Resolving an Understanding Problem through an Extended Sequence

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates how a misunderstanding is sustained, escalated, and ultimately resolved through an extended trajectory of other-initiated repair in Korean conversation. Using a 45-minute phone call between two native speakers, the analysis traces how participants repeatedly return to a trouble source and deploy repair initiators that increase in specificity over time. The single-case analysis identifies three findings: (1) misunderstandings can remain relevant over long stretches of talk even after multiple topic shifts; (2) repair initiations may escalate from weaker to stronger formats across an extended sequence; and (3) a subset of assessments can function as indirect repair initiators by indexing epistemic trouble, a practice described as *doing-being-skeptical*. Situating the case within cross-linguistic work on extended repair, the study advances understanding of how participants negotiate intersubjectivity beyond local adjacency. Limitations of the single-case design and implications for future research and language pedagogy are discussed.

Keywords: other-initiated repair, extended repair sequence, misunderstanding, conversation analysis, single-case analysis

INTRODUCTION

Maintaining mutual understanding is essential for conversational progress, yet talk is interrupted when trouble arises in a variety of forms (Schegloff, 2010, p. 133). For example, cointerlocutors' misspoken utterances such as saying "four" instead of "five" can create conditions where one party misunderstands the other, thus delaying or redirecting the interaction. One primary source for managing such disruptions is repair, described by Schegloff (2000) as "practices for dealing with problems or troubles in speaking, hearing, and understanding the talk in conversation" (p. 207).

While many researchers have investigated repair practices in local proximity (see Kitzinger, 2013), less attention has been given to complex repair practices beyond the adjacency

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pair, particularly in languages other than English. One exception is Suh (2007), who describes how repair can stretch across multiple turns and rounds in business negotiations by non-native English speakers. Yet, extended repair practices are crucial for understanding how interlocutors sustain intersubjectivity when trouble persists beyond a single repair sequence.

The study shows how extended repair trajectories operate within a Korean conversation by tracing how participants repeatedly return to a trouble source, escalate their repair initiations, and ultimately surface and resolve the underlying assumption. Building on cross-linguistic work demonstrating both universal and language-specific features of repair, this study offers a fine-grained analysis of a single episode of extended repair. In doing so, I aim to contribute to research on complex repair practices within a Korean context.

BACKGROUND

Conversation Analysis (CA) treats talk as sequentially organized, with each turn shaped by prior talk and shaping what follows. Its central aim is "to discover how participants understand and respond to one another in their turns-at-talk, with a focus being on how *sequences* of actions are generated" (Hutchby & Wooffitt, 1998, p. 14). Among the many sequences, repair has received a great deal of attention due to its integral role in sustaining understandings in interaction. In this section, I first review foundational literature on repair and then turn to research examining repair in languages beyond English.

Repair and Weak/Strong Repair Initiator

Schegloff at al. (1977) define repair as the set of practices used to deal with troubles in speaking, hearing, or understanding. Central to the basics of repair are *trouble source* and *repair segment*. A trouble source is "a word, phrase or utterance treated as problematic by the participant(s)" (Wong & Waring, 2020, p. 314) and can arise in many forms, including a Freudian slip, an incorrect word, or a misspoken utterance (Schegloff, 2010). In (1), for example, Olive treats *Mary* as problematic with an elongation *uh*:::: in line 1 and a subsequent 0.3-second pause in line 2. In line 4, he replaces it with *Thom:son*, which completes the repair. In this example, *Mary* is the trouble source.

(1) [Schegloff et al., 1977, p. 363 — modified]

Olive: You know Mary uh::::

02 (0.3)

Oh:: what was it.
Uh:: Tho:mson.

Since repair is a sequential phenomenon involving stages in the course of ongoing talk (Shegloff at el., 1977), it consists of distinct segments: repair initiation and repair outcome (repair solution). Repair initiation signals or targets a trouble source, whereas repair outcome resolves or abandons the trouble. In the example above, the repair initiation is the perturbation marker uh:::: (line 1), which follows the trouble source because uh:::: signals that what follows may not be a straightforward continuation of the prior talk. On the other hand, the repair outcome

is *Tho:mson*, whose production completes or resolves the problem. Thus, participants orient to this progression from initiation to outcome (Schegloff, 2010).

Repair sequences can be categorized by who initiates and who completes repair: *self-initiated* versus *other-initiated*. The distinction hinges on whether the repair initiator is the same as the trouble-source producer. This study focuses on other-initiated repair and its continuum of strength, ranging from weakest to strongest (Schegloff, 2007). At the weaker end are *open-class repair initiators* (Drew, 1997) such as *Huh?*, *What?*, *Pardon?*, which signal trouble but perform *less* in pinpointing its nature. *Candidate understandings* represent stronger formats because they offer a proposed interpretation and more directly target the trouble source.

It is important to note that repair may occur in the absence of an overt error or mistake, and conversely, a hearable error does not always necessarily trigger repair. These attributes of repair underscore that it should be understood "not as a discrete conversational device but rather as an interactively negotiated and contextually governed phenomenon" (Suh, 2007, p. 51).

