday') as 'does not study'. *Vapa* is made into a member of the contrast pair <(be) free, study>. The negation of the other member should enable the recipient to locate the contrast category.

Extract 4 Is-your-husband-December-free?

Hanna is a 27-year-old Iraqi woman who had been in Finland as a refugee for 13 months at the time of the first recordings. Gudrun is a 28-year-old German woman who is married to a Finn; at the time of the first recordings, she had been in Finland for 2.5 months.

- 1 Hanna: onko sinu mies (1.1) on joulukuu vapaa°: (0.3) vii|ko
is your husband is decemberfree week
2 (4.2)
3 Gudrun: on|ko (.) minun- minun mi|es: (0.5) on: |ou|lu=
is my my husband is christmas
4 Hanna: =>joulukuu vapa, <
december free
5 (0.5)
6 Hanna: viiko?
week
7 (1.7)

- 8 Gudrun: >°vapa?°<
free
9 (1.7)
- 10 Gudrun: °m:°(.) (°en ymmärä,°)
(I don't understand)
- 11 (0.3)
- 12 Gudrun: e:he:mf!
13 (0.4)
- 14 Hanna: °m:°
15 (0.6)
- 16 Gudrun: °a:h°
17 (1.7)
- 18 Gudrun?: (.h)
19 (1.9)
- 20→ Hanna: ei opiskeeleh?
doesn't study
21 (0.8)
- 22 Gudrun: minun: (0.3) mies: °ö:h-° (2.5) opiskelee (1.0) hän[en]
my husband studies his
- 23 Hanna: [jo]o
yes
- 24 >minä ymmärän,<
I understand

The meaning of a word is explained by exploiting the contrastive, antonymic relation it has with another word. So, apart from knowledge links, word clarifications can also make use of linguistic practices for locating relevant cultural knowledge (see Fillmore 1982). Another example of a linguistic practice is giving synonyms. However, a more frequent type of using substitutes in our data is the use of intermediate language equivalents, e.g. the mentioning of the English equivalent of the word to be explained.

The interactional design of clarification repairs

Most of the clarification repairs in our corpus are designed as one-step moves. The repair proper is done in a single turn. In Extract 1 – *my capital Baghdad* – the clarification is packaged into a single turn-constructional unit. This is also the case in the clarification in Extract 3 (*doctor*) and in 4 (*doesn't study*). The speaker of the trouble-source turn assumes that the clarification can be done as a one-step procedure. However, if we look at Extract 5 – which is an instance of clarification-by-description – we see that the clarification is delivered as a series of successive steps.

Extract 5 Divorce

- Abdul and Juan
- 1 Abdul: .h onko me em onkö onko m m: ihi-ihimine-nen
is we uhm is is m m: m- man- CASE MARKER
- 2 pää: (0.5) (.h) sinun kotimaa?
head your home country
- 3 (0.5)
- 4 .hhonko mies; ero eroja nainen ja nainen eroja mies?
.hhis man divorce divorces woman and woman divorces man
- 5 (1.6)
- 6 onko?=
is
- 7 Juan: =erro,
{divorce}
- 8 (0.3)
- 9 Abdul: ero,
divorce
- 10 (0.5)
- 11 Juan: ero?
divorce
- 12 (0.3)
- 13 Abdul: joo.
yes
- 14 (0.9)
- 15 Juan: >mitä se on< (.) ero?
what is it divorce
- 16 (1.0)
- 17→ Abdul: e:: sinä nyt naimisissa.
you now married
- 18 (0.6)
- 19 Juan: jo, (0.4)[minä (naimisissa.)]
yes I married
- 20 Abdul: [nyt naimisissa.]
now married
- 21 (.)
- 22→ Abdul: ja milloin sinä haluat, (0.7)
and when you want
- 23 sinä sano ö sanon nä:: sinun vaimoo (.h) e: e
you say uh say your wife
- 24 minä en (0.2) halua sinun e e e:: (0.5) mene °e:°
I don't want you go
- 25 sinun eroja.
your divorces
- 26 (0.4)
- 27 Abdul: onko sinun paikka sama suomia?
is your place same Finland

