



## Tracing Multiple Repairs in L2 Interactions: From Lexical Trouble to Meaning Negotiation\*

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### ABSTRACT

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The study examines how multiple repair sequences unfold in second language (L2) interactions, focusing on other-initiated repairs of lexical troubles. Drawing on Conversation Analysis (CA), the research analyzes transcribed storytelling data from four groups of adult L2 English speakers. While prior studies have described repairs mainly as a form-focused mechanism, this study shows that repair trajectories often extend beyond simple correction, evolving into complex negotiations of understanding. The analysis identifies three interactional pathways: (1) form-focused pursuit, where recipients persist in fixing lexical forms, (2) resolution through uptake, where original speakers demonstrate learning by incorporating corrected forms. and (3) meaning-focused transformation, where recipients' lexical trouble is bypassed by the speaker to achieve shared understanding. These findings highlight participants' contingent decisions to pursue, abandon, or transform repairs as part of meaning-making. By tracing the entire sequences of interaction rather than isolated fragments, the study contributes to CA-for-SLA by reconceptualizing repair as an emergent, co-constructed process that reveals L2 interactional competence beyond formal accuracy.

### KEYWORDS

conversation analysis, repair, multiple repairs, other-initiated repair, sustainability, L2 interaction

## 1. Introduction

Repairs refer to the phenomenon in which participants in conversational interaction fix a turn at talk (Kitzinger 2013, Schegloff et al. 1977). The nature of problems is diverse, ranging from turn-taking, mishearing, and misunderstanding to language forms and use, and, in some cases, to no apparent reason. The portion of talk that repair actions target is known as the ‘repairable’ or ‘trouble source’ (Schegloff et al. 1977, p. 363). In second-language (L2) interactions, L2 speakers often encounter a range of problems, including lexical gaps, grammatical errors, pronunciation issues, and content misunderstandings. These problems may stem from asymmetries in language expertise among L2 speakers (Bolden 2012, Egbert 2004, Hosoda 2006). A substantial body of research has examined repair practices in L2 contexts (Chen and Ye 2022, Wong and Waring 2021). Some studies have shown that trouble sources often remain unexposed or bypassed, not directly addressed in interaction, or are only embedded in subsequent turns (Hosoda 2006, Kasper and Wagner 2011, Lee 2013). Other studies have demonstrated that participants provide explicit language correction (Lee and Hellermann 2020, Leyland and Riley 2021, Sert 2017).

These repairs, however, involve a complex negotiation process that often leads to multiple exchanges among the parties as they try to locate the trouble sources (Schegloff et al. 1977), identify the nature of the problems, and determine methods to address them, among other tasks. When an initial repair attempt fails, it often prompts additional repair sequences, resulting in multiple repairs. The complexity is even more pronounced in L2 interaction, as language problems appear to be omnipresent (Lee and Hellermann 2020). L2 interaction involves varying degrees of language competence, pragmatic expertise, and cultural familiarity (Firth and Wagner 1997, Hall et al. 2011) that are manifested in various interactional details (Hosoda 2006, Kasper 1985, Peltonen et al. 2025, Wong 2000). These repairs in L2 do not merely function as corrections of linguistic form or usage, but also as sense-making activities through which participants negotiate what the trouble is, how it matters, and what kind of understanding is at stake (Lilja 2014). For this reason, L2 repairs may involve the extended negotiation of understanding between speakers (Kasper and Burch 2016, Seedhouse 2004).

Accordingly, there are cases in which repairs in L2 interactions expand into multiple repair sequences. Multiple repair sequences involving L2 learners typically exhibit a dual focus on form and meaning, or on learning and communication, through negotiated engagement among speakers. For this reason, repairs have been a key focus for both conversation analysis (CA) and second language analysis (SLA) researchers (Lyster and Ranta 1997, Peltonen et al. 2025, Wong and Waring 2021). The majority of repair studies in L2, however, focus on identifying distinctive patterns through collections of excerpts. Very few studies, however, have examined the process by which these repairs are prompted, negotiated, extended, and acted on through multiple exchanges. It is necessary to trace multiple repair sequences in their entirety to examine how repairs are identified, managed, and addressed during L2 interaction.

This study investigates multiple repair sequences in L2 interactions, focusing on how lexical repairs are managed during storytelling among L2 speakers. While lexical issues have been of great interest to both CA and SLA researchers (Kaur 2020, Kormos 2006, Kurhila 2006, Kunitz and Majlesi 2022, Loewen and Sato 2018), this study features longer transcripts to trace how repairs are initiated by those other than the speaker of the trouble source (Bolden 2024, Kendrick 2015). Some questions to address in the paper include (1) what lexical repair reveals about L2 interaction that other repair domains may not, (2) why lexical trouble is interactionally consequential in meaning negotiation, and (3) how this focus connects to gaps in prior CA-for-SLA research. The participants in the dataset attempt to identify the problem, explore ways to address it, and act within the ongoing activity (Hosoda 2006, Kasper 1985, Majlesi and Eskildsen 2023, Wong 2000). This research clarifies the scope

of negotiated practices in L2 repair sequences, enabling analysts and practitioners to examine how and when repairs reveal L2 competence, cultural knowledge, and meaning-making (Eskildsen and Majlesi 2018, Markee 2000).

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Other Initiated Multiple Repairs

The presence of repairs may interfere with the progress of interaction and, therefore, participants work to resolve them to resume ongoing interactions (Heritage 2007, Schegloff 1992, Stivers and Robinson 2006). Repairs involve mainly two parties: the speaker of the trouble source (self) and the recipient of the trouble source (others). Repair sequences involve a two-step process—initiation and resolution—although these steps can be performed in a single turn.

Schegloff et al. (1977) demonstrated the structural reasons for the preference for self-repair over other repairs, for example, the speaker of the trouble source tends to repair their own turn before the next turn begins. When others initiate repair, it is therefore likely to expand into multiple exchanges of turns, as it may lead into the next turn(s). Others initiate repairs to perform various functions, such as requesting confirmation, pointing out problems, expressing disagreement, resolving misunderstandings, and correcting linguistic forms.

