The body as a resource for other-initiation of repair: 
Cupping the hand behind the ear

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Abstract

This paper analyzes how the human body serves as a resource for other-initiation of repair. It describes how a hand gesture, a cupped hand behind the ear, is oriented to as a repair initiation in a foreign language classroom. The gesture typically occurs in the absence of speech and is treated as a hearing problem. The paper argues that 'hearing' does not refer to the acoustic reception, but rather to the recipient's hearing as displayed conduct and relates to the recipient's lack of displayed orientation to the speaker during the trouble source turn. When the repair initiation is accomplished by co-occurring speech and gesture the speech specifically marks the trouble as not a hearing problem. Data in English as a second language.

Introduction

It would be difficult to deny that the human body provides a core resource for participants to draw on in sense-making practices in social interaction. In co-present face-to-face interaction, participants are in constant movement with gestures, eye movement, postural configurations and other bodily conduct being occasioned across stretches of interaction (e.g., Streeck, Goodwin, & LeBaron, 2011). Although it may reasonably be claimed that some may not have been produced to serve interactional functions – but rather physiological (e.g., blinking) or psychological (e.g., self-grooms) – anything can, in principle, creatively be turned into a meaningful resource in and for intersubjective understanding (Goodwin, 2013; Streeck, 1996, 2011, 2013). From an emic perspective, then, it is inherently an analytic question when a gesture or other bodily conduct is used systematically and recognizably as a resource for designing social action (Hazel, Mortensen, & Rasmussen, 2014).

This paper analyzes how participants in foreign language classrooms orient to bodily conduct.
conduct – typically in the absence of co-occurring verbal and vocal conduct – as a method for other initiation of repair. It focuses on one particular hand gesture, which I will refer to as ‘cupping the hand behind the ear’ (or ‘cupping the hand’ in short; see figures a and b).

Perceptually, the cupping hand resembles a manual, non-technical hearing-aid such as the ear trumpet, which ‘captures’ the sound waves and leads them to the ear. The cupping hand gesture may acoustically work in a similar way. Indeed, this seems to be supported by research in acoustics where Stephens & Goodwin (1984) refer to this gesture as a “non-electric aid to hearing”, and Barr-Hamilton (1983) shows how the gesture provides a “significant amplification effect in the mid-frequency range” (p. 29). The gesture is also frequently used in more symbolic ways: in recent years the gesture has become a common practice for football players having scored a goal – as a celebration towards the crowd (or the football player himself?) (see figure c). And for pop stars to animate the cheering audience (further) during live performances (see figure d). Or as a way to signal stance and disbelief as reported by the soccer manager Sam Allardyce from West Ham, who after his team (‘unjustly’ according to the manager) had been booed off the pitch in anger and frustration by the crowd cupped his hand behind his ear and later explained his gesture to The Independent: “I did it because I was hearing boooing. I couldn’t quite believe it” (Peach, 2014).
The common understanding of the cupping hand as an aid to enhance hearing seems so well-defined that in 2006 it was built into a design and applied for a patent in the US (McCool, 2006). The design resembles two hands, which are attached to a headband, and is worn like a pair of earphones. It can then be worn whenever one wants to enhance the “listening experience” (p. 1) during for instance live concerts, theater and lectures. The reflectors, i.e. the hands, are even in physical “contact [with] the bones of the face and jaw to induce sounds vibrations therein” (p. 1). The current status of the design, however, remains a secret.

Despite its acoustic capacities and what seems to be a highly conventionalized understanding of the gesture it has not yet been described how the gesture is systematically used as an interactional resource, that is, how the gesture is used and understood by participants in everyday courses of action. Methodologically, this paper relies on ethnomethodological conversation analysis (EM/CA) in order to analyze how participants use the cupping hand gesture as a resource for sense-making in social interaction (cf. e.g., Goodwin, 2003a, 2003b; Heath & Luff, 2011; Streeck, 2008, 2009). The paper draws on approximately 20 hours of video recorded foreign language classroom interaction with beginners – A1 and A2 in the Common European Framework of Reference for Language – of English in Luxembourg. The corpus involves three different
classrooms; one from a public language learning center with about 15 students and two from a private one with 3 and 5 students, respectively. The recordings were made with three cameras – one in the back of the classroom facing the teacher and two in the front facing the students. After repeated viewings of the recordings, segments have been selected and transcribed in terms of verbal/vocal and bodily conduct.

Based on the initial observation that the human body in various ways can serve as a resource for other initiation of repair (Mortensen, 2012), this paper focuses on a collection of 50 cases in which the cupping hand gesture is used to initiate repair. Whereas some bodily conducts for initiating repair are used by teachers and students alike (Mortensen, 2012, see also Seo & Koshik, 2010), the cupping hand is primarily but not exclusively used by one of the teachers. This suggests that although the cupping hand is a recognized practice for doing repair initiations (see Day, 2012) some participants may opt for this turn design as opposed to other (more or less) similar formats. However, cupping the hand as a way to initiate repair is quite frequent in this teacher: in the course of 6 lessons of approximately 1 ½ hour, a total of around 6 ½ hours of recording, the cupping hand gesture was used to initiate repair 47 times. As such, although the gesture is recognizable as a repair initiation, it might be idiosyncratic of this particular teacher.

