

Piling up and Spelling out! - Repair work in Challenged Interaction

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ABSTRACT

Troubles in intersubjective understanding are, according to Schegloff (1992), overwhelmingly dealt with immediately and are solved after a few turns at talk, e.g. in the turn which contains the trouble (a self-repair) or in the next turn (an other-repair) (Schegloff et al. 1977). In the present study we investigate cases of repair in interactions in which the co-participants are challenged in some way, partly due to an uneven distribution of language and communication skills. In interactions in which one of the participants speaks a foreign or second language or is communicatively, linguistically and/or cognitively impaired, repair sequences regularly are expanded beyond the simple format of a few turns. In other words, attempts at repairing are piled up in that several repair operations occur on the same trouble source. Furthermore, we observe that participants, as a result of the extended repair work, end up spelling out what they tried to convey from the onset. They make use of remedial resources such as loud, clear and slow speech, while reusing the (linguistic) materials that, either in the original trouble source turn (TST) or in the repair cycles have been unsuccessfully employed. Our study aims at describing both piling up and spelling out as practices across different types of challenged interaction. We discuss these repair operations in relation to the relevancy of the social categories hearing, speaking, or cognitive impaired person, as well as non-native speaker.

KEYWORDS

repair, native-non-native interaction, communication disorders

1. Introduction

People involved in interaction are occasionally struggling to understand their partners or to make themselves understood. They may orient to this as a struggle by displaying the difficulties they face or by indicating that (and why) the interactional work is strenuous. Here, we will categorize participants' explicit display of struggles in interaction as *challenged interaction*. In other words, *challenged* is, in this study, local social interactional category of the participants. It is not derived from the social categories to which societies may assign the participants, such as native speakerhood, non-native speakerhood, hearing impairment, dementia, aphasia, and so on.

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Nevertheless, interactions involving persons from these categories exhibit a larger number of recognizable and systematic challenges, which may be due to an uneven distribution of language and communicative skills and competences between them (see, e.g. Antaki et al. 2015; Antaki & Wilkinson 2013; Barnes & Ferguson 2013; Bloch 2011; Brouwer et al. 2011; Brouwer & Wagner 2004; Firth & Wagner 1997; Goodwin 1994; Hellerman 2011; Higginbotham & Engleke 2013; Hosoda 2000; Kurhila 2001; Lesser 2003; Lind et al. 2006; Maynard 2005; Maynard, McDonald, & Stickle 2016; Mazeland & Zaman-Zadeh 2004; Mori 2004; Pilesjö 2012; Pilesjö & Rasmussen 2011; Rasmussen 2010, 2013, 2016; Skelt 2007; Theodórsdóttir 2011).

The present study investigates a number of cases exhibiting similar traits, with the participants orienting to the challenge in question, namely: How to deal with a lack of common understanding that persists in spite of several attempts? In the context of the present contribution, we will name this way of dealing with the challenge *spelling out*: One participant spells out what the co-participant apparently is unable to get. In the following excerpt (from an interaction between a person with dementia and a significant other), the latter produces an assertion: “Søren blev atten år i går” (*Yesterday Søren had his 18th birthday*, line 1). A little later in the interaction, we find a seemingly spelled out version of that turn (see excerpt (1) below).

In short, *spelling out* entails that a participant restates an earlier trouble source turn (TST) in such a way that its parts stand out more explicitly as constitutive of a meaningful whole. Compare the following turns originating from the same interaction:

- (1) (GR: atten år)
 18 Wife Søren blev atten år i går
Soren had his 18th birthday yesterday
 19 nods
 (several turns omitted from transcript)
 29 Wife Søren (.) blev (.) atten (.) år (.) i går
Soren had his 18th birthday yesterday

As seen from the transcript, spelling out turns differ from the original TST in their *production*. As we will point out, this difference is due to a number of features, such as pauses, a clearer articulation, a slower speech rate, repetitions, and a technique we will call *enactment* (on which more below). Furthermore, as we will demonstrate, *spelling out* typically occurs in sequential environments where participants have attempted several times to repair a TST using a variety of techniques; such an accumulation of repairs will be called *piling up*.¹ In interactions in which one of the participants belongs to one of the social categories mentioned above, repair sequences are regularly expanded beyond the simple three-turn format as described in Schegloff et al. 1977. Instead, attempts at repairing are *piled up* and employ a variety of methods, among them different repair operations (Bloch & Wilkinson 2011; Laakso & Klippi 1999; Svennevig

1 This sequential environment has been earlier described by a number of other researchers (see below).

2008). A central point in the analysis concerns how, when repair cycles remain unsuccessful, *piling up* may lead to *spelling out*.

Both *piling up* and *spelling out* are analyzed in terms of the resources and techniques that are used to accomplish them. Here, we draw on the substantial literature on conversational repair, specifically on how particular repair techniques may indicate particular types of trouble.

Finally, and maybe most importantly, we discuss what *piling up* and *spelling out* sequences accomplish in terms of orientations towards participant competence; we investigate this *across* different types of data. While we note that piling up and spelling out may happen independently of the societal categorizations of co-participants' impairments or language (in)competence, we point out how the participants orient to an uneven distribution of their linguistic and/or communicative skills and competences, and thereby display their interaction as being (at least partially) challenged.

2. Method

The study draws on data from naturally occurring, non-experimentally framed interactions in Danish and English. The interactions stem from a variety of sources: audio-recorded everyday interactions of adult learners of Danish; a corpus of video-recorded interactions between a language educator and groups of early second language learners in a kindergarten; video-recorded interventions happening between on the one hand, audiologists and Speech and Language Therapists (SLTs) and on the other, their adult or child clients; a corpus of video-recorded lectures on so-called New Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NNLP), delivered to a group consisting of socially challenged adolescents and their social workers (see also Brouwer & Rasmussen 2013). The data corpora thus consist of both institutional and everyday settings and include adults as well as children as participants. From these different kinds of settings, we have selected 12 instances, which each in its own way exhibit *spelling out*. The occurrence of this is situated in a context where the participants deal with different kinds of issues (hearing difficulties, language and/or cognitive disabilities, linguistic competences), such that the details of these instances differ. The excerpts were transcribed using Conversation Analytic (CA, specifically Jeffersonian) transcription conventions (Ochs, Schegloff & Thompson 1996), supplemented with notations of body posture, gaze and gesture, whenever relevant. As to the data themselves, they were similarly analyzed using the CA framework (Sacks et al. 1974).