- 28 (1.7)
 29 Abdul: onko^o: (0.7) eroja?
 is divorces
 30 (0.3)
 31 Juan: >anteksi en ymmärrä.< erro
 sorry I don't understand. {divorce}

After a few rounds in which he tries to solve the problem in other ways (lines 4–13), Abdul begins to clarify the meaning of *ero* ('divorce') in order to enable Juan to answer the question about marital law in his home country. Unlike the clarifications we have seen so far, the clarification is now delivered in a series of turns. Abdul first makes an assertion about Juan's marital status ('you now married', line 17) and he does not continue before Juan has confirmed it explicitly ('yes, (0.4) I (married)', line 19). Abdul even repeats a part of the assertion about Juan's married status one more time (we will come back to this repeat in the next section) before he goes on with a next step of the clarification, a description of the kind of event that occasions a divorce in a marriage ('and when ... you say your wife ... I don't want your ... go ... your divorces', lines 22–25).

The progress of the clarification project is made dependent on the active collaboration of the recipient. The recipient not only demonstrates that he recognizes that some repair sequence is under way, he also seizes the opportunity to show that he is following so far. The clarification is interactionalized by distributing it over a series of turns. The recipient contributes to the way it is unfolding. Unlike one-step clarifications, the trouble is not treated as a problem that can be solved by simply handing over a one-way ticket with which the recipient should arrive at a solution all by himself. Instead, the clarifier works towards a solution of the problem by a stepwise guiding of his recipient towards recognition of the kind of situation the word *ero* applies to.

Multi-step clarifications are interactionally achieved as a series of ordered moves that can be characterized both structurally and functionally. In our data, the contours of the following positions become visible: the *clarification basis*, the *clarification path* and the *clarification target*.

In the first step, the clarification basis is established. It locates the starting point from which a joint path can be followed until the clarification is complete. In Extract 5, the clarification basis is created by asserting knowledge that is evidently familiar to the recipient ('you now married', line 17). The person who is the main possessor of this knowledge is Juan himself. He is the one who it is assumed can confirm the correctness of Abdul's assertion.

The turn in line 17 with the assertion about Juan's married state has not yet completed the repair, however. It is observably oriented to as still to be followed by more. Juan only confirms the assertion that is made in it and does not yet begin with answering the question that Abdul is repairing. Complementarily, Abdul too is not yet giving any sign that his recipient should already be able to answer the question. Both participants orient to current turn as only the first step of a project that encompasses more. The clarification is observably designed from the beginning as an activity that will unfold over a trajectory of more than one step.

The clarification basis provides the common ground from where the speaker of the trouble-source turn will guide his recipient along a path that will enable him to develop a working understanding of the explanandum (the item to be explained). Perhaps this is why this move is formulated as a request for confirmation. The assertion about the recipient's married state is oriented to as stating knowledge that is to be ratified interactionally before the participants continue with the next step of the clarification.

The clarification target is the position at which the clarification project is brought towards completion. In Extract 5, Abdul uses a specific device to mark the completion of the clarification trajectory. The turn in which he describes the kind of event it takes to end a marriage is packaged in the 'when ..., then ...' format (see *ja milloi sinä haluat ...*: 'and when you want ...', line 22). In the 'then'-part, Abdul is repeating the repairable in a way that incorporates it in an assertion about the recipient (*sinun eroja*, 'your divorces', line 25). By combining it with the (possessive) pronoun 'your', the speaker demonstrates that the expression-to-be-explained is applicable to his recipient in the circumstances described in the 'when'-part of the ongoing turn.

The repeat of the repairable is not only a demonstration of its applicability, however. It is marking the completeness of the clarification project. We already saw a similar use of repairable repeat marking clarification completion in line 22 of Extract 2. So at least two structurally and functionally specifiable positions can be identified in the series of steps into which the clarification is interactionalized: the clarification basis and the clarification target.

The steps along which a trajectory is laid out from clarification basis to clarification target we will call the clarification path. In Extract 5, this is the part in which Abdul characterizes the type of event it takes to end a marriage. He dramatizes the kind of dialogue that leads towards divorce (lines 22–24). Note that the transition to the clarification-path position is marked as a departure from the clarification basis by formulating this next step as a hypothetical event in the

marriage of the recipient ('and *when* you want ..., you say ... your wife ... I don't ... want your ...', lines 22–24). The clarification basis describes the actual marital state of the recipient, whereas the clarification path is designed to trigger reasoning about the ways in which this situation may develop hypothetically.