Repair over Multiple Turns in Non-English Languages

Research in CA has long established repair as a fundamental mechanism for maintaining intersubjectivity. Participants orient to troubles in speaking, hearing, and understanding, drawing on different sets of repair initiators to resolve them. Yet, the widely cited repair model outlined by Schegloff et al. (1977) focuses primarily on the basic two-part repair sequence, which can be inadequate for capturing the complexity of extended repair trajectories often occurring in interaction. Although subsequent studies have examined repair in institutional settings such as business meetings (Larrue & Trognon, 1993) and classroom interactions (Liebscher & Dailey-O'Cain, 2003; Macbeth, 2004), this work remains heavily centered on English. As a result, our understanding of how repair unfolds across languages beyond local proximity is limited. Addressing this gap, Egbert (2004) presents a detailed case of a repair sequence lasting approximately two minutes, arguing that the repair system is both "elastic," enabling numerous expansions, and "robust," as participants continue re-engaging the trouble source until it is amended.

This broader perspective raises the question of whether repair practices operate consistently across languages. Cross-linguistic research affirms repair as a universal interactional mechanism, while highlighting language-specific resources that guide its completion. For instance, Dingemanse et al. (2015) document other-initiated repair across 12 typologically diverse languages, underscoring its broad application. Simultaneously, studies reveal how repair sequences are shaped by linguistic sources. In Mandarin, the extent of recycling and redoing during repair appears to be influenced more by lexical considerations than by syntax (Chui, 1996), a pattern consistent with the language's lack of inflectional morphology, absence of obligatory agreement between adjacent syntactic categories, and comparatively flexible word order (cf. Tseng, 2006).

Building on these insights, recent research has begun examining multi-turn or extended repair sequences in non-English languages. This work demonstrates that the same universal repair system can operate over longer trajectories while remaining sensitive to language-specific resources. For example, Haakana et al. (2021) show in Finnish that repeats with question words more frequently lead to second repair initiations than candidate understandings or open-class initiators. In Korean, M. S. Kim and S. H. Kim (2014) illustrate how sentence-final particles allow speakers to escalate repair across multiple turns: particle-marked repair initiations can

project disagreement, surprise, or disbelief, whereas unmarked forms simply check understanding. These findings suggest that although the mechanism of repair is universal, its sequential expansion is influenced by linguistic and interactional contexts.

Taken together, cross-linguistic research presents a mixed picture: shared principles of repair coexist with language-specific realizations. Against this backdrop, the present study examines one form of extended repair identified by Kendrick (2015), in which participants persistently orient to a trouble source by issuing several other-initiations until mutual understanding is achieved. Through a detailed single-case analysis of extended repair in symmetrical Korean interactions (e.g., between friends), I aim to deepen our understanding of how extended repair unfolds in Korean and, more broadly, how participants negotiate intersubjectivity over longer stretches of talk.

DATA AND METHOD

The data come from a naturally occurring 45-minute phone call between two native Korean speakers, Sophia and Chan, who attended the same college and majored in English Education. This call was an informal catch-up: Chan relocated to New York City and Sophia was still in Korea. During my "unmotivated looking" (Psathas, 1995), I became focused on an episode in which Chan mentioned a third person, Kihoon, who had invited him to a birthday celebration. As the conversation progressed, Sophia developed a misunderstanding regarding Kihoon's background, one that only Chan could clarify.

This study adopts a conversation-analytic approach, investigating naturally occurring talk to reveal how participants organize interaction on a turn-by-turn basis. The extracts analyzed showcase a particular instance of uncovering and resolving a misunderstanding through an extended sequence between the two speakers. The segment beginning with Chan's introduction of Kihoon and culminating in the resolution of Sophia's misunderstanding was transcribed and analyzed within a CA framework.

The transcripts include: (1) the original Korean utterances in *Hangul* (the Korean alphabet), (2) morpheme-by-morpheme glosses, and (3) idiomatic English translations, presented in a three-line format. Due to linguistic differences, overlaps will be marked only in the original transcript and morpheme-by-morpheme glosses. Transcription follows Jeffersonian conventions (Jefferson, 2004), which capture timing, intonation, overlaps, and pauses—features essential for analyzing repair practices. A list of transcription symbols and abbreviations is provided in the Appendix.

ANALYSIS

The analysis shows that the misunderstanding between Sophia (S) and Chan (C) is resolved through a sustained series of other-initiated repairs that escalate in strength and recur even after topics shift, ultimately surfacing and correcting S's underlying assumption about Kihoon (K). Extended repair becomes possible because each participant continues to treat the trouble source as relevant until mutual understanding is restored. The analysis proceeds chronologically through six phases of the sequence.

Before turning to the extracts, it is important to situate the interactional context. Both participants share a background in the Korean education system and hold bachelor's degrees in English Education from the same college, which houses various education majors. Their initial, but ultimately divergent, expectations about a "math education major" are situated against this background. Specifically, their initial assumption is that completing an undergraduate degree in Math Education is typically followed by pursuing a teaching position in Korea.

Emergence of the Trouble Source: Early Repair Initiation

The initial misunderstanding originates when S interprets the trouble source "今彰显母과 math education major" through the lens of the Korean education system. Her repair attempts reveal trouble in understanding, not in hearing. Prior to Extract 1, C describes attending K's birthday gathering to S. Because K is a common Korean name, S assumes that K followed the Korean academic path in which Math Education typically leads to a teaching career. This expectation shapes how she interprets C's description.

