Using Full Repeats to Initiate Repair on Others' Questions

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This article is a conversation-analytic investigation of a previously undescribed practice of other-initiation of repair designed to locate an entire action as the repairable. This practice is implemented by a full, virtually identical, final-rising-intoned repeat of a sentential turn-constructional unit (a full repeat). This article focuses on how the full repeat is deployed to deal with one type of action, the question (i.e., a first-pair part whose primary action is one of requesting information in the vernacular sense). The full repeat delimits the nature of the trouble by working to rule out that of hearing-what-was-said and understanding-that-a-question-was-asked. The full repeat tacitly claims that a questioning action is somehow problematic. The nature of this problem can be one of either understanding the questioning action (i.e., trouble understanding the thrust of the question-as-a-whole, or what it is getting at, or what is meant by its asking), or accepting the questioning action (e.g., characterizing it as being ridiculous). Data are approximately 80 hours of audio- and videotaped mundane conversation between adult friends and family members.

In conversation, talk can be troubling for other interactants in the sense that they may not sufficiently hear it, understand it, or be prepared to agree with or accept it (Schegloff, Jefferson, & Sacks, 1977; Svennevig, 2008). When these other interactants take measures to deal with such trouble, they are most likely to do so by initiating conversational repair, which allows the speaker of the trouble the opportunity to enact repair themselves (e.g., to correct themselves; Schegloff et al., 1977). Practices of other-initiation of repair have two major functions, primarily including “locating the trouble source” (Schegloff et al., 1977, p. 377), and secondarily (if at all) including delimiting “what the trouble with it is” (Schegloff, 1997, p. 506). In other words, practices of other-initiation of repair help speakers, who will be engaged in the process of repair, answer two questions: (a) What needs to be fixed?, and (b) How should it be fixed? A major strand of conversation-analytic research has dedicated itself to discovering practices of other-initiation of

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repair and describing how they variously accomplish the location and delimitation of trouble source and trouble type, respectively (e.g., Drew, 1997; Egbert, Golato, & Robinson, 2009; Jefferson, 1972; Schegloff, 1997; Schegloff et al., 1977; Selting, 1988; Sidnell, 2007; Svennevig, 2008). Contributing to this research, the present article examines a previously undescribed practice of other-initiation of repair for locating an entire action (vs. only part of an action) as the repairable: the full, virtually identical, final-rising intoned repeat of a sentential turn-constructional unit. This article only deals with this practice as it is used to deal with one type of action: the question (i.e., a first-pair part whose primary action is one of requesting information in the vernacular sense).

LOCATING THE REPAIRABLE

The primary function of talk-in-interaction is the accomplishment of social action (Schegloff, 1995). Turns of talk are constructed from particular units of talk called turn-constructional units (hereafter referred to as TCUs; Sacks, Schegloff, & Jefferson, 1974). A predominant type of TCU, due to syntax, is the sentence. TCUs are the basic building blocks of (or vehicles for implementing) social action. Practices of other-initiation of repair can be differentiated in terms of whether or not they locate an entire TCU, and thus an entire action, as the repairable, or merely one part of a TCU/action. Two notable examples of practices that are designed to locate only part of a TCU/action as the repairable include: (a) question words that are produced with final-rising intonation and that target a referent that is actually referred to in the trouble-source TCU (e.g., Who?, When?, Where?) (Schegloff et al., 1977; Sidnell, 2007), and (b) virtually identical repeats of one part of a trouble-source TCU (Jefferson, 1972; Kim, 2002, 2003; Robinson, 2006; Schegloff, 1979, 1997, 2000b; Schegloff et al., 1977; Selting, 1996; Sorjonen, 1996; Wu, 2006). Alternatively, prior research has examined at least two practices of other-initiation of repair that locate entire actions as repairables, including the open-class repair initiator (e.g., Huh?, What?, Sorry?; Drew, 1997) and What do you mean? (Schegloff, 1997). This article focuses on a previously undescribed practice of other-initiation of repair that is designed to locate an entire TCU, and thus an entire action, as the repairable: The full, virtually identical, final-rising-intoned repeat of a sentential TCU (hereafter abbreviated as a full repeat).

DELIMITING THE NATURE OF THE TROUBLE

Practices of other-initiation of repair do not themselves specifically identify the nature of the trouble (Schegloff, 1997; Schegloff et al., 1977). Although many practices of other-initiation of repair function to delimit the nature of the trouble (Robinson, 2006; Schegloff, 1987), the final determination of trouble type is irremediably dependent on context that extends beyond the practice’s turn design (e.g., identity-bound knowledge in self–other relations; Raymond & Heritage, 2006). The practices of open-class repair (e.g., Huh?, What?, Sorry?; Drew, 1997) and What do you mean? (Schegloff, 1997) differ (at least) in terms of how they delimit the type of trouble involved. For example, although (prosodically unmarked) open-class repair initiators are designed to claim that something about a TCU/action is problematic, they leave open the specific
nature of the trouble (i.e., no type of trouble is ruled out; Drew, 1997). Alternatively, (prosodically unmarked) *What do you mean?* overtly claims (but only claims) that the nature of the trouble involves (at least) understanding (Schegloff, 1997), and thus can work to rule out other types of trouble, such as hearing. In contrast to both the open-class repair initiator and *What do you mean?*, the focus of the present article, the full repeat, indirectly claims that its speaker heard the words of an entire trouble-source question, and thus works to rule out hearing-what-was-said and understanding-that-a-question-was-asked as types of trouble.