In sum, the following three steps can be discerned in the design of Abdul's clarification repair:

- (1) clarification basis (assertion about the recipient's married state, line 17)
- (2) clarification path (narrative characterization of the type of event that ends a marriage, lines 22–24)
- (3) clarification target (project completion-marking in line 25: the speaker returns to the explanandum by stating it as the outcome of step 2).

In Extract 5, step 1 and the combination of step 2 and 3 are interactionalized in separate turns that are responded to independently by the recipient. Each of these steps may be expanded further, compartmentalized or recursively repeated in separate turn-constructional units that are responded to separately as independent turns. Together they implement the trajectory of the repair.

Abdul's second attempt to explain *ero* through clarification is an instance of such an expansion. The first clarification round was not successful (see line 31 of Extract 5, which is repeated in the beginning of Extract 6 below: *anteksi en ymmära. erro*, 'sorry I don't understand. divorce'). After another attempt to deal with the troubles as a simple word-recognition problem (see the morphologically modified repeat of *ero* in line 33), Abdul then embarks on yet another attempt to solve the problem by clarification (lines 40–58). This time, his endeavours eventually will be successful. Before they arrive at the clarification target, Juan already indicates that finally the penny has dropped (see his relieved *joo* – 'yes' – in line 58). Immediately after this, Abdul returns to the trouble-source turn. He repeats the original question (lines 59–61) and Juan is now finally able to answer it (lines 63–67).⁵

Extract 6 *Divorce*

Continuation of Extract 5: the next clarification round

- 31 Juan: >anteksi en ymmära.< erro
sorry I don't understand. {divorce}
- 32 (0.2)
- 33 Juan: sana erro,=
word {divorce}

- 34 Abdul: =eroja,
divorces
- 35 (0.2)
- 36 Abdul: >[ero]laa[:?]
divorces
- 37 (2.2)
- 38 Juan: °erro,°
{divorce}
- 39 (2.9)
- 40→ Abdul: e[si e: esimerkiksi tämä (0.3) tämä (0.7)
for example this this
- 41 Juan: [(°erro,°)
- 42 Abdul: tä- tämä se on nainen.
this it is a woman
- 43 (0.2)
- 44 Juan: joo,
yes
- 45 (0.2)
- 46 Abdul: ja tämäm:< mi[es. e]
and this a man
- 47 Juan: [mies];,
a man
- 48 Abdul: ·h hän (°ng-°) (1.1)naimisis:
he marrie.
- 49 nai[misissa,]
married
- 50 Juan: [joo naimi]sis,<
yes marry
- 51 (0.2)
- 52→ Abdul: ·hh jaa hän (ng:)m hän sano< nainen:<
and he he say woman
- 53 minä en:< h[alua,]
I don't want
- 54 Juan: [mi]nä en halu[a,
I don't want
- 55 Abdul: [sinut pois.
you away
- 56 (0.7)
- 57 jaa [min*ä:*,]=
and I,
- 58→ Juan: [tjoo]=
yes
- 59 Abdul: =jo-, ·h > onko sinun< m m:: kotima< (.) sama.
ye- is your home country same
- 60 (1.4)

- 61 sama suomia.
same Finland
62 (0.9)
63 Juan: (d)joo↑:< (.) kotimaa (1.0)
yes home country
64 on sama. muta (0.7) usko,
is same but belief
65 (0.4)
66 Abdul: [joo,]
yes
67 Juan: [ei ol]e sama.
is not same

Again, the clarification is delivered as a multi-step project that is distributed over an ordered series of turns. A major difference from the interactional design of the clarification in the first round, however, is that both the clarification basis and the clarification path are expanded into an ordered series of smaller units. Each of them is implemented in a separate turn-constructional unit that can be responded to as an independent turn.