The impact on other-initiated repairs on participants varies depending on who is responsible for the communication trouble. According to Kendrick (2015), identifying candidate understanding is the most frequent type. Even this repair may carry additional actions, such as joking or signaling disagreement. For this reason, the format and timing of repairs influence conversational progression and relational dynamics (Robinson 2006). In her collection study, Bolden (2024) found that other-initiated corrections are generally immediate and emphatic, thus challenging the prior assumption that other corrections are dispreferred or delayed. She also noted extended forms of repair that involve longer, multi-component corrections that perform additional social actions, such as criticism, ridicule, or instruction. When others treat the prior talk as a trouble source, the original speaker is prompted to respond. The speaker (self) may respond to address the repairable, but s/he may also react to the attitude, relevance, or even the specific form the repair initiation may take (Drew 1997), through various reformulations, clarifications, or even corrections. If the source of trouble is not resolved, a third initiation may be necessary. In sum, other initiated repairs may be extended into multiple repair sequences.

### 2.2 Repair in L2 Interaction and Multiple Exchanges

Repairs in L2 interaction are a constant possibility because any part of a turn by an L2 speaker can become problematic, whether linguistic, pragmatic, or related to sense-making (Lee and Hellermann 2020, Wong and Waring 2021). Repairs in L2 interaction have received analytic attention from researchers in second language acquisition (SLA) because of their potential for instructional intervention (Ellis et al. 2006, Kormos 2000, Liebscher and Dailey-O’Cain 2003, Lyster 2001, Lyster and Ranta 1997, Nakamura 2008, Nassaji 2007), which is why other repairs are considered important. Of particular interest is how language errors are recast through interactional modifications and the effects these modifications have on L2 speakers’ uptake (Lyster and Saito 2010), serving as evidence of learning. Their findings, however, are mixed because not all modifications of repairs lead to interactional uptake (Ellis and Sheen 2006). When they do, these effects are bound by complex conditions

and interaction types (e.g., Xu and Zeng 2023).

In contrast, CA researchers in applied linguistics have examined repairs with a different agenda, focusing primarily on describing repair phenomena. This agenda falls under conversation analysis for second language acquisition (CA-for-SLA) (Eskildsen and Majlesi 2018, Kasper and Wagner 2011, Lee 2010, Markee 2008, Markee and Kunitz 2015, Mondada and Pekarek Doehler 2004). CA-for-SLA researchers have attempted to describe how language problems are managed in L2 interaction, noting various ways in which repairs are managed, for example, turning into corrective sequences while others are bypassed (Kasper and Wagner 2011, Lee 2013, Mondada and Pekarek Doehler 2004). Since they consider repair to be a site of interactional negotiation, CA-for-SLA research conceptualizes language learning as an emergent process unfolding moment by moment through the co-construction of participants' actions during social interaction (Lee 2006, Markee and Kasper 2004). Of particular interest has been whether and how other repairs become sites where objects of learning are manifested or formulated for learning (Eskildsen and Majlesi 2018, Hall 2007, Lilja 2014).

One prominent area in this line of research is the repair of lexical matters, including word searches. Some researchers regard word searches as opportunities for learning (Brouwer 2003). Some of these repairs on lexical matters are embedded within turns that perform other actions simultaneously, such as lexical replacement or upgrading (Brouwer, Rasmussen and Wagner 2004). Other repairs involve prolonged interaction for various reasons. For example, speakers are unable to provide the necessary form (Lee and Lee 2021, Markee 2000). They lack sufficient lexical resources or confidence, leading to frequent communication breakdowns (Hauser 2017). Wong (2000) found that L2 speakers signal a problem in understanding the prior speaker's turn, but that this signal is delayed. They sometimes undertake additional repairs to address trouble sources or reject the proposed solution (Chen and Ye 2022). Speakers may recruit their peers to participate in the word search (Greer 2013, Kunitz 2021, Pekarek Doehler and Berger 2019). L2 speakers in Lilja's study (2014), for example, use partial repetitions, prompting extended repair sequences as they try to collaborate to clarify meaning. This negotiation process triggers multiple repair sequences.

The occurrence of multiple repairs initiated by others is therefore important because it involves sustained engagement with trouble sources among participants. Not all repairs in L2 interactions are about language forms and functions. The nature of repairs may change as participants resort to other resources in response to emergent, contingent decisions by the interactants. It is therefore important to trace the process to identify the kinds of choices made and how these choices change in the management of repairs in L2 interactions.

### **2.3 Nature of Language Repairs in L2 Interaction**

Given L2 interactions may be fertile ground for extended repair sequences, it is important to examine how the participants identify and address the nature of troubles. According to Hosoda (2006), repair occurs in two primary contexts: one when L2 speakers initiate repair for language matters, such as vocabulary checks, and the other when language-related problems hinder understanding. Egbert et al. (2004) ascribed the problem not only to limited linguistic proficiency but also to differing cultural backgrounds, in which participants frequently encounter difficulties achieving mutual understanding, resulting in extended repair sequences. This indicates that language matters are often intertwined with sense-making matters. While some language matters necessitate linguistic corrections, others involve sense-making matters as participants probe what becomes problematic and why (Ellis and Sheen 2006, Lee 2013). Repairs are even examined for their relevance to L2 speakers' cognitive fluency and language anxiety (Peltonen et al. 2025).

The problem is that repair sequences often disrupt the progressivity of interaction and prompt participants to

resume the interrupted sequence (Heritage 2006). For example, Lee and Hellermann (2020) found that L2 speakers attempt to resume storytelling sequences by collaboratively managing language problems. This means that repairs in L2 interaction are likely to involve multiple repair sequences because L2 speakers may be oriented toward moving the interaction forward after resolving the trouble(s), particularly in storytelling sessions (Lee and Lee 2021). During these sequences, the nature of repairs may change as participants engage in a complex process of identifying what matters and negotiating how to address it. While language matters prompt many repairs, the nature of troubles may change if and when participants do not agree or shift their focus during the interaction (Eskildsen and Majlesi 2018). Language matters may not result in linguistic corrections if participants are preoccupied with other objectives, such as task completion (Kasper 2006). Therefore, it is important to trace the entire sequence to see how participants identify the nature of the trouble source and respond to it. CA's descriptive analysis examines how L2 speakers adjust their repair strategies—such as shifting from language matters to content negotiation—based on each other's actions and uptake (Alzaidi 2015, Lilja 2014).