Conversation Analytic research aims at investigating how conversationalists achieve a common understanding of everyday discursive activities (Maynard 2013). The multimodal embodied strand of CA scrutinizes how co-participants construct their actions by means of a variety of materials such as talk, gaze, language, gestures, bodily movements and artifacts (Mondada & Schmitt 2010; Hazel, Mortensen, & Rasmussen 2014; Streeck, Goodwin, & LeBaron 2011). Moreover, it analyzes how the co-participants organize their actions in systematic ways *together* and how the actions become interactionally recognizable methods of ways of sense-making.

Following Schutz (1967[1932]), CA maintains that social action is not recognizable at its outset; instead, it becomes clear to the co-participants during the actual temporal course of its production. Furthermore, co-participants, when interpreting, are engaged in *typing* action while

it is being produced (see e.g. Kim & Berard 2009); such typifying structures the participants' experience, including how others' contributions to an interaction are understood. Typifying processes leave room for creativity in constructing an action, for instance how to construct an action with the recognizable purpose of repair (Schegloff et al. 1977), or even how to initiate repairs.

Our project employed CA-specific methods for data processing (ten Have 1999): detailed transcriptions of the data guided us in analyzing the immediate context of the action in focus. In light of this micro-context, the action was analyzed, as was the way in which the recipient treated it in a next turn (so-called next-turn proof procedure, see e.g. Peräkylä, 2011). More instances of this initially described sequence were collected, and their similarities and differences were compared and analyzed. Finally, deviant cases were analyzed.

3. Repair

The instances we are analyzing present a type of repair practice. Without systematically reviewing the rather substantial literature on repair, we here point at the following basic insights that have been documented, and which include insights which are essential for our analysis:

- Trouble is often resolved in one repair cycle (Schegloff 1992)
- Repair as a method points to a mechanism of keeping the disruption of the progressivity of talk to a minimum (Sacks 1987). A distinction is made between initiation of repair and repair proper (Schegloff, Jefferson & Sacks 1977)
- Different initiation techniques have different strength in terms of locating trouble (Drew 1997; Mazeland 1987; Schegloff, Jefferson & Sacks 1977)
- The type of repair proper may reflect how participants take responsibility for (the resolve of) trouble (Robinson 2006)
- A distinction can be made between exposed and embedded repair (Jefferson 1987).

Although, as noted by Schegloff et al. (1977), speakers do allow errors to go uncorrected from time to time, if something 'goes wrong' in interaction, repair is likely to occur. Repair is a very common and systematic practice, which occurs in basically all kinds of talk-in-interaction (see e.g. Brouwer, Rasmussen & Wagner 2004; Drew 1997; Egbert 1997; Hayashi & Hayano 2016; Hosoda 2000; Mortensen 2012; Schegloff 1979, 1992, 1997, 2000; Schegloff et al. 1977; Svennevig 2008; Wong 2000). Troubles in intersubjective understanding are, according to Schegloff (1992), overwhelmingly dealt with immediately (p. 1302) and are solved after a few turns at talk, often in either the turn which contains the trouble (a self-repair) or in the next turn (an other-repair) (Schegloff et al. 1977). As pointed out above, participants dealing with trouble in conversation seem to keep the disruption of the progressivity of talk to a minimum (Sacks 1987; Hayashi & Hayano 2016). In other words, a successful repair takes up as little interactional time and

space as possible; this preference, too, fits in well with the preference for self-repair (Wilkinson 2007). Short and immediately successful repair sequences are, however, not our interest in this study. In the cases at hand, repairs become an inherent and substantial part of what the interaction is about. The repairs are not occasioned side sequences (Jefferson 1972), rather, the interlocutors are engaged in dealing with trouble for longer stretches at talk - maybe even for the larger part of the conversation.

Repair operates on a large variety of trouble sources. As several researchers have remarked, while trouble sources may differ with respect to the severity of the trouble for understanding action, all are more or less consequential for mutual understanding. Upon an indication of trouble in interaction, interlocutors face the task of retrospectively considering what was the possible trouble source, what was its nature and how it can be resolved. Thus, participants may treat different (classes of) trouble sources in different ways (Drew 1997; Robinson 2006). One way is by using a variety of techniques for initiating repair, as a first indication that repair is on its way. As been pointed out first and foremost by Schegloff, Jefferson & Sacks (1977), a specific relationship exists between a trouble source, the way repair is initiated on it, and the way a repair proper is done. In the case of other-initiation, the initiation not only points at trouble in a previous turn, but also indicates the nature of that trouble and thereby how the trouble could be resolved. To some extent, Schegloff, Jefferson & Sacks (1977) treat this process in terms of 'strength': some techniques (e.g. by repeating the greater part of a previous turn, where the trouble source is replaced with a question pronoun (e.g. 'what?')), are more effective in locating and specifying trouble than are others (Drew 1997).

Through other-initiation, participants may manage issues concerning responsibility for the conversational trouble. Robinson (2006) points at differences in other-initiation techniques by which either the speaker of the TST is seen as being responsible for the trouble (as is the case in most other-initiated repairs) or, contrarily, the hearer of that turn is regarded as responsible (as is the case in initiation types such as 'I'm sorry?').

Thus, the way an other-initiation of repair is done, its technique and its timing may guide the speaker of the TST by not only signaling that there is trouble, but also to a greater or lesser degree indicating as to how that trouble may be repaired.

Finally, we need to distinguish between *exposed* repairs (which exclusively deal with the trouble source) and *embedded* repairs; the latter are done in the course of a TCU that accomplishes other interactional business as well, thus making it relevant for the co-participant to deal with that other business rather than taking care of the repair (Jefferson 1987). Exposed repairs, however, occur in a sequence by themselves, and put the business of the talk on hold.

With regard to these findings on repair, the cases discussed below share the following characteristics:

- Repair initiation in a first repair cycle does not reflect specific trouble and thus does not point to specific (types of) repairables; it is an 'open class' of repair initiation (Drew 1997). Trouble emerges as ambiguous, vague and unspecific with regard to how it may be resolved.
- Repair is initiated on TSTs by 'other'.

- Trouble is not resolved in a few turns, but rather done in a number of cycles; in other words, these are exposed types of repair.
- Finally, following several (different) attempts at repair, a shift occurs from a stance towards the trouble as being the responsibility of the TST speaker, to its being attributed to the recipient of that turn.

These points will be documented in the following.

