



## **APPEALING TO A BROKER: INITIATING THIRD-PERSON REPAIR IN MUNDANE SECOND LANGUAGE INTERACTION**

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**Abstract:** Interactional repair usually involves one or two primary participants, meaning that either the speaker of a trouble source attempts to deal with it on his or her own or else a recipient initiates the repair and sometimes provides a candidate solution. However, occasionally a third person may also become involved in a form of repair that has been called ‘brokering’. Such brokers mediate the talk, providing the primary recipient with assistance in dealing with the trouble, particularly in cases where the recipient is an L2 speaker. Brokering therefore momentarily reconstitutes the participant constellation and invokes relevant identity categories and epistemic hierarchies. Adopting a Conversation Analytic approach, I build on this line of inquiry by examining a collection of cases in which a novice speaker of English appeals to a third person for brokering, highlighting sequential, embodied and epistemic features of the talk in both successful and aborted bids for brokering. The data are taken from a corpus of multi-party dinner table talk video-recorded in a homestay context.

**Keywords:** Conversation Analysis, brokering, third-person repair, study abroad, L2 interaction

**Özet:** Etkileşimsel onarım genellikle bir veya iki ana katılımcıyla gerçekleşir, ki bu ya sorun kaynağının sahibi konuşmacının kendisinin onunla ilgileneceği ya da bir alıcının onarımı başlatacağı ve bazen de muhtemel bir çözüm sunacağı anlamına gelir. Ancak, bazen üçüncü bir kişi de onarıma dahil olabilir ki bu ‘aracılık’ (Bolden, 2011, 2012) olarak bilinir. Bu araçlar, özellikle alıcının bir ikinci dil konuşmacısı olduğu durumlarda, ana alıcılara sorunla başa çıkmaları için yardım sağlayarak konuşmaya aracılık ederler. Bu yüzden, aracılık katılımcı kümesini yeniden şekillendirir ve ilgili kimlik kategorilerini ve epistemik düzenleri devreye sokar. Konuşma Çözümlemesi yöntemini kullanarak, deneyimsiz bir İngilizce konuşmacısının aracılık için üçüncü bir kişiye başvurduğu durumların derlemesini inceleyerek ve başarılı olmuş ve başarısızlığa uğramış aracılık teşebbüslerindeki konuşmanın dizisel, şekilsel ve epistemik özelliklerini vurgulayarak, bu araştırma hattını geliştireceğim. Bu çalışmada kullanılan veri aile yanında kalma bağlamında video kayıt altına alınan çok katılımcılı akşam yemeği konuşmaları bütüncesinden alınmıştır.

**Anahtar sözcükler:** Konuşma Çözümlemesi, aracılık, üçüncü kişi onarımı, yurt dışında okuma, ikinci dil etkileşimi

### **1. Introduction**

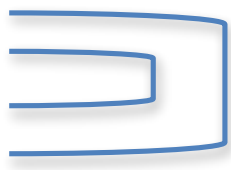
Interaction generally goes smoothly, an observation that Sacks (1995) called *order at all points*, but even when it does not go as the speaker intended there exists an orderly set of interactional practices for getting the conversation back on track—the organization of repair. In Conversation Analysis (CA), repair refers to the various interactional practices speakers use to deal with trouble in talk, including problems of hearing, speaking or understanding (Schegloff, Jefferson & Sacks, 1977). For the most part, sequences of repair involve two people—a speaker and a recipient. When a trouble source is identified, the person who caused the problem generally has the right and the responsibility to fix it (self-repair), although sometimes another person may also notice the trouble and/or offer a solution (other-repair). Largely due to the mechanics of the turn-taking system, there is a preference for self-repair (Schegloff, Jefferson & Sacks, 1977), but when this does not occur a recipient is also able to initiate repair.

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Other-initiated repair is often dealt with through an insert expansion sequence (Schegloff, 2007) as in Excerpt 1.