This study explores the paths of repair sequences in L2 interaction, focusing on how form-based repairs, especially lexical issues, are extended and developed through interactional negotiation. Notably, L2 speakers often initiate repairs to identify the nature of the trouble and try to resolve it during conversations, resulting in multiple repair sequences. In summary, the research questions addressed in this paper include (1) how lexical troubles in L2 peer interactions develop into multiple repair sequences, (2) how the nature of repairs shifts over time, and (3) what interactional choices L2 speakers make when managing these changes and how these choices turn language challenges into meaning negotiation.

### 3. Methodology

This study analyzes naturally occurring interactions among eighteen L2 English speakers, organized into four groups of 3 or 4 participants. These participants were recruited to engage in storytelling tasks to examine their ability to connect utterances coherently as a measure of speaking proficiency (Bygate 2009, Hughes 2017, Lee 2012) and to identify how storytelling is interactionally accomplished. Among them, three groups consisted of graduate students enrolled at a university in South Korea. Their nationalities were diverse: Chinese, Uzbek, Russian, Korean, Indonesian, Mexican, and Kazakhstani. The English skills of international groups ranged from intermediate to advanced. All courses in the program were conducted in English; therefore, students engaged in various group activities, whole-class discussions, small-group discussions, and individual presentations. The fourth group consists of three English teachers in their 30s and 40s. Their language proficiency is similar to that of the graduate students.

All groups took part in three recorded sessions. Each session began with a storytelling activity, during which all participants completed 10-minute storytelling tasks. This was followed by a 10-minute interaction phase during which the participants freely discussed the stories. The storyteller role then rotated among the three participants until all had shared, resulting in a session lasting approximately 60 minutes. To ensure data authenticity and preserve the natural flow of interaction, participants were free to choose a topic for the storytelling tasks, followed by subsequent interactional exchange. All sessions conducted by graduate students were recorded in a recording laboratory equipped with audiovisual recording equipment, whereas the English teacher groups used an audio recorder.

The recorded data were transcribed using Jeffersonian transcription conventions, later updated (Hepburn and Bolden 2013, Jefferson 1984, Mondada 2014). Following transcription, the data were reviewed to identify episodes

involving multiple repair sequences. These instances constituted the primary dataset for subsequent analysis. The following excerpts were drawn solely from verbal interactions, as not all were videotaped. Most repair sequences in the dataset are not finished in a single turn because other participants get involved, and we focused on those related to language issues, especially lexical problems. All data were transcribed and reviewed for multiple repair cases. The following cases were selected for their illustrative value (Mitchell 1984, p. 239) to represent the three main types of multiple repairs identified in the data corpus.

## 4. Analysis and Findings

This section presents six excerpts that illustrate multiple repairs in L2 interaction initiated by participants other than the speaker of the trouble-source turn. Since repair interrupts the flow of interaction, participants work to manage these repairs and resume the ongoing interaction. All repairs presented here were initiated due to lexical problems, but not all of these problems have been resolved. Some are deliberately pursued for language corrections, while others focus on clarifying meaning. The following excerpts are classified according to the different ways in which repairs to form and function are managed in L2 interactions. Participants demonstrate varying levels of commitment to resolving language matters, ranging from persistence to avoidance to uptake.

### 4.1 Pursuing Form

The excerpts presented in this section demonstrate that recipients of trouble sources pursue linguistic form, particularly lexical matter, resulting in elongated and multiple repairs. The first excerpt illustrates the cases of other-initiated repairs that are directed at lexical matter in which the trouble source was the pronunciation of the speaker. All participants in this excerpt were Chinese graduate students at a Korean university in their early 30s. Two speakers (T and Z) are female, whereas Y is male and has lived in Korea for many years. Here, T is talking about her recent visit to a restaurant near “Ewha University,” which is not far from their own university. The lexical problem is first noted by T, who initiates a repair in line 20 as a confirmation request targeting the speaker’s pronunciation “E::wa” in line 18.

#### Excerpt 1

- 11 T: An::d (.) I: wa:nt to (.) talk about an experience^ of mine^  
 12 (.) and my roommate’s. >actually< it happened >several^  
 13 days ago< (.) uhm: one day^ (.) when we finished^ our  
 14 lunch (.) you know; the delicious spicy hot^pot you know;  
 15 Y: °hm°  
 16 Z: oh:^ >hot pot<  
 17 Y: Where? (.) in Seoul?=  
 18 ► T: =in front^ of the entrance of the (.) <E::wa Women^s>  
 19 university,  
 20 ► Y: E:wha?=  
 21 ► T: =Ewa;  
 22 ► Y: °Ewha;  
 23 Z: °Is it tasty?°=

- 24 T: =yeah.  
 25 ► Y: It's near<sub>i</sub> by- (.) it's close<sub>v</sub> to our university?=  
 26 T: =yeah.  
 27 ► Y: O::kay. Ew:ha (.) Ewha ok::ay.  
 28 Z: Ewha<sub>v</sub> University  
 29 T: Yes, and after<sub>v</sub> we finished the lunch, she pro::posed to  
 30 consult,

The excerpt begins with T's introductory comment on when and how the visit occurred. T's story about having a good meal approaches completion in line 14 with the evaluative phrase "the delicious spicy hot pot." Y responds with a continuer in line 15 (Schegloff 1982), while another recipient, Z, gives a more active response in line 16, "oh hot pot." In the next turn, on line 17, Y initiates a follow-up question, asking where the restaurant is with "where?" and then "in Seoul?" T provides the information, thus resolving the repair, "in front of the entrance of the E::wa Women's University." The issue was highlighted by Y's other repair initiation on line 20, in which Y offers "Ewha" as a contrast to T's "E::wa," which lacks the "h" sound. It is unclear whether Y's confirmation request is meant as a correction. However, T confirms it anyway with "Ewa," using the same pronunciation, seemingly treating Y's initiation as a confirmation request for the word. This is followed by Y's quieter repetition of "Ewha." Given the soft tone, it is uncertain whether Y's response is meant as a correction or as a monologue to process what is being referred to.

