# THE MAINTENANCE OF MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING IN ONLINE SECOND LANGUAGE TALK

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# Abstract

Encounters in which at least one person is communicating in a second language (L2) are increasingly prevalent, and span many contexts and settings. However many of these settings remain under-researched, particularly those outside of formal language education (Firth & Wagner 1997, 2007; Wagner 2004). One such under-explored setting is the internet. In one particular internet context, L2 users of English have taken the opportunity to create voice-based chat rooms in which participants can practice their use of English. In such chat rooms, despite the huge variety in backgrounds and proficiencies, participants prove themselves to be highly skilled, resourceful and competent interactants, able to ensure mutual understanding as consistently and regularly as would be expected from first language users. However, as with any context involving any kind of interactants, there are occasions on which this mutual understanding appears to come under threat.

This study applies conversation analysis (CA) to the examination of audio recordings of these online, voice-based chat rooms. More specifically, it provides a fine detailed examination of the work which is put in by the participants in order to pre-empt, and/or overcome, possible threats to mutual understanding (or 'intersubjectivity'). Analysis show how participants are at times sensitive to such threats when dealing with (1) unspecified trouble in talk and (2) an absence of response to talk. Additionally, it is demonstrated how they draw upon available resources, in the absence of shared physical co-presence, in order to deal with potential trouble.

In presenting this data and its analysis, the study adds to understanding of L2 interaction, as well as to technologically-mediated interactions in which participants are not physically co-present. The study also addresses interaction research in general, by discussing the multi-faceted nature of many conversational contexts, and issues this raises in their analyses.

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# Chapter 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Setting The Scene

A large proportion of the world's population communicate regularly in a language which is not their mother tongue. Reasons such as business, travel, self-improvement and personal relationships are bringing people from different language backgrounds together now more than ever. When individuals come together, they invariably have to interact with one another verbally – transactions have to be conducted, business plans need to be proposed, personal feelings need to be expressed, and all manner of other social actions need to be performed. And when the parties coming together are of different language backgrounds, at least one of them needs to perform these social endeavours in a second, or additional, language (L2). In short, L2 interaction is pervasive.

Of the social transactions in which one or more parties is using an L2, a large proportion are conducted in English. With the political and cultural hegemony of the west in the second half of the 20th century came the dominance of English as the major international language. For better or for worse, members of nations which do not employ English as a home language begin to learn and use English for a multitude of purposes as soon as they begin to interact with other nationals. In fact, in some intra-national contexts, such as some university contexts in Scandinavian countries, English has become a language of communication even among individuals who *do* share another common language.

The huge variety of linguistic and cultural backgrounds of L2 users of English, coupled with different means of learning the language and myriad of ways of (and reasons for) its use, means that English language proficiencies, dialects and idiolects vary wildly. Nevertheless, speakers of English need to, and do, interact with other speakers of English, regardless of their background, the variety of English they use, or even their competence in using that variety. And despite these differences, participants prove themselves to be highly skilled, resourceful and competent interactants, able to ensure mutual understanding as consistently and regularly as would be expected from first language (L1) users. However, as with any context involving any kind of interactants, there are occasions on which this mutual

understanding appears to come under threat. How L2 speakers maintain mutual understanding, and deal with potential threats to it, is a central focus of this research.

Additionally, as was mentioned, people use an L2 in a wide variety of settings, in order to achieve any number of social goals. Despite this, research into L2 use does not reflect the breadth of this linguistic landscape. Accordingly, another central focus is that of a recently-emerging setting which is still to be understood: online, voice-based English language chat rooms, which have been set up by L2 speakers for the ostensible purpose of practising or improving their English.

In this opening chapter, these focuses will be outlined in more detail, and an argument for the importance of this research will be offered. Section 1.2 offers an overview of the research. This includes an introduction to the central themes and setting of the study, as well as the methodology employed for its investigation. This section serves as a precursor to a more detailed discussion in subsequent chapters. After the research overview, the objectives and relevance of the study will be explicitly stated (Section 1.3). Finally, before closing this chapter, the organisation of rest of the thesis will be outlined (Section 1.4).

## 1.2 Research Overview

This study explores the linguistic practices of L2 speakers in their maintenance of mutual understanding. It takes as its setting online, voice-based English language chat rooms. The study employs as its methodology conversation analysis (CA; cf. Sacks 1992, ten Have 2007; Schegloff 2007; Sidnell 2010), which has proved a powerful tool for the investigation of the fine details of how mutual understanding, or 'intersubjectivity' is organised through social interaction (e.g. Heritage 1984a). In this section, these three central aspects of the study – second language interaction, the setting of online chat rooms, and conversation analysis – will be introduced.

### 1.2.1 *Second language interaction*

Research into naturally-occurring interaction in a first language has been an established domain of academic investigation for many decades now. Conversation analysis is just one approach to interaction which takes as its data source recordings of 'real world' encounters. However, since the earliest CA studies, interactants using a

language other than their mother tongue did not happen to be on the empirical radar (Schegloff et al 2002; Wong and Olsher 2002). This is surprising, given the amount of L2 interaction which takes place around the world on a daily basis.

Conversely, research which explicitly concerned itself with L2 (such as in the field of second language acquisition [SLA]) has overwhelmingly used experimental data collection methods, such as role-plays and interviews, for its analysis. Such settings have been criticised as inappropriate for the study of L2 interaction, since they are staged for the benefit of researchers and their research agendas, and so can not be considered as 'naturally-occurring' (Wagner 1996, 1998; Gardner and Wagner 2004).

As such, it is only since the end of the last century that studies have begun to examine L2 users' actual behaviours and practices in encounters which would have occurred even if researchers' camera were not present.[1] However, much of this research has been conducted inside language learning classrooms (e.g. Hellermann 2007; Markee 2000; Seedhouse 2004). While the prevalence of this setting in L2 interaction research is understandable given the importance of teaching and learning L2s, it does not accurately reflect the breadth of the settings in which people employ an additional language; although the L2 classroom is one natural, and obvious, site of L2 talk, it has also been argued that to understand L2 talk in general, one must expand the empirical focus into other contexts.

Because of this, there have been calls for research to go 'beyond the language learning classroom' (e.g. Firth & Wagner 1997, 1998, 2007; Wagner 2004). In recent years, these calls have been answered to some extent; L2 interaction is being explored increasingly in non-educational settings, including 'everyday' conversations between friends (e.g. Brouwer 2003; Wong 2000a, 2000b, 2000c, Kim, forthcoming), institutional settings (e.g. Firth 1996, 2009a; Kurhila 2001, 2004, 2004, 2006) and service encounters (e.g. Kuroshima 2010; Theodorsdóttir, in press).

However, the classroom still dominates the empirical arena, and many settings remain under-explored. This needs to be remedied in order to obtain a fuller picture of how L2s are used in the accomplishment of various social endeavours. Such a

[1] This is not to claim that *no* naturally-occurring L2 interaction studies took place until the late 20th century, some studies did (e.g. Gaskill 1980; Jordan and Fuller 1975; Schwartz 1980). The point is that the field did not blossom, or establish itself as a research community in its own right, until fairly recently.

deepened understanding would benefit not only those with a vested interest in the teaching and learning of languages, but also those with a sociological interest in how social members conduct their business in an L2.

The present study addresses this by taking as its research context one such under-explored interactional setting: online voice-based English language chat rooms. In the following section, the setting will be introduced, and an argument for the importance of exploring this setting will be presented.

### 1.2.2 *Online voice-based English language chat rooms*

The recordings which make up this study's data corpus were taken from online, multiparty, voice-based chat rooms, which were accessed through the Internet using Skype. Participants in these chat rooms were able to communicate with one another through both the voice and (private) text medium, although they were not able to see one another. Additionally, the chat rooms were all themed, either by title or keywords, around English language practice or improvement. With this in mind, this study aims to unpack how mutual understanding is maintained and managed in (1) interaction involving L2 speakers who self-identify as not-yet-fully-proficient, and (2) L2 interaction mediated by computer-based technology.

The participants in these chat rooms, on the most part, speak with one another in English, even though (or rather *because*) many of them self-identity as not-yet-fully-proficient in that language. In this sense, the setting might be described as what Kasper (2004) has labelled a 'category-bound activity'. Additionally, the participants are, on the whole, unacquainted as they enter the chat rooms. As such, their relative linguistic expertise is unknown to each-other. This is the first aspect of the setting which renders it different to contexts which have been examined previously; the majority of research into L2 interaction, particularly those which have investigated relative linguistic expertise (in the form of linguistic identity categories) have examined L1-L2 interaction (e.g. Kasper 2004; Kurhila 2004, Hosoda 2006; Ikeda 2005; Park 2007), in which differences in linguistic expertise are typically treated as known (although are not constantly made relevant). If, and how, this manifests itself in the maintenance of mutual understanding is one of the aims of this study.

The second aspect of the setting which is unique in comparison to previous research is the nature of the interaction as mediated by technology. Hutchby (2003)

has explicated the ways in which technologically-mediated interaction (TMI) can be shaped by the 'constraints and affordances' of the technology being utilised. However, while research has examined interaction conducted through telephones (e.g. Hopper 1992; Hutchby 2003; Schegloff 1968, 1979, 1986), mobile telephones (e.g. Arminen and Leinonen 2006; Arminen 2005; Hutchby and Barnett 2005; Hutchby 2005), and push-to-talk radios (e.g. Szymanski et al 2006), it has struggled to keep up with advances in technologies. As such, many new TMI settings remain under-explored, and the context of the present study – multiparty, voice-based, online interaction – falls into this category.

While a handful of studies have conducted research into online voice-based chat rooms (e.g. Cziko and Park 2003; Dourish et al 1996), they did not place as their focus the empirically-grounded analysis of interactions which take place there. Only Jenks (2008, 2009), Sukrutrit (2010), and Jenks and Firth (forthcoming) have appeared to explore the setting from an interactional point of view, examining how participants join and exit the chat rooms, manage topic, get acquainted with one another, and deal with overlapping talk, for example.

Similarly, while previous research has examined L2 interaction conducted through technologies such as the telephone (e.g. Firth 1996; Wong 2000a, 2000b, 2000c), the nature of the interaction *as* mediated by technology has seldom been forefronted. While research has shown how L2 speakers can employ non-linguistic resources in order to aid the achievement of mutual understanding (e.g. Carroll 2004, 2008; Mori and Hayashi 2009; Olsher 2004; Seo and Koshik 2010), no studies have explored how L2 interaction can be impacted upon by the 'constraints and affordances' which come with the use of new technologies for communication.

### 1.2.3 *Conversation analysis and the architecture of intersubjectivity*

As has been stated, the issues and the setting of the present study will be investigated using CA, which can be considered as both a methodology for the analysis of social interaction, as well as a theory of interaction in itself. This will become apparent in this short introduction, as well as throughout the more detailed discussion of CA in Chapter 3.

In following the ethnomethodological framework established by Harold Garfinkel (e.g. 1967), CA originated as a means of investigating the structural

organisation and order of talk-based social interaction (e.g. Schegloff & Sacks 1973; Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson 1974; Sacks & Schegloff 1979). Since that time, CA has continued to investigate the structures of spoken interaction in 'everyday' conversation, as well in various applied settings, such as institutional interactions (e.g. Drew and Heritage 1992). More appropriately for the present study, as mentioned in Section 1.2.1, the CA project also extends to the study of interactions in which one or more participants is not speaking in their mother tongue (e.g. Gardner and Wagner 2004).

The object of analysis for CA researchers – *talk-in-interaction* – is investigated through the detailed examination of recordings of naturally-occurring social interaction, supported by finely-detailed transcripts. In adopting a strictly empirically-grounded, data-driven approach, CA researchers do not assume any *a priori* relevance of various contextual elements, nor impose any exogenous theory or theoretical constructs onto their data. Instead, researchers seek to 'let the data speak for itself' through the participants' own displayed orientations and understandings of each other and various contexts elements, if any (ten Have 2007; Hutchby and Wooffitt 2005).

In order to achieve this, CA necessarily adopts a 'radically emic perspective', by examining the actions of the participants in the data, and attempting to answer the question, "why that, in that way, right now?". This question:

> encapsulates the perspective of interaction as action (why that) which is expressed by means of linguistic forms (in that way) in a developing sequence (right now). (Seedhouse 2004: 16)

In so doing, CA researchers can unpack how the participants at talk ongoingly interpret and understand their local interactional environment.

From this, then, another aim of the CA project becomes apparent: to explicate the methods that participants at talk employ in order to achieve, maintain and restore mutual understanding, or intersubjectivity. From this perspective, whereby participants understand one another, and display that understanding, through their interactional conduct, *talk-in-interaction* can be understood as the 'architecture of intersubjectivity' (Heritage 1984a: 254).

This understanding of spoken interaction and intersubjectivity as inextricably interwoven is naturally well-suited for the present study, whose focus is on how L2 speakers of varying proficiencies manage and maintain mutual understanding through their spoken conduct.

The methodology of CA will be revisited in later chapters, in terms of its epistemological underpinnings (Chapter 3), as well as its methodological process (Chapter 4). At this stage, however, the present study's objectives and relevance will be explicitly stated.

## 1.3 Objectives and Relevance of the Study

As has been outlined, the principle objective of this study is to examine the interactional practices of L2 speakers in the relatively under-explored setting of online, voice-based English language chat rooms. More specifically, the aim of the study is to explicate how L2 speakers manage and maintain mutual understanding in this setting. This setting and focus is considered worthy of investigation for a number of reasons, which will be explained in this section.

First of all, this study contributes to the growing body of work which explores L2 use in non-educational settings (i.e. outside of the language learning classroom). Although the L2 classroom is one natural, and obvious, site of L2 talk, it has also been argued that to understand L2 talk in general, one must expand the empirical focus into other contexts. This position has not only emerged within the field of SLA/L2 itself (e.g. Firth & Wagner 1997, 1998, 2007; Gardner and Wagner 2004; Wagner 2004), but also in the field of interaction studies more broadly. For example, Schegloff has stated that:

> the talk that language learners are going to have to do when they're not in the hothouse of the classroom is situated in the real world where they have real things to do, and that's the talk that people ideally should be recording and studying if they want to understand what the real world problems are for those who are speaking a language that is not their native language. (Wong and Olsher 2000: 122)

As such, the present study may also be able to say something, albeit indirectly, to researchers in SLA and language teaching and learning, although this is not an explicit aim. However, understanding L2 interaction is a worthy investigative cause in and of itself (Gardner and Wagner 2004), and exploring this setting will add to general understanding of how social members interact in a language in which they may not yet be fully proficient.

As was outlined in the previous section, the organisation of mutual understanding necessarily takes centre stage in social interactional research,

particularly that which employs a CA framework. This is no less true for L2 interaction. With this in mind, understanding the maintenance of mutual understanding in this setting is seen as the central aim of the study. This focus is particularly pertinent to these chat rooms, since they are set up for the (ostensible) purpose of 'practising' or 'improving' English language use, and as such (1) there appears to be no institutional agenda or objective for the participants, and (2) participants attending these rooms may self-identify as not-yet-fully-proficient L2 speakers, and so are attempting to manage mutual understanding with less-than-complete linguistic resources. To date, no research into L2 interaction has considered the 'architecture of intersubjectivity' in such a context.

Additionally, while previous research has examined orientations to differential linguistic expertise (often considered in terms of 'native speaker' [NS] and 'nonnative speaker [NNS] identity categories) (e.g. Kasper 2004; Kurhila 2004; Hosoda 2006; Ikeda 2005; Park 2007), there has been little analytic focus on this phenomenon in L2-only interaction. As such, another aim of this research is to examine how (if at all) L2 speakers who self-identify as not-yet-fully-proficient speakers orient to their own, and their interlocutors', linguistic expertise.

In addition to this comes another research aim: to determine if, and how, the technological aspects of the settings impact upon the talk-in-interaction, particularly in light of the participants as L2 users. That is, the study aims to examine how the absence of embodied resources – such as gesture and gaze – impact upon participants' talk and, in particular, their achievement, maintenance and resumption of intersubjectivity. Conversely, how participants employ, manage and coordinate their use of some of the features of the technologically-mediated environment will also be examined.

In considering the setting in this manner, this study adds to knowledge of how interaction can be, and is, shaped in emerging, TMI settings. Settings such as the one for the current study are not only 'new' in the sense that they are under-researched, but simply did not exist until recently. With the evolution of new technologies come new affordances and constraints such technologies bring with them, and this is worthy of empirical investigation in order to further understanding of not only those technologies, but particularly their relationship with, and impact upon, the interactions that they foster.

## 1.4 Organisation of the Thesis

In this chapter, the context of the research has been described and the objectives of the study have been outlined. As has been stated, the issues raised presently will be readdressed, in further detail, in the coming chapters. In the final section of this chapter, the organisation of the rest of the thesis will be outlined.

Chapter 2 is a review of the research literature relevant to the study. The majority of this chapter will outline and discuss research on L2 interaction, particularly that which applies a CA methodology and mindset. The chapter will begin by presenting an overview of the field of L2 interaction research, and will continue by focusing on what is known about (1) the characteristics of L2 interaction, (2) linguistic identities in L2 interaction and (3) mutual understanding in L2 interaction. Additionally, in the final section, research relevant to the present study will be discussed. This will include other research into interaction which is mediated by the use of technology.

Chapter 3 is concerned with the research methodology employed in this study: CA. The chapter begins with an introduction to the methodology, and an overview of its epistemological approach. The chapter will also present an outline of CA's 'intellectual parent' (Kasper 2005), ethnomethodology (EM). This will help to introduce the theoretical underpinnings of CA, as well as to position it against other forms of social scientific research. Following this will be a more detailed description of some of the foundational principles of the approach. With those in mind, the chapter will then describe some of the principle findings of the CA research community. The chapter will proceed with a discussion of reliability, validity and generalizability and then address some criticisms of the methodology. The chapter will conclude with a justification of the appropriateness of CA for this study.

The focus of Chapter 4 is the research design. The first section will offer a description and explanation of the setting of online multiparty voice-based chat rooms, and more specifically, English language practice rooms. An overview of the participants who attended the chat rooms will also be offered. Following this, the research process of data collection, transcription and analysis will be discussed. Ethical issues and the role of the researcher in the research process will also be considered in this chapter.

The three chapters subsequent to Chapter 4 will provide analyses relevant to the overall aim of the study. In all data analytic chapters, the focus is on how the chat room participants manage their mutual understandings, react to potential threats to mutual understanding, and overcome breaches of mutual understanding.

The specific focus of Chapter 5 is sequences of other-initiated self-repair (OISR). While the chapter will examine various forms of OIRs, a feature that they all share in common is that they do not specifically identify the kind of trouble in need of being remedied. Analysis of these sequences show that the interactional work – such as elaborations and reformulations of their trouble source turn – subsequently put in by the speakers of the trouble source overcomes any possible trouble in hearing or understanding. As such, it is argued that the participants are dealing with *possible* troubles in understanding *before* such trouble is explicitly known to be one of understanding, and displaying an extra sensitivity to threats to intersubjectivity.

Similarly, Chapter 6 looks at how participants ensure mutual understanding when another speaker fails to respond. It examines sequences in which participants deal with the absence of a response to their talk. Analysis shows how speakers again manage to respond in a way which not only progresses the ongoing talk, but also allows for the possibility that their turn was not heard or understood. Again, it is proposed that this interactional work demonstrates a sensitivity to potential threats to mutual understanding.

In Chapter 7, the focus is on how participants resume intersubjectivity after troubles in understanding do emerge. More specifically, it examines incidences in which participants' talk is insufficient for resolving the trouble, and they have to draw upon one of the features of the chat room setting – instant, private, written messages (IPMs). Analysis shows that, although the chat room participants overwhelmingly attempt to conduct their business through the use of spoken English, they can be resourceful and persistent in maintaining mutual understanding, even at times when it appears that their linguistic resources are not sufficient to achieve this. Additionally, analysis unpacks how participants manage and co-ordinate the use of multiple modes of interaction.

Chapter 8 revisits each of the analytic chapters, and discusses them in more detail. The discussions include a consideration of the analysis in relation to relevant research literature. Additionally, the overall findings are further considered and

discussed in relation to (1) mutual understanding in L2 interaction, (2) linguistic identities in L2 interaction, (3) technologically-mediated L2 interaction. The discussion chapter ends by considering the multi-faceted, complex, nature of social interaction.

The thesis concludes with Chapter 9, which will offer a summary of the findings. This final chapter will also outline the contributions of these findings to various research communities, such as second language interaction, technologically-mediated interaction and computer-mediated communication, as well as the broader domain of social interactional research.

# Chapter 2. Literature Review

## 2.1 Introduction

This study contributes to the body of research which seeks to understand interactions in which one or more of the participants use a language which is not their mother tongue. More specifically, it follows Kurhila (2006) in exploring "linguistic practices that are used in second language interaction to check and remedy the breaches in mutual understanding" (p. 9). In this chapter, the research literature of relevance to the general study of second language (L2) interaction will be discussed. In Section 2.2, some characteristics of L2 interaction will be discussed in light of the relevant research. Following that, in Section 2.3, the focus will be on research which has examined the concept of identity in L2 interaction. In Section 2.4, mutual understanding in interaction will be discussed, first in terms of interaction in general (Section 2.4.1) and then with regards to L2 interaction specifically (Section 2.4.2). Finally, in Section 2.5, research of relevance to the current setting of online voice-based chat rooms will be discussed.

In the context examined for this study, the language used by the participants happens to be English. However, since many other languages are commonly used as L2s, and since issues pertaining to L2 use are not language-specific, this study aims to speak to the field of L2 interaction in general.

To date, the majority of such work on 'real world' L2 interaction has taken the language learning classroom as its setting. Such studies have examined interactions between teachers and students (Hall 2007; Koshik 2002; Macbeth 2004; Mortensen 2009, in press; Richards 2006; Rylander 2009; Seedhouse 2004; Waring 2008; Walsh 2011) as well as student-only discussions (Carroll 2000, 2004; Hellerman 2009; Hauser 2009, 2010; Mori and Hasegawa 2009) and classroom 'tasks' (Hellerman 2007; Hellerman and Cole 2008; Jenks 2007; Mori 2002, 2004; Seedhouse 1999; Seedhouse and Almutairi 2009). Other settings related to institutional language learning are also commonly investigated; these have included oral proficiency interviews (Kasper and Ross 2007; Okada 2010) and other assessments (Gan et al 2008), so-called 'conversation-for-learning' setups (Kasper 2004; Kasper and Kim 2007; Mori and Hayashi 2006; Sea and Koshik 2010; Yasui 2010), bilingual

classrooms (Pekarek Doehler and Ziegler 2007), as well as 'off-task' talk inside the classroom (Markee 2005, 2007).

This preponderance of classroom-based research is understandable given the amount of L2 researchers with an interest in the teaching and learning of L2s and/or a background in second language acquisition (SLA). Obviously, language learning classrooms are a "major natural habitat for second language conversations" (Gardner and Wagner 2004: 1), and the quality and import of this work should not be called into question. However, L2 users engaged in formal learning, and L2 interactions in such learning environments, constitute only a small percentage of the global L2 landscape. Further, even for those with a specific interest in L2 learning, it has been argued that examining L2 use in non-educational settings is equally, if not more, important to understanding and aiding the development of L2 use (Firth and Wagner 1997, 2007; Schegloff et al 2002; Wagner 2004; Wong and Olsher 2000).

With this in mind, this chapter is concerned primarily with previous research conducted in non-educational settings, such as 'everyday' and workplace-based L2 use; settings where "the central concern is with getting past linguistic and communicative differences, downplaying incompetence, and getting on with business" (Rampton 1997: 331). However, this is not to say that some research findings which have come from educational settings are not useful or relevant, and as such will be discussed when considered relevant.

Non-educational settings have received empirical attention in recent years, as will be seen throughout this chapter. Non-institutional contexts which have been explored include mundane talk between friends conducted in various languages, including English (Eerdmans and Di Candia 2007; Wong 2000a, 2000b, 2000c, 2005), Danish (Brouwer 2003; Skårup 2004), Korean (Kim 2009) and Japanese (Ishida 2009; Mori and Hayashi 2006). Institutional (but non-educational) settings have included business encounters (Firth 1996, 2009a; Brouwer and Wagner 2004; Meierkord 2000), international work meetings (Mondada 2004), university office encounters (Kurhila 2001, 2004, 2005, 2006) and immigration office enquiries (Svennevig 2003), among others. However, despite this admittedly excellent expansion of the empirical database, a gloss of recent publications would suggest the classroom still dominates the research arena (Wagner 2010), and that many 'conspicuous' (Garfinkel 1967) interactional settings remain under- (if not entirely

*un-*), researched. One of the ways that this study contributes to the field of L2 research is by examining one such under-explored interactional setting – online, multi-party, voice-based chat rooms.

An ever-growing body of L2 interaction studies is examining the learning/development of L2-related competencies (e.g. Kasper and Wagner 2011; Kim 2009, forthcoming; Ishida 2009; Markee 2008; Markee and Seo 2009; Pekarek-Doehler 2010). This present study does not intend to directly address learning, but acknowledges that it is hard to remove the notion of learning from all discussions of L2 use (see, e.g. Firth and Wagner [1997] for a discussion of the learning/use distinction, or lack thereof). As such, some of the discussions within this section, particularly those pertaining to intersubjectivity in L2 interaction, may be able to say something indirectly to the ongoing discussion of 'CA for SLA' (second language acquisition). Although, again, this is not one of the aims of the study.

Away from SLA, Gardner and Wagner (2004) propose that the aim of CA research into L2 interaction is threefold: (1) to examine L2 interactions to see what it is that L2 users actually do in real life talk, (2) to examine if, when and how L2 user features impact upon ongoing talk and how this is dealt with by the participants, and (3) to identify whether there are any features of L2 talk which are specific to it. Research which has addressed these aims will be outlined and discussed in the following sections.

In terms of analytic focus (as opposed to interactional setting), L2 interaction research which does not topicalise educational practices could be divided into three main categories: (1) characteristics of L2 talk, (2) L2 identities in talk, and (3) cognition and understanding in L2 interaction. Of course, all three are to some extent interwoven (as will become apparent as this chapter proceeds) and are considered of relevance to the present study. The remainder of this chapter will address these three analytic categories over the following three sections, each of which will close with a consideration of their potential relevance to the present study.

As has been suggested, much of the work in this area has applied the methodology of CA, which is also the analytic tool of choice for this research. The theoretical underpinnings of CA will be explored in detail in Chapter 3. However, in order to understand the approach taken in the studies discussed in this section, it will

be at times necessary to address some of the relevant principles and findings from the CA literature, both empirical and theoretical.

## 2.2 Characteristics of Second Language Interaction

### 2.2.1 *The normality of second language interaction*

Although there are some differences between L1 and L2 interactions (as will be discussed), the overall normality of interaction involving an L2 speaker or speakers can be evidenced not only by its prevalence but also by the fact that, to date, no phenomena exclusive to such interactions have been discovered (cf. Gardner and Wagner 2004; Wagner 2010). Conversely, no aspects of L1-only interaction appear to be beyond the remit of L2 interaction.[2] Interaction involving one or more L2 speakers appears to not differ in terms of (1) how sequences of actions are organised, (2) how taking turns at talk is organised, or (3) how problems pertaining to speaking, hearing and listening are dealt with (see Section 2.4 for an extended discussion on this lattermost point). In short, L2 speakers interact, on the whole, much like L1 speakers. For example, even the most novice L2 speakers are able to co-ordinate their talk as precisely as do L1 interactants, despite their limited linguistic resources (Carroll 2000).

This is not, however, to say that L2 interaction does not differ in some respects. Findings suggest that many interactional phenomena have a different frequency and indexicality in L2 interaction (Wagner 2010). For example, Wong (2004) suggests that a next speaker's turn may be delayed slightly when the previous speaker's turn is produced in a 'deviant form'. Wong argued that these observations are evidence that the turn-taking machinery of conversation, which orients to the minimisation of gaps and overlaps between turns at talk (Sacks et al 1974), is relaxed in L2 interaction, as compared with L1 interaction. The same analysis also suggests that response delays do not appear to project a dispreferred response, as has been found in L1 talk (Pomerantz 1984b).

[2] Wong (2000a) has postulated that 'same-speaker repeated first sayings', whereby a speaker will resume an activity by repeating something just previously uttered, is an action not performed by L2 speakers. However, this belief appears to have been generated after examining 150 lines of transcribed interaction. A quick glance through the same amount of data from the present study quickly discredits Wong's claim.

Although Wong could be accused of making a subjective assessment of what is (and/or is not) 'deviant' linguistic production, her research is an important example of occasions when linguistic form has an impact upon the trajectory of talk. As such, it is significant because, from a CA perspective on interaction, an L2 speaker's language in and of itself is not a source of analytic interest; it is insufficient (not to mention irrelevant) to observe that (some) L2 users may speak with marked pronunciation, possess a comparatively limited lexicon, produce ungrammatical utterances and/or produce unidiomatic turns at talk.[3] Rather, the interest lies in how such features are (or are not) 'procedurally consequential' (Schegloff 1991). That is, CA studies seek to uncover the ways in which an L2 speaker's talk is demonstrably oriented to by that speaker and/or their interlocutor(s), as well as the impact this has on the trajectory of the interaction (Gardner and Wagner 2004).

Findings have overwhelmingly demonstrated that linguistic, grammatical and idiomatic 'errors' are rarely consequential to participants in talk. For example, Kurhila (2001, 2006) has observed that linguistic errors are rarely explicitly corrected in institutional encounters, nor in everyday talk among friends.[4] Similarly, in examining business telephone calls between L2 speakers of English, Firth observed that the participants do not orient to their own, or their interlocutors', "extraordinary, deviant, and sometimes 'abnormal' linguistic behaviour" (1996: 237). Firth argued that, in such interactions, the participants are 'discursively accomplishing normality'. This too could be countered with an accusation of outsider assessment; for the participants themselves, their talk simply *is* normal.

This is, of course, not least because interactants using an L1 also regularly speak in ways which deviate from an objective 'norm'.[5] For any participants in talk, be they using their mother tongue or another language, the importance does not lie in following some prescribed linguistic norms, but rather to achieve mutual understanding with their interlocutor(s) and progress the interactional business at hand (Heritage 1984a, 2007; Schegloff 2007; Stivers and Robinson 2006).

Research into L2 interaction has regularly demonstrated such preference for interactional 'progressivity' over linguistic 'correctness'. In her study of L2 Finnish

[3] And this is certainly not to say that such features are common in L2 talk. However, one can acknowledge that they can, and do, occur among novice users.
[4] However, see Section 2.2.3 for a discussion of instances when corrections are done.
[5] This should not be taken as a subscription to the belief that such a 'norm' exists.

speaking students and their encounters with their university's L1 Finnish administrators, Kurhila (2006) noted how 'corrections' occur only when there is an opportunity to embed them into a response (cf. Jefferson 1983b for a discussion of 'embedded corrections' in L1 interaction). Such corrections may then be taken up by the recipient in subsequent turns at talk. With this, correction is not explicitly 'done' as an activity in itself, but is built into the ongoing talk. As such, the progressivity of the talk is not hindered by a side sequence of 'doing correcting'. That is, as Kurhila puts it, "[t]he repair sequences in NS-NNS ['native speaker'-'nonnative speaker'] conversation are thus managed so as to intrude upon the talk in progress as little as possible" (ibid.:1108). Similar observations were found by Brouwer, Rasmussen and Wagner (2004) in their study of L1-L2 Danish conversation between friends.

However, this does not mean that corrections are always done by an L1 speaker when there is the chance to embed it within the ongoing talk. Wong's (2005) examination of L1-L2 interactions between friends over the telephone uncovered instances in which the possibility for embedded corrections existed, but were not taken up. She noted how the L1 interactant would 'sidestep' grammar by initiating repair in order to clarify topical matters pertinent to the interactional goal, but disregard grammatical, phonological and lexical errors in the turn containing the source of the trouble.

The progressivity of the talk is the matter of prime importance to all participants at talk, regardless of linguistic status or ability. Kasper and Kim (2007) found a similar phenomenon to embedded corrections when examining L1-L2 English language conversational practice activities. In focusing on 'inapposite responses' – when the L2 speaker provided a response which was not relevant to the previous turn by the L1 speaker – the researchers noted how L1 speakers can produce unobtrusive (or 'covert') repairs. This delicate handling of misunderstandings, the authors argued, "afford a useful balance between maintaining and advancing the interaction while simultaneously paying heed to L2 users as social beings with legitimate face concerns" (ibid.: 38).

Of course, though, there are occasions when an L2 user's less than complete linguistic and pragmatic understanding impinges upon the progressivity of the talk. For example, evidence for this can be seen in Eerdmans and De Candia (2007) research on the empirically-established notion of 'idiomatic closings' (Drew and Holt

1995, 1998), in which idioms are used to close a sequence of talk. They showed that at times in L1-L2 talk, idioms may not be known by L2 speakers, which can lead to explanations, or "negotiative metatalk sequences". The researchers illustrated how such a series of events are highly disruptive to the progression of the talk to the next topic, and "return to ongoing talk is accomplished disjunctively" (ibid.: 590).

Second language interaction, then, is normal. Previous interactional research, particularly that from a CA perspective, has demonstrated this effectively. From the perspective of those involved in the talk, their various linguistic statuses and proficiencies are not always relevant to the interactional business at hand. However, as has been seen, research suggests that there are occasions when L2 interactions differ from L1-only interaction. This is not to say that L2 interaction is somehow inferior. In fact, as the next section will discuss, even very novice users have been found to be capable of quite sophisticated interaction in their L2.

### 2.2.2 *The sophistication of second language interaction*

Conversation analytic research has proved to be a powerful tool in demonstrating not only L2 interaction's overall normality, but also its sophistication. That is, L2 speakers have been found to be capable of using all of the resources they have available in order to perform quite sophisticated interactional moves. This is true even of those L2 users at a relatively low level of proficiency.

Hauser (2010) showed how, despite very limited linguistic resources in their L2, Japanese speakers of English were able to accomplish a number of sophisticated social actions, such as to build cohesion into their talk through managing the appropriacy of their responses to prior turns and pre-empting (and cutting short) inappropriate responses to their own turns, as well as to display concerns with the legitimacy of information sources in conversational debate.

Such observations can be uncovered partly through the fine-detailed analysis of instances which might have traditionally been characterised as symptomatic of the deficiencies of L2 speakers. For example, in her study of L1-L2 interactions in a Finnish university, Kurhila (2006) demonstrated that speech perturbations on the part of the L1 speaker were not indicative of a problem in production, but rather used as a resource to display the sensitive nature of the information about to be provided (for

example, when a student had to disclose that they paid their children's alimony 'unofficially').

Firth (2009a) also noted how L2 speakers can use speech perturbations, as well as pauses, laughter and/or a 'smile voice', in order to indicate that their forthcoming talk may be unidiomatic or noticeably non-standard. In so doing, participants not only demonstrate an awareness of their own linguistic competence, but allow their interlocutor to prepare for some interpretative work.

Similarly, Carroll's research on Japanese novice speakers of English has provided a great deal of insight into the achievements of interactional features which had previously thought to be indicative of linguistic limitations. Carroll's analysis has shown how the L2 speakers restarted their turns at talk, not because of linguistic problems, but in order to achieve the recipiency of their interlocutor (2004). His analysis has also shown how vowel-marking can be employed as a resource to hold the interactional floor, when it had previously been dismissed as merely a 'pronunciation problem' or 'L1 interference' (2005). As was mentioned in the previous sub-section, Carroll has also explicated the ability of very novice speakers to time their turns at talk precisely (2000b).

Hauser's (ibid.) earlier mentioned analysis of Japanese L2 speakers of English engaged in a post-class conversation task also demonstrated how participants were able to draw upon other resources available to them, such as their L1, electronic dictionaries, textbooks, whiteboards, and their interlocutors (see Section 2.2.3). The use of resources other than L2 linguistic resources is, of course, dependent upon setting and context. An L2 speaker trying to buy something in a store in a foreign country will not be able to draw upon their L1 as successfully as, say, an L2 speaker in a classroom-based task with fellow students with whom they share an L1. Participants at talk are, of course, cognizant of this, and can draw upon other resources accordingly and appropriately.

One non-verbal resource which can be drawn upon in a variety of contexts is the use of gesture or, rather, embodied actions (e.g. ten Have and Psathas 1995; Goodwin 2000; Goodwin 2007). Research has shown how novice L2 users can compensate for any linguistic limitations through embodied conduct. For example, Olsher (2004) showed how L2 learners engaged in project-group work were able to draw upon their own bodies, and the physical artefacts in their local environment, to complete social

actions which began through talk. In other words, Olsher showed how the participants used 'embodied completions' when linguistic resources might not have been available.[6] Further, Olsher argued that these were made available because of the physical objects present, as well as the activity in which the participants were engaged, and also the participants' joint knowledge of the trajectory of the ongoing talk.

Similar findings were observed by Mori and Hayashi (2006) in their examination of L1-L2 Japanese talk. The researchers also noted how both L1 and L2 users engaged in such embodied completions, as well as relied upon the importance of gaze and gesture in co-ordinating their social activities. Carroll (2008), too, has noted how such resources, as well as posture, and even 'doing being still', can be employed by L2 interactants in order to achieve various social actions.

From such research, we can see the inextricable and complex links between the normatively understood sequential organisation of interaction, the linguistic resources of the participants in talk, the physical bodies of those participants, the activity in which they are engaged, as well as the artefacts involved in that activity. Further, it can also be seen that participants are able to take advantage of these connections in order to compensate if one is less than fully available.

Regardless of levels of sophistication, the flow of all interactions is hindered by some forms of trouble. Such trouble occurs frequently in terms of one interlocutor's speaking, hearing or understanding (Schegloff et al 1977). There is no evidence that the repair mechanism, through which interactants deal with such troubles, is any different in L2 interaction.[7] However, research has shown L2 users can be very persistent in overcoming trouble which is not easily dealt with. One salient example came from Egbert et al (2004), who examined a single sequence in which a multilingual group, speaking in English, spent many minutes trying to resolve trouble with a person reference. The participants in the interaction, as in many instance of L2 interaction, showed themselves to be not only resourceful, but also perseverant, in overcoming the trouble.

[6] Olsher also includes an example of an embodied completion from L1-only interaction, in order to emphasise that such social practices are not exclusive to L2 users.

[7] Wong (2000b) suggested that L2 speakers may engage in 'delayed' initiations of repair, with which a trouble in hearing or understanding is identified *after* the 'next-turn' position in which it is found in L1 talk. However, in a response article by Schegloff (2000), such phenomena was shown to also occur in L1 interactions.

The findings outlined in this sub-section suggest that L2 speakers can be perseverant in pursuing mutual understanding. It has been argued that L2 speakers do not give up easily, regardless of obstacles, as to do so might impinge upon their social identity as a competent social being (Gardner and Wagner 2004). Additionally, the research findings show how even the most novice of L2 speakers are capable of sophisticated interaction, even when possessing apparent limited linguistic resources (Hauser 2010). Such perseverance and sophistication has been uncovered through the analytic lens that CA offers the study of social interaction. As Kasper puts it:

> CA… examine[s] how participants with less than fully developed or accessible linguistic resources collaboratively accomplish activities and intersubjectivity, and often do so in supremely subtle ways. (2006: 91)

The 'collaborative accomplishment' that Kasper refers to can also be evidenced on occasions when interactants themselves orient to an asymmetry in linguistic resources, and either seek or offer help. This is the focus of the next sub-section.

### 2.2.3 *The collaborative accomplishment of second language interaction*

The previous section discussed literature which has demonstrated the sophistication of L2 interaction. Such research shows that this is partly due to L2 users' abilities to draw upon other resources in order to achieve their various social goals. As was suggested, one such resource can be an interactant's interlocutor. A CA understanding of social interaction sees it that *all* social actions and activities – that is, any conversations, stories, interviews, service encounters, classroom activities, etc. – are jointly accomplished between participants at talk, and this is no less true in settings when an L2 speaker is involved. However, this sub-section will consider research in which there is the demonstrable seeking, or offering, of help between interlocutors. Examples of this include word searches and pronunciation 'corrections', as will be seen.

Whether in L1-L2 or L2-L2 interaction (and, although this is not the object of focus in this study, also L1-L1 interaction), there are occasions when one participant may not be able to produce a turn or part thereof. At times, this may be due to (possibly temporary) linguistic limitations. At such times, other participants in that talk, not bound by such limitations, may be able to help out. In talking about some of their workplace data, Firth and Wagner (2007) articulated this well:

> That is, both NS and NNS are collaborating in constructing meaningful discourse, and a mainstay of this collaboration is an effective 'division of labour', based on the resources that the two parties bring to and make relevant in the interaction. (p. 2934)

Although Firth and Wagner were not addressing particular activities when stating this, one example of such phenomena is the word search. While CA research sees the internal workings of the mind as beyond its reach, and as such makes no claims about ability, or otherwise, to 'remember' or 'retrieve' linguistic items, it still has been able to say something about word searches as a socially accomplished, interactional practice (cf. Goodwin 1987; Goodwin and Goodwin 1986; Hayashi 2003; Schegloff et al 1977).[8]

Participants at talk can be seen – through the use of gaze, gesture and various vocal resources – to demonstrably 'perform' a search and, in the use of these resources, display whether they want the others present to be involved in the activity or not (Goodwin 1987). For example, 'word searchers' wishing to produce their search as a solitary activity will withdraw their gaze from their interlocutor. Further, those interlocutors will tend to treat it accordingly, and not provide help. Conversely, a search may be produced in unison with a redirection of gaze *towards* an interlocutor, and/or vocal activity, such as addresses, which indicate a request for assistance (Goodwin and Goodwin 1986).

As one might expect, such phenomena is not uncommon in situations which include participants still developing their competencies in a language. For example, Mori and Hasegawa (2009) looked at word search activities between L2 students in a Japanese classroom. They noted how all of these resources, as well as those of local artefacts such as textbooks, come into play when the students attempt to collaboratively produce a classroom task.

Similar research has been conducted outside of language learning environments. Kurhila, for example, has examined word search sequences between L1-L2 friends and, again, in encounters between L2 students and L1 staff in a university in Finland (2005, 2006). In both settings, Kurhila noted, L1 speakers did not engage in a word

[8] Many other approaches to second language research have attempted to say something about an L2 user's cognitive mechanisms, and this is no less true with regards to word searches. For example, in writing about word searches from a 'communication strategies' perspective, Kasper and Kellerman state: "This condition is one where a speaker wishes to label a concept for which she does not have the lexical resources, or where these resources are available but cannot be recalled, or where available and retrievable resources cannot be used successfully because of con-textual constraints." (2007: 8)

search and seek help from their L2 interlocutor. This, she argued, is indicative of the orientations the speakers have to their respective linguistic expertise.

Interestingly, Kurhila has noted that, on occasions, L2 speakers may accept the candidate solutions to a word search which are offered by the L1 speaker, even if the solution is clearly not the word that was being searched for (2005). This, Kurhila argues, demonstrates the strength of linguistic authority which can be possessed by an L1 speaker in L1-L2 interactions.

Brouwer (2003) has also shown how L2 speakers may seek assistance with word searches from their L1 speaking friends. However, she suggests that orientations to linguistic expertise may, but may not, arise in the wording of the word search initiation, as well as through other aspects of the sequence. That is, it is not the word search in and of itself which demonstrates an orientation to different language abilities.

Brouwer (2004) also identified an interactional practice similar to word searches, which she labeled 'doing pronunciation'. In such episodes, she observed, the business at hand is put on hold in order that the L1 and L2 speaker can remedy some trouble with regards to the phonetic production of the item just produced. In Brouwer's data, which involved Danish and Dutch friends talking in Danish, all such sequences are initiated by the L2 speaker, who indicates some trouble through hesitations, speech perturbations and/or rising intonation at the end of the troublesome word (which indicates the word's production as an attempt, an action Sacks and Schegolff [1979] labeled 'try-marking'). In addition, it was observed that all initiations are responded to by the L1 speaker, either through a correction of an attempt deemed inaccurate, or through a confirmation of an attempt's accuracy.