4. Focusable errors

As shown in the literature, many errors and mistakes happen in native-nonnative interaction and in interactions involving persons suffering from communicative or hearing impairments (Brouwer 2003; Brouwer, Rasmussen & Wagner 2004; Donato 1994; Egbert, Niebecker & Rez-zara 2004; Firth 1996). Whereas the co-participants may let these errors go unrepaired (Firth 1996; Rasmussen 2000), in the case below, the mistake or error causes a trouble that may have major consequences for the interactional business of the talk. The error in question makes the utterances and/or actions incomprehensible to the degree of threatening intersubjective comprehension. Consider the following extract, stemming from a corpus of interactions involving non-native speakers, in this case B is the non-native speaker.

- | | |
|------|--|
| (2) | (CEB: træer) |
| 1 A2 | men men men men hvordan ser planten u:d:
<i>but but but but what does the plant look like</i> |
| 2 B2 | planten meget stærk ser ud æh træer
<i>the plant very strong looks uh trees</i> |
| 3 A2 | store træer
<i>big trees,</i> |
| 4 B2 | ja (.) store eh (.) ikke så (.) store. men
<i>yes big eh not so big. but</i> |
| 5 A2 | men <u>kraftige</u>
<i>but strong</i> |
| 6 B2 | kraftige
<i>strong</i> |
| 7 A2 | ja
<i>yes</i> |

The participants have embarked on a series of identifying which herbs and spices B2 uses in her cooking. In the excerpt here, there has been some doubt as to what herb is being talked about. In this line of activity then, line 1 occurs – a question from A2 asking for a description of the plant from which the herb or spice stems.

The turn in line 2 contains an error of syntax. However, there is more wrong with the turn than just being linguistically incorrect: It is not fitted to the question. It is not quite clear what B2 might mean in line 2, in particular with ‘æh træer’ (*uh trees*), occurring after a transition relevance point (TRP). It can be understood as either a repair proper of the item ‘planten’ (*the plant*) alone, or as a clarification of the whole turn thus far produced. Hence, the turn could either be heard to mean that the spice actually does not come from a plant but from a tree. Alternatively, it could be heard as meaning that the plant is big and strong *like* trees. For the business at hand, identifying the herb or spice, however, to know which of these understandings is right is paramount. The use of ‘stærk’ (*strong*) in relation to ‘plant’ is unfitted in that the adjective cannot conventionally be heard as describing what a particular vegetation would *look like*; rather, it describes what the plant would *taste* like (in Danish, one uses ‘stærk’ when referring to food, where English would say ‘hot’ or even ‘hot-hot’). Letting the trouble go untreated would halt the project that has been embarked upon. In the next turn at talk, line 3, A2 picks up on the ambiguity by suggesting ‘træer’ (*trees*) as a term for the vegetation (rather than *plant*) and ‘stor’ (*big*) as an adjective (rather than ‘stærk’ (*strong*)), which would fit as an answer to the question of what the vegetation item *looks* like.

A number of researchers in CA, while treating different types of data and using different terms, have identified a class of repairables that are consequential for the interaction, in contrast with those that are not. Jefferson (1974) distinguishes between two categories of errors occurring in ordinary mundane talk-in-interaction: ‘production’ vs. ‘interaction errors’. Production errors are made in the production of “coherently, grammatically correct speech” (p. 181), while interaction errors concern speaking “appropriately to some co-participant(s) and/or within some situation” (p.181). Similarly, Mazeland (1987), discussing error correction in foreign language (or math) classroom interaction, treats this distinction in terms of how participants orient to different classes of trouble source in their initiation and correction. According to Mazeland, some issues are treated as fundamental for the activity at hand; he calls these issues (or repairables) ‘focusable’: “the focusability of a repairable depends on the degree in which participants treat it as relevant for the current business at hand” (1987: 12). In a similar vein, Drew & Penn (2016), dealing with interactions involving a woman diagnosed with dementia, follow Wootton (1989), who treats the issue in terms of accountability: interlocutors are accountable for their actions in interaction in that they are obliged to design their action as *recognizable*. In Wootton’s words: “actions will need to be shaped according to design principles which are available to both parties” (1989: 238). Consequently, some errors will directly affect the recognizability of an action, while others do not. In excerpt 2 above, B2’s turn (line 2) can be seen as ambiguous enough to be not necessarily recognizable by A2.

Whether or not an action is recognizable for an interlocutor, becomes apparent in a next turn at talk, as well as from the interlocutors’ non-verbal behavior in the ongoing turn. In the lines following this turn, A2 pursues understanding by trying to disambiguate the turn, thus making the error ‘focusable’. In line 3, she displays that the action of the previous turn was not sufficiently recognizable as an answer fitted to the question that she had posed, by picking up on the ‘træer’ (*trees*) and offering a substitute for the adjective ‘stærk’ (*strong*), namely ‘stor’ (*big*) – which conventionally can be used to indicate the size of (any type of) vegetation. By using both

of these techniques, A2 indicates a candidate understanding of what B2 had said which incorporates both a correction of the trouble with the adjective and its fittedness to the question, while at the same time addressing the possibility that ‘æh træer’ (*uh trees*) possibly was a repair of the previous ‘plant’ (in which case the adjective ‘stor’ (*big*) may have become irrelevant). In this way, A2’s candidate understanding is still ambiguous.

In the present study, which crosses the boundaries of different types of populations, we deal with ‘focusable’ troubles which are consequential for the talk. By this, we mean that these troubles concern the intersubjective understanding of a turn produced by one interlocutor and hence limit the possibilities for a relevant response; they will be addressed as ‘barriers’ for subsequent action.

The next excerpt (3) from a conversation involving a hearing-impaired child exhibits a ‘focusable’ error as well, but in an entirely different way.

- (3) (GR: tromme)
- | | |
|---------|--|
| 1 Nis | (oh ka) få en do:m:
(oh can) have a ‘do:m’ |
| 2 Daimi | jeg står li her bagved stolen Nis
<i>I’ll stand right here behind the chair Nis</i> |
| 3 | <i>moves right hand to Nis’ chair; claps chair</i> |
| 4 Nis | en do:m:
a ‘do:m’ |
| 5 | (1.5) |
| 6 Daimi | °hva°
<i>what</i> |
| 7 Nis | ha lov /få en do:m
<i>be allowed / get a ‘do:m’</i> |
| 8 | <i>/lifts left arm towards Daimi</i> |

Daimi, the speech and language therapist, specifies her location in line 2 (‘I’ll stand right here behind the chair’) – a response that seems unfitted to Nis’ request for a ‘do:m’ (‘tromme’; Danish for *drum*; line 1). Perhaps Daimi thinks (or guesses) that Nis, who has recently received a cochlear implant, is doing some other action; possibly, too, she regards a request at this point in the sequence as untimely or fails to hear or understand what Nis says. Regardless of the trouble’s origin, its consequence is that she does not respond relevantly to Nis’ request. While this is of course problematic, an irrelevant response does not in itself locate or specify any trouble with a turn. Nis’ attempt in his next turn (line 4) to resolve the issue is to repeat the item that was requested in the first place (a ‘do:m’). Note that, although the ‘request frame’ itself (consisting of the words ‘(oh ka) få en do:m’, line 1) is not repeated, uttering the item ‘do:m’ in line 4 with the same loudness and stress as in line 1 can be heard as repeating the request. This kind of repair proper, a partial repeat of the original turn, may indicate that Daimi is thought to have a problem understanding *what* Nis was after.