**FINDING THE PRACTICE AND OUR FOCUS ON QUESTIONS AS REPAIRABLES**

An extensive amount of prior research on practices of other-initiation of repair demonstrates that their function varies according to at least their verbal, vocal, and prosodic construction (both independently and relative to the trouble-source TCU), their sequential position, and the nature of the action(s) implemented by the trouble-source TCU (Corsaro, 1977; Couper-Kuhlen, 1996; Iwata, 2003; Schegloff, 1996a, 2007; Schegloff et al., 1977; Selting, 1988, 1992; Simpson, 1994; Stivers, 2005; Tarpeel, 1996). The repair-initiation practice that we aim to describe was initially and inductively identified as a *full, virtually identical, final-rising-intoned repeat* of a question (i.e., a first-pair-part whose primary action is one of requesting information in the vernacular sense). Admittedly, each of these italicized components can have different values (e.g., partial repeats, nonidentical repeats, repeats with astonished and/or final-falling intonation, repeats that target sequence-responding actions, repeats that target announcements, etc.). However, different permutations of these components can change the nature of the action being accomplished, including its very nature as a practice of other-initiation of repair. As noted in the “Data and Method” section, the vast majority of the full repeats in our data (20 out of 22 cases) are deployed to deal with questions.

**THE ARGUMENT**

We argue that the full repeat targets an action-as-a-whole as the repairable. In this article, we specifically deal with one type of action: the question. By *question*, we mean a first-pair part (Schegloff, 2007) whose primary action is one of requesting information. Here, the term *information* is being used in a vernacular, rather than technical grammatical/functional, sense. For example, our data include both *wh*-questions (Quirk, Greenbaum, Leech, & Svartvik, 1985) and polar or *yes/no* questions (Raymond, 2003). Through virtually identical repetition (which frequently includes syntactic transformations to accommodate speaker shift, such as *you* to *I*), the full

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1The prosodically astonished (Selting, 1988) form of *What?* can work to delimit the nature of the trouble to a problem of speaking (Schegloff, Jefferson, & Sacks, 1977) or “acceptability” (Svennevig, 2008), which can involve disagreement. The form *Sorry?* can communicate a stance that responsibility for the trouble belongs to the person who initiates repair, rather than to their addressees (Robinson, 2006).

2The prosodically astonished (Selting, 1988) form of *What do you mean?* can work to delimit the nature of the trouble to a problem of speaking (Schegloff, Jefferson, & Sacks, 1977) or acceptability (Svennevig, 2008), which can involve disagreement.
repeat delimits the nature of the trouble by working to rule out that of hearing-what-was-said (or at least one version of what was said) and understanding-that-a-question-was-asked. We argue that the full repeat tacitly claims that the questioning action is somehow problematic.

As will be shown, the precise nature of this problem, and thus how it might be resolved/ repaired, is context sensitive and worked out by members on a case-to-case basis. That said, our data suggest that full repeats are deployed to address two types of trouble. First, in the vast majority of our cases, participants orient to the full repeat as addressing trouble understanding the questioning action, that is, trouble understanding the thrust of the question-as-a-whole, or what it is getting at, or what is meant by its asking. For example, due to a combination of the question’s format and positioning—that is, the vast majority of the trouble-source questions examined are sequentially and/or topically incoherent with prior talk (Drew, 1997), such that they come “out of the (interactional) blue” or “out of left field”—the question is vulnerable to having multiple possible meanings or interpretations. In this regard, relative to other actions (e.g., invitations, offers, etc.), that of questioning (i.e., requesting information) may be especially vulnerable, because questions are commonly vehicles for additional actions (Steensig & Drew, 2008). Second, in a small minority of our cases, the full repeat is oriented to problems of speaking (Schegloff, Jefferson, & Sacks, 1977), or what Svennevig (2008) broadened into “problems of acceptability,” including “saying something ‘wrong’ in a wide sense…” (p. 336). For example, the questioning action (i.e., what the question is asking about/for) is understood, but characterized as being, for example, ridiculous.

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3We recognize the possibility that some contexts might exist in which full repeats of questions do not work to rule out hearing trouble (for one such context, see Goldberg, 1975). However, neither our data nor Goldberg’s actually contain any such cases. We do have one case (Extract A) in which hearing does appear to be the trouble, but note that the repeat is not identical, and thus not what we consider to be a full repeat:

Extract A: LOW FAT [UTCL:D8:04]

01 RIC: I’ve gotta give a speech.
02 CAR: T(h)om(h)ow?
03 RIC: Not tomorrow [but .hhh s]on enough. an’ I’ve
04 CAR: —[hh huh huh huh]
05 RIC: gotta memorize it and stuff.=
06 CAR: =Really.
07 RIC: “Ye[a[h.]
08 TS> CAR: [ ‘T ’]s your speech q:n.
09 —
10 CAR: >Uh huh?<
11 RIC: Well it’s this persuasive speech on uhm (.)
12 hhuh (throat clear) lo:w fat high fiber.
13 (0.3)
15 CAR: Oh really,
16 RIC: Yeah.

Carrie’s “‘T’s your speech q:n” (line 8) involves a massively truncated/clipped version of What’s (i.e., “‘T’s”)—which is partially overlapped by Rich’s “Yeah.” (line 7), which can make hearing trouble possibly relevant (Schegloff, 2000a)—and Carrie places stress on “q:n” (symbolized in the transcript by the underline and colon). In contrast, Rich’s repeat, “What’s my speech on?” includes a fully formed “What’s,” and Rich places stress on “speech.” Carrie responds with mere confirmation, “>Uh huh?<” (line 11), which orients to possible hearing trouble. There is no evidence that, for Rich, the trouble was anything more than a possible mishearing.
DATA AND METHOD

Our analytic method is conversation analysis (for review, see Heritage, 1984b). An examination of approximately 80 hours of ordinary conversation data between adult friends and family members (including 140 American calls, three Americans dinners, and 35 British calls) produced 20 cases in which: (1) repair was initiated with a full, virtually identical, final-rising-intoned repeat of a sentential turn-constructional unit (i.e., a full repeat); (2) the trouble-source action was a question (i.e., request for information); and (3) the full repeat was designed to implement other-initiation of repair. The larger corpus of data also includes two cases where full repeats targeted other types of actions (in both cases, an announcement), but these are not dealt with in this article. All data were transcribed using Jefferson’s notation system (see Atkinson & Heritage, 1984).