*Excerpt 1. Schegloff (2007) TGI*

1. Bee:	Yih sound HA:PPY, hh	FPP <sub>base</sub>	
2. Ava:	I sound ha:p[py?	FPP <sub>insert</sub>	
3. Bee:	[Ye:uh	SPP <sub>insert</sub>	
4.	(0.3)		
5. Ava:	No:,	SPP <sub>base</sub>	

Bee initiates a First Pair Part (FPP) in line 1, an assessment that makes agreement (or disagreement) a relevant action in next-turn (Pomerantz, 1984). However, the response to that turn (a disagreement) does not come until line 5 because there is a brief insertion sequence in which Ava confirms the content of Bee's question (and arguably orients to its underlying intent as well). The repair is swiftly dealt with by Bee in line 3, after which Ava provides the second pair part (SPP) to Bee's original question. The insertion sequence is an instance of other-repair that deals with trouble succinctly and then immediately gets back to the sequentially due response, thereby maintaining the progressivity of the talk. In short, interactional repair generally allows two people to maintain intersubjectivity (Schegloff, 1992).

However, occasionally a third person may also become involved. Such "brokers" can mediate the talk, providing assistance in dealing with the trouble, particularly where one of the participants has limited interactional competence, such as a child or a speaker who is using a second language (Bolden, 2011). Brokering therefore momentarily reconstitutes the participant constellation and invokes relevant identity categories and epistemic hierarchies in order to find a repair solution and therefore maintain the progressivity of the conversation (Bolden, 2011, 2012).

When a speaker proffers a brokering in order to facilitate a novice recipient's inclusion in the talk the broker is often orienting to the novice's limited interactional competence (Greer, 2008; Skårup, 2004). On occasion, this can lead to experts speaking on behalf of the novice, such as when a mother explains what her toddler said to a non-comprehending adult (Bolden, 2012) or when a parent answers a question that a doctor directed to her child (Stivers, 2001). The current study will focus instead on situations in which it is the novice speaker who appeals to a relative expert for a brief explanation or interpretation of elements of the talk or makes a bid for assistance in completing his own turn-in-progress. Following a brief review of the CA literature on brokering and an outline of the data, the analysis examines novice appeals to a broker during forward-oriented repair, then considers brokering in third position repair and finally discusses bids for assistance that do not result in a broker response.

## 2. Brokering talk

In multiperson talk, a speaker may draw a third person into the talk for a wide variety of reasons. An overhearing recipient may be called on (or offer) to provide a counter argument or respond to a challenging question (Ikeda, 2009), or to indirectly convey a message to a target recipient by directing it primarily to a third person (Kang, 1998). Multiperson talk also differs from paired interaction in the way that speakers formulate their turns for their varying audiences. For example, the way a story is told can orient to collectivities within a group of recipients (Lerner, 1993), such as when some of the participants are treated as knowing the story and others are not (Goodwin, 1979).

As outlined above, the current study will focus on *brokering*, a form of third-person repair. Bolden (2012) defines brokering in the following way:

To BROKER a (potential) problem of understanding is to act as an intermediary between the other participants (i.e. between the speaker of the problematic talk and his/her addressed recipient) and to attempt to resolve the problem in a way that would expose and bridge participants' divergent linguistic and/or cultural expertise for instance, by providing a translation or a simplified paraphrase of the problematic talk. (p. 99)

In other words, brokering is a repair sequence in which a third person mediates talk between a speaker and a primary recipient. Recent CA literature has documented brokering within intergenerational migrant families (del Torto, 2008, 2010; Bolden, 2011, 2012), and between highly proficient bilingual peers (Greer, 2008, 2013). In these situations all the participants have at least some access to both languages, meaning that they can use code-switching as part of their repair practices. Although there have been a number of CA studies that have examined various forms of repair between pairs of expert and novice language users (e.g. Brouwer, 2004; Egbert, 1997; Hosoda 2006), there has been less focus on brokering within multi-party talk where the majority of the interactants only speak one language. In situations like this, the brokering inevitably consists of unpacking an unfamiliar word or phrase by using the same language, such as explaining an English trouble source to a language learner by using English only. Translations and other-medium explanations are not possible because the broker does not speak the novice's L1.