This paper will show how the gesture is used as a systematic method for other-initiation of repair, which in situ is treated as a hearing problem and bears a resemblance with ‘open’ class repair initiations (Drew, 1997). I argue, however, that ‘hearing’ does not refer to the acoustic reception of the prior turn, but rather with participants’ embodied participation framework (e.g., Goodwin, 2000) during the production of (what is retrospectively defined as) the trouble source turn, and the cupped hand as a stand-alone gesture is accompanied by a visual reorientation through gaze and postural orientation towards the speaker of the trouble source turn.²

² In addition, sometimes the gesture is produced by leaning slightly forward and/or turning or tilting the head slightly to the side. Although this certainly is important, the current paper, for reasons of space, will focus on the cupping hand gesture and its relation to postural reorientation.
The first extract serves to demonstrate the sequential environment in which the gesture occurs and how participants display their understanding of it in the unfolding of the interaction.

**Extract 1**

01 Teacher: .tsk ↑André
02 (1.4)
03 André: kh khh ((coughs))
04 (1.6)
05 Teacher: who is Phii’s (.) sister’s °son°

((16 lines omitted))

06 Teacher: André you don’t remember
07 (9.4)
08 Teacher: it was the:: the picture with the family
09 (2.7)
10 Teacher: ow you have it (th-) ah ye:s okay=
11 Camilla: =#ne:phew

fig. #1.1
12 #+(.) +(0.7) ((0.8))

Te_gaz: +turns gaze towards Camilla
Te_ges: +right hand to right ear
Te_mov: +leans slightly forward

fig. #1.2
13 Camilla: #↑nephew

fig. #1.3
14 Teacher: +>good<

Te_gaz: +withdraws gaze from Camilla
Te_ges: +retracts gesture

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3 Names and other personal information have been anonymized and images have been edited. In the transcripts, screen shots from several cameras are provided so that for instance fig. 2 and 2a are from the different videos at the same time. This procedure follows throughout this paper.

Transcription of bodily conduct is based on Mondada (e.g., 2012) and is assigned to participants with ‘ges’, ‘gaz’ and ‘mov’ to indicate gesture, gaze and (other bodily) movements, respectively.
In extract 1, the class is discussing family relations, which the teacher draws and expands on the board step by step in the form of a family tree. The teacher selects André to answer the next question (lines 1 to 5), and after several prompts (not in transcript) and clues (McHoul, 1990) as to when the topic was discussed and which picture it belonged to (line 8), another student, Camilla, self-selects and provides a second pair-part (line 11). Her turn is latched to the teacher’s turn, and is produced by slightly stretching the initial vowel. After a micro pause (line 12), the teacher produces a cupping hand gesture: he raises his right hand to his right ear, and leans slightly forward as he torques the upper body towards Camilla. Immediately after the gesture has reached its stroke (Kendon, 1980), Camilla repeats her prior turn (line 13) with high pitch (cf. Curl, 2005). In line 14, the teacher makes a positive assessment of her turn while retracting the gesture and turning the gaze away from Camilla.

In this paper, I will unpack and expand some initial observations from the first extract. Firstly, here as well as throughout the collection the gesture occurs in a transition relevant position following a student’s turn-at-talk. In extract 1, Camilla has produced what can be heard as a candidate answer to the teacher’s question. As such, the cupping hand occupies what Schegloff (2007: 148ff.) refers to as a non-minimal post-expansion. Secondly, the gesture is produced as a responsive action that is treated as dealing with and relevant to the immediate prior turn. Camilla’s turn is a second pair-part as an answer to the teacher’s question, which in the classroom context makes a follow-up turn by the teacher relevant – typically an assessment or a prompt for the student to self-repair. Thirdly, the gesture is retracted immediately after Camilla’s repetition in line 13 and in overlap with the teacher’s assessment. Sequentially, the cupping hand gesture can
be described as a repair initiation that treats the prior turn as somehow problematic, and in and through Camilla’s repetition of her prior turn she orients to the gesture as indexing a hearing problem.

**Repair organization**

Conversation analysis (CA) has a long and well-known tradition for describing social practices for dealing with troubles of speaking, hearing and understanding (e.g., Hayashi, Raymond, & Sidnell, 2013b; Schegloff, 1992, 2000; Schegloff, Jefferson, & Sacks, 1977). This line of research distinguishes on the one hand between repair initiation and repair outcome, and on the other hand between who initiates and accomplishes the repair – the speaker (‘self’) of what is treated as a trouble source or ‘other’. The repair may occur in several sequential positions relative to the trouble source: immediately following the trouble source (i.e. in ‘mid turn’), after the turn constructional unit (TCU) that contains the trouble source, in a next-turn position, or in the turn following the co-participant’s turn after the trouble source. These positions are structurally ordered in such a way that the speaker of the trouble source has the first sequential opportunity for locating and repairing the trouble source, respectively. There is, thus, a preference for self-repair over other-repair (Schegloff et al., 1977).

Other initiations of repair overwhelmingly occur in the turn following the TCU that contains the trouble source (Schegloff, 2000). This is referred to as next-turn repair initiation. Besides the sequential position, next-turn repair initiations can be designed in various ways in order to locate the trouble source as well as to indicate what kind of trouble is being alluded to – hearing or understanding (e.g., Mazeland, 1986). Such practices include (partial or full) repeats, interrogatives such as who, when and where and phrases such as what do you mean and the like. In addition, Drew (1997) describes so-called ‘open’ class repair initiations like huh?, what? and sorry?. They are open in the sense that they do not specify which aspect of the prior turn is treated as problematic.