Extract 1					
1	S	누구의 생일이었음?			
		whose birthday-be-PST-IE			
		Whose birthday was it?			
((6 lines	s omitted))	·			
8	S	.hh 되게 한국적인 이름인데, 뉴욕에서 만난 거임?			
		very Korean.like-be-RL name-be-CIRCUM NewYork-LOC meet-RL-thing-IE			
		.hh (It) is a very Korean name (and) (did you) meet (him) in New York?			
9	С	한국에서- 아 뉴욕에서 만난 거↑고:, 한국사람이↑고[:			
		Korea-Loc uh NY-Loc meet-RL-thing-and Korea.person-be-and			
		In Korea- Uh in New York (I) met (him) \(\gamma\) and:, (he) is Korean \(\gamma\) and:			
10	S	[어,			
		[uh-huh			
		yes,			
11		[여]:			
		[uh-huh]			
		yes:			
12	С	[수]학교[육과 박-]			
	_	[ma]th.ed[ucation.study doc]			
		(he's) Math Education doc-			
13	S	[맞음 기]훈이는 한국- 한국 사람임.(hh)(hhh)			
		[correct P]N-NOM Korea Korean person-be-IE			
		(You're) Right. Kihoon is Korea- Korean. (hh) (hhh)			
14	C	어, 기[훈:]			
		Yes P [N]			
		Yes, Kihoon:			
15	S	[에::? 수]학교육과?=			
		[huh ma]th.education.study			
	→ Huh::? Math Education major?=				
16	C	=어 수학교육 [과]			
	Yes math.education.[study]				
		=yes Math Education major			
•					

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When S asks whose birthday it was in line 1, C mentions K in the omitted lines, leading S to assess the name as "very Korean" in line 8. C then provides brief background information in lines 9 and 12 while S overlaps with continuer tokens "or uh-huh" (K. H. Kim, 1999) in lines 10-11. As C mentions K's degree level "math education study doc-" in line 12, S displays heightened engagement "the right," reconfirming that K is Korean in line 13.

In line 15, S launches an open-class repair initiator with an elongated " \mathfrak{A} ::? huh::?", which simultaneously indexes surprise and initiates repair (Wilkinson & Kitzinger, 2006). S then repeats C's mid-turn item with rising intonation "math education major=?", explicitly flagging it as the trouble source. This invites C to complete the repair, confirming what she heard is correct in line 16. This suggests that C treats this as a hearing, not an understanding, problem.

Seemingly unsatisfied, S launches another repair attempt, offering a candidate understanding "Kihoon?"—." Here she replaces the trouble source "math education major" with "Kihoon" in line 17, suggesting S is trying to piece all the information together. C completes his cut-off turn "박-doc-" (line 12) and identifies K as a doctoral student in line 18, again treating the issue as a simple hearing error. In overlap, S produces a gasp, hearable as surprise in line 19. Although C treats both repair initiators as hearing problems and provides local repair, S's surprise, reiteration of K's name (lines 8 and 13), and prosodic stress on "교육과 education major" over "숙학 math" (line 15) and final gasp (line 19) signal a deeper epistemic mismatch. For S, a U.S. math education degree followed by a teaching position in Korea makes little sense.

Reorientation and Renewed Trouble: Assessment as Indirect Repair Initiators

Following Extract 1, C and S shift to a new topic for approximately five and a half minutes, yet S eventually returns to the trouble source, indicating that the misunderstanding remains unresolved. Still unsettled about why K is pursuing a math education degree abroad, S uses assessments (*very interesting/funny*, *weird*) as subtle repair initiators—a practice I term *doing-being-skeptical*. Extracts 2 and 3 illustrate this practice at varying levels of intensity.

```
Extract 2
                      그래서 기훈이는 (.) 많은 축하를
20
       S
                                                            받았음?
                      anyway PN-TOP
                                       a.lot congratulation-ACC receive-PST-IE
                      Anyway did Kihoon (.) receive a lot of congratulations?
(( 3 lines omitted ))
                      우와.=근데 거기서 수학교육과라는
                                                           게
                                                                되게: 웃긴다:,
                                                                                   뭔가
24
       S
                      wow but there-LOC math.ed.study-QT-RL thing very funny/interesting DM
                      Wow.= But having a math education major there is somehow very interesting:,
25
                      (0.5)
                      >그런 전공을
                                     선택해서< 가는구나:,
26
                       such major-ACC choose-and go-UNASSIM
```

		(One) would choose such a major:,				
27	C	그쵸:, Ma:th educacatio:n- 왜냐면 >내가 지금 다니는 학교가<				
		be.so-COMM:POL because I-TOP now go-RL school-TOP				
		Right:, Ma:th educatio:n- because >the school I go to now<				
28		teachers- teachers college 잖아요, 누나:,				
		be-you.know-POL older.sister				
		is as you know teachers- teachers college, nuna:,				
29	S	그렇지,=				
		be.so-COMM				
		(You're) right,=				
30	C	=그러니까 그 ↑모든: 교육과가 다 있어요.				
		so DM every education.study-TOP all have-POL				
		=So (the school) has ↑every education study.				
31		(0.5)				

In line 20, S uses the disjunctive marker "그래서 Anyway" to signal a topic shift (Crow, 1983) and employs Kihoon as a pivot in line 20 to usher in "next-positioned matters" (Beach, 1993, p. 329), namely "숙학교육과 math education major" in line 24. Importantly, this renewed pursuit does not appear to be motivated by the "less than enthusiastic" responses (Button & Casey, 1985), as evidenced by C's high engagement with S's earlier repair attempts and the 5.5-minutes of unrelated talk. This confirms that S's initial repair attempts were not about mishearing and that the earlier sequences did not resolve her understanding trouble.