As mentioned above, when mistakes, errors or other types of trouble occur, an interlocutor may notice them but ‘let it pass’ (Firth 1996; Rasmussen 2000; though see also Brouwer, Ras-

mussen & Wagner 2004). However, Nis does *not* let it pass, and there seems to be a good reason for this. If he lets the trouble go unnoticed, this will have consequences for the interaction: Nis may have to abandon the project of getting ‘a do:m’.

Excerpts 2 and 3 both exhibit trouble concerning the progression of the interactional trajectory that has been embarked on. In excerpt (2), A2 and B2 cannot come any closer to a recognition of the spice, while in (3), Nis’ request has neither been granted nor denied. When troubles occur in interaction, their sources may be diverse, and not all of the troubles are always dealt with; those that are not, may be categorized as “interactionally irrelevant” (Firth 1996: 243).

In the above excerpts, however, there is no way in which the interactants *could* ‘let it pass’ and simultaneously maintain the interactional project. The utterances and/or actions are incomprehensible to a degree that it seems unlikely that a recipient can guess or tweak a turn or part of a turn that is either poorly understood or not heard (or both) without risking even more interactional trouble.

5. Piling up (re-workings, re-doings, or enhancements of prior turn)

Sometimes, a trouble may not be easily repaired within the next few turns. Excerpts (2) and (3) above are examples of repair work that extends beyond the three part sequence of trouble-source, repair initiation, and repair proper (Schegloff et al. 1977). In this section, we consider the same excerpts in order to point at ways in which additional re-workings, redoings or enhancements of a trouble source turn are done. Redoing the TST possibly relates to the fact that when trouble becomes apparent, its nature is not necessarily clear: either a repair initiation is ambiguously pointing at several methods for repairing the trouble (Excerpt 2), or an unfitted response is being formulated (Excerpt 3).

In (3), Nis asks for a ‘do:m’. Daimi’s response does not indicate recognition of his action: “I’ll stand right here behind the chair Nis” (line 2). This occasions a repair on Nis’ part in the next turn that is allocated to him (line 4):

- (3) (GR: tromme)
- | | |
|---------|--|
| 1 Nis | (oh ka) få en do:m:
<i>(oh) can have a do:m</i> |
| 2 Daimi | jeg står li her bagved stolen Nis
<i>move right hand to Nis’ chair; claps chair</i> |
| 3 | <i>I’ll stand right here behind the chair Nis</i> |
| 4 Nis | en do:m:
a ‘do:m:’ |
| 5 | (1.5) |
| 6 Daimi | °hva°
<i>what</i> |
| 7 Nis | ha lov /få en do:m
<i>have permission / get a ‘do:m’</i> |
| 8 | /lifts left arm towards Daimi |

As it turns out, the ‘do:m’ that Nis asks for in line 1 refers to a drum, in Danish a *tromme*, conventionally pronounced as [trom:]. Nis’ alternative way of pronouncing it, may be the reason for Daimi not to react to his request in line 2, and neither in line 6, after the request has been repeated, now without what has been described as ‘dispensable elements’ of the original turn (Schegloff 2004). This way of repairing the original turn points to the possible nature of the trouble: what was asked for, was not understood. However, the repeat does not resolve the trouble: a 1.5 second pause and a soft-voiced repair initiation (*what* in line 6) occasion yet a second repeat (line 7). By way of this repeat, Nis thus produces a repair on his prior attempt to repair (line 4); it is done by changing the initial turn’s ‘*can I have*’ to ‘*be permitted to have*’. With the repair in line 7, Nis indicates his changed assumption about the nature of the trouble.

Repair work may start and develop in different ways. For example in excerpt (2), above, the repair sequence was initiated by the non-native speaker as she initiates a repair of her own turn (boldfaced for emphasis, line 2):

- (2) (CEB: træer)
- | | |
|------|--|
| 1 A2 | men men men men hvordan ser planten u:d:
<i>but but but but what does the plant look like</i> |
| 2 B2 | planten meget stærk ser ud æh træer
<i>the plant very strong looks uh trees</i> |
| 3 A2 | store træer
<i>big trees,</i> |
| 4 B2 | ja (.) store eh (.) ikke så (.) store. men
<i>yes big eh not so big. but</i> |
| 5 A2 | men <u>kraftige</u>
<i>but strong</i> |
| 6 B2 | kraftige
<i>strong</i> |
| 7 A2 | ja
<i>yes</i> |

In response to the self-repair (‘planten’ (*the plant*) - ‘træer’ (*trees*)) in line 2, the native speaker, A2, makes a suggestion (line 3) as to what the non-native speaker, B2, is trying to convey. B2 reformulates the original utterance by repairing B2’s linguistic categories (changing *plants looks very strong eh trees*, line 2 to *big trees*, line 3). This however does not solve the trouble, which is instead addressed in a second repair cycle, initiated by B2 in her next turn (line 4). This turn builds on the repair in the form of a candidate understanding offered by A2, as B2 picks up on ‘store’ (*big*) and adds ‘ikke så store’ (*not so big*) (line 4) followed by ‘men’ (*but*). In other words, she manages to convey that she is searching for an attribute that is somehow comparable to *trees* (Brouwer 2003). In combination with the turn-initial confirmation of *big*, B2 also seems to indicate her impression that she and her conversational partner are getting closer to an acceptable description.

In her next turn, B2's response part builds on the A2's previous repair turn picking up on 'men' (*but*) (line 4) and suggesting 'kraftige' (*strong*) (line 5). This happens in yet another (a third) repair cycle (line 6), tried out by B2, where the item that B2 has possibly been searching for is finally confirmed by A2.

In both excerpts, (2) and (3), the repair initiations and repairs proper all build on previous repairing actions. Each repair cycle is a new attempt to solve the problem. Even so, all the cycles are still referring to the initial TST.