The relation between turn design and the kind of trouble being addressed has received substantial attention in the prior literature. In relation to ‘open’ class repair initiations, the
analysis of what kind of trouble is being alluded to rests on the speaker of the trouble source turn. In this sense, ‘open’ class repair initiations do not specify the responsibility of the trouble source. Recent studies, however, describe how prosodic features in ‘open’ class repair initiations play a key role in indexing the trouble type (M. Egbert, Golato, & Robinson, 2009; Hayashi & Kim, in press). Robinson (2006) suggests that other-initiated repair is biased towards placing responsibility of the trouble on the speaker of the trouble source and that certain ‘apology-based’ ‘open’ class repair initiation formats – such as I’m sorry? – work specifically to place the responsibility on the speaker of the repair initiation. Svennevig (2008) has observed a preference for orienting to the least sensitive solution before more complicated ones, that is, for addressing a problem as a hearing problem before treating it as an understanding problem. This suggests that if the repair initiation does not specify the kind of trouble the participant is having, the speaker of the trouble source will treat the repair initiation as a hearing problem before an understanding problem.

‘Open’ class repair initiations are often followed by a (verbatim or partial) repeat of the trouble source turn whereby the speaker of the trouble source turn treats the trouble source as a hearing problem (Couper-Kuhlen, 1992; Enfield et al., 2013; Hayashi & Kim, in press; Hayashi, Raymond, & Sidnell, 2013a; although see Schegloff, 1997; Schegloff, 2004). Curl (2005) describes repairs in the form of (verbatim) repetitions of the trouble source turn. Following Drew (1997) she describes how the repetition repair is phonetically marked, e.g., through loudness or expanded pitch range in cases where the trouble source was (sequentially and topically) fitted whereas in cases where the trouble source was ‘disjunct’ they are not. Her analysis shows how what may be treated as a hearing problem ‘on the surface’ (Curl, 2005: 40) is tiedly connected with the sequential organization and fittedness of the trouble source turn.

In second/foreign language classroom interaction research repair has been a frequent topic not the least as psycholinguistic approaches to second language acquisition see repair and corrections more generally as a way for learners to get comprehensible input and thereby directly related to the learning process (see e.g., Gass, 1997). Conversation analytic approaches to classroom interaction has argued that repair organization reflects and is reflected by the
pedagogical focus (Seedhouse, 2004). For instance, in pedagogical activities that focus on linguistic forms the teacher may initiate repair on students’ turns although they are grammatically correct and shaped to the sequential environment if the turn does not meet the pedagogical focus (e.g., to produce a ‘complete sentence’ or a particular linguistic form). This suggests that the repair trajectories are different depending on the pedagogical focus of the activity (see also Kasper, 1985; McHoul, 1990). Such repair initiations are frequently positioned in the turn following the student’s response to the teacher’s elicitation and are embedded in the instructional (classroom) sequence of the IRF-format originally described by Sinclair and Coulthard (1975). As such, classroom repair in a post expansion position has often been described as being a case of ‘correction’, in a non-CA sense of the word, rather than mere repairs (see Hall, 2007; Macbeth, 2004). Seedhouse (2004) notes that in form-and-accuracy contexts ‘open’ class repair initiations might be less ‘appropriate’ than in meaning-and-fluency contexts as they don’t locate the trouble source and “do not even indicate the presence of a linguistic error” (Seedhouse, 2004: 162). He concludes that “[t]he use of open class repair initiators by the listener may therefore actually imply to the speaker that some form of trouble other than a linguistic error has occurred” (ibid., emphasis added). However, in the language classroom anything can be treated as a problem of the linguistic or pedagogical form and as such even repair initiations that do not index a linguistic or pedagogical problem may lead to linguistic/pedagogic changes in the repair turn.

With the growing acknowledgement of the role of bodily conduct as essential for sense-making in face-to-face social interaction (see e.g., Deppermann, 2013a; Goodwin, 2013; Hazel et al., 2014; Streeck et al., 2011 for recent discussions), a range of studies has described participants’ use of gesture, gaze and other bodily conduct in repair sequences in everyday conversation. Egbert (1996) describes how the German repair initiation bitte? seeks to establish mutual gaze. Rasmussen (2014) describes how speakers in lengthy repair sequences lean forward during the production of reformulations of the (initial) repair initiation, in what she describes as a method for quite literally “coming closer to an understanding” (p. 31). Learning forward has also been found as a resources for dealing with repair in interactions between participants with a hearing loss (Pajo & Klippi, 2013). Similarly, in a auto-biographical paper, Day (2012) describes the cupping hand gesture as a recognized practice to increase the receptive capacity by people with hearing
loss. In educational (second language) settings, Olsher (2008) discusses gestures in the repair turn as enhancing intersubjectivity. Kääntä (2010) and Seo (2011) describe how teachers rely on various resources such as talk, the body and material objects in repair sequences. More recently, Kääntä, Lilja and Piirainen-March (forth.) describe how other repair initiations can be multimodal packages composed of material from various semiotic resources (here: talk, the body and material and technological artifacts), and how such multimodal constructs work in various settings – everyday conversation between native and non-native speakers, classroom interaction and technology-mediated activities. Additionally, Seo and Koshik (2010) describe how two body postures, the head poke and the head tilt, can be used to initiate repair. The present paper strongly builds on Seo and Koshik’s findings, but the social practice, as well as the (‘embodied’) resource, presented here is different in at least one important aspect: whereas the gestural repair initiations described by Seo and Koshik are treated as a problem of understanding, this study reports on repair initiations that are oriented to as a problem of hearing.

The cupping hand as a repair initiation

The cupping hand gesture is most frequently produced without co-occurring speech (although, see below). For participants, this means that the gesture is not accompanied with a verbal indication of how the gesture relates to the prior action, how it is to be understood nor which next-action it makes relevant. However, looking at how participants treat the gesture reveals an orientation to the gesture as a first pair-part (a repair initiation), which makes a certain type of second pair-part conditionally relevant (a repair).