Third-person repair momentarily alters the participant constellation (Greer, 2013), such that the broker is other-selected and therefore becomes ratified as next-speaker. Skårup (2004) notes that brokering holds an inherently inclusive function and can be used to draw a non-comprehending participant back into the conversation. An additional scenario is when the non-comprehending recipient initiates the repair by explicitly calling on the broker to provide an explanation (Bolden, 2011), therefore tacitly orienting to his or her own limited linguistic competence. The excerpts to be examined in the current paper are all situations of this latter variety, in which a Japanese learner of English appeals for assistance from someone other than the speaker of the trouble source. Language teachers in Japan have long noticed that their students often delay their responses in the classroom, such as by confirming the answer with a nearby student (Reinelt, 1987), but it is worth considering how this practice works outside the classroom in situations where there is only one Japanese speaker in a group of native English speakers, as is often the case in homestays and study abroad contexts.

### **3. Participants**

The data to be examined in the current study were recorded in Seattle, USA in 2012. The focal participant, Shin, is a 19 year-old Japanese male who is taking part in a three-week study abroad program. He is living in a homestay with an American family that consists of Mom, Dad, Gran and a daughter, Jeni, who is in her late teens. Although the broader data set consists of around 3 hours of naturally-occurring talk recorded throughout the homestay,<sup>1</sup> the excerpts we will examine in this paper all come from one 33-minute dinnertime conversation in which the participants are seated around the table as shown in Figure 1.



Figure 1. Participant seating arrangement

The host family constitutes one normatively understood party within the talk, consisting of a group of expert English speakers with an extended history of shared experiences. However, Shin and Dad also form another collective that is procedurally consequential at this point in the conversation; earlier in the day, Shin and Dad attended a baseball game at Seattle's Safeco Stadium, and therefore throughout the conversation Mom and Jeni are asking Shin about the game, as well as comparing it to baseball games he has been to in Japan. At certain points, Shin appeals to Dad for assistance in responding to these questions, therefore calling on him as a broker in order to maintain intersubjectivity, and also making their co-membership within the sub-group of participants who attended the baseball game relevant to the ongoing interaction. It is these moments that are at the focus of the current analysis.

#### 4. Analysis

As a kind of multi-person insertion sequence, brokering can take a variety of forms depending on who appeals to the broker for assistance. In the sub-type that we will focus on here, it is the language novice who initiates the brokering by shifting gaze to tacitly select someone other than the prior speaker to clarify the trouble. As such, all of the excerpts we will examine can be represented through the following sequence of actions;

- Move 1: A initiates a sequence (first pair part) directed at B
- Move 2: B appeals to C for assistance
- Move 3: C assists B by clarifying or simplifying A's turn
- Move 4: B responds to the turn A initiated in Move 1.

In other words, Moves 2 and 3 constitute an insert expansion sequence with Move 2 directing a repair initiation at someone other than the sequence initiator. The analysis in this section will consider how this sequence is played out in appeals to a broker during forward-oriented repair and in third position repair. The analysis will then go on to consider some situations in which bids for brokering do not receive uptake from the broker. The instances of third person repair we will examine in this paper deal with problems of speaking (Excerpts 2 and 5), problems of understanding (Excerpt 3), and problems of hearing (Excerpt 4).

##### 4.1. Appealing to a broker during forward-oriented repair

One interactional locus in which an appeal can become relevant is during word search sequences, or what some CA researchers refer to as forward-oriented repair (Carroll, 2005; Greer, 2013; Schegloff, 1979).<sup>2</sup> Such repair is considered forward-oriented in that the trouble source is located in some yet-to-be-produced element of the talk, and this means that the current speaker (the word searcher) has primary responsibility for initiating the repair and holds the ultimate epistemic right to adjudicate on the repair outcome. Goodwin and

Goodwin (1986) found that when word searchers are looking away, they are undertaking a solitary word search, but as soon as they shift their gaze to another participant they are inviting co-participation and that person can offer a candidate repair—a word that might be the one which the speaker is searching for.