S's assessment of K's major as "되게: 웃인다: very interesting/funny" in line 24 does more than evaluate: it displays skepticism about the logic of studying Math Education "거기서 there" (NYC). Her repeated spatial indexing supports her assumption that education majors belong within the Korean teacher-certification system, thus perceiving K's academic path as "illogical." The discourse marker 뭔가 in line 24 also hedges her stance, indicating uncertainty. Without obtaining any uptake during the 0.5-gap in line 25, S proceeds to reiterate what she treats as interesting in line 26, with the use of "구가," (a change-of-state token similar to English Oh (Heritage, 1988)), displaying surprise at discovering something unexpected. At the same time, although S launches an assessment-as-repair-initiator (doing-being-skeptical) in line 24, she aligns with the new information in line 26, orienting to preference for progressivity despite receiving no overt repair solution from C.

C's "그룹 right" in line 27 affiliates with S's evaluative stance (Yoon, 2023), but he immediately mitigates this alignment by providing a lengthy justification for why choosing Math Education is acceptable in lines 27-28 and 30. In line 29, S responds with "그렇지 you're right," a token associated with a subordinate epistemic position (Yoon, 2023), but still signals tentative agreement (J. Lee, 2014). This suggests that while S acknowledges C's answer, it is not scratching the core of S's skepticism.

By line 30, C finishes his explanation for why K's choice is not *funny/interesting*. His raised pitch on "모든 *every*" highlights his effort to guide S toward the intended understanding. As will be shown, the underlying misalignment in their interpretations of Math Education remains unresolved, setting the stage for stronger repair initiators.

Sequential Escalation with Epistemically Downgraded Stance: *Doing-being-skeptical*

Extract 3 shows a sequential escalation of *doing-being-skeptical*, yet this escalation is designed in an epistemically downgraded manner. S's skepticism becomes more obvious and extended compared to Extract 2, but her stance is repeatedly softened through hedges and mitigators (e.g., 음, 뭔가, ~(으) ㄹ 것 같아, 느낌, 약간, and 좀). This duality sustains orientation to the trouble source, while preventing the understanding problem from being explicitly articulated and therefore being resolved.

Extra	ct 3					
32	S	.hh 음-뭔가: 거(기)까지 가서 교육학을 ↑한다는-				
		um DM there-even go-and ed.study-ACC do-PRE-DC-RL				
		→ .hh um- well: that (he) even goes there and ↑does an education major-				
33		.hh <u>교육학은</u> 괜찮은데 뭔가 <u>수학</u> 교육과 막 이렇게 하면은				
		edu.study-NOM fine-CIRCUM DM math.edu.study DM like.this do-if-TOP				
		.hh education major is reasonable but if (you say) (he) does a math education study				
34		거기서 임용 볼 것 같애.				
		There certification.exam take-RL thing like-IE				
		It seems like (he will) take the (teacher) certification exam there.				
35	C	(h)(h)(h)[(h)(h)]				
36	S	[(h) hh] hhh .hhh 뭔가 느낌이 (.) 약간- 좀 >그런 데 가서는 뭔가<				
		something feeling-NOM little DM such.place go-after-TOP DM				
		[(h) hh] hhh .hhh something feels (.) a little- (weird) >after (you) go there<				
37		마켓팅학과나 경-경영학과 그것까지는 다괜찮은데:				
		marketing.major-or bu-business.major that-up.to-TOP all fine-CIRCUM				
		Up to marketing major bu-business major something up are all reasonable:				
38	C	어 [:]				
		uh- [huh]				
		Yes[:]				
39	S	[그]냥 교육↑과라고 하면은 뭔가: (.) 느낌이 >좀 이상해.<				
		[jus]t edu.major-QP if-TOP DM feeling-NOM DM weird-IE				
→ If (you) (say) just education ↑major: (.) it feels >a little weird.<						

Despite S's tentative affiliation in Extract 2, her reluctance marker "을 um" in line 32 suggests potential disaffiliation (Pomerantz, 1984). Treating C's previous turn as insufficient, she launches a lengthy post-expansion through line 39, initiating a second instance of doing-being-skeptical. In line 32, S's comment "even goes there" reiterates her sense of locational illogicalness. In lines 33-34, she further speculates that K must be planning to take the teacher certification exam in NYC, indicating that S still cannot reconcile why K would study Math Education in the U.S. if he had already completed the relevant training in Korea (based on her implicit assumption; see Extract 7 below). From her perspective, majors such as marketing or business constitute a more "reasonable" reason to study in "그런 데 such a place" (lines 36-37), whereas Math Education remains "이 상해 weird" (line 39), echoing her earlier stance.

Throughout these turns, S's design remains epistemically mitigated. Her repeated use of 음, 뭔가, 약간, 좀, and 것 같아 (it seems like) and 느낌 (feeling) softens her stance and frames

her assessment as tentative or subjective. These items signify hesitation and present her stance as her own confusion rather than a challenge to C's earlier explanation. Simultaneously, her *doing-being-skeptical* is escalated from *funny* in line 24 to *weird* in line 39.

This dual design of both escalation and mitigation is significant. S's turns display stronger skepticism, advancing the repair trajectory, yet their mitigating form prevents her from exposing the underlying assumption causing her trouble. A more assertive inquiry (e.g., "Why would K study Math Education in NYC?") would have revealed the core issue and prompted C to address it directly. Instead, C's laugher tokens in line 35 treat S's assessment as laughable, failing again to target the actual understanding problem. As a result, the problem remains submerged, and both participants continue operating with misaligned assumptions. The sequence therefore progresses toward the stronger repair initiations that ultimately bring the underlying trouble to the surface in Extracts 4-7.