ANALYSIS

Our analysis proceeds as follows. First, in order to better understand the full repeat as a practice of other-initiation of repair, we briefly examine a similar, but alternative practice: the partial repeat.

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4 Differences in turn-final intonation affect both the function and nature of repeats as practices of other-initiation of repair. Not only can turn-final intonation affect the type of trouble that a repeat makes relevant, but it can affect its status as a genuine practice of other-initiation of repair. For example, see Extract B. Dan has called Sam as part of a research study designed to collect naturally occurring conversation.

Extract B: PAID [CallFriend:6869]

01 SAM: >So do I< get pa:id?
02 DAN: (...) Do you get pa:id:=
03 SAM: =hh hh[h h] (laughter)
04 DAN: [.hhh [It- ] you=you’re doing a service
05 to sc:ience my man.

Dan’s repeat, “Do you get pa:id” (line 3), ends with final-falling intonation (symbolized in the transcript by a period), which our data suggest works to delimit the nature of the trouble to a class described by Svennevig (2008) as involving non-acceptance (see also Schegloff et al. 1977). As evidence, after Sam responds by laughing “hh hh hh hh” (line 4), Dan chastises Sam, albeit in a good-humored manner: “you’re doing a service to sc:ience my man” (lines 5–6). Here, Dan orients to his repeat as claiming that Sam’s trouble-source question embodied impudence. Neither Sam nor Dan treat Dan’s repeat as a genuine practice of other-initiation of repair.

As seen in Extract C, turn-final-level or continuing intonation (symbolized in the transcript by the blank underscore at line 3) can project the lack of turn completion, and thus turn continuation.

Extract C: STUDYING [UTCL:D08:04]

01 CAR: What are you studying.
02 (0.2)
03 RIC: What am I studying_ ( ) speech.

After his repeat (line 3), Rich continues to answer Carla’s question with “speech.” Again, neither participant treats Rich’s repeat as a genuine practice of other-initiation of repair.

Even repeats with final-rising intonation can be produced as answer prefaces (Bolden, 2009; Schegloff, 1997), and thus not as genuine practices of other-initiation of repair. For example, see Extract 12 (in main text).
Here, we show that, in contrast to full repeats, partial repeats of questions tacitly claim that their speakers do understand the questioning action as a whole. Second, we analyze nine cases of full repeats, showing that, and how, full repeats can index trouble either understanding (Extracts 3–10) or accepting (Extract 11) a questioning action. Third, we expand our analysis of the full repeat by comparing it to two alternative practices for repairing entire actions—open-class initiators (e.g., What?) and What do you mean?—which differ from full repeats in terms of delimiting the source and type of trouble to be repaired.

The Partial, Virtually Identical, Final-Rising-Intoned Repeat of a Question

As a practice of other-initiation of repair, the partial, virtually identical, final-rising-intoned repeat of a question (hereafter abbreviated as a partial repeat) locates just one component of a question as the repairable (Schegloff et al., 1977). For the first of two examples, see Extract 1. Two friends, Dee and Meg, are catching up after having not spoken in a while. (Meg is currently living in Israel). At line 1, in a disjunctive topic shift (Jefferson, 1984b), Dee proffers a brand new topic for discussion (Schegloff, 2007): “Hey do you get duck man?” (Duck Man is an adult-targeted, animated-cartoon, television show).

Extract 1: DUCK MAN [CH:4245]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Line</th>
<th>DEE:</th>
<th>Meg:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01</td>
<td>Hey do you get duck man? (i.e., a TV show)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02</td>
<td>(0.5)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03</td>
<td>Duck man?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04</td>
<td>Duck man = it’s a show.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>05</td>
<td>(: )</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06</td>
<td>.h[hh ]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07</td>
<td>[No:]::</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At line 3, Meg initiates repair on Dee’s question with a partial repeat, which is of the question’s referent: “Duck man?” Dee initially responds by repeating “Duck man” (line 4), which treats Meg’s repair initiator as claiming that she may not have adequately heard the words Duck Man. Dee then rushes through (symbolized in the transcript by the equals sign; Schegloff, 1988) to a second answer, “it’s a show.” which treats Meg’s repair initiator as claiming that she may not have recognized/understood the referent Duck Man. Dee’s response (at line 4) orients to Meg’s partial repeat (at line 3) as locating just one component of Dee’s question as the repairable (i.e., Duck Man). When Meg produces a conditionally relevant response (Schegloff & Sacks, 1973), “No::” (line 7), she treats Dee’s repair (at line 4) as sufficiently resolving the trouble. The fact that Meg is able to provide a conditionally relevant response while only having access to Dee’s repair of the single component Duck Man is evidence that, prior to initiating repair, Meg heard the other parts of Dee’s question (i.e., “Hey do you get . . .”), understood its nature as an action (i.e., a question), and understood the questioning action (i.e., what the question was asking about).

Extract 2 is drawn from a call between a physician-representative of a medical-insurance company and a surgeon who has sought insurance approval for a procedure called a tympanostomy, which involves inserting tubes in patients’ ears. At line 1, the surgeon, who is under the mistaken assumption that the insurance agent is the patient’s pediatrician, asks: “Have you looked at ‘is ears.”
Extract 2: EARS [Tymp : L : 2 : 3]

01 SUR: Have you looked at his ears.
02 (0.3)
03 → INS: Me?
04 SUR: Yes.
05 INS: ‘Course not. I mean [I’m ]
06 SUR: [Oh I’m sorry. I didn’t-] I un-
07 INS: thought maybe you were ‘is family doc[tor too. ]
08 [No=No=No. ]
09 INS: I’m, I’m, I’m doing an insurance review.