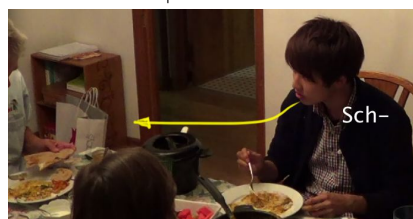
In excerpt 2, Shin initiates such a word search sequence, appealing to Dad for help in co-remembering the name of the stadium they went to earlier that day. In so doing, Shin casts Dad into the role of broker and is able to continue his response to Mom in a reasonably timely manner.<sup>3</sup>

*Excerpt 2. Schofield*

1 Mom When you go- when you watch you're-  
 2 you're much farther away?  
 3 Shin ((nods deeply)/(0.8)  
 4 Mom O:↑h↓=  
 5 Shin =YEa:h (and uh)  
 6 (1.1)  
 7 Shin Yeah, it's↑ [(1.0)  
 8 [(hand pivot))  
 9 some- it's- uh depends on  
 10 the: stadiums but uh (0.4)  
 11 .hhh Seattle::



12 |Sch- Schofield?  
 → |D~~ M~~=====



13 | (0.5)  
 |M===  
 14 |Schofield?  
 → |D~~=====



15 Dad Safeco.

16 Shin |Ah Safe[c o fi- ]  
|Plate~~== M~~ (Nods)



17 Mom [Oh Safeco.]  
18 Shin Yeah field is (0.9) very close.



19 (.)  
20 Mom Yes:.  
21 Shin Yeah

Mom's sequence-initiating action (or first pair part) in lines 1 and 2 is a post-expansion (Schegloff, 2007) which forms part of a longer sequence in which she has been asking Shin about the differences between Japanese and American baseball stadiums. In prior talk (not shown), Shin has stated that he felt the crowd was closer to the game play at the American stadium, and Mom's turn is therefore a follow-up clarification formulated as a polar interrogative. Shin initially gives a minimal positive response by nodding in line 3, but then goes on to expand on that response by adding an elaboration, an upshot of which might be glossed as "Yeah, it depends on the stadium, but Seattle's Safeco field is very close". However, in producing that turn Shin comes up against some interactional trouble; he cannot initially recall the name of the stadium (Safeco field, the place where he and Dad went earlier that day) and so he initiates forward-oriented repair.

Shin initially attempts to approximate the name of the stadium with the sound "Sch" (line 12) and it is significant that his gaze shifts to Dad as he does so, since arguably this is his first bid for brokering in this instance. However, Dad is otherwise engaged with eating at this point and his gaze is directed to his plate. Shin therefore returns his gaze to Mom and produces the remainder of his approximation ("Schofield") while looking at her, perhaps orienting to the fact that she may recognize the place referent. Mom does not indicate any recognition of this referent and a gap of silence ensues in line 13. Shin then re-attempts to engage Dad in brokering in line 14 by again shifting his gaze to Dad and repeating the candidate version of the repair with upward intonation. This time Dad is free to respond and provides the correct referent ("Safeco") in line 14. Both Mom and Shin receipt this through repetition (Greer, Bussinger, Butterfield & Mischinger, 2009; Svennevig, 2004) and Shin's gaze returns to Mom as he embeds the correct version into his turn-in-progress by completing the sentence in line 18.

In this brief moment then, Dad brokering has provided a sequentially-due item and so enabled Shin to continue the interaction. It is not that Dad has interrupted Shin to do this; Shin's appeal to Dad has momentarily altered the participant constellation to accomplish an insertion sequence through third person repair in which Dad and Shin collectively work to

deal with the interactional trouble so that the progressivity of the turn is maintained. The interactional resources Shin uses to initiate the bid are minimal yet nonetheless sophisticated; gaze shift timed with candidate repair completion that is marked with upward intonation alerts Dad to the fact that he is being asked to assist Shin with the word search.

#### 4.2. Appealing to a broker in third position repair

Similarly, in Excerpt 3 Shin again appeals for assistance from Dad, this time in reformulating an interrogative from Mom. Mom asks the question in line 1, but she does not immediately receipt Shin's answer. When Mom rewords (and therefore redelivers) the question in line 7, Shin turns to Dad for help in explaining Mom's question before eventually responding to Mom in the negative in line 28.