Extract 2

01 Camilla: where *does* (1.1) where does she do:?
02 Teacher: what does she ↓do (.) my [wife=
03 Camilla: [yes
04 Teacher: =she re↑lax[es
05 Camilla: [↑oh:::
06 (1.2)
07 Camilla: ( ) la chance
08 ()
09 André: it’s very "good"
10 Teacher: it’s very good for [he:r but for me: [it’s Hhhhh
11 Camilla: [very good
12 Sabine: [no work.
In extract 2, the teacher is joking about the ‘hard work’ of having a wife. This is part of a meaning-and-fluency exercise in which the students describe what they do after work, and just prior to the extract the teacher jokingly says that he has two jobs – the professional job as a language teacher and as a husband. In line 9 André makes an assessment, which is followed by an upgraded second assessment (Pomerantz, 1984) by the teacher in line 10. In line 12, Sabine self-selects and initiates a turn in overlap with the teacher. The teacher turns the gaze towards her and after a 0.6 second pause he raises the left hand to the left ear and makes a cupping hand gesture. As in extract 1, the student produces a repeat of her prior turn following the stroke of the gesture and orients to the gesture as a repair initiation that makes a repair conditionally relevant. The repair is produced with a change in prosody (see figures e and f): whereas the trouble source turn is produced with falling intonation the repair is produced in a lower volume and with raising intonation, which makes it recognizable as a request for confirmation.
Whereas in most cases the cupping hand gesture follows a student’s second pair part, in extract 2, it follows a first pair part and thus turns the repair sequence into an insertion sequence (Schegloff, 1972). As observed by Svennevig (2008) in extract 2 we see how participants orient to a ‘hierarchy’ of different repair initiation formats: the first repair initiation, the cupping hand gesture in line 13, is followed by a repeat in overlap with a second repair initiation this time verbally – thereby treating the repair initiation as a problem of hearing – and the third, as her repeat in line 14 does not receive an uptake by the teacher she repairs the trouble source by changing the turn design (line 17). As such, the student starts out by treating the cupping hand gesture as orienting to a hearing problem before treating it as a linguistic/pedagogical problem and/or a problem of understanding.

Extracts 1 and 2 show that the students orient to the gesture as (i) dealing with their prior turn, that is, they display an understanding of the gesture as a turn that orients to the students’ prior turn, (ii) initiating repair. And (iii), through a repeat of their prior turn they treat the gesture as displaying a problem of hearing.

The repair sequences I describe in this paper are other-initiated self-repairs. The resources through which other-initiated repairs are initiated constitute first pair-parts and the repair sequence is therefore organized as an adjacency pair (Schegloff, 2007: 101). In the conversation analytic literature, one of the criteria for treating some action as a first pair-part in an adjacency
pair is that it makes a second pair-part *conditionally* relevant in the next-turn (Schegloff, 1968; Schegloff & Sacks, 1973). Consequentially, when what can be understood as a second pair-part does not occur in the next turn – or another action that can be seen in relation to the first pair-part such as another first pair-part (Schegloff, 2007, cpt. 6) – it is seen as noticeably absent and accountable. In extract 3, the repair turn does not follow immediately after the stroke of the gesture and the teacher treats this as problematic.

**Extract 3**

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01</td>
<td>Teacher: Sabine number eleven i:s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02</td>
<td>(6.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03</td>
<td>Sabine: (he- he’s ea+sy)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04</td>
<td>(0.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>05</td>
<td>Sabine: no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06</td>
<td>Teacher: mmm[mm eat] <em>eh:</em> e+asy was number five eh,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07</td>
<td>Sabine: [+hight]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08</td>
<td>(0.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09</td>
<td>Sabine: <em>(hight?)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Teacher: o+retracts gesture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Teacher: o:sorryo?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>(0.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Teacher: &lt;h:i:gh&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>(0.5) +(0.7) ((1.2))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Teacher: o+kay (. ) high</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 3.**
Here the teacher selects Sabine to answer the next question, which refers to describing the next picture on the handout (line 1) by providing the relevant adjective. In line 3 she produces a candidate answer, but rejects it after a 0.8 second pause. In overlap with the teacher’s negation token (line 6), she produces another candidate answer (line 7). Once the teacher arrives at a possible completion of his turn, an account for the negative evaluation (line 6), in line 9 she repeats the answer she just produced in overlap with the teacher and which he didn’t orient to in his prior turn. After 1.0 second the teacher produces a cupping hand gesture. At this point, however, Sabine is gazing into the textbook and may therefore not be able to see the teacher’s gesture. What follows is not a repair by Sabine, but another repair initiation by the teacher, this time verbally in the form of an ‘open’ class repair initiation, a *sorry* produced in a soft voice. He thus orients to the noticeable absence of a repair. Again the repair turn is noticeably absent, and in line 13 the teacher produces an emphatically pronounced candidate understanding of Sabine’s turn. In this way, the teacher retrospectively defines the cupping hand as a repair initiation, which makes a repair conditionally relevant and which orients to a problem of hearing, or rather, not hearing ‘good enough’ in order to provide a (pedagogical) evaluation of the relevant lexical item after the student’s response (cf. Schegloff, 2007: 151).

What the first extracts show is that (i) participants orient to the gesture as a repair initiation, which (ii) makes a repair in the next-turn conditionally relevant. And (iii), that the cupping hand is understood as indexing a hearing problem. In this way, it demonstrates participants’ understanding of the gesture, that is, it provides an *emic* perspective of the gesture as producing a specific social action.

