

**How the initiation and resolution of repair sequences act as a device for the co-construction
of membership and identity**

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Abstract

This conversation analytic paper investigates how speakers self-position or are other-positioned as members of a certain social group (e.g., competent speakers of a language) through other-initiated repair. Findings illustrate the complexity of linguistic membership categories by demonstrating that they continually shift depending on local interactional goals and documenting how shifts are accomplished. The different levels and types of linguistic and cultural knowledge that are invoked in instances of repair on specific lexical items demonstrate the complexity of linguistic membership categorization, and this indicates a need to problematize the use of a priori and overly-vague labels like ‘non-native speaker’. Findings contribute to our understanding of the functions of other-initiated repair and the mechanisms of co-constructing membership (categorization) and thus social identity in interaction. They also raise questions about the relationship between amounts and types of knowledge and further our understanding of the construction of expert/novice categories via knowledge displays and negotiation.

Keywords: identity; repair; membership categories; epistemics; expert/novice interaction, positioning

1. *Introduction*

In research on second language acquisition (SLA), participants are often assigned, a priori, the categories of native speaker (NS) and non-native speaker (NNS). This is not to say that extensive background questionnaires and proficiency tests are not used; however, literature in social interaction (Carroll 2000; Firth and Wagner 1997; Hosoda 2000, 2002; Kasper 2004; Wong and Olsher 2000) has questioned the validity/usefulness of this practice because these categorizations: 1) presume NNSs to be deficient members of the interaction, 2) typically ignore potential differences in the communicative abilities of different NNSs, and 3) oversimplify the complexity of multilingual situations by treating all NSs as a monolithic group. Additionally, it is unlikely that NS/NNS categories are static at, or relevant to, all moments of interaction. In other words, while NNSs (and their co-participants) may orient to non-nativeness at certain moments during the interaction, that category may not be relevant at all times. Furthermore, the labels NS and NNS themselves may be too vague. Schegloff, Koshik, Jacoby, and Olsher (2002) refer to categories like ‘expert’ and ‘novice’ language speaker, and Carroll (2000) asserts that a term like ‘novice-level L2-user’ may be more descriptive because it considers differing ability levels of second language (L2) usage.

The current work investigates how co-participants in interaction negotiate linguistic membership categories related to NS/NNS identities and what devices they use to bring them to the interactional surface. In particular, it explores how the other-initiation of repair and its resolution aids in the co-construction of these categories. Segment 1, a shortened excerpt of data Segment 3, is provided here as an example. In line 17, Oberon other-initiates repair, targeting a trouble source uttered by Aurora in line 12, the lexical item ‘suits’ (referring to suits in a deck of cards such as hearts, diamonds, etc.). However, while uttering the repair initiation he directs his eye gaze at Eva, not Aurora. Oberon completes the repair in line 19 by translating to German, *farbe* ‘suits’, which Eva confirms in line 20. In doing so, Oberon is assigning himself (and his addressee Eva) the category of German speaker. Eva confirms this translation, aligning with Oberon’s categorization.

(1) *Farbe*

((ten lines of transcript omitted))

1.2. Data

The data presented are taken from two hours of audio- and video-recorded naturally occurring talk and follow the transcription conventions of Atkinson and Heritage (1984). Data were recorded by the author in a Midwestern city in the United States. Within the transcriptions, non-verbal behavior is added when it proved to be relevant for the analysis (i.e., eye-gaze is noted above the talk it accompanies). In these data, friends have gathered for the second time to learn and play a popular German card game, *Doppelkopf* ('two heads'). The recording took place in the home of two of the participants. Its purpose was to document what the participants perceived to be the complicated rules of the card game given that the expert player was only living in the area for several months. Five participants are present in each of the segments (names provided are pseudonyms): Oberon, Aurora, Eva, Todd and Pat. Oberon is the individual who taught the others how to play the game (at an earlier meeting). Aurora, Eva and Todd had all played the game once with Oberon. This is Pat's first exposure to the game. Taking an etic perspective, we can note that Oberon and Eva are German NSs and NNSs of English. At the time of recording, Oberon had lived and taught university courses in the US for approximately four months (one

semester), whereas Eva had been living and teaching university courses in the US for approximately four and a half years. Todd is a NS of English but can also speak German, having completed two and a half years of university instruction in German and a five-week study abroad program in Austria as well as several visits to Germany. Aurora and Pat are NSs of English with no previous experience in German language instruction. However, given Aurora's friendship with Oberon, Eva, and Tom, she had been exposed to some German in their previous interactions.

To assist the reader in interpreting the social interaction during game play, a brief description of the card game and its key terms are provided. *Doppelkopf* is played with a specialized deck of cards consisting of 48 cards, two sets of 24, with values ranging from nine to ace. Suits include hearts, diamonds, clubs, and spades, and each card value (e.g., ace) has two cards of the same suit (i.e., there are two aces of diamonds in the deck). The game is played by four players in teams of two; however, in any given round, a player's partner is unknown and decided by the pre-playing bidding and the make-up of each player's hand. All 48 cards are dealt out to the players at the start of each round, resulting in 12 tricks (i.e., sets of four cards) that can be won based on the order and rank of the cards played. The game also involves the use of trump, which generally means that a specific suit ranks above others. In *Doppelkopf*, there is a complicated system of trump values which can also depend on the order in which the cards are played. For the purposes of this analysis, it is important to know that the ace of diamonds is referred to as 'a fox'. If a player has both aces of diamonds, then he/she announces this by stating 'schweinchen' 'piglet'. When this occurs, those two cards become the highest ranking trump cards for that round of the game. It is these rules and terminology that the friends have gathered to learn.