The starting point from which the clarification work begins is moved further back in this second clarification round. The clarification basis itself is treated as something that has to be accomplished independently along an interactionally warranted series of moves. Abdul this time does not start with an assertion about the state of being married. Instead, he begins with the real basics of marriage: '... this is a woman, ... and this is a man' (lines 40–46). The concept 'marriage' itself then is introduced by stating it as a relation the latter person (the man) has with the former (the woman): 'he ... married' (lines 48–49). Each relevant component of the concept *marriage* is delivered in a separate turn-constructional unit and each unit is responded to independently by the recipient. First by just acknowledging (*joo*, 'yes'; line 44) and then by more actively co-producing the relevant utterance parts by repeating them in overlap at the first possible recognition point of their delivery (cf. Jefferson 1973; see *mies*, 'a man' in line 47 and *jaa naimisis*, 'yes marry' in line 50).

The clarification path is also interactionalized. It is shaped as a discrete component implemented in a single turn-constructional unit that is responded to separately ('... I don't want,' line 53). Its successful receipt is not only registered by repeating the relevant part at the first possible recognition point (see line 54).⁶ It is also reformulated in a next turn-constructional unit ('you away', line 55).

Both the clarification basis and the clarification path are modified

so as to maximize the number of opportunities at which the recipient's developing understanding can be monitored. Each step is delivered as a separate turn for which the effect can be verified independently in the recipient's response. The clarifier gains maximal control over the process in which the recipient is working towards understanding from the components and instructions provided in the successive steps of the clarification.

In the next section we will see that the selection and ordering of the materials that are used in multi-step clarifications may be guided by semantic considerations. For now it suffices to have shown that clarifications are interactionalized into a sequentially ordered series of steps, each of which can be oriented to as a separate turn seeking an independent response. The order of these steps and their respective functions can be specified. We have distinguished the following positions: the clarification basis, the clarification path and the clarification target.

Interactional semantics: clarifying state-modifying categories

In this section, we show that the design of clarification turns and sequences is guided by a semantic analysis of the expression to be explained. The semantic logic of Abdul's clarification of *ero* can be formulated in terms of the notions that Harvey Sacks developed for the analysis of the categorization of persons (Sacks 1972a, 1972b). Sacks describes how the members of a culture order knowledge categorically in their perception and interpretation of the social world. They organize the knowledge that is relevant with respect to some topic or task in collections of categories for which specific rules of application and rules of inference hold.⁷

Abdul orients to this type of knowledge organization in his clarification of *ero*. He clarifies the problematic expression by specifying its position in a system of categorically organized knowledge.

- (a) *Locating the system.* Abdul begins the clarification with an assertion about his recipient's married state ('you now married'). He introduces a category that locates knowledge about a specific area of social organization ('marriage'). The use of this category enables him to talk about Juan as the incumbent of the male category in the relational pair 'husband' and 'wife' and about a specific woman as the incumbent of the counterpart category.

- (b) *Telling about a change.* Abdul then tells about a fictive dialogue in Juan's marriage ('and when you ... want you say ... your wife ... I don't ... want your ... go'). The things Juan says and does to his wife are designed to be heard as cancelling constitutive features of their bond as coupled incumbents of the category pair <husband, wife>.
- (c) *Finding the consistency.* The clarification began with an assertion about Juan ('you now married') and it ends with another one (*sinun eroja*: 'your divorces'). This latter assertion is also about Juan and it has the problematic expression in it. The first assertion is about Juan's married state and the second is after a story about a hypothetical event in his marriage. The second assertion demonstrates that *ero* can be used to characterize his situation after the event in the story. The whole clarification project is configured so as to suggest the type of order that accounts for the co-selection of the category that is used to describe Juan's situation before the event in the story ('married') and the one that is asserted about him after it (*ero*).

(a) Locating the system

The semantic system in terms of which *ero* is clarified is located by the predicate 'married' in the clarification basis ('you now married', line 17). Abdul introduces a category that is associated with knowledge about a particular social institution ('marriage'). This knowledge is used as a frame of reference that provides the categories in terms of which the actors in the ensuing story are identified. When Abdul is talking about 'your wife' ('and when ... you say ... your wife', line 22–23), he exploits a semantic relation between *married* and the pair of relational categories 'husband' and 'wife'. Asserting that Juan is married implies there is a woman who is his wife. The possessive pronoun 'your' – in 'you say ... your wife ...' – refers to the addressee as *the* husband of the woman referred to with 'wife'.⁸

The recipient's displayed understanding of the category that is introduced in the clarification basis is used as an interpretative framework in the clarification path. The expression-to-be-explained is not only related to the state of being married, but this latter category is also treated as taking part in a more encompassing system of categorically organized knowledge. The relational pair <husband, wife> belongs to it as well, just as the rules of inference that are associated with it.