In the next turn on line 23, however, Z continues the topic of the restaurant's food quality with "Is it tasty?" This shifts the focus away from the lexical matter. This request receives a "yeah" response from T in line 24. Given this exchange between Z and T, the repair initiated by Y appears to have resolved the issue thus advances interaction for progressivity (Heritage 2007).

This repair sequence is not finished yet, however, as Y pursues the matter in the next turn on line 25, asking, "It's nearby, it's close to our university?" At first glance, this question concerns the university's location rather than its pronunciation. However, Y's pursuit appears to confirm the location to which T refers. Having lived in Korea for many years, Y has cultural knowledge of the part of Seoul where the restaurant is located. T quickly responds with "yeah," latching onto the question.

With this answer in hand, Y offers confirmation by saying "Okay," then repeats "Ew:ha" twice in line 27. Y continues to confirm T's pronunciation of the university name here (Brouwer 2003, Waring 2011). This development indicates a shift in Y's approach to the problem: he initially identifies the lexical issue and attempts to confirm the referent's name. Once he is sure about what is being referred to, he draws on his knowledge of the location and later corrects the pronunciation in the sequence. In other words, the repair process involves multiple steps, beginning with identifying the problem and then resolving it. This was made possible by his knowledge of the location, as a long-time resident of Korea. Interestingly, however, it is Z, not T, who correctly repeats the word in line 28, "Ewha University," noting the corrective move initiated by Y. In contrast, T does not show an uptake of the corrected version. Instead, she marks her acceptance with a "yes" before resuming her story.

This excerpt illustrates a process in which initiating a repair triggers multiple exchanges involving several repairs. The recipient who initiates the repair pursues the matter to confirm what is being referred to. Only after the location information is confirmed does another repair occur to correct the word later. The recipient temporarily re-orientes to address lexical trouble (Kasper and Burch 2016) without the speaker showing uptake.

Pedagogically minded readers may see this as a failed case for a corrective move because the speaker of the trouble source turn did not demonstrate her understanding of what matters. From the CA perspective, however,

sequential analysis reveals that each speaker has a different agenda: the teller is oriented toward moving forward with her story, whereas the recipient attempts to confirm the referent before correcting the pronunciation.

The following excerpt presents another case of multiple repairs caused by lexical confusion. The participants are the same as in the first excerpt, involving three Chinese graduate students in Korea. The recipient is unsure how the speaker pronounced a specific word. As a result, the interaction also involves verifying the referent, leading to a sequence of multiple repairs. The excerpt begins with T's comment on a Chinese athlete whose story was featured in a TV interview. The issue begins with the word "medal."

## Excerpt 2

- 11 T: S<sub>Q</sub>: (1.0) so when I: first hear your story, I thought that-  
 12 (0.5) I(.) think of (0.5) uhm: (0.5) I think^ of a:(1.0)  
 13 Chinese ah (.) Chinese very popular boxing^ champion is  
 14 Zou Shiming  
 15 Z: =>yes< Zou Shiming I heard- do you know Zou  
 16 Shi::ming?  
 17 Y: °yeah°=  
 18 Z: =>he's a very< famous sports::man (.) and^ he fights or  
 19 he: (1.0) he (0.5) his career^ is boxing?  
 20 T: =yeah^ yeah^ yeah boxing^  
 21 Z: ° yeah.°  
 22 ► T: And: she: (0.5) he: ha:s got the metal.  
 23 (0.3)  
 24 ► Z: Got^ the metal?=  
 25 T: =yeah.=  
 26 ► Z: =>that^ is< me::tal:ǃ  
 27 (1.0)  
 28 T: [(pri: )]?  
 29 Z: [ ]  
 30 (0.3)  
 31 ► Z: metal?  
 32 Y: °g-°goldenǃ  
 33 ► Z: golden medal,  
 34 T: yeah.  
 35 ► Z: medal or metal?  
 36 T: [so(rr)y] the prize  
 37 Y: [hah]  
 38 Z: [hah]  
 39 Z: >She got< he got^ (.) he got^ golden <medals> (.) ah (.)  
 40 about boxing.=  
 41 T: =Yeah.  
 42 Z: He got golden medals.  
 43 T: And^ his wife just had (.) the interview because Zou Shimin  
 44 ^first son

T's story here introduces a real-life figure: the famous Chinese boxer Zou Shiming. In the subsequent turn, Z offers an agreement token with "yeah" and then asks another participant, Y, about the name, "Do you know Zou Shiming?" in lines 15-16. Y responds with a positive "yeah" in line 17, prompting the teller, Z, to move on to an additional account about the boxer in the following lines. Z's account comprises several repairs as she reformulates the boxer, first with "famous sportsman" and then with "he fights," to reiterate that "his career is boxing" in lines 18-19. This move prompted T to resume the story, who began with an agreement token, "yeah, yeah, yeah, boxing," in line 20. With Z's confirmation, T introduces a new fact about the boxer in line 22: "he has got the metal."

However, T's remark identifies a source of trouble. First, this turn is followed by a brief silence in line 23, indicating a problem (Pomerantz 1984). The next line shows that Z indeed begins a repair, "Got the metal?" Since "metal" and "medal" are a minimal pair, some speakers may find it difficult to distinguish between them. In this context, Z's repair initiation functions as a confirmation request, signaling lexical trouble. In the next turn in line 25, T responds quickly with "yeah." However, Z continues with "that is metal?" in line 26, revealing the source of the trouble.

This confirmation request is the second attempt, which confuses T and leaves a one-second pause in line 27. She had already answered Z's repair initiation. After the delay, T attempts to resolve the repair with an additional account that includes the word "prize" in line 28, which overlaps with Z's comment. This overlap also results in a micro-pause. In line 31, Z initiates another repair with "metal?" and focuses on the "tal" sound, highlighting the problem. In the next turn in line 32, Y intervenes to provide a lexical clue, "golden." In the next turn, Z takes up Y's clue by producing "golden medal." This strategy receives a quick positive answer from T in line 34.