1.3. *Membership categories*

A large body of research in the conversation analytic tradition has been concerned with membership categorization devices. Schegloff (2007a) interprets Sacks' (1972a, 1972b, 1992) membership categorization devices as being comprised of both (collections of) categories and their rules of application. Categories include labels such as male, female, native speaker, non-native speaker, and follow certain rules when being used to do identifying, describing, etc. Membership categorization devices are thus explicit labels used to describe or refer to the

identity of an individual or group of individuals. But identity formation and transmission are accomplished in interaction even when these explicit labels are not used, as identity can be viewed as a resource individuals deploy in talk rather than static, monolithic categories (Antaki, Condor, and Levine 1996). This paper will show how we demonstrate our membership in one linguistic category or another, and thus our identity, through the actions we co-construct throughout our interactions with others, as seen, for example in Segment 1. These categories are not, however, static, which is where the importance of context and relevance enter. Context means the local context within the interaction; in other words, what is occurring in that exact moment of the interaction and its relation to what has just occurred and what is done next (Heritage 1989). Contextual relevance refers to local interactional (that is, sequential) relevance at a particular moment. Because relevance is related to context, it must be continually demonstrated at each moment in the data, as context is changing in each moment. This paper demonstrates how situating other-initiated repair and its resolution in its local context illustrates one way in which participants construct and maintain certain membership categories without the explicit use of membership categorization devices.

1.4. *Other-initiated repair*

Repair is concerned with solving problems in speaking, hearing, and understanding talk. Repair can be self- or other-initiated and self- or other completed relative to who uttered the *trouble source* (i.e. what is being targeted by the repair). The preference organization for repair (i.e. the most common combination) is self-initiated, self-completed repair. Other-initiated, self-completed repair is the next common, and other-initiated, other-completed repair is relatively less common (as is self-initiated, other-completed repair) (Schegloff et al. 1977). It is typical for the repair to be addressed to and responded to by the trouble-source speaker (Egbert 1997). Other-initiated repair has also been shown to accomplish additional tasks beyond managing difficulties in hearing and understanding, such as signaling disagreement (Schegloff 2007c, 103-4), securing eye-gaze of a non-attending speaker (Goodwin 1979), securing speakership in overlap (Schegloff 1987b), exiting one engagement and smoothly entering into an ongoing conversation (Egbert 1997), etc. The current study adds this body of literature showing other-initiated repair can accomplish two goals simultaneously by demonstrating how it functions in the co-construction of linguistic membership categories.

Other-initiated repair has commonly been a focus of research investigating NS/NNS discourse (Hosoda 2000, 2002; Kasper 2009; Kurhila 2006; Olsher 2004; Schegloff 2000; Taleghani-Nikazm 2015; Wong 2000) because it relates to SLA concepts of negotiation of meaning and error correction and can provide insights into how learners formulate troubles with speaking, hearing and understanding (Wong 2000). One theme that has emerged is a comparison of the repair practices of those traditionally classified as NSs and NNSs. Hosoda (2000, 2002), for example, documented/described the repair practices of NS/NNSs of Japanese and reported the following differences between NS-NS and NS-NNS interactions: 1) the types of trouble sources on which repair was other-initiated were different between NS-NS interactions and NS-NNS interactions (NS-NS interactions tended to target technical terms, proverbs, etc., while NS-NNS interactions dealt with common vocabulary, phrases, and grammatical structures), 2) self-initiations by NNSs were regularly other-completed by NSs after verbal and non-verbal invitations to do so, and 3) a particular preference for doing ‘vocabulary checks’ (offering a word with rising intonation mid-turn) was employed by NNSs. Hosoda also noted that NSs did not provide help (and thus did not attend to their status as NS and their co-participants status as NNS) unless sought to do so by their NNS co-participants.

Another theme that has emerged from research on repair relates to other forms of linguistic membership categorization not related to the NS/NNS distinction, but rather to dialect communities. Maheux-Pelletier and Golato (2008), investigated how linguistic membership categories emerge as relevant when certain trouble sources are targeted in the self- and other-initiated repair of co-participants from different French-speaking communities. For example, they demonstrated how multiple instances of repair on the lexical items *bleuets* ‘blueberries’ (used in Canadian French) and *myrtilles* ‘blueberries’ (used in ‘Metropolitan French’) aided in the establishing, confirming, asserting, or negotiating of speakers’ membership in one category rather than another (Maheux-Pelletier and Golato 2008, 694-695). In a similar vein, Egbert (2004) explored the relationship between other-initiated repair and membership categorization, arguing that translation can be used as a repair device to assign linguistic membership categories. In Egbert’s data, a German NS is telling several other German NSs a story about her studies at a university in the US and uses the English phrase ‘frat guys.’ By doing so, the speaker implicitly self-assigns what Egbert calls linguistic membership categorization and requires that her co-participants also share this category. When a co-participant other-initiates repair on this term, the

speaker self-completes by immediately translating the term into German, thus assigning a different linguistic membership category to her co-participant. Importantly, Egbert demonstrated that “a co-participant can assign membership to him/herself or to other co-participants” (2004, 1495). Furthermore, Egbert discussed how co-participants can either reject or insist upon these categorizations. In this way, membership categorization is neither self-selected nor other-selected, but is “a collaborative process” (2004, 1495), co-constructed among and between co-participants.

