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Addressing a Source of Trouble Outside of the Repair Space

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Abstract

A body of research in Conversation Analysis has identified a range of structurally-provided positions in which sources of trouble in talk-in-interaction can be addressed using repair. These practices are contained within what Schegloff (1992) calls the repair space. In this paper, I examine a rare instance in which a source of trouble is not resolved within the repair space and comes to be addressed outside of it. The practice by which this occurs is a post-completion account; that is, an account that is produced after the possible completion of the sequence containing a source of trouble. Unlike fourth position repair, the final repair position available within the repair space, this account is not made in preparation for a revised response to the trouble-source turn. Its more restrictive aim, rather, is to circumvent an ongoing difference between the parties involved. I argue that because the trouble is addressed in this manner, and in this particular position, the repair space can be considered as being limited to the sequence in which a source of trouble originates.

Key words: Conversation analysis, Post-completion account, Repair, Repair space, Intersubjectivity, Talk-in-interaction.

Introduction

Talk-in-interaction is vulnerable to trouble, both internal and external, and seemingly at any point. Such trouble can be articulatory, sequential, syntactic, auditory, ambient, memorial, and so on (Schegloff, 1979). Repair refers to a general practice that people use in interaction for dealing with such trouble when it becomes apparent. Because trouble is not limited to errors, the term 'repair' is more generic than 'correction' (Schegloff et al., 1977). A key function of many types of repair, and one that will constitute an important consideration in this paper, is that it can enable participants to return to a turn containing a source of trouble. This return can provide for a revised response to the trouble-source turn, which is based upon a newly-established understanding of its meaning.

An account of the organisation of repair has been a key area of research within conversation analysis, as it has shown how participants to an interaction are able to defend and maintain an intersubjective, or shared, understanding (cf. Schegloff, 1992). The conversation analytic concept of repair refers to a dynamic class of actions that speakers and recipients can use to address sources of troubles, from a variety of positions relative to those troubles.

In this paper, I will review what is known as the 'repair space' (Schegloff, 1992; Schegloff et al., 1977), with an aim to identify how sources of trouble can come to be addressed beyond that space. It is extremely rare, for both participants and researchers, to encounter troubles that persist for long enough to be addressed outside of the repair space, relative to the proportion of trouble-sources that come to be repaired within it. Sources of trouble are usually addressed soon after their production¹. Using one instance where this is not the case, I will explore how the parties involved are unable to address a source of trouble within the repair space, and how it eventually comes to be addressed. In order to do so, I will first offer a brief overview of the existing findings on repair, which will allow for a consideration of the opportunities that are bypassed in the datum.

The format of repair operations are shaped by which party initiates the repair and at what position relative to the trouble source (Schegloff, 2000)². Repair can be initiated by either the speaker of a turn containing some source of trouble, in which case it is referred to as 'self-initiated repair,' or by a recipient of a trouble-source turn, where it is referred to as 'other-initiated repair.' The inclusion of the term *initiation* highlights that the party who identifies a source of trouble is not necessarily the one to produce the repair solution. It is thus possible for self-initiated self-repair, other-initiated self-repair, self-initiated other-repair, and other-initiated other-repair. Each of these divisions of labour engender further diversity in the way that repair can be accomplished (Schegloff et al., 1977).

Self-initiated self-repair is the most common type of repair in talk-in-interaction and there is a structural reason for this distribution. Speakers of a turn-in-progress, because they have a warrant to produce at least a single turn-constructive unit (cf. Sacks et al., 1974), have an opportunity to initiate repair within the same turn as a source of trouble. Self-initiated self-repair can also be produced in transition space, which is found following the end of a trouble-source turn and before the beginning of a response to that turn (Schegloff et al., 1977).

¹ However, the presence of an ostensible source of trouble does not necessitate its repair. For instance, Land and Kitzinger (2005: 391-396), Kitzinger (2006), and Jefferson (2007: 450-452) have shown how erroneous person references can remain unaddressed. In these instances, the recipients of a source of trouble are clearly in a position to realise that an error has been made, but apparently decide to eschew addressing that error, in order to not delay the production of the sequentially relevant next action.

² Examples of the different repair operations discussed here can be found in Schegloff (1992).

In the event that a turn containing an ostensible source of trouble is brought to completion without the speaker having repaired that trouble themselves, recipients can engage in a sequential move where they seek to address that source of trouble; a practice referred to as 'other initiated repair.' The term 'next turn repair' was originally used in relation to these types of other-initiated repair (Schegloff et al., 1977), although subsequent research has shown this is not always the case (Schegloff, 2000). There are two principal ways in which they can do so. In one, a recipient can make a response to the overall action initiated in the trouble source turn and, in that response, repair the trouble that they have apparently identified; what Jefferson (1987) calls 'embedded correction.'

The second type of move that recipients can make, to address a source of trouble, is to suspend their response to the overall action initiated by the trouble source turn, in order to exclusively address the trouble. They thereby initiate an insert sequence (Schegloff, 1972, 2007) that interpolates the first and second parts of an otherwise adjacent pair of utterances. They can do so in order to repair a source of trouble. The most common way in which this is accomplished is for recipients to initiate repair, but then to leave it to the first speaker to produce a repair solution, in what is known as other-initiated self-repair (Schegloff et al., 1977). An alternative is for the recipient to both initiate repair and to provide a repair solution; what Jefferson (1987) calls 'exposed correction.' In this case, the next relevant move is for a recipient to accept or reject the correction.

So there are already two points, available within the repair space, to address a source of trouble in talk-in-interaction. The first is available within a trouble-source turn, and in any ensuing transition space. The second comes in a recipient's response to that turn. These two positions account for the majority of repair operations that are produced in interaction. They enable most sources of trouble to be resolved soon after their production (cf. Schegloff et al., 1977). In addition to these two positions, however, there are two further repair positions, which are discussed extensively by Schegloff (1992). These are the positions that will be most pertinent to our current considerations, as they appear to enable, in principle, an infinite repair space.