Interestingly, however, Z returns to the pronunciation issue in line 35 with "medal or metal," initiating another repair and referring back to that specific word. In response, T first says "sorry," then "the prize" in line 36, providing another clue that shows her understanding of Z's trouble. This may relate to the content, not the form of the language. While both seem to focus on the word "medal," T does not appear to know what is problematic here. Due to this mixed situation, both Y and Z laugh as the repair sequences extend into multiple exchanges.

In the subsequent turns in lines 39-40, Z pursues the matter but places the word in the context of T's entire message with a summative remark, stating that this athlete won a gold medal in boxing. In response to this confirmation request, T quickly acknowledges it with "yeah" in line 41. In the subsequent turn in line 42, Z tries again to focus on the phrase "golden medal."

Despite Z's persistent efforts to address the lexical issue, the speaker of the trouble source T does not show an uptake. When Z says, "he got golden medals," T interprets this as understanding what was said about the athlete and thus continues her story about the boxer's family in lines 43-44. In other words, T's response to Z's correction is a claim of understanding rather than a demonstration (Sacks 1992). This extract shows how a recipient of lexical trouble pursues the source of the trouble through multiple repair sequences.

The excerpts in this section show that, while language issues are omnipresent, not all of them are corrected. It takes several exchanges for these participants to identify the source of the problem. Once the problem is identified, these recipients pursue language correction. However, despite multiple attempts, the speaker of the trouble source may not show an understanding of the correction (Hauser 2007, Waring 2011). Instead, they focus on resuming the story (Chen and Ye 2022, Lee 2013).

Tracing these sequences shows how the process of identifying and fixing the trouble source happens during interaction through multiple repairs. The speakers involved in the trouble source do not fully understand or accept the suggested correction, despite the recipient's efforts to fix it. While language repairs are always possible, these problems are not always solved because they depend on the participant's interactional choices.

## 4.2 Resolving Repair

While the previous section showed that corrective moves may not lead to uptake, the following examples demonstrate cases in which language issues are resolved through collaborative effort. These cases show the original speaker accepting the correction, illustrating what matters and how. These are also the results of multiple repair sequences. One reason for this uptake may be the speaker's expressed uncertainty about the trouble-source turn, which suggests they are more predisposed to accept corrective feedback to resolve that doubt.

The following example shows how lexical issues can lead to corrections. The main element is a proper noun, specifically the name of a palace in Korea. The excerpt features three L2 speakers from different L1 backgrounds: C, a native Chinese speaker from China; K, a native Korean speaker; and S, a Spanish-speaking Mexican. They are all in their 30s and all females. In this excerpt, C talks about her plan to visit a Korean palace and museum. K initiates a repair about the name of the place in C's talk. The problem arises because the name of the palace is pronounced differently in Korean and Chinese.

### Excerpt 3

- 11 C: During our week::^ends: I will al::so:^ to: maybe visit  
 12 some: traditiona:l K[or::ean: hou::ses],  
 13 K: [hm:: hou(h)ses?]  
 14 ► C: =yeah yes houses like the: [jingfu?]  
 15 ► K [(kun?)]  
 16 ► C: <Jin-> (.) jingfu<sub>6</sub>  
 17 ► K: Tingfu?=  
 18 ► C: =Tingfu<sub>6</sub>  
 19 (1.0)  
 20 K: sorry [I don't know]  
 21 S: [°where is it°]=  
 22 C: =uhm: <the:> (0.5) pa:lance^ (. )  
 23 K: Uh: (. )  
 24 S: Here in Seoul?  
 25 K: Gyeong:bokgung?  
 26 C: Ah: (.) Gyeongbokgung yeah  
 27 K: yeah right  
 28 S: [hah]  
 29 K: [hah]  
 30 C: [hah]

In lines 11-12, C describes her weekend plan as “visiting Korean traditional houses.” Because she depicts the place as “traditional,” K responds with “hm:” and then “houses?” K's turn shows collaborative completion by projecting what C is to say (Lerner 1991). This projection is accurate, as both speakers produce “houses” together.

In the next turn on line 14, C confirms K's initiation with “yeah yes houses like the:: jingfu.” Note that C's elongated sound “like the::” appears to be a preface to an analogical formulation (Raymond and Lerner 2014). This turn by C also serves as a hesitation marker during the word-search task (Hauser 2007, Kurhila 2006). With “jingfu,” C attempts to recall the name of the palace “Gyeongbokgung,” as Koreans pronounce it. This turn by C

is produced as a repair initiation, conveying uncertainty. The subsequent repair sequences are triggered by confusion over how this word is pronounced. Both Korean and Chinese speakers know the palace name but differ in pronunciation. Since K is Korean, she likely knows the name of the palace.

C's pronunciation of "jinfu" in line 14 is, however, overlapped by K's "kun" in line 15, constituting another other-initiated repair. In the next turn in line 16, C repeats her previous repair attempt. In doing so, C makes a self-repair, starting with "jin-," which is cut off, and then says the whole word, "jingfu." With this, C produces a contrasting sound compared to K's "kun" (Jefferson 1987).

The trouble continues as K hears it as "Tingfu" in line 17 and asks for confirmation from C. Here, C initiates another repair by repeating K's hearing of "Tingfu." C's word in line 14 is not accurate in representing the palace, and yet the problem worsens because K hears it differently here. This results in a one-second silence (Pomerantz 1984), demonstrating that these two speakers are confused about what is being referred to and how to pronounce it. For this reason, K expresses her uncertainty in line 20, "Sorry, I don't know." Despite the clarifying effort, K does not recognize the word "jingfu" that C proposed earlier. The lexical issue remains unresolved because K does not understand what C is referring to, despite being Korean.

At this point, another recipient, S, intervenes with the question "Where is it?" in line 21, initiating a new round of repair. Seeing that the exchange does not resolve the repair issue, S takes a different approach, asking for the location. While the source of the trouble was a language matter, S transforms the problem into a place-recognition matter (Lilja 2014).

In response, C clarifies by saying "the palace," indicating that the trouble lies in the name of the place mentioned in line 22. Now that the nature of the trouble is clear, the exchange takes a new direction, focusing on identifying the palace's name. S's turn in line 24 begins a repair to locate the place "here in Seoul?" In the following turn in line 25, K finally states the name of the palace, "Gyeongbokgung," which C's earlier "jingfu" referred to. C confirms this in line 26, showing acknowledgment. This recognition resolves the issue, and all speakers break into laughter simultaneously.