Taleghani-Nikazm (2015) invoked the notion of Communities of Practice (CofPs), or groups of individuals joined in a process of collective learning (Lave and Wenger 1991) to demonstrate how language learners use repair to engage in an L2 community of practice that is oriented to the shared goal of language learning. She showed how language learners coordinated a variety of linguistic and gestural resources to initiate, negotiate, and resolve repair while simultaneously orienting to a shared goal of (language) learning. For example, during a lengthy word search sequence, participants used gestures and elicited the help of others rather than switching to their shared first language. In this way, Taleghani-Nikazm argued that repair practices were a resource interactants used to display their orientation to being members of an L2 Community of Practice with a shared goal of language learning.

To summarize, previous research has compared the repair practices of those traditionally categorized as NS/NNSs and reported that the types of trouble sources on which repair was other-initiated were different between NS-NS interactions and NS-NNS interactions. Previous work has also demonstrated that other-initiated repair can be used to accomplish multiple goals simultaneously. Repair can aid in the establishing, confirming, asserting, or negotiating of speakers’ membership in one category rather than another, but these categorizations are a collaborative process co-constructed among and between participants. Finally, repair has been shown to be used as a device between members in a Community of Practice to demonstrate their orientation to a shared goal of learning. The data in the current paper illustrate how speakers self-assign or are other-assigned to different linguistic membership categories through the interactional choices they make, specifically, through the way they manage interactional trouble (repair). Throughout, I demonstrate that local context is paramount in understanding how distinct forms of indicating trouble in another speaker's talk and its resolution can be used to self-assign and other-assign membership categories. I further demonstrate the category of NNS of English as

frequently less relevant than other categories by presenting data that problematize the use of overly vague terms like NS and NNS.

2. *Data analysis*

In this section, I provide segments that demonstrate the co-construction of different participants' membership categories through the initiation and resolution of repair sequences. Segment 2 illustrates an other-initiated repair produced by Oberon, who seems to have difficulty understanding the English word 'cunning'. The word was first uttered by Todd, who mentioned the title of the opera *The Cunning Little Vixen* (Segment 2, line 4).¹ After 1 minute and 40 seconds of talk, Oberon returns to a discussion of this word.

(2) *Cunning*

```
001      E: but remember m[y problem with like- (.)      going      ]=  
002      T:          [i thought you meant like a word for like,]  
003      E: =to see the opera?=  
004      T: =the cunning little vixen? ((name of a Janáček opera))  
  
          ((116 lines of transcript omitted; ca. 1:40 min))  
  
120      E: [but you know what-]  
          [*((O's eye gaze is directed at the table))  
121      O: [*(so) what is cunning actually:,  
122          (0.2)  
123      A: sly[:..  
124      E:      [sly:. yeah.=[ehm  
125      P:          [sly[:..  
126      O: sly? [what is sly.      ]  
127      A:      [tricky, or (.) ]smart;=  
128      T: =yeah=  
          *((E turns her eye gaze toward A))  
129      E: =*is it- is it is it conniving [too] somehow?  
130      ?:  
          [( )]  
131      A: sort of [yeah.      ]
```

132 T: [sometimes,] yeah.
 133 A: like [i-
 134 E: [M↓m,=
 135 T: =°mischievous?°
 136 (0.1)
 137 T: °maybe?°
 138 (1.0)
 *((gaze in E's direction))
 139 O: *↑SO is- [s- (.)]is sylvester stallone, is (.) one of
 *((gazes at O and gestures with an open hand))
 140 E: * [>schlau.<] ((German word for clever or sly))
 sly
 141 O: his nickna:mes [sly?
 142 A: [sly.
 143 E: sly: [yeah.
 144 T: [yeah,]
 145 A: [that's]just [cause his name is]sylvester,
 146 O: [wh- WHY is this?]
 147 E: mm-hmm[.
 148 P: [yes. sylvest[er.]
 149 O: [o]kay.=he's not sly.
 150 A: no:

In the omitted interaction, the title of the opera *The Cunning Little Vixen* is discussed and in line 121, Oberon other-initiates repair on the word ‘cunning’ with his eye gaze maintained on the game. Oberon's request for information does not continue the current sequence, but instead returns to earlier talk and makes visible a problem with a previous turn (line 4, ‘cunning’). In the following turn (line 123), Aurora completes the repair by providing the requested information. She provides the synonym ‘sly’, which another participant, Eva, repeats in overlap (line 124) and confirms with ‘yeah’. By constructing her turn in this way, [repeat] + [agreement token], Eva claims independent knowledge rather than claiming to have just been informed by Aurora or claiming to remember (Heritage and Raymond 2005). That is, Eva constructs herself as (equally) knowledgeable about the definition of ‘sly’. Oberon then other-initiates a second repair sequence, this time on the trouble source ‘sly’, by (a) repeating the word with rising intonation (Schegloff, Jefferson, and Sacks 1977) and then (b) adding a second repair initiator in the form