##### *Excerpt 3. Same food*

1 Mom <Do they eat the same food> at your games↓  
2 [as] we eat?  
3 Shin [yes] ((nods))  
4 (1.2)  
5 Shin ((looks to Mom, nods)) Yeah.  
6 (0.4)  
7 Mom We eat the same food?  
8 → (0.6)/((Shin turns to Dad))  
9 Shin A:::h, (0.7)/((looking at Dad))  
10 → °we::°↑  
11 (0.5)  
12 Dad The:↑ (.) <the food at the stadium,>  
13 Mom >Well of course we have LOts of food.<  
14 Dad is, yeah.  
15 (0.4)  
16 Shin Yes [yes.]  
17 Mom [(is ][that-)]  
18 Dad [D o y]ou have simila:r choices?  
19 (1.1)/((Dad sniffs))  
20 Dad [a:t↑  
21 Shin [(sim-/same)  
22 (0.5)  
23 Dad the baseball ga[me? (I mean for)]=  
24 Shin [A A↑ ↑A A : : : h]  
25 Dad =a hanshin [tigers  
26 Shin [A↑A:::↓h  
27 (1.4)  
28 Shin A:↓:h↓ (.) no↓.  
29 (0.7)/((Shin sniffs))  
30 Jeni °no?°  
31 Shin Nyeah.  
32 (.)  
33 Shin In Japan, (0.6) I (1.2) >I don- I don't<  
R~~~ == G=== plate~=====  
34 (1.4) eat↓ eat↓  
plate=====  
35 Mom Mhm  
36 (0.5)  
37 Shin in the game.  
38 (0.5)  
39 Shin and uh (0.5) yeah.  
40 (0.6)

This excerpt begins after a short break in the conversation and Mom's initial question in line 1 constitutes a change of topic (from stadiums to food). Given that the question does not

involve any pre-sequences or signposts that flag it as a new topic, there is a possibility that Shin may not have been completely ready for the topic transition. His response in line 3 (a nodded “yes”) is timely but brief, coming in overlap with Mom’s turn-in-progress. When neither participant goes on to produce further talk in line 4, Shin repeats his response in the clear (line 5) with “yeah”. This leads to Mom’s initial reformulation of the first pair part, simplifying it from “Do they eat the same food at your games as we eat?” to just “We eat the same food?” Mom’s utterance in line 7 is therefore an instance of third position repair (Schegloff, 1992). That is, hearing Shin’s answer in line 5, Mom notices that her question in lines 1-2 has been misunderstood and consequently carries out self-repair in line 7. Although both questions are polar interrogatives, the initial version is more syntactically complex and involves three person referents (*they*, *your* and *we*) while the revised version only involves one. By reinitiating a first pair part directly after it has received a response, Mom casts some doubt on Shin’s positive answer. Shin treats Mom’s turn this way<sup>4</sup> and initiates repair on the question in lines 8 to 10 by turning to Dad and saying “Aah...we?”, and thus appealing to him for brokering.

The gaze shift towards a third person who is not the producer of the trouble source is again fundamental to the initiation of the brokering segment, and Shin’s quiet repetition of “we” in line 10 followed by a gap of silence suggests that he does not understand the entire question. The sequence of talk from this point until line 28 (where Shin responds to Mom) constitutes an insertion question in which Dad explains Mom’s question to Shin. He breaks it down into more manageable chunks reworking the object into a subject by placing noun phrase “the food at the stadium” first (line 12) and then reissuing the question in line 18. Dad then incrementally positions further detail in lines 20 to 25 (“at the baseball stadium, I mean at the Hanshin Tigers...”) but Shin overlaps this with a series of Japanese change-of-state tokens in the form of vowel-elongated *ahs* (lines 24, 26 and 28), that act as a strong display of uptake. He then turns to Mom in line 28 to respond with “no” indicating that he has understood Dad’s reformulated version of the question, and then goes on to further elaborate on this response in the remainder of the excerpt.<sup>5</sup> Shin’s appeal to Dad has momentarily cast him in the role of broker, but once this has been done Shin then returns to Mom’s question, orienting to the progressivity of the talk as his prime concern.