*‘Hearing’ as displayed recipiency*

As discussed above, ‘open’ class repair initiation do not index the type of problem or locate the trouble source. They are, however, often treated as a hearing problem – at least before treating it as a problem of understanding. Obviously, whether someone has actually heard the prior turn or not is not available to neither the co-participant(s) nor the analyst, so the description of something as a hearing problem refers to how participant treat the repair initiation. Svennevig (2008) argues that the strength of ‘open’ class repair initiation lies in the ambiguity of what it treats as
problematic. He writes: “The very fact that they signal insufficient hearing is the reason why they are useful as part of a systematic procedure for addressing delicate problems in a way that avoids bringing the sensitive issue to the surface. However, these initiators do provide for the possibility that hearing repair will solve the problem” (Svennevig, 2008: 346). In the context of the language classroom, the use of ‘open’ class repair initiations may be a (‘strategic’, ‘pedagogic’) way for teachers not to specify and locate the trouble source thereby letting the student of the prior turn analyze what might have been problematic. And, potentially, change the format of the trouble source turn according to the linguistic form or pedagogical fit with the ongoing activity.

Throughout the collection, the trouble source turns are generally very short – most often consisting of just one or two words – and can be described as either lexical or clausal/phrasal TCUs (Sacks, Schegloff, & Jefferson, 1974). At the same time, they are typically produced with marked second language production and/or low volume or may in other ways be problematic in terms of pronunciation. In these cases, the trouble source can be seen to be related to the acoustic reception of the trouble source turn – what we might gloss as a ‘real’ hearing problem. In extract 4, the teacher has initially asked Sabine how many hours she works per day and this results in a very long repair sequence. As the extract begins, the teacher has now segmented the initial question to ‘what time do you start in the morning’.

Extract 4

01 Teacher: *Sabine*
02 (0.6)
03 Sabine: “yes”
04 (0.5)
05 Sabine: Hhh
06 Teacher: what time do you start in the morning
07 (2.1)

((16 lines omitted))

08 Teacher: what time do you start
09 (0.3)
10 Sabine: start
11 (2.0)
12 Teacher: what time do you begin
13 (6.0) +(5.8) ((11.8))
After a lengthy repair sequence and several prompts by the teacher he writes ‘what time do you start’ on the board in line 13 and then turns around and gazes towards Sabine as he reads aloud what he has just written (line 16). After a 3.3 second pause Sabine starts to count quietly
During her counting, the teacher redirects his attention to the board, and adds a question mark to the sentence he just wrote. Sabine highlights the turn-final lexical item *neite* as a second pair-part to the teacher’s question by increasing the volume and prosodically stressing the word (cf. Mortensen, 2011). The pronunciation of the lexical item, however, is problematic: although it may – in particular in the context of publically available counting – be recognizable as *nine* the pronunciation is markedly non-standard. Following Sabine’s second pair-part, the teacher turns his torso and gaze from the board towards Sabine (line 19), and cups his right hand behind his right ear (fig. 2a). This is followed by a repair (line 20), which in extract 4 includes a substitution of the problematic lexical item from ‘*neite*’ to ‘*neine*’.

Besides the problematic pronunciation of the trouble source turn we noted that the teacher is gazing at the board (and thus not at Sabine, the speaker) during the trouble source turn (fig. 1a). He is thereby not engaged in an embodied participation framework (Goodwin, 2000) with the speaker. However, following the second pair-part the turns the gaze and torso towards her (line 19) just prior to the cupping hand gesture. This suggest that what is treated as problematic does not, or does not only, refer to the non-normative linguistic production of the student’s turn, but rather to the sequential position of the turn and its disalignment with the current participation framework (cf. M. M. Egbert, 1996). The same postural and gaze reorientation occurs in extract 2, here reprinted as extract 5

### Extract 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Camilla:</th>
<th>Teacher:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01</td>
<td><em>where</em> <em>does</em> (1.1) <em>where does she do:</em>?</td>
<td><em>what does she</em> ↑do (.) <em>my</em> [wife=</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03</td>
<td>Camilla:</td>
<td>Teacher:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04</td>
<td>↑she re↑lax[es</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>05</td>
<td>Camilla:</td>
<td></td>
<td>↑oh:::</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06</td>
<td>(1.2)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07</td>
<td>Camilla:</td>
<td>André:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08</td>
<td>(.)</td>
<td><em>it’s very</em> “good”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09</td>
<td>Teacher:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>↑it’s very good for [he:er but for me: [it’s Hhhhh</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Camilla:</td>
<td></td>
<td>very good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
<td>Sabine:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>[no work.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Te_gaz:* +turns gaze towards Sabine
*Te_ges:* +raises left hand to left ear
Overlapping talk risks not being heard and may be treated as problematic and hence repaired (Schegloff, 1987). What constitutes the trouble source turn in line 12 is produced in overlap with the teacher’s protracted outbreath, which he produces as part of an embodied turn-completion by leaning slightly forward and turning the head slightly to the side (cf. Ford, Thompson, & Drake, 2012; Keevallik, 2013; Olsher, 2004). But in addition, it is produced while the teacher is addressing another student, André, and as the trouble source turn is produced he is gazing towards him and thus away from Camilla. Only after Camilla’s turn does the teacher turn the gaze towards her. And after his gaze reaches Camilla he produces a cupping hand gesture. Goodwin’s seminal (1981) study shows a preference for hearer’s gaze towards the speaker during turn-beginnings and resources such as restarts and hesitations for managing a lack of displayed recipiency in this position (see also Carroll, 2004; Deppermann, 2013b; Goodwin, 1980; Kidwell, 1997; Mortensen, 2009). Indeed, throughout the collection it can be observed that the cupping hand gesture occurs after the trouble source turn during which the teacher does not have his gaze directed at the speaking student. In this sense, ‘hearing’ does not refer to the acoustic reception of
the prior turn-at-talk, but rather to the recipient’s displayed hearing as embodied participation in a F-formation (Kendon, 1990). In extract 6, the teacher is gazing at the board as a student provides a second pair-part to his question in line 1, and this even causes a problem with identifying the speaker of the prior turn.