of the question ‘what is sly.’ With the use of a second repair initiator after the repetition, Oberon indicates that he is not repeating the word for confirmation, but that he continues to have trouble and does not understand the offered synonym. Aurora provides two other alternatives in overlap with Oberon in line 127 ‘tricky, or smart’. Eva then offers the alternative ‘conniving’, but her turn is directed at Aurora (through eye-gaze) and designed to imply uncertainty: It is structured as a question and hedged with the word ‘somehow’ (uttered with rising intonation), inviting confirmation from Aurora (which Aurora gives in line 131). With no acknowledgement from Oberon that he has understood, Todd quietly offers ‘mischievous? maybe?’, again inviting confirmation from the others. Oberon still does not give any indication of his accepting the completion of his repair, and we see Eva adding in overlap with Oberon in line 140 an additional completion by translating the word into German while gazing at him: ‘schlau’. Oberon continues with an inquiry about whether one of Sylvester Stallone’s nicknames is sly, which Aurora confirms in line 142. In line 146, Oberon asks (rather incredulously) why one of Sylvester Stallone’s nicknames would be sly (presumably because his new understanding of the word ‘sly’ does not match his previous beliefs about the personality of Sylvester Stallone). In doing so, Oberon offers a candidate understanding of the new word by using it in a different context; thus, he makes a claim of understanding by demonstrating his understanding. Aurora provides an explanation in her response in line 145 by suggesting that ‘sly’ as an adjective and as the nickname of Sylvester are not semantically connected. Oberon demonstrates his understanding of this distinction (and thus his grasp of the meaning of ‘sly’) by providing an assessment of Sylvester Stallone as ‘not sly’. Aurora confirms this understanding in line 150.

Similar to Hosoda (2002)’s findings in which repair on common vocabulary/phrases was other-initiated in NS-NNS interaction, we see other-initiated repair on the lexical items ‘cunning’ and ‘sly’. One might argue that by other-initiating repair on this type of vocabulary, Oberon is self-identifying as a member of the category of NNS. However, one problem with this categorization relates to the definition of ‘common vocabulary’. The trouble sources in Hosoda (2002) categorized as common were the Japanese word *ensou* ‘performance’ and the phrase *sonomama* ‘as it is’. Classifying these Japanese words/phrases, as well as English ‘cunning’ and ‘sly’ as common is not only debatable, but introduces an outside (etic) perspective on the analysis. We have no evidence that the participants are orienting to these trouble sources as common vs. not, and thus, cannot argue that repair on this type of trouble source makes relevant

the category of NNS. We can, however, argue that participants' differing levels of knowledge are made relevant. Therefore, instead of saying that Oberon's other-initiation categorizes him as NNS or 'L2-user', a better label might be one that invokes gradient amounts of knowledge, such as 'less-knowledgeable speaker (of English)'.

We also see the assignment of another linguistic membership category in this segment. Just as some of the participants in Egbert (2004), Eva assigns Oberon a linguistic membership category (that of speaker of German) by translating the word into German. By completing the repair in this way, she also assigns herself to that category. Unlike the speakers in Egbert (2004), Eva does not perform this completion as an immediate response to Oberon's other-initiation. Instead, she does so after confirming an alternative English synonym provided by Aurora and offering one of her own. In this way, she initially assigns herself to 'more-knowledgeable speaker of English' relative to Oberon. She may ultimately have provided the translation because Oberon offers no acknowledgement that he understood any of their alternatives. On the other hand, Eva may be offering an alternative of which she is more certain (i.e., a direct translation) because one of her alternatives has been offered in a way that requests confirmation. In either case, by doing so, she self-assigns herself membership to the category of German speaker and other-assigns Oberon to that same category.

Segment 3 presents the full segment provided as an example in the introduction. This segment also includes an other-initiated repair produced by Oberon on a lexical item of English, this time the word 'suits' (line 13). This segment begins with Oberon offering to provide additional information about the rules of the card game before play begins (line 1). Aurora accepts Oberon's offer in line 2; however, her turn is interrupted by Todd in line 3 who initiates repair on Aurora's previous turn (omitted from the segment) in which she was telling how at primary school, students were rewarded by receiving pig's tails on their desks. Todd asks whether they were tails from live pigs (line 3-4), and Aurora clarifies in line 8 that they were not real, but rather 'curly-cue cutout ones' (line 8). The talk then returns to a discussion of the game.

(3) Farbe

001 O: so is there anything e:lse you need to know?
*((makes a sorting/cutting motion))
002 A: yes, *the order of [the::
[*((A looks at T))
003 T: [were they pigs *fro:m or tails from live
004 pigs?
005 A: no::[:
006 T: [that they- [they put on your de]sk?=[°no°]
007 A: [i wi::sh] [no.]=no
008 A: =they were c-curly-cue cutout one[s,
009 T: [°hm°
010 A: .HH [U::m]
011 O: [(°you don't kn]ow,°)
*((A looks at O))
012 A: *the order of [the: suits.]
013 O: [the colors?]
014 A: so like ten of hearts but- and then it's quee::ns but
015 (it's/its) (0.4) which order of queen- cause the clu- like
016 the trumps, aren't jus- there like a- its own trump suit,
*((looks to E))
017 O: *what was suits?
018 E: um- u[m:: u-]=
019 O: [farbe.]=
suits
020 E: =>farbe.<
suits
021 O: ((O nods))

As previously noted, in line 2 Aurora accepts Oberon's offer to provide further game details specifically indicating a desire to review the order of the trump cards. However, she does not complete her turn (and only has a chance to indicate that the order of something should be reviewed) as Todd interrupts in line 3 to initiate repair on her earlier turn. Once that sequence is completed, Aurora returns to her previous turn by repeating, in line 12, 'the order of the: suits.'