Corrections are, of course, not limited to the phonetic level. Kurhila has also examined correction sequences in her L1-L2 Finnish settings (2001, 2006). In the corpus of conversations between friends, the corrections were only forthcoming if invited, again through actions such as 'try-marking', or at least if the L2 speaker framed their turn at talk as tentative (2001). Such cautious or 'try marked' production of an utterance, Kurhila argues, can be seen by the more linguistically confident speaker as a subtle invitation for support. While the same was often true in the university setting, Kurhila (2006) also noted that corrections were occasionally done when they could be embedded into the ongoing talk (as was outlined in Section 2.2.1).

As with other studies mentioned, Kurhila (ibid.) found that L1 corrections of L2 talk was far more common, with the opposite occurring on very rare occasions. This may be indicative of the supportive role L1 speakers can take in L2 talk, and would also be a sign of the collaborative nature of L2 talk.

All of the non-education-setting studies mentioned so far in this section have been concerned with the assistance an L1 speaker can offer, or be requested to offer, in support of an L2 speaker. It would appear that such phenomena are less common in L2-L2 talk. This is arguably due to more ambiguity with regards differences in linguistic expertise (although this is a matter which ought to be investigated empirically).

However, one caveat should be raised at this point. In discussing English as a *lingua franca* (ELF), many researchers have discussed L2-L2 English interaction in terms of its collaborative nature (e.g. Firth 2009a, House 1999, Meierkord 2000). For example, Polzl and Seidlhofer have described ELF as "overtly consensus-orienting, cooperative and mutually supportive…" (2006: 153). This idea, particularly the implied homogeneity with which it is presented, has been criticised by Jenks (forthcoming). Jenks juxtaposes such notions by presenting L2-L2 English interaction from online, voice-based chat rooms, in which participants are unsupportive, mocking of one another, and 'reprehensive'.[9] Jenks concludes that L2 interaction is not, and L2 speakers are not, inherently supportive; rather, the supportive, or otherwise, nature of any interaction is at least partly due to the setting in which it takes place. When one considers the settings in which research on, for example, word search sequences has taken place, this may hold true. While friends and service providers may be supportive of their interlocutors (for differing reasons), this is not to claim that all participants in talk involving an L2 speaker will inherently be supportive of, or ready to follow the needs of, that speaker.

Indeed, with the same data, Kurhila (2005) has described instances in which the L2 and the L1 speaker do *not* collaborate. Or rather, each interactant appears to orient to different priorities. While the L2 speaker is engaged in a word search and appears to be seeking assistance in resolving it, or is seeking a correction/confirmation, the L1 speaker is orienting not to the production of the correct conjugation of a verb, but to the mutual understanding which has been established. That is, the L1 speaker displays

[9] Although it should be noted that such features of talk were not observed in the data examined for the present study, which is taken from the same setting.

that they have understood the L2 speaker, and this comes at the expense of helping the L2 speaker produce the item they are trying to produce. Theosdóttir (in press) makes a similar argument based upon her analyses of service encounters in an Icelandic context. She notes how an L2 Icelandic speaking customer would insist upon completing her turns at talk, even when the L1 speaking sales clerk had begun to respond, and in so doing, had displayed their understanding of the prior turn, before its completion. This, the researcher argues, is evidence of differing orientations to the purpose(s) of the encounter – while the sales clerk orients only to the importance of completing the service encounter, the customer orients to both that, and to their own interest in completing full turns at talk in their L2 (however, it should be noted that the phenomena which the researcher outlines may alternatively be due to differing interactional norms – such as the 'no-overlap' rule – for speakers of different linguacultural backgrounds).

Many of the research projects mentioned thus far have discussed, explained and/or understood L2 interaction in terms of the identities of the participants involved, and/or in terms of the social organisation and collaborative production of mutual understanding, or intersubjectivity. These two concepts are central to both L2 and CA research, and so naturally play pivotal roles in much of the research which combines the two. In the following two sections, these two facets of social interaction will be outlined. A particular focus will again be placed on research which adopts a CA mentality. Both identity and intersubjectivity will also be discussed in relation to existing L2 interaction research, including, but not limited to, some of the studies previously mentioned.

## 2.3 Identity in Second Language Interaction

### 2.3.1 *An emic approach to linguistic identities*

The role of identities in second language research has been the source of some controversy in the recent past. Studies in which the categories of 'native speaker' ('NS') and 'nonnative speaker' ('NNS') are applied exogenously by the researcher have been accused of (1) essentialising and oversimplifying concepts which are not possible to objectively define (particularly not in any empirically-grounded way), (2)

building-in assumptions (or at least implications) of inferiority, deficiencies, problems, and the unusual nature, of interactions between L1 and L2 speakers, or among L2 speakers, and (3) ignoring the relevance of such categories for the participants concerned (e.g. Cook 1999; Davies 1991; Block 2007a, 2007b; Firth and Wagner 1997, 2007; Rampton 1990, 1997).[10]

For example, Firth and Wagner (1997) pointed out that, in the research settings they examined (namely, workplace telephone calls between L2 users of English), concepts such as 'NNS' and 'learner' were not oriented to by the participants, nor did they appear to be consequential to what was taking place. In light of this, Firth and Wagner (ibid.) called for an increased emic (i.e. participant-relevant) sensitivity to such L2 identity categories.

The approach proposed was based on Harvey Sacks' (cf. Sacks 1992) work on 'membership categories', and subsequent research examining identity as a participants', interactional, resource (e.g. Antaki and Widdicombe 1998; Benwell and Stokoe 2006). In fitting with the ethnomethodological (EM) and conversation analytic principles of 'participant relevance' and 'procedural consequentiality' (Schegloff 1991, see also sub-section 2.2.1), this understanding of identity shows how identities are locally occasioned in ongoing interaction, as well as how participants themselves work up, understand, and interpret such categories (e.g. Antaki 1998; Antaki and Horowitz 2000).

This EM approach to identity is potentially able to deal with the theoretical, methodological and ideological issues outlined above; in only considering identity categories as and when they are demonstrably oriented to by the participants in the talk being analysed, the approach treats identity as a participants', rather than an analysts', resource (Widdicombe 1998). As such, no objective definitions are aimed for, and no assumptions are brought on the part of the researcher.

In the next section, research which has applied these principles to the empirical study of linguistic interaction will be outlined and discussed.

[10] Some research has addressed these criticisms by, for example, adopting non-essentialist, post-structural approaches to identity in L2 research (cf. Block 2007b; Norton 2000; Norton Peirce 1995; Pavlenko and Blackledge 2004). Such research has been useful in expanding on, and changing, notions of identity, and people's relationship to it. Many such studies have produced findings empowering to minority parties concerned, such as immigrant L2 speakers. However, such research has not grounded its observations and findings in the actual daily practices of the participants concerned.

### 2.3.2 *The relevance of linguistic identities to interaction*

As Firth and Wagner (ibid.) suggested, an EM approach to identity does not take for granted the relevance of any social categories. With regards to L2 interaction, this means that:

> [b]eing a second language speaker is not a paramount identity in itself. It is one identity a speaker can adopt. But on the other hand, non-nativeness can be made relevant at any time, by a speaker or by recipients, as well as by different means… (Gardner and Wagner 2004: 16).

As such, much of the research taking up Firth and Wagner's (ibid.) call has sought to demonstrate if, how, and when, linguistic identities are relevant to participants in talk, and how this impacts upon the talk in which they are engaged. The primary observation to have been confirmed empirically by such research is that linguistic identities can come into play at times, but that there are also many occasions on which linguistic identities are irrelevant to the interactional business at hand (e.g. Firth and Wagner 1997, 2007; Hosoda 2006; Ikeda 2005; Kasper 2004; Kurhila 2004, 2005).

This is particularly true for L2 use outside of educational settings since, in educational settings, participants come together precisely *because* of their linguistic statuses. In language learning classrooms, for example, some participants attend because they have been deemed, or deem themselves, not yet proficient enough in their L2, and others (or rather, usually *one* other) come to the classroom because they have been assigned a position of language 'expert' by their employer. In such settings, and shaped to some extent by the institutional and pedagogical goals of the classroom (Seedhouse 2004), L1 and L2 user or learner statuses may be very regularly (although still not always) relevant.

Kasper (2004) made a similar observation in her examination of an informal 'conversation-for-learning' activity, in which one novice L2 German speaker is paired with a German speaker considered more proficient (who happens to be an L1 speaker, although this is not necessarily always the case in this setting, Kasper reports) in order to practice. In this setting, speakers come together because of their linguistic statuses (relative to each other), and as such, Kasper describes it as an example of a 'category-bound event'. Despite this, Kasper's analysis shows that orientations to differential language statuses are invariably short-lived; the participants orient much more regularly to other social identities, such as movie watchers and female acquaintances.

The setting which Kasper examined is somewhat unique in that the participants come together *because* of their differential language expertise, in what is a quasi-eduactional setting (at least in terms of its origins, if not how it is played out). In the majority of L2 interaction settings, participants tend to have other business to deal with, and just happen to be using an L2. For example, Hosoda (2006) analysed 'everyday' talk between L1 and L2 Japanese speaking friends, and observed that linguistic identities only become relevant when the L2 speakers occasionally stop their turn in progress in order to check the accuracy of the vocabulary item just produced, either in terms of its pragmatic accuracy or pronunciation (a practice Hosoda labelled 'vocabulary check').[11] In seeking assistance from their L1 speaking interlocutor, the L2 speaker can be seen to invoke the differential linguistic expertise between the two.

Similar findings have been obtained from institutional settings, in which L1 and L2 speakers who come together do so for reasons other than their linguistic statuses. In such settings, Kurhila (2004, 2005) has noted institutional roles – such as secretary and client or administrator and student – are more regularly salient, and linguistic identities only come into play when the L2 speaker seeks helps from their L1 speaking interlocutor.

As can be seen from the research discussed (as well as some of the research outlined in Section 2.2.3), it appears to invariably be L2 speakers who invoke linguistic identities, either through code switching or self-repairing (Kasper 2004), admonishing themselves for forgetting a word (Park 2007), initiating other-correction (Kurhila 2001) or perform a 'vocabulary check' (Hosoda 2006). Interestingly, Kurhila (2004) has also noted that, in the settings she examined, these invocations can be resisted by the L1 speaker. That is, while the L2 speaker may, in asking for assistance in their language production, be orienting to both interactants' linguistic identity statuses, their L1 interlocutor may see more importance in their respective institutional roles as, for example, student and university service provider. Kurhila describes this as an intersecting of identities.

[11] Although this practice is not exclusive to L2 talk, and may occur among L1 speakers using specialised terminology, Hosoda (2006) argued that 'everyday' vocabulary is not checked in this manner outside of L2 interaction.

Possibly even more interesting is the observation by Kurhila (2004) that this intersecting of identities can occur not just across two interactants, but within one interactant. Kurhila notes that:

> even if displaying herself [sic] as linguistically incompetent, the SL [second language] speaker can display institutional competence. (ibid.: 71)

In other words, even when demonstrably unable to draw upon the necessary linguistic resources, and requiring assistance, the L2 speakers in her data are able to demonstrate that they are aware of their institutional role, what is appropriate, and what is required of them – that is, what they *ought* to be doing, even if they are unable to do so. In so doing, Kurhila argues, the L2 speakers construe themselves as interactionally, institutionally competent beings, who just happen to be lacking some linguistic resources.

While the studies outlined in this section have, much like those outlined in Section 2.3, helped to reconsider what it means to be an L2 speaker, they are still not without some ideological and empirical shortcomings. In the following section, these shortcomings will be discussed, and a preferred way of considering linguistic identities in interaction will be presented.

### 2.3.3 *'Nativeness' or* expertise *in linguistic identity research*

As can be seen by the research outlined so far in this section, many of the orientations to linguistic identities are seen to emerge through word search, repair and correction sequences (such as those also discussed in Section 2.2.3). As Mori (2007) argues:

> the close examination of repair and word search practices observed in interactions involving L2 speakers presents one way to detect whether or not the *participants make identities that correspond to their linguistic proficiency (native–nonnative or expert–novice) relevant* to, and in, the ongoing interaction…. (pp 853-854, emphasis added)

That is, it is argued that, in seeking help from their interlocutor(s), L2 speakers orient to their own identity *as* an L2 speaker (or 'NNS', or non-expert). Conversely, in offering help, L1 speakers orient to their own status as an L1 speaker (or 'NS', or expert). The potential for a circular argument may be apparent here. The above quotation is included, as Mori includes in it two possible descriptors for linguistic identities being oriented to – 'NS'-'NNS' and 'expert'-'novice'. Even within this small sub-field of research, approaches to the study of identity in interaction have

varied; some studies have opted to continue with oft-maligned labels of 'NS' and 'NNS' (e.g. Kurhila 2006; Park 2007), while others have preferred to use the alternative labels of 'FL-speaker'-'SL-speaker' (e.g. Kurhila 2004). Others still have considered L2 interactions in terms of participants' asymmetric/differential language expertise (e.g. Hosoda 2006; Kasper 2004; Kurhila 2001).

While it could be argued that the difference between the 'NS'-'NNS' and 'FL'-'SL' labels is negligible (although cf. the opening of this section, as well as the studies cited therein), one can argue that it is preferable to avoid using such labels at all.[12] One potential problem is that it may be an analytic leap to suggest that a request for assistance in producing a word (for example) is an orientation to NS/FL and NNS/SL identity categories. As has been suggested, such incidences can also occur in L1 interaction, and one would never suggest in those contexts that such incidences are also orientations to nonnativeness. Instead, it may be preferable, for L2 interaction as with L1 interaction, to consider such episodes in terms of temporary, or occasioned, limitations in linguistic repertoires. This then is not an orientation by the speaker to being a 'novice', but just an acknowledgement that the speaker's resources are lacking at that particular moment, and that their interlocutor's linguistic repertoire (for example) might be able to help. Such an understanding is in line with Rampton's (1990, 1997) arguments for the use of the notion of 'expertise' rather than 'nativeness'.

Unlike 'nativeness', which considers linguistic identities only as two opposing static identities which may or may not come into play, 'expertise' is a dynamic notion which can change from moment to moment, and even from participant to participant. For example, Vickers' (2008, 2010) analysis of L1-L2 interactions in a computer engineering setting has shown how the direction of relative expertise in engineering talk can shift on a moment by moment basis. That is, one some occasions, an L1 speaker can be treated as the relative expert by his L2 interlocutor, while on other occasions, the reverse can be true.

Hosoda (2006) also noted this in her analysis of L1-L2 Japanese talk. Hosoda analysed a sequence in which the Japanese L1 speaker switches to English in order to help their L1 English interlocutor. In the opening moments of this shift into English

[12] This point refers solely to the problematic nature of talking in such ways about orientations *in* interaction *by* participants. While the present research project applies the label 'L2 interactions', it does so as a consciously external, analyst's label.

language talk, the (now) L2 English speaker is still orienting to themselves as the relative expert. However, soon after, the same speaker displays some uncertainty regarding an aspect of English, which is aided by the L1 English speaker, and the orientation to relative expertise is duly reversed. Such a complicated, fluid, dynamic orientation to relative expertise cannot be discussed, or even uncovered, when more static identity categories like 'NNS' are applied to the orientations of participants at talk.

Talking of expertise rather than nativeness also opens the way for similar research into L2-L2 interaction. Naturally, notions of nativeness would not be invoked in such settings, but relative expertise can be. To date, little research appears to have examined orientations to relative linguistic expertise in L2-L2 interaction.[13]

One possible reason for this is that it may be very rare for L2 speakers to orient to their status as expert or novice relative to their L2 interlocutor(s). In talking of the L2-L2 English language workplace settings that he has examined, Firth argues:

> that they are communities where L2 proficiency is in essence a *private* matter in that it is not alluded to or topicalised. (2009b: 136, original emphasis)

That is, Firth sees no evidence of participants orienting explicitly to their own, or their interlocutors, language expertise. However, Firth's supposition has not been further examined empirically, and the workplaces he examines would appear to be the only settings in which L2-only interaction has been examined for participant orientations to expertise, and their impact (if any) upon the interaction. Research which considers the extent to which this phenomenon exists is surely warranted, and one purpose of the present study is to address this.

Much of the work discussed in this section has contributed to understanding of linguistic identities, and helped to challenge some pre-existing assumptions regarding, for example, the notion of 'NNS'. Additionally, the work has aided to understanding the role of these identities in interaction, and so has contributed to the larger project of understanding L2 interaction in general. However, it has been argued that many of these studies still adopted potentially problematic identity category labels, such as 'NNS'. Few have opted to consider orientations to linguistic identities in terms of the more fluid concept of 'language expertise'. Even fewer studies have examined

[13] In discussing English as a *lingua franca*, some research has discussed the (potentially related) notion of 'ownership' of English (e.g. Haberland 2010; Higgins 2003; Matsuda 2003), although this research is not based upon the actual practices of participants in L2/ELF interaction.

orientations to linguistic expertise in L2-L2 interaction. From here, a gap in the research literature emerges. One of the aims of this study is to address this gap by considering how, if at all, linguistic expertise is oriented to by L2 participants in online chat rooms. In so doing, the study aims to follow Firth's (2009b) idea of expertise as a 'private matter', and examine the extent to which, in moments of threatened mutual understanding, expertise is topicalised.

As has been apparent throughout the duration of this section, the notion of identity, and participant's orientation to it, is a central aspect of L2 interaction research, and is closely related to the characteristics of L2 interaction as were described in Section 2.2. Another notion which is similarly central to L2 interaction research is that of mutual understanding. This is the focus of the next section.

## 2.4 Mutual Understanding and Second Language Interaction

### 2.4.1 *The organisation of mutual understanding*

Before considering research on mutual understanding, or 'intersubjectivity', in second language interaction, it is important to understand the notion of interactional intersubjectivity in general. This section serves as a precursor to Section 2.4.2, in which research which has applied these findings and principles to L2 interaction will be discussed.

From an interactional perspective, particularly that following the ethnomethodological principles of CA (see Chapter 3), 'intersubjectivity', 'mutual understanding', and even 'cognition' are not terms considered to refer to the internal workings of an individual's mind, as they might in more traditional psychological or sociological research paradigms. Rather, in rejecting any claim that it is possible to uncover what goes on underneath the skull (e.g. Garfinkel 1967), CA research understands intersubjectivity as a publicly displayed, social phenomena (Edwards 2006; Kasper 2006, 2009a; Maynard 2006; te Molder and Potter 2005; Schegloff 1991; van Dijk 2006). This will be explained presently, but it is important to note at this point that this position does not necessarily imply that researchers adopting a CA mindset deny the existence of an individual mind, much as most researchers interested in internal mental processes will not deny the existence, or importance, of social

interaction. Contrary to some misunderstandings, CA is not "strictly anti-cognitive" (Kasper 1997: 310). Rather, CA research takes the position that psychological states and processes cannot be accurately accessed by researchers, and "consequently, CA requires a non-mentalist stance as an analytical *policy*" (Kasper 2006: 84, emphasis in original).[14, 15]

In understanding the notion of intersubjectivity as a social phenomenon, it is necessary to begin by understanding some of the basic principles believed to govern the organisation of talk-in-interaction. This goes back to Goffman's idea of the interaction order (1967); the belief that all talk is "treated by the participants as being somehow linked together, often in such a way that B's doing is regarded as some sort of response to A's previous doing" (Kendon 1988: 31). That is, turns at talk are assumed to be somehow connected to the turn which preceded them. As such, a turn at talk performs some kind of interpretative work of its predecessor; for example, a turn produced as an acceptance displays that its speaker understood the previous turn as an offer, directed at them. Any turn at talk displays an interpretation or understanding or the previous turn at talk. This has been described as the 'understanding-display' device (Sacks et al 1974); as Heritage puts it, "linked actions are, in short, the building block of intersubjectivity" (1984a: 256).

By making sense of one another's actions, and displaying this understanding in their social conduct, participants at talk jointly accomplish mutual understanding as a social process (e.g. Heritage 1984a; Schegloff 1991). This process has been described by Heritage as the "architecture of intersubjectivity" (ibid.: 254), and is also understood as the 'social distribution of cognition' (e.g. Schegloff 1991). Further, it is believed to be the central framework upon which all talk-in-interaction, and all of the social world, is built (e.g. Schegloff 1987, 1991, 1992).

In briefly considering the import of this approach for L2 interaction, it may be apparent that, from this approach to intersubjectivity, problems in understanding are seen as a problem between interlocutors. This is unlike more 'mentalist' L2 research

[14] Of course, as with any position within an academic discipline, this 'mentalist indifference' does not apply to all interaction researchers; see, e.g. Coulter (2005) for an example of a research position which outright denies the existence of an individual mind.

[15] Some clarification with regards to these two quotations may be in order. While they both originate from the same researcher, her position with regards to CA – and its usefulness as a tool for the study of L2 interaction, cognition and learning – changed somewhat in the time between the two. They are included here as they are illustrative of (1) the argument against CA *vis-à-vis* cognition, and (2) the defence against that argument. It is purely coincidental that both the critique and the rebuttal come from Kasper.

approaches, which often see a problem in understanding as one between a L2 user and the language in question (Kurhila 2006).

For participants in talk-in-interaction, understanding is assumed unless one participant does something which contradicts this assumption. When understanding appears to have been breached, then it must be remedied. Section 2.2 contained a discussion of how progressivity of talk takes priority of the 'correctness' of the talk. In turn, and because mutual understanding is necessary for the successful progression of interaction, the maintenance of intersubjectivity takes priority over progressivity.

That is, if one participant does not understand the other's prior action, or if their action is not an appropriate next to the previous action, then this has to be overcome before a sequence of actions can continue. In this sense, progressivity and mutual understanding are inextricably intertwined – talk can only progress in the event of displayed mutual understanding. Should the understanding appear to be threatened, the progress of the activity at hand will be put on hold. As Kasper puts it:

> When [participants] need to stop the action in progress in order to tackle some problem, then understanding itself becomes the order of business. (2009a: 23)

These principles underlying the organisation of mutual understanding will be explicated in more detail in Section 3.3. For present purposes, this brief overview will suffice in understanding research which examined mutual understanding in L2 interaction. This research will be discussed in the following section.

### 2.4.2 *Mutual understanding in second language interaction*

Second language CA studies have sought to explicate if, and how, the 'architecture of intersubjectivity' and the mechanism for repairing breaches in intersubjectivity, are different in L2 interaction. As has been discussed in earlier sections, L2 interaction does not differ widely from L1 interaction, and this has been found to hold true for the *organisation* of intersubjectivity and repair, even in interactions involving very novice L2 speakers. However, many studies have uncovered some interesting findings with regards to the maintenance of mutual understanding in conversations involving L2 speakers. In this section, these studies will be discussed. Again, some of the research outlined in this section has been mentioned in previous sections. In those cases, they are now considered in light of the discussion of intersubjectivity present in Section 2.4.1.

Arguably one of the most important findings comes from Egbert et al (2004), who examined 20 conversations among multilingual friends talking in German. Egbert et al looked for instances of communication 'breakdown', moments in which mutual understanding could not be achieved. Despite the novice L2 status of many of the participants, the researchers were unable to locate a single instance of 'failed' communication.

The researchers also noted that the majority of other-initiated repairs (OIRs) were structured and organised exactly as are OIRs in interactions involving only L1 speakers. However, they analysed in detail one example of OIR which 'almost' ended up in a breakdown; the participants involved spent a number of minutes resolving the trouble with regards to a person reference, and resolve it only after "extraordinary efforts" (ibid.: 178).

Egbert et al do not claim that misunderstandings are always resolved in L2 talk (much like they are not always resolved in L1 talk); rather, they used their findings to make two observations: (1) regardless of level of linguistic proficiency, L2 speakers can be very determined and resourceful in attaining a state of mutual understanding when this is threatened, and (2) the repair mechanism is a powerful resource in aiding this. In discussing the lengthy repair sequence, the researchers state that:

> [the] repair mechanism turns out to be both elastic and robust enough to provide adequate resources even under comparatively extreme conditions… It is flexible in that it allows for a large number of expansions, and it is robust in that interactants keep resorting to it until the repairable is amended (ibid.: 199)

While the study by Egbert et al examined the resolution of OIRs, other research has considered the location of the OIR in the first instance. For example, Wong (2000b) noted that, in her corpus of L1-L2 talk between friends, the initiation of repair can be delayed within the turn after the trouble source. That is, Wong found instances in which participants claimed their understanding (for example, with a change-of-state, or receipt token, such as "oh"), but soon after initiated repair, which would suggest that they might not have understood. Wong suggested that these delayed OIRs were not to be found in L1 interaction, although Schegloff (2000) called this into question. Regardless of whether they are more common in L2 interaction, Wong's observations did draw attention to the fact that participants at talk are able to claim understanding, even if this claimed understanding may be misplaced (albeit extremely briefly).

Wong's findings may also demonstrate that participants at talk are aware of how they are expected to respond to their interlocutors, and that an 'appropriate' response may be produced before a more 'accurate' one.

In examining business telephone calls between L2 speakers of English, Firth (1996) found a similar phenomena, by which the interactants claimed their ongoing understanding (or at least did not display their non-understanding), but were later revealed to have not understood. Firth (ibid.) labelled this the 'let it pass' principle, by which a participant does not hinder the progression of ongoing talk by displaying his/her non-understanding of a piece of talk, in the assumption that that talk will later become clear, or redundant. From Firth's observations, we can again see evidence for participants' orientations to the importance of the progressivity of talk.

However, it should also be noted that Firth juxtaposed these observations with analyses of some sequences throughout which is required "an explicit and specific display, on the recipient's part, of understanding following each and every turn" (ibid.: 248). Such sequences include the exchange of vital information, such as the spelling of business colleagues' names or their telephone numbers.

The general preference for the progressivity of talk over linguistic 'correctness' was discussed in Section 2.2.1. For example, Brouwer et al (2004) noted that linguistic corrections are not regularly done in L2 interaction (nor in L1 interaction, for that matter), as this would hinder the progressivity of the talk. However, as was discussed in Section 2.4.1, intersubjectivity typically takes precedence over progressivity (talk can not typically progress unless intersubjectivity is at least claimed). Considering this in terms of 'correctness', Brouwer et al (2004) point out that this does not mean that corrections are never made; they might be if (or rather, when) the linguistic errors could threaten intersubjectivity. They illustrate this through their analysis of embedded corrections, and note that such corrections are only found in positions when no correction might threaten intersubjectivity. That is, in responding to an action, the next speaker will include the 'corrected' element into their subsequent action, in order to show the grounds upon which they are performing that action (ibid.: 2004).

Kurhila found similar in her analysis of candidate understandings (2006). When responding to their L2 student interlocutor's turn at talk, L1 speaking university administrators might include a reformulation or rephrasing of that prior turn. In so

doing, the L1 speaker is able to display their understanding of the student's turn, and open the space for any necessary correction of this understanding by the L2 speaker. If no such correction is forthcoming, then both participants can see that intersubjectivity is achieved.

Kuroshima (2010) also considered this relationship between progressivity of talk and what she called 'securing' intersubjectivity. Kuroshima collected data from a Japanese sushi restaurant in the US, and analysed orders placed between L1 English speaking customers and the L2 speaking chefs. She noted that some orders were received and acknowledged by the chefs with a simple receipt token (such as *hai* or *haiyo*, the Japanese equivalents of 'okay' or *un*, which works similarly to the English 'uh-huh'), while on other occasions, the orders were repeated back to the customers. Interestingly, Kuroshima noted, when repetitions are produced with a rising intonation, they always project a confirmation by the customer of the accuracy (or otherwise) of the chef's understanding.

Kuroshima considered the combination of potential linguistic uncertainty (on the part of the L2 speaking chefs) and cultural uncertainty (on the part of customers who may not be entirely familiar with sushi) and discussed her analytic findings in terms of the 'trust' the chef displays in his own hearing of the order, as well as in the customer's understanding of the suitability of that order. One colourful illustration of this came from an order of six pieces of eel, placed by a father for his young daughter. The chef seeks confirmation of this, to check that he has understood correctly and also that the father is aware of what he has asked for. In that instance, intersubjectivity can be seen to take precedence over the progressivity of an order which is being made in a very busy, fast-paced, customer service environment.

In his corpus of interaction between L1 Norwegian clerks and their L2 clients, Svennevig (2004) also noted the use of repetition as a display of receipt, and the importance of intonation therein. In his analysis, Svennevig observed that a falling intonation closes a sequence of actions, while a rising intonation indicates surprise or interest in the just prior talk, which can lead to an extension of the sequence. As with the Kuroshima and Kurhila studies, the use of repetition over, for example, a simple recipient token, provides the opportunity for the L2 speaker to indicate whether or not this receipt is as it was intended. As such, it provides some extra 'security' for intersubjectivity.

As should be apparent at this stage, the notion of the work put in by interactants in order to ensure the maintenance of mutual understanding is central to the present study. The research outlined in this section has suggested that, on occasions, participants in L2 interaction may put in some work in order to secure intersubjectivity, particularly when their actions have institutional consequences, as is the case with the Kurhila (2006), Kuroshima (2010) and Svennevig (2008) studies.

What has yet to be examined in detail, however, is if, and how, participants in non-institutional encounters also do work to ensure that they understand, and are being understood by, their interlocutors. The setting of the present study – online chat rooms which are set up for the ostensible purpose of practising English as an L2 – may be particularly interesting in this sense, since participants in the setting may, in joining such a chat room, self-identify as a not-yet-fully-competent L2 speaker. As such, it is possible that participants may display less 'trust' (in Kuroshima's [2010] words) in themselves and their interlocutors, and be more resilient in ensuring mutual understanding. One of the central aims of this study is to determine if, and how, this manifests itself in the 'architecture of intersubjectivity' in online L2 talk.

In the penultimate section of this chapter, research relevant to the setting of the present study will be outlined and discussed. From this discussion it will become apparent that this research setting is under-examined, particularly in light of the impact of the setting upon the interaction, as well as the nature of the interaction as L2. From this will emerge another aim of the present study, which is to consider the impact the technologically-mediated nature of the chat room setting has on the L2 interaction which takes places within it.

## 2.5 Identifying An Underexplored Context: Online Second Language Talk

Few studies have examined voice-based internet communications, particularly those involving the technology of Skype. Of the few studies which presently exist, the majority offer a description of the features of Skype-based services, and an argument for their usefulness in educational contexts (e.g. Branzburg 2007, Eaton 2010; Yang and Change 2008). Similarly, there have been descriptions of how Skype can be used in a classroom (Foote 2008) as well as proposals for how to use Skype in a higher education context (Newman 2007) or as a resource for students in a study-abroad

context (Cohen and Burkhanrdt 2010). In terms of L2 learning and use, a handful of studies have considered Skype's usefulness as a resource for ESL classrooms, and considered the kind of classroom-based language learning activities which the technology could foster. For example, Tsukamoto and Nuspliger (2009) argued for the use of Skype as a means to allow students to speak with L1 speakers from within the comfort and safety of the L2 classroom. Additionally, Coburn (2010) adopted an action research framework, and suggested that Skype-based conversation assignments need to be designed in order to facilitate interaction patterns conducive to language learning. However, the nature of such 'interaction patterns' were not explicated.

As such, the interactional character of Skype, or the setting of voice-based online chat rooms, remains to be understood, particularly from a micro-analytic perspective (although cf. Jenks 2009a, 2009b; Jenks and Firth, forthcoming; Sukrutrit 2010). While the setting of online chat rooms is one platform for computer-mediated communication (CMC), much of the interactional research in the area of CMC focuses on emails and text-based communication (Jenks and Firth, forthcoming).

Within the wider field of technologically mediated-interaction (TMI; Hutchby 2003), other settings have explored how participants are able to interact without being co-present. Examples of other TMI settings include the telephone, mobile (or cellular) telephones, radio phone-ins, and push-to-talk radios. In fact, CA as a research discipline began with Harvey Sacks' examination of telephone calls to suicide hotlines (Sacks 1992). Since that time, a huge body of research has focused on telephone conversation. Most of these have examined English language talk-in interaction (e.g. Hopper, 1992; Schegloff, 1968, 1979, 1986), although research has also examined telephone-based talk in Dutch (Houtkoop-Steenstra 1991), Swedish (Lindstrom 1994) and Korean (Lee 2006). Other languages have also been examined, and subjected to a 'cross-cultural' comparison (cf. Luke and Pavlidou 2002). A small number of studies have also looked at L1-L2 talk on the telephone (e.g. Wong 2004).

Other voice-only settings to be examined within a CA framework include mobile telephone (Arminen and Leinonen 2006; Hutchby & Barnett 2005, and the ensuing debate between Arminen 2005 and Hutchby 2005), push-to-talk radio (Szymanski et al 2006; Woodruff and Aoki 2007) and talk radio phone-ins (Hutchby 1991, 1996, 2001). In terms of CMC-based work, there is also a small body of

research which focuses on voice-based CMC (e.g. Cziko and Park 2003; Dourish et al 1996).

However, despite the vast abundance of data examined from such settings, many of these studies do not focus on the data *as* TMI data. That is, particularly with regards to the telephone-based research, it has merely been considered as a convenient "device through which are refracted other phenomena" (Schegloff, 2002: 290), leaving the constraining nature of the telephone-call context as an afterthought or a footnote. This has rightly been lamented by some (e.g. Hutchby and Barnett 2005). In fully understanding interaction, one must consider the setting in which the interaction takes place, not least its affordances, constraints, and "circumstantial contingencies", as Hutchby (2005: 668) describes it.

Again bearing in mind the framework within which this study takes place, it feel necessary to adopt the position taken by Hutchby, who argues that technological affordances:

> become relevant, and hence observable, in the course of actions as they are being undertaken, they are simultaneously extraneous to the talk (in that they are associated with the technology) and integral to that talk (in that they are oriented to in the course of using the technology). (2005: 668)

As such, one of the primary aims of the study is to determine if, and how, the technological aspects of the settings impact upon the talk-in-interaction, particularly in light of the participants as L2 users.

Additionally, few studies have considered L2 TMI. The majority of the studies discussed in the preceding section were concerned with co-present talk. While the use of non-verbal resources were not topicalised in many of those studies, their importance has been explicated in other research. Not least that of Mori and Hayashi (2009), who focused on the coordination of the vocal and non-vocal resources which are "used to evaluate, discover, and establish shared linguistic and non-linguistic resources in pursuing intersubjectivity" (ibid.: 195). As such, the voice-only nature of the setting may have an impact upon how the maintenance of mutual understanding is organised.

For example, in L1 interaction, research has demonstrated the role of gaze in establishing recipiency (Goodwin 1980; 1986; Goodwin and Goodwin 1986), some significances of hand gestures in interaction (Schegloff 1984), and, more generally, how gaze and gesture allow participants in talk to monitor who is talking and who is

bidding to speak next (Goodwin 2000). Again, what happens as a consequence of the absence of these non-linguistic resources, and/or how these absences are compensated for in the maintenance of mutual understanding, is a primary point of focus for this research.

## 2.6 Summary

In this chapter, some of the research on L2 interaction has been outlined and discussed, with a particular focus on research which has adopted the CA mindset and methodology. Section 2.2 introduced the research by showing that is has characterised L2 interaction as normal, sophisticated and collaboratively accomplished by the participants involved. While these features are not unique to L2 interaction, they have been worthy of investigative focus and acknowledgement, since they call into question some pre-existing assumptions regarding L2 speakers and the encounters in which they engage, and have aided understanding in the ways that L2 interaction is organised.

As was mentioned, the similarities between L1 and L2 interaction are interesting and discussion worthy in and of themselves. However, as was outlined, some of the small differences between L1 and L2 interaction, in terms of the frequency and/or indexicality of some social practices, have also aided understanding of L2 interaction, and interaction in general. The first aim of this study is to contribute to this body of research by examining L2 interaction in another setting outside of the classroom and, more specifically, in the relatively under-explored setting of voice-based chat rooms.

In Section 2.3, an ethnomethodologically emic perspective on identities was introduced, and studies which have examined orientations to linguistic identities in L2 interaction in various settings were outlined. Such research has been important in demonstrating that linguistic identities are not always important in interaction, but can be oriented to on occasions. However, it was argued that much of the research into L2 identities has still applied the problematic categories of NS/NNS and has, to some extent, recycled old ideas in new ways; the categories are still impossible to objectively define. Further, it was argued, an orientation to differential linguistic expertise is *not* the same as an orientation to someone's status as a NS or a NNS.

As such, it was argued that it is preferable to consider orientations to linguistic identities in terms of expertise, and how this is organised and managed. Although a few studies have explored L2 interaction in these terms (e.g. Kasper 2004; Hosoda 2006), the analysis has invariably examined L1-L2 interaction. As such, the second aim of this study is to explore orientations (or otherwise) to relative linguistic expertise in interactions involving only L2 speakers.

In Section 2.4, the organisation of mutual understanding, or intersubjectivity, in talk-in-interaction was outlined. It was demonstrated that mutual understanding is achieved, and maintained, through the organisation of social interaction. Additionally, the repair mechanism, which is used to deal with breaches in mutual understanding, was outlined. The relationship between this, and an orientation to the progressivity of talk-in-interaction was also considered.

Subsequently, research on L2 interaction which has applied these findings and principles were outlined and discussed. It was noted that, in some settings, L2 speakers carefully manage their talk in order to ensure that mutual understanding is achieved. Many of the studies in this area have examined L2 interaction in institutional settings, in which participants have some institutional goal to achieve. The third aim of the present study is to examine how mutual understanding is maintained in this setting, (1) which has no ostensible institutional goal, and in which (2) participants may self-identify as not-yet-fully-proficient L2 speakers.

Finally, in Section 2.5 the setting of online talk was discussed. Again, it was argued that this is an under-explored setting in L2 interaction research. It was also argued that, although many studies have taken TMI as their data source, many have failed to consider the constraints and affordances of the setting on the shape of the interaction. The fourth aim of this study is to consider the extent to which constraints – such as the absence of embodied actions and gaze – and affordances – such as features of the chat room – impact upon the interaction, particularly in light of the nature of the participants as L2 speakers.

Having established in detail the aims of the present study, the next chapter will introduce the methodology of CA. The chapter will discuss CA as both an epistemological position, and an analytical tool, which will be employed to achieve the aims of the research.

# Chapter 3. Methodology

The research methodology employed in this study is micro-analytic in nature and, more specifically, follows the principles and prior findings of the body of research which is known as conversation analysis (CA). The term 'conversation analysis' may be something of a misnomer, since CA examines not just conversation, but any form of spoken interaction (Schegloff 1984). Put simply, CA research seeks to identify the patterns, structures and practices of interaction, in various contexts. As such, the overarching project of CA is to understand what Goffman (1983) called 'the interaction order'. In order to explicate this interaction order, the object of analysis for CA research is what has been described as the 'primordial site of human sociality' (Schegloff 1991): *talk-in-interaction*.

The 'process' of CA research – such as data collection, transcription and analysis – will be explained in and through Chapter 4, which describes the design of the present study. The purpose of this chapter, then, is to introduce and explain the methodology, its theoretical principles and epistemological underpinnings. This is considered necessary in order to understand the analyses and discussions which follow in subsequent chapters.

The chapter is organised as follows: in the opening section, an introduction to the methodology of CA is provided. Following this, in Section 3.2, CA's 'intellectual parent' (Kasper 2006), ethnomethdology (EM) will be described, and its aims outlined. This will allow for an understanding of the epistemological foundations of CA, as well as how it is positioned against other approaches to social research. Throughout this section, some theoretical principles of CA will be introduced, including the emic perspective (Section 3.2.2), sequential context (Section 3.2.3), talk-extrinsic contexts (Section 3.2.4) and normative accountability (Section 3.2.5).

In Section 3.3, some of the key interactional structures which CA research has explicated will be described. These structures – sequence organisation (Section 3.3.1), turn-taking (Section 3.3.2) and repair (Section 3.3.3) – are not only the methods used by participants to organise their talk, but also the building blocks upon which analysts can found their observations. While other structures, such as preference organisation and turn design, are equally important, the three included are considered the most

important to the theme of the present study. Similarly central to this study is the notion of 'progressivity', which will be described in closing this section.

In the remaining sections, CA will be positioned against other social research methodologies. This will include a consideration of issues of reliability, validity and generalisability pertaining to the approach (Section 3.4), as well as an acknowledgement of some of the criticisms levelled at CA (Section 3.5). In the final section, an argument will be offered for why CA is deemed the most appropriate methodology for the present study's purposes.

## 3.1 Introduction to Conversation Analysis

In this study, the term CA is intended to refer to the body of research which began with Harvey Sacks, Emmanuel Schegloff and Gail Jefferson in the 1970s (e.g. Schegloff & Sacks, 1973; Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson, 1974; Sacks & Schegloff 1979). In turn, this work built upon the lectures given by Sacks in the late 1960s (which have been transcribed and collected as Sacks, 1992). Heritage (1984a) argues that Sacks' lectures were all built upon three theoretical assumptions (which, it ought to be added, have been supported with years of subsequent empirical analysis). These three observations were at the time groundbreaking, and to this day remain central to field of CA. In this section, theses three observations will be discussed, in order to introduce the approach of the methodology.

First of all, CA differs from many other social research approaches to language, discourse and communication in its understanding of language. While CA researchers examine spoken discourse, they take it that "talk amounts to actions" (Schegloff 1991: 46) and that "… speaking and listening are *activities* rather than the passive transmission of thought processes" (Silverman 1998: 7). As such, the focus of study in CA is social action as manifest through talk. Further, it is vital to note CA's emphasis on *inter*action:

> the conversation-analytic angle of inquiry does not let go of the fact that speech-exchange systems are involved, in which more than one co-participant is present and relevant to the talk, even when only one does the talking. (Schegloff 1982: 74)

Hence the object of study for CA is *talk-in-interaction*.[16] In other words, it is not language *per se* that is of interest, but rather the social actions undertaken in and through the use of language. In this sense CA is far more closely aligned to – and talks more directly to – sociology, as opposed to linguistics.

Secondly, Sacks observed that there is "order at all points" in spoken interaction (1984: 22), or a meaningful orderliness to all talk. Put crudely, there are organised sets of practices for (1) giving, receiving and constructing a turn at talk, (2) co-producing sequences of actions in talk and (3) dealing with trouble in talk (Sidnell 2010). Further, this meaningful orderliness is available both to *participants in* talk and to *analysts of* talk. This notion then rejects the idea that natural language is too "messy" to analyse, as well as the Chomskyan notion of linguistic performance as a degenerate expression of linguistic competence, and the subsequent belief of the "uselessness" of studying actual talk in understanding language (see Chomsky 1957, 1965). Instead, the analysis of naturally-occurring talk is taken to be a necessity.

Finally, Sacks noted that – and unpacked how – talk creates and maintains mutual understanding ('intersubjectivity') between interactants. This is important in two key aspects for the understanding of talk-in-interaction: (1) Participants engaged in talk are constantly displaying their understanding of one another's actions; for example, when one provides an answer, they display that they understood a question to have been asked, and that the question was directed at them. (2) Participants engaged in talk are able to note when intersubjectivity has been undermined (i.e. when there is no response following a direct question) and are able put on hold the ongoing activity in order to rectify it. This means of (or 'mechanism' for) rectifying troubles in intersubjectivity is known as 'repair' and will be revisited in Section 3.4.3, as well as throughout the analytic chapters.

Because CA, both as a theory of interaction and as a methodology for the study of interaction, is founded upon interactants' displayed understandings of one another, it is essential for analysts of a particular interaction to demonstrate what is going on *for the participants in that interaction, at that time*. This is known as adopting an emic approach to social research, a matter that will be discussed in more detail in

[16] At least at the first point. Recent developments in CA research have allowed for the fine-grained analysis of other, non-verbal, conduct in interaction, including gaze, embodied actions, physical arrangements, etc. This has been described as *talk-and-other-conduct-in-interaction* (Schegloff 2006). Readers interested in this aspect of interaction are suggested to begin with the excellent work of Charles Goodwin (e.g. 1980, 1986, 2000, 2007)

Section 3.3. This approach requires that analysts follow some basic principles when engaged in data collection and analysis.