One reason that brokering became essential in this case is that, due to the nature of Mom’s question, Shin holds the primary epistemic right to respond. The question calls for a comparison of Japanese and American baseball customs and Shin is the one who can normatively be understood to know most about this domain. Even though Dad appears to have some knowledge about Japanese baseball (e.g. he uses the name of a Japanese team in line 25), he and Mom both defer to Shin for a definitive evaluation. However, in cases where two members within a party can both be understood to possess equal epistemic rights to respond, either may do so, potentially aborting an appeal for brokering. The next section will explore two examples of this.

#### **4.3. Bids for assistance that do not result in a broker response**

Not every case in which an L2 user appeals to a broker results in a third-person repair sequence. In a situation where both the second language speaker and the broker can be normatively understood to share equal epistemic right to respond, the broker may provide the second pair part in place of the addressed learner, or the initiator of the first pair part may treat them as consociates (Lerner, 1992) by readdressing it directly to a third person, as Jeni does in Excerpt 4.



*Excerpt 4. Get it from*

1 Jeni Did- what did you get to eat today.  
 2 Did you get [anything]?  
 3 Shin [Hamburg-] cheesebuurger.  
 4 Jeni mm.  
 5 Dad ohn  
 6 Shin yea[h kind of. ]  
 7 Jeni [where from?]  
 8 (0.4)/((Jeni turns to Dad))  
 9 Jeni n'where didja geddit from.  
 10 (0.9)  
 11 Shin → ((looks to Dad)) °gedda fro°  
 12 Jeni Tat's Deli?  
 13 (0.2)  
 14 Dad No.  
 15 (0.6)  
 16 Dad J'st a regular (.)  
 17 Jeni °oh°  
 18 (1.6)  
 19 Dad safeco↑  
 20 Mom mm

In line 1 Jeni addresses a first pair part to Shin, asking him about what he ate at the baseball game. Shin successfully responds in line 3 and follows this with an elaborating increment in line 6. In overlap with this, Jeni produces a post-expansion (“Where from?” in line 7), a follow-up sequence-initiating action that is hearably addressed to Shin, since he has just responded to her prior turn. When Shin does not immediately respond, Jeni first repeats the question in the clear (line 9), although this second version is produced with natural pronunciation and at a pace that is evidently difficult for Shin to pick up, and he again turns to Dad for assistance by shifting his gaze and repeating the first part of the turn in an audibly lower volume.

However, Dad also has knowledge of what Shin had for lunch (since the two of them went to the game together), making them co-members of a party with equal epistemic rights to answer Jeni’s question. In this case therefore, Jeni readdresses the question to Dad in line 12 by providing a candidate response (“Tat’s Deli”, the name of a shop) with rising intonation. Note that Dad evidently recognizes this referent, even though he rejects it, but it is unclear whether or not it is within Shin’s vocabulary. By bypassing Shin, Jeni and Dad treat him in much the same way that a caregiver responds for a child (Lerner, 2002; Stivers, 2001), and they therefore make Shin’s less-than-fully-competent status relevant by and to the ongoing details of the talk. A significant element of this identity categorization is the fact that Dad does not to respond to Shin’s bid for brokering in this instance. Shin also appears to treat it this way, allowing Dad’s response to Jeni to speak for him and therefore negating the need for third-person repair.

On the other hand, in some cases Dad is not able to offer assistance because he is unable to recognize the trouble source since it is not within his epistemic domain. In Excerpt 5, Shin is again undertaking forward-oriented repair: he is searching for the word “scream”, yet this is not projectable at the point where he appeals to Dad for assistance.

*Excerpt 5. Scream*

1 Mom Really?  
 2 Shin Yeah.=  
 3 Dad =°m m°=

4 Shin =Japanese ((swallows)) fan is (.) mo:re↓ (0.2) loud.  
5 (.)  
6 Mom Real[ly?  
7 Gran? [( [ )  
8 Shin [than (0.3) American de  
9 → (0.8)/((tilts head, sucks teeth, looks to Dad))  
10 why::  
11 (0.8)/((tilts head))  
12 Yeah I <expect> (0.2) >expected< (0.3) the American  
13 (0.6)/((RH gesture))  
14 fan is: (1.0) was ve:ry ve:ry loud<=and uh:  
15 → (1.0)/((glances to dad, does "shouting" gesture))  
16 a:h s:ka ss::::: sku a:h  
17 → D== ~~~ M===== D=====  
18 >°How can I say°<  
19 Table=====