In addition to addressing a source of trouble within the turn of its production or in the transition space following their trouble-source turn, speakers can also initiate repair in the third turn relative to that turn. That is, they have another opportunity to address the trouble in the turn following a responsive turn by a recipient. Although an analysis of 'third turn repair' was proffered by Schegloff, Jefferson and Sacks (1977), this has come to be refined and modified by Schegloff (1992; 1997b), who introduces the concept of 'third *position* repair,' and distinguishes it from third *turn* repair. Third turn repair, which tends to take a form similar to transition space repair, is not occasioned by the contents of an intervening turn from an interlocutor. In that third turn, the speaker that produced an ostensible trouble is able to independently identify both the trouble and its source, and moves to repair that trouble.

Third position repair differs from third turn repair in that the intervening talk by an interlocutor displays that some first turn has occasioned a misunderstanding. The speaker of that trouble-source turn then seeks to repair the basis of that misunderstanding. An important observation about third position repair is that the utterance which leads to the recognition of a misunderstanding need not necessarily be positioned in the turn adjacent to a trouble-source turn. Therefore, unlike third *turn* repair, which is always found in third turn, third *position* repair can be located in third turn but could also be located later, if and when an apparent misunderstanding becomes manifest (Schegloff, 1992; 1997b). The following instance,

involving a dispatch officer and a caller to a fire department, demonstrates how repair can be produced in such a circumstance.

(01) [FD, IV, 66 (Schegloff, 1992: 1318)]
01 Dis: Now what was that house number you said=
02 =[you were-
03 Cal: =[No phone. No.
04 Dis: Sir?
05 Cal: No phone at all.
06 Dis: No I mean the uh house number, [Y-
07 Cal: [Thirty eight oh
08 one?
09 Dis: Thirty eight oh one.

The caller's misunderstanding, at line 3, treating the dispatch officer's reference to 'house number' as referring to a telephone number, does not come to be repaired in the next turn (that is, in third *turn* relative to the trouble source). Instead, at line 4, the officer initiates repair on the caller's preceding turn. It is only once the repair solution has been provided by the caller, at line 5, that the dispatch officer moves to initiate repair on the initial misunderstanding, at line 6, in third *position* relative to the trouble source. This repair occasions a revised response from the caller, who replaces his *No phone* (line 3) response with *Thirty eight oh one* (line 9).

Third position repair is a resource for speakers to deal with a misunderstanding that has resulted from a source of trouble that is located in one of their own turns at talk. A similar repair device to deal with misunderstandings within an earlier turn of another speaker is also available to recipients of trouble-source turns, what Schegloff (1992) calls 'fourth position repair.' This is the final position available within the repair space. As with third position repair, some talk following a trouble-source turn exposes a source of misunderstanding. In fourth position repair, however, the party that identifies the source of trouble is the recipient of the trouble-source turn. It is perhaps best understood with reference to an example. This following comes from a call by Colonel Lehroff, who is a director of civil defence, to the home of the manager of a municipal truck yard.

(02) [CDHQ, 15; Openings, 299 (Schegloff, 1992b: 1322)]
01 Phi: Hello?
02 Leh: Phil!
03 Phi: Yeh.
04 Leh: Josh Lehroff.
05 Phi: Yeh.
06 Leh: Ah:: what've you gotten so far. Any requests to
07 dispatch any trucks in any areas,
08 Phi: Oh you want my daddy.
09 Leh: Yeah, Phi[l,
10 Phi: [Well he's outta town at a convention.

Examining this fragment of interaction retrospectively, the source of trouble is Lehroff's presumption that there is only one Phil living at the house he is calling. It turns out that both the father and son who live there are called Phil. However, at the point of Lehroff's identification of 'Phil' at line 2, neither party is aware of this source of trouble. Phil treats Lehroff as having successfully identified his voice. Phil then, in turn, does not display any recognition of Lehroff, who self identifies at line 4. Following Phil's confirmation of this at line 5, there is no reason for Lehroff to presume that he might not be in contact with his intended interlocutor. At this point he initiates the business of his call (at lines 6-7), which indicates to Phil a misunderstanding; the wrong Phil has been identified. His response to that realisation, at line 8, is to initiate fourth position repair. Phil's repair occasions a revised response to the trouble source turn (Lehroff's

Phil at line 2) in which he replaces the turns he produced at lines 3 and 5, which conveyed to Lehtroff that he had reached his intended interlocutor, with an account of why that same interlocutor is unable to come to the telephone (line 10).

Because they occur as the last position in the repair space, fourth position repairs are relatively rare, compared to repairs initiated in earlier positions. Schegloff (1992) presents and examines a small collection. He explains that fourth position repair can take the format of a re-characterisation of a trouble-source turn. This is often, but need not necessarily, initiated with a 'change-of-state token' (Heritage, 1984) such as *Oh*. If this reanalysis is confirmed by its recipient, the party that initiated fourth position repair can then proceed to produce a revised response to the trouble-source turn; the misunderstanding having now been identified and addressed.

Schegloff describes third and fourth position repair as "...a defense of intersubjectivity. They are the last structurally provided positions because after these positions there is no systematic provision for catching divergent understandings" (1992: 1325). They enable participants to identify a misunderstanding that has resulted in their conversation going in an inapposite direction. Exposing such misunderstandings enables a return to the business of a trouble-source turn, and for a revised response to that turn to ensue.

This is an aspect of repair in these positions that will prove to be crucial to our present considerations. In instances where both third and fourth position repairs are deployed, a response has already been made to the trouble-source turn – a response predicated upon a misunderstanding. Repair, then, allows for that response to be revised, in light of a newly-established shared understanding of the trouble-source turn.

The deployment of repair operations in either third or fourth position is dependent on the identification of some source of trouble. They do not require the sort of fixed sequential positioning, relative to a source of trouble, that is overwhelmingly observed with the earlier repair positions. As highlighted by the following schematic, where turn 1 is to be treated as containing a source of trouble, this appears to create the possibility of an infinite repair space.

Turn 1	A:	Same turn
Turn 2	B:	Next turn/second position
Turn 3	A:	Third turn/position
Turn 4	B:	Fourth position
Turn 5	A:	Third position
Turn 6	B:	Fourth position
	A:	Third position
↓	B:	Fourth position

This schematic shows how all four positions of repair can be made available by the fourth in a series of adjacent turns, where the first turn contains a source of trouble. However, the repair space does not end there. Third and fourth position repair can be initiated in the fifth and sixth turns respectively, and, as the downward arrow indicates, in apparently any turn that follows, so long as some preceding utterance exposes the source of trouble.

