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Let's talk business!

Exploring influences of social status and cultural background on politeness in other-initiated repair in business interactions.

Author: Luka Paul Vethake

I.   Abstract

To inject new insights into the growing body of other-initiated repair, this interdisciplinary study investigated differences between checks and corrections against the conceptual backdrop of cultural and social status differences and their relative effect on politeness across multiple types of other-initiated repair, thus propelling the body of research of repair to new interlacing territories of human interaction.

Applying a mixed-methods inductive research design, a corpus (n = 110) of naturally occurring formal business conversations in different discourse categories (e.g., business meetings, job interviews) between native English speakers and non-native Hong Kong Chinese speakers was analysed using a) in-depth sequential analysis to discover micro-dynamics of human interaction and b) statistical analyses to explore general data tendencies.

The results revealed that rather than by imposing external frameworks of social status or cultural differences, politeness in other-initiated repair is negotiated as some co-constructed social capital on a turn-by-turn basis and through repair receipts, which becomes visible through sequential analysis. Also, corrections should not be condemned as automatically risky to politeness in human interaction because participants cooperatively solved misunderstandings. Future research should develop the coalescence between repair receipts and politeness theory and managers should note that inclusive communication already happens on a linguistic level.

Key words: *other-initiated repair, other-corrections, conversation analysis, culture, social status, politeness theory*

II.   Introduction

In organisations, misunderstandings can accrue to a gross loss of an estimated $62 million for SMEs in the USA and the UK alone (Paton, 2008) and happen irrespective of language abilities (Li, 1999). In a world in which enterprises expand internationally (Morrison, 2015), especially cross-cultural misunderstandings can hamper the effectiveness of a multinational enterprise. How can misunderstandings be understood and dealt with? The present study complied with these demands and intended to investigate misunderstandings at the workplace focusing on two distinct elements of other-initiated repair: checks and corrections.

Other-initiated correction has been reviewed mostly against the background of adult-child (Chouinard & Clark, 2003; Ellis & Wells, 1980) or classroom (Åhlund & Aronsson, 2015; Macbeth, 2004; McHoul, 1990) interactions. Other-initiated repair has mainly been studied in informal communication environments (Dingemanse et al., 2015; Firth, 1996). However, it is unclear if organisational settings differ from these (Drew & Heritage, 1992). For example, in institutions turn-taking is regulated through a meeting chair and subject to time constraints or domain-specific language use (Kasper & Wagner, 2014). There is a knowledge gap in how corrections and checks are applied in such settings and to what extent they reflect or construct (or maintain) social status and cultural differences. For the latter, scholars have repeatedly formulated pleas for more research (Kasper & Wagner, 2014; Tsuchiya & Handford, 2014). Additionally, endogenous relevance for this study and a justification of the cross-cultural research lens comes from the sample:

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44   B:    <SA055 [reply to statement:object] no >
45         <SA064 [statement:opine] it¡¦s  JUST  that GEnerally  SPEAking >
46         <SA032 [filler] er  (.) >
47   a3:   <SA053 [reply to statement:acknowledge] *   Mhm >
48   B:    <SA024 [empathizer] ** YOU know >
49         <SA064 [statement:opine] HONG    HONG kong speakers of ENglish    FIND    Other  hong kong
50         SPEAkers of >
51   a3:   <SA064 [statement:opine] *   Easier  to listen  (.) >
52         <SA032 [filler]   YEAH  >
53   B:    <SA064 [statement:opine] ** ENglish    Easier  to  underSTAND   >
54         <SA064 [statement:opine]   so i was  CUrious >
```

Just like *B*, this paper was also concerned with communication issues between native and non-native speakers of English. A mixed-methods design provided an explorative and interdisciplinary analysis aimed at clarifying in-talk human behaviour by carefully applying frameworks of social status, culture and politeness. Rather than social status and culture, participants negotiated and co-determined politeness and repair use in-situ.

To disentangle the various components, the first strategy to tackle misunderstandings, other-initiated repair, will be introduced in the next section followed by other-initiated corrections.

III.   Theoretical background

II.1.1 *Other-initiated repair*

Misunderstandings potentially disrupt the conversation flow. They pose trouble to human interaction since the maxim of quality may be flouted (Grice, 1989), which states that interactants ought to articulate themselves in a clear and unambiguous manner. Through a philosophical lens, even the best communicators will encounter misunderstandings because "the idea received by the receiver is never an exact copy of the one contained in the mind of the speaker" (Radford, 2004, p. 21). Furthermore, people enter conversations with individual knowledge or experiences they obtained beforehand. This can lead to unpredictable understanding problems during talk. Despite that, humans possess the fascinating ability to make sense of such problematic utterances. For example, by using repair initiations (Dingemanse et al., 2015).

If a speaker deems an utterance as problematic, repair can be initiated. Repair exists because a conversation is a collection of interactional sequences in which the interlocutors base their utterance on the preceding one (Ferenčík, 2005), and could therefore be described as a continuous chain of adjacency pairs (Schegloff & Sacks, 1973). Therefore, when a person perceives an utterance as incorrect or problematic, the previous utterance must be taken up again to clarify the meaning before the person can continue. Out of many repair options, this paper will explicitly focus on other-initiated repair because they occur more frequently (e.g., every 1.4 minutes in Dingemanse et al. (2015)) and represents a conversationally marked element (Schegloff, 1997a) with potential consequences for politeness that will be introduced in a later section. The corpus of this study provides an example of an other-initiated repair between two native English males (see Box 1 for transcription clarifications).

Box 1. *Explanation of transcription taxonomy (Seto, 2016)*

B2	= speaker (a/A = female, b/B = male, lower case letters = non-native, capitals = natives)
<SA(…)	= beginning of utterance
>	= end of utterance
SA063 [statement:inform]	= speech act type
(.)	= small pause
A_ E_	= (first, last) names
transLATION	= intonation (stress)
indented speech acts	= overlapping speech
utterances in green	= checks (by author)
utterances in red	= corrections (by author)
underlined utterances	= indicative of phenomenon (by author)
**/*	= overlap
(…)	= irrelevant talk continues (by author)

```
1   B2:    <SA063 [statement:inform] A_ E_ having a meeting in Gloucester room two for fifty >
2   B5:    <SA032 [filler] er >
3          <SA015 [check] just euro-money >
4   B2:    <SA019 [confirm] yes >
```

It becomes obvious that *B2*'s utterance in line 1 forms the trouble source because *B5* treats it as such by asking for clarification (l. 3) about the currency of the room price. While *B5* could have let this unclarity pass (Firth, 1996), he decided to mark the potential misunderstanding publicly in the conversation, thereby opening a side sequence. By limiting the response options through a close-ended yes/no question (l. 3), *B5* exhibits restricted repair because drawing on adjacency pair literature, the following turn needs to match the preceding one (Schegloff & Sacks, 1973). In line 4, *B2* answers *B5*'s repair initiation, which is called a repair solution, and therewith finalises the repair sequence. The strength of this paper is that all qualitative analyses are based on what the speakers make relevant by themselves. That means the analyst does not need to rely on imposing scientific frameworks on the conversation to verify that *B5* initiated repair and thus produced *B2*'s turn as potentially problematic because the participants do this by themselves. This analytic lens is also known as next-turn proof procedure (Hoey & Kendrick, 2017; Sacks et al., 1974). Noteworthy, there are varying "depths" of misunderstandings that determine the usage or repair (Dingemanse et al., 2014a). For example, if there is a severe misunderstanding, a simple repair initiation like *huh?* might not be appropriate because it does not specify the trouble element. Additionally, Schegloff (1997a, 2000) postulated that repair

initiations are in fact pre-sequences that determine the degree of severity of misunderstandings. Such systematically structured repair sequences are found in languages worldwide (Dingemanse et al., 2015).

Cross-linguistically, other-initiated repair can be categorised into a typology (Dingemanse et al., 2014a; Dingemanse & Enfield, 2015) which distinguishes between open (e.g., interjections) and restricted (e.g., candidate understanding) other-initiated repair. All these types reveal distinct usage and meaning. One factor that should be taken into consideration is that these studies "worked with a video corpus of maximally informal social interaction" (Dingemanse & Enfield, 2015, p. 99), which clashes with the corporate and formal nature of the present corpus that will be outlined in the method section. However, institutional talk is often representative of informal interaction (Drew & Heritage, 1992), so this paper explored nuances in how other-initiated repair is used in formal talk:

RQ1: To what extent are the different types of other-initiated repair (Dingemanse et al., 2014a) present in the corpus?

II.1.2 *Other-initiated corrections*

Other-initiated corrections can be defined as "the replacement of an interlocutor's erroneous, incorrect or inappropriate object with the correct version thereof according to the normativity of accomplishments (…) in addition to securing a mutual understanding of the object" (Arano, 2018, p. 6). As will be discussed below, epistemic properties unfold differently for other-initiated corrections than for other-initiated repair, albeit both form subcategories of repair (Arano, 2018).

Meaning is constructed less cooperatively compared to other-initiated repair by subjectively imposing one's utterance as correct. Arano (2018) argues that other-correction sequences are less about creating mutual understanding (as found in other-initiated repair), but rather about debating knowledge. Just like other-initiated repair, other-initiated corrections can also occur in a sequentially adjacent position, as shown in an excerpt from the present corpus.

1	b2:	<SA046 [question:confirmation] but Tuesday are we having our >
2	b4:	<SA015 [check] for the other meeting >
3	b2:	<SA019 [confirm] yeah >
4		<SA063 [statement:inform] I¡¦ll try to cut it down on the on the third >
5	a1:	<SA020 [correct] fourth >
6	b2:	<SA021 [correct-self] on the fourth >
7		<SA029 [expand] that¡¦s a Thursday >
8		(pause)

This excerpt shows a sequence from a meeting between non-native English speakers. The trouble source is articulated in line 4, followed by a direct other-initiated correction by *a1* (l. 5). This excerpt illustrates a sequence that Arano (2018) labelled "post-other-correction repeat" (p. 5) and becomes visible in line 6 when *b2* repeats the other-initiated correction term by *a1*. An interpretation of such a turn could be that a dispreferred communicative act (other-initiated correction) is converted into a preferred act (Lerner, 1996) because by repeating it, the correction is seemingly accepted by *b2*. To what extent this is a recurring phenomenon in formal interaction remains unclear because Arano (2018) focuses on informal conversations and generally, most conversational analyses for other-initiated corrections do (Arano, 2018; Haakana & Kurhila, 2009).

RQ2a: To what extent is the post-other-correction repeat structure present in the corpus?

Typologies for other-initiated corrections exist in teacher-student interactions (Weeks, 1985) or for informal conversations in general (Dingemanse & Enfield, 2015). This study aimed to review this taxonomy for other-initiated corrections in formal cross-cultural interaction. A starting point are direct and *no*-prefaced corrections. The former has been introduced above, the latter first negates and then corrects a prior utterance (Haakana & Kurhila, 2009), sometimes with multiple negations like "no no" that frame the preceding turn as problematic (Stivers, 2004). While "no no" can be seen simply as a disagreement or even refusal (Al-Gahtani & Roever, 2018), it could be argued that together with a corrective input, these two constitute an other-initiated *no*-prefaced correction sequence.

RQ2b: To what extent is the typology for other-initiated corrections (direct and *no*-prefaced) present in the corpus?

While other-initiated repair (also: checks) and corrections are sequentially similar, social relationships might be negotiated differently in the distinct sequences, possibly also mediated by the cultural backgrounds of the interactants and the discourse genre they are embedded in. The following three sections will discuss differences for checks and corrections regarding politeness, social status and culture.

II.2.1 *Politeness and social relationships – checks vs. corrections*

Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory "holds that regardless of culture, humans desire to be treated kindly" (Vethake, 2020, p. 2). Face has been introduced by Goffman (1955) as "the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact" (p. 222). Entangled in politeness theory, face has notions of a capital which is "emotionally invested, and that can be lost, maintained, or enhanced and must be constantly attended to in interaction" (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 61). It is commonly distinguished between a positive face, meaning "the desire (…) to be approved of" (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 13) and a negative face which entails "the desire to be unimpeded by one's actions" (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 13). When interacting, people automatically commit so-called face-threatening acts, meaning to challenge the desired face of their interlocutor. For example, this is due to unconscious knowledge asymmetries or expectations.

There are inherent social aspects to human interaction which are brought forward in the way we strive for achieving harmony and mutual understanding by, for example, initiating repair (Dingemanse et al., 2015). However, this does not imply that language in conversation is constantly polite.

Different repair initiations bear different interactional workload for the repairer. For example, in *huh?*-type checks there is much work left for the interlocutor to locate the problem because it is not tied to a specific aspect or part of the trouble source. Therefore, this repair initiation type could be seen as low in politeness because the speaker does not accommodate and leaves a lot of interactional work to the interlocutor. On the other side of the extreme poles, there is candidate understanding that is highly specific and elaborated: *Is X what you mean?*. This requires less cognitive effort by the interlocutor and can therefore be seen as an accommodating strategy, displaying higher politeness through cooperation:

```
1   B:      <SA053 [reply to statement:acknowledge] sure >
2           <SA047 [question:identification] what what¡¦s the other language that you would like to learn >
3   a:      <SA032 [filler] er >
4           <SA015 [check] you mean the future in the future >
5   B:      <SA019 [confirm] * mhm >
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Here, *a* initiates candidate understanding repair in line 4 to ask *B* if he is referring to the future language aspirations. *B* can confirm this directly (l. 5) because the repair initiation was restricted, leaving little options (yes, no, alternative answer) to answer. This is a positive aspect because *B* does not need to ask further clarifying questions and the repair sequence can be closed after 3 turns.

Other-initiated corrections display different social dynamics compared to other-initiated checks because they infer information or knowledge asymmetry between the interactants and negotiate power dynamics in-situ (Arano, 2018). Corrections are assertive statements that frame the speaker's content as incorrect and deprive the interlocutor of a self-initiated correction. Corrections can be seen as impolite because they implicitly signal that one's own opinion is valid, therewith publicly challenging the negative face of the interlocutor (Ferenčík, 2005). This bears risks in interaction with different statuses present. If employees correct their superior, it might be perceived as impolite because they assume that their own statement is better or that the superior has made a mistake in their previous utterance. Singling this out, especially in front of a group, can be perceived as even more impolite because the superior is deliberately put in the spotlight.