Chan's Initial Attempt to Surface the Underlying Trouble Source

Extract 4 marks the moment when C begins to address the core of S's understanding problem. Her continued orientations to trouble prompt C to produce a protracted explanation that surfaces the assumption fueling the extended repair trajectory. S's downgraded yet persistent skepticism in Extract 3 adds interactional pressure for clarification, treating C's accounts as insufficient and making conditionally relevant a more comprehensive repair solution.

```
Extract 4
                       =거기에서 선생님을 하려고 하나?= 약간 그런 느낌?
40
       S
                        there-LOC teacher-ACC do-will o
                                                          a ;little this feeling
                       =Kind of feels like "Does he intend to become a teacher over there?"
                       아 근데 (.) <웃긴 건> 뭐냐면은 기훈이는 심지어: ce-certified teacher 도 아니야.
41
       C
                                  funny thing what-TOP PN-TOP
                                                                even
                       Ah but (.) <what's funny> is that Kihoon is not even a ce- certified teacher.
42
                       (1.0)
                        ↑ ાં ?
43
       S
                        huh
                        ↑Huh:?
                        근까 그게 뭔 소리냐면-
44
       C
                       I.mean that what sound-Q
                       So what I mean is that-
                                       ((9 lines omitted))
54
                       기훈[이는 ] undergrad 은: (0.2) 근까 저기-학:사 (.) 대학교는:
                       PN- [TOP ]
                                             TOP
                                                     I.mean DM bachelor college-TOP
                \rightarrow
                       Kihoon's undergrad (is): (0.2) I mean well-bache:lor (.) college:
55
       S
                            [어
                            [uh-huh]
                            [yeah ]
       C
                                  그냥 pure 수학과를
                                                            나오고. (0.2)
56
                       completely just
                                            math.study-ACC come.out-and
                       (he) completely just did a pure math major and, (0.2)
57
       S
                       uh-huh
                       uh-huh::
```

58	C	그 담에 master <u>때</u> : 그냥 cer- 그 임용: 아니 뭐야,
		that after time just that certification.exam no what.is.it.
		After that during (his) Master's just cer- certification exam: no what you call it,
59		선생님 안 되는-
		teacher not become-RL
		(track) where (he) doesn't become a teacher-
60		선생님 그 자격증 안 나오[는 그냥 트랙]- 트랙 하고,
		teacher that certification not come-[RL just track] track do-and
		(he) did just a track- track which doesn't issue the certification and,
61	S	[બ:::::?]
		[huh]
		[Huh::::::?]
62	C	>그 다음에 이제 박사도< 그걸로 하는 거예요.
		that after now doctoral.also that-through do-RL thing-POL
		>After that (he) now does the same thing in his doctoral.

In line 40, S makes a conjecture that projects her Korean institutional logic on the U.S. context: "Does he intend to become a teacher there?" This question does not simply ask if K is already certified. Rather, it expresses her broader assumption that studying Math Education, regardless of the location, is motivated by the goal of becoming a teacher. Responding to S's renewed trouble, C opens his turn with the disjunctive marker oh ah and provide a "the but"-prefaced correction: "Kihoon is not even a certified teacher" in line 41. By framing this as "the funny thing," C offers what he treats as clarifying information, implicitly reinterpreting S's conjecture about K's intentions as a question about whether K is (or is not) on a teacher-certification track. The 1.0-gap in line 42 and S's raised-pitch "oh:? huh:?" in line 43 indicate her surprise and signal further trouble.

Interpreting this \(\gamma Huh:\)? as a renewed repair initiation, C expands his accounts. In omitted lines 45-53, he explains that U.S. Math Education includes two tracks: teacher preparation and research. With this context established, C launches a stretched repair solution in lines 54-62, detailing K's academic path: an undergraduate major in pure mathematics (line 56), a non-teaching Master's track (lines 58-60), and research-oriented doctoral study (line 62).

S's response tokens display notable variation throughout this explanation. The first din line 55 functions as a straightforward continuer (K. H. Kim, 1999; Schegloff, 1982). However, the elongated d:: in line 57 and even more pronounced d:::::? in line 61 occur as C unpacks the details of K's academic history. These increasingly marked tokens suggest that C's account may have intensified S's confusion, as the new information conflicted with her existing assumptions about the expected trajectory of K.

Extract 4 therefore represents C's first attempt to address S's problem of understanding. Yet his explanation still does not fully target the implicit assumption shaping her understanding. As a result, the trajectory of trouble continues into Extract 5.

Upgraded Doing-Being-Skeptical and the Emerging Candidate Understanding

Despite C's expanded explanation in Extract 4, S's trouble persists. Extract 5 presents an upgraded instance of *doing-being-skeptical*, culminating in a candidate understanding, a key step towards surfacing the underlying assumption.