We note then, that in our excerpts several attempts at repair are being made on the *same* trouble source, and we call this *piling up*. Although the sequences are initiated in different ways, and the troubles they address diverge, they have in common that the troubles are not resolved in sequentially organized three-part structures. Instead, new cycles are initiated, and the repair sequence is expanded by reworking and recycling prior repair attempts. These new cycles and expansions are done as new attempts at repair on the *same* TST. The piling up seems to indicate an understanding that not until the repair work is finished, and the trouble resolved, can the interaction move forward.

Concluding this section, we point out that piling up not only entails that several repair attempts are being made, but also that these attempts are different in nature and thereby reflect what Mazeland 1987 calls different repair *methods*. Different repair methods indicate how, upon some indication that trouble in interaction has occurred, interactants consider what the trouble source possibly could be, what was its nature, and thus how it could be resolved. Based on our data, we suggest that an initial repair cycle may locate and analyze the trouble in a certain way, exhibiting a specific repair method. The subsequent repair cycles' different analyses of the trouble reflect the participants' recognition that the earlier attempts at repairing the trouble had been unsuccessful, and that therefore different repair methods were needed. Note that, upon having achieved a common understanding that something is wrong, the co-participants develop the repair work by repeatedly structuring actions that relate relevantly to the immediate prior action of the other participant. In this way, and in the course of several turns, the co-participants collaborate interactionally towards achieving an intersubjective understanding.

6. Spelling out

After extended sequences with several attempts at initiating and repairing in different ways (i.e. piling up), by which trouble is not resolved, we see participants in our data doing a last, ultimate attempt. This may either solve the problem, or alternatively, if it doesn't, the participants may give up (Rasmussen 2016). It is this type of last attempt we have termed *spelling out*; it entails a recreation or redoing of the initial TST. Spelling out follows an action by the co-participant that indicates that earlier attempts at solving the trouble were unsuccessful. In some cases, such an action also demonstrates that the co-participant in question has given up repairing the trouble by reformulating the original turn. Furthermore, this particular turn (which is uttered by the speaker of the original trouble source turn (TST) has production features which we perceive as signaling a pressure to complete the extended sequences mentioned above (Wilkinson 2007).

While partly or completely reusing the materials of which the original TST consisted, the speaker adds emphasis. This emphasis is primarily expressed using prosodic as well as bodily resources. The resulting turn stands out as different from the other turns in the interaction. As we will demonstrate below, spelling out can be perceived as an ultimate repair cycle since it combines the repeat of linguistic materials from the trouble source with a variety of cues (prosodic, gestural, bodily, and in some cases syntactic and lexical) that make the turn stand out from its context-thus-far, in which such cues are absent.

Excerpt (3) (a continuation from 2) will serve as an example.

- (3) (GR: tromme) (continued)
- | | |
|----------|---|
| 9 | (2.0) |
| 10 Nis | do:m
'dom' |
| 11 Daimi | dum:
'dum' |
| 12 com | This version of the item comes close to the Danish word for 'stupid' |
| 13 | (1.0) |
| 14 Nis | ja
yes |
| 15 | (0.5) |
| 16 Nis | do:m
'dom' |
| 17 | (0.5) |
| 18 Daimi | vi/vi ik færdig med at lege endnu
<i>we haven't finished playing yet</i> |
| 19 | /shakes head |
| 20 | (2.5) |
| 21 Nis | /dom (.) dom (.) dom.
'dom dom dom' |
| 22 | /taps with flat left flat hand three times on the table |
| 23 Daimi | /trommen ja
<i>the drum yes</i> |
| | nods |
| 24 Nis | °ja°
yes |

At this point in the talk, Daimi has still not gotten what Nis is after. This results in Nis' continuing the talk (Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson 1974) after a gap (line 9). He uses his turn for doing a further (third) repair attempt, to which Daimi responds by simply repeating the word. The repeat indicates at a minimum that Daimi has heard what Nis said, but not that she has understood it. This leaves Nis with two options: he can either close the ongoing (third) repair cycle,

thereby worsening the trouble, or confirm what he had just said. He does the latter by saying “yes” in line 14, but Nis’ confirmation is not responded to by Daimi. As this creates a gap (line 15), Nis initiates a further, fourth attempt at repairing the trouble by repeating his previous attempt. After a gap (line 17), Daimi responds by stating that “we haven’t finished playing yet”. The response does not display a specific understanding of what Nis has been aiming at; Daimi simply bypasses the details of the entire repair sequence, and instead provides an attempt at responding to the (initial) action. By displaying that Nis’ contribution may be regarded as irrelevant, Daimi allows the interactional business to move forward.

What is specifically of interest here, is that Nis in his next turn (line 21) disregards Daimi’s attempt and continues the repair work. The way this continuation is done, however, is qualitatively different from the earlier attempts at repairing. Nis constructs his continued repair in specific ways: he employs not only speech production, but also body movements and other materials (Streeck et al. 2011): he taps the table. Furthermore, with regard to the lexical item that by now has been treated as a trouble source, Nis repeats it three times. Also, the repetitions are done in a specific, rhythmic fashion, with a micro pause occurring between each, which then is terminated with a final falling intonation (Selting 1994). Finally, the word ‘dom’ itself is repeated as a succession of stressed syllables (boldfaced in the excerpt), produced as an imitation of ‘playing a drum’: **dom** (.) **dom** (.) **dom**.

Note that the talk in this turn can be perceived as spelling out in that emphatic contextualization cues are used. In her work on climaxes in storytelling, Selting (1994) has argued that such climaxes may be emphasized by the use of prosodic, syntactic and lexical cues; actually, she mentions several of the cues occurring in the above excerpt: dense use of accentuated syllables, rhythmic production, and an elliptic syntax which only employs items that are absolutely necessary to convey one’s point. Most notably, Selting describes how speech stands out as ‘emphatic’ compared to the earlier occurring talk, that is, before the interactants created a ‘switch’. In our excerpt, one may similarly note a switch between earlier repair cycles and the spelling out turn (line 21): not only there are the contextualization cues noted above, but in addition, we observe the use of bodily movement (pounding the table) along with the extra sound emphasizing the turn.

By way of this method Nis makes efforts to move the co-participant beyond any possible doubt of what he is saying; in other words, he *spells it out*. In this way, he attempts to accomplish the same action that he tried to perform in the original TST, and he does this in the clearest possible way. Nis is using a combination of the resources he has at his disposal in order to make Daimi understand. This method, combined with his positioning of the repair upon her attempt to get on with the interactional business, makes Nis’ *spelling out* understandable as insisting on making Daimi understand.