(b) Telling about a change

Talking about being married also brings along a set of latent assumptions about how the members of a married couple treat each other. Two of these assumptions are made relevant in the story with the fictive dialogue in Juan's marriage. Abdul describes an event in which Juan tells his wife that he does not want her ('I don't ... want you ...'). Note that this is a negative statement. The tellable thing is that a specific attitude of the husband towards his wife is no longer present. The absence of this feeling is noticeable and tellable, not its presence. A husband is expected to 'want' his wife, at the least in a pragmatically relevant fashion.

The other assumption is activated in the next story unit. Juan's dismissal of his wife ('... your ... go!') does not just terminate a state of accidental togetherness. Rather, it takes some kind of lasting co-presence as a default feature of the relation between husband and wife.

The husband first tells his wife that a condition for preservation of the marriage does not hold any more. He then actively terminates their state of being together. The order in which Juan is quoted suggests that his first statement is consequential for the second one (cf. Labov 1972). The lack of feeling for his wife is presented as a motive for sending her away.

Abdul's fictive anecdote describes an event that is designed to be heard as incompatible with constitutive features of the bond between husband and wife. Prototypical rights and obligations associated with the category pair <husband, wife> no longer apply. The husband's actions are selected so as to enable the recipient to infer that the story is about the annulment of marriage.

Note that the packaging of the turns in the clarification basis already projects a change. Abdul says 'you now married', stressing the now (*sinä nyt naimisissa*, line 17). He even maintains the temporal adverb in the partial repeat of this turn (*nyt naimisissa*, 'now married', line 20). Stating, stressing and repeating that something is presently the case is a practice for setting up a temporal contrast. In its present context, it projects the upcoming delivery of the other part of the contrast. It makes the ongoing utterance recognizable as a move in a larger project. The project will not be complete until the other part of the contrast pair is delivered.

(c) Finding the consistency

Abdul builds two types of clues about the nature of the problematic expression into the final step of the clarification. The first one has to do

with the framing and placement of the final unit. The second one is incorporated into its design.

Abdul began his clarification with an assertion about Juan's married state ('you now married'). In the concluding step, he makes another assertion about Juan ('your divorces'). The second assertion is made in the 'then'-slot of a [when ..., (then) ...]-frame: 'and when you want ... you say ... your wife ... I don't want your ..., your divorces' (lines 22-25). Both the framing and the placement of the second assertion locate the story in the *when*-part as a resource for figuring out what is being done with it. The story is pivotal for determining what is being said about Juan when the problematic expression is used in the second assertion.

The other clue is built into the construction type of the second assertion. It is formatted in a way that is similar to the formatting of the first. The first assertion (*sinä nyt naimisissa*: 'you now married') begins with a recipient reference ('you'). The second assertion begins with a form of 'you' too: *sinun eroja* ('your divorces'). The analogy suggests that the second assertion has a design that runs parallel with the format of the first. In the first assertion, 'you' is followed by a predicate that describes a state that currently applies to the recipient ('now married'). Analogously, the recipient reference at the beginning of the second assertion projects a slot for a similar type of predicate.

Not just any predicate will do, however. It has to be contextually relevant. The problematic expression is doing something similar to the category that is used in the first assertion. It has to be related to the first category in such a way that it makes a relevant assertion about Juan's married state after the event in the story.

The problem is almost the reverse of the hearer problem Sacks observed for the interpretation of a series of categories. He describes the problem for the now famous little story 'The baby cried. The mommy picked it up.' Why, do we hear 'the mommy' as the mother of the baby? Sacks accounts for this kind of methodical hearing with a relevance rule that he called the *consistency rule*. If two or more categories are used to categorize two or more members of some population, and those categories can be heard as categories from the same collection, then hear them that way. The rule accounts for a hearing of 'the mommy' as a member of the same collection of categories as 'the baby'. The categories refer to persons that are co-incumbents of the same case of the category *family* (Sacks 1972b and 1992: 150 ff.).