Extra	act 5	
63		(1.5)
64	S	엥: 그래:? 특이[하]네 [:?]
		hmm is.that.so. pecu[liar]-FR[]
		→ Hmm: Is that so:? (it's) peculiar:?
65	C	[°uh°] [어] 그러니까 쟤는 researcher 가 되고 [싶은 거-
		yes that.is he-TOP NOM be [want.to
		ouho okay so he wants to become a researcher-
66	S	[한국이랑
		[Korea-with
67		완전 다르네.
		completely different-FR
		(It's) completely different from Korea. (lines 66-67 combined)
68		(.)
69	S	아::::: 교육에 관련돼서?= 수학쪽에 관련돼서?
		oh education-to related math-side-to related
		Oh::::: (you mean) (research) related to education?= related to math?
70	C	어. 리서처가 되고 싶은 거지
		yes researcher-NOM be want-thing-COMM
		Yeah. (he) wants to be a researcher (but)
71		그 선생이 되고싶은 건 `아닌것 같애.
		that teacher-NOM be want-RL thing-TOP not thing like.IE
		(he) doesn't seem to want to be a teacher.
72	S	o}:::::.
		oh
		O::::h.
73	C	° <u>°</u> •
		yes
		°Yeah.°

Following C's explanation, S designs her next turn as dispreferred (Pomerantz, 1984): a 1.5-gap delay (line 63), a reluctance marker "엉: hmm:" and the questioning "그래:? Is that so:?" (line 64). She then produces a more direct doing-being-skeptical in line 64: "특이하네:? Peculiar:?" While more straightforward, her turn is still epistemically downgraded, marking her stance as tentative. In response, C adds that K wants to become a researcher in line 65. S then demonstrates her understanding that "it's completely different from Korea" in lines 66-67 through -네 (Strauss, 2005; H.S. Lee, 1993), explicitly connecting her trouble to institutional differences.

The turning point arrives at line 69: "Oh:::: related to education? Related to math?" following a micropause. This candidate understanding marks S's first active attempt to reconstruct the logic of K's path. C strengthens this reconstruction by reaffirming that K seeks to become a researcher (line 70), not a teacher (line 71). S's elongated 'h::::. O::::h. signals her transition from not-knowing to knowing (Heritage, 1988). C's " 'Peah." in line 73 serves as a pre-closing device (Betz et al., 2021; Schegloff & Sacks, 1973), signaling orientation towards exiting the sequence.

Throughout Extract 5, both participants continue to collaborate toward resolving the problem of understanding. S's successive repair attempts become increasingly complex, and the

candidate understanding marks the moment when the underlying assumption finally begins to surface, opening the path toward full repair.

Recognition, Mutual Formation, and Successful Resolution of Trouble

This section illustrates how the extended repair sequence reaches completion. S's increasingly assertive repair attempts eventually prompt C to recognize and correct her assumption. Crucially, the participants then *mutually formulate* that assumption; only when both explicitly articulate and align on what the problem of understanding was does repair become complete.

```
Extract 6
                        그럼 걔는 이제 계속
74
        S
                                                 미국에
                                                          있을 생각으로
                        then he-TOP now constantly U.S-LOC be-RL thought-with
                        거기서 (.) 그걸
                                          하는 건가?=
75
                        there
                                  that-ACC do-PRS-thing-RL-Q(Am.I.right)
                        Then am I right in saying that he does (his doctoral) with the thought of continuously
                        staying in the US from now on? (lines 74-75 combined)
                        =아 걔는
                                    고등학교때부터
                                                       미국 살던
                                                                          애예요.
76
        \mathbf{C}
                         Oh he-TOP highschool-time-since US live-used.to-RL child-be-POL
                        =Oh he has lived in the US since high school.
                \rightarrow
77
                        (.)
                        아: 그렇구↑나:.
78
        S
                        oh be.so-unassim
                        Oh: I ↑see:.
                \rightarrow
79
        \mathbf{C}
                        쟤는 그린카드가
                                               있[어.]
                        he-TOP greencard-NOM has-[IE]
                        He is a Green Card holder,
                                                 [아]::: 오키오키오키.
80
        S
                                                 [oh ] ok ok ok
                                                  [Oh]::: okay okay okay.
81
                        (.)
```

In lines 74-75, despite C's earlier attempt to close the topic (line 73), S re-engages it by asking whether K intends to remain in the U.S. "from now on" and "continuously," marked by the epistemic marker -(>)? (H.S. Lee, 2003). Her lexical choices reveal her implicit assumption: K recently moved to the U.S. for study and had previously been in Korea. Through this turn, S makes her underlying assumption newly available to C, creating space for a more precise repair.

In line 76, C responds with a rushed "=oh," signaling that he has finally grasped what S is working out. He then offers a correction that directly addresses her premise—not K's career plans, but the locational assumption underlying her question. This shift shows that he now recognizes the root of S's trouble of understanding. She believed K had lived in Korea until recently and had already completed his Math Education training there, interpreting his U.S. studies through that lens.

After a micropause in line 77, S produces an oh-prefaced "그렇구나 I see," a token associated with sequence closure and integration of new information (Ha, 2018, 2022). This

suggests the repair has likely been successful. To reinforce the repair, C adds that K is a Green Card holder in line 79, which she accepts with triple *okay*s in line 80, displaying alignment with the repair.