Oberon collaboratively completes Aurora's turn by uttering 'the colors?' in overlap with Aurora's production of 'the: suits.'. Aurora in effect sequentially deletes Oberon's turn in line 13 by not acknowledging his candidate completion of her turn and continuing in lines 14-16 to explain the ordering of the trump suits. In line 17, Oberon other-initiates repair on a lexical item Aurora used twice, 'suits' (line 12)/'suit' (line 16). He turns to Eva and asks 'what was suits?'. Recall from Segment 2 that Eva oriented to the fact that she and Oberon are speakers of German through the practice of repair solution through code-switching, specifically through her translation of 'sly' to 'schlau' (Segment 2, line 140). While Oberon did not acknowledge that translation, approximately 90 seconds later in this segment he turns to her for help in understanding this lexical item. In response to Oberon's initiation, Eva produces a word search of her own in line 18 while Oberon self-completes his repair providing the German translation 'farbe' in overlap. Eva finishes her turn by quickly repeating 'farbe', thus confirming Oberon's translation of the word (Betz, Taleghani-Nikazm, Drake, and Golato 2013).

As in the previous example, we see Oberon initiating repair on a lexical item, but this time he specifically requests help from Eva (as indicated by his eye gaze), not from the speaker of the trouble-source. This is atypical in the preference organization of repair (Egbert 1997). By doing so, he assigns a more-knowledgeable English-speaking status to her relative to himself. By addressing Eva, and not Aurora who uttered the trouble-source, he may be making relevant a solution strategy that is available to Eva, but likely not to Aurora: translating the term into German. Recall that Aurora does not accept Oberon's candidate completion of her turn in line 13: Oberon does not understand Aurora's utterance of 'suit/s' and Aurora cannot do anything with his (translation from German) 'colors'. Additionally, Oberon quickly other-completes the repair with the translation 'farbe', thus assigning himself (and his addressee Eva) the category of German speaker. Eva confirms the translation, and in doing so, aligns with Oberon's categorization.

Another segment concerning repair on a lexical item is the following, which is similar to the previous one in that Oberon appeals to Eva for help with a lexical item. However, in this case, he puts his current turn on hold to self-initiate repair by searching for an English translation of the German word *durchbringen* ('to win a trick', line 16).

(4) *Durchbringen*

001 O: .H AND you have to keep in mind that um:
002 (0.6)
*((looks at E))
003 O: what *was: uh- durchbringen?
to win a trick
005 (0.7)
006 O: °you° [you
007 E: [oh to [to uh- [lik-]
008 O: [to [<get] through with a[:>]
009 E: [>to meh-]
010 E: to make a [trick,<]
011 O: [with a]trick,
012 O: >to make a trick< you kno:w?=.hh
*((turning to A))
013 E: *>do you make the trick?<=
014 O: =to bring-
015 (0.2)
016 T: mm:
*((O looks at A))
017 A: *y[ou win a trick.]=
018 O: [if you::]
019 E: =>win a trick,<=
020 O: =win [a trick,]
021 T: [°ahhh yeah.°]
022 (0.2)
023 O: it's difficult to win a trick if you- (.) p- play ↓hearts.

In lines 1-3, we see Oberon initiating a word search by using the token ‘um:’ followed by a pause in line 2 (Schegloff et al. 1977; Egbert 2009). He invites other-completion from Eva by gazing at her (Goodwin 1983) and further appeals for assistance by explicitly asking, ‘what was-durchbringen?’. This assistance is not immediately forthcoming (line 5). After a pause, Oberon begins to self-complete his repair by directly translating into English (lines 6, 8). This is done in overlap with Eva’s beginning of a response to Oberon’s question (an other-completion of Oberon’s word search). Eva drops out and Oberon makes an attempt at a self-completion, but

upon hearing the (non-target-like) formulation ‘get through with a’, Eva corrects with ‘to eh-make a trick.’ Oberon accepts this correction and uses it in his next turn in line 12 as he returns to the explanation put on hold in line 1. However, Eva then chooses to self-initiate repair on her translation by gazing at Aurora and inviting confirmation on her formulation. Aurora other-completes with the corrected ‘you win a trick’, which Eva accepts by repeating the phrase with stress on ‘win’. In line 23, Oberon then accepts this solution by incorporating it into the continuation of the main sequence.

As in the previous examples, we see self- and other-assigning of membership categories through Oberon’s appeal to Eva for a translation of a German verb, although in this case the repair was self-initiated. By inviting Eva to other-complete his word search and providing the German word *durchbringen*, Oberon both self- and other-assigns the membership category of German speaker. In this instance, Oberon again displays an asymmetry in English knowledge/L2 expertise. Eva accepts the categorization as speaker of German by attempting to other-complete his word search with the requested English term. In addition, by correcting Oberon’s translation (line 10), Eva also asserts the membership category of more-knowledgeable speaker of English, in relation to Oberon. However, we also see Eva subsequently appealing to a more-knowledgeable English speaker (and presumably one who has knowledge of a specialized lexicon for card-playing) for confirmation of her translation. Through this move, we also see Eva placing herself into a category with Oberon in that she displays an asymmetry in English knowledge/L2 expertise vis à vis Aurora. This segment highlights the complexity of membership categorization in an interaction. We see that categories of more/less-knowledgeable speaker of language X are not static; instead, they are dynamic and relative to the different participants and participant/epistemic constellations in the interaction. Through their co-construction, these membership categories shift moment-by-moment.