At line 3, the insurance agent initiates repair on the surgeon’s question with a partial repeat of its pronominal subject: “Me?” (line 3). In the wake of the surgeon’s mere confirmation, “Yes.” (line 4), the insurance agent answers the surgeon’s question with a disconfirmation: “‘Course not.” (line 5). This response is non-type-conforming (i.e., It is not a yes/no-type answer; Raymond, 2003), which resists the mistaken premises/presuppositions of the surgeon’s question. There is evidence that the insurance agent’s partial repeat was designed to locate just one component of the surgeon’s question as the repairable (i.e., its pronominal subject) when he continues by clarifying his identity: I mean I’m [doing an insurance review] (line 5; see also line 9). The fact that the insurance agent’s partial repeat involves a transformation of you to me is evidence that he heard and understood at least that component of the surgeon’s question. When the insurance agent produces a conditionally relevant response, Course not (line 5), he treats the surgeon’s repair (at line 4) as sufficiently resolving the trouble. Furthermore, the fact that the insurance agent is able to provide a conditionally relevant response while only having access to the surgeon’s mere confirmation (i.e., Yes at line 4) is evidence that, prior to initiating repair, the insurance agent heard the other parts of the surgeon’s question (i.e., Have . . . looked at his ears?), understood its nature as an action (i.e., a question), and understood the questioning action (i.e., what the question was asking about).

In sum, Extracts 1 and 2 provide evidence, from both the speaker of the trouble-source question (in their response to the partial repeat; Extract 1) and the speaker of the partial repeat (in their response to the trouble-source question; Extract 2), respectively, that partial repeats locate just one component of a trouble-source question as the repairable. Furthermore, partial repeats tacitly claim that their speakers: (a) heard the other parts of the trouble-source question; (b) understood its nature as an action (i.e., a question); and, important for our main argument (below), (c) understood the questioning action as a whole (i.e., what the question was asking about).

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5By indexing trouble with the pronominal subject, the insurance agent’s partial repeat (at line 3) indexes trouble with that aspect of the surgeon’s questioning action (at line 1), thereby indexing “non-acceptance” (Svennevig, 2008) of merely one component of the questioning action, rather than with the questioning action as a whole.

6Although speculative, Extracts 1 and 2 may be evidence for a pragmatic rule informed by Levinson’s (2000) work on interactional heuristics. Expanding on Grice’s (1975) maxim of quantity (i.e., “Make your contribution as informative as is required”), Levinson presented evidence for what he called the Q-heuristic: “What you do not say is not the case.” At least regarding partial-repeat-based, other-initiation of repair, the Q-heuristic may operate as follows: “What the practice of repair initiation does not locate as troubling is not troubling for the person initiating repair.”
The Focal Practice: The Full, Virtually Identical, Final-Rising-Intoned Repeat of a Question

In contrast to partial repeats, full repeats of questions are designed to locate the entire trouble-source TCU, and thus the entire questioning action, as the repairable. Through virtually identical repetition—which, as in Extract 2, frequently involve syntactic transformations in order to account for speaker shift—full repeats delimit the nature of the trouble by working to rule out that of hearing and understanding at least one version of the words of the question as put, and that of understanding that a question was asked. In contrast to partial repeats, we argue that full repeats tacitly claim that a questioning action is somehow problematic. In the vast majority (18/20) of our cases, represented by Extracts 3–10, participants orient to the repair-related problem as being one of understanding the questioning action. In a small minority (2/20) of our cases, represented by Extract 11, the repair-related problem is oriented to as being one of “accepting” (Svennevig, 2008) the questioning action.

Trouble understanding the questioning action. In this subsection, we provide eight examples (Extracts 3–10) of how full repeats are treated as indexing trouble understanding a questioning action. One recurrent feature of these trouble-source questions (which we describe in each case) is that they are sequentially and/or topically incoherent with prior talk (Drew, 1997), such that they come out of the (interactional) blue or out of left field. When understanding is at issue, the trouble involves understanding the thrust of the question-as-a-whole, or what it is getting at, or what is meant by its asking. To be clear, the issue for repair initiators is not one of understanding the very nature of the action being implemented by the trouble-source TCU, such as whether it might be an invitation, versus an offer, versus a request for information. Rather, repair initiators do understand that the trouble-source TCU has implemented a possible request for information, but are having trouble understanding what the question is asking about and/or for.

Extracts 3–8 highlight evidence from the speaker of the trouble-source question in their response to the full repeat. Extracts 9–10 highlight evidence from the speaker of the full repeat in how they deal with insufficient repairs. Just prior to Extract 3, Ida mentioned that she had recently seen a third party, whom Ida and Victor knew from college. At line 1, Victor, who has lost track of this third party over the last several years, inquires: “W’¼that- >what thuh hell< (did) that girl do with her life. di’ she graduate?” In the left-hand margins of transcripts, “TS>” indicates the trouble-source question, and “FR>” indicates the full repeat.