Different correction types might have different influences on politeness in the talk. In line with Arano's (2018) observations about direct corrections, it is assumed that they are more polite because they often evoke an accepting repetition (see case above). *No*-prefaced corrections produce longer sequences and by literally negating the preceding statement, the repair initiator indicates disagreement:

1	b5:	<SA047 [question:identification] what¡¦s the boss of the Royal >
2		< [unclassifiable] (inaudible) >
3	b2:	<SA006 [answer to question:supply] he is not the boss here >
4	b5:	<SA055 [reply to statement:object] no no no >
5		<SA040 [monitor] I mean who¡¦s behind it >
6		<SA032 [filler] er (.) >
7	?:	<SA002 [answer to question:comply] * must be must be the government >
8	b5:	<SA029 [expand] ** the >
9		< [unclassifiable] (inaudible) >
10		<SA032 [filler] er >
11	b2:	<SA002 [answer to question:comply] the government >
12		<SA032 [filler] mm >

The *no*-prefaced correction (ll. 4-5) is disruptive to the conversation because multiple lines follow between the repair initiation and the end turn (ll. 6-11). Humans employ so-called "markers of dispreferredness" (dispreference markers) to signal that they perceived the repair turn as impolite and conversationally unpreferred (Ferenčík, 2008). In the excerpt above, several "*er*'s" are voiced (e.g., l. 6, l. 10) as well as a repetition (l. 7) – both fall under dispreference markers (Ferenčík, 2008). Furthermore, it was found that multiple negators (l. 4) render the prior turn as a problem or wrong (Stivers, 2004), therewith threatening the expertise and face of the trouble-turn speaker. This strengthens the assumption that *no*-prefaced

corrections are somewhat more devasting to the politeness in the conversation because they lead to longer sequences and trigger markers of impoliteness.

When the social status is asymmetric, the inferior repair-initiating person might opt for repair that allocates the fewest workload to the superior out of courtesy concerns. However, differences of repair initiations on politeness may be irrespective of the social status. Therefore, a second, more general research question was formulated.

RQ3a: What is the effect of social status on the use of other-initiated repair and politeness?

RQ3b: What are the differences between checks and corrections regarding their perceived politeness?

II.3.1 *Cross-cultural background of this study*

To what extent cultural classifications are useful in comparative conversation analysis is debatable because they reinforce cultural stereotypes which oppose the reality of an increasingly and continuously interconnecting world (Sarangi, 1994). As far as this paper is concerned, the comparison of two cultures (Anglophone vs. Hong Kong Chinese) served to understand global corporate communication behaviour rather than aiming to verify or seek cultural differences.

To systematically classify cultural differences, Hofstede's (Hofstede, 1994; Hofstede & Bond, 1984) work has been applied horizontally across disciplines, albeit not without criticism (McSweeney, 2002; Wu, 2006). Rather than compiling an array of loose assumptions using concepts like uncertainty avoidance or power distance scales, the current study applied his categories posterior to qualitative analyses in order not to obscure the research through a cultural attribution error lens.

RQ 4: To what extent can possible differences in other-initiated repair use and politeness be attributed to the cultural backgrounds of the interactants?

IV. Method

IV.1.1 *Materials*

Meetings occur frequently (Allen et al., 2014) but transcripts of business meetings are very difficult to obtain due to privacy concerns of enterprises. Kindly, access was provided to a full-text collection of transcribed formal discourse genres that was created within the scope of a doctoral dissertation of a researcher from Hong Kong's polytechnic university (Seto, 2016). The corpus was collected by the English Linguistics department between the mid-1990s and the early 2000s (Seto, 2016). The present discourse genres were job interviews (11,287 utterances, 13 files), business meetings (8,179 utterances, 11 files), placement interviews (9,215 utterances, 11 files), question and answer (Q&A) sessions (4,653 utterances, 7 files) and telephone and conference calls (1,970 utterances, 5 files).

The interactions took place in varying forms between non-native English speakers (mostly but not exclusively from Hong Kong) and native English speakers (United States of America, Great Britain, Australia). A small portion was coded as "other speakers", mainly from China, India and Japan (Seto, 2016), but repair sequences that involved these participants were mostly excluded to enhance cultural homogeneity. The audio recordings were translated into English when necessary and first orthographically and later prosodically transcribed (Seto, 2016).

Seto (2016) annotated 70 speech acts into queries in a search engine. Among others, he coded [check]-speech acts that were equated with other-initiated repair and [correct] which were direct corrections. However, sometimes his coding was dubious and thus ad-hoc scrutinised as will be found in the results. For [correct], all $n = 4$ cases were sampled and all [correct_no] rendered a sample size of $n = 30$. Section *IV.1.4* will shed light on the distinction between [correct] and [correct_no]. For [check], the samples were chosen using a stratified random sampling method based on the discourse genre: per genre, a minimum of 6 sequences and a maximum of 21 sequences were extracted by allocating numbers to the [check] speech acts and using an online randomiser (https://www.randomizer.org/) to select the sample. This resulted in a sample size of $n = 76$. Figure 1 visualises what has been stated above and Table 1 shows the sample sizes relative to the population.

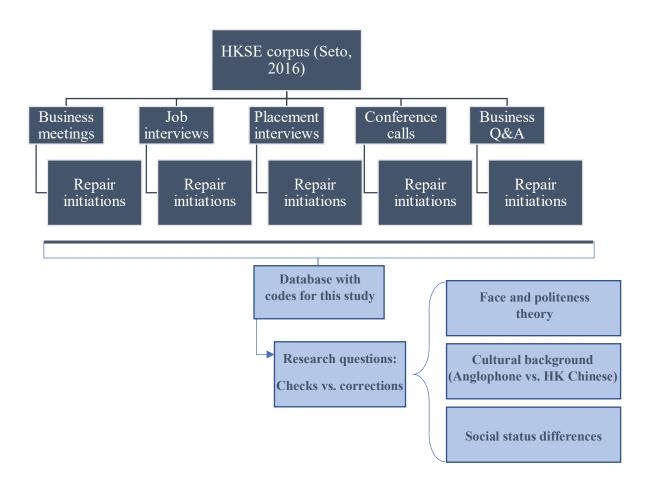**Figure 1.** *Schematic framework of the corpus*

Table 1. *Population and sample sizes by discourse genre*

Discourse genre	Absolute frequency	
	Population	**Sample**
Job interviews	48 x check	21 x check
	0 x correct	1 x correct
	8 x no+X	8 x no+X
Business meetings	69 x check	21 x check
	1 x correct	2 x correct
	17 x no+X	17 x no+X
Placement interviews	34 x check	21 x check
	0 x correct	0 x correct
	3 x no+X	3 x no+X
Telephone conference	10 x check	6 x check
	0 x correct	0 x correct
	1 x no+X	1 x no+X
Business Q&A	9 x check	7 x check
	0 x correct	1 x correct
	1 x no+X	1 x no+X

Total	170 x check	76 x check
	1 x correct	4 x correct
	30 x no+X	30 x no+X

N.B.: The frequency discrepancies between [correct] are due to coding errors as will be outlined in the qualitative results section.

IV.1.2 Confidentiality

The interlocutors that were present in the corpus were anonymised prior to the extraction of the sample. In some instances, the name of the chair was provided, but it was not mentioned in this paper. Only their gender and their native language were known to the researcher (Box 1).

IV.1.3 Analytic procedure for qualitative analyses

While there are many regulatory frameworks on how to conduct conversation analysis (Hoey & Kobin H, 2017; Kasper & Wagner, 2014), this conversation analysis employs mixed methods. By means of unmotivated looking at sequences, potential differences (as outlined in the introduction) in several instances were found between checks and corrections prior to redacting this paper. In a plenary discussion, notions of collaborative thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2012) were followed to identify the following thematic anchor points:

- differences between checks and corrections regarding politeness,
- social status differences,
- cultural differences.

Given the scientific novelty of these interacting variables and following this first screening of the available data, a corpus was constructed with different inductively derived coding systems. The coding was endogenously rooted in the sequences themselves by observing what the participants made salient in their conversation (see literature review). This also enhances the validity of the quantitative analyses because they are based on real-world phenomena of human interaction. The quantitative analysis followed the qualitative analysis because the focus was on thorough understanding of the phenomena before empirically testing them (Korstjens & Moser, 2017). The qualitative reporting started with a more generic investigation regarding checks and corrections that throughout the process evolved into a more accurate and case-based examination of sequences (Albert & de Ruiter, 2018; Bryant & Charmaz, 2012). The purpose

of this paper is not to infer causal explanations between the introduced variables, but to observe human interaction in its natural form and identify elements of repair in talk that the interlocutors themselves make salient. To graphically summarise what has been explained above, Figure 2 shows the research process.
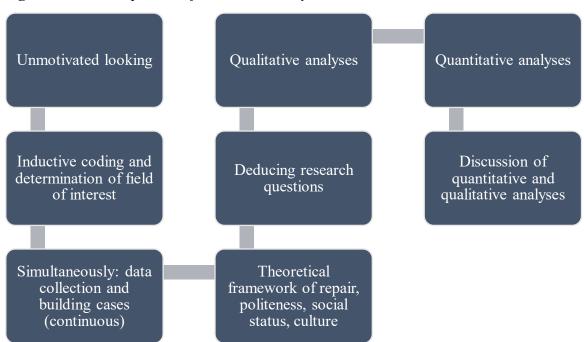
Figure 2. *Research process of the current study*

IV.1.4 Procedure for repair initiations (checks vs. corrections)

For **research question 1**, other-repair initiations were coded as [check] by Seto (2016) and subdivided in the corpus following the typology of Dingemanse and Enfield (2015) and Dingemanse et al. (2014). A simple coding system with codes from 1 to 6 was used to assess the frequencies of other-initiated repair types (Table 3). To answer **research question 2a**, post-other correction repeats were dichotomously coded as absent (= 0) or present (= 1).

Regarding **research question 2b**, corrections were operationalised as the speech act [correct], identified by Seto (2016), and by searching the corpus for "no no" to accommodate the *no*-prefaced correction (Haakana & Kurhila, 2009; Stivers, 2004). Both were integrated into the repair coding system (Table 3). Following the theoretical framework, it was assumed that *no*-prefaced corrections would need to be linked to a lower politeness score than their direct correction counterpart.

IV.1.5 Procedure for politeness

Dispreference markers were applied as indicators of impoliteness. Related to adjacency theory (Schegloff & Sacks, 1973), the repair reaction can be marked as dispreferred or not (Ferenčík, 2005). Ferenčík (2005) identified "delay (*now, well*), repetition (personal pronoun), hedge (*I think*)" (p. 75) as dispreference markers. As seen in Table 2, added dispreference markers were pauses, saying "no" and ignoring the correction initiation (Tsuchiya & Handford, 2014). The dispreference markers also received codes. Under delay, also utterances like "*uhuh*", "*mhm*" or "*er*" were coded as they "signal[s] a minimum receipt of information" (Seto, 2016, p. 111). If the marker was ambiguous, it was not counted. Missing intonation transcriptions in the corpus made it difficult to characterise, for example, *well* as impolite (it could merely serve as an opener for the following phrase).

Table 2. *Operationalisation of dispreference markers*

Dispreference marker	Example	Code
delay	*now*, *well*	1
repetition	(self-)repetition	2
hedge	*I think*	3
pauses	(.), pause	4
saying no	negation	5
ignoring repair	continuation of turn	6

As a second indicator of (im-)politeness, the number of turns after the repair initiation was coded because while "preferred sequences are usually proffered immediately and tend to be structurally simpler (hence unmarked sequences), dispreferred procedures tend to be hesitant, delayed and have more elaborated structure" (Ferenčík, 2005, pp. 74-75), as the example of the *no*-prefaced correction in the literature review showed. The absolute turn frequency was counted starting after the repair initiation and until and including the turn before the repair solution because sometimes sequences contained clusters that one could not disentangle as it would have distorted the epistemic properties of that sequence. Repair solutions (e.g., *alright*) were not included in this count because they are an independent sequential element, as will be explained in the qualitative results section.

The concepts of other-initiated repair and correction and politeness needed to be aligned for the quantitative analyses (**research questions 3a+b, 4**). Inspired by de Jong et al. (2008), a superimposed politeness scale was applied based on the amount of interactional workload for the repairer with the values indicated in Table 3 below.

Table 3. *Operationalisation of politeness x other-initiated repair*

Other-initiated repair type (Dingemanse et al., 2014)	Code	Politeness scale (-5 = least polite, 3 = most polite) (Jong et al., 2008)
open		
Interjections (*huh?*)	1	-3
Question words (*what?*)	2	-2
Formulaic (*sorry?*)	3	-1
restricted		
Repetition (*Lucy and Kelly?*)	4	1
Question word + content (*where will we meet?*)	5	2
Candidate understanding (*you mean in the lobby?*)	6	3
Corrections		
Direct correction (*the fourth*)	7	-4
No-prefaced correction (*no no, in the garage*)	8	-5

IV.1.6 Procedure for social status

Social status difference was coded by allocating numbers to all possible social relations (4 levels (A = repair initiation, B = trouble source): (1) A = B, (2) A < B, (3) A > B, (4) A ? B). Apart from contextual clues, evidence from Seto (2016) was useful to code the relationship, for example: "a general meeting (…) involving colleagues and a professor (N=1)" (Seto, 2016, p. 97).

IV.1.7 Procedure for cultures (Anglophone vs. Hong Kong Chinese)

Clustering different national cultures can be criticised because using national cultures as an independent variable is a false overestimation of cultural homogeneity within a country (Taras et al., 2016; Tung, 2008), leading to inaccurate or overgeneralised claims. Nonetheless, there are examples in which this method has been applied successfully (Chiang & Birtch, 2010) and given the scores on the individualism and power distance dimensions by Hofstede (Hofstede Insights, n.d.), the picture becomes rather homogenous in terms of Anglophone cultures (see Table 4).

Table 4. *Operationalisation of culture (Anglophone vs. Hong Kong Chinese) (Hofstede Insights, n.d.)*

National culture	Cultural dimensions	
Anglophone	**Power distance**	**Individualism**
United States of America	40	91
Great Britain	35	89
Australia	38	90
Hong Kong Chinese	68	25

IV.1.8 Intercoder reliability statistics

To gain insights into the replicability of the study and reliability of the coding systems, intercoder reliability analyses were conducted. Due to time and workload constraints, 20 cases out of 110 cases in total (18.18%) were coded by a colleague. The cases were selected randomly using an online randomiser (https://www.randomizer.org/). Although some scholars would view this number critically (Lacy & Riffe, 1996; Lombard et al., 2005), recent insights deem this number reliable (O'Connor & Joffe, 2020). Following McHugh (2012), the intercoder reliability for repair initiation type showed substantial agreement ($\kappa = .61$, $p < .001$). The number of turns after the repair initiation ($r = .75$, $p < .001$) and the politeness measure ($r = .82$, $p < .001$) correlated strongly with each other, indicating sufficient intercoder agreement.

At first, the intercoder reliability analysis for social status difference ($\kappa = .11$, $p = .474$) and the number of dispreference markers ($r = .37$, $p = .114$) yielded slight to no agreement,

indicating a conflict in agreement between the coders. After a second consultation, social status difference (κ = .66, p < .001) reached substantial to perfect agreement and the number of dispreference markers (r = .95, p < .001) also demonstrated strong correlation.