18 (.)  
M==

19 Mom s s secret?  
20 Shin No. ss sss ssss  
21 (0.5)  
22 like sss (.) scream.  
23 Dad (tr[ains) oh ]  
24 Shin [yeah scream(ing)],  
25 Dad n[yeah]=  
26 Mom [mhmm]=  
27 Shin =yea[h].  
28 Dad [mm=oh  
29 (.)  
30 Shin ((eating)) (and ja-)  
31 (1.4)  
32 Shin and Japane- Japanese fan↓ (.) always  
33 (0.4)/(("talking" gesture: pushes hand from mouth))  
34 ss sss screa:m sc[ream  
35 Dad [uhum [mm  
36 Jeni [uhuh  
37 Dad [mhmm]  
38 Shin [mm. ]  
39 Mom [uhuh],  
40 (.)  
41 Shin ((clears throat)) ghh

Again Shin's word search is part of a response to a question from Mom, a sequential slot in which appeals to Dad for third-person repair has been successful in other instances. Here though, the epistemic right to respond is clearly Shin's alone and there is insufficient information in the turn-in-progress for Dad to provide a candidate repair.

Mom's first pair part in earlier talk (not shown) was a question addressed to Shin that asked which was louder, American or Japanese baseball fans. Shin replied that he thought that Japanese fans were louder, so Mom's news marked "really" in line 1 (and then again in line 6) displays her surprised stance (Wilkinson & Kitzinger, 2006) and accentuates the news by seeking confirmation of what is told and by encouraging further talk about the news (Drew, 2003). It accomplishes this by working as the first pair part of a post-expansion sequence, making an account or further detail sequentially due from Shin.

Shin's response begins in lines 8 to 14, but as part of his explanation he has trouble accessing the word "scream". In line 14 he aborts his turn-in-progress at a point where it is hearably

incomplete (“...was very very loud and...”) and then turns to Dad to perform a gesture that seems to depict something to do with speech; he holds his hand to his mouth and pushes it away while spreading his fingers out repeating this gesture several times in rapid succession. Together with the incomplete turn, this gesture is similar to what Olsher (2004) calls embodied completion, with the gesture filling in for the missing word, except that Shin goes on to finish the turn verbally. By shifting his gaze toward Dad as he delivers this gesture, Shin seems to be initiating a brokering sequence, but Dad is incapable of repairing the trouble and Shin is forced to continue the word search himself, which he does by “doing remembering” as he produces the first phoneme of the word “scream” while shifting his gaze from Dad to Mom and then back to Dad again. At this point the talk is in an incipient state of other-repair and either Mom or Dad could self-select to offer a candidate repair solution, and in fact Mom does so in line 19 with “secret”. This eventually leads Shin to arrive at the repair proper himself in line 22 and he goes on to incorporate it into the remainder of the sentence. Although the novice English speaker made a bid for brokering, in this instance the expert speaker was unable to offer assistance, meaning the L2 user had to carry out the repair himself.<sup>6</sup>

## **5. Concluding discussion**

Contributing to the recent CA line of inquiry into the form of third person repair known as brokering, the current study has examined this interactional practice within mundane dinnertime conversation in a study abroad context. Unlike previous work on brokering in inter-generational immigrant families (Bolden, 2011, 2012; del Torto, 2008), homestay talk does not usually involve bilingual interaction, since the host family does not speak the visitor’s native language. As a result, the sort of repair that takes place generally involves explanations in the target language rather than the translations. Novice speakers rely on brokers to help explain and interpret other expert speakers’ talk, and in the excerpts we have examined here, it is the novice speaker who initiates the brokering when mutual understanding is jeopardized due to problems of speaking, problems of hearing, and comprehension.