In terms of data collection, as stated above, it is generally accepted that data should consist of audio/video recordings of naturally-occurring talk, supported by a finely detailed transcription of the talk. The idea of 'naturally-occurring' is a reaction against experimental research on language and/or social life, as well as against a reliance on imaginary examples of linguistic behaviours, as previously championed by Austin and Searle, for example. In an attempt to avoid (either by accident or design) conducting research on an artificial setting, CA researchers typically investigate episodes of social interaction which would have occurred even if recorders were not present.[17]

Transcripts are required to be as detailed as possible, with all aspects of timing (such as length of pauses between, or within, turns) and verbal conduct (even audible inbreaths, coughs, etc.) acknowledged. This is to ensure that no order of detail can be dismissed as insignificant by the researcher (although, of course, transcripts only serve in support of the recorded data, they are often pored over, and presented to peers. As such, limited transcripts can reflect limited attention to detail). This bottom-up, data driven approach to analysis also works in the opposite direction; while no detail should be ignored, neither should any detail be assumed to be significant. This rules out any *a priori* theorising, and assumptions of the significance of larger social institutions, such as gender, ethnicity, nationality, etc. Outside theories, categories, identities, etc. ought to only be referred to by the analyst if they are demonstrably oriented to by the participants involved in the data under analysis (see Section 3.2.4 for an explanation of this principle).

In the following section, the 'intellectual parent' of CA, EM, will be introduced. This will aid understanding of the epistemological position which CA adopts, as well as where is stands in relation to other forms of social research.

[17] Of course, such a distinction between 'real' and 'experimental' research is not purely binary, and some CA studies have analysed 'prompted' interactions. However, such studies are open to criticism unless they analyse their created situations as exactly that – created situations.

## 3.2 The Ethnomethodological Foundations of CA

Present day CA and EM research are increasingly distinctive, with differing objects of analytic attentions and modes of investigation. However, as has been stated, the former originated from the latter. As such, a CA 'mentality' is best understood through its EM origins and foundations.

This chapter will present an overview of EM and CA, as well as some of their foundational principles. This discussion is not exhaustive, but briefly presents the concepts most relevant to the present study. For a more detailed consideration of EM, readers are recommended to seek out Heritage (1984a). Similarly, ten Have (2007) and Hutchby and Wooffitt (2008) are recommended for an introduction to the principles of CA.

### 3.2.1 *The goal of ethnomethodological research*

Harold Garfinkel developed his sociological paradigm of EM in the 1960s, in reaction against the then-dominant Parsonian functionalist approach to social research (Heritage 1984a). In that approach, social structures – such as age, gender, ethnicity and class – were seen to condition, or cause, the social conduct of individuals and groups (Zimmerman and Boden 1991). This approach was rejected by Garfinkel as deterministic, in that it treated the actions of social members as simply 'effects' – indicators, expressions or symptoms of these macro-forces which acted upon them (Goffman 1983). Additionally, Garfinkel argued, it treated social members as 'cultural dopes', whose understanding of their own social world was inferior to that of social scientific knowledge (Seedhouse 2004).

In response to what he saw as a problematic theory of sociology and social actions, Garfinkel raised three questions: (1) what is the status of the social members' accounts of their *own* actions, especially when these conflict with the causal accounts suggested by existing sociological research? (2) what is the status of social members *shared* knowledge? (3) how do people make *strategic* choices that involve the manipulation of their environments? (Garfinkel 1967).

In order to address these questions, Garfinkel "advocated abandoning epistemology in favour of methodology" (Wei 2002: 161), choosing the empirical over the theoretical. And from this emerged what Garfinkel saw as the proper object of sociological research:

> [The analysis of] the set of techniques that members of a society themselves utilize to interpret and act within their own social worlds. (Wei 2002: 162)

As such, the term 'ethnomethodology' refers to the study of people's (ethno) methods of production and interpretation of social interaction. In employing such methods, the EM position argues, participants produce their social world as an ongoing practical accomplishment (Garfinkel & Sacks, 1970).

This position then rejects the importance, or even use, of trying to uncover social order at the micro-level of social structures, as expressed through statistically significant relationships between variables. Instead, EM places as central the detailed study of how social life and social interaction is interpreted and understood by participants on single occasions through the employment of their own resources (Garfinkel 1967). In applying this approach to the study of social interaction, then, the goal is to explicate how participants make their understandings and orientations available to one another in and through their co-ordinated conduct (such as talk) in order to achieve various social goals in socially situated activities (Kasper 2006).

### 3.2.2 *Emic perspective*

Investigating social members' methods and practices for making sense of their social world and achieving joint understanding requires adopting a radically 'emic' perspective during analysis. The traditional distinction between 'emic' and 'etic' perspectives in social research was proposed by Pike (1967), who noted that:

> the etic viewpoint studies behavior from outside of a particular system, and as an essential initial approach to an alien system. The emic viewpoint results from studying behaviors as from inside the system. (ibid.: 37)

The etic perspective can thus be seen as fitting in with the Parsonian approach to sociology, as described above. And, from a methodological point of view, an emic perspective traditionally comes in the form of ethnographic methods such as observation and interviews, which are believed to bring out participants' "authentic accounts of subjective experience" (Silverman 2001: 90).

However, a EM/CA interpretation of an emic perspective is not participants' *reported* point of view regarding a 'system', but the orientations which they display to one another through their observable actions within the situated activity being investigated (Schegloff 1992). That is, it is not only the participants' perspective

which is important, but their displayed perspective from within the sequential environment in which their actions are performed (Seedhouse 2005).

### 3.2.3 *Sequential context*

Underlying this approach is a theory regarding participants' treatment of their sequential environment, and how it is displayed. Heritage (2005) suggests that this theory involves three inter-related claims:

1. In producing an action, participants normally relate this action to a prior action, which is most commonly the immediately preceding action. As such, their action is shaped by its contextualised location within a sequence of actions. That is, it is *context-shaped*.
2. In performing this action, participants also make relevant a subsequent action (or one from a range of possible subsequent actions), which ought to be performed by an other. As such, their action creates a new context – it is *context-shaping*.
3. By producing an action, participants demonstrate (1) an understanding of the context which has been shaped by the preceding action, and (2) a competence in being able to perform the appropriate next action. Any third action will then confirm that this understanding is appropriate, or alternatively, will indicate that it was inappropriate. Through this process, mutual understanding between participants is shaped and displayed.

As such, Heritage (ibid.) points out, the sequential architecture of meaning making can be understood. Further, with this approach, CA simultaneously analyses participants' social actions, management of context, and mutual understanding, since the three are simultaneous and interwoven.

This 'context-boundedness' of social actions demonstrates the reflexive relationship between action and context. With regards to CA then, all talk-(and-other-conduct-)in-interaction can be seen as highly indexical. That is, no utterance is understood in and of itself, but rather understood in the environment in which it occurs. Similarly, no talk is intended to be understood in isolation – all actions, including talk, get their meanings on each occasion 'locally', through the contextual environment that participants' create and contextual understandings that they display (Kasper 2009b).

### 3.2.4 *Talk-extrinsic contexts*

At this point, it should be noted that CA's notion of context is not limited to that of sequence, as described above. A distinction should be made with what has variably been called 'interaction-external' (Kasper 2009b) or 'talk-extrinsic' (Mandelbaum 1990/1991) context. This is in line with a more 'traditional' understanding of context, and includes macro-social structures, such as gender, ethnicity, social class, etc., and also concerns what might be considered meso-social contexts, such as local circumstances or the relationship between interlocutors.

A piece of talk, or any social action for that matter, is not just produced in reaction to another piece of talk, but is produced *for* a specific individual, and *by* a specific individual (Sacks et al 1974). Each of these individuals bring with them their own biographies and identities, as well as some form(s) of social relationship towards one another. However, not all of these contextual factors are constantly relevant, and it is for the participants to demonstrate and display which contextual elements are being invoked, treated as relevant, at any given time.

Similarly, for an analyst following an EM/CA framework, it is not acceptable to externally determine which identities or contextual factors are relevant to an ongoing action or series of actions; it is for the analyst to unpack what contextual factors are being made 'procedurally consequential' (Schegloff 1991), and to what end.

### 3.2.5 *Normative accountability*

Participants in interaction understand social actions, such as talk, through their sequential (and other forms of) context, as has been discussed. But this is not the only way that actions are understood and interpreted; the orderly arrangement of actions is also *normatively* expected (Kasper 2009b). And it is by reference to these norms that members can design their own actions, as well as interpret those of others (Seedhouse 2004).

Normatively expected actions are not mechanical rules which must be followed, but rather points of reference or 'action templates' (Seedhouse 2004), against which actions can be interpreted. An action performed as normatively expected (such as an answer to a question) is typically 'seen but unnoticed', but failing to produce an expected action (for example, by not responding to a question), or producing an

unexpected action (by responding to a question with a question), may be treated as noticeable, accountable and sanctionable.

From an EM/CA perspective, then, social norms are socially shared presuppositions and expectancy frameworks that participants demonstrably orient to, both by acting in accordance with them, and by treating it as accountable when they are not acting in accordance with (Kasper 2009b).

This section has described some of the methods by which social members make sense of their world, accomplish their social activities and co-ordinate their joint conduct (Garfinkel 1967; Heritage 1984a). The following section will move to consider more specifically some of the structures through which spoken social interaction is organized.

## 3.3 Interactional Structures

Social interaction is organised through a series of 'intersecting machineries' (Sidnell 2010), four of the most central of which will be described in this section. It is important to note, as Seedhouse (2004) rightly emphasises, that these are not 'units of analysis' or 'rules' in the scientific sense. Rather, as has been explained above, they are interactional organisations which participants are able to draw upon when producing their own social actions and interpreting those of their interlocutor(s).

On an analytical level, these machineries have been uncovered by the empirically-grounded observations of CA researchers, and can be employed by those wishing to explore other interactional structures and/or other aspects of social interaction. They are included here in order to provide further insight into the kind of observations CA research has made, and also because they will be drawn upon in this study's analytic chapters which follow.

### 3.3.1 *Sequence organisation*

The machinery of sequence organisation is included first since, as will become apparent, it is most closely related to the EM principles – such as sequential context and normative accountability – described in the previous section.

Social actions are typically performed in junction with other actions – an acceptance does not occur without an offer, for example. In addition to this, actions can only be understood in their sequential environment. The organisation of grouped

actions have come to be described as 'action sequences', and are considered the building blocks of social interaction (Schegloff 2007).

The most basic form of action sequence is the 'adjacency pair', which may be considered an action sequence in its own right, or upon which larger action sequences can be built (Schegloff 1968).[18] Schegloff and Sacks (1973) describe four properties of adjacency pairs:

1. They occur adjacently to one another.
2. They are produced by different speakers.
3. They are ordered. One is a always a first pair part (FPP); the other always a second pair part (SPP). For a example, an invitation always occupies FPP position, while a refusal always occupies SPP position.
4. They are type-matched, such that a particular FPP makes relevant a particular, related, SPP. For an example, a offer FPP is type-matched to an acceptance or a refusal.

Further than this, a FPP makes 'conditionally relevant' an SPP. That is, when an FPP is produced, a type-matched SPP is normatively expected; if a type-matched SPP is not forthcoming, its absence is notable, and this may be accountable. For example, if a question is asked, an answer is expected. If the answer is not forthcoming, its absence may be sanctioned. Similarly, if the question is followed by another question, this may be hearable as a necessary precursor to the production of an answer to the first.

From this, it can be understood that this mechanism for understanding actions, and/or their absence, can be built outwards from adjacency pairs in the formation of quite complex action sequences.

### 3.3.2 *Turn-taking*

Underlying the achievement of the action sequences described above is the mechanism by which interactants are able to co-ordinate their turns at talk. This mechanism is endlessly managed 'locally'. In other words, transitions between speakers can be (at least in non-institutional settings) determined and organised *in situ,* as the talk progresses (Sacks et al 1974).

Turns at talk are made up of 'turn-construction units' (TCUs). These are defined not at a linguistic level (such as through words, clauses or sentences), but at the level

[18] For brevity, adjacency pairs will be addressed briefly here. A far more detailed exploration of the organisation of actions sequences can be found in Schegloff (2007).

of social action, such that a single TCU is defined as any meaningful utterance which completes a social action. As such, this can be anything from a single sound (e.g. 'huh?') to a lengthy explanation. When a participant engaged in talk has completed one such meaningful utterance, there is a space in which a transition to another speaker may take place. This space is described as a 'transition relevant place' (TRP).

The current speaker has the right to continue talking if they so wish, and produce another TCU. In the event that this occurs, no other interactant will choose to speak. Alternatively, current speaker, in their production of the TCU may choose to select the next speaker. In this event, the current speaker will stop speaking upon the end of their TCU. The third option available to a speaker is to not undertake another TCU nor to select a next-speaker. Under such circumstances, an other speaker can self-select, and the first to do so gains rights to the conversational floor. (Sacks et al 1974).

Turns at talk, and their exchanges are very carefully managed and precisely timed, such that, normatively, the is a minimisation of gap and overlap between turns. The overwhelming orientation to this on the part of participants at talk can be evidenced by how quickly simultaneously-produced turns at talk are halted (e.g. Jefferson 1973).

It is important to emphasise that a turn at talk can only be understood in its local sequential environment, in what it is being produced in response to. That is, a TCU is taken to be a single, meaningful utterance, not 'objectively', but for those participants, at that time. This again places the emic perspective of CA research at the forefront.

### 3.3.3 *Repair*

'Repair' refers to the practices which participants use for dealing with problems in speaking, hearing or understanding the ongoing talk (Schegloff et all 1977; Schegloff 1979, 1987, 1992, 1997). All of these problems related to, and impact upon, mutual understanding; for example, if one does not fix a problem with speaking, then a relevant response from an interlocutor may not be possible. Similarly, if one does not hear what has just been said, it is not possible to produce a relevant subsequent action.

Because of the importance of a state of mutual understanding for the progressivity of talk, and because of the importance of repair in resuming intersubjectivity when it is breached, repair as an action has been found to take

precedence over other actions (Schegloff 2000). It is so far believed to be the only interactional practice which has this property, which is evidence of the central importance of it in interaction.

Complete repair sequences comprise of three parts:

1. The source of the trouble which needs to be repaired (the trouble source, TS). This can potentially be any element of interaction – a syllable, a word, a turn at talk, or part thereof, etc. In fitting with the emic stance adopted by CA, 'trouble' is seen as from the participants' perspective. That is, anything is potentially 'repairable', or open to being treated as problematic by a participant at talk, whether it is 'objectively' a problem or not. Conversely, not all 'errors' will be treated as a trouble source, regardless of any 'objective' inaccuracy.
2. A repair-initiation (RI), by which a participant identifies some trouble with their own talk, or their interlocutors', talk. Repair can be initiated by the speaker of a TS (self-initiation of repair, SIR) or by another speaker (other-initiation of repair, OIR). As will be discussed in subsequent chapters, RIs can come in various 'strengths', depending on the extent to which they locate the source of trouble, and identify the kind of trouble (Schegloff 1997; Sidnell 2010).
3. The repair itself, with which the problem is attempted to be resolved. Repair can be conducted by the speaker of the TS (self-repair), or by another speaker (other-repair). The structure of repair is, of course, contingent upon the RI which precedes it, and so can take many forms.

Schegloff et al's (1977) seminal work on the repair mechanism, and its structure, uncovered an ordering of preference for repair, such that self-initiation of repair is preferred over other-initiation, and self-repair is preferred over other-repair. This notion of 'preference' is not intended in a psychological or emotional sense, but rather a sequential one. That is, self-initiation of repair is preferred (and so most common) because of position; the speaker of a TS is currently engaged in a turn at talk, and so has the first chance to initiate and execute repair within that same turn (Sidnell 2010), while another speaker has to await their turn at talk (or begin speaking while their interlocutor is still speaking, which brings with it some interactional problems which need to be dealt with).

These intersecting mechanisms of sequence organisation, turn-taking and repair can all be understood in relation to one another through the principle of progressivity. This rather lengthy quotation from Schegloff is included, as it is believed to capture the importance of progressivity to the organization of social interaction, as well as illustrate how it connects the principles – such as intersubjectivity, conditional relevance, sequential context – and mechanisms – sequence organization, turn-taking, and repair – which have been described so far:

> Among the most pervasively relevant features in the organization of talk-and-other-conduct in-interaction is the relationship of adjacency or "nextness", . . . Moving from some element to a hearably-next-one with nothing intervening is the embodiment of, and the measure of, progressivity. Should something intervene between some element and what is hearable as a/the next one due—should something violate or interfere with their contiguity, whether next sound, next word or next turn—it will be heard as qualifying the progressivity of the talk, and will be examined for its import, for what understanding should be accorded it. Each next element of such a progression can be inspected to find how it reaffirms the understanding-so far of what has preceded, or favors one or more of the several such understandings that are being entertained, or how it requires reconfiguration of that understanding. (Schegloff 2007: 14–15)

That is, through the organisation of sequences, next turns at talk are made conditionally relevant in that local, sequential context. In the event that a conditionally relevant next turn, or next action, is not forthcoming, interactants will assess why this has not occurred. Intersubjectivity, then, is built upon the engine of progressivity. In turn, if mutual understanding is breached, so too is the progression of the ongoing activity, so that the breach can be remedied. From here, then, mutual understanding and progressivity can be seen as the two major, central, principles which govern and organise social interaction.

Having now outlined many of the principles underlying the methodology of CA, this chapter will continue by addressing some of the practical and methodological issues of employing CA. This will be done by considering some of the issues pertaining to reliability, validity and generalisability in CA research.

### 3.4 Reliability, Validity and Generalisability in CA Research

As has become apparent from the discussions in this, as well as the preceding, chapters, a CA approach is a radical departure from most other forms of social scientific research. This section will attempt to positioning CA in relation to other

methodologies by explicitly addressing the reliability, validity and generalisability of the CA research process. Surprisingly, few researchers have attempted to directly engage in these matters, and so these discussions will be drawn almost exclusively from Seedhouse (2005).

### 3.4.1 *Reliability*

Seedhouse (2005) suggests that the primary issue with regards to reliability in CA research is pertaining to the recordings of the interactional episodes under analysis. How the recordings are selected, and their quality are crucial in ensuring a reliable study. Although no recording can capture everything which occurs, it is expected that recordings capture as much as possible. For example, cameras should, at the very least, capture all of the participants involved in any given interaction. If audio-only recordings are made of face-to-face encounters, then many (visual) aspects of such encounters will be unavailable for analysts to consider, and the end analysis may not be wholly reliable. This issue will be revisited with regards to the present study in Section 4.4.

The repeatability and replicability of analytic findings are central to the reliability of CA studies. If analysis is found to be solid, and other researchers achieve similar observations and findings, then reliability can be seen to be good.

Since audio/video recordings are seldom made available in conjunction with published CA research, the transcripts included in published reports are the only thing which can be scrutinised in order to test the quality of analyses. Naturally, this places a lot of importance on the quality of the transcript. Although transcripts are merely a representation of the data, and not the data itself, they should ideally provide as much information as possible from the recordings which they represent. Of course, this is not possible to test without access to the original recordings.

However, CA studies typically present a fine-detailed, thorough analysis, which can be pored over and scrutinised by other analysts, in order to check for logical and empirically-supported claims. In this sense then, the source of analysis, as well as the analytic process, is made available for the testing of reliability (Seedhouse 2005).

### 3.4.2 *Validity*

Seedhouse (2005) discusses four kinds of validity in relation to CA research: (1) internal validity, (2) ecological and (4) construct validity. Each of these will be briefly described presently.[19]

Internal validity relates to the credibility of the findings. That is, do the analytic claims fit the data upon which they are based? In order to ensure this, CA researchers strive to maintain the 'radically emic perspective' outlined in Section 3.2.2. In trying to make observations based upon participants' demonstrable orientations and understandings, internal validity is easily testable. The demonstrable relevance or, and procedural consequentiality of, talk-extrinsic contexts is also important here. Again, analysts are strict in ensuring that they only invoke social contexts or categories if they participants being analysed can be seen to demonstrably invoke those categories . Further, this must be seen to be consequential to the subsequent actions of that participant and/or his interlocutors (Schegloff 1991). Again, this form of validity can be tested by examination of the data by other analysts.

Ecological validity refers to whether analytic findings are applicable to the 'real' everyday, social world. This form of validity is normally concerned with social research which is conducted in experimental and/or laboratory-based settings, which may not be transferable. However, as has been mentioned, one of the key tenets of CA research is that it takes its data from naturally-occurring situations; that is, from settings and encounters which would have proceeded even if a camera was not recording. As such, CA research can be considered as ecologically valid. It should also be noted that on occasions when CA research takes its data from experimental settings, such data ought to be understood as just that. This in itself can produce interesting findings about how artificial settings are socially organised.

Finally, construct validity with regards to CA research adopts a complicated position. While in other forms of, particularly etic, social research, construct validity is concerned with the categories created and applied by the researcher, from an emic perspective, the 'constructs' refer to those of the participants being analysed. That is, as has been mentioned, the constructs which the participants demonstrably orient to in their social conduct are also the relevant constructs for the CA researcher. Again, this

[19] External validity is also included in this list by Seedhouse, but is addressed here under the heading of 'generalisability' in the next section.

is something which is testable by other researchers, by checking the empirical evidence of recorded social interaction.

### 3.4.3 *Generalisability*

Generalisability is concerned with the extent to which analytic observations can be generalised or applied to other settings beyond that of the research. Generalisability can often come in the form of quantification of social phenomena; this is a trend which has been criticised in the past. For example, Zimmerman and West (1975) conducted analyses of cross-gender 'interruptions' and conducted additional quantitative analyses to suggest that men interrupted women more frequently. This was heavily criticised by Schegloff, who suggested that such quantification ignores the individual differences which occur with every single episode analysed, and so undermines the entire CA research project (1987). Despite such criticisms, the quantification and generalisation of analytic observations still occur in some recent CA studies (see, e.g. Fox et al 2009; Stivers and Rossano 2010) and are still being levelled with the same criticisms by the same individual (see Schegloff 2009, 2010, respectively). One of the main criticisms levelled at the quantification of CA analyses is that it by necessity requires the labelling of social actions. This goes against the emic perspective of CA research, as the sequential environment in which those actions occur can no longer be considered (e.g. Schegloff 1993).

As Seedhouse (2005) points out, however, this is not to say that CA research can not talk of macro social issues beyond the micro-level details of social interaction. Indeed, those individual cases of social interaction are locally organised and understood by participants according to their general, normative expectations of the social world. In examining individual cases then, analysts can unpack what these general expectations and orientations are.

In the following section, some of these issues, particularly the lattermost, will be reconsidered in light of how they are formulated as criticisms of CA. Some defences against these criticisms will be made, although some of the limitations of the methodology are acknowledged.

### 3.5 Limitations and Criticisms of CA

In this section, some of the criticisms against CA as a research methodology will be discussed. Such criticisms are acknowledged and accepted, not least because no approach to social research is all-encompassing or flawless, and are included in the acknowledgement that CA has its limitations. However, these criticisms do not alter the position of the present study, which is that the methodology is the most appropriate way to approach and examine the organisation of any form of social interaction, including those conducted in an L2.

The principle criticism levelled at CA as a method for the investigation of the social world is that its micro-analytic lens is too narrow to be able to address broader, macro-social issues. Examples often cited as unreachable by CA are issues of power, as well as political issues pertaining to gender and ethnicity, for example. Along the same lines, the strict emic perspective applied in analysis has led to accusations of deliberately ignoring such obviously important factors.

As was pointed out in the previous section, it has been argued that CA *can* address broader social issues. For example, there is an ever-growing feminist CA movement (e.g. Kitzinger 2000, 2008; Stokoe 2006; Wowk 2007). This may, however, be more limited/controlled (depending on preference for strictly empirically-grounded research) in the sense that CA researchers can only address broader social issues if the relevance of such issues is demonstrably relevant to the participants involved in the data under analysis.

Another criticism is that CA research is too atheoretical, empiricist, or circumstantial. Extreme versions of this criticism have described the CA project as 'trivial' (see ten Have 1990). Along similar lines, CA has been accused of removing the humanity from sociological research through its obsession with the mechanism of talk and the "clacking of turns" (Moerman 1988: xi). This would appear to be a matter of opinion, while some may see CA as 'unsociological' (see Zimmerman and Boden 1991: 19), others question "what could be more sociological than the constitution of social action, and its implementation in interaction?" (Schegloff 1988: 99).

Finally, while CA advocates the position that all features of interaction are potentially relevant to participants in interaction, and so must be considered by the analysts of that interaction, it should be considered that, historically, CA has placed a disproportionate weight on the importance of talk (over, for example, bodily conduct

and social artefacts) in social interaction. However, this would appear to be a historical quirk of fate, since early CA research began with Sacks' analysis of telephone calls, due to the simple fact that that was the data available to him at the time. As technology has advanced, and allowed for better quality recordings of the visual elements of social interaction, such elements are increasingly being considered by CA researchers (e.g. Goodwin 1986, 2000, 2007; Goodwin and Goodwin 1986; Mondada 2008).

Despite such criticisms and limitations, it is felt that CA remains a powerful tool for the analysis of social interaction. The radically emic perspective which is necessarily, and strictly, adopted when employing this research methodology is seen not as a limitation to what can be discussed, but as a guide to what can appropriately be discussed based upon actual, empirical evidence. As such, it is seen as a guide and a resource for analysts in their endeavour to conduct solid, reliable and valid research.

### 3.6 Summary

Building on the literature review in the previous chapter, this chapter has introduced and presented an overview of the methodology which will was employed by much of the work discussed so far, and which will be employed to achieve the present study's research objectives.

In Section 3.1, the methodology of CA was introduced through three of its main principles. They are (1) that language is a vehicle for social actions, and so analysis of its occasioned use is in turn an analysis of social actions, a object of analysis which has come to be known as *talk-in-interaction*. Additionally, (2) this talk-as-social-action is not 'too messy' to be investigated, but is deeply ordered, and organised through a series of mechanisms. Finally, (3) this ordered talk creates and maintains mutual understanding, or intersubjectivity, for participants through their ongoing displayed interpretation of one another's actions.

In Section 3.2, these principles were unpacked further and related to CA's 'intellectual parent', EM. The origins of EM were introduced in order to provide an understanding of what it emerged in reaction to, and so what its research aims are. In this section, further principles central to EM and CA were outlined, including the

emic perspective, sequential context, talk-extrinsic context and normative accountability.

Following this, some of the central interactional structures which CA research has uncovered were described. The structures described – sequence organisation, turn-taking and repair – were outlined as they are considered central to the analysis and discussions which will follow. Additionally, the relationship between these intersecting machineries through their relationship to, and through, the principle of interactional 'progressivity' was discussed.

In the latter stages of this chapter, CA as a methodology was considered in relation to other research methodologies through a brief consideration of how research concepts of reliability, validity and generalisability fare in CA research. Additionally, some criticisms and limitations of the approach were described. Despite these limitations, it is argued that CA is the most appropriate methodology for the investigation of the organisation of social interaction and mutual understanding, which the present study takes as its central focus.

In the following chapter, the research methodology will be considered again, this time in a more grounded manner, as the research process of CA will be explicated through a description of how the present study was conducted. This will begin with a description of the research setting, before outlining the process of data collection, transcription and analysis.

# Chapter 4. Research Design

## 4.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, the methodological principles and theoretical position of conversation analysis (CA) were presented. This chapter will (1) describe the setting in which the study takes place, as well as (2) explain how the methodology was put into practice for the current study.

The description of the research setting begins in Section 4.2, in which the organisation of the chat rooms and their participation is explained. Following this, a brief overview of the participants will be presented in Section 4.3.

Sections 4.4, 4.5 and 4.6 are concerned with methodological procedure which was undertaken in the present study. In Section 4.4, the process of data collection will be described. This section will also include a consideration of ethical issues pertaining to the recording of participants. In Section 4.5, the process of transcription will be outlined, and this will include a consideration of the transcription of the talk of second language (L2), which may be considered as varied. Finally, in Section 4.6, the process of data analysis will be described. From that point, the process which led to the subsequent chapters' analyses will have been fully explicated.

## 4.2 Research Setting

As has been mentioned, the context for this research is online, multiparty, voice-based English language chat rooms. The data corpus was collected from a Skype-enabled chat room service, known as 'Skypecasts'. In this section, both Skype and the Skypecast chat rooms will be described.

Skype is an online software program which allows its users to make voice (or video) calls over the internet (a service know as voice over internet protocol, or VoIP). The service was founded in 2003, and is now a common way for many businesses and individuals around the world to communicate with others. As of the beginning of 2011, there were a reported 520 million Skype accounts, with around 23 million users simultaneously online at peak times (Skype 2011a). Skype users need nothing more than an internet connection and microphone to set up an account, with which they choose a username and opt whether to be listed on a public register of

Skype users. Those who chose not to be listed can still be located by others users through a search service. All Skype account holders are able to make Skype-to-Skype calls for free, and are able to make calls and send SMS messages to landlines and mobile telephone lines around the world at low rates. Skype-to-Skype calls can also incorporate webcam and instant messaging (IM).

In addition to its telephone-style, one-to-one, voice and video calls, Skype has offered some other services in its seven-year history. One such service was Skypecasts, which was available from late 2006 until 1 September 2008, when it was closed down for unspecified reasons (Skype 2011b).[20] Skypecasts allowed any Skype user to set up, and participate in, multiparty voice-based chat rooms. The user who set up the chat room, or Skypecast, was known as the room's 'host'. The host of a Skypecast could give a title, description and keywords to the room s/he created, and specify a start time and date. All forthcoming Skypecasts were listed on a listings webpage, and users could search through the listings by start time, title, keywords, etc. Users could also search for, and join, any Skypecasts currently open. Figure 4.1 below shows the Skypecasts listings webpage.

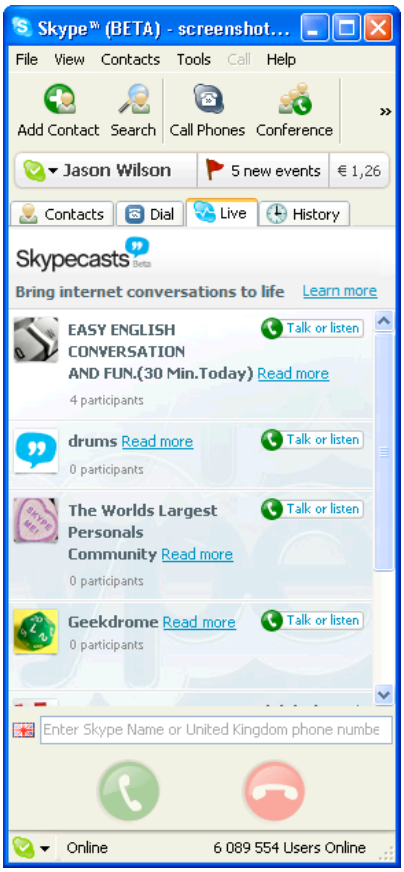
**Figure 4.1 Skypecasts webpage screenshot**


When a user found a Skypecast in which they wished to participate, they could simply click the 'Join this Skypecast' link (indicated by the broken red lines). As an alternative to using a web browser to search for Skypecasts, users could browse all currently open Skypecasts through their Skype software program, and join in by

[20] The term 'Skypecasts' is used in the singular by the company who created it, and so it is used in the same manner in the present study.

clicking on the 'Talk or listen' button. Figure 4.2 shows how the chat room listings appeared through a user's account.

**Figure 4.2 Skypecasts 'Live public conversations' listings screenshot**




Skypecasts had three levels of participation. Once a user had joined a Skypecast, they were entered into the 'listening room', in which they were able to listen to the on-going chat, but not verbally participate in it. They were also able to view the profiles of other chat room participants and send and receive personal IMs. If the Skypecast participant wished to contribute verbally to the chat, they could click on an 'Ask to talk' button, which allowed them to move into the 'waiting room'. This informed the others that this participant wished to talk. From that point, the host could grant permission for participants to move from the 'waiting room' into the 'speaking room', in which they were then able to participate verbally in the ongoing talk.

Figure 4.3 below shows an example of what a user would see on their Skype software program once they joined a Skypecast. The names next to the green icon are the list of participants present, with the host's username in bold (and circled in red here). Participants could check others' profiles and send IMs by right-clicking on the

relevant username. The host was able to promote users into the speaking room, or even remove them from the Skypecast, by right-clicking on their username and choosing the relevant action from a list of options. Participants could leave the Skypecast at any time by clicking on the red button, bottom-centre of their screen.

**Figure 4.3 Skypecast screenshot**

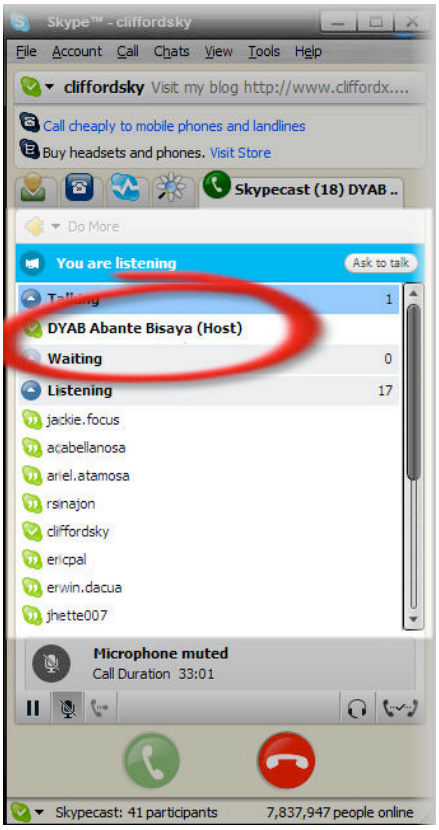



Figure 4.2, shown previously, also gives an indication of the kinds of Skypecasts that were available to participate in. There were many popular topics and themes, ranging from religion, politics and popular culture to sport, online dating, chess, and even Skypecasts themselves. As has been mentioned in earlier chapters, the Skypecasts which this study investigates were those themed around English language practise or improvement, an example of which would be the first listed on the screenshot at figure 4.2 ('EASY ENGLISH CONVERSATION AND FUN').

Some other example titles, keywords and descriptions for Skypecasts set up for the practice/improvement of English language use are shown in the table below. These rooms, among others, were recorded, transcribed and analysed in the present research project.

**Figure 4.4 Skypecasts set up for English language practice**

| Title | Keywords | Description |
|---|---|---|
| To ALL ThE PeOpLe In ThE WoRlD, CoMe In To HaVe A GoOd PoLiTe ChAT (EnGLiSh) | Pakistan | DoNt Be Shy ,CoME In To PraTiCE UR EnGlIsH |
| let's talk english | - | - |
| English ...COMMUNICATION Practice!! | english communication practice | English communication practice |
| TALK AND PRACTICE UR ENGLISH | Learning | - |
| Make new friends around the world, only in english | improve practice talk friends english | - |
| speak, improve your english, (only english) you are welcome | - | - |
| Practice your English and have fun | - | - |

Only chat rooms with some mention of English language practice, improvement or learning in the title, keywords or description were recorded for this study. As can be seen in figure 4.4, the title was indicative enough on many occasions. However, in some cases it was the keywords which informed users that the chat room was set up with the purpose of English language practice in mind (see 'Make new friends around the world, only in english' as an example).

## 4.3 Participants

Despite the stated orientation towards use of English as an L2 in the chat rooms, some of the participants in the recordings were L1 users of English. Judging by accents, dialects and self-disclosures, participants originated from various English-speaking countries, including the UK, the US, South Africa and Singapore. Naturally, L2 speaking participants were from a huge variety of national backgrounds, including countries from Europe, South America, East Asia, North Africa and the Middle East.

From a purely observational perspective, the proficiencies of the L2 users appeared to vary hugely. Many participants displayed no trouble in their use of

English, while others demonstrably struggled at times, asking for help from others whom they considered more able. Stated goals for wanting to improve their standard of English were as varied as the participants themselves; fun, work, study and relocation to an English-speaking country were among the reasons mentioned during participants talk with one another. Participants' ages were seldom announced, although it is estimated that ages ranged from late teens to late sixties.

Again, there was no influence or active participation by the researcher during data collection, and so all background information regarding the participants was obtained during their ongoing talk with one another. The absence of detailed demographic information regarding the participants was not deemed problematic, as the methodological approach to the study deems that contextual information is only relevant to analysis when it is demonstrably oriented to by the participants. Since the participants were not acquainted prior to their interactions during recording, the only shared contextual information available to them was that that made available *by* them. This was then also available to the researcher.

### 4.4 Data Recording and Ethical Considerations

This study includes two corpora of data. The first was recorded by a colleague between 30 April and 21 May 2007. The second set were recorded between 28 May and 22 June 2008. A total of 32 recordings were made, resulting in almost 24 hours of recorded interaction. Individual Skypecast recordings ranged from 15 minutes to just over 2 hours in length.

Skypecast listings were searched, relevant chat rooms were located, and the start dates and times noted. Upon joining the listening room of a Skypecast, permission to record was obtained from those present. At no point after obtaining permission to record did anyone involved in the study speak or request to speak. None of the participants were contacted or communicated with, other than later-joining participants, who were sent an IM in order to inform them of the recording and to request their permission to be recorded. None of the excerpts included in this study involve any researcher, save for one which is taken from the original corpus (and is indicated as such at the point of its presentation). When recordings were being made, the non-descript username 'Skypecastfan' was used. This non-participatory role was

intentional, in order to ensure that researcher influence on the interaction was a minimal as possible, thus ensuring the interaction was as 'natural' as possible (see the discussion in Section 3.1 on the principles of CA).

Even if participants were cognizant of their being recorded, any assumption of an 'observer's paradox' – the belief that participants behave differently when the subject of sociological investigation – would be deemed not entirely problematic to the present study. As Goodwin (1981) points out, all participants at talk, whether recorded, observed or neither, behave as if they are being observe. That is, they organise their talk and social conduct in terms of those around them. Further than this, the object of this study is how participants maintain and manage their mutual understanding, and this could be analysed even if/when participants talk about the experience of being recorded. As Hosoda (2006) puts it, in such cases "the structural organisation of [participants'] interaction remains unaffected (p. 30).

During recording, all spoken interaction between participants was captured. However, it was not possible to obtain access to participant's private IMs to one another. This was not considered to be wholly problematic in the analysis of interaction, as this placed the researcher in the same position as the participants, that is, in having access only to the knowledge that was public to the room. In other words, messages were private between sender and receiver, and remained so unless one of them made information regarding the exchange publicly available through their verbal conduct (which did occur on occasion, as will be shown throughout Chapter 7).

Of course, it was not possible to have access to what each individual Skypecast participant was doing in their own home as they were connected to the chat room. As such, it was not always possible to understand what some sounds, actions (or lack of), etc. were in response to, or caused by. Again, all that was available was that which was publicly available to the Skypecast room. Anything else – such as whether a participant is reading emails, looking out of his/her window, eating something, etc. – can not be known. This may be seen as a limitation of the study, although a counter-argument to that has been presented. In addition, it should be acknowledged that no investigation of naturally-occurring social life can be all-encompassing; in the words of Sacks:

> The tape-recorded materials constituted a 'good enough' record of what happened. Other things, to be sure, happened, but at least what was on the tape had happened. (1984: 26)

Recordings were made using *Pamela*, a Skype-certified software program. Once installed, Pamela automatically records all verbal exchanges made through Skype. Prior to the commencement of this, Pamela plays a verbal message, announcing to all participants that recording will begin. In addition, all participants are sent a written message. This message was edited from its original version, specifying that the recordings were being made in order to "conduct research on Skypecast conversations". Any participants who joined the Skypecast after recording had begun were also informed by written message. Only on one occasion did a participant object to being recorded. This participant joined in after recording had begun, and recording was immediately stopped upon his objection.

Another consideration for the privacy of the participants is the anonymisation of usernames. Although participants typically adopted a pseudonym for their Skype username, this was at times ambiguous. Similarly, there were times within the spoken exchange when 'real' names were used. As such, all names used in this thesis are neither the username nor real name of any of the participants.

During recordings, and in subsequent listenings, notes were made regarding some demographic information of the participants, such as their nationality. This was done in order to aid in identifying which voice belonged to which interactant. Additional notes were made, particularly in later listenings in order to highlight points of potential interest.

### 4.5 Data Transcription

Large amounts of the 24 hours of recorded interaction were listened to through Audacity, an audio software program, and transcribed into Microsoft Word documents. All transcriptions follow the CA conventions first established and developed by Gail Jefferson (see Appendix A). Jefferson wrote extensively on the importance and significance of the transcript to the research process (e.g. 1983a, 1985, 1996, 2004), as too has ten Have (e.g. 2002; 2007, chapter 6). Readers wishing to understand transcription, particularly within CA, in more detail are advised to begin with their work. This section will present a short discussion of the transcription process, and briefly address some issues within it which are of particular relevance to this present study.

A transcript is widely acknowledged as a representation of the data, not the data itself. Audio and/or visual recordings are the data, and should be used as such in the analysis. ten Have (2002) proposed the following model for process of conducting research into spoken interaction:

> Original (inter-)action → *recording* → (audio/video-)record → *transcription* → transcript → (action) *understanding* → procedural *analysis* → analytical argument

At each of the italicised stages, ten Have argues, the previous 'version' is reconceptualised to some extent, and something is inevitably lost. Despite this (and acknowledging it), this process appears to be the best practically available, and transcripts are a necessity.

There are a number of reasons for converting a recording of spoken interaction into a written form. The most obvious of which is the practical dissemination of information, for example in academic publications and/or theses. Data obviously needs to be represented within the article or chapter in which it is being discussed. The other most important benefits of transcribing are more related to analysis, and were explained in typically succinct style by Sacks, as he explained how he began the CA enterprise:

> I started to work with tape-recorded conversations. Such materials had a single virtue, that I could replay them. I could transcribe them somewhat and study them extendedly - however long it might take. (1984: 26)

In other words, once a transcript is converted into written form, it is easier to pore over small parts of the data, be it one turn or even one lexical item. An analyst can 'freeze' the data, as it were (ten Have 2007). Additionally, it is the process of transcribing, as much as the product, which is vital to data analysis. Spending hours listening to recordings, and carefully considering exactly what is happening, and how best to represent it, is the best way to become familiar with the data, and of noticing the 'seen but (otherwise) unnoticed' (cf. Garfinkel, e.g. 1967).

Different approaches to spoken discourse analysis naturally transcribe the object of analysis in different ways, and to different degrees of detail. The stated stance of most CA practitioners is that a transcript should include as much detail as possible, as nothing can be determined to be irrelevant *a priori*, be it a pause of one-tenth of a second, an audible in-breath before speaking, a cut-off mid-word, or something else seemingly insignificant at first glance (see, for example, Jefferson's 1985 discussion

on particles of laughter for an excellent example of how minute details should not be glossed over if an accurate understanding of an interaction is desired).

However, in reality, many CA researchers transcribe to different levels of detail, some even only including orthographic transcriptions. Each analyst, then, has to decide how much detail they are willing to transcribe in (and, it could be argued, justify this). Conversation analytic principles clash to some extent with real-life practicalities and, in the case of this project, transcribing over 24 hours of data in minute detail could take many months. As such, a decision was made to do a 'rough' transcription in the first instance. At that stage, spoken utterances were transcribed, as well as some other, obviously notable, features. Further details were added after multiple hearings of shorter segments considered potentially relevant to the research topic (see Section 4.6 for a further discussion of this).