7. Unsuccessful repair and the pressure to solve interactional trouble

Above, we introduced the notion of ‘exposed repair’, as contrasting with ‘embedded repair’ (Jefferson 1987), to capture the sequential work done by the co-participants involved in the interaction. The actions in an exposed repair sequence serve to solve the trouble; and if they are

successful, the business of the talk is resumed. As we have seen above, such repair can go on for several cycles. *Spelling out* explicates the exposed nature of the repair. For one, this is done by way of sequential organization (i.e. the positioning of the action relatively to the trouble source); but it is also achieved by the ways in which the relevant turns are produced (see the above reference to Selting 1994). These ways may, in addition to signaling pressure to solve interactional trouble, indicate irritation or frustration (Rasmussen 2014). In a certain sense, the participants ‘get in the face’ of their interlocutors.²

To illustrate this aspect of the phenomenon, we compare the spelling out in excerpt (3), which involved the hearing-impaired boy Nis, with examples from other interactions, featuring different types of language and communication disorders or challenges. One excerpt (4) involves an elderly person with dementia, another (5) is from a consultation in a hearing clinic, and finally one excerpt (6) deals with a conversation between a native and a non-native speaker

In all these cases, (a) a TST is recreated and redone as a *spelling out*; (b) this is done in contexts in which the repairing co-participant is dependent on a joint understanding of the TST as having been produced to enable the speaker to perform an action that unfortunately ended up as a TST; (c) the spelling out turns all carry an implicit assumption about how to successfully end the repair sequence; and (d) the spelling out turns all exhibit a built-in presumption regarding who is responsible for the extended repair work.

Excerpt (4) illustrates an interaction between an elderly couple. Ib, a male, is diagnosed with dementia and lives in a care facility; on this occasion, his wife has come to visit him. The trouble source turn occurs at line 1. After Ib’s wife attempts to repair it twice (line 18 and line 26), she repeats the turn while adding micro-pauses between each lexical element (line 29). In other words, she reproduces her turn, but reworks it by delivering it with a different rhythm and at a slower pace.

- (4) (GR: ægtefæller)
- | | | |
|---|------|--|
| 1 | Wife | han fyldte jo år i går
<i>he had his birthday yesterday</i> |
| 2 | | ><H |
| 3 | | (0.6) |
| 4 | Ib | ja:
<i>yes</i> |

² Although we recognize spelling out as a last resort, it is not, as readers may be led to think, what has been termed a last structurally provided defense of intersubjectivity (Schegloff 1992). In his well-known study, Schegloff has demonstrated that third position repair is the sequentially last possibility for interlocutors to deal with what transpires as a misunderstanding. In such sequences, a recipient displays, in a next turn, an understanding of the previous turn, upon which repair then is initiated – indicating that the displayed understanding was a misunderstanding; the repair is thus initiated in third position relative to the trouble source. Although spelling out may occur in a third, or (typically) later turn relative to the trouble source, it does not necessarily occur in third position, but may equally be placed in second position relative to the trouble source turn. The distance between a TST and a repair proper does not necessarily reflect the position of the repair relative to the trouble. As a last resort, spelling out should be understood in terms of the number of repair cycles that have already taken place, but, most importantly, in terms of its qualitative features.

5	><W
6	(1.5)
7 Wife	og I:brahim han fylder år i dag <i>and Ibrahim has a birthday today</i>
8	(1.5)
9 Ib	jamen eh: <i>yes but</i>
10	leans back, ><W, points with left index finger at W
11	(3.1)
12 Ib	det da (.) han han (0.3) han (0.2) fyldt da år (urop) <i>it's you know he he he his birthday</i>
13	(0.7)
14 Wife	hva han hva han blev, <i>what he what birthday he celebrated</i>
15	><H
16	(1.0)
17	W nods; I leans forward, mutual gaze
18 Wife	Søren blev atten år igår <i>Søren had his 18th birthday yesterday</i>
19	nods
20	(7.3)
21	mutual gaze; I gazes towards the window; W gazes at I; mutual gaze
22 Ib	[(i as al al)] altså <i>well</i>
23 Wife	[(du ve me)] <i>(you know)</i>
24 Ib	=>towel
25	holds towel in left hand
26 Wife	Søren <i>Søren</i>
27	>H
28	(2.0)
29 Wife	Søren (.) blev (.) <u>atten</u> (.) <u>år</u> (.) igår <i>Søren celebrated his 18th birthday yesterday</i>
30 Ib	nå
31	<i>if you say so</i>

In lines 12-13, Ib indicates having a problem with his wife's telling two persons having a birthday. In line 14, the wife initiates repair of *his* turn (line 12-13); in this initiation, she refers to her turn while insisting on what Ib seems to disagree with: namely, that 'han' (*he*) (either Søren or Ibrahim) had a birthday (*he celebrated*); supplemented by her nodding (line 14 and line 17). She then picks up on the first part of her telling as the possible trouble source, and asserts that it was Søren who has his birthday, by adding a detail: that of Søren having had his 18th birthday

(line 18). This action, however, receives no response, but instead, an extended gap emerges (line 20) during which Ib gazes at the window. Then both initiate a turn in order to continue the interaction in overlap. Ib's initial turn component 'altså' comes clear of the overlap. While the Danish 'altså' normally is understood as *well* or *you know* (Steensig 2003), in the current context case, it may indicate that Ib still has problems and disaligns with the initial turn; alternatively, it could serve an indication of Ib abandoning the repair work. The 'altså' emerges after a long gap, during which Ib gazed out the window; it is combined with a shift in focus, from gazing through the window to looking at a towel in his left hand – perhaps as an act of reflecting. However, since Ib has been diagnosed with dementia, his behavior could also be understood as his simply not continuing the ongoing repair work; dementia research has shown that people who are diagnosed with the condition may have problems with coherence or cohesion in language, and therefore may have difficulty in maintaining a conversation on different levels (Bayles 1985; Dijkstra et al. 2004; Laine et al. 1998). In any case, since Ib has not shown any understanding of the initial turn, prior to his emergent action in line 22, its initiation may, for different reasons, be understood as his not wishing to relate to or join the repair work. The consequences of abandoning the repair work are (a) that Ib's wife's efforts at repair were unsuccessful, and (b) that any possibility to develop talk on the topic is limited. Ib's wife initiated the topic and 'spelled out' the initial turn. As was the case in excerpt (2), the turn's production is characterized by slow pace, by micro-pauses occurring between each of the turn elements, and by emphasis being placed on some of them. The repair turn is also pre-faced by an attempt to break up the original turn in order to highlight its topical focus, i.e. Søren. In all these ways, Ib's wife seems to work towards enabling her husband to follow what she says, while at the same time she tries to obtain a successful closure of the repair sequence by her assumption about the nature of the trouble, namely the fact that Ib cannot follow her talk. As was the case in excerpt (2), here, too, the speaker of the spelling-out turn bypasses her co-participant's project and insists on making him grasp what she is after. Ib responds to this attempt with a flat 'nå' (*if you say so*), which may indicate a lack of interest and recognition (for work on Danish 'nå', see also Heinemann 2017a; Heinemann 2017b). Ib's wife subsequently substantiates her need to successfully accomplish the repair by establishing a joint understanding that it is Søren (and not Ibrahim) who celebrated a birthday. The point of what she tries to tell Ib, namely that she did not have time to celebrate the day with Søren, even though in Denmark, a person's 18th birthday is considered an important milestone, and even though she had been invited, depended on this understanding (this was not included in the transcript).