Third person repair involves an insertion or side sequence that both delays the talk-in-progress and draws in a participant other than the primary speaker and recipient. Selecting a broker therefore momentarily alters the participant constellation and invokes relevant category identities and epistemic hierarchies. In the data in the current study, such identities involve interactional displays of the standard relational pairs of “expert” and “novice” English speaker, but these identities also map on to other relevant categories that are born out of experiential or knowledge-based membership, including their relative nationalities, the family unit and the sub-group of participants who attended a baseball game that day.

What qualities make for a good broker and how do these attributes become visible in interaction? It is perhaps significant that it was Dad that who was the broker in all the cases we have examined, and this was a general trend throughout the broader data set. As mentioned above, part of this can be seen as a result of the fact that he straddled several of the identity categories; he had, for instance, attended the baseball game with Shin and was able to speak on his behalf with regard to that in certain situations, rendering the brokering moot. In addition, Dad was able to simplify problematic talk in ways that other participants did not, and throughout the recordings Shin generally looked to Dad as his go-to broker. Dad packaged his explanations in shorter, more manageable turn segments while monitoring Shin’s comprehension. In contrast, Jeni and Mom’s turns were generally delivered at a faster pace and involved more complicated formulations. Multi-person talk involving just one

novice speaker in a group of multiple expert speakers can be quite a challenging interactional environment for language learners. One way for a novice language user to deal with this could be to identify the speaker who is easiest to understand and call on that person for assistance through brokering. It appears that Shin has arrived at this practice naturally in the course of his 3-week homestay experience, but teachers preparing students for study abroad should consider discussing interactional strategies like brokering with their students before they depart. Since Dad was easier to understand, Shin seemed to spend an increasing amount of his time with him, and in fact several of the videos he took involved just Shin and Dad, and therefore had no instances of third person repair. While other family members did act as brokers on occasion, when novice speakers call on certain specific expert speakers for an explanation (rather than the producer of a just-prior turn), it makes public their recognition of that person's ability to formulate a more readily comprehensible version of the repairable turn, and makes an emic case for interactional modification.

The current study represents an initial investigation into brokering within a new interactional context, that of the homestay, however since the data are limited to a single conversation there is a need to look further into this phenomenon within study abroad situations. In addition, there are still a number of other institutional contexts that warrant further investigation with regard to this practice. In particular, there is a need for future studies to look into brokering within classroom talk, where peer-based repair sequences could prove another worthwhile locus of inquiry.

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<sup>1</sup>The complete data set consists of 3 hours 16 minutes of talk recorded across five occasions throughout a three-week period, although on one of those occasions there were only two participants present (Dad and Shin), so it was impossible for brokering to occur. During the 2 hours and 5 minutes of multi-person talk, there were 18 cases of brokering.

<sup>2</sup> Forward-oriented repair is a more inclusive term than “word search” in that sometimes participants search for things other than simply words, including phrases, clauses or actions. In addition, the term forward-oriented repair places greater emphasis on the sequential progression of the talk.

<sup>3</sup> The data have been transcribed according to Jeffersonian conventions (Jefferson, 2004) with notes on gaze direction based on the approach used by Goodwin (1981): a tilde (~) in the second tier indicates gaze shift and an equals sign (=) depicts fixed gaze toward an object or person shown just prior to the shift via an initial.

<sup>4</sup> It is also possible that Mom’s partially repeated question is demonstrating a surprised stance (Svennevig, 2004), but Shin does not treat it that way in next turn (e.g. by providing an account for his positive response) and Mom does not indicate that his reaction is unusual.

<sup>5</sup> Note that Shin’s post-expansion focuses on his personal eating habits rather than Japanese baseball customs in general, perhaps indicating that he has not fully understood the question after all, but the other participants do not pursue further repair on this occasion.

<sup>6</sup> Shin’s use of “scream” to depict the sort of shouting that Japanese fans do at baseball games may not be typical of the way that many expert English speakers would describe such cheering and in fact in ongoing talk Mom recognizes this by saying “We’d probably use that word at a rock concert”. However, such interim approximations are using the learners full repertoire and pushing him to the zone of proximal development at which learning takes place, and Mom’s feedback as well as the delayed uptake shown in Excerpt 4 may have cued Shin to the fact that his usage of scream was somewhat marked in this context.