In addition to indications of who speaks, and in what order, the main features which ought to be represented in a detailed CA transcript could be crudely split into vocal (including words as spoken – with indications of pace, sound stretches, stresses, changes in pitch, intonation and volume – and non-lexical sounds) and temporal (such as pauses within a speaker's turn, gaps between two speaker's turns, and overlapping of two speaker's turns).[21]

One issue of contention, which is of particular relevance to this study, is that of transcribing 'words as spoken'. Accurately converting a vocal sound into the written form can inevitably misrepresent how it originally sounded. Of course, short of using phonetics in transcripts (which would make reading impossible for the many researchers not trained in phonetics), the extent to which the transcribed item can, and should, match the 'correct' written form or the sounds as it was made is down to the transcriber's interpretation. Jefferson argued on a number of occasions (e.g. 1983a, 1996, 2004) that 'pronunciational particulars' should be transcribed as such, simply because they are there, and may ultimately prove to be significant. At the same time, she acknowledged that transcribing such 'particulars' could be interpreted as "'comic book' and/or stereotyped renderings" (2004: 15). Transcribing marked pronunciation can led to a caricaturised representation of some speakers, not least when that speaker is using a second language. Similarly, a transcriber must be careful to transcribe what

[21] In other interactional contexts, non-verbal features, such as gaze, gestures and interaction with artefacts, may also be represented in transcripts (either by verbal description or with imagery), but as the context for this research is voice-only, online interaction, this was neither necessary nor possible.

they have heard, rather than what they believe to hear based upon the speaker's linguistic identity.[22]

With regards to this project's data, which hugely involves speakers using English as their additional language, a decision was made to mark pronunciation carefully, in particularly when pronunciation appeared to become an issue for those involved at that time. This is not intended to offer a judgement on the 'accuracy' of any speaker's pronunciation, but rather, in the spirit of Jefferson, an attempt to reflect what was said, and how it was said.

### 4.6 Data Analysis

As stated earlier, analysis began as early as the initial, 'live', listenings, when observations of interesting episodes were recorded in note form. This continued with subsequent listenings, and also into the transcription process. At the preliminary transcription stage, familiarity with the data increased, and an informal analysis continued. At these stages, observations made without any particular research focus consciously in mind. This is in fitting with one of the main principle of CA – that of 'unmotivated' looking. While it has been argued (e.g. Psathas 1990) that all looking is motivated, otherwise the looking wouldn't be done at all, the idea is that one looks 'openly', without any particularly interest of focus prior to the exploratory analysis.

Sacks (1984) argued that approaching data without any without any specific interest is beneficial in two related ways: (1) analysis will not be overly subjective, leading the researcher to 'find' what they hope to find and (2) some other, equally interesting, discovery will not be missed out in. This principle obviously came at a time in which the CA enterprise was still emerging. And while it is still a principle worthy of acknowledging, it might not work now quite as it did now. First of all, any researching using CA now has a body of over 30 years of research to build upon, to work with. One cannot help but be guided, willingly or otherwise, by what has come before. Secondly, and as a result of the first reason, CA is increasingly being applied to specific settings, with which comes specific practical and/or professional motivations. For example, being a research student in a department of applied

[22] Jefferson (1996) illustrated this empirically by showing how one transcription of a conversation between a Dane and a German talking in English resulted in multiple representations of the item 'of' as 'off', whereas her own hearing and subsequent transcript resulted in seven different variants of pronunciation for the same item. She argued that this was evidence of 'transcriptional stereotyping'.

linguistics – working with staff and students interested in the teaching, learning and use of additional languages, and becoming part of a worldwide community of researchers interested in this area – naturally colours ones analytic glasses. In acknowledging this, it is hoped that its effect was minimalised.

An 'open'/'unmotivated' exploratory analysis of this corpus of data resulted in observations about many issues, including (1) participants' joining and leaving of the chat rooms, (2) issues of second language use, (3) generation of talk, (4) the achievement of intersubjectivity, (5) unacquainted parties getting acquainted, (6) the interculturality of the interaction. Although a number of these points of interest will be explored at other times, it was felt best to keep the focus around that which existed when the research setting was initially selected: the exploration of if, and how, language 'practice' manifests itself in interaction. As was mentioned in Section 1. 4, is appears that the participants treat 'practising' English as simply speaking English. This matter will be considered again in the following section (4.7).

Despite this, observations (which will make up most of Chapters 5-7) led to the position that some phenomena pertaining to the maintenance, preservation and resumption of mutual understanding were, at least in part, shaped by the 'not-yet-fully-proficient-English-speaking' nature of the environment (as well as the online, voice-only nature of the setting). As such, and with a relative knowledge of the research on second language talk, and a desire to contribute something to that field, within this context, a decision was made to explore those observations in more detail. Once this general interest had been identified, some interesting interactional and/or sequential phenomena were specified, collections of similar occurrences could be built up, and differences and similarities between each case could be noted.

At all stages of the analytic process – the exploratory stage, the building up of collections, and the formation of ideas based upon assembled collections – analyses and ideas are typically shared with researchers with similar methodological and contextual interests. Two common ways to share data, and to discuss ideas in progress, are data sessions and conference presentations. Sharing one's work-in-progress and analytic ideas is surely important to all disciplines and methodologies across academia. However, it pays a particularly prominent role in the CA research process. First of all, this is a useful way to obtain alternative ideas and interpretations of the data, particularly as data sessions and conferences often bring together people

from assorted disciplines and methodological backgrounds. Secondly, as mentioned in Section 3.2.2, CA researchers strive to provide an emic analysis of the data, and as such, the element of individual researcher interpretation must be as limited as possible. In this sense, it is helpful for a researcher to put forward one's analysis-in-progress, and allow it to be scrutinized by peers who can bring a 'fresh' eye to the data, ensuring that what the analyst offers is not an individual 'interpretation', but "sharable and shared understandings which can… be analysed in procedural terms" (ten Have 2007: 140).

When analysis is presented, such as it is in the following section and throughout Chapters 5-8, it is produced alongside transcripts of the data analysed (see Section 4.4). Although such transcripts are representations of the data, they allow for readers to assess the quality and accuracy of the analysis being offered. This openness to analytic scrutiny is another of the strengths of the CA approach to empirical research.

## 4.7 Summary

In this chapter, the setting of online, multiparty, voice-based English language chat rooms has been described, in terms of its organisational set up (Section 4.2), as well as the makeup of the participants who attended the rooms (Section 4.3).

Additionally, how data from this research setting was selected and collected was described in Section 4.4. The process of data transcription, and its importance to the CA approach, was discussed in Section 4.5, and data analysis procedures were considered in Section 4.6.

Having now explained the setting and the process of data collection and analysis, it is appropriate to move on to report the outcomes of the analysis. This will be done over the course of the following three chapters, before the overall analytic findings will be discussed in Chapter 8.

# Chapter 5. Ensuring Mutual Understanding When an Other Initiates Repair

## 5.1 Introduction

The data analysis chapters that follow will examine how participants manage and maintain mutual understanding in the setting of online, multiparty chat rooms. The phenomena explored were selected as worthy of detailed analysis because (1) on early analyses, they appeared to be organised differently than expectations, and previous research, suggest they might be organised in other settings, and (2) the sequences appear to be shaped, at least in part, by the constraints and affordances of the interactional setting, as well as the participants' awareness of themselves and their interlocutors as not-yet-fully-proficient L2 speakers.

It will be argued that, when faced with some form of unspecified trouble in the talk, participants in the chat rooms put in some extra interactional work in order to allow for the possibility of trouble in understanding, even if such trouble in understanding is not explicitly apparent. In so doing, any issues in understanding do not become exposed. This, it will be argued, suggests an extra sensitivity to threats to intersubjectivity on the part of the participants.

In this chapter, the specific focus is on sequences of other-initiated self-repair (OISR) when the kind of trouble is not specifically identified. In the following chapter, the focus will be on sequences in which an absent response is treated an problematic. The chapters will also consider the extent to which the constraints of the interactional setting factor into the trouble. Finally, the third analysis chapter will examine how the interactional setting affords the participants with a means of dealing with trouble when attempts to resolve it through the talk prove unsuccessful.

As was discussed in Section 3.3.3, other-initiated repair (OIR) is used by an interactant in order to display trouble in hearing or understanding of a (usually just) prior utterance, or part thereof, by another speaker. It typically (although not always) projects repair by the speaker of the trouble-source-containing utterance, i.e. 'self-repair' (Schegloff *et al* 1977). This will be discussed in greater detail at relevant points throughout the chapter.

It is not being claimed that the kind of OISR sequences in this chapter are exclusive to the setting of voice-based English language practice chat rooms.

However, these kinds of OISR sequences do occur with some frequency in the data corpus. Additionally, although they have been found to occur in language classroom settings (e.g. Mehan 1979), they appear to be atypical in 'ordinary' conversation (which has been accepted by the CA research community to be non-institutional, 'mundane' conversation between adults speaking in their mother tongue), or even in many other interactional settings or contexts.

The following section (5.2) will examine sequences involving what Drew (1997) has labelled 'open class' repair initiations (OCRIs, which include "*huh?*", "*what?*", "*sorry?*", and "*pardon?*"). Section 5.3 will deal with 'partial repeat + "what?"' repair initiations (e.g. "*can I pass you the what?*") and Section 5.4 will focus on 'candidate hearing/understanding' repair initiations ("*how old am I, did you say?*"). All of these forms of repair initiation (RI) are typically treated as a display of a problem in hearing (as opposed to understanding) in their subsequent repair. This has been described as 'trying the easiest solution first' (e.g. Pomerantz 1984a; Svennevig 2008), since problems in hearing are considered less complicated to remedy, and less potentially sensitive, than are problems in understanding. However, in the majority of the cases examined in this chapter, the speaker of the trouble-source repairs in a manner which remedies any potential problem in hearing *or* understanding. This, it will be argued, is an example of the kind of 'extra work' put in by the interlocutors in these chat rooms in order to maintain mutual understanding.

## 5.2 'Open Class' Repair Initiation Sequences

The focus of this section is sequences from the corpus which involve what Drew (1997) has labelled 'open class' repair initiators (OCRIs), such as "*huh?*", "*what?*", "*sorry?*", and "*pardon?*". Such forms of repair initiation (RI) have been described as the 'weakest' form, as they do not identify what component(s) of the trouble-source turn should be repaired, nor whether the trouble is with regards to hearing or understanding, only that its producer has had some trouble with another speaker's just prior turn (Schegloff et al 1977).[23] Despite their open-endedness, OCRIs are typically

[23] Schegloff (e.g. 1997) has also described such RIs as the 'strongest' form of repair initiation, in the sense that their deployment requires nothing more than that their user knows a turn was directed towards them. However, it is felt that this description is less convincing. Additionally, having two descriptions of RIs which directly contradict eachother is potentially confusing. As such, for this study, OCRIs will be described only as 'weak'.

treated as a problem in hearing, and result in a repeat, or a slightly modified repeat, of the trouble-source turn by its original speaker (Schegloff 1997).

Excerpt 5.01 is taken from this study's corpus. It is felt an appropriate starting point for a number of reasons: (1) it serves as an example of 'typical' OCRI sequences in order to (2) juxtapose them against other forms of OCRI sequences to be found in this corpus, and to be discussed subsequently. This 'typical' sequence is also included to demonstrate that, while the other sequences presented might be considered 'atypical', there is no claim that they are the only form of OCRI sequences to be found in the corpus.

Prior to the beginning of this excerpt, Ryan and Danny (who are L1 speakers of English) talked at length about DNA and genetic manipulation, as well as religion and politics. Although other participants are present in the speaking room, they did not verbally contribute to the discussion. As such, Ryan and Danny attempted to make the others accountable for their non-participation, by 'naming and shaming' them. In response to this, Hal interjected by explaining that the L2 English users present found Ryan and Danny's topics of discussion too difficult to follow. In order to accommodate Hal's complaint, at line 1, Ryan offers Hal the chance to propose a new topic.[24]

**Excerpt 5.01** *what would you like to talk about*
(8) 15 March 2007 [1:13:34 – 1:14:09]

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| TS | 1 | Ryan: | what would [ you]= |
| | 2 | Danny?: | [(i-)] |
| TS | 3 | Ryan: | =like to talk ↑about |
| | 4 | | (1.5) |
| RI | 5 | Hal: | ↑what |
| R | 6 | Ryan: | what would you <like to talk |
| R | 7 | | ↑about> |
| | 8 | | (1.1) |
| | 9 | Hal: | ↑about a simple=er: (0.6) subject |
| | 10 | | (0.4) ah::, l- like er our er:: |
| | 11 | | (2.9) °er::: some subject |
| | 12 | | *i:: don't ↑know: |
| | 13 | | (2.0) |
| | 14 | Ryan: | where are [you from] |
| | 15 | Hal: | [ (* **) ] |
| | 16 | | (0.8) |
| | 17 | Hal: | i am from Algeria. |
| | 18 | | (0.9) |
| | 19 | Danny: | ↑yea:s |
| | 20 | | (.) |
| | 21 | Hal: | a- (0.2) I am [ from algeria] |

[24] In this excerpt, as in other excerpts, the trouble-source turn is indicated by 'TS', the repair initiation is indicated by 'RI', and the repair outcome is indicated by 'R'.

```
    22    Danny:                  [*- tell us ab]out
    23              your country
    24    Hal:      i am from ↑algeria
    25              (0.8)
TS  26    Ryan:     tell u- tell us about your c-
TS  27              country
    28              (1.5)
 R  29    Hal:      ↑what
    30              (1.1)
RI  31    Ryan:     tell us about your country.
```

Problems in hearing because of overlaps have been found to occasion OCRIs (Schegloff, 1997) and this may be the case at lines 1-5. Ryan asks Hal to proffer a topic of discussion ("`what would [ you] like to talk ↑about`", lines 1 and 3), which is overlapped in the middle with an unidentifiable utterance by Hal (line 2). This overlap is followed by a lengthy pause, as is often the case when interactants overlap one another's talk in this setting (Jenks 2009b). Hal then initiates repair with "`↑what`" (line 5). Regardless of whether the overlap was the cause of Hal requiring repair, Ryan repeats the entire trouble-source, producing the entire turn more slowly the second time, and with an almost 'foreigner talk'-like delivery (lines 6-7).

A similar outcome results from the second repair sequence, at lines 26-31. Having established that Hal is from Algeria, Ryan suggests that Algeria be the topic of discussion ("`tell u- tell us about your c- country`", lines 26-27). Again, after a lengthy pause (1.5 seconds, line 28) comes an OCRI from Hal, "`↑what`" (line 29). And the repair which follows is a repeat of the entire trouble-source turn, although delivered without the restart and cut-off, which are present in the first saying.

It is possible that language identities are being oriented to in this excerpt. Ryan's change in delivery of the trouble-source turns may be due to Hal's status as an English language novice, a status that he himself has recently made explicitly relevant by explaining that he is not yet competent enough to participate in the topics previously being discussed. Similarly, Ryan may be avoiding topicalising Hal's linguistic (in)competence further by offering explicit explanations or reformulations of the turn containing the source of the trouble (i.e. 'trouble source turn', TST). Regardless of linguistic (or any other) identities, in both repair sequences in this excerpt, an OCRI is followed by an exact lexical repeat of the trouble-source turn. Again, previous research strongly suggests that this is typical in such sequences.

However, in this corpus, there are many examples which do not follow this structure. Excerpt 5.02 will begin to illustrate this; Adendo and Fidel are getting acquainted, and have just been discussing the current time at their respective locations (China and Japan).

**Excerpt 5.02** *bed*
(28) 2 June 2008 [1:35:55 – 1:36:18]

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| TS | 1 | Adendo: | when would you:: g- *u::h* go to |
| TS | 2 | | b- go to bed (.) yoos- usuary |
| | 3 | | (3.0) |
| RI | 4 | Fidel: | ↑pardon (.) w- what.=heh |
| | 5 | | (1.4) |
| R | 6 | Adendo: | u::h when, (0.4) u::h (0.5) when |
| R | 7 | | di- when do you, (.) go to bed |
| R | 8 | | hhh go to ↑bed (0.3) go to ↑sleep |
| | 9 | | (0.7) |
| | 10 | | usuary= |
| | 11 | Fidel: | =↑o::h go °tuh°, (0.6) U:::H ↑yeah |
| | 12 | | (.) aroun', you know u::h twelve oh |
| | 13 | | clock i ↓mean huh=heh |

At lines 1-2, Adendo asks Fidel what his typical bedtime is. As with Ryan's question at the end of Excerpt 5.01, this is delivered with some trouble – in the middle of Adendo's turn, there is an elongation ("you::"), a 'false start' ("g-") and some verbalised 'thinking' ("*u::h*"). This may be indicative of what Firth (2009b) labelled 'flagging for markedness'. That is, this disfluency on the part of Adendo may display to his interlocutor an uncertainty with regards to what is to follow. Whether this is the case or not, what follows does include some further disfluency, in the form of self-repairs ("go to b- go to bed" and "yoos- usuary", lines 1-2). In fact, the final production of the latter, "usuary", is still somewhat marked or non-standard, which may cause the trouble for Fidel. Fidel initiates repair at line 4 with two OCRIs, then second of which ends with a small laugh (perhaps included as a face-saving device).

In Adendo's subsequent repair, even more production trouble is displayed, and he appears to break the trouble source turn down into 'chunks' – his turn begins with more verbalised 'thinking', before a stressed "when,", which is followed by a 0.4 second pause (lines 6-7). Another "u::h" and a 0.5 second pause precede his second 'chunk', with a self-repair from "when di-" to "when do you,". Adendo's repair is then completed with two utterances of 'go to bed', the first with emphasis on the final word ("go to bed"), then second with a TCU final upwards intonation on it "go to

↑bed" (lines 7-8). Sacks and Schegloff (1979) described such a TCU-final intonation as 'try-marking', and suggested that it may be used as a display of uncertainty regarding the accuracy or appropriacy of the item which is try-marked.

In summarising this turn up to this point, although no claims can be made here regarding Adendo's internal thinking, it can be said that he produces a slow, considered re-working-through of the trouble-source turn.

At this transition relevance place (Sacks et al 1974), and with his repair ostensibly complete, Adendo could leave it to Fidel to respond. However he does not afford Fidel the time to do so; after a 0.3 second pause (line 9), which is a relatively short turn-transition time in this interactional setting, Adendo self-repairs/reformulates to "go to ↑sleep", with an upwards intonation and stress on the final word, which replaces 'bed' (line 10). This may suggest that Adendo has determined his use of the phrase 'go to bed', or perhaps even the item 'bed' itself, to be the source of Fidel's trouble.

Again with his turn potentially complete, and after a further 0.7 second silence (line 11), Adendo adds another element – "usuary" (line 12) – to his repair. This turn increment (Schegloff 1996) is latched with Fidel's response, which is an "=↑o::h" change-of-state token (Heritage 1984b). The closeness of this response suggests that the 'usually' at line 12 is not being responded to, but rather the reformulation from 'go to bed' to 'go to sleep' is. Fidel then quietly utters "go °tuh°,", pauses, and then provides another acknowledgment token ("U:::H ↑yeah") (line 13), before offering an answer to the question ("aroun', you know u::h twelve oh clock i ↓mean huh=heh", lines 14-15).

This excerpt shows quite clearly three things: (1) in repairing, Adendo displays a slow working through of the TST, concluding with a repetition of the phrase 'go to bed', as well as a reformulation to 'go to sleep'. Regardless of what was the source of Fidel's trouble – whether it was one of hearing, of understanding Adendo's pronunciation of some word(s), in having lexical knowledge of some word(s) – Adendo treats the phrase "go to bed" as the trouble source. Additionally, and more important to the present argument, (2) Adendo repairs in a manner that accounts for a problem in hearing *or* a problem in understanding. As such, it would appear that Adendo is displaying some kind of extra sensitivity to Fidel's OCRI, either in terms of his own production of the original trouble-source, or in terms of Fidel's ability to

understand it. Had this not been the case, Adendo could simply have repeated the original TST, with no reformulation. Finally (3) Adendo does not repair in a way which explicitly topicalises either his or Fidel's status as L2 users. Of course, Adendo could have made relevant his own pronunciation or Fidel's inability to understand (whether or not the trouble was in understanding). This avoidance of topicalising matters of linguistic expertise may be evidence of what Firth (2009b) has both called 'doing *not* being a language learner', and 'retain[ing] the 'private'character of [one's] L2 competence (p. 140).

These latter two points – that repair is conducted in a manner which accounts for a potential problem in hearing or understanding, without topicalising a problem, and without hindering the progressivity of the talk too much – is also evident in the next excerpt, which happens to involve the same participants, and occurred just a few minutes earlier:

**Excerpt 5.03** *company*
(28) 2 June 2008 [1:29:14 – 1:29:26]

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| TS | 1 | Adendo: | an:: er:: (0.4) which company |
| TS | 2 | | you: ↓serve |
| | 3 | | (2.1) |
| RI | 4 | Fidel: | ↑pardon |
| | 5 | | (1.4) |
| R | 6 | Adendo: | what company you worked |
| | 7 | | (1.2) |
| | 8 | Fidel: | um: (.) i'm:, (.) wor- i'm- i'm |
| | 9 | | a pharmacist |

In this excerpt, as Adendo and Fidel are getting acquainted, the former asks the latter a question pertaining to his employment ("an:: er:: (0.4) which company you: ↓serve", lines 1-2). After a 2.1 second pause (line 3), Fidel responds with the OCRI, "↑pardon" (line 4). After another 1.4 second pause (line 5), Adendo repairs. As in the previous example, the repair is not in the form of a repetition, but a reformulation, in which two elements from the trouble-source turn are altered – "which" is replaced with "what" at the turn-initial place, and "worked" takes the place of "↓serve" in the turn-final place (line 6). No reformulation or replacement is done with regards to the lexical item "company", which suggests that Adendo did not see it as requiring repair.

This reformulated question results in an apposite response from Fidel, in which he discloses his profession (lines 8-9). Again, regardless of whether Fidel's trouble

was one of hearing or one of understanding some element of the TST, Fidel repairs in a manner which accounts for both, and the repair sequence comes off fairly smoothly. And, as in the previous example, this is achieved without topicalising the trouble, or bringing any uncertainties about the source of the trouble to the surface of the talk by, for example, explicitly checking whether the turn or any elements of it have been understood.

One potential explanation for the repair outcomes in the excerpts provided thus far is not that the speakers of the TST are allowing for the possible inability of their interlocutor to have understood the TST, but are rather displaying some sensitivity to their own intelligibility. The next example illustrates this more explicitly, as the speaker of the TST selects one (of – from an etic perspective at least – apparently many) element to focus his repair upon. In this excerpt, which occurs soon after Excerpt 5.01, Hal is describing his home country of Algeria to his interlocutors.

**Excerpt 5.04** *winter*
(8) 15 March 2007 [1:23:20 – 1:23:58]

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | 1 | Hal: | the area that (0.2) i, (0.5) i |
| | 2 | | li::ve is the ↑hottest (0.4) in |
| | 3 | | the wo::rl°d° (0.3) °in de hor-° (0.2) |
| | 4 | | °i-° (0.4) it is the ↑hotte↑st (.) |
| | 5 | | in the world |
| | 6 | | (0.7) |
| | 7 | Ryan: | yes i ↑heard I heard the sahara |
| | 8 | | desert gets very very hot |
| | 9 | | (0.7) |
| | 10 | Hal: | yeas. |
| | 11 | | (1.3) |
| TS | 12 | Hal: | but in the:: ↑winter (0.5) it i- |
| TS | 13 | | (0.5) the temperater ((temperature)) |
| TS | 14 | | is (.) yooender ((under)) zero |
| TS | 15 | | ↓degrees (0.5) de- degrees celcius |
| | 16 | | (1.8) |
| RI | 17 | Ryan: | *e- what's ↑that |
| | 18 | | (1.4) |
| R | 19 | Hal: | in der::: ↑winter |
| | 20 | | (1.2) |
| R | 21 | Hal: | opposite ↑summer |
| | 22 | | (1.0) |
| R | 23 | Hal: | >in de winter. |
| | 24 | | (1.7) |
| R | 25 | Hal: | the tom[perat]er= ((temperature)) |
| | 26 | ?: | [ in- ] |
| R | 27 | Hal: | =is- (0.2) is ↑yooender ((under)) |
| R | 28 | | (0.2) zero degree |
| | 29 | | (1.0) |
| R | 30 | Hal: | celcius. |
| | 31 | | (3.2) |

In lines 1-3, Hal explains that the area of Algeria in which he lives is the hottest part of the world. This statement is produced with a number of intra-turn pauses, but comes off fairly unproblematically. Despite this, after a short pause (0.3 seconds, line 4), Hals repeats his point, "it is the ↑hotte↑st (.) in the world" (lines 5-6). It is difficult to say whether this is a self-repair or a means of emphasising his point. Ryan then acknowledges the information, stating that he was aware of the extreme temperatures in that part of the world, ("yes i ↑heard I heard the sahara desert gets very very hot", lines 8-9). Hal acknowledges this at line 10 ("yeas."), and continues to provide some extra information regarding the weather in this area; at line 13, he states that the winter is opposite in extremity, with temperatures falling below zero degrees celcius.

This turn is produced with a number of intra-turn pauses, as well as with 'non-standard' pronunciation of a number of words – "temperater" ('temperature', line 13) and "yooender" ('under', line 14). Additionally, 0.5 seconds after having completed the turn, he self-repairs the final lexical item, from "↓degrees" to "de- degrees celcius" (line 15). Perhaps because of these pauses, or the (potentially) unclear pronunciations of key aspects of the turn, or for some other reason, Ryan initiates repair with "*e- what's ↑that" at line 17.

Since Ryan's OCRI does not specify the source, or type, of trouble, Hal could perceive and treat any (or all) aspects of his TST as requiring repair. Of all of the possibilities, Hal focuses his repair on the lexical item 'winter'; at line 19, he responds to the OCRI with "in der::: ↑winter", prolonging the article before and placing stress on the word itself, and 'try-marking' it (Sacks and Schegloff 1979). When there is no uptake by Ryan in the subsequent 1.2 seconds (line 20), Hal does not offer an alternative candidate repair, but rather offers a definition of 'winter' – "opposite ↑summer" (line 21), which is uttered with a questioning, upward intonation (see, e.g. Markee 2000, for analysis of 'doing definitions'). Ryan does not respond to this turn either, and so Hal repeats the repair, ">in de winter." (line 23). Again, Ryan does not respond (line 24), and Hal proceeds to reproduce the rest of his TST (lines 25-30).

As in previous examples, the speaker of the TST does not repeat the whole turn following an OCRI. However, rather than reformulating or elaborating upon what he treats as the repairable, in this instance, Hal offers it once again, albeit 'try-marked'. As was outlined earlier, Sacks and Schegloff (1979) argued that producing a lexical

item with an upwards intonation can be taken as 'try-marking' it – offering it as a potential, or candidate, appropriate word. That would appear to be the case in this instance. When the recipient of this 'try-marked' word does not offer an assessment, Hal subsequently offers a quasi-definition of what he is treating as the source of trouble (by stating that what he is trying to reference is the opposite of summer).

What exactly Ryan is doing following his RI ("*e- what's ↑that", line 19), which turns out to be his final contribution, is impossible to know – he may well be distracted by something or someone in his physical proximity, he might simply not be listening to Hal, or actually having difficulty in understanding Hal. This is analytically irrelevant, however; regardless of why Ryan initiates repair, and regardless of why he does not engage verbally subsequently, what is noteworthy is that Hal treats the OCRI and following response absences as trouble in understanding, and treats his use of 'in the winter' as the source of this trouble. This would appear to be an example of an interactant displaying some sensitivity to their own intelligibility following an OCRI from their interlocutor.

The following is another example of this, albeit with a slightly different outcome. In the moments leading up to this excerpt, Jen and Ale have been getting acquainted. Jen has just told Ale that she is currently living in the UK, but will be taking a trip back to her home country of South Korea soon.

**Excerpt 5.05** *proficiency*
(5) 13 March 2007 [0:25:34 – 0:26:32]

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | 1 | Ale: | and ↑after you come back to |
| | 2 | | ↓korea |
| | 3 | | (0.6) |
| | 4 | Jen: | .hhhh u::::h (.) i::: will:: go |
| | 5 | | back to korea this ↑june |
| | 6 | | (0.9) |
| | 7 | Ale: | [mm.] |
| | 8 | Jen: | [ i ] guess, for:: a ↑month |
| | 9 | | (0.6) |
| | 10 | Jen: | [and then::,]= |
| | 11 | Ale: | [ mm mm. ] |
| | 12 | Jen: | =i will come back here ↓again |
| | 13 | | (1.1) |
| TS | 14 | Ale: | you are taking the ↑profince=the |
| TS | 15 | | profincey >(what is the name)< |
| TS | 16 | | profincey (0.3) english |
| TS | 17 | | pronfinceh |
| | 18 | | (1.4) |
| RI | 19 | Jen: | i'm ↑sorry |
| | 20 | | (0.6) |
| | 21 | Ale: | na no i don't use the right word |
| | 22 | | in inglay- in glin- english |

```
23              (1.0)
24    Ale:      er::::::,
25              (1.4)
26    Ale:      si but (0.3) (is)/(it's) i think
27              it's er::: you=a speak=er:: (1.6)
28              although you go- you: have
29              intention to go also in ↑america
30              (1.7)
```

In lines 1-12, Jen informs Ale that she will be spending a month in Korea before returning to the UK, and Ale plays his role in this telling by providing listenership tokens (lines 7 and 11). Once Jen's turn is complete, and after a 1.1 second pause (line 13), Ale formulates a new question, which would appear to be regarding an English proficiency test, "you are taking the ↑profince=the profincey >(what is the name)< profincey (0.3) english pronfinceh" (line 14-17). This turn includes what appears to be four separate attempts to produce the word 'proficiency', which are interspersed with a verbalised word search, which displays that he is having trouble in remembering the word and/or its correct pronunciation (Brouwer 2003; Hayashi 2003). This word search is uttered quickly and does not afford Jen the space to assist.

Jen does not appear to understand the question, and initiates repair after 1.4 seconds (line 18) with "i'm ↑sorry" (line 19). Ale does not attempt to repair or reformulate the TST, but instead offers an account for the trouble, "na no i don't use the right word in inglay- in glin- english" (lines 21-22). This response is located immediately after the RI, and so fills the 'slot' in which the repair would typically be found, thus relieving Ale of that responsibility. Similarly, it displays that this trouble is ongoing, and Ale is still unable to produce the necessary English word. In this example, we can see evidence from the speaker of the trouble source that they perceive the temporary breakdown in intersubjectivity to be due to their own unintelligibility, even though the participant who makes relevant a problem in mutual understanding (i.e. through initiating repair) does not identify the source, or type, of trouble.

Of course, there are occasions following OCRIs when the speaker of the TST does not indicate, or demonstrate, some doubt regarding their own role in the trouble. The following is one such case. This excerpt is taken from a Skypecast titled 'Practice English for IELTS'. Just prior to line 1, Dev and Annabella have introduced themselves to one another.

**Excerpt 5.06** *IELTS*
(02) 02 May 2008 [0:01:18 – 0:01:54]

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| TS | 1 | Dev: | u::h. (0.6) >why do=you wanna, (0.3) |
| TS | 2 | | pass (0.2) ee=↓elts: ((IELTS)) |
| | 3 | | (2.0) |
| RI | 4 | Annab: | °↓wha:t° |
| | 5 | | (1.1) |
| R | 6 | Dev: | u:h (0.2) so. (0.3) *w::*=uh what |
| R | 7 | | for: (0.2) uh:: w:hy do you want |
| R | 8 | | to:: (0.2) pass this exa:m (0.4) |
| R | 9 | | uhm: becaus::e the (0.4) uh (0.6) |
| R | 10 | | topic of this: (.) cast (.) is (.) |
| R | 11 | | >practice english fo::r eye ee (0.3) |
| R | 12 | | ell tee ess: ((IELTS)) |
| | 13 | | (1.3) |
| | 14 | Dev: | do=you want to travel or: wor::k |
| | 15 | | abroad. |
| | 16 | | (3.8) |
| | 17 | Annab: | °↑mm° (0.3) °hh° |
| | 18 | | (1.3) |
| | 19 | Annab: | (** language) (0.2) (** **)= |
| | 20 | Dev: | =SO. what about you ↑aneesh |

At lines 1-2, Dev asks Anna a question, "u::h. (0.6) >why do=you wanna, (0.3) pass (0.2) ee=↓elts:". Note that this turn, which will prove to be a source of trouble, is not produced with any perturbations, restarts or self-repairs. This is unlike what has been seen in the previous excerpts in this section.

Following a lengthy pause (2.0 seconds, line 3), Annabella quietly utters an OCRI, "°↓wha:t°" (line 4). Rather than offering a repetition of the TST, Dev's repair-containing turn constitutes two elements. The first part of his repair turn is a slight reformulation of the original question, "u:h (0.2) so. (0.3) *w::*=uh what for: (0.2) uh:: w:hy do you want to:: (0.2) pass this exa:m" (lines 6-8). In addition to this, Dev provides an explanation/justification for the question, "uhm: becaus::e the (0.4) uh (0.6) topic of this: (.) cast (.) is (.) >practice english fo::r eye ee (0.3) ell tee ess:" (lines 9-12).

This turn clearly does more work than a simple repetition would have; firstly, Dev's repair response reformulates from "ee=↓elts:" to "exa:m". In addition to this, he contextualises the question's relevance to this current chat room, and this, to its participants. When Anna does not respond to the repair turn in the following 1.3 seconds (line 13), Dev then provides her with some candidate responses, in the form of a follow-up question, "do=you want to travel or: wor::k abroad." (lines 14-15). Again, we see evidence of Dev's work in repairing the trouble.

Regardless of whether, or with whom, the interlocutors display (either implicitly of explicitly) their understanding of the cause of trouble, it can be seen in the examples in this section that there is often some sensitivity to intersubjectivity when it is 'threatened' by OCRIs. One appropriate way to deal with this, without hindering the progressivity of the talk too much, appears to be to repair in a manner that resolves any potential trouble with hearing or understanding. This is a phenomena which will be explored in more detail, with regards to other forms of RI, in the following sections.

### 5.3 'Partial Repeat + "*what?*"' Repair Initiation Sequences

While the OCRI in the sequences in Section 5.2 are the 'weakest' form of RI (in that they as they do not identify the specific TS nor the type of trouble), there are other ways of initiating repair which indicate more specifically the source of the trouble. One form such RIs can take is that of 'partial repeat (of the TST) + *"what"?*'. In such RIs, it is displayed that the trouble pertains to the item being replaced by "what?". Sacks (1995, volume 1, lecture 12) was the first to discuss these kinds of RI, suggesting that this "partial repetition format" is "a very characteristic way to go about locating what somebody said that you didn't hear" (ibid: 723). Sacks also argued that only certain kinds of words (namely, nouns and verbs) can be located in this 'partial repeat + "What?"' method, and ultimately argues that the trouble which precedes such RIs is often one of contextuality. That is, trouble in hearing, or 'catching' a word can often be because its hearing is shaped by, or it does not 'fit' logically into, the current context. From this understanding, it would seem that this RI formulation would be treated as a trouble in hearing, as opposed to understanding. And this would appear to be the case according to previous research (e.g. Drew 1997; Jefferson 1985; Sidnell 2010)

Of course, much like as outlined for OCRIs in the previous section, this format of RI does not always, automatically, result in a 'repetition as repair' from the speaker of the TST. Context plays a role in how such RIs are dealt with, as do the interactants themselves. In the present study's corpus, it again seems that this format of RI often can result in a repair format which differs from that which has been found in other interactional contexts. The examples in this section are illustrative of this.

In the following excerpt, Sunny (who is from Iraq) is talking with Shelley (who is Chinese) about the languages of China.

**Excerpt 5.07** *dialects*
(9) 15 March 2007 [0:09:04 – 0:09:28]

```
     1    Sunny:    but a- a:- but ah heard in china
TS   2              you've got a lo- so many ↓dilects
     3              (0.8)
     4    Sunny:    in china=hhh .hhh
     5              (0.4)
     6    Sunny:    one guy=
RI   7    Shelle:   =SO MANY ↑WHA[T]
     8    Sunny:                 [t]old me,
     9              (1.6)
 R   10   Sunny:    dialects, (0.2) slangs, (0.7) it
 R   11             means l::anguages (.) in ↓china=
     12   Shelle:   =↑o::h (.) ↓o::h (.) yes (.) yes
     13             (2.0) ((background noise))
     14   Sunny:    about how many: (.) too much
     15             (0.2) ↑ten, ↑seven (0.4) or (0.3)
     16             no- (0.5) less
```

Following some silence, Sunny takes the floor to continue the discussion about languages in China. To do this, he reports something he has been told, "but a- a:- but ah heard in china you've got a lo- so many ↓dilects" (lines 1-2). When there is no uptake or response from Shelley in the following 0.8 seconds (line 3), Sunny adds a turn increment (Auer 1997; Schegloff 1996; Ford et al 2002) by repeating, "in china=hhh", with an emphasis on 'China' (line 4). One might expect Shelley to comment on this telling, not least because she is Chinese, is in a position to claim knowledge about such matters, and has had that position made relevant to her. However, after a further 0.4 seconds (line 5), she has yet to respond, and so Sunny self-selects again, beginning a new turn ("one guy=", line 6) before Shelley responds with a RI, "SO MANY ↑WHA[T]" (line 7).

This RI takes the form of *partial repeat + 'what'*, and as such locates the source of Shelley's trouble as the word uttered by Sunny following his saying of 'so many', namely the lexical item 'dialects' (uttered as "↓dilects" at line 2). The end of Shelley's RI is uttered in overlap with the continuation of Sunny's turn ("[t]old me,", line 8), which results in a 1.6 second silence (see Jenks 2009b for analysis of how overlapping talk is dealt with by lengthy silences in this interactional setting). After this pause, Sunny repairs (line 10). His repair constitutes three parts, the first of which is a repetition of the trouble-source word "dialects,", which is produced this

time with stress and an altered pronunciation, as well as a 'continuing' intonation, which indicates that more is to follow. Then, following as short pause (perhaps for emphasis), Sunny produces an attempted synonym for dialects "slangs,", again produced with stress and a continuing intonation. Finally, after another short pause (0.7 seconds, line 10), he continues by offering another synonym, this time delivered as a definition of the word, "it means l::anguages (.) in ↓china=" (lines 11-12).

Shelley does provide an answer immediately, but precedes it with two change-of-state tokens, "=↑o::h (.) ↓o::h (.) yes (.) yes" (line 12). With this turn, Shelley has displayed that she now understands Sunny's original telling, and aligns with it. After a lengthy pause interspersed with some background noise (line 15), Sunny shows that he now takes it that Shelley understands, and agrees with, his prior telling by asking a follow-up question about the number of dialects in China (lines 16-18). That is, the repair sequence is over and the talk progresses.

In this sequence, we can see that a *partial repeat + 'what'* RI locates the recipient's source of trouble to a single lexical item, which can be dealt with accordingly by the speaker of that trouble source. The repair-containing turn by Sunny accordingly locates and repairs the source of trouble by Shelley. In addition, it repairs in such as way as to overcome any problem Shelley had with regards to hearing or understanding. More than this, though, the turn's ending, "in ↓china=", although not necessary for the repair to be successful, matches the ending of Sunny's original statement. With this, it makes relevant that earlier statement and allows Shelley to respond to it, without explicitly topicalising any problem she may have had (if any) in understanding the term 'dialects'. This turn then both (1) closes the repair sequence fairly quickly, allowing for mutual understanding to be resumed and for the discussion to progress, and (2) avoids the possibility of Shelley having to explicitly display her non-understanding, which may have caused a loss of face on her part.

The following sequence provides another example of this. It begins as Andregee and Jen are getting acquainted with one another.

**Excerpt 5.08** *nap*
(17) 30 April 2007 [0:08:45 – 0:09:08]

```
1     Andre:    =what do you- what do you
2               usually do in your spare time
3               (0.7)
```

```
     4    Andre:    tell me about you (.) a little
     5              ↓bit
     6              (1.4)
     7    Jen:      u:::h (1.1) .hh spare time?
     8              (0.5)
     9    Jen:      okay um:: (1.1) mm::::
TS   10             (0.2) i:::: like taking a ↑nap
     11             (2.9)
     12   Jen:      or:[::::           ]
RI   13   Andre:       [(you do) what)]
     14             (0.4)
 R   15   Jen:      taking a nap (.) like ↑ sleeping
     16             (0.6)
     17   Andre:    ah okay
```

At lines 1-2 Andre initiates a new topic by asking Jen to reveal what she likes to do in her spare time. Following the completion of this turn, there is a 0.7 second silence during which Jen does not respond, and Andregee pursues a response, with "`tell me about you (.) a little ↓bit`" (lines 4-5). Following a 1.4 second silence (line 6), Jen produces "`u:::h`", which serves to take the floor, as well as to display that she is considering a response. After another 1.1 second silence, she produces a candidate hearing, "`.hh spare time?`" (line 7), which is presumably a check that she has heard/understood the question correctly. When neither a confirmation nor a correction of this comes from Andregee, Jen begins to answer "`okay um::`" (line 9). There follows another silence and a similar floor-holding, 'thinking-displaying' utterance ("`mm:::`", line 9) before Jen finally answers, "`i:::: like taking a ↑nap`" (line 10). Note this the turn-final word, as in previous excerpts, is marked with a rising intonation.

Although one might anticipate an assessment of this response by the question-asker, or perhaps at least an acknowledgement token, none is forthcoming in the following 2.9 seconds. Jen then subsequently self-selects, apparently to provide another answer, "`or:[::::`" (line 12). However, this is cut short as Andregee initiates repair "`[(you do) what)]`" (line 13). This repair would appear to locate 'like taking a nap' as the trouble-source, and Jen responds accordingly at line 15. And in addition to repeating the trouble-source turn, she also provides an alternative description for the activity, again with a rising intonation on the turn-final word "`like ↑sleeping`".

Although the extra work put in by Jen is not of the same amount that has been demonstrated in the previous example, a similar phenomenon can be witnessed. The source of trouble is identified by the repair initiator and the resultant repair provides more than just a repetition, but also some additional help. This comes off without

topicalising the trouble, and allows the trajectory of the talk to resume unproblematically.

The next excerpt also provides an example of extra interactional work on the part of the speaker of a trouble source, albeit in a different way, and possibly due to different reasons. The excerpt is taken from an exchange between Jen and James, both Korean, who are getting acquainted. The two of them have been discussing their lives and families in Korea.

**Excerpt 5.09** *how many*
(18) 1 May 2007 [1:39:43 – 1:40:27]

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | 1 | James: | so AND=u:h (0.7) a- (0.7) i |
| | 2 | | wonder your=a- your fam'ly: in |
| | 3 | | your=a- in korea in- you- you |
| | 4 | | said you live in ↑anya |
| | 5 | | (0.6) |
| | 6 | Jen: | [°mm-hmm°] |
| | 7 | James: | [ and ] eh you=a:, (0.4) |
| | 8 | | >how can i say< you=a (0.2) |
| | 9 | | (furs') ↑(dor'a) or::=a (1.0) and |
| | 10 | | (0.3) >second (**)< (0.2) how |
| TS | 11 | | many friend in your=a (0.3) |
| TS | 12 | | in your ↓fam'ly |
| | 13 | | (0.6) |
| | 14 | James: | only: [not] |
| | 15 | Jen: | [am-] |
| | 16 | | (0.5) |
| | 17 | James: | except (0.3) u::h except (0.2) |
| | 18 | | to your husband and, (.) in your |
| | 19 | | fam'ly. |
| | 20 | | (0.7) |
| | 21 | James: | in anya. |
| | 22 | | (0.7) |
| | 23 | James: | i wonder.= |
| RI | 24 | Jen: | =how many- (0.3) how many:: ↑what |
| RI | 25 | | (.) i'm ↓sorry |
| | 26 | | (0.6) |
| | 27 | James: | yeah >yeah yeah< yeah. |
| | 28 | | (1.1) |
| R | 29 | James: | for example, i ha:ve a (.) older |
| R | 30 | | brother and a elder sister |
| | 31 | | (0.4) |
| R | 32 | | in my case=[a ] |
| | 33 | Jen: | [m.] |
| | 34 | | (0.5) |
| R | 35 | James: | i- i wonder your=a (.) your case |
| | 36 | | (0.4) |
| | 37 | Jen: | ah=okay .hh .hhhh (0.4) ↑well |
| | 38 | | a(h)h (.) my family's a small |
| | 39 | | so my parents an' (0.5) .hh and |
| | 40 | | myself (0.5) a' i have |
| | 41 | | younger ↓brother |

James begins to formulate a question at lines 1-4, "so AND=u:h (0.7) a- (0.7) i wonder your=a- your fam'ly: in your=a- in korea in- you- you said you live in ↑anya" (lines 1-4). The question appears to be pertaining to Jen's family in Korea, and ends with reference to information Jen previously divulged regarding her hometown. After a 0.6 second pause (line 5), Jen quietly provides a confirmation/continuer, "[°mm-hmm°]" (line 6). This is produced in overlap with the beginning of James' next turn, "[ and ] eh you=a:," (line 7).