In this paper, I will explore the limits to this repair space, arguing that repair is a resource that is limited to dealing with troubles in extant sequences. I will make this argument with reference to datum where a misunderstanding comes to be addressed outside of the sequence of its production. In this position, the source of trouble is accounted for, rather than repaired.

Although intersubjectivity is restored, no revised response is made relevant, as is typically found in third and fourth position repair, because the sequence containing the trouble source is over.

The datum

The datum is an entire recording of a telephone conversation between Michelle and Barry (both pseudonyms). It comes from a corpus of telephone conversations recorded in Australian Community and Home Care (CHC) service centres during 2008. These centres provide services that enable older people to live independently in their own homes and engage in community activities. Services are typically customised to suit the particular needs of each client, but might include tasks like cleaning, grocery shopping, and transportation. This datum was collected with the informed consent of both participants, following ethical approval from both the participating data source and the University of Adelaide.

Each CHC client is assigned a coordinator within a service centre, who manages the ongoing delivery of the client's services, making responsive adjustments where needed. Michelle is Barry's coordinator. The datum has been transcribed based upon the conventions devised by Jefferson (2004); I have followed an updated version of these conventions by Hepburn and Bolden (forthcoming).

Given the misunderstanding that is the focus for this paper relates to the particular details of some of Barry's service arrangements, it may be helpful to have a preliminary overview the pertinent details. It becomes apparent that Barry has at least two services that are delivered on a regular basis and that are discussed in this interaction. Neither of these are initially referred to by name, but it becomes evident towards the end of the call that the first of these services is for grocery shopping.

As it is unclear from the datum what the second service is (although I take it, following Schegloff, 1997a, that both parties have a shared understanding of what this service is), I will refer to the first service as 'grocery service' and the second as 'service B.' The grocery service is usually delivered by a care worker pseudonomised as Kathleen and it seems that she comes on a fortnightly basis. Service B is usually delivered by a care worker pseudonomised as Cindy and it is not clear from the datum how often this service takes place.

A misunderstanding in this call, which is the focus of my analysis, concerns the identity of the care worker who last came to visit Barry. According to Michelle, Emma last came to visit Barry. According to Barry, it was Suzanne. This misunderstanding (over whether it was Emma or Suzanne that last came to visit) is eventually resolved when Barry reveals that he has been referring to the care worker for his grocery service, whereas Michelle has been referring to the care worker for some other service (possibly, but not necessarily, 'Service B'). Nevertheless, prior to this revelation, both parties think that they are referring to the same singular, discreet, and historical event, and yet they have divergent understandings of one of its details. My interest will be to account for how this is the case, and the manner in which the misunderstanding eventually comes to be addressed.

A single case study approach

As established above, the focal phenomenon, a source of trouble that is accounted for having passed through the repair space, is a rare event, but also one that results from an extended and complicated sequence. For these reasons, in this paper I will focus on the single instance that I have available. This follows a longstanding interest that conversation analysts have in studying single episodes of interaction. To paraphrase an early paper (Sacks et al., 1974), conversation analysts are interested in finding mechanisms that can be located in single cases but which also yield some observable orderliness that can be additionally located as an aggregated practice.

In this paper, I follow an approach described by Schegloff (1987). I will utilise the established findings of conversation analysis to explore a single episode of interaction, with the goal of using a novel aspect of the datum, the addressing of a source of trouble outside of the repair space, to generate insights that contribute to this field of study. My aim is to identify a practice in a single instance that might further our understanding of how interaction is organised more generally.

The focal practice

A fragment taken from the end of the datum contains the utterance that is the focus of study. It is presented in boldface on line 63 and is an account, by Barry, of how it is that he and Michelle have been disagreeing with one another throughout their preceding talk. It begins with Michelle pursuing a response to an arrangement, the details of which have led to a misunderstanding in the conversation.

```
(03) [CHC060, 1:19-1:39]
57 Mic: is that alright?=
58 Bar: =either yes.
59      (.)
60 Mic: ohkay. thank you. [ ~.h]-.h-.hhh.h~ thank you an:'=
61 Bar: [ (bh) ]
62 Mic: =[ e:rm ]
63 Bar: =[oh I thought you was talkin' about the grocery.
64      (.)
65 Mic: yeh-=oh no that's going to be Mandy. who you
66      know.=you've met Mandy:- she's the one that does
67      lots of relief work. you'll know her pretty well
68      when you see her; .mphh=
69 Bar: =mm hm.
70 Mic: alri:p?
71      (0.4)
72 Bar: yep.
73 Mic: °okay°. thAnk you. see ya later. bye bye.
74      (.)
75 Bar: bye
76      (1.2)
77      ((call ends))
```

I will come to analyse the utterance in boldface as a post-possible-completion account for a misunderstanding between Barry and Michelle. It is an account of a source of trouble, rather than a repair operation, as it does not produce or lead to a revised response to the trouble-source turn. A revised response is unnecessary, as the trouble-source turn has been

responded to *in spite of* the misunderstanding. The primary objective of this utterance, I find, is to account for the misunderstanding that took place, in order to allow the participants to continue their relationship with their intersubjectivity over this matter restored. To see how can be the case, I now turn to the beginning of the source of trouble.

The trouble source

As we have just observed, the trouble source in this call does not become apparent to the participants and, by extension, to analysts, until near the termination of the interaction. To appreciate that utterance, however, it is necessary to begin our examination much earlier in the interaction. The following fragment comes after the call opening and the ethics exchange that was necessary to gain Barry's informed consent to participate in the study.

(04) [CHC060, 0:12-0:33]

01 Mic: .hhh u::m tch and I'm >just ringin' just to let you
02 know< of course u::m (.) Kathleen's still off.
03 khhh! .hh now it's gonna be Mandy but the girls
04 have put it in at one o'clock is that a problem for
05 you?
06 (0.6)
07 Bar: it's a bit late but it doesn't mattah.
08 (.)
09 Mic: you shure you don't mind?
10 (0.2)
11 Mic: I know i- I know it's an inconvenience and thank
12 you for that and I think Kathleen should be back
13 pretty soon. .hhh-.hh
14 (0.4)
15 Mic: so thank you very much for tha:t.