Against this background, both culture variables (2 levels: (1) native, (2) non-native) nationality of the trouble source (κ = .89, p < .001) and nationality of the repair initiator (κ = .89, p < .001) revealed almost perfect intercoder agreement. This enabled combining them into a more comprehensive variable, namely cultural difference[1] (4 levels (see social status): (1) native = native, (2) non-native = non-native, (3) native – non-native, (4) non-native – native).

Gender, repair success and interaction type were coded as context variables but excluded from the primary research design. Directional insights are in appendices E and F.

IV.1.9 Statistical treatment

For the quantitative part, this study utilised frequency and descriptive statistics using the statistical software programme IBM SPSS. Although limits of statistical power were reached, Pearson's chi-square analyses were run to explore statistical relationships between the categorical variables. Secondly, Kruskal-Wallis and Mann-Whitney tests were used to account for the observed data variations. In-depth qualitative analyses were conducted as a main instrument of investigation.

V.   Results

V.1 Qualitative results

Seto's (2016) corpus in general exhibits a paucity of checks and corrections compared to other corpora (Dingemanse et al., 2015). Dividing the deducted checks and corrections by the total of 37,011 utterances, this equates to one initiated repair every 177 utterances (M = 177.09) and one initiated correction every 974 utterances (M = 973.97), seen from a populational dimension. While calculating this number is scientifically unsound because the units of analysis occur in distinct conversations, it provides an overgeneralised impression of the frequency of occurrences of both repair types. To shift the attention to the nature of repair, the following cases will treat the forms in which corrections and checks come and how they impact politeness.

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[1] The quantitative analyses for the individual variables of the newly computed variables "cultural difference" and "gender difference" were not statistically significant either (see appendix J).

V.1.1 Corrections

Politeness reviewed

In line with the previous assumption that *no*-prefaced corrections are more disruptive to conversational flow and lead to longer side sequences, the following example showcases one such case.

Case (1.1_1).

1	a1:	<SA005 [answer to question:imply] may be not having hav- having a a a meeting a lunch meeting you
2		can (.) >
3		<SA047 [question:polarity] do you want to just s- talk to her >
4		<SA017 [clue] J__ I mean >
5		<SA047 [question:identification] or email her >
6	B:	<SA002 [answer to question:comply] mm (.) >
7		<SA032 [filler] yeah >
8	a1:	<SA032 [filler] mm >
9	B:	<SA069 [uptake] yeah (.) >
10		<SA063 [statement:inform] and K__ with Motorola or Coca-Cola or whatever >
11	a1:	< [unclassifiable] * ((laugh)) >
12	a2:	< [unclassifiable] * ((laugh)) >
13	B:	<SA063 [statement:inform] ** it was >
14		<SA063 [statement:inform] we got what it was now >
15	a2:	<SA032 [filler] er >
16	a1:	<SA064 [statement:opine] Motorola I think >
17		< [unclassifiable] ((laugh)) >
18	a2:	<SA055 [reply to statement:object] no Motorola >
19	B:	<SA045 [query] * wasn¡¦t it >
20	a2:	< [unclassifiable] ** ((laugh)) >
21		<SA064 [statement:opine] Coca-Cola >
22		<SA069 [unclassifiable] ((laugh)) >
23		<SA035 [hedge] * I think >
24	B:	<SA064 [statement:opine] ** it was Coca-Cola >
25	a1:	<SA048 [question:polarity] is it Coca-Cola >
26	a2:	<SA002 [answer to question:comply] no >
27		<SA029 [expand] something like s- >
28	B:	<SA062 [starter] well >
29		<SA063 [statement:inform] there was an ola- in it >
30	a2:	< [unclassifiable] * (inaudible) >
31	B:	<SA063 [statement:inform] ** in there anyway >
32	a2:	<SA063 [statement:inform] sweet something >
33		<SA063 [statement:inform] * I¡¦m not sure >
34	B:	<SA063 [statement:inform] ** it was either it was ei- either Motorola or Coca-Cola >
35	a2:	<SA063 [statement:inform] it it¡¦s not Motorola I¡¦m sure >
36	a2:	< [unclassifiable] (inaudible) >
37		<SA063 [statement:inform] that one >
38	B:	<SA053 [reply to statement:acknowledge] yeah >
39	a2:	<SA033 [frame] oh yeah >

In this excerpt of a business meeting, the interactants discuss a business lunch meeting with a company representative. However, it is unclear for which company she is working. While *B* initially indicates that the company name is not important (l. 10: "or whatever"), he changes his

16

opinion after the laughter by *a1* and *a2* and delegates the unclarity to the group (l. 14). Laughter works as a marker of incompetence (Ginzburg et al., 2020; Wilkinson, 2007) which could have triggered this reaction since *B* is the chair and therefore laughter could have been perceived as a face-threatening act triggering chair-typical not-letting-pass behaviour (Firth, 1996; Tsuchiya & Handford, 2014). Next, *a1*'s suggestion of Motorola is negated by a *no*-prefaced correction of *a2*: "no Motorola (…) Coca-Cola" (ll. 18 & 21). Interestingly, although *a2* corrects *a1*, she uses a hedging device (l. 23: "I think") which indicates insecurity. In fact, although she receives immediate support from interactant *B* (l. 24), *a1* questions the correction (l. 25), thus not accepting *a2*'s correction. To aid the other conversationalists, *a2* then starts to provide descriptive information: "something lie s-" (l. 27) and "sweet something" (l. 32). While for *B* the solution seems to be a dichotomous choice between Motorola and Coca-Cola (l. 10, l. 34), the final clarification remains unknown (l. 36). Two aspects are striking in this excerpt. Firstly, the willingness of the interlocutors to interact and collaboratively reach mutual understanding. By doing so, they implicitly express politeness as they conform with the need to delay the original conversation and extend the repair side sequence. Secondly, multiple interactants change their statement through interaction. Noticeably, *a2* completely reverses her correction (ll. 18-21) in line 26 after *a1* expresses her doubts (l. 25). After an exchange of descriptive information, a mutual understanding is reached. This highlights the cooperative nature of human talk even in cases of corrections.

The preliminary conclusion here is that the number of turns after the repair initiation is an imperfect tool to estimate politeness[2]. This means that the interactants interactionally co-construct politeness even in corrections by being willing to solve the problem cooperatively and spending their conversation time on solving the misunderstanding, which cannot be captured by quantifying this variable. This sequence is also interesting because it exemplifies the influence that other interactants can exert over each other, leading to a change in opinion and therefore producing longer sequences[3].

To sum up: the mere fact that corrections produce longer sequences and are thus more disruptive to the conversation flow does not necessarily entail that the interactants compromise or jeopardise politeness in-situ. There are even instances in which people publicly ask for the help of others, as the following case demonstrates.

Case (1.1_2).

1   b1:   <SA063 [statement:inform] building >

---

[2] A statistical analysis contradicted this (see appendix D).
[3] Please consult appendix E for statistical trends regarding this observation.

2		<SA026 [emphasizer] yeah yeah >
3		<SA063 [statement:inform] credit card >
4		<SA026 [emphasizer] yeah >
5		<SA063 [statement:inform] and * mortgage and corporate >
6	B7:	<SA064 [statement:opine] ** but that£¾s only been a recent experience >
7	b1:	<SA015 [check] sorry >
8	B7:	<SA019 [confirm] but that£¾s only been only a recent experience over the last maybe >
9		<SA032 [filler] er >
10		<SA064 [statement:opine] eighteen months to two years >
11	b1:	<SA053 [reply to statement:acknowledge] * yeah >
12	B7:	<SA064 [statement:opine] ** as opposed to I would imagine your statistical
13		provisioning process may take a ten year cycle >
14	b1:	<SA055 [reply to statement:object] no >
15		<SA029 [expand] we don£¾t take a ten year cycle >
16		<SA001 [alert] P_ >
17		<SA048 [question:polarity] is P_ C_ here >
18	b2:	<SA063 [statement:inform] a five cyc- five year cycle >
19	b5:	<SA002 [answer to question:comply] yes >
20		<SA002 [answer to question:comply] I£¾m here >
21	b1:	<SA046 [question:confirmation] * is that right >
22		<SA046 [question:confirmation] is that right >
23		<SA068 [unclassifiable] is >
24		<SA068 [unclassifiable] (inaudible) >
25	b5:	<SA063 [statement:inform] ** credit card credit card has a different methodology for * calculation >
26	b1:	<SA063 [statement:inform] ** credit
27		card actually depends on the what we call the flow rate in the sense how much (.) >
28		<SA032 [filler] er >
29		<SA063 [statement:inform] we are experiencing >
30		<SA063 [statement:inform] and then we project it forward (.) >
31	b5:	<SA068 [unclassifiable] * (inaudible) >
32	b1:	<SA063 [statement:inform] ** so it£¾s actually quite a complex formula in that sense >
33		<SA063 [statement:inform] credit card depends on what we call flow rate for this >
34	b5:	<SA032 [filler] * mhmm >
35	b1:	<SA063 [statement:inform] ** and we that would go really straight into specific provision (.) for credit
36		card all these bankruptcies we just take them immediately into our P and L >

It is an excerpt from a business Q&A session involving a chair (*b1*) and different representatives from assumably also other companies (*B7*, *b2*, *b5*). In lines 16-17 and 21-22, the chair publicly calls *b5* for support after having negated *B7*'s statement about the ten-year cycle (ll. 14-15). Interestingly, instead of *b5*, *b2* intervenes and one can witness something that could be labelled as a collaborative *no*-prefaced correction (l. 18). Although *b2*'s answer is neglected by the chair, case (1.1_2) shows that the nature of corrections can also be highly cooperative, with conversation partners sharing the negation (ll. 14-15) and the corrective element (l. 18). The observation that the correction was scattered across multiple turns and created a cluster was also found for checks, as will be shown later.

On another note, this excerpt displays a repetition check (l. 22) from the chair to not let the (potential) misunderstanding pass (Firth, 1996). By ignoring *b2*'s correction and concomitantly asking for help again, he makes his social position as chair salient because it is his responsibility to obtain clarity and avoid aggravated problems in the future (Tsuchiya &

Handford, 2014). Furthermore, it exemplifies that checks and corrections are entangled in one interaction which also was a recurring observation.

The suggestion that corrections may not be a threat to politeness in conversations became even more obvious for the other type of corrections, direct corrections. In the following, this repair type will be assessed with special focus on politeness and post-other correction repeats.

Post-other correction repeat in corrections

Case (1.1_3) exemplifies Arano's (2018) observation of post-correction repeat *par excellence*. Before analysing this sequence, it is helpful to mention that the speech act in line 10 was interpreted as a direct correction because it deems *a2*'s preceding utterance (l. 6) as wrong while issuing a corrective element at the same time.

Case (1.1_3).

1	a2:	<SA002 [answer to question:comply] Singapore is not like Hong Kong >
2		<SA038 [justify] because >
3		<SA068 [unclassifiable] (inaudible) >
4		<SA038 [justify] it only has >
5		<SA035 [hedge] I think >
6		<SA038 [justify] two and a half million >
7		<SA024 [empathizer] you know >
8		<SA038 [justify] population >
9		<SA032 [filler] erm >
10	b2:	<SA063 [statement:inform] three million >
11	a2:	<SA069 [uptake] ha >
12		<SA015 [check] three >
13	b2:	<SA019 [confirm] three million >
14	a2:	<SA053 [reply to statement:acknowledge] okay (.) >
15	b2:	<SA032 [filler] * yeah >
16	a2:	<SA053 [reply to statement:acknowledge] ** three million >
17		<SA064 [statement:opine] whatever >
18		<SA032 [filler] erm >
19		<SA063 [statement:inform] but it£¾s it£¾s smaller than than Hong Kong > (…)

After *b2*'s direct correction (l. 10), *a2* initiated a repetition repair type: "three" (l. 12) which is directly resolved by *b2* (l. 13: "three million") in the same repair manner. The post-other correction repeat takes place two lines later: "three million" (l. 16). On the one hand, one could argue that this is an expression of politeness towards the repairer because the suggestion is accepted and, even more so, repeated which attributes credit to the correction. On the other hand, *a2* indicates indifference (l. 17) and says she does not care about the exact facts (l. 19). While in most direct corrections the corrective element was taken up and the sequence finished, one can see that it could also be perceived as petty-minded or even annoying under certain

circumstances. This does not render Arano's (2018) findings invalid, but it underpins the observation that politeness is negotiated on a turn-by-turn basis.

Case (1.1_4) was extracted from a job interview in which the applicant (*a3*) and two interviewers (*a1, a2*) discuss the duration of a project from *a3*. SA002 (l. 7) was judged to have been miscoded by Seto (2016) because it is a direct intervention framing the previous turn as incorrect.

Case (1.1_4).
```
1    a3:     <SA032 [filler] Mhm >
2            <SA002 [answer to question:comply]     unTIL >
3            <SA032 [filler]      ER >
4            <SA002 [answer to question:comply]    at the  END  of  JUNE >
5    a1:     <SA053 [reply to statement:acknowledge] THE  end of  JUNE >
6    a2:     <SA068 [unclassifiable] NEXT >
7    a3:      <SA002 [answer to question:comply] *    THIS  year >
8    a1:     <SA053 [reply to statement:acknowledge] **    NE      THIS   YEAR >
9    a3:     <SA032 [filler] *    YEAH >
10   a1:     <SA068 [unclassifiable] **    OH  it >
11           <SA032 [filler]    oKAY >
12           <SA032 [filler]     YEAH >
```

The interviewee interrupts the interviewer midst the beginning of her turn initiation (ll. 7-8). While this may be seen as an overt challenge of *a1*'s status, *a1* actually accepts *a3*'s correction. The total reassurance that only she can know this fact let her decide to produce a turn which otherwise might have been more face-threatening. Nonetheless, *a1* signals surprise (l. 10: "OH") or confirmation which remains obscure due to missing intonation information (Koivisto, 2019).

Post-other correction repeat was also frequent in *no*-prefaced corrections. Case (1.1_5) is extracted from a business meeting and shows the interaction of two socially symmetrical employees.

Case (1.1_5).
```
1    b1:     (…) so averages is around that six and seven booking per day from HRC
2            so we are the winner of the hotel of the Hong Kong Hotel Associations for the March >
3    b2:     <SA020 [correct] not the winner the highest >
4    b1:     <SA054 [reply to statement:agree] yeah the highest >
5    b2:     <SA069 [uptake] well >
6            <SA063 [statement:inform] the under this project >
7            <SA032 [filler] okay >
8    b1:     <SA053 [reply to statement:acknowledge] yeah >
```

The corrected person (*b1*) reacts by affirmatively (l. 4: "yeah…") accepting *b2*'s *no*-prefaced correction and repeating a part of it (l. 4: "…the highest"). The repeat is initiated at the second

position, contrary to Arano's (2018) third-position repeat for direct corrections. Note that *b2* relativises his correction in lines 5-6 and therefore his initial correction becomes less of an assertive and imposing statement, but rather a well-contextualised fact.