This rather long turn is somewhat disfluent, containing many pauses and hesitations. After the opening comes a pause (0.4 seconds, line 7), which is followed by a restart, possible displaying James' trouble in articulating what he wants to articulate, ">how can i say<", (line 8). This is reminiscent of that produced in Excerpt 5.05 in that it is uttered quickly and without the space for the interlocutor to provide assistance. What follows this appears to be two questions, the first being an alternative option question, "you=a (0.2) (furs') ↑(dor'a) or::=a (1.0) and (0.3) >second (**)<" (lines 8-10). Following a 0.2 second pause, James then either adds a second question, or replaces his first with an alternative, "how many friend in your=a (0.3) in your ↓fam'ly" (lines 10-12).

Jen provides no uptake or response to James' questions in the following 0.6 seconds (line 13), and so he continues with "only: [not]" (line 14), a turn which appears to be cut short due to the overlap with Jen's "[am-]" (line 15). After another silence (0.5 seconds, lines 17), James appears to begin his turn again, reformulating to "except (0.3) u::h except (0.2) to your husband and, (.) in your fam'ly." (lines 17-19). Following more silences, James provides two further turn increments, "in anya." (line 21) and "i wonder.=" (line 23).

Although this lengthy piece of talk on the part of James is apparently unclear, Jen appears to have understood that it forms a 'how many' question, and that she is expected to provide an answer (not least because they are the only speakers present in the room at this point). As such, she responds with an RI in the format of *partial repeat + 'what'*, "=how many- (0.3) how many:: ↑what (.) i'm ↓sorry" (lines 24-25). This RI by Jen appears to have located the source of the trouble as James' "friend", which is the item which he produces immediately following "how many" (lines 10-11). Notice that Jen also ends her turn with 'I'm sorry', which, since she has already indicated the source of her trouble with her immediately prior RI, would appear to be an apology rather than an OCRI.

After a 0.6 second silence (line 26), James responds with "yeah >yeah yeah< yeah." (line 27). Jen appears to take this as indication that more is to come from James, as she does not speak again in the subsequent 1.1 seconds silence (line 28). Instead, James eventually continues, not by producing a repeat or a reformulation of his TST 'friend', but by providing the relevant answer in his own case as an example, "for example, i ha:ve a (.) older brother and a elder sister" (lines 29-30). And, when there is no uptake from Jen following this (0.4 seconds, line 31), he continues with "in my case=[a ]", which perhaps is to display that he is seeking the same information 'in her case'. Jen does not provide such information, but rather acknowledges James' turn with a short response of "[m.]" (line 33). After another 0.5 second silence (line 34), which may be a result of the just prior, brief overlap, James makes his request more explicit, by contining, "i- i wonder your=a (.) your case" (line 35).

Jen responds following a 0.4 seconds silence (line 36). First, she displays receipt of new information and a newly-obtained understanding "ah=okay", after which she takes an audible in-breath (possibly to hold the floor), before answering James' query, "↑well a(h)h (.) my family's a small so my parents an' (0.5) .hh and myself (0.5) a' i have younger ↓brother" (lines 37-41). In doing this, Jen has demonstrated that James' action (namely, providing an example in his case) has been sufficient to resolve the trouble.

While the previous two excerpts showed the repairer providing not just a repeat of the identified trouble-source item, but also alternative definition(s), the repairer in this data provides an example response. Unlike in the previous examples, the trouble-source itself is not repaired, nor is the trouble-source containing turn. Instead, James gives a model response to Jen, and thus side-steps having to repeat or reformulate his question. When one considers the difficulty with which James originally produced his question, it is entirely possible that this was a creative way to avoid enduring the same kind of difficulties again. Mazeland and Zaman-Zadeh (2004) located similar phenomena in their research on adult learners of Finnish as a foreign language. In their analysis of word-clarification repair sequences, one of the phenomena they observed was the use of exemplification in attempts to obtain a response.

Regardless of James' intentions in responding to the RI in this way, the example, as with the others in this section, shows that this form of RI can lead to outcomes similar to those discussed in the previous section. That is, even when the TS

is located more specifically than with an OCRI, speakers of the TST may not treat the problem as one of hearing, but may allow for potential problems in understanding by putting in some extra interactional work. This extra work manages to ensure that intersubjectivity is secured.

### 5.4 Other Repair Initiation Sequences

The forms of repair discussed so far – OCRIs and 'partial repeat + "*what?*"'' are not the only ones in this corpus which result in the kind of outcomes outlined. This section will examine some more forms of RI which include a repetition, or partial repetition, of a TST, but which do not fall into either of the categories examined so far. However, these repetition RIs have similar strength to the 'partial repeat + "*what?*"'' in their ability to locate the trouble source. According to previous literature on repair (e.g. Koshik 2005; Schegloff 1997; Sidnell 2010), these RIs typically project a confirmation or a correction of candidate offered.

The first kind to be discussed are typically heard to be eliciting confirmation of a possible understanding, and will be referred to as 'candidate understandings'. The second type to be considered do not contain a question word, and is typically taken to be eliciting confirmation of a hearing (Sidnell 2010). These are referred to as 'candidate hearings'. Although the distinction between the two forms to be discussed here isn't always clear, their production is often such that the type of repaired projected is clear. Regardless, as will be demonstrated in the following excerpts, in this corpus of chat room interaction, both of these kinds of RIs also lead to some kind of explanation and/or elaboration by the speaker of the trouble source.

The first case presented involves a candidate understanding of a question. It begins as Madihel and Whiskey are in the process of getting acquainted. In the moments before line 1, Whiskey has just divulged that he is from Germany, and that this is also where he lives.

**Excerpt 5.10** *Germany*
(22) 17 May 2007 [1:02:02 – 1:02:25]

```
TS   1    Madihe:   and you're going to live in
TS   2              ↑germany (.) ↑forever
     3              (1.6)
RI   4    Whiske:   if i live for ↓always (0.4) in
RI   5              ↑germany or what do you ↓want
```

```
     6                (0.6)
RI   7     Whiske:    to ↓know
     8                (0.7)
RI   9     Madihe:    ↑ye:ah (0.2) are you going to
RI   10               live always in germany, or do you
RI   11               intend to move somewhere ↓else=
     12    Whiske:    =hhhhhhh=YA:::H=ER:::M:=I, (0.4)
     13               i don't kno:w you know (0.7)
     14               maybe i'll (.) travel: (.) or
     15               live in england for a couple of
     16               years=I don't know=or in: spain,
     17               france or something ↓else
```

Madihel builds upon her newly-received information regarding Whiskey's home country and current location by asking a question, "and you're going to live in ↑germany (.) ↑forever" (lines 1-2). Although this may not be grammatically produced as a question, note the rising intonation on 'Germany', which is also followed by another, turn-final, rising intonation at 'forever'. Turn-final rising intonation is typically taken to display that an answer/confirmation should follow (Sacks and Schegloff 1979). However, that is not the case in this excerpt. Instead, following a 1.6 second silence (line 3), Whiskey responds with a candidate understanding of the question ("if i live for ↓always (0.4) in ↑germany", lines 4-5), coupled with his explicitly checking what it is that Madihel has asked ("or what do you ↓want (0.6) to ↓know", lines 5-7).

Following a 0.7 second silence (line 8), Madihel responds, first by confirming ("↑ye:ah") and then, following a 0.2 second pause, by reformulating slightly and elaborating on her initial question. On its own, the 'yeah' uttered by Madihel might have served as a sufficient enough response to resolve the trouble and to resume mutual understanding. However, Madihel backs this confirmation up with a reformulation of her initial question, "are you going to live always in germany," (lines 9-10) which is this time also grammatically a question. Additionally, Madihel elaborates on the question, and makes possible answers clearer, by providing Whiskey with an alternative option, "or do you intend to move somewhere ↓else="(lines 10-11).

Whiskey displays his understanding quite strongly, with an inbreath and a loud agreement token, an elongated, floor-holding 'erm', all of which is uttered quite quickly, "=hhhhhhh=YA:::H=ER:::M:=I, (0.4) I don't kno:w you know" (lines 12-13). The beginning of this response is latched on to the end of Madihel's repair, which might suggest that the extent of the repair work (or at least the elaboration part)

was not necessary. Regardless, Whiskey continues by outlining a few options for his future ("maybe I'll (.) travel: (.) or live in england for a couple of years=I don't know=or in: spain, france or something ↓else", lines 14-17), which further demonstrates his understanding of the question.

Whether or not the extent of Madihel's repair was necessary in order to restore mutual understanding is irrelevant; this example demonstrates another case when one interactant puts in some extra interactional work in order to deal with some trouble.

Madihel's inclusion of "or what do you ↓want (0.6) to ↓know" in the repair initiating turn would suggest that it was being produced as a candidate understanding. In the following examples, it is not clear whether the trouble is with regards to hearing or understanding. However, the repair outcomes are again similar. In the next excerpt, Jen, Andregee and a number of other chat room participants are discussing the kinds of movies they like to watch.

**Excerpt 5.11** *horror movie*
(17) 30 April 2007 [0:09:43 – 0:09:56] needs amending

```
1     Jen:      .tch see I love horror ↑movie
2               (1.7)
3     Jen:      you know.
4               (1.1)
5     Jen:      horror movie?
6               (0.8)
7     Andre:    horror ↑movie
8               (2.0)
9     Jen:      yeah ↑scary, y'know horror movi:e
10              (3.1)
11    Andre     ↑↓o:kay
```

After a lengthy silence (not included in the transcript), Jen self-selects in an attempt to re-initiate some talk with, ".tch see I love horror ↑movie" (line 1). This is not responded to in the subsequent 1.7 seconds (line 2), and so Jen offers a turn increment, "you know" (line 3). This may be a way to seek acknowledgement or confirmation from one of her interlocutors. However, after a further 1.1 seconds silence (line 4), there is still no response from anyone. As such, Jen once again self-selects in order to repeat the subject of her initial turn, "horror movie?" (line 5). This is 'try-marked' with rising intonation (Sacks & Schegloff 1979), which suggests that Jen is checking her interlocutors' understanding of the term. One reason for the lack of uptake by any of her interlocutors is that her turn does not project a relevant next speaker, and previous research has shown (Jenks 2009a) the kind of trouble

which can follow multiple simultaneous turns in these chat rooms. However, after a further 0.8 second silence (line 6), Andre takes the floor, and responds with "horror ↑movie" (line 7).

This response by Andre may have been produced in order to indicate his surprise at Jen's fondness for that genre of films, and indeed previous research (e.g. Drew 1997; Schegloff 1997) has suggested that this kind of repair can be used to indicate surprise or "deliberate disaffiliation" (Drew 1997: 93). Alternatively, it is also possible that Andregee is indicating that he does not understand the term. Jen's next turn deals with both of those possibilities by confirming but also preceding the confirmation with some extra information, "yeah ↑scary, y'know horror movi:e" (line 9). The addition of 'scary', which is uttered with emphasis and a rising intonation, adds an element of description to the kind of movies Jen is referring to, and so will aid in understanding in the event that understanding the term is an issue here. Additionally, it may serve as an explanation for why she likes horror movies – they are scary. Note that aside from the inclusion of 'y'know', which demonstrates that she is seeking agreement, Jen does not topicalise the potential trouble in her turn. Instead, it is built in a way which provides some extra information unproblematically. This, coupled with Andre's response of "↑↓o:kay" (line 11), closes the repair sequence quickly and allows the talk to continue.

The next example is particularly illustrative of, and important for understanding, the phenomena under current consideration. The episode offers another candidate hearing of a statement, and another case in which the candidate hearing may not be due to a problem in hearing or understanding, but rather an indication of surprise. However, it differs from the previous examples throughout the chapter in that the speaker of the TST initially repairs in a more 'conventional' way, providing time for the repair initiator to display uptake of the repair. When no such uptake is forthcoming, the speaker of the TST then goes on to perform the actions which are incorporated into the repair in the previous excerpts. That is, he goes on to provide the extra work and provide the extra information which appears necessary.

The sequence is taken from a lengthy discussion regarding various national cultures food-eating practices, a discussion which has mostly focused on foods which are considered unusual in nations outside of which they are eaten. A discussion of eating raw horse meat in Japan has just ended prior to line 1.

**Excerpt 5.12** *whale*
(23) 18 May 2007 [0:47:28 – 0:48:35]

```
    1                (0.9)
    2       James:   .hh yeah so an', (0.5) hello
    3                osa↑ka
    4       Osaka:   ↑hello=
    5       James:   =yeh.
    6                (1.0)
    7       James:   yeah yeah. >my name's [james]<=
    8       Osaka:                          [ yeh.]
    9       James:   =so::: (.) i::: .hh (0.3) in my
    10               case there wh- (0.5) u:::::h
    11               (0.6) when i checked the (.)
    12               ↑in'erne:t (0.2) i- i read a some
    13               kind of article from=a ↑japan
    14               (0.2) so you know:, (0.4) then
    15               i checked the ↑yahoo ↑japan (0.4)
    16               so i can- i can find=a some kind
    17               of story so: i think >(it is very
    18               surprise)< (.) to:: me .hh that
    19               ↑story (0.2) er- is that,
    20               (0.6) (em:::) japanese
    21               peopl::e, (0.2) sometimes, (1.0)
    22               <they:::> (0.4) <have a,> (0.3)
TS  23               wha::l:e
    24               (1.0)
TS  25       James:  meat.
    26               (0.5)
    27       James:  whale (.) ↑okay
    28               (0.8)
    29       Jen:    ↓a::h=
RI  30       Osaka:  =whell ↓meat
    31               (1.2)
 R  32       James:  yeah yeah yah (0.3) whale
    33               (0.8)
 R  34       James:  whales the sea
    35               (0.7)
 R  36       James:  it's=a big ↑sea:
    37               (0.5)
    38       James:  yah.
    39               (0.8)
 R  40       James:  double yoo aitch ay ell ee
 R  41               ((W-H-A-L-E)) whale (0.2) it's
 R  42               a (0.4) big (0.4) fish (.) okay?

                     ((14 lines omitted))

    55       Osaka:  OH ↑YES=a yes=(a)/(sir)
    56               (0.5)
    57       Osaka:  i love.
    58               (0.9)
    59       Osaka:  ↓whale
    60               (0.6)
    61       James:  you ↑love
    62               (0.6)
```

James addresses Osaka at lines 2-3 ("**.hh yeah so an', (0.5) hello osa↑ka**"). Since there are many people present in the room, and James and Osaka have already greeted and introduced themselves to one another, this move by James projects that his next turn is to be directed at Osaka. The latter responds with "**↑hello=**" (line 4), and James confirms again ("**=yeh.**", line 5 and "**yeah yeah.**", line 7). James then self-identifies, "**>my name's [james]<=**", at line 7, an action which James regularly performs (see Jenks 2010 for a discussion of this). He then goes on to describe an article he read on the internet which suggested that it is normal to eat whale in Japan (lines 9-23), also noting that this came as a surprise to him ("**so: i think >(it is very surprise)< (.) to:: me**", lines 17-18).

In telling something regarding Japanese society, coupled with his shocked reaction to it, to a member of the national culture in question, it would appear that James is projecting confirmation or refusal of the information he has obtained and shared. In other words, he is checking whale meat is a normal thing to eat in Japan.

However, James does not frame his turn as a question, nor does he *explicitly* ask for confirmation. Perhaps because of this, no response is forthcoming from Osaka (1.0 second silence, line 24) following the end of his turn, "**(em:::) japanese peopl::e, (0.2) sometimes, (1.0) <they:::> (0.4) <have a,> (0.3) wha::l:e**" (lines 20-23). This leads James to produce a turn increment, "**meat.**" (line 25). When there is still no uptake or response from Osaka, nor indeed any of the other interactants present, in the subsequent 0.5 seconds (line 26), James produces an understanding check, "**whale (.) ↑okay"** (line 27). This turn increment and understanding check are somewhat similar to those response pursuits demonstrated by Jen in the previous example.

In response to this understanding check, Jen offers a change-of-state token "**↓a::h=**" (line 29), which is latched on to Osaka's candidate hearing "**=whell ↓meat**" (line 30). As with the previous example, this candidate hearing could be an indication of surprise, one of disaffiliation (i.e. a reaction against the outrageousness of such a claim) or it could be intended as a initiation of repair. As with the previous example, it is also treated as a request for confirmation.

Unlike with the previous example though, the recipient of the candidate hearing does not elaborate in the next turn, but confirms and repeats; after a 1.2 second silence (line 31) James offers multiple confirmation tokens and repeats the single lexical item which he treats as the trouble source, "**yeah yeah yah (0.3) whale**" (line 32). It is

also possible that the repetition of the word 'whale' here may be a reaction to Osaka's marked pronunciation of it in his just prior turn, although it is not possible to say for certain (see, e.g. Brouwer *et al* 2004; Jefferson 1983b for analysis of 'embedded corrections').

Although, again, James does not build any further elaboration into his repair-containing turn, as has been seen in this chapter's previous examples, he does not allow much time for uptake or response from his interlocutors before doing so. After 0.8 seconds silence (line 33), he continues, providing extra information about 'whales'. He does this first by contextualizing where they live, with "whales the sea" (line 34) and when there is still no uptake in the subsequent 0.7 seconds (line 35), with "it's=a big ↑sea:" (line 36).

Soon after, when there is still no response, James proceeds to literally spell out the word and repeat it again, "double yoo aitch ay ell ee ((W-H-A-L-E)) whale" (line 40), before offering a description of the size and classification of whales, "it's a (0.4) big (0.4) fish" (lines 41-42), and closing with another understanding check, "okay?" (line 42).

Over the course of the following 14 lines, there is a negotiation of this spelling, the details of which are not relevant to the present point (however, see Excerpt 7.01 for a detailed examination of this part of the episode). Ultimately, Osaka displays a change of state (Heritage 1984b) and a confirmation "OH ↑YES=a yes=(a)/(sir)" (line 55), which would suggest that the trouble throughout has indeed been due to not understanding (at least James' production of) the lexical item 'whale'. Osaka then continues to confirm explicitly that enjoys eating whale meat ("i love.", line 57, and "↓whale", line 59).

Again, this sequence is particularly important in illustrating the present point because, while it is another example similar to those previous, its differences also show the kind of trajectory the other excerpts could have taken if the speakers of the TST did not repair in the manner in which they did. In treating the trouble as one of hearing, and simply repairing with a confirmation and repetition, James does not allow for the possibility that the trouble has been with regards to understanding the item upon which repair has been initiated. As can be seen, this leads to an extended repair sequence which stretches over 32 lines of transcript. While one can see how the kind of RI offered by Osaka projects the repair which James initially produces, one

can also see how such an episode can be avoided, as is the case in previous examples, when the participants show some extra sensitivity to intersubjectivity, and do not opt for the 'easiest solution first' when repairing.

## 5.5 Summary

This chapter has examined sequences from the chat rooms in which there is a breach of mutual understanding in the ongoing talk. Participants in these sequences orient to this breach by indicating that they are experiencing some form of trouble, and halt the ongoing talk by initiating repair.

The RIs examined in this chapter include OCRIs, partial repeat + 'what'?, and candidate hearings. These forms of RI vary to the extent that they locate the source of the trouble. However, none of the RIs examined throughout this chapter indicate the *form* of the trouble and it is up to the speaker of the TS to determine what the trouble is (i.e. one of hearing or one of understanding), and respond accordingly.

Although previous research suggests that, in such cases, participants will 'try the easiest solution first' and treat the trouble as one of hearing, the present analysis has shown that participants respond to these RIs by putting in some extra interactional work and repairing in such a way that overcomes any possible trouble in hearing *or* understanding. In so doing, the participants allow for the possibility of trouble in understanding and do not expose any such trouble. This, it has been argued, suggests an 'extra sensitivity' to trouble in understanding on the part of the participants. As was suggested, Excerpt 5.12 is significant in being particularly illustrative of this.

Analysis in the next chapter will build upon these findings by examining how participants deal with trouble in the form of nonresponses to turns (which project a response).

# Chapter 6. Ensuring Mutual Understanding When an Other Fails to Respond

## 6.1 Introduction

The previous chapter examined how speakers respond when an interlocutor displays that they have had some trouble with what has been said. In this chapter, the focus is on how nonresponses (in a place where a response might be rightfully expected) are dealt with. Analysis will show how speakers faced with nonresponses manage to allow for potential trouble on the part of their interlocutor(s), and also manage to maintain the progressivity of the talk.

Similar to the findings of the previous chapter, speakers in such situations tend to elaborate and/or reformulate their turns. In so doing, the talk is not hindered, and possible trouble is not brought to the surface. This phenomenon is noteworthy in that it again demonstrates how participants in these chat rooms react to, and in these cases allow for the possibility of a breach in mutual understanding. Additionally, as will be argued, it appears to be symptomatic of the technologically-mediated nature of the setting.

In these chat rooms, the lack of a response to a turn at talk is a constant possibility. Participants are able to enter and leave this interactional environment on a continuous basis. They can choose to leave the room at any time, and at times do so without announcing, even in the middle of a conversation of which they are a part. Additionally, the unreliability of technology mean that participants can be disconnected at any time. As such, the loss of recipiency (that is, the 'disappearance' of an interlocutor) is a constant risk. As with telephones, participants are required to constantly monitor the presence of their interlocutor(s), since there are no physical cues upon which to draw. For example, if one poses a question to a friend in the same room, and no response arrives, one can simply look at the person from whom a response was expected, in order to determine possible reasons for the lack of a response. This is not possible in the voice-only environment of these chat rooms. Put in interactional terms, this means that a nonresponse can potentially occur at any time, and could be the result of one of a number of issues.

Section 6.2 will examine one instance from the data corpus which differs from the examples in the subsequent sections. As will be seen, the participant who produces

the not-responded-to turn does not opt to continue the talk, but instead proceeds to check for the intended recipients continued presence. In addition, and also *unlike* subsequent sequences in this chapter, the participant does not allow for the possibility that his interlocutor has not understood his question. The result of this is a lengthy repair sequence, which lasts around 4 minutes.

The chapter will then focus on two particular sequential positions in which nonresponses often occur in the chat room setting: (1) following a response seeking turn (Section 6.3), and (2) following a telling (Section 6.4). Analysis will show how speakers faced with nonresponses in these locations allow for the possibility that the nonresponse is due to trouble on the part of their interlocutor(s), and also manage to maintain the progressivity of the talk. As will be seen, speakers tend to treat their interlocutor as still present, but as having had some trouble which has prevented the expected response from being produced. Building on the findings of the previous chapter, speakers in such situations tend to pursue a response in a manner which accounts for the possibility of their original turn having not been understood, i.e through reformulation and/or elaboration on their not-responded-to turn. In so doing, (1) the possible trouble is not brought to the interactional surface, (2) the progressivity of the talk is not hindered, and (3) the participants demonstrate a faith that their interlocutor, who cannot be seen, is still present and able to respond.

The example in the following section is included to demonstrate how such an outcome is avoided in the other cases, because of the manner in which other participants in the chat rooms tend to deal with nonresponses.

## 6.2 Notable Absences and Their Treatment

It has been shown that adjacency pairs form the building blocks of *talk-in-interaction*; that is, a first pair-part (or first social action) projects that a type-fitted (i.e. appropriate) second pair-part is normatively expected (e.g. Schegloff 1968, 2007). Evidence for this can be seen in a number of ways: (1) a relevant response is regularly provided, (2) speakers treat a recipient's failure to provide relevant responses *as* a failure, and (3) recipients orient to not producing a response as a failure (Stivers and Rossano 2010). When the expected appropriate second pair-part does not follow, its absence is notable.

One example from the corpus may be helpful in illustrating this empirically. Additionally, as with the first example in the previous data analysis chapter, it provides a case from the corpus which can subsequently be juxtaposed against the other excerpts to be discussed.

In the following example, Allure, Zana and others are getting acquainted. In the minutes preceding the beginning of this excerpt, the chat room participants have been trying to decide what they should talk about. Just prior to line 1, Allure attempted to initiate a new topic by asking a question, but was apparently unheard by his fellow participants (and the research recording equipment) because of a connection problem.

**Excerpt 6.01** *abroad* (abridged)[25][26]
(27) 01 June 2008 [0:07:00 – 0:07:30]

```
     1    Allure:   .hhh can you hear me right n(h)ow
     2              (0.4)
     3    Zana:     yes we can hear ↑you
     4              (0.5)
     5    Allure:   .h i asked you (.) .hh my darling
     6              (.) have you bin abro:ad
→    7              (5.9) ((with typing sounds))
     8    Allure:   ↑zana::
→    9              (5.1) ((with typing sounds))
     10   Allure:   zana ↑hello:::=
     11   Zana:     =yes yes yes ↓yes
     12             (1.5)
     13   Allure:   an::d (.) i asked you (.) have
     14             you been abro:ad
```

At line 1, Allure takes the floor with an audible inbreath, and then checks that his connection has been re-established by asking whether he can be heard. At line 3, Zana confirms on behalf of his interlocutors that he can once again be heard. After a 0.5 second silence, Allure than apparently repeats the question that was unheard, and produces this question *as* a repeated question, "`.h i asked you (.) .hh my darling (.) have you bin abroad`" (lines 5-6). The question would seem to be directed at Zana, as indicated by Allure's addressing her as his 'darling'.

As was suggested in Section 6.1, an answer is conditionally relevant following a question (Schegloff and Sacks 1973). If a question is not answered, there would seem to be two acceptable alternatives: (1) an account of why no answer is forthcoming, such as a claim of not being able to answer (Heritage 1984a), or (2) a repair initiation

[25] In all excerpts in this chapter, the point of focus, the nonresponse, is indicated with an arrow in the transcript.
[26] The full version of this episode can be found as Appendix B.

which indicates that an answer is conditional on a repair coming first (Stivers and Robinson 2006). However, as can be seen, Zana produces none of these actions in the 5.9 seconds following Allure's question. As a result, Allure addresses Zana by name and elongates the pronunciation, in what would appear to be an attempt to garner her attention ("zana::", line 8). When Zana still does not respond, neither to the initial question nor to this summons, in the following 5.1 seconds (line 9), Allure again calls her, this time with both her name and an extended summons, "zana ↑hello:::=" (line 10). Zana responds with mutual response tokens, "=yes yes yes yes" (line 11), the strength of which possibly indicate that the summons were not necessary.

Upon Zana's confirmation that she is still present, it could be said that recipiency has been re-established. Allure then proceeds to re-ask his question "an::d (.) i asked you (.) have you been abroad" (lines 13-14), again producing it *as* a re-asked question. Subsequent lines demonstrate that Zana does not understand the question, and the ensuing trouble covers 150+ lines of transcript and lasts around 4 minutes. Aspects of this will be a focus of analysis in Section 7.03. However, the lines examined so far are sufficient to discuss the two presently relevant points.

First of all, it can be observed that the development of the topic is 'put on hold' upon Zana's nonresponse. Allure treats the lack of an answer to his question as a notable absence, and opts to check for Zana's presence, and attempt to re-establish recipiency, before proceeding further. Previous research has shown that, in physically copresent talk, "gaze can be used as a resource for pursuing uptake when response is missing, *before* resorting to a verbal pursuit…" (Stivers and Rossano 2010: 9, emphasis added). Of course, this is not possible in multiparty online talk. Additionally, this absence of visual signals for participants creates a potentially fragile interactional environment; any nonresponse could be interpreted by the first speaker as a loss of recipiency. Despite this, however, the above excerpt is not typical in the chat rooms, and participants do not regularly put the talk on 'hold' every time a response is absent. This will be demonstrated throughout the following two sections.

Secondly, and relatedly, while the reason for Zana's nonresponse *may* be due to a loss of recipiency (perhaps because of a technical problem), it equally could be that she was engaged in another activity, either online or in her physical proximity. Perhaps she was engaged, but simply didn't hear, or understand. Although she later initiates repair to indicate that she doesn't understand the question, this may not have

been the case at the point of nonresponse. In others cases, the 'real' reason for nonresponse may not be revealed. To some extent, this is irrelevant anyway. How speakers treat a nonresponse is the matter of concern in this chapter. The previous excerpt is included to show one possible way of responding to a nonresponse. The remaining analysis in this chapter will show that this is not the most common way in the chat rooms. As will be shown, it is more typical for participants to trust that their interlocutor(s) are still present, and to treat the nonresponse as an indication of possible problems in hearing and/or understanding, by reformulating and elaborating the not-responded-to turn.

### 6.3 Nonresponses to Response-Seeking Turns

This section will present and analyse episodes in which a response-seeking turn, typically a question, is not responded to. Again, the focus is on how the nonresponses are dealt with by the previous speaker. As has been discussed in earlier sections, when faced with trouble, participants at talk consider the local sequential environment, as well as the nature of their setting and interlocutors, in order to react accordingly. In this section, it will be argued that regardless of the 'real' source of trouble, the participants deal with nonresponses to questions in such a way as allow for possibile difficulties in hearing and/or understanding, while also managing to maintain the progressivity of the talk.

In the first excerpt, Jen (a Korean), Andregee (a Latvian), Veronica (from China) and others are discussing different languages. Veronica has just told the others that she considers French to be the most romantic language in the world. Andregee responded to this by stating that he finds French words very difficult to pronounce. The excerpt begins with the subsequent turn by Jen, which is latched on to this comment by Andregee.

**Excerpt 6.02** *different tones*
(17) 30 April 2007 [0:15:11 – 0:15:38]

```
1    Jen:      =well i think (0.2) yeah i haven-
2              learn chinese before but I think
3              chinese ↑also (0.4) y'know one of
4              the most (.) difficult languages
5              to learn too i ↓think (.) .hh (.)
6              because [there]=
7    Andre:            [for- ]
```

```
     8    Jen:      =is like
     9              (0.5)
     10   Andre:    for euro[peans]
     11   Jen:              [tiny ]
     12   Veron:    you (just [like)]=
     13                       [(***)]
     14   Veron:    =(*) (.) hhh
     15             (1.1)
     16   Jen:      ↓yea::h because like .hh (.)
     17             there's the different ↓tones
     18             right?
→    19             (1.3)
     20   Jen:      like (0.9) ↑.hh sam::::e maybe
     21             same letter but different ↓tones
     22             y'know different ↑meanings i
     23             think
→    24             (0.7)
     25   Jen:      i'm not quite sure but i think so
     26             (0.5)
     27   Andre:    can you (0.2) say something nice
     28             [  in ch]inese
```

Jen's turn at lines 1-6 is regarding the difficulty in learning Chinese, and is directly related to Andregee's just prior turn, which assessed French in a similar manner. Andregee begins to comment upon this at line 7, but does not get further than the first word, most likely because it is produced in overlap with Jen's ongoing talk. After a 0.5 second silence (line 9), Andregee proceeds to complete his comment ("`for euro[peans]`", line 10), following which there is further trouble in the form of multiple overlaps and inaudible talk (lines 11-14).

After a 1.3 second silence (line 15), Jen takes the floor again. She opens her turn with an agreement token, "`↓yea::h`", and continues by explaining why she considers Chinese to be so difficult, "`because like .hh (.) there's the different ↓tones right?`" (lines 16-18). The turn ending "`right?`" projects an agreement or confirmation from the next speaker, and indicates the strength of Jen's belief regarding her observation.

However, no such agreement is forthcoming in the following 1.3 seconds. After this time, Jen self-selects to elaborate on her observation that Chinese is difficult to learn because of the language's use of tones, "`like (0.9) ↑.hh sam::::e maybe same letter but different ↓tones y'know different ↑meanings i think`" (lines 20-23). This turn elaborates on her just prior turn, and provides her interlocutors with not only another opportunity to respond, but also more information with which to understand what she is describing. Additionally, note that this turn ending indicates a weakened stance from Jen, "`i think`", which now displays an uncertainty on her part.

When the is still no response in the following 0.7 seconds (line 24), Jen weakens her stance even further, "i'm not quite sure but i think so" (lines 25). This weakening of stance might be expected in this sequential location, since askers of such questions have been found to treat a nonresponse as an indication of disalignment. For example, Pomerantz (1984a) showed how questions not responded to are subsequently adapted to fit in with assumed disalignment.

While Jen does adjust the strength of her conviction, she builds into this an elaboration on her initial point, thus providing her interlocutors with the opportunity to agree/align with her. At the second attempt, when such an action still does not emerge, she hedges her observation even further. In shifting to a statement (lines 20-23), and then to an epistemic comment on this (line 25), Jen allows for the possibility that her lattermost turn be treated as a step-wise transition into another, related, topic. Her turn is, indeed, treated as such; Adendo subsequently makes a request which, although related to the topic of Chinese language, is not 'type-fitted' to Jen's observation about the difficulty of the use of tones in Chinese ("can you (0.2) say something nice [in ch]inese", lines 27-28).

Jen's not-responded-to turn in this example is a question in the sense that it seeks a response, and more specifically projects confirmation. As has been discussed, how she deals with nonresponses in her subsequent turns are shaped by the social action performed by her original turn. The remaining examples in this section do not include response/confirmation-seeking observations, but rather information-seeking questions. As such, the lack of response is dealt with differently than in the previous case.

Excerpt 6.03 provides a simple case of a reformulation following a nonresponse. It occurs as Jen, Andregee and others have just finished talking about movies that they like. Following a lengthy silence in which no-one spoke, Jen self-selects to take the floor.

**Excerpt 6.03** *job*
(17) 30 April 2007 [0:13:46 – 0:14:03]

```
     1    Jen:     so [andre what]=
     2    ?:           [ what what]
     3    Jen:     =are you- (0.2) o:h what do you
     4             do
→    5             (0.9)
     6    Jen:     what's your ↓job
     7             (0.2)
```

```
8     Andre:    .hhh hhh (.) what i am doing
9               now?
10              (0.6)
11    Jen:      ↓yes:
12              (0.4)
13    Andre:    i'm:::: (like) i'm student hhh
14              i'm studying ↓business
15              (1.0)
16    Jen:      a:::h studying business
17              [okay (do y-)]
```

At lines 1 and 3, Jen addresses Andregee and begins to formulate a new question, "so [andre what]= =are you-", but stops mid-way through, presumably because of the unknown speaker's overlapping talk (line 2). Jen soon restarts, and completes her query at the second attempt, "o:h what do you do" (lines 3-4). When Andregee does not respond in the following 0.9 seconds, Jen provides him with another opportunity to provide the same information, by reformulating the question to "what's your ↓job" (line 6). Andregee then provides an understanding check ("**.**hhh hhh (.) what i am doing now?", lines 8-9), which Jen confirms as correct (line 11), allowing Andregee to answer ("i'm:::: (like) i'm student hhh i'm studying ↓business", lines 13-14).

This short, simple excerpt provides another example of a reformulation following a nonresponse. It is not being claimed that Andregee has not understood the question 'what do you do?', nor even that Jen suspects that he has. Rather, it can be seen that, following the absence of a response, Jen's actions allow for the possibility that Andregee hasn't heard or hasn't understood.

Questions regarding profession are common in the chat rooms, and the following example provides another case of this. This excerpt also follows a similar series of events as the previous example. Here, Jen, James and Cody are still getting acquainted with one another.

**Excerpt 6.04** *student or working*
(18) 1 May 2007 [0:05:00 – 0:05:21]

```
1     Jen:      ↑hey ↑lee=
2     James:    =a:nd [it-  ]
3     Cody:           [ha↓hu]
4     Jen:            [ (**)] do in ↑korea
→ 5               (0.9)
6     Jen:      [ (*)  ]
7     James:    [↑↑yeah]
8               (0.4)
9     Jen:      ar- are you a ↑student or:: are
10              you ↓working
```

```
11              (1.6)
12    James:    ↑me
13              (0.4)
14    Jen:      ↓yes
15              (4.6) ((with some typing sounds))
16    James:    who is speaking [   (**)    ]=
17    Cody:                     [(yeah sure)]
18    James:    =↑Jen
19              (0.6)
20    Jen:      ↑yes i just a[sked you,      ]
21    James:                 [>yeah yeah yah<]
22              (0.3)
23    Jen:      whether [you]=
24    James:            [uh-]
25    Jen:      =work or: ↓y'know (0.3) whether you
26              study=
27    James:    =↑a:h >yeah yah<
28              (0.7)
29    Cody:     >make [it snappy<]
30    James:          [  u:::h   ] i::,
```

At line 1, Jen identifies the recipient of her forthcoming turn as 'Lee'. Some contextual information may be necessary here. The speaker of the next turn has the username 'James', and indeed self-identifies as this on many occasions during his chat room interactions. However, his profile information included his real name, which is Yu-Lee. With this turn at line 1, it appears that Jen is summoning him by his 'real' name, which seems to be the source of some forthcoming uncertainty.

At line 2, James utters "=a:nd [it-]", which would appear to be the start of a continuation of his prior talk. This is cut off, presumably because Cody's very brief laughter tokens ("[ha↓hu]", line 3) overlap with it. Jen can then be heard to say "[(**)] do in ↑korea" (line 4). The audible part of which appears to be the end of a question which has not been heard fully by the other interactants (nor indeed by the recording equipment) because of the overlap.

James does not respond in the following 0.9 seconds silence (line 5), after which Jen self-selects again, but stops when the beginning of this turn (line 6) is produced in overlap with James' "[↑↑yeah]" (line 7). After this overlapping talk, there is a short silence (0.4 seconds, line 8), and Jen then reformulates her question, "ar- are you a ↑student or:: are you ↓working" (lines 9-10). Much like in the previous example, Jen has avoided repeating her question and has instead offered an alternative formulation which, if answered, will result in the same information being obtained. In addtion to this, Jen's reformulation has candidate answers built in through providing alternatives. Again, this alleviates any possibility of non-understanding, or non-hearing.

It is worth emphasising that Jen opts to reformulate, rather than simply repeat, her question, even though the original asking was produced in overlap with talk from two other participants. As has been discussed throughout the analysis chapters so far, participants at talk are adept at diagnosing causes of trouble, and act accordingly. One might suspect that Jen would consider the overlap as problematic, and deal with the subsequent nonresponse by repeating her question.

At line 12, James appears to check that he is the designated respondent of this question ("↑me"). After Jen confirms that this is the case ("↓yes", line 14), 4.6 seconds pass (line 15) without any further talk (although some typing sounds are clearly audible). Following this, rather than responding, James seeks identification of the speaker of the question ("who is speaking [(**)] ↑Jen", lines 16 and 18). By doing this, James has bypassed his obligation to respond, by filling that 'slot' with a question of his own. In the next turn, Jen both confirms herself as the speaker, and also begins to offer her question again, "↑yes i just a[sked you,]" (line 20). Note that this is produced in overlap with James' confirmation tokens "[>yeah yeah yah<]", line 21), which might indicate that James is aware of the question he is being asked to answer. Regardless, Jen continues to formulate the whole question again ("whether [you] work or: ↓y'know (0.3) whether you study=", lines 23 and 25-26), even when James vies for the floor, possibly in order to respond, in the middle of this (line 24).

Again, we can see the speaker of a question dealing with the lack of an appropriate response (either with no talk from the intended recipient, or with the formation of a side sequence), by reformulating, elaborating and/or repeating. In the case of this most recent example, we can even see the question speaker repeat her reformulation of the question in full, even after the intended recipient (eventually) displays that they have understood, and is beginning to respond.

This phenomena can be seen more clearly in Excerpt 6.05, which also concerns as unanswered question regarding a participant's profession. The excerpt begins as Fidel, Cheryl and Adendo's discussion about China comes to a close. Fidel has been seeking confirmation that the different dialects in China are not mutual intelligible, and Cheryl has just stated that this is true most of the time, but that there are occasions on which speakers of different Chinese dialects can understand one another.

**Excerpt 6.05** *what do you do?*
(28) 2 June 2008 [1:27:50 – 1:28:19]

```
1     Fidel:    i ↓see=
2     Cheryl:   =yes=
3     Adendo:   =yeah ↓sometimes
4               (6.4)
5     Fidel:    so:::: what do you guys do for
6               ↓living
→ 7             (0.4)
8     Fidel:    >what do you ↑do<
→ 9             (1.7)
10    Fidel:    are you:::: (0.7) are you
11              working,
→ 12            (1.5)
13    Fidel:    or are you a ↓student
→ 14            (3.2)
15    Adendo:   ↑me
16              (1.0)
17    Fidel:    mm-hmm.
18              (0.6)
19    Fidel:    yeah i- [i mean]=
20    Adendo:           [u::h=a]
21    Fidel:    =both (0.2) both of you
22              (1.3)
23    Adendo:   u::h i:::'m a:: mechanical
24              ↓engineer
```

The preceding discussion comes to a close at line 3, following which there is a 6.4 second silence (line 4). Fidel then takes the floor to initiate a new topic, beginning with an elongated 'so' to indicate this topic change, "so:::: what do you guys do for ↓living" (lines 5-6). Fidel does not wait long for a response (0.4 seconds silence, line 7), before reformulating his question, quickly uttering ">what do you ↑do<" (line 8). There is still no response in the next 1.7 seconds (line 9), and so Fidel self-selects again, this time beginning with an extended "are you::::", before pausing for 0.7 seconds (line 10). Although this is not a grammatically complete turn, and so Fidel still has the floor in this 0.7 second pause, one might imagine that either Adendo or Cheryl could take the floor to answer the question posed in lines 5-6 and line 8. However, they do not.

Instead, Fidel continues, asking "are you working," (lines 10-11). This turn is produced with a 'continuing' intonation, which may project that alternatives to 'working' are to follow. Before the alternative is presented, though, there is a 1.5 second pause (line 12) in which either Adendo or Cheryl could confirm or reject the possibility that they have jobs. Neither does so, and Fidel accordingly provides an alternative possibility, "or are you a ↓student" (line 13). After this turn, Fidel does not continue; instead, a 3.2 second silence follows (line 14).

In the first response by one of the other participants, it becomes apparent that the lack of an answer may have been due to the ambiguity in next-speaker selection on the part of Fidel, who's first turn in this sequence (lines 5-6) appeared to be addressed to both of his interlocutors, and did not specify who should speak next. As such, Adendo checks that he is the required respondent ("↑me", line 15). After confirming that a response is expected from him ("mm-hmm.", line 17), Fidel then suggests that the questions were not directed at either individual in particular ("yeah i- [i mean] both (0.2) both of you", lines 19 and 21). Adendo, however, having recently taken the floor, continues to answer the question ("u::h i:::'m a:: mechanical ↓engineer", lines 23-24).

Both Excerpt 6.04 and Excerpt 6.05 include a case of uncertainty regarding next speaker selection, as demonstrated by the checking of one interlocutor as to whether it is they who is the intended respondent. In both cases, the ambiguity is most likely an artefact of the online multiparty chat room. In Excerpt 6.04, the confusion was apparently due to the use of an interlocutors 'real' name, in an environment where created usernames are more prevalent and expected. In Excerpt 6.05, it would appear that the ambiguity is due to the complete absence of an addressed next speaker. In copresent multi-party talk, a next-speaker is typically selected through gaze, especially in the absence of an explicit address term (Sacks *et al* 1974).

In the absence of gaze, a 'respondent designator', with which a intended recipient is clearly identified (i.e. "what do you think Mark?"), is preferred to a 'respondent indicator' (i.e. "what do you think?"), with which a specific respondent is suggested but not identified (Lerner 2003). In these chat rooms, in which gaze is not an available interactional resource, participants are faced with problems if they do not adapt their conduct accordingly. The previous two excerpts provide examples of such problems.