Eva and Oberon are not the only participants to self- and other-assign the membership categories of speaker of German. In the Segment 5, we see Aurora other-assigning Eva to the membership category of speaker of German. Recall from the description of the card game that there are two aces of diamonds in the deck. When a player has one ace of diamonds, it is called a ‘fox’, and when a player has both foxes, it is called ‘piglet.’ At the beginning of this sequence, Oberon is engaged in teaching this rule. To ‘test’ their knowledge, he asks display questions (i.e., he knows the answer) about what it is called when a player has both foxes. The rising intonation

in lines 1, 4, and 6 is used to invite other-completing/other-correction of the turn, a common strategy in pedagogical settings (Seedhouse 2004, 74). After two incorrect responses (lines 3 and 8), Aurora jokingly offers in line 10 ‘the doppel vixen?’ as a non-serious response. She then comments on the word ‘vixen’, identifying and assessing it as ‘the ba:d word’ (lines 19),² and this begins a series of initiated repairs on that lexical item.

(5) Vixen

001 O: and it's called,
002 (0.4)
003 A: °the ↑fox.°
004 O: no, (.) when [you have bo]th?
005 T: [nu::h,]
006 (0.1)
007 O: it's not called the f[oxes?
008 A: [the doppel? (.) the doppel fox?
double double
009 P: hh ha ha [ha ha he he he]
010 A: [the doppel vixen?]
[double]
011 T: [ha ha ha. ha ha]hu hu
012 E: hh [hh ha ha]
013 P: [ha ↑HE HE HE]
[*((smile voice))]
014 O: [*that was ↑too] ea[sy.
015 E,P: [ha: ha ha, ha ha he ha.
016 P: that's- that's uh just [too easy.
017 E: [i don't remember what it's
018 c[alled either]
019 A: [oh. vixen is]n't that's that's a ba:d word.
020 E: yeah. vixen is (the/a) [bad word.]
021 T: [nah, nah tha-] ↑doesn't that mean-]
022 A: [i said the do(h)pp(h)el vixen]
023 A: °↑he he↑°
024 T: doesn't that- m-just mean (.) female fox?

025 [or is that also like,]
 026 A: [*no: but in german does]n't **that m[ean** something]
 027 E: [yeah it just,]
 028 A: really rau:nchy?=
 029 E: =yeah, *well i don't th- **yeah.
 030 (0.2)
 031 E: *[yes it does.]
 032 O: [it's called pi]ggy.
 033 (1.0)
 034 T: a:h yeah that's [right.]
 035 O: [pig] (0.4) <<schweinCHEN.>>
 036 E: oh that, [yeah.
 037 T: [it's called little [pig,
 038 E: *[(E shifts gaze from O to A)]
 039 T: =when you ha(hh)ve huh u [hu
 040 E: [to masturbate, (.) basically,
 041 [yeah.
 042 P: [ha ↑HA HA] HA.
 043 T: [hu hu hu] hu
 044 (0.2)
 045 T: *°what.°=
 046 E: =but, [yeah.
 047 A: [like [WHICH FO]:[RM.]
 048 T: [vixen?] []
 049 E: [wichsen.] yeah.
 050 A: [which FOrm am i us]ing [°when i say that;°]
 051 T: [>oh oh you mean,<] [you mean literally the word
 052 E: [yeah.]
 053 T: [ah >yeah] yeah yeah.<=
 054 E: =but remember m[y problem with like- (.) going]=
 055 T: [i thought you meant like a word for like,]

056 E: =to see the opera?=
057 T: =the cunning [little vixen?]
058 A: [the c(hh)unning? (li-)] and i said
059 that wa[s funny cause <cu:nning>[to me sounds kindof like]=
060 E: [and cu:nning.] []
061 T: [because of cunning? yeah.]
062 A: =cunni[lingus.]
063 E: [yeah.]

In lines 19-20, Aurora assesses the word vixen as ‘that’s the ba:d word.’ Eva immediately confirms this assessment in line 20, but Todd overlaps with Eva’s response in lines 21 and 24, disagreeing and offering a candidate definition/understanding for confirmation, in which he offers that the word ‘vixen’ in English is simply a term to refer to a female fox. Aurora maintains her assessment by overlapping with Todd in line 26 and turning to Eva to seek support from her to confirm that ‘vixen’ can indeed be considered a ‘bad word’ in German. In overlap, Eva provides confirmation ‘yeah it just,’ and then again at the completion of Aurora’s turn ‘yeah.’ She then turns to Oberon while saying ‘well, i don’t-’ and gestures to him with an open hand, as if electing him next speaker. It is possible that here, Eva is appealing to Oberon as a speaker of German, to also confirm Aurora’s assessment. However, Oberon could potentially view this gesture as a go-ahead to return to the earlier work of explaining the game. Regardless of how he interpreted the gesture, Oberon’s next turn (line 32) provides the correct answer to his earlier display question in overlap with Eva’s re-confirmation of Aurora’s assessment (line 31).