Also checks displayed a structure of repeats at a sequentially similar turn position, namely one turn after the repair initiation. This is logical because generally, checks and corrections display structural similarities in turn-taking mechanisms (Arano, 2018; Schegloff, 1997b).

Checks and next-turn repeat

Next-turn repeats are an easy option to signal agreement with the repair element and have been captured by Rossi (2020) who labelled them other-repetitions. Consider the following excerpt.

Case (1.1_6).

1	a1:	<SA042 [precursor] ** this year is a very sensitive year in Hong Kong the ninety seven is approaching>
2		<SA032 [filler] er >
3		<SA047 [question:identification] how do you see the hotel market >
4		<SA032 [filler] er >
5		<SA047 [question:identification] after nineteen ninety seven >
6	a2:	<SA032 [filler] um >
7		<SA015 [check] do you mean in Hong Kong >
8	a1:	<SA019 [confirm] in Hong Kong >
9		<SA019 [confirm] yeah >
10	a2:	<SA032 [filler] mhm (.) >
11		

Although the conversations (participants, backgrounds) vary, the form and structure of next-turn repeat remains the same displaying a pattern. In congruence with the function in corrections, these repeats seem to be a reinforcement and open acknowledgement of the repair in one. Remarkably, these types of interactions rarely exceed two or three turns until the trouble source is solved (ll. 5-7). This might be due to the simplicity yet effectiveness of the repeat and the preceding restricted repair initiation. Therefore, it is not surprising that 61.1% of the next-turn repeats in checks were found in candidate understanding. Compared to Rossi (2020) who identified multiple interactional purposes of next-turn repetitions, in this analysis they seem to have mainly a confirmatory function. As Table 5 shows, next-turn repeat was present across almost all check types but most frequent for candidate understanding.

Table 5. *Frequency for next-turn repeats for check types*

Other-initiated repair type	Frequency of next-turn repeat

	Absolute frequency (%)
Interjections	1 (5.6%)
Question words	1 (5.6%)
Formulaic	0 (.0%)
Repetition	4 (22.2%)
Question word + content	1 (5.6%)
Candidate understanding	11 (61.1%)
N total	18 (100.0%) [of 76 (23.7%)]

This first qualitative results section revealed that politeness in corrections is a turn-by-turn cooperative accomplishment although they are more disruptive to the conversation. The next sub-section is dedicated to checks.

V.1.2 Checks

V.1.2.1 Politeness in checks

Two main findings will be covered in this chapter. To start, the form of checks in the corpus will be examined.

Case (1.2_1).

```
1    B:                          <SA053 [reply to statement:acknowledge]  ** okay >
2          <SA033 [frame] so >
3          <SA047 [question:identification] when you were doing your practicum >
4    a:    <SA032 [filler] * mm >
5    B:    <SA047 [question:identification] ** in the restaurants (.) >
6    a:    <SA032 [filler] * mm >
7    B:    <SA047 [question:identification] ** of your (.) >
8    a:    <SA032 [filler] * mm >
9          <SA032 [filler] mm mm mm >
10   B:    <SA032 [filler] ** er >
11         <SA047 [question:identification] university >
12         <SA047 [question:identification] how what did you do exactly >
13   a:    <SA015 [check] what >
14   B:    <SA047 [question:identification] what * what >
15   a:     <SA015 [check]  ** what did I learn >
16   B:    <SA019 [confirm] yeah >
17         <SA019 [confirm] * no >
```

22

18	a:	<SA053 [reply to statement:acknowledge] ** um >
19		<SA053 [reply to statement:acknowledge] um >
20	B:	<SA047 [question:identification] what did you what what were the tasks >
21	a:	<SA068 [unclassifiable] * yes it is >
22	B:	<SA047 [question:identification] ** you had to do >
23		<SA047 [question:identification] what what did you do >
24	a:	<SA002 [answer to question:comply] actually >
25	(…)	

In this excerpt of a placement interview *B* is the interrogator and *a* the applicant applying for a job in a hotel. Following *B*'s syntactically dysfluent utterance (ll. 10-12), *a* initiates repair (l. 13). Next, *B* marks *a*'s previous repair initiation as unpreferred by repeating it (Ferenčík, 2005) in line 14 and simultaneously initiates repair of the repair initiation, so to say. Interestingly, *a* realises her *faux pas* and directly initiates a *question word + X* repair that is arguably more polite because she is providing more specific information about the trouble source, differentiating between what she learnt or did (l. 15). After a short exchange of fillers, *B* clarifies what he would like to hear from the candidate. He does so by repeating the same content twice in morphologically different versions (l. 20 & l. 23). One can witness a gradual increase in politeness that eventually leads to the desired outcome by the repair initiator. This interaction exemplifies that similarly to politeness in corrections, politeness for checks also seems to be negotiated rather on a turn-by-turn basis.

Symptomatic for the corpus data is that checks seem to happen in group-like clusters, often scattered across one interaction sequence. The repair initiations within these clusters cannot be viewed as individual repair initiations because only together they coherently and epistemically function as one repair initiation. For example, the excerpt above features three checks across three turns (l. 12, l. 15 & l. 17). Often this happens when there is speech overlap (l. 21), utterances are evaluated as an encouragement to proceed (ll. 18-19) and when the trouble source treats multiple aspects or is lengthy (l. 10 ff.).

V.1.2.2 Conceptualisations of repair and misunderstandings

Schegloff (1997b) showed that repair initiations follow a three-step turn structure (trouble source, repair initiation, repair acceptation) but repair initiations and acceptations can be delayed and are organised within a turn system endogenous to the repair sequence (Schegloff, 2000). Repair initiations can be pre-sequences inviting to a more elaborate talk in which also the intonation of the repair signals assumptions about the locus of the troubling component and therefore the length to the speaker (Schegloff, 1997a). Therefore, checks function as pre-repair positioned misunderstanding avoiders. For example, one of the previous sections demonstrated that next-turn repeats in checks do not serve as markers of mutual understanding but of

confirmation. Backed by sequential evidence, the following is a thought exercise to outline the need for a conceptual distinction between micro- and macro-misunderstandings after repair initiations. Two types of misunderstandings will be compared; one case in which repair initiates a macro-misunderstanding sequence, and one in which a repair sequence functions as a micro-misunderstanding avoider and resolver in one. The following case featured a brief excerpt in the introduction.

Case (1.2_2).

```
1   B:     <SA053 [reply to statement:acknowledge] *    RIGHT >
2   a3:        <SA029 [expand] **  but it¡¦s  oKAY >
3              <SA029 [expand]   STILL  oKAY >
4   B:     <SA033 [frame] SO >
5          <SA047 [question:identification]  so  WHICH  one did you  FIND  was easier >
6   a3:    <SA033 [filler] ER >
7          <SA002 [answer to question:comply]   THE     THE     THE  the  GUY >
8   a2:    <SA015 [check] NAtive  (.) >
9   B:     <SA053 [reply to statement:acknowledge] *    oKAY >
10  a2:                    <SA015 [check] **   Native  speaker >
11  a3:               <SA019 [confirm] **    YEAH >
12         <SA019 [confirm]   native >
13  a2:    <SA053 [reply to statement:acknowledge] * oKAY >
14         <SA053 [reply to statement:acknowledge]   oKAY >
15  a3:                   <SA019 [confirm] **  SPEAker >
16         <SA001 [alert] OH >
17         <SA045 [query]   he¡¦s a the  NAtive  speaker >
18         <SA038 [justify] because  SOME  people   they  COULD  speak very  WELL  but    NOT  necessarily
19  a >
20  a2:    <SA053 [reply to statement:acknowledge] Mhm >
21  a3:                  <SA032 [filler] *   Mhm >
22  B:     <SA053 [reply to statement:acknowledge] **   YEAH >
23  a2:    <SA053 [reply to statement:acknowledge] Mhm >
24  B:     <SA055 [reply to statement:object] NO >
25         <SA063 [statement:inform]   the reason i  ASKED  is    because  Usually  (.) >
26         <SA032 [filler]   ER >
27         <SA063 [statement:inform]   when we give  THAT    the transCRIPtion to   PEOple    THEY
28                          would find the   WOman  easier >
29  a3:    <SA053 [reply to statement:acknowledge] OH >
30  B:     <SA063 [statement:inform] than the  MAN >
31  ((pause))
32  a2:     <SA068 [unclassifiable] * ((inaudible)) >
33  a3:    <SA064 [statement:opine] **   actually it¡¦s  PRETty  much the  SAME >
34  B:     <SA053 [reply to statement:acknowledge] *   yes  YEAH >
35  a3:              <SA064 [statement:opine] **   IT¡¦S    but it¡¦s  JUST the  NAME when    when  SHE  s
36  >
37  B:     <SA032 [filler] WELL >
38         <SA053 [reply to statement:acknowledge]  it¡¦s  it¡¦s  JUST >
39         <SA053 [reply to statement:acknowledge]    YEAH  yeah >
40  a3:    <SA064 [statement:opine] says it¡¦s hi i    I >
41  B:     <SA053 [reply to statement:acknowledge] *   yeah  YEAH >
42  a3:              <SA064 [statement:opine] **   or  SOMEthing  like that i  COULDN¡¦T   hear the  NAME
43  >
44  B:     <SA055 [reply to statement:object] no >
45         <SA064 [statement:opine] it¡¦s  JUST  that GEnerally  SPEAking >
46         <SA032 [filler] er  (.) >
47  a3:    <SA053 [reply to statement:acknowledge] *   Mhm >
```

48	B:	<SA024 [empathizer] ** YOU know >
49		<SA064 [statement:opine] HONG HONG kong speakers of ENglish FIND Other hong kong
50		SPEAkers of >
51	a3:	<SA064 [statement:opine] * Easier to listen (.) >
52		<SA032 [filler] YEAH >
53	B:	<SA064 [statement:opine] ** ENglish Easier to underSTAND >
54		<SA064 [statement:opine] so i was CUrious >
55		<SA038 [justify] beCAUSE your YOUR of your OWN (.) the FACT that you¡¦re VEry >
56		<SA032 [filler] er >
57		<SA038 [justify] VEry much a biLINgual SPEAker >
58		<SA068 [unclassifiable] ((laugh)) (.) >
59	a3:	<SA053 [reply to statement:acknowledge] * Mhm >
60	B:	<SA032 [filler] ** er >
61		<SA064 [statement:opine] whether THAT * CANcel it OUT >
62		<SA032 [filler] YEAH >
63	a3:	<SA064 [statement:opine] ** IT¡¦S it¡¦s ACtually a that¡¦s PRETty much IT¡¦S I i
64		think BOTH I i find BOTH of them easy to LIsten >
65	B:	<SA053 [reply to statement:acknowledge] * YEAH yeah >
66	a3:	<SA064 [statement:opine] ** IT it¡¦s YEAH >
67		<SA064 [statement:opine] JUST yeah >
68	B:	<SA055 [reply to statement:object] no >
69		<SA064 [statement:opine] it DOEsn¡¦t MATter >
70		<SA029 [expand] i¡¦ve JUST that was JUST a A >
71	a1:	<SA053 [reply to statement:acknowledge] * YEAH >
72	B:	<SA029 [expand] ** QUEStion of curiOsity on my PART >
73		<SA029 [expand] it¡¦s >
74		<SA032 [filler] er >
75		<SA029 [expand] has NO SIGni >
76	a3:	<SA053 [reply to statement:acknowledge] * oh oh >
77	B:	<SA029 [expand] ** NO sigNIficance in THAT (.) >
78	a3:	<SA053 [reply to statement:acknowledge] * OH >
79	B:	<SA064 [statement:opine] ** i would have preDICted (.) >
80	a3:	<SA053 [reply to statement:acknowledge] * YEAH >
81	B:	<SA064 [statement:opine] ** that you would >
82	a2:	<SA068 [unclassifiable] * ((laugh)) >
83	B:	<SA064 [statement:opine] ** SAY the MAN >
84		<SA032 [filler] ALright >
85		<SA063 [statement:inform] i was just (.) so i was CUrious IF that if I (.) * if I would be corRECT
86	>	

The topic being audio recordings, the main misunderstanding is that *B* just aimed at knowing if *a3* was able to understand the men or the women better in general and without any importance or valence for the job interview that they are situated in. However, it takes several sequences to get there. First, *a2*'s repair initiation might have cued a misleading direction of the conversation by asking "Native speaker" (l. 10). Then, *a3* goes on to describe the language levels of the people in the recordings (ll. 15-19) until *B* interrupts and clarifies his intentions to find out if the men or women were easier to understand for *a3* (ll. 24-28, l. 30), who tries to make her understanding problems of the women specific by referring to issues hearing the name (l. 42). Again, *B* intervenes and indicates that he was looking for a more general answer (l. 45) and that his main motivation behind the question is the fact that a3 is an English-Hong Kong Chinese bilingual speaker (ll. 49-50, ll. 53-58, l. 61). The final answer to *B*'s question comes very late

(ll. 63-64). For the sake of clarifying this detour, *B* issues a final explanation saying that it was merely his own curiosity (ll. 69-70, l. 72) which *a3* then acknowledges as finite (l. 80). What all this detouring and hustle demonstrates is that repair initiations can be at the start of a profound misunderstanding but there is also a second pathway.