However, the participants were apparently not cognizant of ambiguous next-speaker selection as a possible reason behind nonresponse. Instead, the participants reformulated and elaborated upon their questions, thus overcoming possible issues with regards to hearing or understanding. In the previous excerpt, regardless of the reason behind the lack of response, Fidel provided the others with four chances to respond, firstly with the initial question (lines 5-6), with its reformulation (line 8), and

the with two, more narrow, questions (lines 10-11 and line 13) which required confirmation or rejection, and also invited further response.

The following excerpt provides another similar example, although it differs slightly in that the intended respondent is identified. The excerpt begins as Adendo and Fidel are discussing the former's working life. Adendo has just informed Fidel about his age when he left university, and the company he has worked for since then.

**Excerpt 6.06** *age*
(28) 2 June 2008 [1:28:43 – 1:29:05]

```
1     Adendo:   this my: (0.2) er:: f- (0.5)
2               fourth years
3               (1.5)
4               ((mic noise))
5               (1.2)
6     Adendo:   and ↑you=
7     Fidel:    =so::,
8               (0.4)
9     Fidel:    °so-° so that must (.) you know
10              (0.6) so that makes you:
11              <twen'y six>
→ 12            (1.2)
13    Fidel:    <twen'y (.) ↓s[even>         ]
14                            [((mic noise))]
→ 15            (0.4)
16    Fidel:    i mean, (0.4) i'm- i'm asking
17              your ↓age
→ 18            (0.6)
19    Fidel:    how old [   are ↓you   ]
20    Adendo:           [>twenty eigh'<]
21              (0.3)
22    Adendo:   twenty eigh'=
23    Fidel:    =twen'y eight ↑o:::h=↑ahuh
24              [i(h)'m]=
25    Adendo:   [ yeah.]
26    Fidel:    =also twe(hh)n'y ei(hh)ght.
```

At line 1, Adendo states that he is currently in his fourth year of employment with the company in question. There is no apparent response or uptake from his interlocutor in the following 2.7+ seconds (lines 3-5), and so Adendo self-selects in order to switch the focus of the discussion on to Fidel, "`and ↑you=`" (line 6). However, Fidel also speaks at this point, uttering "`=so::,`", which is latched on to the end of Adendo's turn. This elongated production of so appears to be backward-oriented, suggesting that Fidel has something to say with regards to what has recently been said. After a short pause (0.4 seconds, line 8), Fidel begins another new turn "`°so-° so that must (.) you know (0.6) so that makes you: <twen'y six>`" (lines 9-11). This turn serves as both a commentary on the news Fidel has already received regarding

Adendo's biography, and also as an indirect question. The turn ends with Fidel's calculated assumption (based upon what he knows regarding Adendo's education and length of employment) that his interlocutor is twenty six years of age.

Although this turn is not formulated as an explicit question, the age Fidel offers as a guess is uttered with some uncertainty, in the form of slowed down speech ("<twen'y six>", line 11). One would expect that the recipient of an age guess would either confirm or reject such a guess, and yet Adendo does not. At least, he does not respond in the 1.2 seconds pause (line 12) before Fidel provides a second guess, "<twen'y (.) ↓s[even>", again produced slowly (line 13). Whether this second guess is a legitimate re-estimation of Adendo's age or not, is irrelevant. It provides Adendo with another slot in which to respond. However, he does not respond in the following 0.4 seconds (line 15), which may be due to the microphone noise (line 14) overlapping with, and potentially impeding the hearing of, Fidel's second age guess.

With two attempts at guessing Adendo's age, Fidel then resorts to some meta-talk in an attempt to obtain a response, "i mean, (0.4) i'm- i'm asking your ↓age" (lines 16-17). While it seems obvious that a response (in the form of a confirmation or a rejection) was necessary previously, this explicit request makes a response even more relevant. Note also that Fidel frames this turn in the present continuous tense, indicating that the asking of a question is an ongoing activity until the answer is provided. In stating 'I am presently engaged in the action of asking you a question', Fidel is making it clear to Adendo that he is required to provide an answer to that question.

In the following 0.8 seconds (line 18), there is still no response, and so Fidel once again speaks, this time formulating an explicit question, "how old [are ↓you]" (line 19). While this is no longer an example of meta-talk, it is still an action which serves the pursuit of a response. Further, it is another new action, the first time that Fidel has asked Adendo in such a manner. It ultimately transpires that Adendo answers the question before Fidel manages to complete it, quickly uttering "[>twenty eigh'<]" (line 20) in overlap with the end of Fidel's question ("[are ↓you]", line 19). At line 22, Fidel repeats his response, "twenty eigh'=", presumably in case it went unheard in the overlap with Adendo's question, and Adendo then repeats and

offers change of state tokens, in acknowledgement of the answer ("=twen'y eight ↑o:::h=↑ahuh", line 23).

This excerpt provides further examples of the ways nonresponses are dealt with. When his information-seeking question is not responded to, the question-asker provides multiple further opportunities for his interlocutor to respond. He achieves this through a second guess of the forthcoming information, a reformulation of his question, and some meta-commentary regarding what he is asking for. In following this line of actions, the question-asker allows for the (undisplayed) possibility that he has not been heard or understood, while at the same time continues the progressivity of the talk. These kinds of response pursuits through various means, as opposed to mere repetition, recipient confirmation (e.g. "I'm talking to you, Lee!") or presence-checking (e.g. "are you still there?") can be seen on many occasions in this corpus.

### 6.4 Nonresponses to Tellings

This section will address instances in which participants engaged in a 'telling' treat a response to the telling as absent. As with the previous section, the focus will be on how such nonresponses are dealt with by the speaker of the telling. A nonresponse following a telling may not be as accountable as a nonresponse following a question (Couper-Kuhlen [2010] has pointed out a distinction between absent and *noticeably* absent turns at talk), but all of the following excerpts contain incidences in which the first speaker treats the absence of a response *as* an absence in their subsequent actions, which appear to pursue a response.

The first two excerpts in this section were included in the previous chapter, although the current point of interest now differs. In Excerpt 6.07, Jen and Andregee have been talking about the kinds of movies they like.

**Excerpt 6.07** *horror movie*
(17) 30 April 2007 [0:09:43 – 0:09:56]

```
     1    Jen:      .tch see I love horror ↑movie
→    2              (1.7)
     3    Jen:      you know.
→    4              (1.1)
     5    Jen:      horror movie?
     6              (0.8)
     7    Andre:    horror ↑movie
     8              (2.0)
     9    Jen:      yeah ↑scary, y'know horror movi:e
```

```
10              (3.1)
11    Andre     ↑↓o:kay
```

At line 1, Jen informs Andregee that she is a fan of horror movies ("`.tch see I love horror ↑movie`"). Jen places stress on the word 'love', which displays the strength of her fondness for this genre of movies. When there is no uptake or response by Andre in the following 1.7 seconds, Jen opts to pursue a response with an agreement-seeking token, "`you know.`" at line 3. This affords Andregee a second opportunity in which to respond, or to indicate uncertainty (if any) regarding what Jen has told. However, after another 1.1. seconds silence, Andregee has yet to respond, and so Jen repeats the name of the genre of movies in question, this time produced with 'try-marked' intonation, "`horror movie?`" (line 5). In so doing, she provides Andregee with another opportunity to respond, but has also adopted her turn such that it may project an indication by Andregee that he did not hear or does not understand.

As was discussed in the analysis of this sequence in Section 5.4, Andregee's response at line 7 ("`horror ↑movie`") may be indicative of his surprise that Jen is a fan of such movies. Jen's confirmation at line 9 ("`yeah ↑scary, y'know horror movi:e`") subsequently confirms that this is the case, and builds into the confirmation an explanation of why she likes them ("`↑scary`").

It should also be noted that both Andregee's candidate hearing at line 7, and Jen's confirmation at line 9 are followed by rather lengthy silences (2.0 seconds at line 8 and 3.1 seconds at line 10, respectively). However, for whatever reasons, the participants do not opt to pursue responses in those silences, and the responses eventually come. After the 3.1 second silence at line 10, Andregee reacts to Jen's telling with "`↑↓o:kay`" (line 11), a response token which appears to close the sequence.

The following example follows something of a similar trajectory to that of the previous excerpt, although it differs in two ways. First of all, the (apparent) trouble resolution is not closed as quickly as it is by Jen and Andregee. Secondly, and related to this, the speaker of the telling puts extra work into overcoming the possibility that one aspect of his telling has not been understood.

As a reminder, in the talk leading up to this excerpt, James (from Korea) and Osaka (from Japan), as well as some others, have been talking about unusual food-

eating practices from various national cultures. The excerpt begins just after Osaka has divulged that he does not approve of eating horses.

**Excerpt 6.08** *whale*
(23) 18 May 2007 [0:47:28 – 0:48:35]

```
1                (0.9)
2      James:    .hh yeah so an', (0.5) hello
3                osa↑ka
4      Osaka:    ↑hello=
5      James:    =yeh.
6                (1.0)
7      James:    yeah yeah. >my name's [james]<=
8      Osaka:                          [ yeh.]
9      James:    =so::: (.) i::: .hh (0.3) in my
10               case there wh- (0.5) u:::::h
11               (0.6) when i checked the (.)
12               ↑in'erne:t (0.2) i- i read a some
13               kind of article from=a ↑japan
14               (0.2) so you know:, (0.4) then
15               i checked the ↑yahoo ↑japan (0.4)
16               so i can- i can find=a some kind
17               of story so: i think >(it is very
18               surprise)< (.) to:: me .hh that
19               ↑story (0.2) er- is that,
20               (0.6) (em:::) japanese
21               peopl::e, (0.2) sometimes, (1.0)
22               <they:::> (0.4) <have a,> (0.3)
23               wha::l:e
→ 24             (1.0)
25     James:    meat.
→ 26             (0.5)
27     James:    whale (.) ↑okay
28               (0.8)
29     Jen:      ↓a::h=
30     Osaka:    =whell ↓meat
31               (1.2)
32     James:    yeah yeah yah (0.3) whale
→ 33             (0.8)
34     James:    whales the sea
→ 35             (0.7)
36     James:    it's=a big ↑sea:
→ 37             (0.5)
38     James:    yah.
→ 39             (0.8)
40     James:    double yoo aitch ay ell ee
41               ((W-H-A-L-E)) whale (0.2) it's
42               a (0.4) big (0.4) fish (.) okay?
```

This excerpt was analysed (albeit with a different point of focus) in the previous chapter. For a more detailed analysis of the first 22 lines, readers are advised to revisit Excerpt 5.12. To gloss, James has indicated at lines 2-3 that he wishes to say something of concern to Osaka. Following this, he proceeds to provide a lengthy account of having recently read about Japanese people eating whale meat. James

lengthy turn ends at lines 20-23 with "japanese peopl::e, (0.2) sometimes, (1.0) <they:::> (0.4) <have a,> (0.3) wha::l:e". In preceding this with a suggestion at his surprise in reading this on the internet, it would appear that James wishes Osaka, as a Japanese, to confirm or deny the accuracy of the article he has recently read.

In the following 1.0 second silence (line 24), however, no such confirmation or denial is forthcoming, from Osaka nor any of the other participants in the chat room. As such, James produces a turn increment (Auer 1997; Schegloff 1996; Ford et al 2002). Turn increments have been defined as "nonmain-clause continuation after a possible point of turn completion" (Ford et al 2002: 16), and described as 'recompleters' (Tanaka 1999). That is, although James' turn is grammatically and pragmatically complete upon his utterance of "wha::l:e" at line 23, his addition of "meat" at line 25 completes his turn once again, providing Osaka with a second opportunity to respond.

Again, Osaka does not respond (0.5 seconds, line 26) and James proceeds in a similar manner to Jen in the previous example. At line 27, he produces a repeat of one aspect of his turn, "whale", coupled with a confirmation check, "↑okay". This allows for the possibility that his interlocutors have not heard or understood that he is talking about people in Japan eating whales (an action that, for many people, may be instantly commentable upon).

This series of response pursuits on the part of James would appear to be over as Jen displays (at least) understanding with a change of state token "↓a::h=" at line 29, which is latched on to Osaka's candidate hearing, "=whell ↓meat" (line 30). This candidate hearing would appear to project a confirmation or denial of its accuracy by James, which arrives in the form of multiple confirmation tokens and a repeat "yeah yeah yah (0.3) whale" (line 32).

At this point then, with the candidate hearing confirmed as accurate, one would once again expect a response to the original telling to arrive. It does not and, as such, James appears to treat his repeat of 'whale' as insufficient in confirming Osaka's candidate hearing. James then proceeds to pursue a response to his confirmation through multiple attempts to establish mutual intersubjectivity with regards to the lexical item 'whale'. This was also discussed in detail in the analysis of Excerpt 5.12 in Chapter 5. To gloss again, these attempts include the addition of some information

regarding whales, "whales the sea" (line 34) and "it's=a big ↑sea:" (line 36), neither of which are responded to. After this, James resorts to spelling out the word 'whale', which possibility indicates that he is sensitive to his own intelligibility. In addition to the spelling, James adds some extra information regarding whales, "it's a (0.4) big (0.4) fish", and ends this turn with a confirmation seeking token, "okay?" (lines 41-42).

The subsequent talk is not of direct relevance to the present point (although it is analysed when this episode is revisited again in Section 7.01), nor is the fact that the information James offers may be ambiguous ("whales the sea" may not be entirely clear) or inaccurate (whales are mammals, not fish). What is relevant is that, as with the previous example, a nonresponse results in some work by the speaker of a telling in order to provide a further opportunity for a response. Additionally, the interactional work put in by James overcomes the possibility that Osaka has not heard or understood his telling.

The following example shows a similar course of events, albeit over a shorter period of time. It occurs just minutes earlier than the sequence shown in Excerpt 6.08 and is part of the ongoing story-telling of 'unusual' food-eating practices. Jen is coming to the end of a story she is telling her interlocutors (James, Osaka and some others) regarding her trip to Japan. She has just informed them that she visited the home of a Japanese friend, whose mother prepared dinner for everyone. Just prior to line 1, Jen has told the others that the dinner host informed her guests that horse meat was to be served. After a short side sequence (in which understanding of the term 'horse' was checked), Jen resumes her story

**Excerpt 6.09** *raw*
(23) 18 May 2007 [0:46:28 – 0:46:37]

```
1    Jen:      anyways ah h:ad it and ↑then (.)
2              .hhh (.) ↑↑mm:::::: it's- it was
3              raw f-
4              (0.5)
5    Jen:      raw meat >alrigh'=↓y'know< (0.2)
6              ↑raw
7              (1.3)
8    Jen:      wasn't [ ↓fried  ]
9    James:             [yeah yeah]
10             (0.2)
11   Jen:      [↑(alrigh')]
12   James:    [  yah u-  ]
13             (0.4)
14   Jen:      ↑so::=
```

```
15   James:    =yeah yeah
16             (0.4)
17   James:    ↑yes
```

In resuming her story, Jen informs the others that "it's- it was raw f-" (lines 1-3). Her story has built up to this climax, with "raw" uttered with emphasis. Given the location of this turn within her story, how it is delivered, and its relevance to the ongoing talk regarding unusual foods, this can be seen as the story's 'upshot'. As such, it projects at least a response token, which does not arrive.

When there is no response or uptake after 0.5 seconds silence, Jen continues, elaborating with "raw meat", also adding a quickly-produced understanding check ">alrigh'=↓y'know<", and then repeating with rising intonation, "↑raw" (lines 5-6). By elaborating, repeating and including an understanding check, Jen has, in one short, quick turn, allowed for any possible trouble in understanding or hearing. Despite this work on her part, there is still no response, either to her story or to the necessity or otherwise of her extra information (such as a change of state token), in the subsequent 1.3 seconds (line 7).

Following this, Jen then begins to offer a definition of what 'raw' means in the context of her story, "wasn't [↓fried]" (line 8). This explanation is overlapped with confirmation by James, "[yeah yeah]" (line 9), which suggests that the definition wasn't necessary. This understanding confirmation sequence extends over the following few turns (lines 11-17) within which James offers more confirmation tokens "=yeah yeah" (line 15) and "↑yes" (line 17). From these, it would appear that James is displaying that the extra work put in by Jen to clarify 'raw' was not necessary.

In the two excerpts preceding this one, the pursuer of a response wasn't stopped short by recipient (and in fact, with regards Excerpt 6.08, it later becomes appears that 'whale meat' had not been understood). However, in this example, the recipient halts the elaboration in progress, thus displaying that such extra work is not necessary. And yet, in providing extra information, repetition and a definition in such a short space of time, Jen may be interpreting the nonresponse as due to a problem with regards to the lexical item 'raw'. It is also possible that she is sensitive to her own intelligibility in pronouncing the word, as may have been the case with James' pronunciation of 'whale' in the previous example. Equally, it may be that Jen is simply seeking the kind of response she expects in telling this kind of story (such as surprise, disgust).

However, these possibilities can not be determined empirically. Whatever her intentions, she elaborates in a manner which allows for possible nonhearing or nonunderstanding while pursuing a response.

The same outcome occurs in the following example, in which Jen and Tom are introducing themselves to one another. Tom, who had earlier described himself as Australian, is explaining his linguistic and cultural background to Jen.

**Excerpt 6.10** *Swedish born*
(6) 14 March 2007 [0:09:06 – 0:09:21]

```
1    Tom:     you see, i ↑am (.) i am er::::
2             swedish bo:rn
3             (6.2)
4    Tom:     yea'. (0.2) i- i- w:: (.) i::, i'm
5             born in sweden y'[see  ]
6    Jen:                     [↑ye:s] (.) yea:h.
```

At line 1, Tom explains "you see, i ↑am (.) i am er:::: swedish bo:rn". His restart and hesitation might be a display that he is having or anticipating trouble. Jen does not display trouble, but nor does she react or respond in the following 6.2 seconds (line 2). It would seem, judging from the 24 hours of chat rooms recordings in the present corpus, that divulging one's country of birth is a commentable action. Previous research has shown that norms regarding response tokens, and there use or otherwise, can differ across languages and cultures. For example, Jefferson (2002) discusses some such differences in response tokens in British and American English. Additionally, Young and Lee (2004) explicate the differences of response tokens in Korean and English. This latter study may resonate with this example, since Jen happens to be an L1 speaker of Korean.

As such, it is possible that some participants may treat a response token as expected, while others may not. In this particular excerpt, Tom appears to be treating a response token as relevant, as, when no comment, reaction or even continuer (such as 'yeah') is forthcoming, he self-selects again, and explains, "yea'. (0.2) i- i- w:: (.) i::, i'm born in sweden y'[see]" (line 4-5). This reformulation again begins with a number of self-repairs and some hestiations. Additionally, Tom's second telling ends with the response-seeking "y'[see]", which would make any subsequent nonresponse more accountable.

Before his explanation is complete, however, Jen takes the floor, overlapping the end of his turn a strong confirmation, "[↑ye:s]", and then providing another

"yea:h." (line 6). Here, Tom has pursued a response from Jen by reformulating his just prior turn, and providing her with a second chance to react and, as with the previous example, before the reformulated, response pursuing turn can be completed, the recipient has interjected to display that such work is not necessary.

One further, short, example will be included to demonstrate this phenomena, and also to show that no claims are being made regarding the L2 nature of the participants in the excerpts so far. In this excerpt, Max (who is English) is talking to Chris (an American), with Ronig (a Dane) also present in the room. The three of them are discussing their various professions, and Chris and Max have been sharing their experiences in educational employment.

**Excerpt 6.11** *allotment*
(3) 12 March 2007 [0:11:30 – 0:11:47]

```
 1    Max:     i ↑wus (.) e- i- i once knew a
 2             man who had an allotment ↑garden
→3             (1.3) ((typing sounds))
 4    Max:     °if-° that mean- you know
 5             where 'e: (0.2) grew vegetables
 6             and [stuff]
 7    Chris:       [ yes.] of course.
 8             (0.6)
 9    Max:     and er:: ther- there was a, (0.7)
10             there was a sort of (0.5) er (.)
11             ↑club (0.8) that ran (0.4) the
12             (0.3) complex
```

At lines 1-2, Max announces that he once knew a man who had an allotment garden. This is a canonical opening to a story, and as such, one would expect a continuer to be provided by one of the listeners (see e.g. Sacks 1992; Goodwin 1982; Lerner 1992, for role of listeners in the collaborative production of story-telling). However, neither of Max's interlocutors respond to this turn in the following 1.3 seconds (line 3). Within this time, the sound of someone typing can be clearly heard, although neither the analyst nor the non-typing participants are able to identify who this is.

With no response forthcoming, Max opts to explicate exactly what an allotment garden is. This turn begins with what would seem to be the beginning of an explicit definition "that mean-". However, this is self-repaired to "you know" (line 4). This self-repair from a presumed non-understanding to a projected agreement may be indicative of his sensitivity to not offer an explicit definition of a linguistic item.

Regardless, he provides the extra information that the man's allotment garden was "where 'e: (0.2) grew vegetables and [stuff]" (lines 5-6). This both progresses the talk and allows for the possibility that Chris (and/or Ronig) may not understand the term 'allotment'.

Chris' response, in which he strongly indicates he does in fact know what an allotment is ("[ yes.] of course.", line 7), is produced before Max can complete his definition. In adding 'of course', Chris treats the information as obvious, and not necessary. Ronig does not orient to the term at all.

The possibility of the nonresponse at line 3 being due to Chris' attention being elsewhere is increased when one considers the typing sounds at line 3. Further, it is a possibility which was also available to Max. Despite this, his response to the nonresponse did not halt the talk by checking for the others' continued presence and attention. What his response to the nonresponse did do, was allow for the possibility that they did not hear, or were otherwise distracted from the talk, while still progressing the talk.

The analysis and discussion of Excerpts 6.07 – 6.11 have addressed some ways that speakers of a telling deal with a lack of a response to that telling. As one might expect, there appears to be a normative expectation for a reaction, or at least for a continuer or listenership token to be offered, in response to the telling of news (particularly when that news may be considered something surprising, such as eating whale or raw meat). This is doubtless particularly true in the environment of multi-participant, voice-based, online interaction, when speakers do not have access to non-verbal listenership indicators (such as eye contact and head-nods, for example).

As has been shown, at times, the speaker of a telling which does not receive a response may offer extra information, an elaboration or even a definition of some aspect of their just prior turn. Alongside pursuing a response, this move enables the speaker to allow for potential problems regarding hearing or understanding, without topicalising any such potential problems, and also without halting the progression of the talk.

## 6.5 Summary

While the previous chapter focussed on how speakers respond when an interlocutor displays that they have had some trouble with what has been said, this chapter has examined how speakers deal with the absence of a response to what they have just previously said.

The first excerpt analysed showed one way a participant can respond to a nonresponse – by checking that his interlocutor is still present through a summons. This is understandable given that being 'disconnected' from the chat room is a constant possibility. However, it does not allow for the possibility that the not-responded-to turn has not been understood. Additionally, it halts the progression of the ongoing talk.

However, the remaining excerpts through the chapter have shown that this is not typically the case in the chat rooms. In those excerpts, participants respond to the absence of a response by allowing for the possibility of trouble in understanding, and subsequently pursue a response through elaboration and/or reformulation. Much like with the response to various forms of RIs in the preceding chapter, this prevents exposure of trouble in understanding (if any). Additionally, it maintains the progressivity of the ongoing talk, and also demonstrates a faith that their interlocutor is still connected to the chat room floor, and able to respond.

Analysis has also uncovered that some of the trouble can arise because of ambiguity with regards to speaker selection. This has been explained in terms of some of the constraints of this interactional setting, in which multiple participants are unable to draw upon non-verbal resources, such as embodied actions and gaze. Conversely, the following, final, analysis chapter, will examine how participants in this setting are able to draw upon the affordances of the setting, in terms of one of its communicative features. More specifically, it will examine how this feature is employed by participants who are unable to resolve trouble through talk alone.

# Chapter 7. Regaining Mutual Understanding When Talk Cannot Resolve the Trouble

## 7.1 Introduction

In the first data analysis chapter, the focus was on how orientations to trouble, in the form of other initiations of repair (OIRs), are responded to and dealt with by the recipient. The second analysis chapter focused on how response absences, in a location where a response might rightfully be expected, were reacted to and dealt with by the speaker of the just prior turn. In both sequential environments, the (perceived) trouble was dealt with, in one way or another, through talk. This final data analysis chapter will examine occasions on which trouble in understanding *is* exposed, and on which, when the subsequent talk proves insufficient for resolving it, the participants have to resort to another resource available to them.

More specifically, the analysis in this chapter will focus upon when, and how, participants use the instant private message (IPM) feature of the chat room software in order to communicate with one another in written form. As will be explored, the trouble which is ultimately resolved through the use of IPMs is typically one of linguistic knowledge or understanding.

In the previous two chapters, some of the constraints of the interactional setting of voice-only, multiparty online chat rooms have been discussed. In addition, through the analyses in those chapters, some of the interactional implications for these constraints have been uncovered. For example, the absence of nonverbal resources such as gaze and gesture can lead to some ambiguities regarding next-speaker selection, and this can result in an adapted means of pursuing a response. Conversely, this chapter will consider how one affordance of the communicative setting can aid the interactants.

Previous research has examined 'live' written interaction through the internet, in the form of (quasi)-synchronous internet relay chat (IRC) (e.g. Rintel et al 2001; Vallis 1999). However, it seems that no research exists which has examined how online interactants manage the joint resources of talk- and text-based interaction. In addition to addressing some of the aims outlined in earlier chapters, this chapter also fills this research gap by considering (1) some of the things which occasion written

messages, as well as (2) how the written interaction is connected to the spoken interaction.

As was discussed in Section 4.4, the data collection procedure only allowed for recording of the spoken interaction which was publicly available in the room. As such, many written exchanges surely occurred without detection by the researcher. However, such messages remained out of view of not only the research but also the public discourse of the room. For reasons of not just necessity, but also of analytic interest, this chapter only focuses on IPMs which are oriented to publicly and, as such, impact upon the trajectory of the spoken interaction.

More specifically than this, and in fitting with the themes of the study, the chapter will examine occasions on which the sending of an IPM is used to overcome some form of trouble. As will be seen in the excerpts which follow, the trouble which occasions the use of IPMs is always one of understanding. While the corpus includes examples of participants (apparently) sending one another IPMs in order to flirt, gossip about other chat room members, teach one another words deemed inappropriate for public declaration, and share website links, none of these episodes have been considered relevant to the current topic of investigation.

Twenty-four hours of chat room data presented only a few cases in which IPMs are used to resolve some trouble, only four of which are examined in this chapter. All of these sequences are relatively lengthy, particularly compared to many in the previous analysis chapters. This is understandable, given that the chat room participants appear to attempt to resolve the trouble via talk in the first instance, before resorting to these other means, as will become apparent.

The analysis in this chapter is divided into three sections. Section 7.2 will examine an occasion when the speaker of a trouble source (TS) sends an IPM in order to resolve the trouble. In Section 7.3, the focus will be on requests by an other speaker to have the TS resolved through an IPM. Finally, in Section 7.4, an episode will be provided which demonstrates in further detail how participants coordinate their use of the written and spoken mediums available to them. The same episode serves as an example of the determination participants can display in achieving understanding. In all sections, the interest lies in what occasions the sending of an IPM, how it resolves trouble in the talk, and how it is connected to the talk.

## 7.2 Resolution of Trouble Through an Instant Private Message

The first excerpt in this chapter is an extension of that which was first examined as Excerpt 5.12 in Chapter 5, and then as Excerpt 6.08 in Chapter 6. It is taken from a chat room in which a lengthy discussion about national food eating practices, particularly those which members of other nations might consider unusual, emerged. It features Jen, James (who are both Korean) and Osaka (who is Japanese). In the preceding talk, these interactants (and some others) had discussed in detail the notion of Koreans eating dog (see Brandt and Jenks 2011 for analysis and discussion of those sequences). That was followed a littler later by Jen's story of eating raw horse meat while in Japan. In the moments just prior to this excerpt, Osaka has disclosed that he does not like the idea of eating horses, as he believes horses should be free animals.

**Excerpt 7.01** *whale*[27]
(23) 18 May 2007 [0:47:28 – 0:48:35]

```
1                (0.9)
2     James:     .hh yeah so an', (0.5) hello
3                osa↑ka
4     Osaka:     ↑hello=
5     James:     =yeh.
6                (1.0)
7     James:     yeah yeah. >my name's [james]<=
8     Osaka:                           [ yeh.]
9     James:     =so::: (.) i::: .hh (0.3) in my
10               case there wh- (0.5) u:::::h
11               (0.6) when i checked the (.)
12               ↑in'erne:t (0.2) i- i read a some
13               kind of article from=a ↑japan
14               (0.2) so you know:, (0.4) then
15               i checked the ↑yahoo ↑japan (0.4)
16               so i can- i can find=a some kind
17               of story so: i think >(it is very
18               surprise)< (.) to:: me .hh that
19               ↑story (0.2) er- is that,
20               (0.6) (em:::) japanese
21               peopl::e, (0.2) sometimes, (1.0)
22               <they:::> (0.4) <have a,> (0.3)
23               wha::l:e
24               (1.0)
25    James:     meat.
26               (0.5)
27    James:     whale (.) ↑okay
28               (0.8)
29    Jen:       ↓a::h=
30    Osaka:     =whell ↓meat
31               (1.2)
```

[27] In all excerpts in this chapter, a single arrow indicates the point at which an IPM is requested or offered. A double single line indicates the point at which a recipient verbally displays their receipt, either explicitly or by some other means, such as a change of state token (i.e. "ah!").

```
      32    James:    yeah yeah yah (0.3) whale
      33              (0.8)
      34    James:    whales the sea
      35              (0.7)
      36    James:    it's=a big ↑sea:
      37              (0.5)
      38    James:    yah.
      39              (0.8)
      40    James:    double yoo aitch ay ell ee
      41              ((W-H-A-L-E)) whale (0.2) it's
      42              a (0.4) big (0.4) fish (.) okay?
      43              (2.1)
      44    Osaka:    (its)=
      45    James:    =okay=
      46    Osaka:    ='scuse ↑me=heh ha[hahu]
      47    James:                     [ i- ]=
→     48              =[i wi- i wi- i wi  i will]=
      49    Osaka:     [ double yoo ↑aitch ↑ee  ]
      50              ((W-H-E))
→     51    James:    =send a,
      52              (1.1)
      53    James:    double yoo aitch ay ell ee.
      54              ((W-H-A-L-E)) ((typing sounds))
      55              (1.0)
      56    Osaka:    double yoo aitch [ e-  ]= ((W-H-E))
      57    James:                   [↓okay]
      58    Osaka:    =ee ell ee ((E-L-E))
      59              ((typing sounds))
      60              (1.2)
      61    James:    ↓yeah
      62              (.)
→→    63    Osaka:    OH ↑YES=a yes=(a/sir)
      64              (0.5)
      65    Osaka:    i love.
      66              (0.9)
      67    Osaka:    ↓whale
      68              (0.6)
      69    James:    you ↑love
      70              (0.6)
```

The aspect of this excerpt which is of relevance to this chapter begins at line 40. The preceding moments in this sequence have been examined in both of the previous two chapters. However, a recap seems appropriate, as a reminder of the events which lead up to the present point of interest. After Osaka provides his negative assessment of eating horse meat, James takes the floor, addressing Osaka (lines 2-3) and self-identifying (line 7), which is a practice he regularly engages in. At lines 9-24, James provides a story, and frames this as his contribution to a sequence of stories ("in my case", lines 9-10), following on from Jen's horse meat anecdote. James justifies the telling of this story by marking it as newsworthy, stating that he was "very surprise" (lines 17-18) to find this out. James' suggests that Japanese people sometimes eat whale (line 20-23), but does so in a hedged, cautious manner (note "sometimes", line 21, the pauses in lines 19-23, the slowed down speech at 22-23).

Prior to this, James has also provided an account of the origin of this information, namely the "↑in'erne:t" (line 12), and more specifically, the named source of "↑yahoo ↑japan" (line 15).

It appears that James is being very cautious not to offend Osaka with an erroneous assumption. James' actions here may also be in light of the earlier sequence regarding Koreans eating dogs, in which James suggested that a lot of information on the internet is unreliable (again, see Brandt and Jenks 2011). In other words, he is seeking confirmation from Osaka that this information is reliable; he is providing a story, but simultaneously proffering an 'is this true?' query. This may also explain why James addresses this story to Osaka only, and not to Jen (lines 2-3). However, it may not be entirely clear to his interlocutors that this is a query which requires confirmation or denial.

At line 24, there is a 1.0 second silence in which Osaka or Jen could provide uptake, either with as assessment of the story, as might be expected, or with a confirmation or denial of James' query. However, no response is forthcoming. As such, James provides a turn increment, "meat." (line 25), which provides his interlocutors with a second opportunity to respond (Auer 1997; Schegloff 1996; Ford et al 2002). With still no response in the subsequent 0.5 seconds, James repeats and provides what may be a response pursuit or a confirmation check ("whale (.) ↑okay", line 27). This action prompts a response from both Jen ("↓a::h", line 29) and Osaka ("whell ↓meat").

Jen's response is minimal, and its function difficult to ascertain. It does not appear to be responded to. However, Osaka's turn is treated by James as a candidate hearing, as James confirms enthusiastically, "yeah yeah yah (0.3) whale" (line 32). With still no assessment or response with regards to the story in the next 0.8 seconds (line 33), James provides some extra information regarding whales ("whales the sea", line 34, and "it's=a big ↑sea:", line 36, both with stress at the turn-ending for emphasis), before confirming again ("yah", line 38).

At this point, it is apparent that Osaka has heard the term 'whale meat', since he has repeated it, or his own interpretation of it, at line 30. It also seems that he does not understand the term, as he does not provide what might be expected as an appropriate response. Whether or not this is the actual case, what is clear is that James is treating this as a potential problem in understanding, with his provision of some extra information. Further, in not responding in the multiple available slots, Osaka does

nothing to show James that this extra information is unwarranted. As such, James continues.

With still no response from Osaka, James begins to spell out the word 'whale', "double yoo aitch ay ell ee", and closes this spelling by repeating the word in full, "whale" (lines 40-41). In addition, he adds another piece of descriptive information ("it's a (0.4) big (0.4) fish", line 42) before ending with more understanding checks ("okay?", line 42, and "okay", line 45). In spelling out the word, James may be displaying an uncertainty with regards to his own intelligibility in pronouncing the word 'whale'. What is clear is that James is treating the extra information, about whales being big fish from the sea, as so far insufficient in resolving the trouble. As such, he is drawing upon another interactional resource, that of spelling words out.

Osaka responds to the spelling of 'whale' with an open-class repair initiator (OCRI, see Section 5.1), "'scuse ↑me". He follows this with laughter, "hehhahahu" (line 46), which may be a face-saving device in light of his continued non-understanding. James then begins to respond with what appears to be a pre-repair announcement, "i- i wi- i wi- i will send a," (lines 48 and 51). Although this turn does not get completed, and James do not announce what it is he will send, one can presume that he is referring to sending an IPM (not least because one cannot imagine what else James might send).

It would appear that this announcement by James is in response to Osaka's OCRI at line 46, and is a pre to the repair which is about to be produced via an IPM. However, Osaka continues after his OCRI by producing what would appear to be a partial hearing of the spelling, which he produces in overlap with James' announcement ("double yoo ↑aitch ↑ee", line 49). In repeating only the first three letters of the word, Osaka may be indicating that he did not hear to remaining two letters (see Section 5.2 on partial repeat RIs). James responds by repeating the spelling verbally ("double yoo aitch ay ell ee", line 53) which Osaka again offers a candidate hearing of , this time in full ("double yoo aitch e- ee ell ee", lines 56 and 58).

Overlapped within this is another "okay" by James (line 57). During this, and also in the subsequent 1.2 second pause (line 60), typing sounds can be clearly heard. After this, James produces "↓yeah" (line 61). This yeah closely follows the end of the typing sounds, and may be indicative of the verbal closing of a physical action on the

part of James. Almost immediately following this (0.1 seconds, line 62) is an emphatic change of state token (Heritage 1984b) and confirmation, by Osaka ("OH ↑YES=a yes=(a)/(sir)", line 63). This is followed by another confirmation, "i love" (line 65). Osaka then provides a turn incursion with "↓whale" at line 67, which is the first time in the sequence that Osaka produces the lexical item without 'try-marking' it. James indicates his surprise at this response by asking "you ↑love" (line 69).

This sequence has been examined in all three data analysis chapters, with a different point of interest in each. It would appear that all such interest (on the part of the analyst) comes about because of the apparent trouble with the lexical item 'whale'. It is worth considering how this sequence could have come off had there been no such trouble:

**Excerpt 7.01b** *(imaginary) whale*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 20 | James: | (0.6) (em:::) japanese |
| 21 | | peopl::e, (0.2) sometimes, (1.0) |
| 22 | | <they:::> (0.4) <have a,> (0.3) |
| 23 | | wha::l:e |
| 24 | | (1.0) |
| 63 | Osaka: | OH ↑YES=a yes=(a)/(sir) |
| 64 | | (0.5) |
| 65 | Osaka: | I love. |
| 66 | | (0.9) |
| 67 | Osaka: | ↓whale |
| 68 | | (0.6) |
| 69 | James: | you ↑love |
| 70 | | (0.6) |

The confirmation at line 63 may have been less emphatic were it not for the intervening trouble, but the point remains. The work put in between lines 25 and 62 appears to be James' attempts to obtain the relevant response finally achieved at lines 63 and 65. In this chapter, it is being argued that the action which ultimately results in this relevant response is the sending of the written form of the lexical item 'whale'. This sending of an IPM may itself come about because of James' initial offering of a verbal spelling at lines 40-41. When this verbal spelling occasioned more trouble, as indicated by Osaka's OCRI at line 46, James then drew upon another resource available to participants in this online setting – IPMs.

James pre-repair announcement of "i- i wi- i wi- i will send a," (lines 48 and 51) attended to Osaka's OCRI, and also forewarned that the trouble was to be dealt with in another medium. As such, it acted as a signpost of a shift from spoken

interaction into a written exchange, a link between the spoken and the written. It is also worth noting that this written repair was linked to, and occasioned by, James' failed attempt at spelling the word out verbally.

So, in this sequence, trouble in understanding was exposed, and rose to the interactional surface (although there was still no explicit statement of "I don't understand"). Despite James' efforts to repair any potential problem in understanding before it was exposed, his attempts at repair and elaboration following nonresponse were not sufficient for resolving the trouble. James' attempts at resolving the trouble resulted in his spelling aloud the apparent TS. When this too resulted in an RI and further trouble, James resorted to one of the features of the chat room setting – the IPM function – in order to resolve it. It ultimately proved successful, as Osaka was able to (finally) understand the item 'whale' and respond to James' query.

Of course, an IPM to resolve trouble does not have to be *offered* by the speaker of the trouble-source, but can be first *requested* by the recipient. In fact, the above case of an IPM being sent without being requested is the only one in the corpus. In the remainder of this chapter, sequences which include a request for an IPM will be examined.

### 7.3 Requests For an Instant Private Message in Trouble Resolution

This section will examine sequences in which participants, apparently encountering trouble in understanding one of their interlocutors, request repair in the form of an IPM in order to resolve the trouble. The section begins with an example in which such a request is not upheld.

Excerpt 7.02 is also an extension of an episode examined earlier (as Excerpt 5.01). Leading up to the beginning of this excerpt, Ryan and Danny have been taking about DNA and genetic manipulation, as well as religion and politics. Many other chat room participants, including Hal, have been present in the speaking room, but have not contributed to the discussion. Ryan has made this relevant by naming those participants listed in the speaking room, and making them accountable for their non-participation. Hal subsequently took the floor to explain that the topics of discussion have been too advanced for the other chat room participants, who are (in Hal's words) 'beginners and intermediate in English'. In the seconds before this excerpt begins, Hal

has proposed that a more simple subject should be chosen for discussion and Ryan places the onus on Hal to propose an alternative topic.

**Excerpt 7.02** *Algeria*
(8) 15 March 2007 [1:13:34 – 1:14:38]

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | | Ryan: | what would [ you]= |
| 2 | | Hal: | [(**)] |
| 3 | | Ryan: | =like to talk ↑about |
| 4 | | | (1.5) |
| 5 | | Hal: | ↑what |
| 6 | | Ryan: | what would you <like to talk |
| 7 | | | ↑about> |
| 8 | | | (1.1) |
| 9 | | Hal: | about↑ a simple=er: (0.6) subject |
| 10 | | | (0.4) ah::, la- like er our er:: |
| 11 | | | (2.9) °er::: some subject |
| 12 | | | *i:: don't ↑kno::w° |
| 13 | | | (2.0) |
| 14 | | Ryan: | where are [ you from ] |
| 15 | | Danny: | [(well tell u-) ] |
| 16 | | | (0.8) |
| 17 | | Hal: | i am from algeria |
| 18 | | | (0.9) |
| 19 | | Danny: | ↑yea:s |
| 20 | | | (.) |
| 21 | | Hal: | a- (0.2) i am [ from algeria] |
| 22 | | Danny: | [*- tell us ab]out |
| 23 | | | your country |
| 24 | | Hal: | i am from ↑algeria |
| 25 | | | (0.8) |
| 26 | | Ryan: | tell u- tell us about your c- |
| 27 | | | country |
| 28 | | | (1.5) |
| 29 | | Hal: | ↑what |
| 30 | | | (1.1) |
| 31 | | Ryan: | tell us about you country. |
| 32 | | | (6.6) |
| → | 33 | Hal: | if you can write to ↓me |
| 34 | | | (1.1) |
| → | 35 | Hal: | write it for ↑me |
| 36 | | | (2.1) |
| → | 37 | Hal: | like this i can't understand ↑you |
| 38 | | | (1.4) |
| 39 | | Ryan: | d- do you want to describe your |
| 40 | | | ↑country |
| 41 | | | (0.7) |
| 42 | | Hal: | ↓yes |
| 43 | | | (0.7) |
| 44 | | Hal: | do ↑you er d- (0.7) do you not er |
| 45 | | | (.) know ↑algeria |
| 46 | | | (1.3) |
| 47 | | Ryan: | no i do ↓not |
| 48 | | | (1.6) |
| 49 | | Hal: | it's situated in (.) the s- in |
| 50 | | | the north of af↑ri↓ca |

At lines 1 and 3, Ryan asks Hal to decide the next topic of discussion ("what would [you] like to talk ↑about"). After a 2.2 second pause (line 4), Hal responds to this with an OCRI, "↑what" (line 5). Ryan treat the trouble as one of hearing, by repeating his question ("what would you <like to talk ↑about>", lines 6-7). However, this repeat is produced in a clearer, more slowed down manner than the original question, which may demonstrate that Ryan is treating Hal as someone having difficulty in understanding (remember that Hal categorized himself as either a 'beginner' or 'intermediate' English language user).

At lines 9-12, Hal provides a vague response which does not provide any concrete suggestion for a topic, other than to say that it should be 'simple' ("about↑ a simple=er: (0.6) subject (0.4) ah::, la- like er our er:: (2.9) °er::: some subject *i:: don't ↑know°"). A 2.0 second pause follows this (line 13), before Ryan takes the floor again, initiating a new topic with "where are [you from]" (line 14). Having provided Hal with the opportunity to take the initiative, which Hal failed to do, Ryan once again takes the role of topic-decider. However, this time, Ryan has designed a topic-initiating question which fits into Hal's request of something 'simple'. In fact, Ryan proffers a question which most L2 language users should have become familiar with since the early days of learning their target language.