In brief, the reason for the call is outlined (cf. Button and Casey, 1985) by Michelle at line 1 as an informing that Kathleen, the usual care worker for Barry's grocery service, will be replaced at the next service by a care worker called Mandy and that she will come at a different time to Kathleen. Notwithstanding the apparent inconvenience of this modified service arrangement (foreshadowed in Michelle's first turn and explicitly acknowledged in her second turn), the sequence is treated by Michelle as complete by line 15. She then launches what turns out to be a second arrangement, which becomes the locus for the focal source of trouble.

There are two related points to keep in mind about this fragment of the conversation. The first is that the two parties have been discussing one particular service arrangement and are now about to move on to another. Towards the end of the call (see the focal utterance in Fragment 3 above), it becomes apparent that this first service arrangement is for grocery shopping. The second, and related, point, is that it becomes apparent that Barry has in some way not realised (either entirely or at all) that Michelle has moved on to discuss a second arrangement. This lack of realisation will create the conditions under which the two parties come to make mutually exclusive claims about a purportedly single event that, in fact, turn out to be unrelated.

This brings us to the moment where Michelle moves from talking about the first service arrangement to a second.

(05) [CHC060, 0:31-0:52]

15 Mic: so thank you very much for tha:t. .hh u::m and
16 Cindy's still off as we:ll so u:m (0.2) she's
17 >gonna be off< for a little bit.=did I tell you
18 that she'd broken 'er 'er wrist? .hhhh
19 (.)
20 Bar: yes:.
21 Mic: yep.=>I'm just [tryin' to< ((rustling paper)) s]ee:,
21 Bar: [(g i v e m y)]
22 (0.4)
23 Mic: while I've got you who it is [com]ing. [.hhh]
24 Bar: [give] [my bes]t
25 wishes onto her. >if yo[u e]ver< (.) t[alk-]
26 Mic: [y-] [y e]:ah.
27 thank you we'll give her a ca:ll.=yeah it's going
28 to be: uh E:mma again on: (.) Thu:rsday,

Michelle's second informing of an arrangement is produced as a continuation of her first, by associating Cindy's period of absence with Kathleen's prolonged absence. Michelle had earlier indicated that Kathleen is *still off*. (line 2), and she now reminds Barry that *Cindy's still off as we:ll* (line 16). Barry treats this as an afterword to the grocery service modification and offers his "best wishes" for Cindy³. As it turns out (on lines 27-28), this reminder is used by Michelle as an explanation of the necessary consequence of making another arrangement.

Previous research has shown that informings, such as of news, typically occasion responses that assesses the information as either novel and therefore newsworthy, or as already known to the recipient (Heritage, 1984; Maynard, 2003; Terasaki, 2004). In the corpus calls from which the present datum is taken, informings of arrangements occasion acceptance or rejection (cf. Ekberg, 2011).

Barry's acceptance of this second arrangement comes to be significantly delayed. While the informing *its going to be: uh E:mma again on: (.) Thu:rsday* (lines 27-28), a base first pair part (cf. Schegloff, 2007), makes a response to the arrangement relevant, Michelle here expands her turn by latching on an incidental sequence (Schegloff, 2007) to solicit from Barry confirmation of his acquaintance with Emma (*I think you had her last ti:me*. lines 28-29). This is treated as a source of trouble by Barry.

(06) [CHC060, 0:48-1:00]

27 Mic: =yeah it's going
28 to be: uh E:mma again on: (.) Thu:rsday,=I think
29 you had her last ti:me. mcht
30 (0.2)
31 Mic: A blonde lady. blondey coloured lady. .hhh hair I
32 mean. huh huh-huh! .hhh oka:y?
33 Bar: I had Suzanne.

Michelle's recognition solicit is a *second* first pair part, following on from the *first* first pair part that accomplished an informing of an arrangement. The recognition solicit is incidental to the sequence within which it is embedded because, as Schegloff (2007) writes of incidental sequences, although they occur *within* a sequence, they are not *of* that sequence⁴. If Michelle's

³ As we shall learn towards the end of the call, at some point Barry lost track of which service Michelle was referring to. It may be at this point, as he hears Michelle's reminder as nothing more than a reminder, that he loses track of which service is being referred to.

⁴ See Jefferson (1981) for an examination of how turn recompletions can be used to address reference troubles in conversation *without* launching a new sequence.

attempt here to secure Barry's recognition of Emma were successful, this recognition alone would not be sufficient to progress the action of her base first pair part of arrangement making. It would still be necessary for Barry to respond to that arrangement. These two first pair parts in Michelle's turn at lines 27-29 come to have an ongoing relevance to the sequential unfolding of this conversation. Having both informed Barry that Emma will be coming, and then having incidentally solicited his recognition of her on the basis of a previous encounter, Michelle brings her turn to possible completion, with final falling intonation in her pronunciation of *ti:me* (line 29). At a point where it is relevant for Barry to respond (cf. Sacks et al., 1974), he instead remains silent at line 30. In response to this silence, Michelle elects to continue talking, expanding upon and pursuing the incidental sequence that is concerned with soliciting Barry's recognition of Emma.

In her pursuit, Michelle contributes more information to bolster the possible resources available to Barry to recognise the substitute care worker. She appears to treat the gap in the conversation as evidence that Barry has not successfully identified Emma as someone with whom he is acquainted, and so Michelle proceeds to provide additional information to aid his recognition (*A blonde lady. blondey colourd lady. hhh hair I mean.* lines 31-32).