Excerpt (5) likewise exhibits the special technique of repeating an original turn while slowing down its production. Also here, the spelling out turn occurs in a context in which the challenged co-participant's understanding is indispensable to the participant's carrying out a specific next action. In this case, Anne, an audiologist, asks a hearing-impaired client, Claus, if he has worked without ear protection for a longer period of time, say 10 years. The answer to this question is necessary for the audiologist when filling in a standard questionnaire and in addition responding to further questions in order to assess if the implementation of a cochlear implant is relevant for Claus as an alternative to a hearing aid.

(5) (GR:uden høreværn)

1	Anne	så det er cirka- det er måske ti år du har arbejdet uden ar arbejdet
2		uden høreværn <i>then it's about - it is perhaps 10 years that you have worked without ear protection</i>
3		shakes, nods
4		><Claus
5		(1.0)
6	Claus	nej jeg brugte jo <i>no I used you know</i>
7		lifts right hand tw right ear, points tw right, moves right index back and
8		forth; jerk-like
9		><Anne
10		(0.5)
11	Anne	ja uden <hø(.).re(.).værn> <i>yes without ear protection</i>
12		leans forward, right hand tw right ear
13		><Claus
16		leans forward, right hand tw right ear
17		><Claus

The question in line 1-2, which was already being dealt with in two prior cycles (not in the transcript), is a polar (yes/no) question (Clayman & Heritage 2002; Raymond 2000) in declarative format. Either a confirmation or a disconfirmation can be considered relevant responses to the question; even so, the question seems weighted towards a confirmation, the preferred response (Rasmussen, 2016). However, after a pause of one second (line 5), Claus responds with a 'nej jeg brugte jo' (*no I used you know*), combined with gestures, thereby indicating that Anne's understanding is incorrect. Anne then corrects that earlier understanding, when she (line 11) initially acknowledges Claus' turn (by uttering 'ja' (*yes*); Mazeland 1990) and in this way matches the polarity of his disagreement. She then proceeds with a new TCU by way of a pitch reset ('uden høreværn', *without hearing protection*) to explicitly repair the correct understanding of her question (in other words, Anne performs an exposed repair, as opposed to an embedded one; Jefferson 1987). Thereby, she spells out what she assumes Claus did not understand, or rather did not hear: she slows down the production of the phrase 'ear protection' and she inserts micro-pauses between each syllable and puts emphasis on one of them: 'uden hø(.).re(.).værn' (*without ear protection*). Anne not only displays which of the turn's elements Claus presumably did not get, she also orients to what she figures occasioned the problem (his hearing disorder) by leaning forward, raising her right hand to her ear (as to gesture ear protection), and speaking with em-

phasized lip movements. In this way, she produces an explicit repair for Claus to deal with.³ We also recognize spelling out as a technique used in interactions with people speaking foreign or second languages. The following excerpt (6) is an illustration. Johnny, an instructor for a specific type of coaching technique and a native speaker of American English, sits in front of a group of Danish course participants and, before starting the official course business, he selects one of the participants, Torben, as his primary recipient. Johnny starts telling an anecdote (line 1):

- (6) CEB/GR: japan)
- | | |
|----------|-----------------------------------|
| 1 Johnny | dja- [di y [ever go to (.) Japan? |
| 2 | [>Torben |
| 3 Torben | [>Jonny |
| 4 | (1.7) |
| 5 Johnny | >Torben |
| 6 Torben | >Johnny |
| 7 | purses lips |
| 8 Torben | hvad? |
| | <i>what</i> |
| 9 Johnny | Japan. |

We see how Johnny (line 1) turns to Torben with a yes/no question. Torben turns his gaze towards Johnny during this first turn, thereby displaying reciprocity. However, instead of answering the question, Torben keeps gazing towards Johnny, and purses his lips, with a confused look on his face (line 7). The rather long pause ends with Torben initiating repair (line 8). The subsequent repair in line 10 is a partial repeat of the first line, displaying Johnny's analysis of what the problem for Torben might have been: he might not have heard or understood the rather essential word 'Japan'. However, as we can see in the continuation of this excerpt, this first attempt at repair does not solve the problem:

- | | |
|-----------|-------------------------------|
| 11 | (0.3) |
| 12 Torben | yeah? |
| 13 Johnny | have you ever been there? |
| 14 Torben | (jeg ha aldrig xxxxxx) |
| 15 | (I have never) |
| 16 Johnny | thi- this: [country of Japan= |
| 17 | [hand up and outward |
| 18 Torben | =(yeah)= |
| 19 | nod |

3 As we can see from the continuation of excerpt (5), Claus actually deals with the trouble source of the repair, thus treating it as an explicit repair rather than an embedded one:

18 Claus	[ja øh- fik jeg sådn små propper i ørerne=
19 Anne	=nå okay=

20	leans forward
21 Johnny	have you ever been to the country of Japan.
22 Torben	no I havn't.
23	(0.3)
24 Johnny	When you go there
25	(0.5)
26 Johnny	They have these tiny little fish these little white fish
27	(0.8)

In the next turn at talk (line 12), and after a short pause in which Torben still has a puzzled look, it becomes apparent that although Torben now at least understands that Johnny has said 'Japan' this does not enable him to answer the question. His 'yeah' (line 12) is a positive receipt of 'Japan' as a topic, but it does not necessarily repair the initial trouble (line 1.), if the trouble indeed was understanding the relevancy of the turn. In line 13, Johnny then explicates the comment to the topic. Note here that lines 12-13 taken together represent a structure commonly referred to as either Topic/Comment or Left Dislocation (Duranti & Ochs 1979). Johnny has, so to speak, broken up his original turn in a topic ('Japan') and a comment ('have you ever been there?'), both of which he, separately, makes sure that Torben gets.