The latter half of Ryan's question is produced in overlap with an utterance by Danny (line 15), which appears to be "well tell u-". At line 17, Hal responds by disclosing his country of origin, "i am from algeria". Danny's agreement token ("↑yea:s", line 19) would appear to be an indication of his aligning with Ryan's question and proposed topic. Hal then repeats his response at line 21 ("a- (0.2) I am [from algeria]") which is produced in overlap with Danny's suggestion, "[*- tell us ab]out your country" (line 22). Hal then produces his formulaic response for a third time (line 24), presumably because of the overlap occurring in the second production. After a 0.8 second pause (line 25), Ryan repeats Danny's suggestion for Hal to follow up on this information of his country of origin, "tell u- tell us about your c- country", (lines 26-27).

At this point, it would appear that Ryan and Danny are aligned with one another, with Danny agreeing with Ryan's question, and also by producing the same question for Hal. In asking Hal to tell them about Algeria, they have opted for a topic which they can be sure Hal knows something about, and something that they do not

know about; in response to his earlier request, they have shifted the knowledge status to him.

There is a 1.5 second pause (line 28) following Ryan's question, after which Hal again initiates repair with "↑what" (line 29). Ryan then repeats ("tell us about you country.", line 31), this time without the restarts which were present in the initial saying. Then, after a lengthy (6.6 second) pause at line 32, Hal requests that Ryan repair again, via an IPM ("if you can write to ↓me", line 33). There is no response in the following 1.1 seconds (line 34), and Hal subsequently self-repairs, "write it for ↑me" (line 35), with an emphasis on the 'it', which was missing from his request's original saying. When there is still no uptake in the following 2.1 seconds (line 36), Hal provides an account for his request, orienting to the necessity of a written message to resolve the trouble, "like this i can't understand ↑you" (line 37). Ryan does not respond to this request directly, either with an acceptance or declination, but rather reformulates his original suggestion, to "d- do you want to describe your ↑country" (line 39-40).

This reformulation demonstrates Ryan's understanding that the previous formulation proved problematic to Hal, and that some form of repair is necessary. However, again, Ryan does not respond to Hal's request for this repair to be dealt with via an IPM, either after the initial request (line 33), its reformulation (line 35) or the justification for its necessity (line 37). This may be indicative of a preference to keep the talk in the spoken form and, equally importantly, keep the talk publicly available to all chat room participants. In the previous example, and in subsequent examples, it was apparent that the use of a written message to deal with some trouble was only employed after a number of prior attempts to resolve that trouble via talk. In the present case, however, the request for a repair through IPM has come about somewhat soon after the trouble source, following only one OCRI and one subsequent repeat.

Additionally, unlike in the previous example (and also in subsequent examples), the trouble source here has not been identified as a single lexical item, but remains identifiable only as a complete turn, or some part thereof. If an entire turn is produced in written form, privately, then the whole purpose of the chat room – to speak in English – may be negated. However, as has been argued, and will be demonstrated through the subsequent excerpts, it seems that resolution of trouble regarding one

lexical item via IPMs is, at times, acceptable, and necessary, for the progression of the talk. This will be demonstrated in Excerpt 7.03.

This excerpt has also been examined earlier, as Excerpt 6.01. This analysis is concerned with a longer portion of the sequence than was the analysis in Chapter 6, but still does not cover the entire repair sequence, which ultimately lasts over four minutes and covers around 180 lines of transcript. The excerpt begins after some connection problems in the chat room. One of the participants, Allure, has been trying to generate talk among the group by asking a topic-initiating question to his fellow chat room participants. However, because of technical problems, he has apparently not been heard. Line 1 is the first spoken contribution by a participant for a few minutes. The present analysis will focus mainly on the exchange between Allure, who is the topic-initiator, and Zana, who is the host of the chat room.

**Excerpt 7.03** *abroad* (abridged)
(27) 01 June 2008 [0:07:00 – 0:08:45]

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | 1 | Allure: | .hhhhh can you hear me right n(h)ow |
| | 2 | | (0.4) |
| | 3 | Zana: | yes we can hear ↑you |
| | 4 | | (0.5) |
| | 5 | Allure: | .h *i* asked you (.) .hh my darling |
| | 6 | | (.) have you bin abro:ad |
| | 7 | | (5.9) ((typing sounds)) |
| | 8 | Allure: | ↑zana:: |
| | 9 | | (5.1) ((typing sounds)) |
| | 10 | Allure: | zana ↑hello:::= |
| | 11 | Zana: | =yes yes yes ↓yes |
| | 12 | | (1.5) |
| | 13 | Allure: | an::d (.) i asked you (.) have |
| | 14 | | you been abro:ad |
| | 15 | | (3.0) |
| | 16 | Zana: | BRoad? |
| | 17 | | (0.5) |
| | 18 | Allure: | a broad. |
| | 19 | | (3.0) |
| | 20 | Aramis?: | what's the (brod) |
| | 21 | | (0.7) |
| | 22 | Allure: | abroad guys no- ((cut off)) |
| | 23 | | (2.7) |
| → | 24 | Zana: | can you type me this allure |
| | 25 | | (4.8) |
| | 26 | | (('ping' sound)) |
| | 27 | | (5.3) |
| | 28 | Kuwait: | ((clears throat)) hello? |
| | 29 | | (0.8) |
| | 30 | Allure: | d- urh |
| | 31 | Zana: | ↓hell[o ] |
| | 32 | Allure: | [ev]eryone do you know what |
| | 33 | | da- what it means (.) ↓abroad |
| | 34 | | (2.7) |
| | 35 | Kuwait: | 'scuse me? |

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      36              (0.9)
      37    Allure:   .hh er- i- sorry where you from
      38              (0.3)
      39    Allure:   are you from you ess ↑ay ((USA))
      40              (1.4)
      41    Kuwait:   (no) i am [from]=
      42    Allure:             [ oh ]
      43    Kuwait:   =↓kuwait
      44    Allure:   .hhh (.) o- (.) .hhh i just ask
      45              (0.2) asked (.) .hhh have you
      46              been abroad
      47              (0.5)
→→    48    Zana:     ↑ahhh[hh]
      49    Allure:         [do] you know this
      50              (0.9)
→→    51    Zana:     yes [er::  ]
      52    Allure:       [do you] know this
→→    53    Zana:     but not er far from my country
      54              (2.2)
      55    Allure:   your country what haha
      56              (0.6)
      57    Zana:     mmm (1.0) i wa::s (0.4) out my
      58              country but not far awa:y .hhh
      59              just close my country
      60              (1.1)
      61    Allure:   .hhh okay $i understand you$ wa-
      62              i unders(hh) haha .hhh
```

At line 1, Allure checks that he is now being heard "`.hhhhh can you hear me right no:w`"). At line 3, Zana responds with "`yes we can hear ↑you`", which apparently is an answer made on behalf of all of the other chat room participants (note 'we'). Now that hearability is established, Allure restates his question, and frames it as a restated question, "`.h i asked you (.) .hh my darling (.) have you bin abro:ad`" (lines 5-6). In specifying "`you`" here, and addressing her as "`my darling`", Allure constructs the question as one directed only to Zana, and not to the others that can (apparently) hear him. There is no response in the subsequent 5.9 seconds (line 7), during which time the sound of someone typing can be heard clearly. Allure then provides a summons of Zana by calling her name, "`↑zana::`" (line 8). When there is still no response by Zana in the following 5.1 seconds (during which time typing sounds can again be heard), Allure again pursues a response by summonsing her ("`zana ↑hello:::`", line 10). Zana responds to this in what appears to be a frustrated manner with multiple 'yes's (line 11), but still does not answer Allure's question.

Allure then repeats his question, opening with "`an::d (.) i asked you (.) have you been abro:ad`" (line 13), which again orients to the fact that his question has been left hanging, unanswered. After a 3.0 second silence (line 15), Zana initiates repair with a try-marked candidate hearing of one aspect of the question-asking turn,

namely the lexical item 'abroad' ("BRoad?", line 16). This indicates that she has not understood what Allure has said, and so cannot answer the question which has been posed to her. Allure accordingly repairs the trouble-source item at line 18 by repeating, with emphasis, "a broad.".

In the next 3.0 seconds (line 19), Zana does not respond to the repair, either to display her continued trouble, or to answer the question. At this point (line 20), Aramis self-selects to initiate repair himself, "what's the (brod)". This RI also indicates that 'abroad' is a source of trouble, although it projects a definition of the term, rather than another repetition. However, when Allure repairs again, he does not offer a definition, but produces a correction designed for both Zana and Aramis, "abroad guys no-" (line 22). This turn appears to be cut off before its completion, perhaps because of a technical fault.

Either way, it is apparent that this second repeat-as-repair has still not been sufficient to remedy Zana's non-understanding. After a 2.7 seconds silence (line 23), she requests a repair in a different modality, namely via an IPM ("can you type me this allure", line 24). After a number of repair attempts, Zana appears to see an IPM as a necessary means of dealing with the trouble, most probably through being able to identify the word (and obtain a meaning if necessary) upon seeing it in written form.

In the 10.2 seconds (lines 25-27) which follow this request by Zana, none of the chat room participants speak, but the sound of typing can be clearly heard. In the middle of this, a 'ping' notification sound can be heard. These may be the sounds of Allure sending, and Zana receiving, the IPM which has been requested. In fact, in light of what follows, this is quite likely. However, it cannot be said for certain, and there is no explicit orientation by either that the request has been fulfilled.

There then follows a side sequence in which a new participant, Kuwait, joins the room (lines 28-31), after which Allure opens the issue of understanding the term 'abroad' up to the whole chat room ("[ev]eryone do you know what da- what it means (.) ↓abroad", lines 32-33). In doing this, Allure allows for others to display any trouble they may also be having with the item. Also note that Allure has framed this as a problem with regards to his interlocutors knowledge of the meaning of the word, and not as a problem in his own intelligibility.

When Kuwait responds with an OCRI, "'scuse me?" (line 35), this sets off another side sequence in which Allure tries to establish Kuwait's country of origin

(lines 37-43). After this, Allure once again repairs with a repetition, "`.hhh (.) o- (.) .hhh i just ask (0.2) asked (.) .hhh have you been abroad`" (lines 44-46). Soon after, Zana provides an "`↑ahhh[hh]`" (line 48) which displays a change-of-state (Heritage 1984b). Allure responds before Zana's token is completed, with "`[do] you know this`" (line 49), which indicates that he is treating Zana's "`↑ahhh[hh]`"" as a display of her newly found knowledge/realisation.

Note in particular the proterm 'this' used by Allure, which may suggest he is referring to a message sent by himself to Zana. It would not make sense for Allure to be using 'this' to refer to his spoken question, since Zana has already demonstrated on multiple occasions that she does not know what Allure means. It seems that Allure is referring to something new which Zana has been provided, which is the written message that she has requested. Zana then says "`yes [er::]`" (line 51), which is overlapped with Allure's second asking, "`[do you] know this`" (line 52). With her subsequent turn, "`but not er far from my country`" (line 53), it seems that Zana's "`yes [er::]`" was the beginning of her response to Allure's initial question, rather than a confirmation that she does now know 'this'.

Allure himself then initiates repair ("`your country what haha`", line 55), after which Zana then constructs a full response to Allure's question of '`have you ever been abroad`' ("`i wa::s (0.4) out my country but not far away .hhh just close my country`", lines 57-59).

In this case, unlike in Excerpt 7.01, it is the recipient of the trouble source turn who suggests using the written form in an attempt to deal with trouble regarding a specified lexical item. And, unlike in Excerpt 7.02, the request is granted and the trouble is apparently resolved, for Zana at least.[28] And, as with Excerpt 7.01, this comes about only after some work is put in at the spoken level first of all.

In relation to the work put in to resolve the trouble before the use of an IPM, it is also interesting to note that Allure could have attempted repair in some other way (such as by reformulation, elaboration and/or explanation), but doesn't. Instead, all of the RIs by his interlocutors are responded to with 'repair as repeats'. As such, it is ultimately left to the recipient, namely Zana, to seek an alternative course of action in order to achieve understanding. And, as has been seen, she does this by requesting to have the word sent to her in written form.

[28] The full version of this excerpt shows that Zana's response does not resolve the trouble for the other chat room members.

There are two more features of Excerpt 7.03 which bear similarity to the previous example. First of all, the written repair is only proposed once it has been established that the source of the trouble is one particular lexical item. This is occasioned by the unfolding interaction; more specifically, it comes about following a candidate hearing RI by the recipient and a subsequent failed attempt to repair this by the speaker (in the first example, with a failed elaboration/explanation, and in the second example, with a unsuccessful 'repair as repeat'). Secondly, both examples are marked with an audible change-of-state token, made available for all participants at the spoken level. These public displays of a change in understanding (regardless of whether or not an actual change in state of understanding has occurred within the mind of those individuals) serve to show the sender of the written repair, as well as the other members of the chat room, that there has been some change in epistemic stance, i.e. that the repair has been successful.

Additionally, these verbal change-of-state tokens (as opposed to, say, a written response) serve to link the written repair back to the spoken medium, back to the public floor of the chat room. This allows for a coherence at the spoken level, which might not be publicly apparent if the sender and receiver of the written messages did not divulge to the rest of the room what exchange had taken place privately. The next example provides another, perhaps more explicit, illustration of this. The example provided also shows that participants in chat rooms can display patience and persistence is achieving a state of understanding.

## 7.4 Persistence in Achieving Understanding

This section will provide analysis of another case in which a participant requests an IPM in order to resolve some trouble. This case differs in that the progressivity of the talk is not contingent upon the interactant understanding the TS. However, the interactant still pursues the IPM in order to achieve a state of understanding, as will be demonstrated.

Excerpt 7.04 is taken from a chat room hosted by Sherry (who self-categorizes as a Chinese learner of English), and also involved Anthony, Saint (who are both L1 speakers of British English) and Angel, Charlie and Aurora (who are also Chinese users of English). In this case, the sending of an IPM is occasioned at an early stage of the chat room talk, but was not resolved until around 45 minutes later. As such, the

analysis begins with Excerpt 7.04a, which includes the occasioning of a request for a written repair, in order to set the scene for how it is subsequently dealt with much later in the talk, which is examined in Excerpt 7.04b.

Just prior to the beginning of Excerpt 7.04a, there has been some meta-talk regarding what the interactants should talk about. Tony has just proposed telling the others what he cooked for dinner the previous evening, after which Sherry takes the floor with her turn at line 1.

**Excerpt 7.04a** *aquarian (part 1)*
(28) 02 June 2008 [0:02:05 – 0:03:09]

```
1    Sherry:    A:H (.) ↓really
2               (2.6)
3    Sherry:    a:h so, (0.2) what i:s your: star
4               si(hh)gn
5               (1.2)
6    Anthony:   which ↓one
7               (1.0)
8    Saint:     your: (.) astrological star ↓sign
9               (0.8)
10   Anthony:   ↑me=
11   Angel:     =s::star s[:ign ]
12   Saint:                [(yep)] (yup) [ yes  ]
13   Angel:                              [(** *)]
14              (1.1)
15   Anthony:   ↑o:h i'm an ↓aquarian
16              (1.3)
17   Saint:     aquariuS:.
18              (0.5)
19   Anthon:    ↓yes:: very happy peopl:e,
20              lovin', open ↓hearted
21              (0.5)
22              .hhhh (0.3) er:: ↓considerate
23              (0.3) hopefully ↓polite
24              (0.5)
25              an:' (.) very ↓sensitive
26              (2.7)
27   Sherry:    sorr:y i can't find °(it)°
28              (1.0)
29   Angel?:    hehe↑huh
30              (0.7)
31   Anthon:    .hh=[.hh=.hh     ]
32   Sherry:        [°(laugh↑ing)°]
33              (0.9)
34   Sherry:    ↑why:::
35              (2.8)
36   Angel:     [((clears throat))]
37   Saint:     [       er        ] look up
38              aquarius on that e- page i gave
39              you cheryl
40              (0.9)
41   Sherry:    ↑a:::::h (.) ↓so
42              (2.2)
→ 43 Sherry:    ↑tony:: can you please [ type]=
44   Anthon:                           [yeah.]
```

```
→   45   Sherry:    =it ↑me
    46              (1.1)
    47   Anthon:    ek-=
    48   Sherry:    =(*)
    49              (0.9)
    50   Anthon:    excuse ↑me
    51              (1.7)
    52   Sherry:    [(yeah so)]
    53   Angel:     [  mmmm   ]
    54              (0.4)
→   55   Sherry:    °(** ty- type) type it to me
→   56              please°
    57              (0.3)
    58   Anthon:    what ↑a[quar-]=
    59   Sherry:           [ (*) ]
    60   Anthon:    =ac-
    61              (0.5)
    62   Anthon:    aquar[ian  ]
    63   Saint:          [↑tony]
    64              (0.5)
    65   Saint:     turn your [spea]kers
    66   Anthon:              [yeah]
    67              (0.2)
    68   Saint:     (on) echo again my ↓friend
    69              (0.5)
    70              o:kay ↓sorry
```

After line 69, Anthony and Saint negotiate the sound quality of their connection. Immediately following which, another participant joins in the talk with a question, and the discussion does not return to 'aquarians' until much later, as will be shown in Excerpt 7.04b. Before examining that, it seems necessary to point out some important aspects of the interaction in the above excerpt.

At line 1, Sherry appears to respond to Anthony's suggestion of disclosing the dinner he prepared the previous evening ("A:H (.) ↓really"). However, she then initiates a new topic, asking "A:H so, (0.2) what i:s your: star si(hh)gn" (lines 2-3). The intended recipient of this question does not appear to be clear. However, Anthony, as the previous speaker, asks "which ↓one" (line 6), which in itself is not entirely clear (Anthony could be asking 'which one of us?' or 'which star sign'). Saint responds on behalf of Sherry at line 8, clarifying the object of her question "your: (.) astrological star ↓sign", with an emphasis on "astrological". Anthony then asks another question, "↑me" (line 10), which displays that it was not clear to him that he was the intended recipient of the question.

A few lines later, after confirmation by Saint "([(yep)] (yup) [ yes ]", line 12) and some input by Angel (lines 11 and 13), Anthony responds to the question with "↑o:h i'm an ↓aquarian" (line 15). Saint receives this information not a receipt

token, which also serves as an embedded correction, "aquariuS:." (line 17) with an emphasis on the different ending, and with a final stop intonation (see Section 2.2.1, as well as Jefferson 1983b, Kurhila 2001 and Brouwer *et al* 2004 for discussions on 'embedded corrections' in interaction). It is quite possible that this ambiguity between 'aquarian' and 'aquarius' as the correct name of the relevant star sign occasions the resultant trouble. Anthony then confirms, "↓yes::" (line 19), before continuing with his description of people who fall under this category, "very happy peopl:e, lovin', open ↓hearted (0.5) .hhhh (0.3) er:: ↓considerate (0.3) hopefully ↓polite (0.5) an:' (.) very ↓sensitive" (lines 19-25).

Sherry responds by stating "sorr:y i can't find °(it)°" at line 27. The 'it' to which Sherry refers would appear to be the star sign that applies to Anthony. What she takes that star sign to be ('aquarian' or 'aquarius', for example) is not apparent, nor is where she is looking. It would seem most likely that Sherry is looking in a book or on the internet for this star sign, perhaps for extra information about it, or for a translation of the English word into its Chinese Mandarin equivalent.

Following Sherry's statement of difficulty in locating the word, there is a side sequence of laughter between Angel and Anthony. This laughter is possibly in reaction to Anthony's somewhat immodest description of aquarians (a group in which he self-categorizes), or may be simply symptomatic of what (ethnographically) can be seen as frequent flirtatious behaviour between the two. However, the sequential placement of the laughter, which is immediately following Sherry's declaration that she is unable to find the term 'aquarian' (line 27), is such that it can be hearable as laughing at Sherry. As such, Sherry appears to orient to this with her 'noticing' of the laughter ("°laugh↑ing)°", line 32), and her questioning of its occurrence ("↑why:::", line 34). However, this is not responded to by either Anthony or Angel.

Instead, following the 2.9 second pause (line 35), Saint takes the floor, offering a suggestion to Sherry at lines 37-30, which orients to her statement that she can not find 'it' (line 27), "look up aquarius on that e- page i gave you cheryl". Note that Saint again repeats the word itself, rather than adopting Sherry's use of a proterm. As such, Saint's turn achieves two things (1) it directs Sherry to where she should look, and (2) it restates that the term she should be looking for is 'aquarius', as opposed to 'aquarian'.

After a silence of 0.9 seconds (line 40) Sherry responds to Saint's suggestion with "↑a:::::h (.) ↓so" (line 41), which displays to the others the receipt of new

information, presumably that she has some new-found means of locating this word (i.e. the means proposed by Saint). There then follows a silence of 2.2 seconds (line 42) before Sherry takes the floor once again, "↑tony:: can you please [ type] it ↑me" (lines 43 and 45). Whatever the turn at line 41 indicates, it seems that Sherry still does not know the term to which Anthony and Saint are referring, as she is requests for a written message to be sent to her by Anthony. As in the previous two examples, the trouble source has emerged as a solitary lexical item. And, as in the previous example, repetition of this item has not helped to resolve the trouble (despite, or perhaps even *because of*, its 'repeat' being different when offered by different speakers). Once again, it has been proposed that the use of an IPM may help to resolve the trouble.

Anthony eventually responds to this (line 50) with "excuse ↑me". Sherry takes this OCRI as a display of Anthony's trouble in hearing her request, which can be seen in her repair as repeat at lines 55-56, "°(** ty- type) type it to me please°".

Apparently, this does not resolve the trouble for Anthony, as he tried to initiate repair again with "what ↑a[quar-]" (line 58), which is abandoned after Sherry produces something in overlap (line 59). Anthony then attempts to complete this RI on two more occasions ("ac-", line 60, and "aquar[ian ]", line 62), the latter of which is produced in overlap with a summons of Anthony by Saint ("[↑Tony]", line 63). Saint then holds the floor to inform Anthony that his computer's speaker settings are causing technical problems for all members of the chat room (lines 65 and 68).

The discussion then moves on, and the trouble regarding Sherry's ability to locate (and understand) 'aquarius'/'aquarian' is left unresolved. Her request to be sent a written message is apparently left unfulfilled, as she is not afforded the chance to confirm to Anthony that it is indeed 'aquarius'/'aquarian' that she would like to be sent in written form. The issue does, however, arise once again in the chat room some 45 minutes later, as can be seen in Excerpt 7.04b, which begins just after Sherry has repeated verbatim something Anthony has just said.

**Excerpt 7.04b** *aquarian (part 2)*
(28) 02 June 2008 [0:48:20 – 0:49:13]

```
1    Anthon:   your e:ng↓lish is gettin' ↓better
2              (1.6)
3    Sherry:   °↑mmm (.) ↓thanks°
4              (0.6)
5    Sherry:   hope so=
```