**Extract 6**

```
01   Teacher:  +who’s ↑this
     Te_ges:    +points at the drawing on the board
     Te_mov:   +turns towards the students
02                   (5.4)
03   Camilla:   +# (“son and”)
     Te_gaz:    +turns gaze to the board
     fig.       #6.1
04                   (0.6) +(0.6) +#(0.8) #(0.7) ((2.7))
     Te_mov:   +turns towards the students
     Te_gaz:   +gazes towards Sabine
     Te_ges:   +right hand to right ear
     fig.       #6.2 #6.3
05   Teacher:  Sabine I didn’t hear
06                   (0.5)
07   Sabine:    ↑mm +# ↓mm (. Camilla
     Sa_ges:    +points and gazes at Camilla
     Te_ges:    +retracts gesture
     fig.       #6.4
08   Teacher:   [ah:
09                   (0.9)
10   Teacher:  Camilla I didn’t +hear#
     Te_ges:    +right hand to right ear
     fig.       #6.5
```

*Figures 6.1, 6.2, 6.3*
Figure 6.

Here the class is going through a drawing of family members, which the teacher has made on the board (the same exercise as in extract 1), and in line 1 he points to the figure he has just completed and asks who’s this. After a lengthy pause in line 2, he turns around, redirects the gaze to the board thereby projecting more writing or another kind of graphically related assistance. As he turns around, Camilla produces a candidate answer (line 3). Her turn is produced in a low volume and with her head resting on her hand and is abandoned before she reaches a possible point of completion. The teacher turns around, gazes at another student, Sabine, and cups his hand behind his ear (line 4). As we have seen above, a repair turn is conditionally relevant after the cupping hand gesture, but the problem here seems to be by whom: by Camilla who produced the prior trouble source turn or Sabine who the teacher is selecting as next speaker through gaze. As a repair does not follow, the teacher produces a verbal repair initiation, in which he specifies the problem as a hearing problem (line 5). Note that he addresses Sabine through a turn-initial address term and thereby orients to her as next-speaker and hence as the speaker of the trouble source turn. Sabine orients to the speaker selection, but does so by gazing and pointing with her thumb towards Camilla, produces a minimal negative response (Stivers & Heritage, 2001) and Camilla’s name and thereby orients to the teacher having selected the wrong speaker. In overlap with Camilla’s name, the teacher produces a change of state token (Heritage, 1984) in line 8 and repeats the verbal repair initiation by substituting the address term and places Camilla’s name in a turn-initial position (line 10). The verbal repair initiation is here co-occurring with a repeat of the cupping hand gesture thereby tying the repair initiation in line 10 to the one in line 4 (Koschmann
& LeBaron, 2002; LeBaron & Streeck, 1997). In this way, producing the trouble source turn in a low almost not detectable volume while the teacher was gazing away from the students resulted in the teacher’s problem of identifying the speaker and consequently a problem with whom to address the repair initiation.

In extracts 1, 3, 4 and 6 above, the trouble source turns are second pair-parts, that is, they are verbal responsive actions to the teacher’s question earlier in the sequence. Sequentially speaking, the students’ turns are produced in a slot where a second pair-part is conditionally relevant, and the second pair-parts can be seen as type-related (Schegloff, 2007: 78ff.) to the teacher’s question, as a (candidate) answer to his question. In extract 5, however, the trouble source turn is a first pair-part – a request for confirmation about the work of the teacher’s wife. In extract 7, too, is the trouble source turn an initiating action, i.e. a first pair-part, in the form of a formulation (Heritage & Watson, 1979) that via a gloss provides an analysis of the (gist of the) prior sequence. But here the problem seems to be how the turn is related to its sequential environment.

**Extract 7**

01 Teacher: and André to relax (.) after work
02 (0.4)
03 André: Hhhhh HHuuum (1.1) °I don’t know°
04 (4.4)
05 André: yes
06 (0.9)
07 André: I work at home
08 (0.3)
09 Teacher: you work at home
10 Camille: [ohh]hh
11 André: in in my car
12 (0.8)
13 Teacher: with
14 (0.2)
15 André: in my car
16 (0.2)
17 Teacher: °in °in your car:r
18 André: [mm hmm?
19 Camille: double +life
20 Tel_gaz: +turns gaze to Camilla
21 (0.8) +#(0.8) ((1.6))
22 Tel_ges: +left hand to left ear
23 fig. #7.1
21 André: #huuu°
25 fig. #7.2
Here the class is discussing how they relax after work, and in lines 7 to 11 André answers what can be taken to mean that he works on his car. After a repair sequence Camilla self-selects in line 19. Her turn, double life, refers to the title of a section in the textbook that the class discussed earlier in the lesson. The sequential position of the turn, however, seems topically out of place (cf. Drew, 1997). During the student’s turn, the teacher turns the gaze towards her, and after a short pause he produces a cupping hand gesture (line 20), and Camilla leans forward and gazes into the textbook on the table in front of her. At this point, her textbook is open on a page with the title ‘A double life’. She thereby orients to the gesture as a repair initiation, and the current open page of the textbook as a relevant site of orientation before producing the repair. The teacher’s retraction
of the gesture follows after Camilla’s leaning forward and turning the gaze towards the textbook so he too orients to the textbook as a relevant resource prior to the repair. As we have previously seen, the teacher does not gaze towards the student as the trouble source turn is initiated, but does so as Camilla initiates the.