Through these turns, we see Aurora orienting to the relevance of language (and the interactional situation as multilingual) through her shift from Todd to Eva in line 26; and to Eva’s membership status as a (more-knowledgeable) German speaker with the authority to confirm her assertion that ‘vixen’ can be considered a ‘bad word’ in German. By appealing to Eva for confirmation, Aurora assigns herself the category of non-expert-German speaker. Aurora, not being a speaker of German, does not have the authority to claim on her own that ‘vixen’ is a ‘bad word’ in German. Eva aligns with Aurora’s categorization of her as speaker of German by confirming Aurora’s assertion and also potentially seeks support from the other German speaker in the room, Oberon.

In line 32, Oberon provides the answer to his original question (uttered in line 4): ‘it’s called piggy.’ After a pause, Todd orients to Oberon’s action by claiming to remember ‘a:h yeah’. In line 36, Eva also registers Oberon’s solution, but rejects his attempt to return to his original question by continuing (line 38) with the discussion of ‘vixen’. She offers a translation of what it would mean in German: ‘to masturbate, basically’ (lines 40). Todd other-initiates repair in lines 45 and 48 on Eva’s translation by producing the candidate understanding ‘vixen?’, which he offers for confirmation. She utters ‘wichsen’ with falling intonation and the confirmation ‘yeah.’ Todd uses the change of state tokens ‘oh oh’ and explains his confusion (and disagreement that ‘vixen’ is not a ‘bad word’) with ‘you mean literally the word yeah yeah yeah yeah.’ In line 55, he attempts to explain his earlier confusion by starting ‘i thought you meant like- a word=for like’, but abandons this course of action as he drops out of the overlap with both Aurora and Eva and joins the ongoing conversation by providing (line 57) the name of the opera. Thus, in this segment, Todd initially self-assigns the category of more-knowledgeable speaker of English by offering a candidate understanding of ‘vixen’ and other-initiating repair on Eva’s claim that it means ‘to masturbate’. In doing so, he simultaneously questions Aurora’s assessment and Eva’s confirmation of it, and thus, their claims of knowledge about this lexical item. However, through his use of the change of state token ‘oh oh’ and repeated ‘yeah’s’, he claims to have gone from a not-knowing to knowing recipient of the alternative German definition, thus abandoning the relevance of his self-assignment of the category of more-knowledgeable English speaker and accepting their claims of knowledge about the word. In this example, we have seen a situation where there are (temporarily) competing membership categorizations that result from sequential misalignment.

The final example presented also contains an other-initiated repair on a lexical item similar to Segments 2 (‘cunning’) and 3 (‘farbe’). However, in this example, it is Aurora who initiates the repair sequence. Prior to the beginning of Segment 6, Todd has asked Eva if German speakers use or have a word like ‘cunnilingus’.

(6) Cunnilingus

*((looking down))

*((gaze shift to O))

001 E: *cunili- ((german pronunciation)) *do you can you say
002 cunilingus? ((german pronunciation))
003 O: i don't actually know what that is,
004 (0.2)
005 T: a:h.=
006 O: =nobody wants [to-
007 T: [it's like [it's,
008 P: [°i guess not.°
009 T: oral sex.
010 O: ok[ay.
011 P: [yeah.
012 A: [but ONLY on a girl.
013 (.)
014 O: [<i see.>]
015 T: [yeah. perfor]med (.) [upon a woman.]
016 E: [because it has lingus] [in it.]
017 T: [yeah,]or
018 °something like that°=
*((eye gaze directed at E))
019 A: *what's lingus.
020 (0.2)
021 T: ↑tongue,=
022 P: =↑tongue.
023 (0.6)
*((eye gaze directed at E))
024 A: *like [() lingua?]
025 E: [mother tongue]
026 T: ye::ah.
027 E: lingua franca, lingua[:
028 A: [ling(hh)ua fra(hh)nca,
029 E: and stuff like that yeah that's all (it),

The work being done in Segment 6 involves defining and explaining the word 'cunnilingus', an action Oberon initiates in line 3 with his claim 'i don't actually know what that is,'. Todd and Aurora provide the completions in lines 7, 9, 12 and 15. Eva adds to Aurora's 'but only on a girl' by explaining 'because it has lingus in it'. In line 19, Aurora other-initiates repair on the trouble

source 'lingus' (line 16). In lines 21-22 Todd and Pat provide the other completions 'tongue' to which Aurora produces a candidate understanding 'like lengua?', which she directs at Eva, who uttered the trouble source turn. Just like in the previous example ('vixen'), we see other-initiated repair on a lexical item, and just like in Segment 3 ('cunning'), we see the other participants in the interaction providing other-completions to define the word. But, how do we label the linguistic membership categories that are being assigned/invoked in these turns?