```
6    Anthon:   =yor-
7              (0.5)
8    Anthon:   you're ↓welcome
9              (0.6)
10   Anthon:   heh heh
11             (1.0)
12   Auror?:   hu hu ↑HU
13             (0.6)
14   Anthon:   .hhhhhhh hhh (.) er (0.3)
15             aquarian if that's your ↓question
16             (0.6)
17   Anthon:   my dear lady
18             (1.8)
19   Charli:   ah:::
20             (2.8)
21   Sherry:   ↑lady=
22   Anthon:   =yes ↓sir
23             (1.9)
→ 24 Sherry:   sorry i- i- i don' know wha' is
→ 25           this meaning so type it to ↓me::
26             (1.0)
27   Anthon:   ↑↓okay i ↓will
28             (0.6)
29   Anthon:   °sherry°
30             (0.9)
31   Sherry:   thanks.
32             (0.2)
33   Aurora:   hahehe=
34   Anthon:   =you're welcome.
35             (2.2)
36   Sherry:   i- i just=a ask=er what is his
37             er:: star ↓sign
38             (1.6)
39   Sherry:   (because er) he has so:: ↓many
40             (1.5)
41   Sherry:   °so many ↑(what)° °°(so many)°°
42             (0.6)
43   Aurora:   hhhh
44             (0.4)
45   Aurora:   oh ↑right=
46   Anthon:   =aquarians [are]=
47   Aurora:              [mmm]
48   Anthon:   =towards the end of
49             [            janu]ary=
50   Aurora:   [((clears throat))]
51   Anthon:   =so i was born on the twenny six'
52             (0.4)
53   Anthon:   of january
```

At line 1, in response to Sherry's just prior turn, Anthony provides an assessment of Sherry's English language proficiency ("your e:ng↓lish is gettin' ↓better"). Sherry acknowledges this compliment quietly with "°↑mmm (.) ↓thanks°" (line 3), and Anthony returns with "you're ↓welcome" (line 8). Then, after some laughter between Anthony and Aurora (lines 10 and 12), Anthony takes the floor again with, ".hhhhhhh hhh (.) er (0.3) aquarian if that's your ↓question" (lines 14-15). This would appear to be a response to a question which has

not been asked verbally, but rather via an IPM. It is difficult to know how the question to Anthony has been formulated, but one would presume that, if 'aquarian' is his answer, the question is once again along the lines of 'what is your star sign?'.

Note that Anthony does not just answer 'aquarian', but marks verbally that this is a response to a question that has been posed to him ("`if that's your ↓question`"). His turn incursion of 'my dear lady' (line 16), coupled with Charlie's attempt to take the floor "`ah:::`" (line 18) appears to delay Sherry's response to his question, which comes at lines 24-25: "`sorry i- i- i don' know wha' is this meaning so type it to ↓me::`".

Sherry here once again requests for this information in written form, and also provides an account of why the written form is required, namely that she doesn't know the meaning of 'aquarian'. Note that there is no news receipt or change of state token – Sherry is not treating 'aquarian' as new information, but is still not sure of its meaning. This demonstrates Sherry's orientation back to the previous exchange (in Excerpt 7.04a), which Anthony does not appear to refer back to.

Anthony confirms that he will fulfill Sherry's request (`"↑↓okay i ↓will"`, line 27) before another 'thank you'/'you're welcome' exchange between the two (lines 27-31). Then, after a 2.2 second silence (line 35), Sherry explains "`i- i just=a ask=er what is his er:: star ↓sign`" (lines 36-37). After this, she begins to formulate an account for why she has asked for this information, but abandons her attempt (`"(because er) he has so:: ↓many (1.5)°so many ↑(what)° °°(so many)°°"`, lines 39 and 41). This explanation and account is clearly not designed for Anthony, to whom she refers in the second person, so must be for the benefit of the other participants in the room who have not had available the private exchange that has just occurred between Sherry and Anthony (note also that Charlie and Aurora were not present during the exchange show in Excerpt 7.04a). Here again we see one of the participants privy to a private exchange explaining how it is connected to the public, spoken arena.

It does not become apparent exactly why Sherry has requested Anthony's star sign, as she does not complete her explanation, her turn instead trailing off, getting increasingly quiet. However, Aurora displays a change of state with "`oh ↑right`" (lines 45) which demonstrates to the others that this information by Sherry has been of use to her. Anthony then proceeds to explain how he qualifies as a member of the group 'aquarian' (lines 46-53), although it is not made clear whether he sends Sherry

the word she has requested at this point (or if he ever does, since this is the last reference to star signs in the chat room).

This episode serves as another example of chat room interactants resorting to the use of written form of repair when a verbal repair of a lexical item is insufficient. Excerpt 7.04b also demonstrated, more explicitly than the previous examples, the participants' tendency to link this written interaction to the floor of the spoken discourse. Anthony's behaviour in providing a verbal second pair part to a written first pair part was obviously potentially confusing for the other participants in the room. Sherry subsequently oriented to this, and provided an explanation for the benefit of the others.

Excerpts 7.04a and 7.04b may also serve to show a preference for the spoken form over the written form, even when the written form is requested following some amount of trouble. Again, note in Excerpt 7.04b that Anthony deals with the private, written request by publicly, verbally responding. Note also that this was brought about because of the occurrences 45 minutes earlier, when Anthony attempted to deal with the request for a written message by verbally repeating the trouble-source, on multiple occasions, ("what ↑a[quar-]", line 58, "ac-", line 60, and "aquar[ian ]", line 62). Although none of these repeats were uttered completely and without overlap, it still demonstrates Anthony's preference to repeat verbally, rather than with a written message. Anthony does seem to be aware that Sherry has asked to be 'typed' something, and so he could simply have requested clarification with an IPM (i.e. 'Is it aquarian that you wanted me to type to you?'), which would have been received by her without any trouble. However, he appears to attempt to obtain clarification verbally, and, when this is unsuccessful, he still does not respond to the request for written repair.

This final excerpt also differs from the previous examples in this chapter in that the progressivity of the talk is not dependent upon the TS being resolved. In the three other cases, a response to a question was contingent upon successful repair. However, in this final example, the TS itself was actually a response to a question. After being provided with an answer which she doesn't understand, Sherry displays persistence is achieving understanding of the answer, especially considering that the talk moved on to another topic. To do this, not only does she draw upon the technological features of her interactional setting, but she also ultimately waits 45 minutes to obtain the information she requires.

## 7.5 Summary

While the previous two analytic chapters provided examples of participants in chat rooms allowing for the possibility of trouble with understanding, even when such form of trouble is not explicitly indicated (and in so doing avoided any such trouble in understanding being exposed), this chapter has examined occasions on which trouble in understanding *is* exposed. Further than this, the excerpts in this chapter all include cases in which (at least one of the) participants orient to the talk as insufficient for resolving the trouble, and resort to the use of IPMs in order to achieve understanding. While previous chapters have considered some of the constraints of this technologically-mediated setting, this chapter has demonstrated how participants in the chat rooms can draw upon some of the technological features of the setting in order to achieve their interactional goals.

Analysis also showed that there may be a preference for keeping the talk in the chat room publicly available for all present. When a sequence begins in the spoken form, there appears to be an orientation to commencing it in such a way. Only when trouble arises, and cannot be resolved after multiple efforts, do participants appear to resort to the use of their non-vocal resource. Additionally, once the trouble is resolved through an IPM, the participant receiving the message publicly acknowledges it, and the ongoing interaction returns to the public floor.

The sequences analysed suggest that TSs repaired through the use of IPM are typically single lexical items which have, apparently, not been understood. In resorting to another medium of communication only for solitary words, the state of the interaction as public, and mostly talk-based, can be maintained.

The final excerpt also demonstrated that, on occasion, repair of the TS can be pursued even if the progressivity of the ongoing talk is not dependent upon it. The analysis of two sequences, separated by 45 minutes, showed that the participant was not only resourceful in employing a technological feature of the chat room, but was also persistant and determined in achieving a state of understanding.

In the next chapter, the findings of the three analysis chapters will be revisited and considered in relation to the existing literature on L2 interaction and talk-in-interaction in general. After which, some further considerations will also be offered.

# Chapter 8. Discussion

## 8.1 Introduction

Using the micro-analytic tool of conversation analysis (CA), this study has explored the practices of second language (L2) speakers in their maintenance of mutual understanding in online, voice-based, multi-party, English language chat rooms. This has been achieved by analysing the micro-details of moments in which participants orient to potential threats to mutual understanding, and explicating how those potential threats are responded to.

More specifically, over the preceding three chapters, the following have been analysed: (1) how various forms of other-initiated repair (OIR) are responded to, (2) how absences of response (in a place were a response can rightfully be expected) are responded to, and (3) how trouble which could not be resolved through talk is responded to.

The sequences analysed within these three chapters suggest that: (1) the participants in this setting at times display an *extra sensitivity to the possibility of understanding problems*, by putting in extra interactional work in order to ensure the resumption of mutual understanding. Additionally, (2) perceived threats to mutual understanding may occasionally arise because of the constraints of the technologically-mediated interactional setting. However, (3) participants are able to employ some of the technological affordances of the setting in order to deal with threats with mutual understanding following failed attempts to resolve the trouble through talk alone.

These research findings shed extra light on L2 interaction, particularly in a relatively new, under-explored environment. As such, it contributes to the call for research into L2 interaction outside of formal educational environments (e.g. Firth and Wagner 1997, 1998, 2007; Wagner 2004; Wagner and Gardner 2004).

More specifically, the study has added to knowledge of L2 interaction in terms of the "architecture of intersubjectivty" (Heritage 1984a: 254). This has been achieved by contributing to Svennevig's call for "further investigation of not just how people remedy existing problems but also practices for *anticipating problems and preventing them from arising"* (2008: 347, emphasis added).

The analysis of how the participants manage mutual understanding in this setting may also provide insight into their orientations to themselves, and each other, as L2 users in this interactional environment. In anticipating problems before they arise, participants may be minimising the exposure of linguistic limitations, and keeping linguistic expertise a 'private' matter (Firth 2009b).

The findings also provide insight into the impact on interaction of one emerging technologically-mediated communication environment. This adds to the body of research which has examined the relationship between technology and interaction (e.g. Hutchby 2003).

All of these observations will be discussed in more detail, and in relation to the relevant research literature, in the following section (Section 8.2). Following this, the overall findings and discussion will be considered further, and more broadly, in relation to the existing research literature which was discussed in Chapter 2 (Section 8.3). Then, some methodological considerations will be discussed (Section 8.4). Finally, some concluding comments will be offered (Section 8.5).

## 8.2 Discussion of the Findings

This section is divided into three parts. In each of the three sections, one of the analysis chapters will be considered in turn. To serve as a reminder, the findings will once again be briefly summarised. Additionally, findings will be discussed in terms of the relevant research literature. The section serves as a means of summarising and collating the analytic observations, in preparation for the following section, which relates the overall findings further to the relevant research literature on L2 interaction and TMI.

### 8.2.1 *Maintaining mutual understanding when an other initiates repair*

The analysis in Chapter 5 explicated how participants in the chat rooms often respond to various forms of repair initiations (RIs) by allowing for possibile trouble in understanding, even when such trouble is not explicitly indicated, and repairing accordingly. That is, in response to RIs which do not specify the type of trouble other speaker is encountering, the speaker of a trouble source (TS) often repairs in a way which allows for possible trouble in hearing or understanding. This finding is of

particular interest because it is not what has been found by previous research on OIR (Drew 1997; Koshik 2005; Schegloff 1997, 2002, 2004; Mazeland & Zaman-Zadeh 2004; Sorjonen 2006; Svennevig 2008), as will be discussed presently.

Repair initiations (RIs) are often complicated to deal with, and this is true of the varieties of RI which were analysed. Some RIs, such as the 'open' class RIs (OCRIs; Drew 1997) discussed in Section 5.2, do not locate the TS, and the speaker of the trouble source turn (TST) must work out which element of what they have just said has been problematic for their interlocutor. And even with those RIs which do locate the trouble source, the kind of trouble, and how it can be rectified, is not always clear. This is what Sidnell (2006) has described as the 'other-initiated repair problem' for speakers of a trouble-source. A speaker of a trouble-source is required to, *in situ*, determine what needs to be repaired, and how.

Despite, or perhaps because of, the complexity of dealing with RIs, past empirical research has shown that there is a tendency to "try the least complicated and costly remedy first" (Pomerantz 1984a:156). That is, in the first instance, many forms of RI are treated as a problem in hearing, and trouble-source turns are invariably repeated (cf. Drew 1997; Koshik 2005; Schegloff 1997, 2002, 2004; Mazeland & Zaman-Zadeh 2004; Sorjonen 2006; Svennevig 2008). Previous research findings does not suggest that this is any different in L2 talk; for example, in analysing a sequence involving an L2 speaker, Koshik observed that:

> her partial repeats are always at first taken to be candidate hearings/understandings proffered for confirmation. It may be that, with adults at least, even with those who have limited proficiency in a language, *repair is generally at first taken to express problems with hearing rather than problems with competency*. (2005: 209, emphasis added)

However, in analysing various types of OIR sequences, the present study has shown that this doesn't quite appear to be the case in this corpus of online chat room interaction. Participants in these chat rooms do not *only* try the 'easiest solution first' (in the form of a repetition), instead they often repair in a way which deals with not only trouble in hearing, but also potential trouble in understanding (by building elaborations and/or explanations into their repair turn). It has been argued that this demonstrates an *extra sensitivity* to the maintenance and resumption of intersubjectivity on the part of the participants.

Section 5.2 examined sequences involving an OCRI. Such forms of RI have been described as the 'weakest' form (Schegloff et al 1977), in that they only indicate

that there is some trouble, but do not indicate the specific source or kind of trouble. In some cases, the TST speaker displayed a diagnosis of what they saw to be the specific source of trouble, and repaired accordingly. In other cases, the entire TST was repaired. In both cases, the repair included not only a repetition of the TST, but also reformulation, elaboration and/or explanation.

The analysis of Section 5.3 showed similar outcomes following from RIs which more specifically located the source of trouble. Repair initiators in the format of 'partial repeat + "*what?*"' indicate the specific TS, although they still do not necessarily indicate the kind of trouble. Analysis of such sequences again showed that repair dealt with the possibility of trouble in hearing or understanding.

Section 5.4 examined candidate hearing and candidate understanding RIs. Although such RIs typically occasion a confirmation or correction of the candidate, the excerpts analysed are examples of occasions when extra work is put into the repair. This extra work again takes the form of reformulation, elaboration and/or explanation.

Again, these findings ought to be considered in relation to Pomerantz's notion of repairing with the "least complicated and costly remedy first" (1984a: 156). As has been argued, these participants appear to be sensitive to possible troubles in understanding and accordingly put in extra interactional work in order to deal with such trouble. As such, it can be stated that they are *not* repairing in the least complicated manner.

In achieving this, the repair work is not 'costly', in terms of delaying the progressivity of the talk, or in terms of potential sensitivity, as Pomerantz (1984a) discusses 'costliness'. In repairing for possible troubles in understanding before such trouble is explicitly indicated, such problems in understanding are not exposed.[29] Were the repairers to repair in a more typical fashion, then problems in understanding may have become exposed, and participants' L2 shortcomings likewise. From this, it might be said that participants are willing to sacrifice the 'least complicated' rule, in order ensure the security of the 'least costly' one.

This allowing for possible troubles in understanding were also noted through the analysis of sequences in Chapter 6, which will be discussed in the following section.

[29] This is not to claim that all of the participants initiating repair in the examples are having trouble in understanding, they may not be. The point is exactly that we cannot tell, as the 'true' cause of trouble is not exposed.

### 8.2.2 *Maintaining mutual understanding in the absence of a response*

Talk-in-interaction is structured such that one turn at talk makes a second, type-fitted, turn at talk conditionally relevant. This was first explored and explained by Schegloff over forty years ago. In talking about utterances, he pointed out that:

> given the first, the second is expectable; upon its occurrence it can be seen to be a second item to the first; *upon its nonoccurrence it can be seen to be officially absent*. (Schegloff 1968: 1083, emphasis added)

Chapter 6 explored what participants in online chat rooms do following such 'official absences'. It was noted that participants may treat the absence as a sign of potential trouble in understanding, and so respond in such a way that overcomes any such understanding problem.

In Section 6.2, it was first shown that one way to treat a nonresponse is to check for the presence and recipiency of the intended respondent. In the example provided, the question-asker halted the ongoing talk in order to summon his interlocutor after she failed to respond. When his interlocutor indicated (impatiently) that she was available and listening, the question-asker repeated his initial question. It soon emerged that the question had *not* been understood (although this may not have been the initial reason for the nonresponses) and the ensuing trouble took a number of minutes to resolve. This may have been avoided had the interlocutor reformulated his question, or elaborated upon it, as most of the question-askers in Section 6.3 did in reaction to a nonresponse (see discussion below).

Presence-checking on the part of the asker of an unanswered question is understandable in this setting. In an interactional encounter dependant not upon physical copresence but on the reliability of technology, there is always the possibility that an interlocutor has been disconnected, that they can – to all intents and purposes – 'vanish' from the interactional arena. Additionally, interactants may still be connected to the interaction, but not engaged by it. Chat room participants may be listed as present, and may even be able to hear and to be heard. But they may be otherwise engaged, involved in another activity at their computer or in their physical proximity. With these possibilities constantly bubbling under the surface, one would not be surprised if every nonresponse was reacted to in the same manner shown in the opening excerpt of Chapter 6.

However, the remaining excerpts throughout the chapter showed that this is not the case; when faced with a nonresponse, the participants in these chat rooms tend to keep faith that the technology upon which their interaction is dependent has not let them down. They invariably treat their interlocutor(s) as still present and connected, and as having not responded for some other reason.

Section 6.3 examined nonresponses to response-seeking turns. These response-seeking turns are typically in the form of information-seeking questions, and the question *"what do you do for a living?"* was a common example in this section, as well as in the corpus overall. The analyses showed that participants deal with the absence of a response to a question by reformulating their question and/or by elaborating upon it. Such elaboration often comes in the form of presenting the recipient with candidate responses (for example, in the case of *"what do you do for a living?"*, a follow up is often *"are you a student?... are you working?")*. Such actions (1) treat the interlocutor as still present, (2) allow for the possibility that the initial question was not heard or understood and (3) maintain the progressivity of the ongoing talk. Much like with the RI sequences in the preceding chapter, participants appear to be sensitive to possible problems in understanding, and so exert some extra interactional effort to allow for this possibility.

Another observation to emerge from the examination of nonresponses to response-seeking turns is that next-speaker selection can be ambiguous in multiparty, voice-only settings. In a number of the excerpts presented, it was eventually apparent that the intended respondent was not sure that they *were* the intended respondent. This was due to either confusion regarding the use of (and knowledge of) interlocutors' names (either 'real', or usernames) as well as the potential ambiguity of the use of 'you' as an address term in this setting. 'You' indicates that there is an intended recipient of the turn, but it does not necessarily specify who this is (Lerner 2003), which is even more problematic in the absence of gestural resources, such as gaze.

Interestingly, though, as has been shown, participants did not appear to treat this as a potential reason behind the nonresponse; at no point in any of the excerpts examined do speakers of a response-seeking turn add the name of their intended recipient as a turn increment. Instead, again, they progress the talk by elaborating upon or reformulating their initial turn. This may suggest that they are treating non-

hearing or non-understanding as a more likely source of trouble than ambiguous next-speaker designation.

In Section 6.4, the focus moved to nonresponses to tellings. Tellings are usually designed as relevant to the addressee and also consequential to them and/or the ongoing conversation (Goodwin 1990/1991). As such, responses to tellings could rightfully be expected. Such a response could come in the form of an assessment, a reaction token or even a listenership token. When no such response is forthcoming, it is still possible that its absence may not be treated as problematic; some absences need not necessarily be treated as *noticeable* absences (Couper-Kuhlen 2010).

However, in the sequences examined, speakers of a telling *did* appear to treat a nonresponse as an absence. The speakers displayed this through their reformulation and/or elaboration of the telling. For example, when explaining to her interlocutors that the horse meat she ate was raw, Jen pursued a response by explaining what the lexical item 'raw' means in culinary terms. As such, she treated the lack of uptake as a possible indication of non-understanding of the term. A similar trajectory was observed when James asked his Japanese interlocutor to confirm whether whale meat is a common thing to eat in Japan – when neither a confirmation nor denial was forthcoming, James proceeded to explain the term 'whale'.

In such cases, the speaker displays their diagnosis of the situation. At times, it could be that their interpretation is inaccurate. The final examples in Section 6.4 demonstrate incidences in which recipients treat an explanation or reformulation as unnecessary. For example, in Excerpt 6.10, Tom responds to Jen's lack of response by retelling, in a reformulated manner, that he was born in Sweden. But before he is able to complete this action, Jen interjects to display that it is not necessary to do so. The same series of events were observable in Excerpt 6.11 as Max explained to Chris what is done in an allotment.

In those cases, it may be that the unnecessary explanations were face-threatening to the recipients, who did not wish to be treated an non-knowledgeable, although this can not proved analytically. However, what is important is how the seeker of a response reacts when a response is not provided. In allowing for the possibility that their question or telling has not been heard or has not been understood, participants are able to deal with such possibilities without topicalising them, which might be even more face threatening. Additionally, as has been stated, such a reaction

allows for a progression of the ongoing talk, and perhaps displays a confidence in the robustness of the technology upon which the ongoing talk is reliant.

### 8.2.3 *Achieving mutual understanding when talk cannot resolve the trouble*

The analyses throughout the first two chapters demonstrated that participants in these chat rooms often act in a way which allows for possible troubles in understanding, even when such forms of trouble are not explicitly displayed. Analyses also suggested that some troubles can emerge as a consequence of the nature of the setting, as has been discussed. The third analysis chapter examined instances in which trouble in understanding surfaced, and also how one of the technological affordances of the setting can be employed to deal with such trouble.[30]

Section 7.2 provided a single case analysis in which a participant ultimately sent an IPM to his interlocutor in order to aid understanding of the TS, which was the lexical item *'whale'*. The sending of an IPM as a form of repair came following multiple attempts to resolve the trouble through talk, via elaboration, repetition, and explanations. In fact, before sending the IPM, the speaker of the TS even spelled the word out to his interlocutor. When this was unsuccessful, the TS speaker verbally signaled that he would send a message, and soon after receipt of the message, the other speaker was able to respond to the initial question.

Although spelling out words may occur in classrooms, particularly language classrooms, it would appear to be very uncommon in other interactional settings. However, Firth (1996) provides an example from his corpus of business telephone calls, in which two interactants put a lot of work into establishing the correct spelling of one of their names. Firth argues that information such as names and telephone numbers, which are crucial in business, require the kind of attention not necessarily required of less 'fatal' details.

Although understanding, and so responding to, a comment in an online chat room about eating whale meat may not be as extrinsically important as obtaining the correct telephone number of an important business partner, the participants in the chat room display its importance to them at this time. While the question could easily have

[30] Of course, this is not to claim that all exposed troubles in understanding were resolved through the use of IPMs. There are other sequences within the corpus in which troubles in understanding are exposed, and subsequently resolved through the regular (talk-based) repair mechanism.

been abandoned by the participants, without any serious consequences, this was clearly not desirable to them. Being understood by, and able to understand, one another *is* demonstrably important to the participants in these chat rooms, even when discussing matters which do not involve important business transactions.

As was discussed in Chapter 2, research has shown how L2 users, much like L1 users, can draw upon non-verbal resources in order to aid the achievement of mutual understanding (e.g. Carroll 2008; Mori and Hayashi 2006; Mori and Hasegawa 2009; Olsher 2004). For these participants, in the absence of non-verbal resources such as embodied actions and gaze, they demonstrate themselves to be resourceful in still finding means to work towards understanding beyond the verbal.

However, it was also suggested that there was an orientation on the part of the participants to use the IPM feature as a last (or at least 'late') resort. In Section 7.3, an episode was examined in which one interactant requested an entire response-seeking turn be sent to him in a written format. This request was denied, and a repair as reformulation appeared to be sufficient. Additionally, in all of the other examples which were provided (and in fact, in all of the other cases to emerge from the corpus), IPMs were used only as a last resort, and exclusively for a singular lexical item. This suggested a tendency by the participant to keep their interaction in spoken form.

This may be because the participants had joined the chat rooms in order to practice their English, but it may also have been partly due to the fact that the talk was the only medium which was publicly available to all participants; IPMs were precisely that – *private*, and there was no publicly available written forum in these chat rooms. As was explicated throughout the chapter, the participants routinely oriented to the IPM in their talk, and resumed the interaction through talk once the trouble had been resolved. An example of this is the audible change-of-state token present in all of the sequences analysed. This made the resumption of mutual understanding publicly available not only to the speaker of the TS, but also to all of the other chat room participants.

The single case provided in Section 7.4 also demonstrated the importance of connecting the written communication to the spoken floor. The episode took place over two separate occasions in the chat room. At time 1, one participant was unable to understand the response to her question about astrological star sign (quite possibly because the response given by her L1 interlocutor – *'acquarian'* – is not an established star sign). As such, she requested to be sent the word via IPM. When this

was not forthcoming, the participant experiencing the trouble later requested the IPM again, this time apparently initiating it via an IPM. The recipient of this IPM then responded verbally, addressing the sender but being heard by all present. The sender then made her request publicly known, asking again verbally and providing an account for this request.

One more observation came from this final sequence. The second sequence in the episode came some 45 minutes after the first. As such, chat room participant experiencing the trouble demonstrates the importance to her in understanding the TS, even though the talk has progressed well beyond it. This is indicative of the kind of determination of L2 speakers which has been uncovered by other researchers, such as Egbert et al (2004). The understanding of the term *'acquarian'* did not hinder the progressivity of the ongoing talk, in fact, the talk had long since progressed. Despite this, the participant demonstrated a desire to understand. Additionally, it once again suggests that, for participants in these chat rooms, the maintenance, and establishment, of mutual understanding is an important matter to them, regardless of the lack of any 'fatal' implications (e.g. Firth 1996; Jordan and Fuller 1975) should understanding not be achieved.

This section has summarized and discussed the findings from the three analysis chapters. In the next section, the overall findings will be discussed further, and considered in relation to the existing research literature on L2 interaction and technologically-mediated talk.

## 8.3 Further Considerations

The initial aim of this study was to examine L2 interaction outside of formal education settings and in 'real world', non-experimental settings. The setting selected fit these criteria, and has also been previously under-researched (although see Jenks 2009a, 2009b; Jenks and Brandt 2011; Jenks and Firth, forthcoming; Sukrutrit 2010). As such, it contributes to an emerging body of research which has widely been called for (e.g. Firth and Wagner 1997, 2007; Schegloff et al 2002; Wagner 2004; Wong and Olsher 2002).

In addition to this, through a review of the relevant literature, the study set out three further points of analytic focus, which were (1) the management of mutual

understanding in an online setting in which there was no apparent, external, institutional goal, (2) participants' orientations to linguistic expertise within this setting, and (3) the impact of the mediation of computer-based technology on the interactions.

In each of the following three sub-sections, these aims will be considered further, in light of the analytic findings and how they relate to the previous research literature, such as those discussed in Chapter 2.

### 8.3.1 *Mutual understanding in second language interaction*

The analysis throughout this study has explicated some of the ways that participants in these chat rooms manage mutual understanding through their talk. As has been argued throughout (and most recently in Section 8.2), the participants appear to display an extra sensitivity to threats to mutual understanding, and put in some extra interactional work in order to overcome this.

In Chapters 2 and 3, the relationship between progressivity and mutual understanding was discussed. Past research, both that pertaining to L1 interaction and L2 interaction, has consistently demonstrated that mutual understanding takes precedence over progressivity (e.g. Schegloff 2000). That is, the ongoing talk is put on hold when intersubjectivity is breached, and "understanding itself becomes the order of business" (Kasper 2009b: 23). The findings of the present study have supported this; in the sequences examined (as well as other sequences not presented in this report), trouble in mutual understanding is consistently dealt with before talk continues.

Further than this, though, the analysis has shown that, and how, participants are able to prevent hindrances to the progression of the talk by dealing with possible threats to mutual understanding. The sequences throughout Chapters 5 and 6 showed how problems were remedied for any possible cause – i.e. issues with hearing *or* understanding. In not just 'trying the easiest solution first', the participants in the excerpts provided were able to avoid possible extended sequences of trouble.

Conversely, the *'abroad'* case, presented as Excerpts 6.01 and 7.03, provided an example of the potential consequence of *not* allowing for the possibility that there has been trouble in understanding. In regularly and consistently treating the trouble as one

of hearing, and so simply repeating the TS, the speaker does not get his question answered for some four minutes, and confusion is abound in the chat room.[31]

In this sense, then, the phenomena may be comparable to embedded corrections (e.g. Kurhila 2006). Kurhila noted how corrections can be built into the preceding talk in order to avoid hindering its progression and exposing any trouble. She argued that:

> [t]he repair sequences in NS-NNS ['native speaker'-'nonnative speaker'] conversation are thus managed so as to intrude upon the talk in progress as little as possible. (ibid.:1108)

Both the phenomena in Chapter 5 – in which participants' reaction to RIs overcame possible hearing and understanding problems – and those in Chapter 6 – in which participants responded to nonresponses in a similar way – bore a similar property. However, they remedied trouble *before* it was able to intrude upon the talk.

Previous research on L2 interaction has also shown that the maintenance of mutual understanding requires interactional work on the part of the participants involved. Participants at talk are required to constantly monitor their own talk, as well as that of their interlocutors, and react accordingly in order to achieve and maintain mutual understanding, as well as to restore it when it is placed under threat. For example, Kuroshima (2010) and Svennevig (2004) both considered the use of repetitions to discuss the kind of work L2 speakers can put in in order to ensure, or 'secure', intersubjectivity. This study, too, has demonstrated some of the work through which participants can ensure mutual understanding.

Finally, some research has suggested that participants engaged in L2 interaction may 'let pass' problems in understanding, provided they are inconsequential, or 'non-fatal' to the overarching goal of the interaction (e.g. Firth 1996; Jordan and Fuller 1975). Findings from this setting may demonstrate quite the opposite; participants are dealing with *possible* problems in understanding *before* they can be seen as consequential.

Additionally, as was evidenced in Chapter 7, participants do not 'let pass' problems in understanding, but can put in a lot of interactional work in order to ensure that they understand, and are understood. When resolving trouble through the use of IPMs, the interactants could be seen to exert a lot of effort, and to draw upon available resources, in their attempts to achieve mutual understanding.

[31] The full *'abroad'* sequence spans over three pages of transcript, and so is considered too long to present in this discussion. However, see Appendix B for a full transcript of the episode.

This is particularly interesting as one could argue that there would be no serious consequences were understanding not to be achieved. Rather than vast quantities of money changing hands, or business deals being brokered, the consequences would be questions about favourite past times being left unanswered, or an interlocutor's star sign remaining unknown – hardly 'fatal'.

However, for the participants in these chat rooms, achieving and maintaining mutual understanding is *itself* oriented to as a consequential matter. They demonstrate, through their actions and efforts, a desire to understand and be understood. Rather than understanding being a vehicle through which other goals, such as selling cheese (e.g. Firth 1996) or fulfilling administrative duties as a student (e.g. Kurhila 2006), are achieved, **mutual understanding is the goal in and of itself.** For these participants, there may be no external outcome upon which their ability to understand, and be understood, is contingent. However, to be understood is to be a valid member of the chat room community, as well as – perhaps more importantly to them – a competent social being, able to interact in a language which they are trying to master.

It is possible that this is reflective of the chat rooms nature as English language practising rooms. For those participants who enter the chat rooms because they self-identify as not-yet-fully proficient L2 speakers, then being understood in their L2 may be their goal. This possibility, however, is one which cannot be tested empirically with the present methodology.

This consideration will be continued somewhat in the following section, in which the research findings will be considered in terms of the existing research literature on linguistic identities and expertise.

### 8.3.2 *Linguistic expertise in second language interaction*

In this section, the observations made in the analytic chapters will be considered in terms of orientations to linguistic identities.

In Chapter 5, these observations were made in light of OIR sequences which, as was discussed in Section 8.2.1, were not typical in that the speaker of the TS did not 'try the easiest solution first', but allowed for the possibility of potential trouble in understanding, even if such trouble was not explicitly indicated through the initiation of repair. This brings to mind an observation by Schegloff (2002), who rightly points out that:

> [s]peakers whose utterance is followed by… a repair initiation are not automata; they take into account the character of the turn which they produced and the circumstances of its production in determining what the likely source and character of the trouble was and what form its repair should take. (p. 321)

In other words, participants at talk do not automatically respond to an OIR by responding in the 'typical' manner. Rather, they consider the local circumstances in which the repair has been initiated. Schegloff continues to provide the example that, if one speaks while a pile of dishes crashes loudly to the floor, an OIR may be responded to with a 'repeat-as-repair', treating the noise as the cause of the trouble.

While Schegloff's point is a wholly valid one, he appears to be referring only to the interactional and contextual factors. However, the importance of his point may extent to broader social contexts, such as interactional setting and social identities of the participants. Considering this for the present study, the nature of the chat rooms as for English language practice, as well as the social identities of the participants as L2 users, may be factored in by participants facing breaches to mutual understanding.

For example, in the OIR sequences examined (as well as the nonresponse sequences in Chapter 6), it could be that the participants are treating their interlocutors as L2 speakers who are not yet fully proficient, and repairing accordingly. Similarly, it could be an orientation to their own language proficiency; as was evidenced in some cases, such as the *'winter'* example, speakers of an unspecified TS often repaired one particular lexical item within their TS turn, thus treating that item as the specific TS. This would appear to demonstrate a sensitivity to their own usage of that word.

Additionally, as was mentioned in the analytic chapters, in allowing for possible trouble in understanding, any such trouble is not exposed, and issues of linguistic proficiency or expertise do not surface in the interaction. There is no orientation to linguistic identities on the part of the participants; quite the opposite. The participants seem to put work in in order to avoid linguistic expertise becoming a relevant matter.

In this sense, then, Rampton's idea of L2 interactants outside of the classroom "getting past communicative differences, *downplaying incompetence*, and getting on with business" (1997: 331, emphasis added) may be evidenced. It may be unfair to talk about incompetence among the very sophisticated communicators in these chat rooms, but the participants can be seen to at least bypass the exposure of (possible) linguistic shortcomings.

These observations are also in fitting with Firth's (2009b) idea of linguistic expertise being a 'private' matter in some settings. Firth (ibid.) points out that, in L2 classrooms, linguistic expertise is open to being "topicalised, evaluated, commented upon, discussed, inquired about, 'noticed' and 'corrected'" (p. 140). Conversely, Firth observed that in his workplace data, none of these actions were present. In fact, the participants in the workplace settings were seen to put in interactional work in order to maintain the 'privacy' of their linguistic expertise.

As was pointed out in Chapter 2, to date, few studies appear to have examined Firth's ideas further, or provided further empirical support for them. The sequences analysed and presently discussed lend weight to the idea, and expand the previous observations in two ways.

First of all, Firth (ibid.) suggested that the maintenance of linguistic expertise as a 'private' matter was achieved by speakers themselves, whose own interactional work prevents the topicalisation or exposition of any linguistic issues they might display; for example through what he labelled as 'flagging for markedness' (p. 140) – a kind of indication of the speaker's awareness of their own less-than-proficient, or unidiomatic, language usage. However, in the present study, it appears to be *other* speakers, through the way they manage threats to mutual understanding, whose interactional work maintains the 'privacy' of any linguistic shortcomings. It is the other speaker, when repairing a TS or faced with a nonresponse, who manages to avoid topicalising or exposing problems in understanding, should they exist.

Secondly, the present study provides some evidence for this idea in a different interactional context. In the setting of English language chat rooms, it would appear again that linguistic expertise is treated – for many of the participants, if not all – as a 'private' matter, not to be exposed.

This may again be related to the point raised in the previous section; for the participants, it appears that being understood is one of the primary goals for participants in the chat room. How this is achieved does not appear to be of importance.

While the present and preceding section have considered the analytic findings in relation to the nature of the participants as L2 users, the following section will offer some further comments pertaining to the nature of the interaction as mediated by technology.

### 8.3.3 *Technologically-mediated second language interaction*

Although the principle theme of the present study has been L2 interaction, the setting in which the study takes place has led to some findings of relevance to the field of TMI and, more specifically, computer-mediated communication (CMC). While some of these findings may be relevant to L2 TMI in particular, other observations contribute more generally to the field.

Previous literature has shown L2 interactants to be resourceful as they go about their social business. As was outlined in Section 2.2.2, participants interacting in an L2 can make up for any linguistic shortcomings (and this is not to imply that such shortcomings are a given) by drawing upon other, nonverbal, resources. Research has shown that the most common resources drawn upon are gestural (e.g. Carroll 2008; Mori and Hayashi 2009; Olsher 2004) although it has also been shown that artefacts in the surrounding environment (Mori and Hasegawa 2006), and language aids such as electronic dictionaries (e.g. Barrow 2009; Hauser 2010) can be employed.

The findings of the present study add to this body of research by demonstrating how L2 interactants in English language chat rooms can draw upon the IPM feature of their chat room software. As has been evidenced in Chapter 7, participants can resort to the use of written messages when trouble in understanding can not be resolved through the talk. This again demonstrates L2 users to be resourceful in their attempts to understand, and be understood.

This would appear to be related to participants' statuses as L2 users. While one can imagine L1 users resorting to the use of written messages for particular lexical items (such as technical words) or to overcome technical problems (like poor sound quality), one would expect that, because of the kind of trouble being resolved through IPMs in this corpus (i.e. 'everyday' words, cf. Hosoda 2006), this is an example of the usefulness of the chat room setting for the practice of L2 use.

Another interesting observation to emerge from the IPM sequences examined in chapter 7 was the relationship between the text and the talk. As was discussed, there appeared to be a strong preference for resolving trouble through talk, and only using IPMs after (often multiple) failed efforts to do so. It was argued that this may be due

to the private nature of the written messages and a desire to keep the interaction publicly available to all present. Regardless, these observations contribute to an understanding of how and why CMC users choose different media, which has been called for within CMC research community (Jenks and Firth, forthcoming).

Additionally, the analyses showed how receipt of a written message, and any resulting change in epistemics, is typically displayed vocally. This then links the text back to the talk and serves to return the ongoing interaction to the, preferred, spoken floor. Such interactional transitions between mediums have also been identified as an aspect of CMC in need of further understanding (Jenks and Firth, forthcoming).

Two final considerations from the study which are relevant to research into TMI and CMC pertain to the observations on nonresponses from Chapter 6. The first is the general participant orientation to continuing the talk in the face of a nonresponse. As was demonstrated, the *'abroad'* case – in which the participant faced with an absent response put the ongoing talk on hold in order to check for his interlocutor's presence – appeared to be a deviant case. On all of the other occasions, the participants continued the ongoing talk, apparently in the belief that their interlocutor was still present and available, and unable to respond for some other reasons (such as a problem in hearing or understanding).

This provides an example of how participants in the chat rooms manage some of the limitations of the TMI setting; in this multiparty, voice-only environment, the absence of visual cues and uncertainty with regards to who is present, are constant constraints for those involved. As such, these observations follow Hutchby's (2003) call for further investigation into the constraints and affordances of emerging technologies on interaction.

Related to this is the nonresponse itself. While analysis has been able to explicate the consequences of a nonresponse, its cause is also worthy of analytic consideration. Because of the nature of the data collected, and the data which could not be collected (see Section 8.4), it was not always possible to know the 'real' reason (which is not necessarily the same as a claimed reason) for an absent response. As was postulated in Chapter 7, a response absence *may* be due to a problem in understanding, or in hearing, but it is equally possible that a participant does not respond because their attention is elsewhere. The implications of this are interesting.

Other forms of TMI, such as one-to-one telephone calls, follow Goffman's definition of 'focussed' encounters, which he describes as:

> two or more participants in a situation joining each other openly in maintaining a single focus of cognitive and visual attention. (Goffman, 1963: 1989)

Couper-Kuhlen (2010) applies this notion of focussed encounters in her distinction between 'noticeably absent' turns and 'absent but not noticeably absent' turns; in focussed encounters, where all participants are engaged in a single focus, an absence is noticeable. However, Couper-Kuhlen (2010) argues, other settings – such as cooking a dinner, working in a shop, studying with a friend – do not require sustained joint attention, and so may be considered nonfocused, in that both parties are not required/expected to maintain a single, common, focus of attention.

It may be that the occasional absences of responses are indicative of some participants' differing orientations to the style of interaction in which they are engaged. That is, while some may be treating the ongoing talk as a focused encounter, much like a one-to-one telephone conversation, others may treat it as a non-focused encounter, with which they are simultaneously engaged in other activities, such as reading emails, browsing websites, watching TV, or involved in any number of other activities.

Couper-Kuhlen (ibid.) argues that non-focused encounters have not received as much analytic attention in social interaction research and suggests that:

> we would be well advised to extend our analytic attention to other forms of social togetherness, including nonfocused gatherings and incipient states of talk, in order to appreciate more fully how focused interaction is achieved and sustained." (ibid.: 35)

The data and analysis presented in Chapter 7, and discussed in the present chapter, may shed some preliminary light on how this can be oriented to differently by participants engaged in the same interaction, and subsequently how focused interaction can be "achieved and sustained" in the face of contesting orientations to it.

This section has offered some candidate interpretations of many of the study's analytic observations. It is difficult to offer definitive conclusions regarding the impact that the technologically-mediated nature of the interaction has on the talk, or the impact that the participants' statuses as L2 speakers has. This is partly because it is not possible to tease apart these two factors, and understand the separate influences

they bring to bear on the interaction. The next section will consider this multi-contextual nature of the research setting.

### 8.3.4 *Final considerations: the multi-faceted nature of interaction*

As has been apparent throughout the previous sections, and indeed chapters, it is not possible to consider any of the three facets of this study – L2 interaction, mutual understanding and TMI – in isolation from one another. Further than this, though, nor is it always entirely possible to demonstrate empirically the impact that one of these factors is having upon the others.

It must be emphasised that this has not been the purpose of the present study, nor is it a general aim of CA studies to understand various aspects of interactional contexts in isolation from one another. The purpose of the present study, in line with the general aims of the project of CA, has been simply to understand something more about the setting which has been selected for examination, in terms of its interactional organisation.

However, this observation does raise some interesting issues, and serves as a reminder of the importance of considering all contextual elements of any setting under investigation. While it may not be possible to say that a particular phenomena - say, response to nonresponses, for example – occurs because the chat rooms are occupied by not-yet-fully-proficient L2 speakers, or because of the voice-only nature of the setting, one has to acknowledge and consider all possible factors in analyses and subsequent discussion.

In Chapter 2, it was pointed out that the principle aim of research into L2 interactions, as set out by Gardner and Wagner (2004), is to examine if, when, and how, L2 features impact upon talk-in-interaction. This is not being contested. However, in considering L2 features in one's analyses, one should not do so at the expense of the other factors which impact upon the setting. Such factors include, but are not limited to, the institutional setting in which any encounters take place and any interactional constraints and/or affordances acting upon the interactants. To grant one factor centre stage over the other(s) may be to lose something of that setting.

As was outlined in Chapter 2, many studies which have explored L2 interaction in various institutional settings have considered the relationship between the institutionality of the interaction and the participants' linguistic statuses. Beyond

looking at L2 speakers in and of themselves, such studies have explicated how L2 users are competent social beings, capable of achieving various social and institutional objectives, regardless of any linguistic obstacles they may encounter (if any).

However, many studies into L2 interaction happen to employ telephone conversations as their object of analysis (e.g. Brouwer and Wagner 2004; Firth 1996, 2009a, 2009b; Wong 2000a, 2000b, 2000c, 2005), and have not necessarily done the same when it comes to the technologically-mediated aspect of the setting. While the validity and quality of such work is not being called into question, and the advancement of understanding of L2 interaction which such work has promoted is being acknowledged, it could be argued that such studies have neglected a consideration of the constraints and affordances of the telephone setting in fore-fronting the importance of the L2 context.

Studies of the organisation of social interaction are increasingly acknowledging and examining the importance of interactional resources beyond the verbal, in both L1 encounters (e.g. ten Have and Psathas 2005; Goodwin 2000; Goodwin 2007) and L2 encounters (e.g. Carroll 2008; Mori and Hayashi 2006; Olsher 2004). Accordingly, studies should consider how participants at talk manage their interactions in the absence of some of these resources, and how they compensate for this. As new technologies – such as online, multiparty, voice-based chat rooms – continue to emerge, more such interesting interactional contexts are likely to demand exploration and understanding. It is being proposed here that researchers interested in L2 interactions studies should not underestimate the importance of the technological aspect of such encounters. Similarly, researchers interested in TMI should not confine themselves to examining how L1 users interact in such settings, since L2 speakers make up a large proportion of the world's technology users.

This study has examined interactions among L2 speakers in online, voice-based chat rooms. In so doing, it has attempted to acknowledge and explicate the roles that the technology – and its constraints and affordances – and the linguistic statuses of the participants play on the organisation of the interaction as participants attempt to achieve and manage mutual understanding. As is surely apparent from the analyses and resulting discussions, this is a complex, multi-faceted relationship. The final

argument put forward presently is that such complexity is to be found, and so should be considered, in all interactional research.

This discussion naturally leads into some methodological considerations, which will be offered in the following section. The discussion in that section will subsequently lead to suggestions for future research projects, which might be able to develop the observations made in the present study.

## 8.4 Methodological Considerations

In this section, some of the potential critiques of the study will be acknowledged, and defences against them made. This section is then not provided in order to undermine the value of the present study, but rather to demonstrate that shortcomings have been acknowledged.

The first, most obvious shortcoming of the study is that the data collection procedure was unable to capture everything. This was earlier discussed in Section 4.4. As was mentioned then, and as was apparent through the analytic chapters, the only data available was the publicly-shared talk; IPMs between individual chat room participants were not recorded, and so many messages may have been exchanged which were not oriented to by the participants in their talk. As was stated as a defence in Section 4.4, this is not seen as hugely problematic, as the only data available to the research was also the only data publicly available to all chat room participants; what occurred privately between participants would only affect the trajectory of the interaction if it was demonstrably oriented to in the talk.

What proved to be more problematic, however, was the lack of knowledge regarding what each individual chat room participant was doing in their own physical space as they engaged in the talk. Particularly with regards to the nonresponse analysis, it may have been useful to have insight into some of the 'genuine causes' of these nonresponses. Again, however, what was rendered publicly available was what was also relevant to the analysis. As was outlined throughout the analysis, it was the participants' interpretation and treatment of the nonresponses which was of particular importance, rather than the reason behind the nonresponse itself.

Another matter of methodological consideration pertains to the micro-analytic tool of CA. In collecting a corpus of 24 hours of interaction from the research setting,

and analysing a number of short sequences from within the corpus, this study has attempted to understand how mutual understanding is maintained in the interactional setting of online voice-based chat rooms. These analyses in turn can be seen to be part of a broader understanding of this setting itself – how it is socially organised in and through the talk which takes places within it. As was discussed in Chapter 3, CA analyses is built upon the notion of participants' normative expectations (Heritage 2005; Seedhouse 2004) – analysis can uncover how participants treat 'seen but unnoticed', 'expected' behaviour, and sanction social actions which are not normatively expected. However, in this setting in particular, it would appear that normative expectations are still emerging – participants' treatments of the social rules of the setting appear to differ from chat room to chat room, and even from moment to moment. Although generalisability is not typically a matter of concern to CA research (see Section 3.4.3, and Schegloff 1993, 2009, 2010), it could be argued that this setting is so fluid and dynamic in terms of its norms, that this corpus may not be reflective of what would be found if another 24 hours of data were recorded, with different participants in different English language chat rooms. For the chat rooms that were recorded, however, and for the sequences that were analysed, the observations still stand.

Finally, this study examined L2 interaction in a relatively 'new' interactional environment, which is both underexplored and unfamiliar to those engaged within it. Unlike other studies into L2 interaction, there has been no L1 interaction 'baseline' against which to compare the findings. In order to understand how L2 interaction is impacted upon by the constraints and affordances of the setting, it may have been useful to first understand how L1 interactants are similarly affected. In such a way, it may have been more feasible to claim that such phenomena were likely exclusive to L2 interaction. However, comparisons within CA research have been heavily criticised, as interactional research data should be considered in its own right, and not against any 'baseline' (Schegloff 2010). As such, and since the analysis within the present study has aimed to adopt a strictly emic perspective in discussing the relevance of L2 identities, this is not considered a major shortcoming.

However, this is not to say that research into L1 interaction in this setting would not be welcome. Indeed it is one of many recommended directions for future research. In the final section of this chapter, recommendations for future research will be

offered, particularly in light of the methodological considerations which have been discussed in this section.

## 8.5 Recommendations for Future Research

In light of the above comments, a number of directions for future research are apparent. Firstly, it is strongly suggested that more research be conducted into this research setting. The present study has only been able to scratch the surface of what is a fascinating and unusual interactional context. For example, researchers might consider gaining access to the physical environments in which (at least) some of the participants situate themselves, in order to further understanding of what else they do while talking in such chat rooms.

This would also shed light on how the interactants utilise and manage the multiple technological mediums available to them, which is an important direction for future research. As new technologies are emerging and, more importantly, being used simultaneously, it is important to understand how users of these technologies make choices regarding which medium to use, and how they manage shifts from one medium to another.

Additionally, as has been mentioned, in these chat rooms, the only stated goal is for participants to speak in English; topics of conversation are not specified. How participants, who do not know one another, and who have no other goal than to talk, manage to organise and generate their talk is also worthy of investigation.

As was suggested in the previous section, norms and expectations in this setting appear to be open to change on a moment-by-moment basis, as well as contestable within moments. Future research into online chat rooms would do well to explicate how such norms and expectations are managed and co-constructed. Similarly, understanding of how participants manage their entrances into, and exits from, the chat rooms would be welcome.

Moving slightly outside of the specific setting, research into other chat room forums would be welcome. It would be interesting to observe if, and how, interaction is organised differently in differently themed chat rooms. For example, does a specific chat room topic impact upon the talk? Additionally, when a particular language is not specified, is there a stronger tendency for participants to mix linguistic codes in order to maintain mutual understanding?

Future research should also consider L1 interaction in this setting. This would not only provide findings against which the present study could be compared, but would also be interesting in itself. Is mutual understanding managed by L1 participants in this setting in the same way as in the present study? Do L1 speakers manage the constraints and affordances of the chat rooms as do L2 speakers?

Outside of TMI, further research into L2 interaction is still necessary. As was stated in Chapter 2, a recent review of the literature suggested that classroom-based interaction analysis still dominates the research arena (Wagner 2010). While understanding of L2 interaction inside education settings is still highly valuable, the empirical spectrum should continue broadening in order to more accurately reflect the huge range of contexts within which participants interact in an L2.

More specifically, it will be useful to examine other non-educational settings in which participants who (apparently) self-identify as not-yet-fully-proficient L2 speakers come together in order to 'practise'. In other settings, such as ones in which participants are copresent, are they found to orient to themselves and one another as L2 users in a different manner than was found in this setting?

Finally, research should continue to examine how L2 speakers manage mutual understanding in a variety of interactional settings. This is particularly true of L2-only interactions, in which there is no teacher, nor L1 speaker to whom relative linguistic expertise can (potentially) be granted. How is mutual understanding maintained when various L2 speakers do not know their relative proficiencies? How is it when they do – are there orientations to expertise? Many questions pertaining to L2 interaction and intersubjectivity remain unanswered. Current research has only just begun to examine the broad social landscape in which participants using an L2 come together and achieve, and maintain, mutual understanding.

# Chapter 9. Conclusion

In this final chapter, the aims of the research will be revisited, and how these aims have been achieved will be discussed. Additionally, the importance of the findings of the present study will be argued and the contributions that the study has made to the domain of social interactional research will be presented.

The primary aim of the present study was to broaden the empirical database of second language (L2) interaction research by examining naturally-occurring interactions between participants using a language other than their mother tongue, in a non-eduational environment. This was following calls from with the field of L2 studies (e.g. Firth and Wagner 1997, 1998, 2007; Gardner and Wagner 2004; Kasper and Wagner 2011; Wagner 2004) and from the more general field of interaction research (e.g Schegloff et al 2002; Wong and Olsher 2002).

In investigating L2 interaction in online, voice-based, multiparty, English language chat rooms, the primary aim was achieved. The setting examined proved to be unique in that – unlike other settings in which L2 interaction has been investigated – it is non-institutional, non-educational, not between acquainted friends/students and it is often conducted without an L1 speaker present. Additionally, the present study follows calls for research which furthers understanding of this technologically-mediated environment itself (Jenks 2008, 2009; Jenks and Firth, forthcoming).

More specifically, the focus, as set out in Chapter 1, was to understand how L2 participants in these English language chat rooms managed and maintained intersubjectivity, or mutual understanding. This was considered important particularly in light of the ostensible goal of the chat rooms as for English language practice/improvement. Following Kasper's notion of 'category-bound events', the study sought to examine if and how breaches of mutual understanding were dealt with by participants who (may have) self-identified as not-yet-fully-proficient L2 speakers.

Findings suggest that participants demonstrated an extra sensitivity to threats to mutual understanding, and put in some interactional work in order to 'secure' intersubjectivity. Contrary to findings from other interactional settings (cf. Drew 1997; Koshik 2005; Mazeland & Zaman-Zadeh 2004; Pomerantz 1984a; Schegloff 1997, 2002, 2004; Sorjonen 2006; Svennevig 2008) participants were *not* found to 'try the easiest solution first' and treat displayed trouble as a problem in hearing.

Instead, when faced with a repair-initiation (RI) from an interlocutor, or an absence of a response to something they have said, speakers would allow for *both* possible trouble in hearing *and* trouble in understanding, by responding not just with a repetition, but with an elaboration and/or explanation. Such actions (1) overcame possible troubles in hearing *and* understanding, (2) managed to minimise exposure of troubles in understanding, and also (3) maximised progressivity of the ongoing interaction by quickly closing repair and trouble sequences.

These analytic observations were also considered in terms of another research aim, which was to examine if and how orientations to linguistic expertise manifest in interactions set up for English language practice among L2 speakers. This was considered worthy of investigation, since research has yet to sufficiently explore linguistic identities in L2-only interactions, where orientations to expertise may prove to be more fluid, changeable and contestable than in L1-L2 interactions (which have been regularly examined, e.g. Kurhila 2004; Hosoda 2006; Ikeda 2005; Park 2007).

In line with this aim, post-analytic discussion has argued that, in not exposing trouble in understanding, participants not only don't orient to differential linguistic expertise, but manage to *avoid* such differences, preventing them from reaching the interactional surface. These observations were considered in line with Firth's (2009b) idea of linguistic expertise existing on a 'public-private' scale. Firth (ibid.) argued that language abilities are open to correction, assessment, etc. in educational environments, but not in workplace environments. Findings from this study contribute to Firth's notion by suggesting that, interestingly, language abilities remain relatively 'private' in online chat rooms, even though they ostensibly exist for the purpose of language practising.

The final research aim was to understand how L2 interaction is affected by the constraints and affordances of the technologically-mediated setting. The voice-only nature of the multiparty talk was seen to constrain participants on occasion in next-speaker selection. The absence of embodied actions and gaze also meant that participants faced with an absence of response could be sure if their interlocutor(s) were still present. Analysis showed that, on the whole, participants put their faith in the reliability of the technology, and continued the progression of the talk.

Finally, participants could be seen to draw upon one technological affordance of the chat room setting when talk proved insufficient in overcoming breaches of mutual

understanding; when verbal elaborations and explorations were insufficient, participants occasionally employed the instant private message (IPM) feature to send written messages to one another. These observations again uncovered how participants can draw upon resources available to them in order to achieve intersubjectivity. Additionally, analysis of IPM sequences showed the L2 participants to be determined in achieving and maintaining a state of mutual understanding.

In achieving the research aims which it set out, this study contributes to the research project of L2 interaction, as well as to research into social interaction more generally. It has demonstrated some of the organisation of the "architecture of intersubjectivity" (Heritage 1984a: 254) in a relatively new interactional environment, which is of relevance to researchers concerned with both L1 and L2 interaction.

The findings have also contributed to an understanding of how technology, and more specifically computers, can mediate interaction. Insight has been provided into important aspects of TMI settings, such as how the affordances and constraints of technology can impact upon interaction. More specifically, the analyses have demonstrated (1) how participants in online, voice-only multiparty chat rooms deal with the problems that come with a setting in which many people can talk but cannot be seen, and (2) how users organise and co-ordinate their use of the multiple mediums made available to them. As social technologies continue to develop and combine, such insights are crucial for understanding not only communication technologies, but also how people use, and are affected by, them.

More generally, as was outlined at the start of this chapter, the study has followed calls to broaden the empirical database of L2 interaction research, by exploring L2 use in a real world domain outside of the language learning classroom. As such, it furthers general understanding of what participants at talk actually do when they speak in a language other than their mother tongue. Further than this, it has demonstrated some of the ways such speakers achieve mutual understanding and overcome threats to this understanding.

Despite these contributions, much remains to be understood about this setting, as well as other, related, contexts. The micro-analysis of social interaction continues to prove a powerful tool in unpacking how social members come together in order to achieve their various social goals. It is suggested that such analytic endeavours continue, in order to understand the many under- and un-explored aspects of our

social world. This includes, but is by no means limited to, how participants interact in an L2, how interaction can be mediated by new technologies, and – most importantly – how interaction is organised so that social members can manage and maintain an understanding of one another.

# Appendix A:
# CA Transcription Conventions

| | |
|---|---|
| [ ] | Overlapping utterances ( beginning [ ) and ( end ] ) |
| = | Contiguous utterances, or continuation of the same turn by the same speaker even though the turn is separated in the transcript |
| (0.2) | The tenths of a second between utterances |
| (.) | A micro-pause (1 tenth of a second or less) |
| : | Sound extension of a word (more colons demonstrate longer stretches) |
| . | Fall in tone (not necessarily the end of a sentence) |
| , | Continuing intonation (not necessarily between clauses) |
| – | An abrupt stop in articulation |
| ? | Rising inflection (not necessarily a question) |
| ___ | Emphasised word or sound |
| ↑ ↓ | Rising or falling intonation |
| ° ° | Talk that is quieter than surrounding talk |
| hhh | Audible aspirations |
| .hh | Audible inhalations |
| (hh) | Laughter within a word |
| > < | Talk that is spoken faster than surrounding talk |
| < > | Talk that is spoken slower than surrounding talk |
| (( )) | Analyst's notes |
| ( ) | Approximations of what is heard |
| $ $ | Talk uttered in a 'smile' voice |

Modified from Atkinson and Heritage (1984)

# Appendix B:

## Full '*abroad*' Excerpt

**Excerpt** *abroad*
(27) 01 June 2008 [0:07:00 – 0:10:57]

```
1    Allure:   .hhhhh can you hear me right n(h)ow
2              (0.4)
3    Zana:     yes we can hear ↑you
4              (0.5)
5    Allure:   .h i asked you (.) .hh my darling
6              (.) have you bin abro:ad
7              (5.9) ((typing sounds))
8    Allure:   ↑zana::
9              (5.1) ((typing sounds))
10   Allure:   zana ↑hello:::=
11   Zana:     =yes yes yes ↓yes
12             (1.5)
13   Allure:   an::d (.) i asked you (.) have
14             you been abro:ad
15             (3.0)
16   Zana:     BRoad?
17             (0.5)
18   Allure:   a broad.
19             (3.0)
20   Aramis?:  what's the (brod)
21             (0.7)
22   Allure:   abroad guys no- ((cut off))
23             (2.7)
24   Zana:     can you type me this allure
25             (4.8)
26             (('ping' sound))
27             (5.3)
28   Kuwait:   ((clears throat)) hello?
29             (0.8)
30   Allure:   d- urh
31   Zana:     ↓hell[o ]
32   Allure:         [ev]eryone do you know what
33             da- what it means (.) ↓abroad
34             (2.7)
35   Kuwait:   'scuse me?
36             (0.9)
37   Allure:   .hh er- i- sorry where you from
38             (0.3)
39   Allure:   are you from you ess ↑ay ((USA))
40             (1.4)
41   Kuwait:   (no) i am [from]=
42   Allure:             [ oh ]
43   Kuwait:   =↓kuwait
44   Allure:   .hhh (.) o- (.) .hhh i just ask
45             (0.2) asked (.) .hhh have you
46             been abroad
47             (0.5)
48   Zana:     ↑ahhh[hh]
49   Allure:         [do] you know this
50             (0.9)
51   Zana:     yes [er::  ]
52   Allure:       [do you] know this
53   Zana:     but not er far from my country
```

```
54              (2.2)
55   Allure:    your country what haha
56              (0.6)
57   Zana:      mmm (1.0) i wa::s (0.4) out my
58              country but not far awa:y .hhh
59              just close my country
60              (1.1)
61   Allure:    .hhh okay $i understand you$ wa-
62              i unders(hh) haha .hhh
63   Zana:      i (can't) understand you ahuhuhu
64              (2.6)
65   Allure:    .hhh er:: [(fr-)]
66   Flycoo:               [ who ] is from Prague
67              in [here]
68   Allure:       [(*) ] i will kill you
69              (0.4)
70   Allure:    ha[ha]
71   Zana:        [hu]hahaha
72   Allure:    ha (0.3) yo(h)u kn(hh)ow huh
73              (1.1)
74   ?:         what's going on in here
75              (1.0)
76   Allure:    i'm sorry wu- er (.) w:ho is
77              (that)
78              (1.3)
79   Allure:    i have a question for everyone
80              (0.8) who have been er::: who-
81              who have been abroad
82              (1.9)
83   Kowsi:     what do you [mean]=
84   Sara:                  [(no)]
85   Kowsi:     [by]=
86   Flycoo:    [no]
87   Kowsi:     =broad
88   Flycoo:    i haven't
89              (1.0)
90   Flycoo:    i haven't been there
91              (1.7)
92   Kowsi:     what do you mean by broad (0.4)
93              is it town or city or what
94              (1.0)
95   Flycoo:    PRAGUE i think
96              (0.5)
97   Aramis:    [another country]
98   Flycoo:    [   he means    ] prague maybe
99              (0.3)
100  Allure:    another [country]
101  Kowsi:             [ (but) ] city (.) city
102             or (.) country or wot
103             (1.4)
104  Allure:    a broad guys oh my god
105             (1.0)
106  Aramis:    abroad is [another]=
107  Flycoo:              [PRAGUE?]
108  Aramis:    =[country i think]
109  Flycoo:     [     (***)     ]
110  Kowsi:     explain
```

```
Allure:  yes (.) yes (.) you are right
         yeah yeah it's another country
         (1.7)
Kowsi:   okay:::
         (2.2)
Kowsi:   where is it (.) where is-
         (2.4) ((mic noise))
Kowsi:   where is it
         (1.2)
Allure:  what.
         (1.2)
Kowsi:   where is it
         (3.5)
Allure:  i don't understand you
         (1.4)
Kowsi:   aha what is- where is it
         (1.5)
Allure:  what [  is it  ]
Kowsi:        [the broad]
         (0.9)
Kowsi:   where is it the broad (.) hh.
         country [you say]=
Allure:         [  hh.  ]
Kowsi:   =that
Allure:  oh my god (0.5) okay okay (0.7)
         .hhh i just asked (0.2) have you
         been abroad ora- i mean .hhh are
         you travelling what are you doing
         you n- (0.3) do you know what- d-
         (0.7) understand- do you
         understand me
         (1.6)
Kowsi:   .hhh (0.4) [(a little)]
Sara:               [   oh::   ]
         (0.4)
Sara:    travell[ing]
Kowsi:          [ a ] little bit
         (1.1)
Allure:  travel yeah travelling
         (0.6)
Sara:    ye::ah
         (0.4)
Sara:    hmm
         (0.6)
Sara:    trav[elling]
Kowsi:       [  you ] mean travelling
         (1.0)
Allure:  .hhh yeah sure
         (1.3)
Kowsi:   so
         (3.0)
Allure:  .hhhh [   cos the  ]=
Kowsi:         [but i didn't]
Allure:  topic- (.) wh- the topic f- the
         topic is er is er t- (.) .hh
         travelling (.) and i ask have you
         been a broad
```

```
168           (0.8)
169  Sara:    mm-hmm
170           (1.5)
171  Kowsi:   i never ever in my life been
172           there
173           (3.8)
174  Allure:  strange life (.) welcome back (.)
175           nice to meet you aga:::in
```

# Appendix C:

# ‘Skypecast’ recordings (see attached CD)

## ‘Skypecast’ tracklisting

(1) 12 March 2007
(2) 12 March 2007
(3) 12 March 2007
(4) 13 March 2007
(5) 13 march 2007
(6) 14 March 2007
(7) 14 March 2007
(8) 15 March 2007
(9) 15 March 2007
(10) 15 March 2007
(11) 16 March 2007
(12) 17 March 2007
(13) 17 March 2007
(14) 18 March 2007
(15) 18 March 2007
(16) 19 March 2007
(17) 30 April 2008
(18) 1 May 2007
(19) 4 May 2007
(20) 14 May 2007
(21) 15 May 2007
(22) 17 May 2007
(23) 18 May 2007
(24) 21 May 2007
(25) 21 May 2008
(26) 28 May 2007
(27) 1 June 2008
(28) 2 June 2008
(29) 4 June 2008
(30) 4 June 2008
(31) 4 June 2008
(32) 22 June 2008

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