Extract 3: PRETTY [CH : 5352 : 3]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>VIC:</th>
<th></th>
<th>IDA:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01</td>
<td>W’¼that- &gt;what thuh hell&lt; (did) that girl do with her life. di’ she graduate?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02</td>
<td>(0.2)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04</td>
<td>Y’es. she uhm (0.3) she’s w(h)aiting &lt;to get&gt; (.) her c(h)ertification.=I don’t know if she’s passed thuh exam (.) yet.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>05</td>
<td>(0.3)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08</td>
<td>IDA: But she’s substitute teaching,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09</td>
<td>(0.4)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>VIC: m¼Oh. okay,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>IDA: A:n’d (.) yegah.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
After Victor’s question (at lines 1–2) is answered (at lines 4–8), and after this question–answer sequence is nominally closed (at lines 10–11), Victor asks the trouble-source question: “S= she pretty?” Arguably, one conventional understanding of this question is as an inquiry into the third party’s baseline physical attractiveness. (Compare the formulation Is she pretty? with hypothetical alternatives, such as Is she still pretty? or Is she pretty now?). However, actions are accountably produced and understood in terms of what interactants figure each other ought to know (Heritage & Raymond, 2005; Pomerantz, 1980; Terasaki, 2004). As such, a conventional understanding of Is she pretty? is possibly defeated by the fact that Ida knows that Victor saw the third party several years ago and was able to independently assess her baseline physical attractiveness. Thus, Victor’s question is prone to being heard as asking about something else. Ida’s ability to determine what else Victor might be asking about is complicated by the fact that the topic of his question (i.e., the third party’s physical attractiveness) is relatively incoherent with that of Victor’s immediately preceding question (and Ida’s answer, at lines 1–8, which deal with the topic of the third party’s career).

At line 15, Ida initiates repair with a full repeat: “Is she pretty?” Although hypothetical, it is useful to contrast this practice with a partial repeat, such as Pretty?, which would take issue with the term pretty, but not necessarily with the meaning of the trouble-source question-as-a-whole. Victor responds to the full repeat by producing a reformatted version of, and thus replacing and correcting, his trouble-source question with: “She= ever get good looking,” (line 17). Similar to his trouble-source question, Victor rebegins his reformatted question (after the tense marker) with the word she. Additionally, Victor replaces pretty with the synonym good looking. Victor’s reformatted question clarifies his trouble-source question as asking about the development of the third party’s physical attractiveness. By replacing his trouble-source question with a reformatted version of the same question, Victor tacitly claims that the reformatted version more adequately captures what the trouble-source version was designed to ask about. In sum, Victor treats Ida’s full repeat as indexing her trouble understanding his questioning action.

Extract 4 is drawn from a face-to-face conversation between two college-educated adult acquaintances, Debbie and Peter, during a multiparty dinner. After a lapse in the conversation, Debbie asks Peter: “Do you re:: ad?” (line 1).

Extract 4: READ [Tannen]

((Lapse in conversation))

01 TS> DEB: Do you re:: ad?
02 (0.4)
03 FR> PET: Do I re:: ad?
04 (1.4)
Debbie’s question (at line 1) initiates a new course of action and a totally new topic. Arguably, one (perhaps far-fetched) understanding of Debbie’s question is as an inquiry into Peter’s ability to read. However, this understanding is possibly defeated in a number of ways: (a) Peter is a college-educated adult who can be assumed to know how to read; (b) Debbie uses the auxiliary verb do (i.e., *Do you read?*) rather than the modal verb can (i.e., *Can you read?*); and (c) Interaction is fundamentally designed to reduce interpersonal conflict and promote social solidarity (Clayman, 2002), and as a serious inquiry into Peter’s ability to read (i.e., Debbie produces her question without smile voice or laugh tokens), Debbie’s question would deeply violate Peter’s positive face (Brown & Levinson, 1987). More likely, Peter’s trouble understanding Debbie’s questioning action stems from its lack of a syntactic complement for read (i.e., *...things just for fun*). Missing complements are typically recoverable from prior context, but not in this case, as Debbie’s question emerges from a lapse and initiates a totally new topic.

Peter initiates repair with a full repeat: “Do I read?” (Line 3). Similar to Victor in Extract 3 (above), Debbie responds by replacing and correcting her trouble-source question with a reformatted version of it: “D’ you read things just for fun?” (line 17). Similar to her trouble-source question, Debbie rebegins her reformatted version with *Do you...* but replaces the main verb read with *read things just for fun*. Debbie’s reformatted version clarifies her trouble-source question as asking about whether or not Peter reads as a hobby. By replacing her trouble-source question with a reformatted version of the same question, Debbie tacitly claims that the reformatted version more adequately captures what the trouble-source version was designed to ask about.

Extract 5 is drawn from the middle of a call between two friends, Mark and Joanne. At line 1 Mark asks a reciprocal (Schegloff, 2007) *How-are-you*-question: “How you doin’.”

Extract 5: THANKSGIVING [SF1]

```
01 MAR: How you doin’.:=h
02 (.)
03 JOA: Oh:pretty goo : d.
04 (0.8)
05 MAR: .hhhhhh ((0.7))
06 (.)
07 MAR: [(Uh:m) ]
08 JOA: [This we]ek,=hh heh heh heh [.hh ]
09 MAR: [ .:ch] Oh this week
10 JOA: Hih hih .hhh y:=:ah.
11 (0.2)
12 MAR: Why. what’s going on this week.
13 JOA: Oh nothing. I’m just “in a... (. ) really good mood
14 this (week). [( ]]
15 MAR: [ Oh:] good.
```
In order to understand the trouble and its repair, it is necessary to describe its interactional context. In response to Mark’s “How you doin’.” (line 1), Joanne produces: “Oh: pretty good.” (line 3). With the Oh-preface, Joanne projects an update that involves some type of trouble (Heritage, 1998). After a long, 1.6-s silence (at lines 4–6, which actually includes an inbreath by Mark at line 5), Joanne produces an increment “This week,” (line 8; re increments, see Ford, Fox, & Thompson, 2002; Schegloff, 2001). Here, Joanne indicates that whatever trouble she was experiencing (which she projected at line 3) has recently subsided, and thus Joanne raises the relevance of a good-news turning-point event relative to her trouble. With both a newsmark, “Oh this week” (line 9; Heritage, 1984a) and a question, “Why. what’s going on this week” (line 12), Mark pursues and solicits an account of this turning-point event. Through her Oh-prefaced response, “Oh nothing” (line 13; Heritage, 1998) and subsequent account (especially the word just), “I’m just in a’ (. ) really good mood this (week)” (lines 13–14), Joanne claims that there was no particular reason, or particular good-news account, for her good mood.