When Barry finally does speak, he does so not to produce the recognition that Michelle has been soliciting, but rather to correct or counter-inform her (Heritage, 1984; Jefferson, 1987; Robinson, 2009) that the care worker he last had was Suzanne. In saying *I had Suzanne* (line 33), Barry contests Michelle's claim of who visited him 'last time.' At this point in the interaction, both parties have made different and mutually exclusive claims about the same event: Michelle claims that Emma came to visit Barry 'last time'; Barry claims that it was Suzanne. What might have been a routine incidental sequence to secure recognition of a care worker now needs to be expanded upon, given that the parties to this conversation have made mutually exclusive claims about an event that is referred to within it. As we shall observe, addressing this difference delays the progressivity of the base sequence of arrangement making to which it is incidental.

Attempts to repair the source of trouble

Similar to instances that Robinson (2009) explores, Barry here produces a counter-informing, but without including information that might enable Michelle to understand the basis for his contradiction. In response, and consistent with Robinson's analytic account, Michelle initiates repair on Barry's turn, which occasions a responsive turn in which Barry might provide the type of information that Michelle requires. In addition to the ensuing fragment, where we can observe repair being used in an attempt to resolve their mutually exclusive claims, the remainder of the conversation contains space in which repair might resolve their trouble, but does not.

(07) [CHC060, 0:59-1:04]

33 Bar: I had Suzanne.

34 (0.4)

35 Mic: °e-°

36 (0.2)

37 Mic: pard'n?

38 (.)

39 Bar: Suza:nne.

40 Mic: did you have Suzanne,

41 Bar: yes.

42 Mic: oh okay.

Barry's response to Michelle's recognition-solicit turn is not to claim or deny any recognition of Emma, but to instead challenge a presupposition embedded within it – that he had *Emma* last time. His challenge takes the form of a counter-informing, *I had Suzanne*. (line 33), and with its production, two mutually exclusive claims are exposed and need to be addressed. However, Barry's minimal and unembellished counter-informing does nothing to assist Michelle to resolve their disjunctive claims. At this point she cannot either understand how she has been misunderstood by Barry, or even that she has been misunderstood at all. As she cannot identify how her turn might have been a source of trouble, she instead treats Barry's turn as in need of repair (cf. Schegloff, 1992).

Schegloff (1987) speculates there are mechanisms that enable parties to an interaction to circumvent the initiation of disagreement and, for this reason, repair can be thought of as a defence of intersubjectivity in interaction (Schegloff, 1992). Here we can observe how this practice works. Rather than directly challenge Barry's version, Michelle produces two successive repair initiations on Barry's counter-informing turn – first, the open-class repair initiator (Drew, 1997) *pard'n?* (line 37), and then an understanding check (*did you have Suzanne*, line 40).

Multiple other-initiations of repair are found when a first instance does not achieve an adequate repair solution and each successive repair initiation is typically (as here) in a format that is stronger than in preceding attempts (Schegloff, 2000; Schegloff et al., 1977). Michelle's first repair initiation claims some problem with the entire preceding turn. Although this repair initiation could relate to a problem of hearing, Drew (1997) shows how these open-class initiators can also occur in particular sequential positions that can indicate to participants that the problem with a prior turn may actually relate to its appropriateness. In this case, Barry is contradicting Michelle's version of events, but he does so without providing her with cues that might enable her to understand why he is doing so. In this sequential context, Michelle's open-class repair initiator is an opportunity for Barry to specify a basis for his counter-informing (see also Robinson, 2009; Svennevig, 2008). However, Barry's response (*Suzanne*, line 39) does not attend to any possible broader problems of comprehension.

Michelle's second repair initiation is more specified, providing another opportunity for Barry to either account for or to back away from his version of who came 'last time' (Robinson, 2009; Svennevig, 2008). However, his response is to simply confirm Michelle's understanding check (yes, line 41). Yet again, no reconciliatory information is made available.

With her attempts at repair having failed to gain clarification, Michelle is in no better position to either accept Barry's counter-informing, and resolve their difference, or to reject it and maintain their disjunct versions of an event. In spite of this, she moves to accept the version of events proffered in his counter-informing turn, with *oh okay*. (line 42); displaying a readiness to move their conversation in a new direction (cf. Schegloff, 2007, on sequence closing thirds). It turns out, however, that the new direction is away from using repair but not entirely away from their different claims. Throughout this ensuing talk, various positions in the repair space are bypassed.

Further attempts to address the source of trouble within the repair space

To this point in the interaction, there are two sequences that are still relevant to the conversation. The first, base sequence – the main action in which Michelle is engaged – is making a modification to an existing service arrangement. This sequence has not yet been responded to by Barry. The second, incidental sequence, which has been the focus of the preceding talk, has come to be concerned with a presumption embedded within a recognition solicit: that Emma came ‘last time.’ Michelle and Barry assert mutually exclusive versions of who visited Barry ‘last time.’

As in Robinson’s (2009) analysis, Barry’s counter-informing asserts his primary epistemic access to know who it is that came to visit him ‘last time.’ However, it is also the case that Michelle has access to verifiable records of which care workers visit which clients, and when. In the ensuing talk, we will observe Michelle progressively downgrading the strength of the claims she makes, in apparent deference to Barry’s primary epistemic access, whilst also forwarding tentative claims, made on the basis of her own access to information. Throughout, the presence of mutually exclusive claims continues to resonate across the talk, with Barry consistently resisting whatever claims Michelle makes.

At the beginning of her turn at line 42, having possibly closed down the incidental sequence with *oh okay.*, Michelle is now in a position where she might return to the primary action in which she is otherwise engaged: making an arrangement for Emma to visit Barry in place of Cindy. Rather, both parties produce evidence for what they have previously said.

(08) [CHC060, 1:03-1:13]

42 Mic: oh okay.=they’ve put Emma here I thought you’d had
43 her before. .hhhh
44 (0.6)
45 Mic: so is that o[k a]:y?
46 Bar: [Su-]
47 Bar: SUzanne >was the first< e:rm (0.4) I think it’s the
48 first fortnight she’s been working for you.

After apparently closing the incidental sequence (with *oh okay.* line 42) and returning to the revised service arrangements (reporting – presumably on the basis of the schedule she’s consulting – that *they’ve put Emma here* (line 42), that is, for the next visit⁵), Michelle returns to the divergent claims made within the incidental sequence, which was initially launched by her to solicit Barry’s recognition of Emma, with *I thought you’d had her before.* (lines 42-43). This is a modified version of the original first pair part of the incidental sequence – *I think you had her last time.* (lines 28-29). Her epistemic qualifier *I think*, at line 28, which implies a contemporary belief, has been downgraded to *I thought*, by line 42, thereby indexing a belief that was previously held and which she now claims may be mistaken. Her formulation of Emma’s visit as having been *last time.* (line 29) has now been downgraded to a more general *before.* (line 43).