Notice that the pronunciation issue was identified and resolved through C's understanding of the word. The problem stemmed from C's initial uncertainty. She used the word "houses" instead of "palace," which hindered K's recognition, along with the mispronunciation. This issue led to multiple repair sequences (Lee 2021, Sert 2015). Later in the sequence, the parties used different resources to resolve the problem, with the third party eliciting location information, prompting K to recognize the palace's name.

What initially was a language issue has now become a matter of name recognition. The parties try to resolve the issue indirectly by searching for clues such as "palace" and "in Seoul." Eventually, they reach a mutual understanding of what is being referred to (see Hosoda 2006, Kasper 1985, Kurhila 2006). Ultimately, C shows uptake of the word by recognizing the name in line 26. The participants do not focus on correct pronunciation because the goal of the repair is to identify the place's name. Since the palace is named in Chinese characters, the Chinese and Korean speakers pronounce it differently. Additionally, the Chinese speaker may not remember the word accurately. This confusion somewhat delays recognition of the name, leading to multiple repairs. The speaker's uncertainty may lead to uptake when a recipient provides the corrected form.

While the above excerpt illustrates the mix of understanding and learning during repair sequences, the following example provides a clearer case of uptake by L2 speakers, as the speaker of the trouble source not only demonstrates uptake but also incorporates the corrected version in the next turn. Again, this excerpt shows the speaker's uncertainty about the source of the trouble. This excerpt features three Korean speakers of English engaged in a conversational exchange. They are all in their 40s and are all Koreans. Here, S discusses her visit to Angkor Wat, a Cambodian Hindu temple renowned for its architecture.

## Excerpt 4

- 35 S: ah first we visite:d banti seray. .h banti slay i:s one of the  
 36 temp:^le (.) of ah: Angko:r (.) Kingdo:~^m but hm: that i:s  
 37 ▶ (.) the very (.) hm: (.) .h  
 38 (0.5)  
 39 ▶ S: Cengkyohan, hh  
 40 ▶ L: [Elaborate?  
 41 ▶ Y: [elaborate^  
 42 (0.5)  
 43 ▶ S: Elora:te?  
 44 ▶ L: [Ela:borate.  
 45 Y: [Elaborate.  
 46 ▶ S: Elaborate, .h ah very ela:borate ah: (.) reliefs  
 47 everywhere, ever:y (0.5) wa:lls or ever:y (.) pillars or ever:y  
 48 ▶ (.) roof, .h (0.5) everything has very (.) ela:borate (.) relie:f  
 49 (.) that was fantastic, very very fascinating, .h so:

The speaker S describes the temple, but she struggles to find an English word in lines 37-38. After multiple attempts, she uses the Korean word “Cengkyohan” as a code switch to convey her meaning. In response to this code switch, both recipients of the story, L and Y, suggest an English word in lines 40-41. Both responses from L and Y serve as repair initiations, asking for confirmation or clarification to determine whether this is indeed what S intended to express.

However, this causes a brief pause, indicating trouble for S in line 42. Otherwise, she would have accepted the word. Still, S initiates a repair in line 43, saying “elorate?” to seek confirmation. This shows that S mishears the suggested word, highlighting the importance of pronunciation. In the next turn, both L and Y provide the repair “Elaborate,” addressing the hearing issue.

These corrective moves are effective, as S shows recognition in line 46, “Elaborate.” The speaker demonstrates understanding through uptake, indicating she comprehends the repair suggested by the recipient. Interestingly, she immediately uses the word again in the following turn, “very ela:borate,” in line 46, incorporating the correction into her subsequent speech. In fact, she repeats this word in the next turn, line 48, to emphasize the comment “everything is very elaborate.” This is a clear example of uptake, highlighting a learning moment for the word.

Unlike the cases we have discussed so far, this type of uptake is relatively rare because L2 speakers are often focused on making meaning rather than resuming the sequence. This shift toward progressivity in interaction may drive their conversational exchanges (Heritage 2007). This is an important feature of natural conversation and therefore presents a challenge for L2 researchers. Not every language matter becomes a learning moment, because participants may be preoccupied with making sense of what is being said. For this reason, we cannot assume that learning has occurred simply because a corrective move occurs. Instead, the sequential analysis shows that the speaker’s uncertainty precedes uptake once a correction is offered. This marks a significant departure from the previous section, where such uptake was notably absent.

As noted earlier, language issues can be a persistent concern because any part of the conversation may pose difficulties for L2 speakers. This unique aspect of L2 interactions may create opportunities for learning or teaching (Eskildsen 2017, Li and Vuono 2019, Mackey 2006). However, it is up to the participants to decide what matters

and how to address these issues. Some participants are motivated to correct what can be corrected, while others are content simply to recognize the meaning. Ultimately, participants' choices determine which actions to take and how to carry out the repair sequences.

### 4.3 Pursuing Meaning

While the previous section presented multiple repair cases in which participants sought linguistic corrections, this section presents excerpts in which speakers bypass recipients' lexical trouble to achieve shared understanding. The following excerpt illustrates a case in which a discussion group comprising three native Chinese speakers discusses the importance of learning Korean for everyday communication: two females and one male. Notably, one speaker engages in a series of repair sequences that target a particular word.

#### Excerpt 5

- 125 T: But we need: >most of us< are:(1.0) lear:n some:  
 126 (0.5) spok::en Korean<sup>v</sup> for usual<sup>^</sup>work<sub>g</sub> usual li::fe.  
 127 ► Y: my<sup>v</sup> life?  
 128 ► Z: your li::fe? or your life? or-  
 129 ► T: us::ual life.  
 130 Y: ^ life.=  
 131 T: =yeah.  
 132 (0.5)  
 133 ► Y: what is u- [( )  
 134 Z: [ >she means that< you have to learn some (.)  
 135 spoken Korean language (.) in your daily:  
 136 Y: in my: daily life okay. yo(h)ur: ok(h)ay.  
 137 Z: ha::  
 138 Y: en (0.5) now- we are in Seoul in Korean, you can practice  
 139 it (.) every time (0.3) and everywhere.