With this context in mind, we now turn to Mark’s trouble-source question. At line 22, Mark produces an assertion to be (dis)confirmed regarding Joanne’s lack of knowledge about something: “An’ you don’ know why?” Joanne’s understanding of the meaning of Mark’s question is possibly problematized by at least two factors. First, Mark’s question is designed, especially through the unit-initial connective and (i.e., “And you don’t know why?”), to target Joanne’s immediately prior talk, wherein she claims to currently have a positive personal state: “Everything’s just (. ) lovely.” (lines 19–20; Sacks, 1975). Along these lines, Mark’s trouble-source question (which is a a “B-event statement”; Labov & Fanshel, 1977) is hearable as asking about Joanne’s lack of knowledge of her own personal state. However, Joanne has primary rights and resources to know about her own personal state (Sacks, 1975). Second, the prior talk has not involved a reference (at least an explicit one) to what Joanne does not know. Admittedly, Joanne previously claimed (at lines 13–14) that there was no particular reason for her being in a good mood, but this is not the same as having a lack of knowledge of such reasons.
Joanne initiates repair with a full repeat: “I don’t know why?” (line 24). Mark’s response to Joanne’s full repeat displays his orientation to his questioning action as being possibly ambiguous. Mark designs his response as a complete redoing of his trouble-source question by repeating: “You don’t know why...” (line 25). Mark then adds “...everything’s lovely,” (line 25), which clarifies/specifies the syntactic object/complement of his trouble-source question, and thus clarifies its elliptical reference to prior talk. Finally, Mark continues to produce: “you j’st feel good?” (lines 25–27). Here, using Joanne’s own language (specifically, the words just and good from line 13), Mark clarifies/specifies his trouble-source question as a request for confirmation that there was no particular reason, or good-news account, for Joanne’s good mood. Taken as a whole, Mark’s response clarifies, on a number of fronts, what his trouble-source question-as-a-whole was designed to ask about.

Extract 6 is drawn from a call between two male friends, Moe and Bill, who have been talking disparagingly about psychotherapy (see lines 1–5).

Extract 6: NIRVANA [CallFriend:6661]

01 MOE: .hh I think it’s good to look at things
02 bu- I gu: ss ’but (.) I don’t know” sometimes
03 I wonder because (.) just seems like ()
04 [hhhhhhh[ hh a ra:]cket to me [for the:rapy.]
05 BIL: [.hhhh ] [Y:e:ah. ]
06 MOE: -hhhh huh [huh huh ]
07 BIL: [You know-] let me te(ll)=ask you
08 TS> about one thing. do you know Nirv:a:na,
09 (1.2)
10 FR> MOE: Do I know Nirv:na: [n]
11 BIL: [Thuh=p-] gro:up=h
12 MOE: [Oh: I- I thought (h) ly(h)ou=h huh huh huh
13 BIL: [Do you know their music, ]
14 MOE: [.hh] [Have I been to Nirv:na:]
15 BIL: [hh=huh huh huh huh huh huh huh]
16 BIL: [huh huh]
17 MOE: [Hh hh] [huh huh]
18 BIL: [.hhh ] [Are you i:n Nirv:na:na].
19 MOE: [.hhhh h. ]
20 MOE: Uh:mm: (0.2) I’ve h:ead of them I’m not s:ure
21 that I’m: (0.2) I’ve probably heard some of their
22 music if they=w*r” real pop:ul[ar, b’t-]
23 BIL: [ Y:e ]:ah.
24 BIL: Well=
25 MOE: =Not real familiar w’[th *em. ]
26 BIL: [ le:’=m’e] tell you. this-
27 this re:ally. (0.2) s:ti:red me up because it was
28 a band. . .

At line 7, Bill projects the initiation of a new topic with “You know-“. At lines 7–8, Bill initiates a pre-pre-sequence (Schegloff, 1980): “let me te(ll)=ask you about one:me thing.” (lines 7–8). As is typical with this type of pre-pre, Bill continues to produce an interrogative, “do you know Nirv:
na,” (Line 8), which is framed by the pre-pre as being a background-information question; in this case, Bill seeks to establish Moe’s recognition of Nirvana prior to telling about it. Bill’s intended reference to Nirvana is to the now-disbanded, American rock music band formed by the late Kurt Cobain. However, Nirvana the rock band has not previously been referred to in this entire phone call. Given the men’s prior talk (at lines 1–5) about psychotherapy, Bill’s inquiry about Nirvana is prone to being understood as referring to the psychological/spiritual (or Buddhist) state of nirvana (i.e., an ideal condition of harmony, wisdom, joy, etc.), which has also not previously been referred to in this entire phone call.

Moe’s understanding of the meaning of Bill’s trouble-source question is possibly problematized in several ways. First, the do you know-format, “do you know Nirvana,” (line 8), can be understood in at least two ways. On the one hand, and in line with its pre-pre frame, do you know refers to having knowledge of (e.g., Do you know about Nirvana). On the other hand, idiomatically, the do you know-format can refer to “having experienced” (e.g., Have you experienced nirvana?). Second, Moe has just criticized psychotherapy as a racket (at lines 3–4), to which Bill has agreed: “Y:e:ah.” (line 5). If Bill’s trouble-source question refers to Moe having experienced the psychological state of nirvana, then it is misfitted to Moe as a recipient. This type of misfitting is accountable, and can be a practice for being sarcastic, teasing, joking, etc. However, Bill produces his trouble-source question seriously (e.g., without smile voice or laugh particles). In sum, it is arguable that, from Moe’s perspective, the repair-related trouble with Bill’s question has less (or nothing) to do with understanding the referent Nirvana, per se, and more (or everything) to do with understanding what Moe is asking about regarding the psychological/spiritual state of nirvana.