⁵ While it is possible that ‘here’ could refer to either the records of previous services or a schedule of future services, the former possibility is unlikely. If Michelle had a record detailing which care workers visited Barry for previous services she would not have needed to claim, with reference to her memory, *they’ve put Emma here I thought you’d had her before.* (lines 42-43), but could have rather asserted something like *they’ve put Emma down here as coming last Tuesday for your cleaning.* Her failure to provide such details as evidence suggests that she may not have them to hand. Moreover, her reference ‘they’ is likely to refer to the employees that work, at this particular service centre, on the schedules for future care visits, rather than to records of prior service occasions. It is therefore much more likely that Michelle is using ‘here’ to refer to a schedule of upcoming services. Importantly, however, the ambiguity of whether ‘here’ refers to records of previous or future services could be relevant for Barry.

In response to having their assertions challenged, participants may downgrade components of their version and only assert that which they can adequately evidence (Pomerantz, 1984b). What we observe at lines 42-43 is a downgraded claim about Barry's acquaintance with Emma, but one that still pursues a response from him; namely, his recognition of Emma. It is, then, a continuation of the incidental sequence, and the mutually exclusive claims contained within it, rather than a return to the base sequence.

At this point, Michelle moves to circumvent the problem of their mutually exclusive versions. Her response solicitation (Jefferson, 1981) *so is that oka:y?* (line 45), is a return to the base sequence, and is concerned with pursuing acceptance of the arrangement that she is trying to make with Barry. However, at the point where Barry is sequentially obligated to respond to the arrangement (with either acceptance or rejection), he instead persists with his focus on the different claims occasioned within the incidental sequence, which has come to be preoccupied with whether Emma came 'last time.' He produces a piece of information about Suzanne which offers evidence for his version (*Suzanne >was the first< e:rm (0.4) I think it's the first fortnight she's been working for you.*, lines 47-48). This means that at a point where the incidental sequence is abandoned by one party in an attempt to progress the base sequence, the other party persists in advancing his claim by continuing the incidental sequence.

By this point in the interaction, then, we have heard both participants attempt to provide evidence for or qualify claims that were initially produced as assertions. In the following turns, we continue to hear these resources being used in relation to their different claims.

(09) [CHC060, 1:08-1:21]

47 Bar: SUzanne >was the first< e:rm (0.4) I think it's the
 48 first fortnight she's been working for you.
 49 (0.6)
 50 Mic: o::h right. ohkay.
 51 (0.7)
 52 Mic: °yea:h.° >oh w'l< I'll look at thAt then but the- I
 53 know they've put down here E:mma.
 54 (.)
 55 Mic: mph
 56 Bar: eh ha-ha
 57 Mic: is that alright?=
 58 Bar: =either yes.

As with her response to Barry's earlier counter-informing, Michelle again responds at this point with a series of possible acceptances across line 50 and at the beginning of line 52, apparently accepting Barry's version of events and displaying a readiness to move the conversation in a new direction. She then commits to following up on the apparent inconsistency that Barry's information has revealed (*oh w'l I'll look at thAt then*, line 52) but again reasserts her own evidence, prefacing it this time with a more committed epistemic qualifier 'I know' (*but the- I know they've put down here E:mma*, lines 52-53)⁶. Indeed, Michelle suspends the progress of her turn at talk, in order to specifically insert the epistemic qualification. So while, on the one hand, Michelle appears to accept Barry's version, on the other hand the difference between them continues to resonate in Michelle's use of evidence to support her claim, even when the

⁶ Again, it is possible that 'here' could refer to records of previous services or the schedule for upcoming services. As argued for above in footnote 5, I think that the latter is more likely. However, if Barry hears it as a reference to the records of who had visited him in the past, then this is a direct challenge to his memory of the event. To accept Michelle's version of events, then, would mean that Barry is unable to remember who it was that visited him probably less than a fortnight before. This would likely constitute a serious threat to the soundness of Barry's mind.

claim specifically relates to the care worker for the future service and not the disputed care worker who came to deliver one of Barry's prior services. Again, an opportunity to expose the misunderstanding might have been available, had Michelle referred to the service that Emma is to deliver.

What is particularly interesting by this point is what is no longer present in the recycling of claims. There is no longer any assertion that Emma has ever visited Barry before, let alone 'last time.' Unable to counter Barry's version, which is apparently based upon his own direct experience, Michelle appears to have ceded various points to him. Now, she asserts only what she knows is in the paperwork that she is examining. Yet even Michelle's minimal reassertion is responded to with a chuckle from Barry (line 56).

At a stage in the interaction where Michelle concedes that it is possible that her understanding may be flawed and in need of revision, Barry's responsive commentary on her claim continues to make the mutually exclusive versions relevant to the conversation. According to Vuchinich's (1990) analysis of terminating disputes, Michelle has offered a concession and Barry should either accept that concession or make a concession of his own in order to ratify the termination of the dispute. Barry's laughter does neither of these actions.

At this point, Michelle again attempts to move out of the incidental sequence, which was originally concerned with soliciting recognition of Emma, and return to the arrangement that was the goal of the base sequence (*is that alright?*, line 57). On this occasion, she is successful and Barry agrees to the arrangement. Yet even in doing so, he is able to keep their different claims relevant in the conversation by agreeing to have *either* Emma or Suzanne as his replacement care worker (line 58). Right to the close of the base sequence, Barry agrees to the modification but explicitly without accepting Michelle's version of events. Barry and Michelle have failed to resolve their mutually exclusive claims and the sequence is brought to a close.