Case (1.2_3).

```
1    b1:    <SA063 [statement:inform] is that and then the lady there >
2           <SA032 [filler] yeah >
3    B3:    <SA034 [greeting] hi >
4           <SA063 [statement:inform] it£¾s S_ H_ of M_ >
5           <SA032 [filler] erm >
6           <SA042 [precursor] three questions first on your new provisions >
7           <SA056 [request:action] can you be more specific in terms of how much was for unsecured consumer
8    lending
9                        * and >
10   b1:    <SA015 [check] ** how much >
11          <SA010 [apology] sorry >
12   B3:    <SA019 [confirm] how much was for unsecured consumer lending >
13          <SA029 [expand] such as credit cards and personal loans >
14   b1:    <SA004 [answer to question:evade] the bulk of it >
15          <SA029 [expand] I don£¾t give the breakdowns >
16          <SA004 [answer to question:evade] but the bulk of it is really (.) >
17   B3:      <SA047 [question:identification] * how about >
18   b1:    <SA068 [unclassifiable] ** (inaudible) >
```
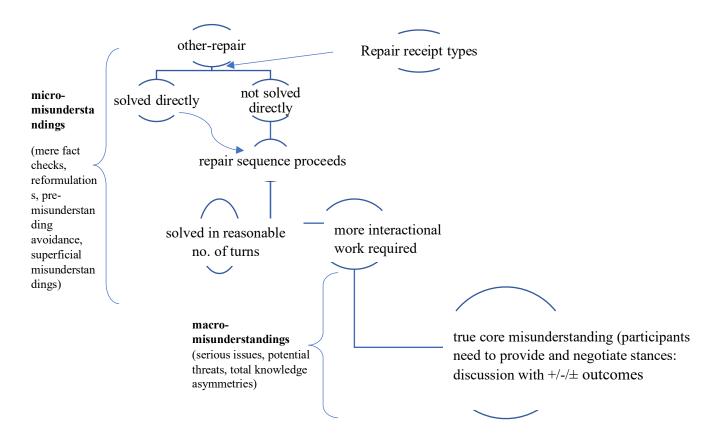
This excerpt stems from a business Q&A session in which *b1* functions as a company representative and chair of the discussion. Initiating a repetition-type repair (l. 10), *b1* uses it as a precursor or macro-misunderstanding avoider. This is only logical because by addressing a minor trouble source (ll. 7-8) directly, *b1* automatically deflects a potential macro-misunderstanding derived from providing the wrong numbers on "unsecured consumer lending". Since *b1* has a lot of responsibility, avoiding a future macro-misunderstanding that could potentially result in ineffective investments by shareholders, is highly desirable (cf. Tsuchiya & Handford, 2014). It is impossible to infer that this repair initiation is the result of a true misunderstanding because it is solved quickly (ll. 12-13) and without a debate or the need to provide a discussion standpoint. No knowledge must be negotiated or created.

From the insights of this section, a visualisation (see Figure 3) was crafted with the first case (1.2_2) representing the lower right pathway and the second case (1.2_3) the upper left one.

Figure 3. *Visualisation of the discrepancies between micro- and macro-misunderstandings*

Repair receipt types

- **micro-misunderstandings**
  (mere fact checks, reformulations, pre-misunderstanding avoidance, superficial misunderstandings)

  - other-repair
    - solved directly
    - not solved directly → repair sequence proceeds
      - solved in reasonable no. of turns
      - more interactional work required

- **macro-misunderstandings**
  (serious issues, potential threats, total knowledge asymmetries)
  - true core misunderstanding (participants need to provide and negotiate stances: discussion with +/-/± outcomes

To sum up this part, repair initiations function as gatekeepers for misunderstanding sequences that occur subsequently. One crucial factor or determinant in this decisive moment are repair receipts that have been named, but not explained.

V.1.3 Repair receipts

Coincidentlly, repair receipts evolved as an area of interest. These markers are at a sequentially interesting position because they demarcate the termination of the repair side sequence (Schegloff, 2000) and may signal a potential turn-taking moment for the other interlocutors. Building on seminal work on repair acceptations (Heritage, 1984), other scholars labelled this "repair receipts" and documented their existence in Finnish (Koivisto, 2019), non-native English (Hosoda, 2000) or German interactions (Golato & Betz, 2008). Information about intonation would have allowed for more nuanced distinctions between surprise or confirmation expressions (Koivisto, 2019) and therewith negotiations of epistemics in this analysis. In the following, attention is given to these different types. To extend the literature on repair receipts, the sections below will inject the current framework of politeness, culture and social status.

Repetitions

This type was most prevalent and next-turn repeats that were observed in the repeats section for checks are good examples of repetition repair receipts.

Case (1.3_1).

```
1   a1:     <SA046 [question:confirmation] so that you  CAN  >
2           <SA040 [monitor]  I  mean >
3           <SA046 [question:confirmation]  you can apPLY    apPLY  the SKILLS and  KNOWledge    that
4                   YOU  have    acQUIRED >
5   a3:     <SA032 [filler] ER >
6           <SA015 [check] YOU  mean    JUST  in the field of  transLAtion >
7   a1:     <SA019 [confirm] TRANSLAtion >
8   a3:     <SA069 [uptake] well >
9           <SA005 [answer to question:imply] i   THINK >
10          <SA032 [filler] ER   (.)  >
11          <SA005 [answer to question:imply]  IT¡¦S   GOOD      TO (…)
12
```

In the job interview excerpt above, *a1* questions interviewee *a3* about how well her skills translate into the new job. After a candidate understanding repair (l. 6), *a1* demarcates the end of the repair sequence by a simple second-position repeat (l. 7). This is highly economic because *a3* directly initiates her new turn (l. 8 ff.) enabled due to the restrictive nature of the repair initiation. If a prefix (e.g. "er") accompanies a repetition, this might complicate repair termination because it suggests unresolved knowledge asymmetries (Golato & Betz, 2008). In terms of politeness, no valence should be attributed to this repair receipt because it does not add content or is a personal affront (because the words of the preceding interactant are used). Affirmatives will be discussed next.

Affirmatives

As mentioned above, another group of repair receipts that was observed were affirmatives.

Case (1.3_2)

```
34  B:      <SA063 [statement:inform] ** it was either it was ei- either Motorola or Coca-Cola >
35  a2:     <SA063 [statement:inform] it it¡¦s not Motorola I¡¦m sure >
36  a2:     < [unclassifiable] (inaudible) >
37          <SA063 [statement:inform] that one >
38  B:      <SA053 [reply to statement:acknowledge] yeah >
39  a2:     <SA033 [frame] oh yeah >
40          <SA001 [alert] W__ >
41          <SA048 [question:polarity] have you have you finished checking for this one > (…)
```

Case (1.3_2) is the continuation as of line 34 of case (1.1_1) in which *B* (l. 38) and *a2* (l. 39) end the repair sequence by affirming that the problem has been solved. However, with different intonation or the use of breaks this repair receipt can also evoke the prolonging of a sequence (Koivisto, 2019). A relevant turn-taking position is issued adjacent to this repair receipt (l. 40

ff.). Presumably, this efficiency changes for other repair receipts, as will be shown in the following.

Interjections

The following case demonstrates what effect different repair receipts can have on the course of the conversation.

Case (1.3_3).

```
1    a:     <SA015 [check] you mean in the F and B outlet >
2    B:     <SA032 [filler] well >
3           <SA017 [clue] for example >
4    a:     <SA053 [reply to statement:acknowledge] * uhuh >
5    B:     <SA017 [clue] ** in F and B or >
6           <SA032 [filler] er >
7           <SA017 [clue] sales and marketing >
8           <SA032 [filler] erm >
9           <SA017 [clue] or reception >
10          <SA019 [confirm] I¡¦m not sure if we right now to be honest >
11          <SA032 [filler] er >
12          <SA017 [confirm] if we¡¦re looking for somebody in the room side (.) >
13   a:     <SA053 [reply to statement:acknowledge] * mhm >
14   B:     <SA032 [filler] ** um >
15          <SA063 [statement:inform] I¡¦m very certain that we¡¦re more concern now with getting some >
16          <SA032 [filler] er >
17          <SA063 [statement:inform] good trainees in the food and beverage outlets (.) >
18   a:     <SA053 [reply to statement:acknowledge] * mhm >
19   B:     <SA063 [statement:inform] ** but that¡¦s that¡¦s flexible >
20   a:     <SA053 [reply to statement:acknowledge] * mm >
21   B:     <SA063 [statement:inform] ** and we can still >
22          <SA032 [filler] er >
23          <SA032 [filler] you know >
24          <SA063 [statement:inform] talk about that exactly where you want to go >
25          <SA046 [question:confirmation] it sounds like you¡¦re more you¡¦re you¡¦re more interested in going
26   into the room side >
27          <SA011 [appealer] is that right >
28          <SA046 [question:confirmation] to reception >
29   a:     <SA032 [filler] mm >
30          <SA002 [answer to question:comply] yes >
31          <SA029 [expand] and also the sales and marketing >
32   B:     <SA053 [reply to statement:acknowledge] * yeah >
33   a:     <SA029 [expand] ** but I don¡¦t mind work in the F and B outlets > (…)
```

In this placement interview, the interviewee *a* initiates repair (l. 1) upon which *B* provides the first set of repair elements (ll. 5-12) which is followed by two short ones (ll. 14-17, l. 19) and a longer one (ll. 21-28). From an interactional workload perspective, interjections might be least polite because it remains ambiguous if mutual understanding has been reached and they could also communicate indifference depending on their intonation. This becomes clear in this case as *B* continues talking and elaborating on the initial repair initiation until a more determinant repair receipt (l. 30) is voiced. By remaining indifferent, *a* could also display politeness as the

conversational face of the interviewer (*B* claims higher social status) is not challenged and the communication flow not interrupted. Perhaps also cultural or language differences play a role since *a* is not a native speaker and therefore willing to wait longer for definitive repair receipts due to language insecurities (He, 2017, 2018; Schegloff, 2000; Woodrow, 2006). On the contrary, the next marker is a clear demarcation of a repair sequence.

Clear on-record

Much like candidate understanding, this repair receipt provides a transparent indication of the end of a repair sequence to the interlocutor, as displayed in the following case.

Case (1.3_4).
```
1    b:      <SA015 [check] you mean have both video and and >
2            <SA032 [filler] er >
3            <SA015 [check] cassette tape >
4    A:      <SA019 [confirm] alright >
5    b:      <SA015 [check] and two cassette tapes three cassette tapes >
6            <SA015 [check] and these two also different cassette tape >
7    A:      <SA047 [question:identification] what do you mean >
8    b:      <SA002 [answer to question:comply] I¡¦ve I think I¡¦ve just finished >
9            <SA032 [filler] er >
10           <SA002 [answer to question:comply] most of the cassette tape >
11   A:      <SA069 [uptake] oh >
12           <SA053 [reply to statement:acknowledge] oh I see >
13   b:      <SA069 [uptake] right >
14           <SA063 [statement:inform] and one videotape on F_ > (…)
```

This excerpt begins with a long candidate understanding repair initiation (ll. 1-6) by *b* that is unclear to the academic supervisor (*A*) upon which she initiates a *question word + content* repair (l. 7). In *b*'s next turn, he clarifies his doubt (ll. 8-10) and *A* overtly indicates understanding of the issue (l. 12: "oh I see") which enables *b* to directly initiate a new turn (ll. 13-14 ff.). *b* does not need to work out if *A* has understood his explanation because she signals him understanding (l. 12). This is further expressed by b's acknowledgement of "right" (l. 13) which serves as a repair receipt acknowledgement, but also as a transition element towards the next turn. Transitional elements are also in the last repair receipt.

Initiating novel turns

The following case is specifically delicate in terms of social interaction. In lines 5-6, *B* answers to a repetition repair initiation from *a2* (l. 4). However, *a2* never indicates if the trouble has been resolved by *B* in her opinion. Instead, *a3* initiates a completely unrelated new turn (l. 7 ff.). Therefore, the repair sequence is discarded (not ended) and a novel turn initiated.

Case (1.3_5).

```
1    B:                                      <SA048 [question:polarity] ** have we have we got fifteen hours
2    >
3    a1:     <SA006 [answer to question:supply] are not transcribed >
4    a2:     <SA015 [check] fifteen hours of >
5    B:      <SA048 [question:polarity] have we got fifteen hours of untranscribed data >
6            <SA017 [clue] not just conversations but academic >
7    a1:     <SA064 [statement:opine] I¡¦m just wondering for some conversations may be may may maybe they
8    haven¡¦t >
9            <SA032 [filler] er >
10           <SA064 [statement:opine] they haven¡¦t been transcribed > (…)
```

Assumably, this type of repair receipts serves to implicitly indicate that the repair sequence is finished because a new turn is initiated. However, to what extent the repair sequence is or is not over remains opaque to the conversation participants. In this specific case, the new turn has much more of an imposing character, thus being a potential threat to politeness.

Generally, repair receipts must not always occur in a clearly distinguished form. The following is one sequence that disconfirmed a clear distinction between these receipts.

Case (1.3_6).

```
1    a3:     <SA002 [answer to question:comply] NO >
2            <SA029 [expand] i¡¦m not reQUIRED to DO    to have Any     DAY time >
3            <SA032 [filler]  ER >
4    a1:     <SA015 [check] ALL  EVEning >
5    a3:     <SA032 [filler] ER >
6            <SA029 [expand]     CLASses >
7            <SA032 [filler]    oKAY >
8    a1:     <SA053 [reply to statement:acknowledge] *    UH  huh        >
9    a3:                         <SA019 [confirm] **   ONly evening    CLASses >
10   a1:     <SA053 [reply to statement:acknowledge] i see  (.) >
11           <SA032 [filler] *   YEAH >
12   a3:     <SA032 [filler] **   YEAH >
13           <SA032 [filler]   YEAH >
14   a1:     <SA032 [filler] MM >
15   a3:     <SA032 [filler] Mhm >
16           <SA033 [frame]    SO >
17           <SA032 [filler] er >
18           <SA046 [question:confirmation] THAT  means (…)
```

Starting with an on-record repair receipt, *a1* indicates understanding (l. 10) and subsequently seems to cue certain repair receipts that *a3* then repeats (l. 11-12, 14-15). To what extent these receipts are demarcating the end of a turn or function more as fluid interstitial turn elements for interlocutors to continue the conversation remains unclear (Koivisto, 2019).

A "mini-analysis" of repair receipts found that their use was not determined by cultural, gender or social status differences[4]. The following frequency distributions were found.

Table 6. *Frequency for repair receipt types*

Repair receipt types	Absolute frequency (%)
Interjections	15 (13.6%)
Novel initiation	16 (14.5%)
Repetitions	5 (4.5%)
Affirmatives	68 (61.8%)
Clear on-record	6 (5.5%)
N **total**	110 (100.0%)

There seems to be a clear preference for affirmatives (like *yes*, *yeah*). Given the preceding cases, this might be because while they are relatively short, they still politely close a repair sequence. On the other side, people do not seem to overtly terminate a repair sequence as clear on-record strategies were relatively scarce (5.5%). Note that the taxonomy of repair receipts was present equally in check repairs as well as in correction types[5].

To close this section, Table 7 summarises the observed repair receipt types and provides a careful diagnosis about their relative impact on politeness.