Moe initiates repair with a full repeat: “Do I know Nirvana?,” (line 10). Hypothetically, Moe might have alternatively initiated repair with a partial repeat Nirvana?, which would take issue with the referent Nirvana, but not with the questioning action as a whole. Similar to Extract 5 (above), Bill’s answer to the full repeat is designedly composed of two units. First, Bill responds with “Thuh=p gro:up” (line 11), which corrects and clarifies the referent “Nirvana” (at line 8) by disambiguating it from the psychological/spiritual state of nirvana. The completion of Bill’s first response to Moe’s repair initiator is a place where it is conditionally relevant for Moe to begin answering Bill’s question, and Moe does begin to speak at line 12. However, in a prolonged bout of overlapping talk (Schegloff, 2000a), Bill competes with Moe for the turn space in order to produce a second response. In doing so, Bill treats his second response as being independently consequential for repairing his trouble-source question. Bill’s second response, “Do you know their music,” (line 13) is designed, largely through the repeat of the Do you know-frame of the trouble-source question, to be a reformatted and corrected version of it. Bill’s second response displays his orientation to Moe’s full repeat as indexing trouble that extends beyond Moe’s understanding of the referent Nirvana to one of understanding what Bill’s question-as-a-whole is asking about.

After Bill’s initial response, “Thuh=p gro:up” (line 11), Moe produces “Oh:” (line 12), which indexes his change of state from unknowing to knowing (Heritage, 1984a), and is some evidence that his trouble involved a type of understanding. Moe then claims to have originally understood Bill’s trouble-source question as having asked about experiencing (vs. knowing about) nirvana: I thought you [meant] have I been to nirvana? (lines 12–14). With his laugh particles in “(h)y(h)ou” (symbolized in the transcript by parenthetical h’s), and his unit-medial laughter, “huh huh huh,” Moe orients to this version of Bill’s question as being nonserious (for review, see Glenn, 2003).
In Extracts 3–6, the trouble located by the full repeat was repaired by reformatting the trouble-source question-as-a-whole. Alternatively, in Extracts 7–8, the trouble located by the full repeat is repaired by supplying a set of grounds for understanding the questioning action. Immediately prior to Extract 7, Ann has complained about the poor sound quality of the telephone connection (data not shown). Bea initially claims that nothing can be done (line 1), but then realizes that the connection might be improved if she pulls out the antenna of her phone (line 4). In overlap with line 1, an unknown person can be heard, off-line and at a distance from Bea, shouting the name: “E:RICA?” (line 2). It turns out that the shouter is not in Bea’s dorm room, but out “in thuh hallway.” (line 9). At line 5, presumably in reference to the shouting, Ann asks: “Is your room gettin’ busy.”

Extract 7: GETTING BUSY [CallHome:4838]

01 BEA: Can’t really do an[ything about it,]
02 ???: [E:RICA ]? ((off line on Bea’s end))
03 (0.5)
04 BEA: Oh: I can pull out thuh antenna. h=huh huh
05 TS> ANN: Is your room gettin’ busy,
06 (0.2)
07 FR> BEA: Is my room getting busy?
08 ANN: Yeah I hear [people. ]
09 BEA: [N:o th ]at’s- in thuh hallway.
10 (0.3)
11 ANN: Oh [>well=it’s< damn lo]:ud.=
12 BEA: [I live in a (very)-]
13 ANN: =.h How- how warm is it in Arizona.

Bea’s understanding of Ann’s questioning action (at line 5) is possibly problematized by at least three interrelated factors. First, similar to the trouble-source questions in Extracts 3–6, Ann’s question initiates a new course of action and an entirely new topic. Second, although the idiomatic expression getting busy generally refers to some type of activity (i.e., a party, having sex, etc.), it does not specifically or directly refer to noise or loudness. Third, the objective noise (i.e., the off-phone shouting) to which Ann’s question refers does not actually occur in Bea’s room.

At line 7, Bea initiates repair with a full repeat: “Is my room getting busy?” Although hypothetical, note that Bea does not initiate repair with a partial repeat, such as My room? or Getting busy?, which would take issue with a component of the question, but not necessarily with the entire questioning action. Ann initially responds to the full repeat with a simple confirmation, “Yeah” (line 8). By producing her Yeah with unit-final, level intonation, Ann designs it to sound incomplete, and thus Ann designs it to project more talk (Ford & Thompson, 1988). As projected, Ann continues to provide her personal epistemic grounds for asking her trouble-source question: “I hear people.” By providing such grounds, Ann attempts to facilitate Bea’s understanding of what the trouble-source question was asking about. Note also that, by merely providing such grounds, Ann relies on, and thus treats, Bea’s full repeat as indexing that she heard and understood the words and syntactic structure of the trouble-source question.