Unlike Michelle, who progressively downgrades her version of events and attempts to return to the base sequence of making an arrangement, when Barry produces an account for his version of who came 'last time' (lines 47-48), he does so in order to continue the incidental sequence and sustain their different claims as a topic for conversation. Right to the point where Michelle begins to close and shift the topic, there is no compromise from Barry over any aspect of his version of events. It seems, at this point in the interaction, that the discussion about the different claims of who came 'last time' will be abandoned or deferred, rather than resolved.

Addressing the trouble source outside of the repair space: A post-possible-completion account

The misunderstanding between the parties that we have been examining never gets resolved in the sequence within which it is occasioned. As in Goodwin's (1990) study of arguments between children, the direct relevance of their difference ends, even if it has not been resolved, when the parties end the sequence containing it to start a new one. As we shall observe, it is only after Michelle has closed down the base sequence and moving towards a new action, that Barry accounts for the misunderstanding that created the *conditions* for the parties to make mutually exclusive claims, when in fact there was never an actual *basis* for this to be the case.

Barry's revelation of why there were different versions has no structural foundation in the adjacent moments of the interaction, and he has to interrupt Michelle's production of an

unrelated action in order to make his account. It also occurs outside of the repair space that is so often the means by which intersubjectivity is defended in conversation. Given that conversation analysts have never systematically examined how a trouble source can be addressed in this position, it warrants close examination. The focal utterance is transcribed in boldface.

(08) [CHC060, 1:19-1:39]
 57 Mic: is that alright?=
 58 Bar: =either yes.
 59 (.)
 60 Mic: ohkay. thank you. [~.h]-.h-.hhh.h~ thank you an:'=
 61 Bar: [(bh)]
 62 Mic: =[e:rm]
 63 Bar: =[oh I t]hought you was talkin' about the grocery.
 64 (.)
 65 Mic: yeh==oh no that's going to be Mandy. who you
 66 know.=you've met Mandy:- she's the one that does
 67 lots of relief work. you'll know her pretty well
 68 when you see her; .mphh=
 69 Bar: =mm hm.
 70 Mic: alri:p?
 71 (0.4)
 72 Bar: yep.
 73 Mic: °okay°. thAnk you. see ya later. bye bye.
 74 (.)
 75 Bar: bye
 76 (1.2)
 77 ((call ends))

The base sequence of arrangement making is resolved, and is closed, midway through line 60, with a sequence-closing third and thanking. This also implicitly closes off the incidental sequence that was designed in its service and which resulted in mutually exclusive claims being made by the participants. Having closed these sequences, and following her inhalation, Michelle launches a possible pre-closing sequence (Schegloff and Sacks, 1973), with *thank you an:'=e:rm* (lines 60 and 62). If it were not for what comes next, it is likely that this conversation would have shortly come to a close. However, rather than this, Barry interrupts to reveal *oh I thought you was talkin' about the grocery*. (line 63). With this, he is able to account for, outside of the sequence within which they were occasioned, the mutually exclusive versions that he and Michelle held in relation to who last came to visit him.

This account is located in a position that is past the possible completion of the sequence to which it refers. The sequence is only *possibly over*, because Barry's turn comes in overlap with Michelle's apparent attempt to close down both the sequence and the conversation. For this reason, this instance is most aptly referred to as a post-possible-completion account, although it is likely to belong to a broader class of post-completion accounts.

Barry reveals that throughout the base sequence dealing with a replacement care worker for Cindy, which included the incidental sequence about his acquaintance with Emma, he misunderstood Michelle to be referring to his service for grocery shopping. His current claim reveals that he now understands that this must be at odds with what Michelle was intending to refer to. His account explains how he could have reasonably: (1) produced a counter-informing; (2) persisted in maintaining his version in response to Michelle's multiple other-initiations of repair; (3) provided evidence in support of his version; and (4) maintained his version even as he produced his response to the base sequence within which the difference claims were occasioned.

I have shown how, following the completion of a sequence containing different claims that do not get resolved, one party (Barry) interrupts the other party's attempt to initiate a new sequence, which accounts for how the parties came to speak as though they occupied incompatible positions. Like the post-completion musings that Schegloff (2007) discusses, this utterance relates to the preceding talk but without being an expansion on it. Yet unlike post-completion musings, Barry's utterance does more than just reflect back on the sequence. Rather, it is an account that specifies, for the benefit of all involved, how both parties could have reasonably acted in the way that they did.

Post-completion accounts and fourth position repair

Barry's account shares some features of fourth position repair (cf. Schegloff, 1992, 2000). As with repair in that position, his account is an opportunity to "...formulate a proposed alternative understanding of an interlocutor's earlier utterance" (Schegloff, 2000: 211). The account itself also appears to share a similar format to fourth position repairs. As reviewed above, from the limited number of instances that have been studied, this repair type seems to be typically initiated with a change-of-state token, followed by a proposed re-understanding of an earlier and misunderstood utterance made by an interlocutor. Once this re-understanding has been confirmed by the speaker of the troublesome utterance, it becomes possible for the recipient to produce a revised response to the utterance for which both parties now have a common understanding (Schegloff, 1992, 2000).

Like many fourth position repairs, Barry's turn also contains a change-of-state token, followed by an account of a misunderstanding earlier in the talk. However, there are some crucial differences. Initiations of repair in fourth position re-characterise an interlocutor's trouble source turn, but they do not necessarily account for the basis of the misunderstanding itself. The focus, rather, is on enabling a revised response to a trouble source turn. Barry's turn is the exact opposite to this. He produces an account for the misunderstanding, but no re-characterisation of the trouble source turn. This move does not seem preparatory to revising the overall outcome of the possibly completed sequence, in order to generate a revised response.

Another difference between fourth position repair and post-completion accounts is that there is a structural basis for the former, but not for the latter. Fourth position repair results from the recipient of a trouble-source turn being able to identify that source of trouble from some information that is contained in a subsequent turn by the trouble-source speaker. We observed how Michelle's talk did not enable Barry to come to this realisation. There is no such structural basis for the post-completion account that Barry uses, in the position of its production. When the basis for their misunderstanding occurs to Barry, he must interrupt Michelle in order to make it known.