In extract 7, as in all the analyzed extracts so far, the gesture occurs in the absence of talk, and the repair initiation does therefore not verbally specify what kind of trouble, hearing or understanding, the teacher is having. As we have seen, however, both participants treat the gesture as a hearing problem and orient to the gesture as highly conventionalized. In extract 7, the trouble source turn comes out of the blue, i.e. its sequential fit is not made explicit, but it is left to the co-participants to analyze how it relates to the prior sequence. In that sense, the gestural repair initiation could be described as orienting to a problem of understanding similar to the ‘open’ class repair initiations described by Drew (1997). The other students, however, do not seem to have a problem with understanding Camilla’s turn. On the contrary, they respond to it: André through a hearable laughter token (line 21) as the teacher’s cupping hand gesture has reached its stroke, and Sabine with a confirming yes and laughter (line 23). The laughter sequence seems to interrupt the repair sequence as Camilla leans back in her chair and turns the gaze to André. At this point the teacher produces a candidate understanding of Sabine’s turn (line 27), Sabine confirms his request for confirmation (line 28), and the teacher asks for an account (line 29). This suggests that Sabine’s turn in line 19 needs more work in the form of an account of its relation to the prior sequence. ‘Hearing’ seems here to refer not only to the teacher’s lack of gaze towards Sabine as her turn is initiated, but to the teacher’s request for a more elaborate turn in the form of an account of the turn’s sequential fit, and the repair initiation, the cupping hand gesture, provides Sabine with a chance to review and repair her prior turn, and possibly changing the turn design and/or linguistic format.

So far I have described cases in which the cupping hand gesture is treated as a repair initiation in the absence of co-occurring speech. It occurs in situations where the the teacher does not gaze at the speaker during the production of the trouble source turn. ‘Hearing’, therefore has more to do with the prior turn and its production within an established participation framework.
than with acoustic reception. As the trouble source turn is produced without securing the recipiency of the addressed recipient, the repair initiation is also a way to ratify the prior speaker as legitimate, and turn the student’s turn into an official part of the classroom lesson for the whole class (cf. Koole, 2007; Markee, 2005). In the next section, I turn to cases in which the cupping hand gesture co-occurs with speech.

**The cupping hand with co-occurring speech**

The cupping hand gesture may be described as an example of what gesture studies refer to as an emblem; [E]mblems have as their characteristic use production in the absence of speech” (McNeill, 1992: 38) although speech is “optional” (ibid., 7). As described above, the cupping hand gesture frequently occurs in the absence of speech and is, as I have shown, systematically oriented to as dealing with a problem of displayed hearing. However, as the collection also includes cases in which the cupping hand co-occurs with speech it is relevant to look at what happens in these cases and ask the question if such cases differ from the stand-alone gesture I have described so far.

The turn design of verbal repair initiations may indicate the kind of trouble the participant is having (‘hearing’ or ‘understanding’). They may locate the trouble source (e.g. through *wh*-questions) and indicate roughly what constitutes a relevant repair in the next turn (e.g. a repeat of the entire turn or a single lexical item). Above I have argued that the cupping hand gesture is oriented to as a problem of hearing, and is routinely followed by a repeat of the trouble source turn. It is significant, however, that when the cupping hand gesture co-occurs with speech the verbal repair initiation specifically locates the trouble source and specifies the kind of problem the speaker has as in extract 8.

**Extract 8**

| 01 Teacher: | number ↑four (.) Camilla (>who are you<) |
| 02 | (0.4) |
| 03 Camilla: | eh:: she is eh:: (8.0) (*grunt*) ( ) (grant) (. ) se (0.3) wife |
| 04 | (0.3) |
| 05 Teacher: | +#who? |
| Te_ges: | +left hand to left ear |
| Te_mov: | +leans slightly forward and turns the head to the side |
| fig. | #8.1 |
In extract 8 the class is pairing photographs of celebrities with their relatives. In line 1, the teacher selects Camilla to guess who the next person might be. Her turn in line 3 is initiated with hesitation tokens and a 8.0 second pause, which indicates problems with producing the answer. She then produces a candidate answer in a low volume and non-standard way and a self-repair. After a micro pause, she adds first the possessive marker ‘s and after another pause the head noun wife. The candidate answer is thus produced incrementally with the pronunciation of the possessive noun in a non-normative way. After a 0.3 second pause the teacher initiates a repair through a cupping hand gesture, leaning slightly forward and tilting the head and a verbal repair initiation – ‘who’. The bodily conduct seems almost exaggerated in its form, and this seems to be the case whenever the cupping hand gesture co-occurs with a verbal repair initiation (see also extracts 9 and 10 below). The verbal repair initiation specifically targets the trouble source. In combination with the cupping hand the verbal repair initiation can thus be seen to indicate the lexical item that the (verbal) repair initiation is orienting to.

Pedagogical prompts are another type of verbal repair initiations that co-occur with the cupping hand gesture. These are repair initiations that specifically address the linguistic or
pedagogical format of the prior turn and elicit the student to repair the format of the prior turn. In this sense, they specifically do not orient to the prior turn as a problem of hearing, but indicate a problem with the form in the prior turn and indicate a relevant way to produce the repair turn. This is typically done by repeating a part of the student’s prior turn and leaving the trouble source itself to be completed by the student what Koshik (2002) refers to a designedly incomplete utterance. In extract 9 the trouble source is produced in a language other than the language of instruction.