Table 7. *Prognosticated politeness of repair receipts in checks and corrections*

Receipt type	Examples	Politeness		Reasoning
Interjections	*Mhm, uh uh*	Negative impact		It is unclear if the repair sequence is finished
Novel initiation	*But what about…, and how would you…*	Somewhat negative impact		Indication of the termination of the old repair sequence but

---

[4] Please consult appendix H.
[5] Please refer to appendix I.

				opening another one
Repetitions	E.g.: second-position check repeats	Neutral	⊖	They do not add to the
Affirmatives	*Yes, yeah, (al-)right, okay*	Somewhat positive impact	↓	Positive statements
Clear on-record	*I understand, I get it, I see, thank you*	Positive impact	⊕	Clear indication

V.2 Quantitative results

V.2.1 Data normality distribution tests

To prefix the validity of the quantitative analyses, statistical analyses were run to explore the data distribution of the outcome variables. The following reasoning is solely relevant to the selection of the statistical tests. As Table 8 displays, all three variables seemed to deviate from the normal distribution. Politeness (z = -1.87) did not differ significantly from the normal skewness because the manually calculated z-score was lower than $z = \pm1.96$ which demarcates the α-level of $p \leq .05$. However, for all the remaining variables, skewness and kurtosis showed deviations from the normality distribution on a $p < .001$ level because the absolute z-scores were higher than $z = \pm1.96$. The politeness data distribution seemed to be platykurtic, the distribution of dispreference markers and number of turns data tended to be leptokurtic and skewed to the right. The histograms for the three variables visualise and strengthen the aforementioned assumptions (see appendix C).

Table 8. *Results of descriptive analyses for the outcome variables (politeness, no. dispreference markers, no. turns after repair initiation)*

Outcome variables	Descriptive statistics			
	Minimum - maximum	*M* (*SD*)	Skewness (*SE*)	Kurtosis (*SE*)
Politeness scale	-5 - 3	-.35 (3.34)	-.43 (.23)	-1.54* (.46)
No. dispreference markers	0 - 13	1.55 (2.33)	2.60* (.23)	8.14* (.46)
No. turns after repair initiation	0 - 13	2.24 (2.96)	2.13* (.23)	4.51* (.46)

*Significant on a *p* < .001 level.

A Kolmogorov-Smirnov test reassured that all the variables, politeness (*D* (110) = .26, *p* < .001), number of dispreference markers (*D* (110) = .25, *p* < .001) and number of turns after the repair initiation (*D* (110) = .26, *p* < .001), deviated significantly from a normal distribution.

A boxplot diagram spotted five outliers in number of turns and one outlier in number of dispreference markers. After inspecting each outlier individually in the raw dataset, it was decided not to exclude them from the analyses because it would have changed little to nothing regarding the irregular distributions of these variables.

The fact that the number of turns and dispreference markers were not normally distributed and skewed to the right makes sense because the opposite would mean that humans employ a considerable number of unpreferred markers and also hold rather long conversations, which would not be congruent with earlier findings that show that in repair sequences, humans converse cooperatively (Dingemanse et al., 2015). Still, for the empirical data purposes, non-parametrical tests were conducted when possible as they account for such circumstances (Field, 2018). The interpretations should be viewed as careful and tentative direction-giving assumptions because of varying group sizes.

V.2.2 Politeness and the use of other-initiated repair

Social status

To compare multiple independent conditions, a Kruskal-Wallis non-parametric test was applied and showed that politeness was not significantly affected by the social status difference (4 levels: (1) A=B, (2) A<B, (3) A>B, (4) A?B) present in the interaction (*H* (3) = 1.16, *p* = .763). Likewise, there was no significant effect of social status difference on the number of

dispreference markers (H (3) = 2.06, p = .560) or the number of turns after the repair initiation (H (3) = 3.85, p = .278).

A chi-square analysis revealed that there was no statistically significant association between the social status relationship and the type of repair initiation used (χ^2 (21) = 20.70, p = .295)[6]. Fisher's exact test p-value was reported because 81.3% of the cells showed an expected count less than 5 due to highly different group sizes in the sample (Field, 2018). Following Field's (2018) recommendation, a Bayesian loglinear regression factor (BF = 6611.73) was calculated to account for this violation. After dividing 1 by the factor, the probability of the null hypothesis being true was strongly supported (BF_{01} < .001) because the probability of the alternative hypothesis being true was lower than .001. Additional evidence comes from the non-significant Kruskal-Wallis test for politeness (H (3) = 1.16, p = .763). Since the politeness score is closely linked to the repair initiation type, one can confidently assert that there is most likely no statistically significant relationship between status differences and the use of repair strategies in this sample.

Culture

Given that the social status differences did not have a significant effect on politeness or the use of different other-initiated repair, another Kruskal-Wallis test was performed and showed that also cultural differences (4 levels: (1) A-A, (2) a-a, (3) A-a, (4) a-A) did not have a significant effect on politeness (H (3) = 6.63, p = .085), number of dispreference markers (H (3) = 5.20, p = .158) or the number of turns after the repair initiation (H (3) = 5.66, p = .129).

Furthermore, a chi-square test showed that there was no statistically significant association between the cultural differences and the type of other-initiated repair used (χ^2 (21) = 26.93, p = .061)[7]. Fisher's exact test p-value was reported because 71.9% of the cells showed an expected count less than 5 due to highly different group sizes in the sample (Field, 2018). Consequently, a Bayes factor (BF = 649.04) was computed which strongly supported the null hypothesis because the probability of the alternative hypothesis being true was low (BF_{01} = .002). Again, the Kruskal-Wallis test also evidences this finding (H (3) = 6.63, p = .085).

Repair initiation types

---

[6] The chi-square analysis for social status difference x check_correct was non-significant too (χ^2 (3) = 1.79, p = .657).
[7] The chi-square analysis for cultural difference x check_correct was non-significant too (χ^2 (3) = 4.69, p = .222).

To detect potential differences between checks and corrections, the repair initiation types were computed into a new variable, namely checks_corrections (2 levels: (1) checks, (2) corrections). A Mann-Whitney test for two independent samples in non-parametric data distributions (Field, 2018) showed that checks_corrections had a significant effect on the number of dispreference markers after the repair initiation ($U = 1914.00$, $z = 4.23$, $p < .001$). Corrections (mean rank = 73.79) came with significantly more dispreference markers compared to checks (mean rank = 47.32). The effect size was medium to large ($r = .40$).

To allow for more specific comparisons, a non-parametric Kruskal-Wallis test for more than two independent samples showed that the repair initiation type had a significant effect on the number of dispreference markers ($H (7) = 21.77$, $p = .003$). Pairwise comparisons revealed that *repetitions* (mean rank = 41.86) caused a significantly ($p = .001$, Bonferroni correction) lower number of dispreference markers compared to *no*-prefaced corrections (mean rank = 75.08). The effect size for this comparison was large ($r = -.55$). Furthermore, it was found that candidate understandings (mean rank = 48.22) also caused a significantly ($p = .008$, Bonferroni correction) lower number of dispreference markers when compared to *no*-prefaced corrections (mean rank = 75.08). The effect size for this comparison was medium to large ($r = -.44$). The effect sizes were manually calculated and are exclusively presented for comparisons due to accuracy concerns (Field, 2018). There were no further statistically significant comparisons.

Table 9. *Frequency and mean (SD) statistics for type of repair initiation x no. of dispreference markers and no. of turns*

Other-initiated repair type	Outcome variables		
	Absolute frequency	No. dispreference markers	No. of turns after repair initiation
	Total $N = 110$	M (SD)	M (SD)
Interjections	1 (.9%)	1.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)
Question words	6 (5.5%)	1.50 (1.38)	1.50 (1.23)
Formulaic	3 (2.7%)	1.00 (1.00)	1.00 (.00)
Repetition	25 (22.7%)	.72* (1.28)	1.28** (1.77)
Question word + content	3 (2.7%)	.33 (.58)	.67 (.58)

Candidate understandings	38 (34.5%)	.97* (1.39)	.79** (1.02)
N total checks	76 (69.1%)	.91 (1.30)	1.00 (1.31)
Direct correction	4 (3.6%)	1.50 (1.29)	3.00 (.82)
No + correction	30 (27.3%)	3.20* (3.47)	5.27** (3.84)
N total corrections	34 (30.9%)	3.00 (3.32)	1.003.69)

*Comparisons significant on a $p < .050$ level.

**Comparisons significant on a $p < .001$ level.

A Mann-Whitney test showed that checks_corrections also had a statistically significant effect on the number of turns after the repair initiation ($U = 2349.00$, $z = 7.05$, $p < .001$). When the repair initiation was any type of correction (mean rank = 86.59), it led to a significantly higher number of turns to reach mutual understanding compared to when the repair initiation was any type of check (mean rank = 41.59). The effect size was large ($r = .67$). Table 9 shows frequency and means statistics, albeit means are impractical for data distributions where the assumption of normality is violated, but it helps to grasp the essence of the picture.

Again, a Kruskal-Wallis test was executed and found a significant effect of type of repair initiation on the number of turns after the repair initiation ($H (7) = 52.42$, $p < .001$). Pairwise comparisons showed that *repetitions* (mean rank = 44.30) caused a significantly ($p < .001$, Bonferroni correction) lower number of turns compared to *no*-prefaced corrections (mean rank = 87.15). The size of this effect was very large ($r = -.69$). Furthermore, it was found that candidate understandings (mean rank = 38.09) also caused a significantly ($p < .001$, Bonferroni correction) lower number of turns when compared to *no*-prefaced corrections (mean rank = 87.15). There were no further statistically significant pairwise comparisons.

To sum up, it was qualitatively and empirically proven that external social status and cultural background concepts of the speakers do not statistically influence the use of repair nor politeness in conversations extracted from Seto's (2016) corpus. They sometimes surface on a more local level. While politeness differences were significant between repair types, the qualitative analysis refuted this indicating that politeness is hardly quantifiable. The next section will evaluate and merge the qualitative and quantitative results.

VI. Discussion and conclusion

Checks and corrections

General politeness review

This study was set out to explore different types of checks and corrections in formal interactions and their implications for conversational politeness (research questions 1-2). To recapitulate, it was found that applied classifications like social status (research question 3a) and cultural differences (research question 4) most likely do not have a statistical effect on the choice of other-initiated repair or conversational politeness estimators, but that the repair type itself does engender differences in turn number and dispreference markers (research question 3b).

Through qualitative analyses, repair sequences were scrutinised with a specific focus on politeness. Politeness theory (Brown et al., 1987) does have its place because different repair initiations and receipts bear different interactional workload for the interlocutor. However, politeness is dynamically negotiated through sequential constituents of repair sequences (e.g., repair receipts, turns) endogenous to the overarching turn-system through which repair sequences are organised and operate (Schegloff, 1997a, 1997b, 2000). Participation in the repair sequence evoked mutual understanding in repair (Dingemanse et al., 2015), even in potentially more face-threatening settings such as *no*-prefaced corrections. Therefore, politeness and conversational face (Goffman, 1955) in repair are negotiated turn-by-turn. This might have to do with the in-situ turn dynamics that were observed. For example, repair was often scattered or co-constructed by participants and increased gradually, which is congruent with previous research on multiple other-repair initiations (Skedsmo, 2020) but also peer-involving other-corrections (Åhlund & Aronsson, 2015).

Norrick (1991) claimed that other-corrections do not necessarily jeopardise politeness because the correction might be interpreted as goodwill or the repair initiator simply possesses more knowledge. This is somewhat comforting as humans seem to be relatively robust to allegedly low politeness turns in conversation, meaning that unless an interactant is overtly impolite (e.g., using swear words), little offense will be taken or at least made known to the perpetrator. For now, this finding seems to corroborate earlier research that presumed that apart from behaviour, also human language is innately cooperative and people supportive of one another (Dingemanse et al., 2015). In addition to direct corrections, Arano's (2018) post-other correction repeat was also observed in types of check and *no*-prefaced corrections. This analysis

also complements findings from Rossi (2020) who encountered other-repeat for checks at the second turn position. While Arano (2018) predicted that third-position other-repeat would be an in-depth negotiation of epistemic asymmetries, it was insinuated that repeats function more as a superficial fact check.

The variety of repair was not outrageously high. Interjections were used the least in the sample, while repetitions and candidate understandings were the most popular ones. Svennevig (2008) found speaker preferences for repair types that indicate issues of noise. Repetitions could fall under this category because they do not challenge anyone's utterance and are, *ipso facto*, a relatively "safe" repair initiation regarding politeness. Bearing in mind the cooperative principle under which repair operates (Dingemanse et al., 2015), the frequency of candidate understandings is not unexpected.

Generally, politeness is not a quantifiable concept in interaction because it interactionally evolves through turn-by-turn negotiations. Therefore, the quantification of human communication should follow qualitative analyses because endogenous coding systems grounded in observing what humans do in interaction can ecologically validate succeeding quantitative analyses (Stivers, 2015). Hence, while this paper meets these demands, it also pledges for more qualitative research in information and communication science because it might be a common 21st-century fallacy to state that empiricism has stronger explanatory power than qualitative methods due to a fact-based *zeitgeist* (Osborne, 2013), or conflating significance with statistical significance (Schegloff, 1993). The research of human interaction needs to be immersive and cannot exclusively be conducted with quantitative methods.

Conceptualisations of misunderstandings

There are various attempts to graphically represent interaction (Shannon, 1948) or repair (Larrue & Trognon, 1993; Varonis & Gass, 1985). The purpose of the figure provided in this paper is not to draw a more accurate or truthful one, but to explain that there is a need to differentiate between repair and misunderstandings as conflating the two leads to conceptual unclarity, which in turn has drastic consequences for the accuracy of conversation research.

In line with previous literature (Dingemanse et al., 2014b; Schegloff, 1997a, 2000), this paper strongly argues to conceptually separate between different depths of misunderstandings and to view repair as gatekeepers that can determine this magnitude of misunderstandings. In this regard, it might be interesting to look at repair receipts.

Repair receipts

For repair receipts, literature on turn-taking (Schegloff, 1987; Schegloff & Sacks, 1973) is a sensible context. Indeed, repair receipts are at a transitionally relevant position (González-Lloret, 2010) because "by virtue of the occurrence of an adjacently produced second, the doer of a first can see that what he intended was indeed understood, and that it was or was not accepted" (Schegloff & Sacks, 1973, p. 298). This study positions itself in congruence with previous findings that different repair receipts negotiate different meanings (Golato & Betz, 2008; Koivisto, 2019). In addition, the link to politeness was drawn which should be pursued in forthcoming research. For example, Schegloff, (1987) showed possible complications in repair beginnings, like starting too quickly. Similarly, when the repair receipt is self-initiated, it might be perceived as rushing towards a repair closing without the other person being satisfied with the answer or indicating consent.

Social status

Following the discussion above, it is logical that external frameworks like social status and culture cannot find statistically significant differences which highlights the importance of qualitative analysis. When analysing requests of UK and American speakers, Drew (2013) found that instead of social categories like status difference, politeness and social relationships were enacted linguistically and in turns which this paper verified for repair by applying mixed methods. Only in some cases, social status was made salient by chairs because they did not let unclarities pass (Firth, 1996) due to their social and organisational responsibility (Tsuchiya & Handford, 2014). Therefore, it is doubtable to what extent business conversations generally display differences in terms of interaction, supporting findings of earlier works (Drew & Heritage, 1992). One sensible point for differentiation could be discourse genres *within* formal settings. They were coded for this paper but excluded from the analysis. However, significant differences between the genres regarding the outcome variables and repair types were detected (see appendix G).