This clarification resolves the informational gap but not yet the understanding trouble itself. The micropause in 81 presents an opportunity for S to steer the conversation forward. Extract 7 demonstrates how full resolution requires both parties to formulate and confirm the previously unspoken assumption, thereby restoring intersubjectivity regarding the trouble source.

```
Extract 7
                        아 난 또 여기 한국에
82
        S
                                              있다가
                                                            그렇게 가서 하는 건 [줄 알았어.]
                        oh I DM here Korea-LOC exist-and-then like.that go-and do-RL
                \rightarrow
                        Oh I thought (he) was in Korea and went there (to become a teacher).
83
        C
                                                                                  [아::
                                                                                         아:]: uh-
                                                                                 [oh
                                                                                         oh ]
                                                                                  [oh::
                                                                                         oh:]: uh-
                        아 그니까
                                      한국에서 수학교육을
                                                              하다↑가: >선생님 하다가:?<
84
                        oh you.mean Korea-LOC math.edu-ACC do-while teacher do-while
                \rightarrow
                        Oh you mean (he) studied math education in Korea: (and) >being a teacher:?<
85
        S
                        어: 어:
                                  [어: ]
                                   [yes ]
                        yes yes
                        yeah: yeah: [yeah:]
86
        C
                                   [%]:::.
                                   [oh ]
                                   [Oh:: ]:::.
87
                        (.)
88
        C
                        hhh∫hh
89
        S
                                  ]래서 특이하(h)다(h):
                                                              hh[hh ]
                            [That's] why peculiar-DC
                            That's why (I said it's) pecu(h)liar(h): hh[hh]
90
        C
                                                                 [↑그|치::
                                                                  be.so-COMM
                                                                  [rig]ht::
((5 lines omitted))
96
                        한국에(h)서 선생(h)님 할 거(h)면: hh <u>굳이</u> Hhh 꼭 갈 필요가 있나[: ]
        S
                        Korea-LOC teacher be-RL-thing-if why-bother surely go-RL need be-Q
                        If he's going to be a teacher in Korea, is there really any need to go (arboad)?
97
        C
                                                                                     [어.] 그치그치.
                                                                                     yes be.so-COMM
                                                                                     [yes.] Right, right.
```

In line 82, S provides a "full disclosure of misapprehension" (Smith & Seuren, 2022, p. 56), finally stating what she had previously believed about K's situation. Her lexical contrast between the repeated "거기 there" (lines 24, 34, 40, 75) and "여기 한국에 here in Korea" in line 82 highlights a shift in both locational and cognitive framing. This is the first explicit articulation of the assumption that shaped her interpretations throughout the interaction—namely, that K completed his training preparation in Korea before coming to the U.S.

Upon receiving this disclosure, C produces a duplicated, elongated *oh* in line 83 and initiates an other-initiated repair with "24" You mean," followed by an understanding check

in line 84 (Benjamin, 2012). In this turn, C formulates S's prior assumption in his own words, demonstrating his full understanding of both the corrected information and the nature of the misunderstanding itself. This two-way formulation is crucial as it displays alignment, confirms shared understanding of the trouble source, and marks the near-completion of repair.

S confirms C's formulation with a triple "I yes" in line 85, which C acknowledges with an elongated "I oh" in line 86. The exchange of confirmation and change-of-state tokens indicates that the misunderstanding has been completely resolved. C's formulation also displays a clear grasp of the source of the trouble, marking a moment of achieved intersubjectivity.

After a micropause in line 87, C invites S to laugh in line 88. Revisiting her earlier assessment *peculiar* (line 64), S joins in laughter. This shared laughter indexes affiliation (Ellis, 1997) and serves to terminate the topic (Holt, 2010), signaling that both participants recognize the trouble as resolved. S's hypothetical extension in line 96, delivered with continued laughter and an inside-joke quality, further reinforces topic termination.

In short, Extract 7 demonstrates that extended repair does not conclude with correct information alone. Rather, full resolution is achieved only when participants openly articulate the underlying assumption, confirm each other's understanding of it, and mutually acknowledge the repair's completion. This phase re-establishes intersubjectivity and closes the extended trajectory of trouble initiated in Extract 1.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The analysis reveals that the participants' initially shared understanding of the trouble source *Math Education* diverged after C relocated to NYC, where he gained new knowledge about K and the U.S. education system. This divergence created an asymmetry in how each party interpreted *Math Education*, ultimately generating trouble in understanding. In the early stages, C repeatedly failed to recognize the root of S's trouble, leading S to persistently reorient the talk toward the trouble source. Through the process, the implicit assumptions shaping S's interpretations were gradually surfaced, articulated, and repaired. Ultimately, through multiple rounds of initiation and resolution, the participants collaboratively navigated the problem of understanding, reached resolution, and transitioned to a new topic.

Three key findings emerge. First, the case demonstrates that a repairable trouble may persist across long sequences, with participants repeatedly returning to it even after shifting topics. Although the initial problem of understanding receives partial attention in Extract 1, the topic moves in new directions for approximately five and a half minutes. Still, S reopens the trouble by using K as a pivot and launches the first *doing-being-skeptical* repair initiation "very interesting" in line 24. Her successive repair initiations create new opportunities for C to address the trouble, enabling the pair to collaboratively work towards resolution. This supports Egbert's (2004) characterization of repair as an "elastic" and "robust" mechanism, one that allows for multiple expansions and is reused until the repairable is amended, as also evidenced in extended L1-L2 repair trajectories (Egbert, Niebecker, & Rezzara, 2004).

Second, the analysis reveals a clear escalation from weaker to stronger repair initiations throughout the conversation. S progressively intensifies the specificity of her repair work. In Extract 1, she upgrades from an open-class initiator Huh::? (line 15) to a candidate understanding $Math\ education\ major$ (line 17). After multiple topic shifts, S reinitiated repair through $doing\-being\-skeptical$ in Extract 2, expands it in Extract 3, and produces a further

upgrade in Extract 5. This development aligns with Dingemanse et al.'s (2015) cross-linguistic "principle of specificity," which predicts that interactant increasingly prefer more targeted formats following open initiators. The present case extends this work by demonstrating how such escalation unfolds in Korean across an extended sequence.