The category-interpretation problem is different for Juan. He does not know the expression that is used in Abdul's second assertion. The consistency rule nevertheless provides a basis for

making inferences in a case like this. It proposes that we hear the unknown expression in Abdul's second assertion ('your [ero]-es') as a member of the same collection of categories as the predicate category in his first assertion ('you now married'). The relevant collection has two members: 'married' and the category referred to with *ero*. The consistency rule provides the kind of relevancy principle that enables the recipient to assemble the collection of categories that matters.

The clarification thus provides the following clues to the recipient. The problematic expression refers to a category that comes from the same collection of categories as 'married'. It is used to characterize the state that results from a marriage when the husband sends his wife away because he does not want her any more. The clues exploit categorically organized knowledge with respect to a specific domain of social organization ('marriage'). The knowledge and the rules of inference that are associated with it have to enable Juan to recognize the situation *ero* is referring to.

Technically speaking, 'marriage' is a presupposition of 'divorce'. The term presupposes a chronologically prior state, that is, the state in which a couple is still married (see Miller and Fellbaum 1991; Fillmore 1973; Mazeland 1980). Abdul begins the clarification by introducing the presupposition. He introduces the state of being married before depicting the kind of event that dissolves it. The temporal directionality of the pair of categories <married, divorce(d)> (the second state occurring after the first) and the action-logic dependency of the second state on the first (the first one must have been the case before the second one can apply) are carefully built into both the order in which they are introduced and the way their relation is demonstrated.⁹

Abdul explains *ero* as an event that modifies the situation that is referred to with 'married'. He presents the two categories as co-members from a structured collection of categories. The collection's structure is explicated as a contrastive two-place relation with an order of precedence. It has 'married' as its first member and *ero* ('divorce(d)') as the second one: <*naimisissa* ('married'), *eroja* ('divorces')>. Each part of this ordered pair is a state-describing category but the second one is shown to be dependent on the first. It refers to a situation in which the state referred to by the first category is terminated in a way that is consequential for its applicability. So the *state-modifying* category *ero* is explained by explicating the operation it performs on the *state-describing* category 'married'.¹⁰

To formulate the semantic logic of this organization more schematically: *ero* is explained as the second member of a temporally

ordered pair of categories $\langle C_1, C_2 \rangle$. C_1 refers to a state of affairs that chronologically precedes C_2 . C_2 results from events that terminate the C_1 -state. The relation between C_1 and C_2 is mutually exclusive, in the sense that C_1 is not applicable any more as soon as C_2 is appropriately used. The relation between C_1 and C_2 is presuppositional in the sense that the assertion of C_2 legitimates the assumption that C_1 has been applicable.

Although we did not come across many other instances of clarifications of state-modifying categories in our corpus, we have already seen an instance in Extract 2. Melbi's clarification of the Finnish word for 'repairs' (*korjaja*), line 18–26, displays an analysis of the repairable as a state-modifying category. In this case too, the repairable is characterized as a state-modifying category. The temporally preceding state is described first with the C_1 -category (*auto rikki*, 'car broken'; line 18). Then the dependent state is referred to with the C_2 -category itself (*korjaa*, 'repairs'; line 22).

The main difference with the repair of *ero* has to do with the way the clarification is interactionalized. The three steps in Abdul's clarification – clarification basis, clarification path and clarification target – are built into a single turn-constructural unit. The clarification path and the clarification target collapse. The terms in which state-1 is described ('car broken') is assumed to provide sufficient ground to govern inference making with respect to what is happening next.

Korjaa ('repairs') is explained as a paired category at the semantic level. It is presented as the second part of an ordered pair of categories. The first member of the pair is explicated as the – negatively evaluated – breakdown of a formerly well-functioning, artificial device; the second member refers to a chronologically next state in which state-1 is undone: \langle broken device, repair \rangle .

The unit type that is selected for implementing the clarification still allows for a two-step segmentation of the clarification's trajectory, however. The clarification basis is delivered in the *if*-part and the clarification target in the *then*-part of a turn-constructural unit with an ['if ... , then ...']-format. The design of the clarification turn still correlates with the bi-partite structure of state-modifying categories. The C_1 -state is introduced in the 'if'-part of the clarification turn, the C_2 -category is demonstrated to be applicable in its 'then'-part. The design of the clarification turn is guided by the semantic analysis that is made of the repairable.