Culture

Contrary to previous scholars that eagerly classified and quantified cultures for comparisons (Hofstede, 1994; Hofstede & Bond, 1984), this paper indicates that their critique (McSweeney, 2002; Wu, 2006) might be justified, at least for the current data and research context. This paper reflects findings by Dingemanse et al. (2015), who revealed that repair initiations occur in languages worldwide. Additionally, previous literature showed that turn-taking (González-Lloret, 2010; Sacks et al., 1978) and communication preferences (Kim, 1994) are robust to

external parameters such as culture or social status differences. Park (2007) investigated request and assessment interactions between natives (NS) and non-natives (NNS) and concluded that "a hierarchical relationship between NS and NNS is constantly redefined in an unfolding interaction" (p. 354). Partly corroborating this finding, no statistical influence of culture was found in this paper but rather in-situ negotiations of politeness that could not be traced back to culture in a definitive manner. Culture might have a more subtle influence on the use of repair that is linguistically independent and invisible to researchers.

Limitations

Mostly, the accuracy of the interaction transcriptions and thus, the qualitative analyses are somewhat limited in precision. The lack of metadata in the transcriptions exacerbated the analyses, leaving out valuable insights about, for example, mimics, pause lengths or voice intensity of the interactants. Such behaviour is important not only to estimate the perceived politeness and its consequences (Laplante & Ambady, 2003; Trees & Manusov, 1998) but also to understand the repair sequence as a whole. Missing intonation transcriptions have been mentioned multiple times throughout this paper and could have eased coding the dispreference markers or allowed for more analytical detail for interjective repair receipts. Furthermore, the typology of other-initiated repair could have been more refined and further divided. For example, repetitions can be subdivided into partial or incomplete (Kendrick, 2015a; Lilja, 2014).

Despite the fact that this paper was centralised around observing and exploring, a researcher free oneself from subjective biases. Since this is a common limitation in qualitative methods (Cutcliffe & McKenna, 1999; Morse et al., 2002), it should be noted that this study is to be viewed as a screening of repair in formal interaction, meaning that none of the statements made are finite and generalisable, but are observations based on this corpus that are to be taken as directional and insightful to succeeding researchers in this field. Notwithstanding, in the tradition of next-turn proof procedure, the analysis was guided by what the interaction participants themselves made relevant in the conversation which counters a portion of this subjective bias.

Future research

As noted by Steen (2011), humans adjust language and communication based on genre expectations, among others. These are constantly negotiated in talk and once breached might lead to interesting insights about how humans organise the interaction against the backdrop of

misunderstandings. For example, in job interviews the power between conversation participants can be clearly divided and asymmetrical (Chen et al., 2008), potentially leaving the interviewee with less motivation to correct the interrogators as this would breach the conventional norm of this discourse genre. As a methodological starting point, Steen's (2011) cognitive-psychological model of genre analysis could be incorporated into sequential conversation analysis or mixed methods, as practised in this paper.

The finding that politeness adjustments tend to increment gradually could be explored further by changing the research method. Drawing on an expectancy theory framework (Burgoon et al., 1995), one could hypothesise that interactants would perceive it as impolite if a follow-up repair initiation was located lower on the politeness scale than the first one because this action is unexpected. Using a breaching experiment or ethnographic methods could shed light on what the repercussions of such a move are and how metalinguistic (mimics, body language, etc.) behaviour is applied when it comes to checks and corrections, possibly in cross-cultural interactions (Kita, 2009).

Lastly, this paper opened the pathway for more research into repair receipts. Although a taxonomy with possible consequences on perceived in-situ politeness was predicted, it can be argued that the reality is much more complex and diverse. Research into repair receipts is important so that the interlacement of repair sequences in conversations can be understood in a more holistic way. Partially, the taxonomy seizes features of previous literature (Golato & Betz, 2008; Hosoda, 2000; Koivisto, 2019), but future studies should explicitly focus on how politeness is negotiated through repair receipts.

Practical implications

There is little evidence that cultural or social status repair preferences exist outside of conversation-specific interaction. This implies that people in cross-cultural formal settings can be somewhat daring regarding the use of repair. Needless to say, there are limits to this and also intonation and other metalinguistic aspects factor in. It is recommended to pay closer attention to other attributes that might influence the communicative image of oneself in intercultural formal encounters, such as aspects of common courtesy (eye contact, speaker proximity, etc.) or conversational norms (no religion, politics, etc.) (Ri, 2018b).

Repair receipts could be strategically applied in communication. Especially for managers, this may be useful because sometimes, there are more gravely underlying factors to a misunderstanding (e.g.: job dissatisfaction, low motivation, etc.). By using a more ambiguous repair receipt, like interjections, managers might encourage the employee to continue speaking,

as observed in the sequence examples in the results section, which could unveil these potential issues. However, it is recommendable to employ on-record repair receipts in meetings due to clarity needs and time restrictions to avoid a chain of follow-up misunderstandings due to ambiguity. Nonetheless, linguistic room for manoeuvre should be granted so that especially interlocutors in lower social status positions feel free to voice their misunderstandings. Corpora like this show that polite communication happens on a turn-by-turn level, which is often neglected in business and perhaps hard to consciously implement.

Human interaction is a dynamic, yet cooperative accomplishment of different parties working together. The very centre of human identity, evolution and accomplishment, namely language, displays highly cooperative patterns regardless of social status or cultural background. Even when we correct each other, we at least express benevolence through language and interaction which is somewhat comforting from an anthropological perspective.

Theoretical implications

This paper has shown that it might be useful for researchers to scrutinise conceptualisations of misunderstandings and to distinguish between micro- and macro-misunderstandings. Moreover, it is important to keep the two concepts of other-initiated repair and misunderstandings apart for more precise investigations.

Furthermore, this paper highlighted the sequential power of repair receipts and their importance as gatekeepers between repair sequences and newly initiated turns. The reviewed taxonomy can be seen as a conceptual step towards a better understanding of the entanglement of repair and politeness in human interaction.

Lastly, this paper was meant to shed light on in-situ power dynamics and their relative effect on politeness for various types of checks and corrections in formal synchronous human interaction. Neither culture nor social status parameters had a statistically significant effect on the use of different repair and thus different politeness strategies to combat micro- and macro-misunderstandings. This questions the quantifiability of concepts like politeness, culture or social status in human interaction. Rather than imposing such frameworks, research designs should first enable the exploration of how individuals interact with each other (Stivers, 2015). This paper is part of the important progress in conversation research that is tapping into formal and naturally occurring business communication.

When taken together and applied, the theoretical insights can improve internal and external communication practices of stakeholders and might gradually decrease the financial loss found by Paton (2008).

VII.   References

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51

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VIII.   Appendices

Appendix A – Research ethics statement Radboud University Nijmegen

Checklist EACH (version 1.6, November 2020)

(Complete and submit, together with your research proposal, to your supervisor).

You fill in the questions by clicking on the square next to the chosen answer ☐
After clicking, a cross will appear in this square ☒

1. Is a health care institution involved in the research?
Explanation: A health care institution is involved if one of the following (A/B/C) is the case:

 A. One or more employees of a health care institution is/are involved in the research as principle or in the carrying out or execution of the research.
 B. The research takes place within the walls of the health care institution and should, following the nature of the research, generally not be carried out outside the institution.
 C. Patients / clients of the health care institution participate in the research (in the form of treatment).

  ☒ No → continue with questionnaire

  ☐ Yes → Did a Dutch Medical Institutional Review Board (MIRB) decide that the Wet Medisch Onderzoek (Medical Research Involving Human Subjects Act) is not applicable?
  ☐ Yes → continue with questionnaire
  ☐ No → This application should be reviewed by a Medical Institutional Review Board, for example, the Dutch CMO Regio Arnhem Nijmegen → end of checklist

2. Do grant providers wish the protocol to be assessed by a recognised MIRB?

  ☒ No → continue with questionnaire

  ☐ Yes → This application should be reviewed by a Medical Institutional Review Board, for example, the Dutch CMO Regio Arnhem Nijmegen → end of checklist

3. Does the research include medical-scientific research that might carry risks for the participant?
  ☒ No → continue with questionnaire

  ☐ Yes → This application should be reviewed by a Medical Institutional Review Board, for example, the Dutch CMO Regio Arnhem Nijmegen → end of checklist

Standard research method

4. Does this research fall under one of the stated [standard research methods](#) of the Faculty of Arts or the Faculty of Philosophy, Theology and Religious Studies?

        ⊠ Yes → …… **(Conversation (corpus) analysis, 3)** → continue with questionnaire

        ☐ No → assessment necessary, end of checklist

Participants

5. Is the participant population a healthy one?

        ⊠ Yes → continue with questionnaire

        ☐ No → assessment necessary, end of checklist → [go to assessment procedure](#)

6. Will the research be conducted amongst minors (<16 years of age) or amongst (legally) incapable persons?

        ☐ Yes → assessment necessary, end of checklist → [go to assessment procedure](#)

        ⊠ No → continue with questionnaire

Method

7. Is a method used that makes it possible to produce a coincidental finding that the participant should be informed of?

        ☐ Yes → assessment necessary, end of checklist → [go to assessment procedure](#)

        ⊠ No → continue with questionnaire

8. Will participants undergo treatment or are they asked to perform certain behaviours that can lead to discomfort?

        ☐ Yes → assessment necessary, end of checklist → [go to assessment procedure](#)

        ⊠ No → continue with questionnaire

9. Are the estimated risks connected to the research minimal?

        ☐ No → assessment necessary, end of checklist → [go to assessment procedure](#)

        ⊠ Yes → continue with questionnaire

10. Are the participants offered a different compensation than the usual one?

        ☐ Yes → assessment necessary, end of checklist → [go to assessment procedure](#)

        ⊠ No → continue with questionnaire

11. Should [deception](#) take place, does the procedure meet the standard requirements?

☐ No → assessment necessary, end of checklist → [go to assessment procedure](#)

☒ Yes → continue with questionnaire

12. Are the standard regulations regarding [anonymity and privacy](#) met?

☐ No → assessment necessary, end of checklist → [go to assessment procedure](#)

☒ Yes → continue with questionnaire

Conducting the research

13. Will the research be carried out at an external location (such as a school, hospital)?

☒ No → continue with questionnaire

☐ Yes→ Do you have/will you receive written permission from this institution?

☐ No → assessment necessary, end of checklist → [go to assessment procedure](#)

☐ Yes → continue with questionnaire

14. Is there a contact person to whom participants can turn to with questions regarding the research and are they informed of this?

☐ No → assessment necessary, end of checklist → [go to assessment procedure](#)

☒ Yes → continue with questionnaire

15. Is it clear for participants where they can file complaints with regard to participating in the research and how these complaints will be dealt with?

☐ No→ assessment necessary, end of checklist → [go to assessment procedure](#)

☒ Yes → continue with questionnaire

16. Are the participants free to participate in the research, and to stop at any given point, whenever and for whatever reason they should wish to do so?

☐ No→ assessment necessary, end of checklist → [go to assessment procedure](#)

☒ Yes → continue with questionnaire

17. Before participating, are participants informed by means of an information document about the aim, nature and risks and objections of the study? (zie [explanation on informed consent](#) and [sample documents)](#).

☐ No→ assessment necessary, end of checklist → [go to assessment procedure](#)

☒ Yes → continue with questionnaire

18. Do participants and/or their representatives sign a consent form? (zie [explanation on informed consent](#) and [sample documents](#).

☐ No→ assessment necessary, end of checklist → [go to assessment procedure](#)

☒ Yes → checklist finished

If you want to record the results of this checklist, please save the completed file.

If you need approval from the EACH due to the requirement of a publisher or research grant provider, you will have to follow the formal assessment procedure of the EACH.

Signature of researcher:

Luka Paul Vethake, Nijmegen, 08-04-2021

Appendix B – Timeline of the research project

Table 10. *Timeline of the research project*

Item number	Agenda point	Deadline
1	Submit research proposal	09-04-2021
2	Codify and finalise corpus	16-04-2021
3	Feedback meeting with supervisor about research proposal	Week 12-04 – 16-04
4	Implementation of recommendations // re-submit research proposal	Depends on agenda point 3 but latest: 23-04-2021
5	Start of qualitative and quantitative analyses	23-04-2021
6	Feedback loop on qualitative and quantitative analyses – statistician consultation if necessary	Between 23-04 – 04-05
7	End of analyses	04-05-2021
8	Finish redaction of results section	11-05-2021

9	Finish redaction of discussion and conclusion section	18-05-2021
Buffer period		
10	Submit MA thesis draft	28-05-2021
11	Feedback meeting on MA thesis draft	Week 31-05 – 04-06
12	Incorporate MA thesis feedback and peer reviewing	15-06-2021
13	Submission of MA thesis	15-06-2021

N.B.: Throughout the writing process the timeline was altered. The thesis draft was handed in on 06-06-2021, the feedback of two peers was incorporated on 21-06-2021 and the final paper was submitted on 22-06-2021.