T discusses the need to learn Korean for everyday life in lines 125-126. She then corrects her own phrase at the end, changing “Korean for usual work” to “usual life.” This phrase, “usual life,” causes confusion, and Y starts to clarify in line 127 with the question, “my life?”

This initiation does not seem to be a language issue, as it refers to whose life T was discussing. In the following turn at line 128, another participant, Z, responds to another repair (Lerner 1996) by reformulating Y's initiation of repair, “your life or your life or-.” Z's initiation appears to confirm the propositional content. This is a case where two L2 speakers challenge the trouble source turn (Hall 2019, Sert 2015) as they replace “usual” with “your life.”

In response to these, T clarifies the matter as “usual life” in line 129. While the two previous repair initiations by Y and Z addressed propositional content, T's repair focuses on pronunciation because she noticed Y and Z did not mention the very word she produced. Therefore, she repeats the word with a lengthened sound “us::ual life” in line 129. In the next turn, line 130, Y repeats only “life,” but T considers the issue resolved in line 131.

This language issue could have been resolved here. However, Y on line 133 begins another repair with “what is u-,” indicating that the problem remains unresolved. At this point, Z steps in on lines 134-135 to clarify the earlier comment on behalf of speaker T. In doing so, Z's explanation references both language and content issues, and

she changes “usual life” to “daily life.” This change seems to work for Y, who then repeats the phrase “in my daily life” and later says, “your, okay, okay” on line 136. Y then provides more explanation on lines 138-139, describing how she should learn Korean as part of her daily routine. Y’s summative account suggests she understood what T meant in her initial account. This is partly due to the third person, Z, who offers a comment by reframing the problematic phrase, replacing “usual” with “daily” life. In doing so, Z redirects the focus from linguistic form to content. This leads to Y’s acknowledgment of the meaning that was problematized.

This excerpt illustrates how sources of trouble may require rephrasing to alter the meaning. During this process, the focus shifts to a sense-making issue, leading to multiple adjustments due to the recipients’ uncertain hearing of the word. Here, the third person may speak for someone who is still uncertain about what is being referenced. When a third party is involved, it often requires significant interaction, including identifying and explaining the issue, which leads to multiple repairs. The source of confusion is rephrased and clarified. However, it remains unclear whether the recipient, Y, understood the word “usual,” as the matter was bypassed while participants focused on clarifying the meaning. Although lexical issues prompted the repair sequences, the linguistic problem was set aside to reach a shared understanding.

The next excerpt demonstrates another instance where lexical issues triggered repair sequences, yet the participants work to understand the meaning behind the problematic turn. The excerpt features three Chinese graduate students discussing what they covered during storytelling sessions. Z makes an evaluative comment on Y’s story, and Y begins a repair of Z’s evaluation.

## Excerpt 6

162 Z: s<sub>0</sub> Y seems like (.) uhm (0.5) seldom<sup>^</sup> (0.5) seldom<sup>^</sup>  
 163 (0.5) mee:t some difficulties in your life<sub>ç</sub>  
 164 (0.3)  
 165 ▶ Y: wha:t? sorry<sub>ç</sub>  
 166 ▶ Z: that mea:ns that you: seldom meet  
 167 [some>difficulties< in-  
 168 ▶ Y: [sel:don?  
 169 ▶ Z: yeah<sup>v</sup> seldom.  
 170 ▶ Y: °seldom° what is sel[don?  
 171 ▶ Z: [seldom.  
 172 =>that means<  
 173 ▶ Y: what is seldom?  
 174 ▶ Z: sel::dom<sup>^</sup>  
 175 ▶ Y: sel::don.  
 176 ▶ Z: seldom[heh  
 177 T: [<sel::dom.>  
 178 Y: sel:don<sub>ç</sub>  
 179 Z: °en°  
 180 Y: in: Chinese.  
 181 (0.5)  
 182 Z: hen::shao  
 183 Y: o(h)u: ok::ay.  
 184 Z: in Chin(h)::ese<sub>ç</sub>

- 185 T: ɹare(h)ly  
 186 Z: <ɹare::ly> your rarely get some >difficulties< in  
 187 your life, so you:

In lines 162-163, the speaker Z comments that Y seldom faces difficulties in her life. In doing so, Z self-repairs by producing the word “seldom.” In response, the recipient Y initiates a repair in line 165 with “what?” This is an open-class repair (Drew 1997), and Y adds “sorry” at the end. Z interprets this as a request for clarification and repeats the entire message in lines 166-167. On the next turn in line 168, however, Y initiates another repair that overlaps with Z’s explanation. Y’s repair targets the word “seldom,” but it is pronounced as “seldon.”

Interestingly, however, Z confirms Y’s initiation with “yeah” and then repeats the word “seldom” in line 169. Z considers this repair to be related to a hearing issue (Dingemanse et al. 2014, Kendrick 2015) and thus focuses on the word. However, this assumption proved incorrect because Y acknowledges the answer with “seldon” in line 170 and then makes another initiation, asking, “what is seldon?”

In the next turn in line 171, Z repeats the word “seldom,” overlapping Y’s turn. Z’s overlap indicates that Z has finally understood the issue with Y’s repeated repair attempts and begins to clarify its meaning in line 172. Z’s move here aims to address both pronunciation and meaning. This type of repair is an L2 issue (Hall 2007, Markee 2000, Waring 2011) that involves actions focused on both language form and function. However, Y attempts another repair with the same pronunciation in line 173, asking, “What is seldon?”

Given the complexity of the matter, Z decides to address the pronunciation issue first, in line 174, by emphasizing the word “seldom”, she breaks the word down phonetically into two parts, first with “sel:” and then “dom.” This is an explicit language correction aimed at correcting language form. However, this strategy does not seem to work, as Y still hears it as “sel::don” in line 175. Z then tries with “seldom,” emphasizing “dom” in line 176, ending with laughter. Notably, another participant, T, intervenes in line 177, producing “sel::dom” at a slower pace, indicating a repair conjoin (Bolden 2012).