As noted in Hosoda (2002), NS-NS interactions also contain other-repair on vocabulary items, but differ in the type of trouble source (e.g., technical terms, proverbs). The previous example seems to corroborate this finding, if we consider 'lingus' to be a technical term. But again, this classification introduces an etic perspective. In addition, Hosoda discusses how participants in NS-NNS interactions do 'nativeness/expert' or 'non-nativeness/novice', but does not discuss what categories/labels would be appropriate for the NS-NS interactions. We are confronted with the same problem in this example. The lexical item is a Latin root of the English word 'cunnilingus'. It would be inappropriate to say that Aurora is doing being a non-native speaker of Latin or English. It would also be problematic to define Aurora's membership category in terms of being a novice speaker of English (considering the fact that the word novice refers to a beginner and here we seem to be dealing with a specific type of knowledge about one's language, namely an etymology). Instead, it seems the most appropriate label to describe her membership status in this moment in the interaction is 'less-knowledgeable about the etymology of an English word'.

This example was included to demonstrate that the same devices are used by NS and NNS participants to indicate problems with understanding and their appeals to the more-knowledgeable speakers in the interaction to remedy those problems. It shows that using terms like NS and NNS (or even expert/novice speaker) cannot sufficiently capture the complexities of how these membership categories are co-constructed in interaction on a moment-by-moment basis. The analysis in this section has shown that repairs concerning specific lexical items of a language can be better understood by appealing to categories of relative knowledge and sometimes specific types of knowledge.

3. *Summary and concluding discussion*

By examining the use of other-initiated repair and its resolution in the previous segments, we have seen one way in which continually shifting linguistic membership categories are co-constructed. These linguistic membership categories are not static; rather, they are dynamic. We have also seen how these membership categories relate to differing amounts (and types) of knowledge about a language. For example, Oberon, a ‘NNS’, assigns himself to the category of less-knowledgeable speaker of English. Eva, also a ‘NNS’ by SLA terms, assigns herself to both more- and less-knowledgeable speaker of English in relation to her co-participants (which include NNS *and* NSs of English). Finally, Segments 4 and 6 exemplify how different types of knowledge (e.g., specialized card-playing vocabulary and etymological information about words) contribute to talking these categories into existence. In the case of Segment 6, Aurora, a ‘NS’, gains knowledge from her ‘NNS’ co-participants about the etymology of an English word.

In this sense, then, other-initiated repair is used as one device available to participants to self- and other-assign linguistic membership categories throughout the talk-in-interaction while simultaneously managing problems in speaking, hearing and understanding. Similar to Maheux-Pelletier and Golato (2008), who showed how repair is used to establish, confirm and insist upon membership to a particular linguistic category, and Taleghani-Nikazm (2015), who showed that repair is a device to orient to membership in an L2 Community of Practice, other-initiated repair can be used as a device to accomplish multiple goals. In the current work, we also see other-initiated repair being used as a device to accomplish two goals simultaneously; specifically, to attend to a trouble-source while additionally self-/other-assigning linguistic membership categories.

We have also seen that differing amounts and types of knowledge are relevant to the creation and maintenance of linguistic membership categories. Along the lines of the analysis of members of an L2 Community of Practice set forth by Taleghani-Nikazm (2015), the current analysis can also be viewed in the larger context of situated learning (Lave and Wenger 1991) as participants’ knowledge asymmetries (about both the card game and the languages they speak) are made relevant in their initiation and resolution of repair sequences, which act as a device in the co-construction of their linguistic membership categories. The current findings are also in line with recent discussions at the intersection of the fields of Psychology, Sociology, and Linguistics concerning epistemics in interaction (Heritage 2013; Raymond and Heritage 2006).

Raymond and Heritage (2006), for example, argued that “the management of rights to knowledge...can be a resource for invoking identity in interaction” (2006, 680). Heritage (2013) explained that “since personal and social identities are also formed from what persons have experienced and can lay claim to have access to and to know...the epistemic claims that are enacted in turns-at-talk are central to the management and maintenance of identity itself” (2013, 371). The analysis set forth in this work corroborates these claims and provides additional evidence for the relationship between epistemics and identity formation/maintenance, specifically here, with regard to linguistic membership categories.

The findings from this paper also support previous research which has called into question the categorization of participants as NS/NNS (Carroll 2000; Firth and Wagner 1997; Hosoda 2000, 2002; Kasper 2004; Wong and Olsher 2000). These data illustrate the complexity of linguistic membership categories by demonstrating that different levels and types of knowledge are invoked in instances of repair on specific lexical items. Specifically, they demonstrate how speakers orient to having gradient levels (and types) of knowledge about a language and the resources they use to accomplish this. These findings also raise questions about the relationship between amounts and types of knowledge and our understanding of the construction of expert/novice categories.

The goal of this paper has been to show how speakers exploit repair at specific interactional points to construct a variety of linguistic membership categories related to levels and types of knowledge and to demonstrate that binary categories like NS and NNS are insufficient labels for the complicated reality of identity construction. I have demonstrated how an analysis of other-initiated repair can provide insights into how participants co-construct membership categories on a moment-by-moment basis. We have seen that identities are continuously shifting and contingent upon the interactional context, topics, and co-participants.

Notes:

1. To better understand how the interaction in Segment 2 relates to learning the card game, it is helpful to recall that the ace of diamonds is called a 'fox', and when a player has both foxes it is called a 'piglet'. When Oberon asks the others what having two foxes is called, one guess offered is 'vixen' (see Segment 5), which ultimately leads to a discussion of the opera *The Cunning Little Vixen*.
2. The word 'vixen' in English sounds similar to a German vulgar word for masturbating, *wichsen*. As becomes apparent in the data, Aurora and Eva have had a previous conversation about this, which explains Aurora's assessment that 'vixen' is a bad word in German.

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