A similar interdependency of semantic analysis and the architecture of the repair can be observed at the level of its sequentialization in the case of Abdul's clarification of *ero*. The semantic structure in

terms of which the repairable is explicated is reflected in the successive steps into which the repair is interactionalized. In the previous section we already showed that the clarification of *ero* was sequentialized into the following steps:

- (1) the clarification basis (the assertion about the recipient's married state: 'you now married', line 17)
- (2) the clarification path (a narrative characterization of the type of event that ends a marriage: 'you say ... your wife ... I don't ... want your ... go', lines 22–24)
- (3) the clarification target (the demonstration of the applicability of *ero* in *sinun eroja*: 'your divorces', line 25).

The structure of the semantic system that is laid out in the clarification figures prominently in its interactional design. In step 1 (the clarification basis), the first member of the relevant pair of categories is introduced in an assertion about the recipient. In step 2 (the clarification path), the position of the other member of the pair is located by specifying through example the circumstances under which it can be used ('you say ... your wife ... I don't ... want your ... go'). In step 3 (the clarification target), finally, the rule of application of the problematic expression is demonstrated by using it in a second assertion about the recipient (*sinun eroja*: 'your divorces').

The speaker's analysis of the semantic structure of the repairable correlates with the design of the clarification. This is independent of a delivery as a single turn – as in the 'he-repairs-car' extract – or as a trajectory of three or more turns. First, the C_1 -category is introduced in the clarification basis, then the relation of the C_2 -category with the C_1 -category may be specified in the clarification path (optionally) and, finally, its applicability is demonstrated in the segment with the clarification target. The layout of the clarification trajectory is informed by considerations with respect to the semantic properties in terms of which the repairable is explicated. The structure of the device returns in the design of the repair and, in reverse, the design of the repair structures the device in a way that is relevant and informative for the occasion.

Concluding remarks

We do not know whether similar types of clarification repairs occur in non-elicited second language interactions between adult foreign-language learners. However, we expect that our central results will turn out to be valid and insightful. Our phenomena pertain to levels of

interaction that were not specified in advance. The data-driven methodology provides some warrant that we did not construe patterns that cannot be found in the data. We therefore expect that the methods our students used for solving word-understanding problems are typical for the ways this kind of trouble is dealt with in some other types of second language interactions between adult foreign-language learners.

On a theoretical level, we made a distinction between different levels of word-clarification design: the conceptual, the interactional and the semantic level. At the conceptual level, we discussed several types of word-clarification repairs (clarification by exemplification, by description or by script-link) and grouped them into classes that differ with respect to the kind of linking procedures they primarily exploit (encyclopedic versus linguistic links). However, our exploration of the semantic logic of state-modifying categories also shows that language knowledge and world knowledge are highly interdependent and reflexively interwoven. A speaker may explain an expression by positioning it in a little categorical system that is embodied in the language that is used to talk about it.

An interesting result of our tentative exploration of the semantic logic in the design of clarification repairs is the idea that the lexical-semantic features of the trouble-source word are a primary resource for the interactional design of the repair. The material that is used in the respective positions of multi-step clarifications (clarification basis, clarification path and clarification target) is selected on the basis of its position in the categorical system in terms of which the repairable is explained. The design of the clarification is the result of considerations with respect to three interdependent dimensions: the problem-solving mode, the semantic analysis of the repairable and its implementation into a repair sequence.

Endnotes

- 1 The authors would like to express their thanks to Arja Piirainen-Marsh from Jyväskylä University (Finland) and Maurice Neville from the Australian National University in Canberra for carefully reviewing earlier versions of this paper. We also profited from the comments of Emanuel Schegloff after a presentation of the paper in the Clic-colloquium at UCLA, February 1998. Finally, we thank the editors of this volume for their remarks and suggestions.
- 2 Note that the recipient of 'my capital (is) Baghdad' also has to be able to perform a very subtle type of situated, deictic reasoning with respect to categorically relevant properties of the identity of the speaker in order to be

able to develop a working understanding. The possessive pronoun *my* does not just refer to the speaker but to the speaker as a member of the people from Iraq. Only if the speaker's identity as an Iraqi is taken into consideration, is it appropriate to say that *his* capital is Baghdad.