However, this breaking up does not help Torben. From his (barely discernable) turn (line 14), it can be inferred that while he is able to hear, Torben still is not able to answer the question with a simple 'yes' or 'no', or some equivalent expression(s). Johnny, on the other hand, needs an answer along these lines in order to be able to go ahead with his anecdote. While Torben seems (line 14) to start on a larger unit (line 14), this is however done in Danish and thus indicates a continued lack of understanding – especially for one like Johnny, who does not understand the language. Torben begins his turn by stating that 'jeg har aldrig' (*I have never*); but his project is interrupted by Johnny, who at this point appears to become irritated, while doing a renewed attempt at repair (line 16 'this country of Japan'), by explicating the central topic of his turn in more words. Again, Torben indicates a minimal understanding of where this is going, as he responds with a barely hearable 'yeah' and a nod (line 18-19) while he leans back in his chair. This work seems to be insufficient for collaboratively achieving an intersubjective understanding, so Johnny repeats a version of the entire first turn (line 1) – a version which now is *spelled out*. The first turn 'dja- [di y [ever go to (.) Japan?]' (line 1), includes the phonetically reduced versions of 'did you' ('dja' and 'di y'), as shorter or possibly the shortest ways in which the question could be posed. The spelled out version, however, consists of a syntactically, phonetically and lexically expanded (spelled out) version: 'have you ever been to the country of Japan' (line 21). Although the talk is not interspersed with micro-pauses, nor accentuated on specific syllables or pronounced slower (as in the excerpts analyzed above), its particulars display a less phonetically reduced, linguistically more elaborated way of redoing the whole turn of line 1. Moreover, Johnny makes explicit that Japan is a country, thus assuming a level of common-sense geography which is inferior to that of most adults. In the other cases, the repair of the spelling out action has inbuilt assumptions about the co-participant's failure to recognize (2), to follow (4), or simply hear (5) what the speaker of the TST was saying. In (5), the trouble source speaker, Johnny,

operates on a presumed a lack of knowledge on the part of the co-participant. Interestingly, left dislocation is used as part of the spelling out technique in this case (6), (where in addition, issues of native/nonnative talk are involved) as well as in (4) (involving cognitive impairment).

8. Problems, competence and responsibility

A central theme in CA is that meaning is co-constructed by participants in interaction: for the interaction to be successful, both participants need to make an effort to achieve intersubjective understanding. As already mentioned, Drew & Penn (2016) address this in terms of accountability for action design; the interacting co-participants expect the others and themselves to construct their turns such that the co-participants can discern what is intended. Quoting Wootton (1989), they write:

[We] are required to construct [our] behaviour so as to be recognisable by others, recognisable as being engaged in some particular form of activity. [...] Mutual intelligibility, in whatever form that empirically exists, requires that we so design our actions that others can discern in them what we intend. (1989: 238)

In line with this, Robinson (2006) shows how participants in repairs initiated by others orient to trouble solving being the responsibility of the speaker of the TST. Cases in which other-initiations of repair are done (apart from cases in which other-initiation is done in an apologetic way) represent an exception to this. In our data, initial attempts at resolving trouble also display the participants' orientation to having the speakers of the TST take responsibility for resolving the trouble. The participants go to great lengths, using different repair methods and targeting different parts or aspects of the original TST, in this way displaying different analyses of the trouble source and its nature. However, in the last attempt at repair, the spelling out, the speaker of the TST does not use new linguistic materials. Johnny seems to have run out of choices and instead appears to conclude that the only possible reason for the trouble (and thus the responsibility for it) lies in the other's understanding ability. Actually, the items in the spelling out turn have all been uttered before, either in the TST itself or in the repair cycles piling up prior to the spelling out. Earlier used materials are treated by the speaker as appropriate for the purpose at hand, since, evidently, the solution of the trouble is not to be found in the repairing participant's methods and techniques, but rather in the co-participant's other-initiated repair. Furthermore, the *spelling out* turn differs from prior repairing turns in its production: the earlier mentioned speech rate, pauses, repetition, enactment, leaning forward, gaze or combinations of these. The irritation or impatience that may be perceived in the repairing participant's successive turns may be due to this extra layer of interactional complexity.

In cases like ours, the ascription of responsibility to a co-participant is particularly interesting, as skills and competences are unevenly distributed between the participants - even to the degree that one of the participants is categorised as an *impaired person with a communicative disorder*, and another as a *non-native speaker*. As to *spelling out*, it may be produced by a non-im-

paired person or native speaker ((5), (6), (7)) but interestingly, also by an impaired person ((3), (4)). That is, this seemingly uneven distribution of competences does not necessarily place the responsibility for successful interaction on the shoulders of the supposedly more competent participant, nor does it necessarily blame the supposedly less competent participant for unsuccessful interaction. This observation underlines the need for a further discussion on the notion of competence in relation to non-nativeness and impairment in interaction.

9. Conclusion

With regard to earlier work on repair in interaction, we can identify a number of issues.

Considering that trouble often has been found to be resolved in a single repair cycle (Schegloff 1992), it may seem remarkable that a *piling up* of repair cycles is not all that uncommon in our data. The phenomenon may be due to the participants' struggle to make themselves understood, while they at the same time are trying to keep any disruption of the talk's progress at a minimum (Sacks 1987). In the same vein, we assume that also in atypical and native non-native interaction, the participants try to restrict repairs to a minimum. The more repair cycles there are, the more critical it becomes that troubles be resolved. This, too, is apparent from the data, more specifically in the turns we have described as *spelling out*, which are produced in a qualitatively different manner than are other repair attempts; our understanding is that they are demonstrably produced as last resorts. In our examples, either the trouble is solved, or participants claim understanding, or else they give up and move on to something else.

As to other-initiation of repair, this happens in our excerpts after the entire TST has been delivered; usually, no specific indication of the location or nature of the trouble is provided (Schegloff, Jefferson & Sacks 1977). We note that different cycles of repair target different aspects of the TST.

Spelling out, in other words, is a redoing of the original TST in the clearest possible way. It occurs sequentially after a number of repair cycles on the TST, i.e. in the sequential environment of *piling up*. Spelling out, moreover triggers the use of specific techniques in relation to the TST, seemingly arising from an urge to make the TST as clear as possible. Spelling out is not just a mere repetition: it adds an extra layer of techniques that help make the TST as clear as possible.

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