Lastly, the data highlight a set of repair-initiation practices employed by S that merit closer attention. Of particular interest are her final three assessments "very interesting," "weird," and "Peculiar?" (lines 24, 39, 64). These serve simultaneously as stance displays and as doingbeing-skeptical—that is, assessment-as-repair-initiator. While CA traditionally treats assessments and repair as distinct domains—the former used to project (dis)agreement and negotiate epistemic rights (Pomerantz, 1984; Heritage & Raymond, 2005), and latter indexing trouble recent research shows that repair can be initiated through indirect stance displays, including subtle epistemic or embodied behaviors such as eye gaze or sharp head turn (Egbert, 1996; Seo & Koshik, 2010). Building on this line of research, this study proposes that a subset of assessments can function as indirect repair initiators by indexing epistemic trouble, making elaboration conditionally relevant. Their weakness lies in their lack of specificity; nevertheless, they are treated as actionable by recipients. Across the data, S's progressively elaborated doingbeing-skeptical prompts C to provide further clarification, ultimately contributing to the turning point in Extract 5, where the underlying assumption begins to surface. The extracts therefore support the claim that these assessment-based practices serve as an important, though subtle, resource for initiating repair in extended sequences.

As a single-case analysis, this study does not claim generalizability to all Korean interactions or all instances of extended repair. Rather, Korean linguistic resources played a consequential role in how trouble was displayed and treated, and the analysis is offered as a detailed examination of one extended repair trajectory that can serve as a basis for future comparative work across languages and contexts.

Theoretically, the analysis broadens our understanding of extended repair by showing how such sequences unfold when an understanding trouble is rooted in implicit cultural institutional assumptions. Given the analytic challenges of systematically analyzing complex repair practices, prior research has largely focused on adjacent repair practices. By examining how multiple delayed repairs address trouble stemming from misaligned epistemic statuses, this study contributes to a fuller account of repair beyond local adjacency. I further proposed that a subset of assessments may operate as indirect repair initiators. While additional work is needed, this finding offers a potential starting point for building collections of the candidate phenomenon (cf. Waring, 2009).

Pedagogically, the findings underscore the relevance of repair for language teaching and learning. Repair provides a fundamental tool for addressing learners' errors and misunderstandings (Kasper & Y. Kim, 2007). Yet employing direct, verbal repair strategies in real time can be challenging for learners with limited proficiency. One way to address this problem is to introduce *indirect* methods for projecting epistemic stance. Prior research has shown that speakers use "embodied noticings" to signal doubt or non-alignment (Kääntä, 2014), facial gestures to directly flag trouble (Dingemanse & Enfield, 2015), and body movements to initiate repair (Andrews, 2014). In addition to these nonverbal resources, short assessments such as "That's interesting," as a form of *doing-being-skeptical*, can be explicitly taught as a means of signaling epistemic trouble and effectively flagging a prior turn as a potential trouble source.

Future research should pursue a more systematic account of how complex repair practices are organized, particularly in extended sequences that unfold over multiple shifts in stance, and

epistemic access. In addition, expanding single-case analyses to languages beyond the one examined in this study will help clarify both the universal features of repair and the language-specific resources through which participants manage trouble in interaction. Such work will deepen our understanding of how intersubjectivity is negotiated across diverse linguistic and cultural contexts.

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APPENDIX

Transcription Symbols

(period) falling intonation.

? (question mark) rising intonation., (comma) continuing intonation.

- (hyphen) abrupt cut-off.

:: (colon(s)) prolonging of sound.

word (underlining) stress.

word The more underlining, the greater the stress.

WORD (all caps) loud speech.

°word° (degree symbols) quiet speech. ↑word (upward arrow) raised pitch. ↓word (downward arrow) lowered pitch.

>word
(more than and less than) quicker speech.
(less than and more than) slowed speech.
(less than) jump start or rushed start.
(series of h's) aspiration or laughter.
(h's preceded by period) inhalation.

(hh) (h's in parentheses) inside word boundaries.[] (lined-up brackets) beginner and ending of

simultaneous or overlapping speech.

(equal sign) latch or contiguous utterances of the same speaker.
(2.4) (number in parentheses) length of a silence in 10ths of a second.

(.) (period in parentheses) micro-pause, 0.2 second or less.
 () (empty parentheses) non-transcribable segment of talk.
 (try1)/ (try 2) (two parentheses separated by a slash) alternative hearings.

\$word\$ (dollar signs) smiley voice. #word# (number signs) squeaky voice.

List of Abbreviations

ACC	Accusative	NEG	Negative particle
BEN	Benefactive	NML	Nominalizer
CAUS	Causative	NOM	Nominative
CIRCUM	Circumstantial	PASS	Passive
CLF	Classifier	PL	Plural suffix
COMM	Committal	PN	Proper noun
COND	Conditional	POL	Polite ending
CONJ	Conjectural	PROG	Progressive
DC	Declarative suffix	PRS	Present
DEF	Deferential ending	PST	Past
DM	Discourse marker	Q	Question particle
EVID	Evidential marker	QT	Quotative particle
FR	Factual realization	RL	Relativizer suffix
HEARSAY	Hearsay marker	TOP	Topic particle
HON	Honorific	UNASSIM	Unassimilated
IE	Informal ending	VOC	Vocative particle
LOC	Locative particle		