Despite T’s help, Y still shows uncertainty about the word in line 178, using the same pronunciation. Noting that the issue persists, Y asks for a Chinese version by starting a repair “in Chinese” in line 180 (Brouwer 2004, Li 2005). Therefore, Z provides a Chinese equivalent, “hen shao,” in the next turn, in line 182, noting that Y does not know the word.

In the next turn at line 183, Y signals her understanding (Sacks 1992) with a tentative acknowledgment token “o(h)u: ok::ay.” Then, T offers a synonym, “rarely,” in line 185. In the following turn at line 186, Z accepts T’s suggestion with an elongated pronunciation “rare::ly” and later incorporates it into her next turn, saying “you rarely get some difficulties...” to continue her comment about Y’s life. This shows that both Z and T focus on the meaning of the word used in Z’s initial comment, through repeated repair sequences, they learn that Y did not know the word. It is unclear whether Y learned the word “seldom.” Y claims to understand what matters, but she does so without clear uptake. This is another case in which lexical matter is set aside as the parties focus on clarifying the content.

The language features discussed in this section stem from previous corrections, and they have not yet been fully developed into a learning opportunity (Kasper 2004, Waring 2009). The speaker’s repeated mishearing of the trouble source made it difficult to move beyond the language issue, leading to an extended side sequence (Jefferson 1972). When there is no clear understanding of the corrected version, the listener resorts to code-switching to indirectly address the problem (Greer 2014). This is an example of let-it-pass (Firth 1996), as both parties focus on clarifying the meaning of the problematic source. The two excerpts demonstrate that the language problems remained unresolved despite multiple repairs. When clear uptake is lacking, participants turn to other resources to

continue with the content. This is what multiple repair sequences showed.

## 5. Conclusion

This study traces the dynamic paths of multiple repair sequences in L2 interactions, showing how lexical issues evolve into complex interactional negotiations. The analysis indicates that repair sequences are key points where participants actively build their interactional skills through real-time decision-making, challenging traditional ideas about error correction in L2 settings. The findings reveal three distinct pathways through which L2 speakers handle linguistic issues: form-focused pursuit, where the recipient seeks repair to fix the problem, meaning-focused transformation, where speakers strategically overlook linguistic precision to prioritize mutual understanding, and repair resolutions, where speakers of the trouble source show uptake, demonstrating their understanding of what matters and how. These three categories help us see repair as a complex interactional phenomenon that often extends beyond fixing errors (Hall 2018; Mortensen 2016), encompassing the broader concept of interactional competence (Hall and Looney 2019).

The data also challenge the prevailing focus of SLA research, which primarily treats language errors as opportunities for correction. Instead, participants demonstrate sophisticated interactional skills by making contingent choices between correcting for linguistic accuracy and achieving communicative goals. When speakers bypass linguistic issues to focus on meaning negotiation, they demonstrate an implicit understanding that success in communication goes beyond formal correction.

The study helps rethink the relationship between language form and communicative functions in L2 interaction. Rather than treating repairs as isolated correction events, the analysis shows them as ongoing interactional efforts that can span multiple turns and require complex coordination among participants. This view might offer an alternative approach for SLA researchers, who mainly focus on the effectiveness of corrective feedback.

This study builds on and advances a CA-for-SLA approach by systematically tracing complete repair trajectories rather than analyzing decontextualized repair fragments within the dynamic context of L2 interaction (Hauser 2017, Sert 2013). Previous research has mainly focused on repair initiation or resolution in isolation (Kasper and Kim 2015; Seedhouse 2004), without tracking the entire repair sequence. By examining full sequences, the study uncovers the emergent and negotiated nature of what ultimately becomes 'correctable' and 'learnable' and when (Koshik 2002, Eskildsen and Cadierno 2015, Waring 2008, 2012). Decisions to pursue or abandon linguistic targets arise through real-time contingencies (Firth 1996, Kunitz 2015, Sert 2015) that analytic categories cannot predict.

The findings suggest an alternative approach to corrective feedback practices in L2 instruction. Instead of assuming that linguistic errors require immediate correction, educators should recognize that learners may strategically prioritize communicative goals over formal accuracy. It also requires that L2 teaching develop learners' observational skills, enabling them to make informed decisions about when linguistic precision is necessary and when meaning negotiation can take priority over the need for interaction to progress. Educators might also facilitate extended classroom discussions, providing students with the necessary interactional space to independently discover and resolve problematic turns.

For CA-for-SLA research, the study highlights sequential analysis as a key methodological approach for understanding how L2 interactional competence develops. The stubbornness of many repair sequences—their resistance to simple educational interventions—exposes the complex nature of interactional exchanges in L2 interactions (Seedhouse 2004). Sequential analysis demonstrates how descriptive analyses can effectively explain

how participants actively manage and negotiate language issues within specific contexts, through the evolving sequences of talk that involve multiple repair sequences. These sequences represent essential interactional skills in which participants negotiate the relationship between linguistic form and communicative intent. By revealing the complex decision-making processes behind repair cases, L2 speakers are defined as skilled interactional participants capable of managing their problems in detail.

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**APPENDIX**

## Transcription Notations

- [ ] The point of overlapping utterances.
  - (2.0) Timed silence within or between adjacent utterances.
  - ( ) An uncertain hearing of what the speaker said.
  - (( )) Scenic description and accounts
  - (.) A short untimed pause.
  - = Latching that indicates no interval between adjacent utterances.
  - A halting, abrupt cutoff
  - . Stopping/falling intonation contour, not necessarily an assertion.
  - ? Rising intonation
  - ¿ Rising intonation but no less than?
  - , A slightly rising intonation, not necessarily a clause boundary.
  - √^ Marked change in pitch: upward or downward.
  - Quieter than surrounding talk
  - : A prolonged stretch on a stressed syllable, either by increased amplitude or higher pitch or both
  - h Aspiration, breathing out
  - .h Inhalations
  - ha(h)s Smiley voice
  - <> Utterance is delivered at a slower pace than the surrounding talk
  - >< Utterance is delivered at a quicker pace than the surrounding talk.
  - ▶ A line of particular interest in the discussion
- (cf. Hepburn and Bolden, 2013)

Examples in: English

Applicable Languages: English

Applicable Level: Tertiary