Extract 9

01 Sabine: ehh little girl?
02  
03 Sabine: <of> five years
04  
05 Teacher: five years old
06  
07 Sabine: ye[s
08 Teacher: "okay"  
09  
10 Sabine: ma::: mon parente are retir#ré
  Te_ges: +raises left hand
  fig.  #9.1
11  
12 Teacher: +#my::
  Te_ges: +left hand reaches left ear
  fig.  #9.2
13  
14 Sabine: parents
15  
16 Sabine: pare[nts
17 Teacher: [+<pa:::rents>
  Te_ges: +left hand turns into an OK gesture
  fig.  #9.3
18 Sabine: °parents° (.) are retir+ed
  Te_ges: +retracts gesture

Figure 9.
Here the class is talking about their family members as part of a meaning-and-fluency activity. In line 10, Sabine code-switches to French, which elicits a repair initiation by the teacher: as the student approaches a possible completion of the turn, he raises his left hand and performs a cupping hand gesture. The gesture is accompanied by a slight head turn and a facial mimic and the closing of the eyes (fig. 2). As the hand reaches its stroke he produces a verbal repair initiation – a ‘translation’ of the first lexical item of the trouble source turn in a prosodically marked way. The repair initiation thus prompts the student to repair the prior turn in the language of instruction by continuing the teacher’s turn-beginning. She continues the turn by producing the next lexical item, but again in a distinct French pronunciation. This is followed by a self-repair (line 16) and an other-initiated repair by the teacher (line 17) that locates the phonetically problematic item, the lengthening of the initial [a] by stretching it and changing the gesture into a precision grip (see fig. 9.3) (Lempert, 2011; see also Streeck, 2009: 45). Sabine repeats the trouble source, ‘parents’, and continues the turn and brings it to a possible completion.

In the last extract, the class is practicing the conjugation of adjectives and their pronunciation in the form of a round robin (Mortensen & Hazel, 2011) in which students, one after the other, provide the superlative form of a list of adjectives that are projected on the board.

Extract 10

01 Oliver: most bu- beautiful
02 Teacher: yeah
03 (0.6)
04 Catrin: worst
05 Teacher: worst yeah the worst
06 Catrin: worst
07 Teacher: good
08 (0.8)
09 Danielle: best
10 Teacher: okay
11 (0.2)

---

4 Although the pronoun is neither in English nor French (would be ‘mes’), ‘parents’ is clearly produced ‘in French’, which also seems to be the target of the teacher’s repair initiation in line 12.
5 The gesture is similar to the ‘OK gesture’, but with the index finger slightly more towards the root of the thumb.
In line 12, Heike produces the next word on the list in the pedagogically relevant grammatical form. The teacher does not produce an evaluation in the next turn as seems to be the way this activity is organized (see lines 2 and 10) (cf. Seedhouse, 1997). Instead he raises both hands to his ears and takes a small step forwards while he mouths an [i] (see fig. 10.2 and 10.3), and thereby indexes the pronunciation of the prior turn as problematic and locates the first vowel as the source of the repair initiation. In line 14, Heike repairs her prior turn and changes the pronunciation of the prior turn by stressing the first syllable. In this way, the cupping hand gesture in extracts 9-11 co-occurs with a verbal (or mouthed) repair initiation, which specifically marks the trouble source as a linguistic/pedagogical problem. The co-occurring verbal repair initiation is used to locate the trouble source thereby making it not a general problem of hearing, but rather to specify and disambiguate the kind of trouble the teacher is orienting to, and what is required as a relevant repair in the next turn.
Conclusion

In this paper I have described how participants orient to a cupping hand gesture in a transition relevant position as an other-initiation of repair. They are generally produced in the absence of co-occurring speech, and are followed by a repeat of the trouble source turn. The gestural repair initiation is understood as a problem of hearing. I have shown how hearing does not refer to the acoustic reception of the prior turn-at-talk, but to the speaker’s displayed engagement with the speaker of the trouble source turn, i.e. during the trouble source turn the co-participant (the teacher) does not gaze at the speaker. In this way, the paper adds to a description of how what is typically described as hearing problems may be embedded within participants’ displayed postural orientation towards co-participants during the unfolding of specific courses of action. Finally, I have described cases in which the cupping hand gesture co-occurs with speech the verbal repair initiation specifically locates the trouble source and indexes the kind of trouble is being alluded to.

It has been argued that bodily conduct alone is not – or at least, has not yet been shown to be – organized in the same way as speech, and indeed that “nonverbal conduct is subordinate to verbal conduct with which it is intermeshed” (Drew, 2005: 78). For instance, Schegloff (2007), in his description of the sequence organization of talk-in-interaction notes that there is “no reliable empirical basis for treating physically realized action as being in principle organized in adjacency pair terms” (p. 11). This claim has not been left unchallenged, and recent studies have shown how bodily conduct can be, and indeed often is treated by participants as performing both first (Seo & Koshik, 2010) and second pair-parts (Arminen, Koskela, & Palukka, 2014; De Stefani & Gazin, 2014; Rauniomaa & Keisanen, 2012). This paper contributes to this discussion by showing how the participants themselves orient to a stand-alone gesture as initiating repair of the prior turn-at-talk. Taking an emic perspective, the paper documents how participants rely on bodily conduct as a systematic way of performing relevant social actions in and of itself in a specific sequential environment, and how participants creatively use and make sense of various resources from which to fashion their actions as sequentially implicative to the ongoing courses of action.
References


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