Note further that the class of capital names is not exemplified by its most prototypical member. The selection of Baghdad is not governed by considerations with respect to prototypicality – the type of consideration a naive transfer of cognitive linguistic arguments would generate – but by situated pragmatic reasoning. The one member of the class of capital names is selected which would do as an answer to 'what is your capital' in the event that Abdul himself had to answer the question. So, it is what the word is doing in this particular utterance in this particular context in this particular situation that provides the criteria for selecting a particular member of the class of capital names.

- 3 A 'correct' pronunciation of this word would sound like *korjaa*. Melbi does not always pronounce the *r*-sound as native Finnish speakers are assumed to do. Note that Asha repeats this pronunciation in line 15 and that Melbi herself produces a more correct form later on in line 22.
- 4 Pomerantz (1984b) also discusses other types of measurement systems in terms of which participants assess the degree of easiness of resolution types. One prominent type is social delicateness. Its resolution might lay bare some kind of disagreement between participants. In our data, assuming that your recipient does not know a word might be a delicate thing to show.
- 5 Note that the participants are able to maintain an orientation to the conditional relevance of the suspended answer over a very long trajectory of inserted repair sequences. The first part of the question/answer pair was delivered for the first time in lines 1–4 of Extract 5. The question/answer sequence is proliferated considerably through insert expansions dealing with the trouble occurring in the first pair part. It is not until lines 63–64 – almost two minutes later – that the second part of the base pair is delivered. This prolonged maintenance of an orientation towards the sequential basis of the inserted repair sequences is an essential difference of adult foreign language learning from first language acquisition: participants are competent with respect to such basic pragmatic skills as the interactional management and maintenance of sequences over a long and very complex trajectory. See also Goodwin (1995), who makes a similar observation for the interaction of an aphasic man with his collaborators.
- 6 See Schegloff (1997: 527 ff.) for a discussion of repeats as a practice for registering the receipt of something the prior speaker has said.
- 7 Collections of categories are context-relevantly assembled relative to some task. They should not be reified too easily as pre-existing, context-independent structures (cf. Hester and Eglin 1997). Perhaps it is better to think of them as emerging structures (cf. Hopper 1987) for which sufficient cultural continuity holds in the history of their use on the one hand, whereas, on the other hand, a collection is assembled and ordered each time

- anew as a situated configuration relative to the interactional task at hand. (Cf. Schegloff 1972; see also Mazeland *et al.* 1995.)
- 8 The general rule of interpretation for expressions such as 'your wife' is: when a possessive personal pronoun modifies a category from a relational pair such as <husband, wife>, the referent of the personal pronoun is heard to be the real-world matching incumbent of the other category from that pair. Other instances of this kind of cross-reference based upon relational-pair semantics are, for example, 'my father' (invoking the relational pair <father, child>) or 'her doctor' (<doctor, patient>). Cf. Sacks (1972a, 1972b and 1992 *passim*); Watson (1987).
- 9 Pairs like <married, divorced> are antonymous but in a different way to, for example, the pair <bachelor, married>. The relation between the members of the former pair displays some kind of both temporal and logical directionality – a kind of irreversibility by default. Re-installment of the original state – 'and then they married again' – is noticeable, a tellable, a not self-evident course of action. The pair is also different from pairs of categories describing frequently alternating states such as <'be-free', 'have-to-work'> in which the replacement of one state by the other usually is not considered to be final (see Extract 4). There is also some specific relation with negation: in the case of <married, divorced>, one has to add *any more*: 'he is not married any more'. Saying 'he is not married' does not have to imply that he is a divorcee.
- 10 Other candidates for the class of state-modifying categories are: 'repair', 'recover', 'cure', 'die', 'restore', 'expire', 'fire', 'resign', 'release', 'rescue' ... Note also that these state-modifying categories are level-specific. In contrast with general state-modification describing categories like 'stop', 'change' or 'modify', the former class specifies at least some particular features of the kind of state that is modified.

Second Language Conversations

Edited by Rod Gardner and Johannes Wagner

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