Appendix C – Histograms for politeness, no. dispreference markers and no. of turns

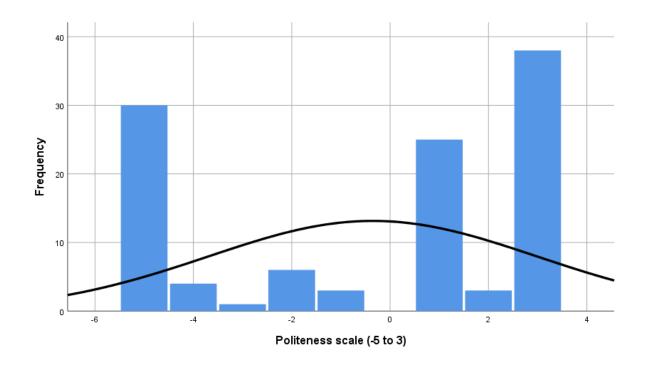**Figure 4**. *Histogram with normality curve for politeness*

Figure 5. *Histogram with normality curve for no. dispreference markers*
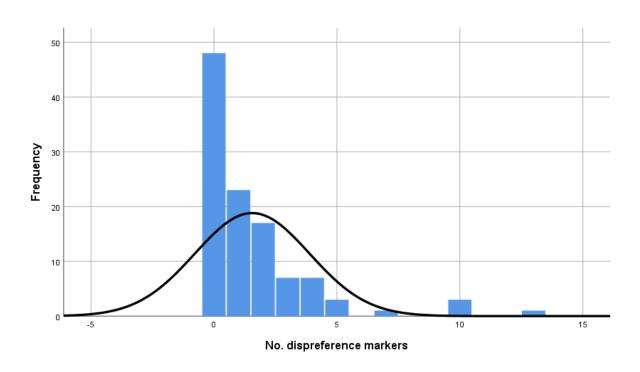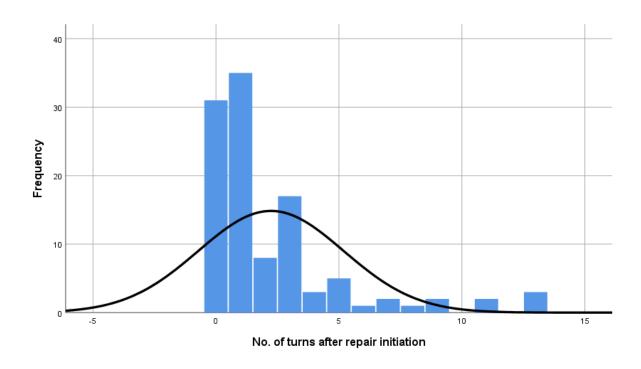

Figure 6. *Histogram with normality curve for no. turns after repair initiation*

Appendix D – Statistical analyses for number of turns as a predictor for politeness

Contradicting this statement, a linear simple regression analysis showed that the variable entered, number of turns after the repair initiation, explains 35.5% (*Adj. R^2* = .355) of the variance in politeness (*F* (1, 108) = 60.90, *p* < .001). The number of turns was shown to be a significant predictor of politeness (β = -.60, *p* < .001). This means that when the number of turns increases by 1 standard deviation, politeness decreases by -.60 standard deviations on the scale used. However, apart from the known violations of normality, the assumption of independent errors was violated because the Durbin Watson test was below 1.00 (.95). Therefore, the results are to be viewed with a considerable degree of suspicion and might explain why analysing the data inductively, different results were found.

Appendix E – Statistical analyses exploring interaction types and the repair success moments

Repair success was coded (1 = direct success after 1 turn, 2 = more than 2 turns, 0 = no success) and first indicated low intercoder agreement (κ = .15, *p* = .191), but after the second consultation repair success (κ = .74, *p* = .003) reached substantial to perfect agreement. A repair initiation was deemed successful when a repair receipt was present. The intercoder reliability for interaction type (2 levels: (1) two-people, (2) multiple people) demonstrated almost perfect agreement (κ = .86, *p* < .001). Quantitative evidence for multiple-people conversations involving more turns was gathered through a Mann-Whitney test for two independent samples in non-parametric data distributions (Field, 2018). The test showed that the interaction type had a significant effect on the number of turns after the repair initiation (*U* = 1836.00, *z* = 3.63, *p* < .001). When multiple people (mean rank = 71.50) were involved in the interaction, it took significantly more turns to reach mutual understanding compared to two-people interactions (mean rank = 48.34). The effect size was medium to large (*r* = .35). Two-people conversations seem to be more efficient and reach mutual understanding after a lower number of turns compared to multiple-people interactions. This was found by conducting a chi-square analysis (χ² (2) = 6.80, *p* = .037). However, none of the groups' standardised *z*-scores were greater than *z* = ±1.96, so the direction of the effect remained unclear. The assumption above is tentatively based on Figure 7. Nonetheless, this is important because the repair success moment significantly influenced politeness (*H* (2) = 21.49, *p* < .001). Repair solutions after one turn (mean rank = 61.75) ranked significantly (*p* < .001, Bonferroni correction) higher on the politeness scale when compared to more than two turns (mean rank = 21.83). The effect size of

this difference was medium to large ($r = .42$). To sum up, two-people interactions do present a slight advantage over multiple-people interactions when it comes to politeness.

Figure 7. *Graphic of the chi-square distribution for type of interaction and repair success*

Appendix F – Statistical analyses for gender

Gender was binarily coded (2 levels: (1) male, (2) female) and gender trouble source ($κ = .90$, $p < .001$) as well as gender initiator ($κ = .89$, $p < .001$) demonstrated almost perfect agreement. For the gender variable, the same procedure as for the cultural difference was employed, leading to a new variable gender difference (4 levels (where the first person named is the repair initiator and the second one the trouble source producer): (1) male-male, (2) female-female, (3) male-female, (4) female-male).

As outlined in the result section, the contextual variables gender trouble source and initiator were computed into a new one, namely gender difference. Consequently, a Kruskal-Wallis test was launched and showed no main effects of gender difference (four levels: (1) m-m, (2) f-f, (3) m-f, (4) f-m) on either politeness ($H(3) = 6.86$, $p = .077$), number of dispreference markers ($H(3) = .03$, $p = .999$) or number of turns after the repair initiation ($H(3) = 5.13$, $p = .162$).

To find out if the use of repair initiation types varied across gender constellations, a chi-square analysis was performed and showed no statistically significant association between gender difference and repair initiation types (χ^2 (21) = 20.15, p = .283). Fisher's exact p-value was reported because 71.9% of the cells showed an expected count lower than 5. A Bayes factor (BF = 31065.60) was once again computed and showed very high support for the null hypothesis (BF_{01} < .001). Combined, the analyses seem to indicate that gender does not influence repair behaviour and politeness as a pre-determined category.

Appendix G – Statistical analyses for discourse genre

A Kruskal-Wallis test for more than two independent samples showed that the discourse genre (five levels: (1) business meeting, (2) job interview, (3) placement interview, (4) Q&A business, (5) telephone conference) had a significant main effect on the number of dispreference markers (H (4) = 10.02, p = .040). However, none of the pairwise comparisons (Bonferroni correction) were statistically significant which points to an unclarity of the direction of the effect. Future papers with more statistical potency should rule out this issue.

Another Kruskal-Wallis test found that discourse genre also had a significant main effect on the number of turns after the repair initiation (H (4) = 13.28, p = .010). Pairwise comparisons revealed that *placement interviews* (mean rank = 35.79) caused a significantly (p = .004, Bonferroni correction) lower number of turns after the repair initiation compared to *business meetings* (mean rank = 64.12). The effect size for this comparison was medium to large (r = .44). The effect sizes were manually calculated and is exclusively presented for this singular comparison for accuracy reasons (Field, 2018). There were no further statistically significant comparisons. This ties in smoothly with the previous finding in appendix E of two-people interactions (prevalent in *placement interviews*) eliciting shorter sequences than multiple-people interactions (prevalent in *business meetings*).

The Kruskal-Wallis test for politeness did not show any main effect for discourse genre (H (4) = 9.47, p = .050). To provide a directional understanding of the analyses in this appendix, Table 11 shows the means and standard deviations for the discourse genres derived from a multivariate one-way ANOVA.

Table 11. *Results one-way ANOVA for discourse genre x politeness, no. of dispreference markers and no. of turns*

Discourse genre	Outcome variables			
	$N = 110$	Politeness scale	No. dispreference markers	No. of turns after repair initiation
Business meeting M (SD)	40	-1.58 (3.34)	1.68 (2.07)	3.10* (3.50)
Job interview M (SD)	30	.00 (3.56)	2.03 (2.94)	2.17 (2.51)
Placement interview M (SD)	24	1.00 (2.62)	.67 (1.47)	.96* (1.94)
Q&A business M (SD)	9	.11 (3.22)	2.13 (3.27)	2.67 (3.97)
Telephone conference M (SD)	7	-.14 (2.55)	1.29 (1.89)	1.43 (.79)

*Comparison significant on a $p < .050$ level.

A chi-square test for discourse genre x repair initiation type was assumably significant (χ^2 (28) = 49.11, $p = .008$). However, the reported Pearson's asymptotic significance is inaccurate for small and varying group size datasets (IBM, 2020) but p-values from Fisher's exact test or Pearson's exact significance could not be calculated according to the software. Therefore, a Bayes factor ($BF = .86$) was once again computed and showed low to moderate support at best for the null hypothesis ($BF_{01} = 1.16$). However, the limits of the statistical power did not permit exploring this finding further in a meaningful way and the Kruskal-Wallis test for politeness indicates no statistically significant differences for discourse genres. Table 12 shows the absolute and percentage distributions of the data for this analysis.

Table 12. *Absolute frequency and percentage distributions for discourse genre x type of repair initiation*

Other-initiated repair type	Discourse genre				
	Business meeting	Job interview	Placement interview	Q&A business	Telephone conference
Interjections	0 (.0%)	1 (3.3%)	0 (.0%)	0 (.0%)	0 (.0%)
Question words	3 (7.5%)	1 (3.3%)	1 (4.2%)	1 (11.1%)	0 (.0%)

Formulaic	0 (.0%)	0 (.0%)	0 (.0%)	1 (11.1%)	2 (28.6%)
Repetition	8 (20.0%)	4 (13.3%)	9 (37.5%)	1 (11.1%)	3 (42.9%)
Question word + content	2 (5.0%)	0 (.0%)	1 (4.2%)	0 (.0%)	0 (.0%)
Candidate understanding	8 (20.0%)	15 (50.0%)	10 (41.7%)	4 (44.4%)	1 (14.3%)
Direct correction	2 (5.0%)	1 (3.3%)	0 (.0%)	1 (11.1%)	0 (.0%)
No + correction	17 (42.5%)	8 (26.7%)	3 (12.5%)	1 (11.1%)	1 (14.3%)
Total (110)	40 (100.0%)	30 (100.0%)	24 (100.0%)	9 (100.0%)	7 (100.0%)

Appendix H – Statistical analyses for repair end turn markers

For these statistical analyses, only the final repair receipt was coded. For instance, in the following case taken from the paper, a repetition (l. 16) would have been coded.

```
1   a2:   <SA002 [answer to question:comply] Singapore is not like Hong Kong >
2         <SA038 [justify] because >
3         <SA068 [unclassifiable] (inaudible) >
4         <SA038 [justify] it only has >
5         <SA035 [hedge] I think >
6         <SA038 [justify] two and a half million >
7         <SA024 [empathizer] you know >
8         <SA038 [justify] population >
9         <SA032 [filler] erm >
10  b2:   <SA063 [statement:inform] three million >
11  a2:   <SA069 [uptake] ha >
12        <SA015 [check] three >
13  b2:   <SA019 [confirm] three million >
14  a2:   <SA053 [reply to statement:acknowledge] okay (.) >
15  b2:    <SA032 [filler] * yeah >
16  a2:   <SA053 [reply to statement:acknowledge] ** three million >
17        <SA064 [statement:opine] whatever >
18        <SA032 [filler] erm >
19        <SA063 [statement:inform] but it£¾s it£¾s smaller than than Hong Kong > (…)
```

Social status

A chi-square analysis was performed and showed no statistically significant association between social status difference and repair receipts (χ^2 (12) = 14.95, p = .385). Fisher's exact p-value was reported because 65.0% of the cells showed an expected count lower than 5. A

Bayes factor (BF = 1195.22) was computed and showed very strong support for the null hypothesis (BF_{01} = .001).

Culture

A chi-square analysis was performed and showed no statistically significant association between cultural difference and repair receipts (χ^2 (12) = 5.50, p = .872). Fisher's exact p-value was reported because 75.0% of the cells showed an expected count lower than 5. A Bayes factor (BF = 1038.57) was computed and showed very high support for the null hypothesis (BF_{01} < .001).

Gender

A chi-square analysis was performed and showed no statistically significant association between gender difference and repair receipts (χ^2 (12) = 2.09, p = 1.000). Fisher's exact p-value was reported because 80.0% of the cells showed an expected count lower than 5. A Bayes factor was not computed because Pearson's chi-square analysis showed devasting support for the null hypothesis.

Appendix I – Statistical analyses for check_correct and repair receipts

A chi-square analysis was performed and showed no statistically significant association between check_correct and repair receipts (χ^2 (4) = 1.37, p = .830). Fisher's exact p-value was reported because 60.0% of the cells showed an expected count lower than 5. A Bayes factor (BF = 25.53) was computed and showed very high support for the null hypothesis (BF_{01} = .039).

Appendix J – Statistical analyses for computed culture and gender variables

A Mann-Whitney test for two independent samples in non-parametric data distributions (Field, 2018) showed that the culture of the repair initiator did not have a significant effect on the number of dispreference markers after the repair initiation (U = 1563.50, p = .156), on the number of turns (U = 1296.00, p = .722), or the politeness scale (U = 1555.50, p = .178). There was also no statistically significant association between the cultural background of the repair initiator and the type of repair (χ^2 (7) = 8.15, p = .289). A Bayes factor (BF = 59.16) was

computed and showed very strong support for the null hypothesis (BF_{01} = .017). Another Mann-Whitney test showed that the cultural background of the trouble source producer did also not have an effect on the number of dispreference markers after the repair initiation (U = 1342.00, p = .955), on the number of turns (U = 1291.00, p = .698), or the politeness scale (U = 1368.00, p = .908). There was also no statistically significant association between the cultural background of the trouble source producer and the type of repair (χ^2 (7) = 6.94, p =.500). A Bayes factor (BF = 104.41) was computed and showed very strong support for the null hypothesis (BF_{01} = .010).

The gender of the repair initiator did also not have a statistically significant effect on the number of dispreference markers after the repair initiation (U = 1448.00, p = .878), on the number of turns (U = 1251.00, p = .167), or the politeness scale (U = 1755.00, p = .075). There was also no statistically significant association between the gender of the repair initiator and the type of repair (χ^2 (7) = 5.52, p =.602). A Bayes factor (BF = 229.61) was computed and showed very strong support for the null hypothesis (BF_{01} = .004). Lastly, also the gender of the trouble source did not have an effect on the number of dispreference markers after the repair initiation (U = 1491.00, p = .802), on the number of turns (U = 1326.00, p = .428), or the politeness scale (U = 1635.50, p = .245). There was also no statistically significant association between the gender of the trouble producer and the type of repair (χ^2 (7) = 6.24, p =.514). A Bayes factor (BF = 166.67) was computed and showed very strong support for the null hypothesis (BF_{01} = .006).

Appendix K – Statement of fraud and plagiarism

Statement of own work:

Student name: Luka Paul Vethake_____

Student number: s1007392_____

PLAGIARISM is the presentation by a student of an assignment or piece of work which has in fact been copied in whole or in part from another student's work, or from any other source (e.g. published books or periodicals or material from Internet sites), without due acknowledgement in the text.

DECLARATION:

a. I hereby declare that I am familiar with the faculty manual (http://www.ru.nl/stip/english/rules-regulations/fraud-plagiarism/) and with Article 16 "Fraud and plagiarism" in the Education and Examination Regulations for the Master's programme of Communication and Information Studies.
b. I also declare that I have only submitted text written in my own words.
c. I certify that this thesis is my own work and that I have acknowledged all material and sources used in its preparation, whether they be books, articles, reports, lecture notes, and any other kind of document, electronic or personal communication.

Signature: _____

Place and date: Nijmegen, 22-06-2021__