Whether Barry misunderstood which service was being referring to in Michelle's incidental recognition solicit was ultimately inconsequential for his response to the base sequence. His turn at line 63, then, appears to be less about re-establishing sequential progressivity, as in fourth position repair, as it is with circumventing the perseverance of an ongoing difference between the parties. Differences involving mutually exclusive claims can entail potentially serious consequences. As both cannot be simultaneously correct, each party has a basis for

calling into question the competence of the other⁷. Barry's account, while acknowledging his misunderstanding, also displays his ability to identify an error and moreover the basis for it. He is therefore arguably in a more competent position than he would be, were Michelle to check her records and confirm his error.

If it is the case that Barry has used a post-completion account in an attempt to circumvent a future possible inference about his mental competence, this nevertheless becomes relevant in the immediately ensuing talk. Michelle begins to agree with Barry, saying *yeh* at line 65. However, she cuts off her pronunciation of this and changes tack. Her ensuing 'oh'-prefaced utterance is a way in which Michelle can display a marked shift in her attention (cf. Heritage, 1984; Heritage, 2002), in this case from apparently moving to close down the conversation (at line 60) to discussing Barry's grocery service, a matter that was last the focus of *Michelle's* talk at line 15.

So rather than commenting upon the basis of Barry's misunderstanding, Michelle instead produces a series of prompts about the substitute care worker for the grocery service, Mandy, for whom there was no previous trouble of recognition. Across lines 65-68, Michelle provides a series of information about the recognisability of Mandy by Barry. Following his account of why he contradicted her claim that Emma came last time, Michelle now appears to treat her earlier reference to Mandy as someone known to Barry (cf. Sacks and Schegloff, 1979; Schegloff, 1996) as equivocal. Barry's failure to understand what was being referred to on one occasion may now be having consequences for the way Michelle appraises his capacity to understand who she was referring to earlier.

The relationship between sequence and repair

In the episode that we have been considering, the optimal outcome following the closure of a sequence containing an addressed yet unresolved source of trouble was that it came to be accounted for. The alternative, suboptimal outcome, would be for each party to consider the other as making an erroneous claim about some aspect of the universe. Based on such sources of trouble that come to be addressed outside of the sequence within which they were occasioned, repair can be understood as a resource for restoring the progressivity of extant sequences.

To be clear, there may be attempts at repair that occur at the possible boundaries of sequences. What Schegloff (2000) calls 'post-response other-initiations of repair' would be one such type of attempt. In these instances, an other-initiated repair is separated from the source of trouble by an initial response to the trouble-source turn. That is, a recipient has produced a second pair part response, only subsequently to review the first pair part that their response was based on. A recipient's repair can enable them to make a revised response to a speaker's

⁷ See Schegloff (1992: 1334-1337) for a similar scenario. In that instance, the trouble source is located in a base, rather than incidental, sequence, and the ensuing disagreement comes to be deferred to a subsequent episode of interaction, rather than being addressed within the current interaction. Therefore, while the account that we have been considering here is produced in post-possible-completion position, the account in Schegloff's instance is very much in the position of post-completion; the conversation in which the source of trouble was occasioned is over. Like the instance we have been considering here, when that trouble source is addressed in that subsequent interaction, it comes to be accounted for but the parties do not make a revised response. As Schegloff writes, this account allows the parties to restore the amicability of their relationship. Here too, with Barry and Michelle, a post-completion account is a means to avoid possible deleterious consequences of an ongoing misunderstanding between them.

first pair part. In such instances, however, although a response has been produced, the sequence is still open for expansion.

In the datum that I have been considering here, the progressivity of a sequence containing a source of trouble is either expired or, at the very least, rapidly expiring. When Barry comes to account for the misunderstanding, he displays his move as referring to a past sequence of action, using past tense in his turn *I thought you was talkin' about the grocery*. (line 63). No attempt is made to make a revised response to the trouble-source turn. Once a sequence has been closed, it seems that structurally available positions from which to launch repair on troubles within that sequence are also closed off to participants.

So it appears that there is a crucial difference between repair, including post-response other-initiations of repair, and the post-completion accounts that I have been considering above. Although third and fourth position repairs may be the last structurally provided defences for intersubjectivity within sequences (Schegloff, 1992), post-possible-completion accounts are a means by which intersubjectivity can be restored once sequences containing unresolved misunderstandings are over. They allow for a re-specification of what was said, which can enable the participants to move forward more amicably than they might have if an ongoing difference had been maintained between them.

Conclusions

In the datum examined in this paper, a debate over different claims was occasioned by an informing and counter-informing conveying mutually exclusive claims about an event (which care worker last came to visit Barry). Repair, a resource that is usually effective in defending and maintaining intersubjectivity, failed to resolve the participants' trouble. Intersubjectivity was re-established only after the sequence was over – and interruptively in the course of a new initiating action – via a post-possible-completion account.

My analysis contributes to an understanding of how intersubjectivity can be lost and restored in interaction. Although third and fourth position repair enable an expandable repair space, my analysis shows how repair may be a resource that is limited to dealing with troubles that are located within extant sequences. My analysis therefore supports Schegloff's (1992) argument that third and fourth position repair are the last structurally provided positions for repair. There is no provision for a post-completion account because, unlike third and fourth position repair, it is not predicated on being able to identify the source of a misunderstanding in something that an interlocutor says in the talk following a source of trouble.

In instances where some ostensible source of trouble needs to be addressed after a new sequence has been initiated, I find that an option available to speakers is to account for how the sequence transpired in the way that it did. One context where this can appear is in addressing unresolved mutually exclusive claims. Such unresolved misunderstandings are relatively rare because, as Schegloff, Jefferson and Sacks (1977) explain, repair positions that are closer to a source of trouble are more likely to be utilised, and are therefore more likely to resolve any given trouble. However, based on the analysis in this paper I suggest that post-completion accounts may be a general resource for dealing with problems that have failed to be satisfactorily addressed by repair within the sequences of their production.

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Vita

Stuart Ekberg completed his doctoral studies in the School of Psychology at the University of Adelaide, where he currently holds a visiting research fellowship. His doctoral research, for which this datum was collected, involved an examination of how people make arrangements with one another. His current research, based in the School of Social and Community Medicine at the University of Bristol, uses conversation analysis to examine online Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) sessions with clients seeking treatment for depression.

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