Extract 8 is drawn from a dinner conversation. Tom works with deaf people and is only moderately proficient with sign language. Betsy’s question at lines 1–4 (which is rearticulated several times) is getting at how Tom, in the course of talking with a deaf person, understands the meaning of signs that Tom does not know.
Extract 8: SIGNS [Tannen]

01 BET: .hh Do you figure o:ut, thuh-=c- those
  uh:m cor[responden]ces, or d-=when you l:earn
02 TOM: [So (this) ]
03 BET: thuh si:gn (pee) somebody te:lls you.
04 (0.4)
05 TOM: Oh you mean (w:a[tching] it) it?
06 BET: [‘Cause I-=can im]ag[ine knowing]
07 TOM: [li:ke j’st]
08 BET: [that] si::gn (0.3) an’ no:t (.) figuring out
09 TOM: [( ]
10 BET: th’t=it had anything to do with thuh decorations.
11 (0.4)
12 TOM: No, eh- you kno:w that it has (t’)=do with thuh
decora: [ tions.]
13 BET: [‘Cause some]body tells you? or you
14 BET: [figure it] out.
15 TOM: [No. ]
16 (0.4)
17 TOM: Oh. (.) you- you >talking about< me, or:
18 (thuh deaf] per[son. ]
19 BET: [Yeah. ] [you.]
20 BET: You.
21 (0.4)
22 TOM: M@? uh:m someone te:lls me [w:s’lly. ]
23 BET: [‘(Mm):’]
24 ()
25 TOM: But- (m)- a lot of= ’em I can te:ll.
26 ()
27 TOM: I mean th[ey’e o]:bvious.
28 BET: [Hm. ]
29 (0.7)
30 TOM: Thuh better I get thuh more I can tell.
31 ()
32 TOM: Thuh lo:nger I do it thuh more I can tell
what they’re talking (‘bout).
33 ()
34 BET: Huh.
35 (1.0)
36 TOM: Without [knowing what thuh sign] i[s. ]
37 BET: [That’s interesting. ] [ ]
38 TS> JOH: [W’ ]=how
duh you learn a new si:gn.
39 (1.1)
40 FR> TOM: How do I learn a new s[ign? ]
At lines 41–42, John asks the trouble-source question: “We’¼ how duh you learn a new si:gn.” (lines 41–42). Tom’s understanding of this questioning action is possibly problematized by the fact that: (a) John prefaces his question with Well (i.e., “We’¼ how duh you. . .”), which structurally ties his question to, and thus treats it as being coherent with, Tom’s immediately prior talk (at line 39; Schiffrin, 1987); (b) John designs his question so as to index his lack of knowledge of the subject matter (Heritage, 2007); yet (c) John’s question is possibly hearable as being the same question that was just asked by Betsy, and that Tom just answered (lines 1–40). Betsy had asked about figuring out new signs (lines 1–4), and Tom had responded by informing the group that someone usually tells him the sign (line 24), but also that he can figure signs out on his own (line 27) because they’re obvious (line 29) in context (lines 32–35). In sum, similar to Victor’s trouble-source question Is she pretty? (Extract 3), because actions are accountably produced and understood in terms of what interactants figure each other ought to know (Heritage & Raymond, 2005; Pomerantz, 1980; Terasaki, 2004), John’s question is prone to being heard as asking about something else, yet it is arguable that Tom has insufficient resources for determining what else John might be asking about.

Tom initiates repair with a full repeat: “How do I learn a new sign?” (line 44). John prefaced his repair with “I mean” (line 45), which overtly claims that his repair deals with Tom’s understanding of the meaning of the questioning action. John’s repair involves providing a set of grounds for understanding his question in the form of a hypothetical background situation: “supposing (.) Bobbie’s talking an’ >all of a< sudden he uses thuh si:gn for thanksgiving. an’ you’ve never seen it before” (lines 45–48). Here, especially with the modifier all of a sudden, John clarifies his trouble-source question as an inquiry into how Tom understands novel signs as they emerge in interaction without the benefit of contextual clues, which potentially differentiates John’s question from Betsy’s at lines 1–4. In doing so, John treats Tom’s full repeat as indexing his problem understanding John’s questioning action. Similar to Ann in Extract 7, by merely providing a background situation, John relies on, and thus treats, Tom’s full repeat as indexing that he correctly heard and understood the words and syntactic structure of the trouble-source question.

In Extracts 3–8, we supported our argument by examining how the speaker who produced the trouble-source question responded to (i.e., repaired) the full repeat. In Extracts 9–10, we further support our argument by examining the perspective of the speaker who produced the full repeat (i.e., the speaker who initiates repair). In these extracts, the full repeat is responded to simply with a mere confirmation Yeah. If our argument is correct, mere confirmation, which treats the full repeat as a request for confirmation of a candidate hearing (Goldberg, 1975), is not a conditionally relevant response because it does not address the problem of understanding the questioning action. In Extracts 7–8 this insufficiency was oriented to by the producer of the trouble-source question in their response to the full repeat, when they continued beyond Yeah to produce a relevant repair. In Extracts 9–10, this insufficiency (and our argument) is oriented to, in the next turn, by the person who initiated repair. Specifically, in the wake of no relevant repair, the person who initiated repair orients to not understanding what the trouble-source question is asking about.
Extract 9 is drawn from a call between two college students, Rich and Carrie, who are talking about Carrie’s tennis class. In response to Rich’s question, “Are you gunna=nuh get an ‘A’ in thuh cla:ss,” (line 1), Carrie produces a series of hyperconfident agreements, including “‘Of course” (line 3) and “...Fer sure” (line 7), and then marks her answer with laughter (at line 9), all of which make her answer accountable.

Extract 9: Instructor [UTCL:D08a.4]

01 RIC: =Are you gunna=nuh get an ‘A’ in thuh cla:ss, (.)
02 CAR: Of course.
03 RIC: Of course.
04 CAR: Yeah. I’m gunna get an ‘A’ in thuh cla:ss.
05 (0.2)
06 CAR: Fer sure.
07 (0.2)
08 CAR: Uhhh huh huh huh .hhh
09 (.)
10 RIC: Why:.=do you know thee instructor,=hh heh heh ((laughter))
11 CAR: No:. (thee) instructor’s a laddy.
12 RIC: ![h]h Oh- (.)
13 TS> RIC: We:ll, do you know ‘er?
14 (0.2)
15 FR> CAR: Do I know ‘er?
16 RIC: Yeah.
17 CAR: >I mean< I know ‘er,=
18 RIC: =Oh.:.=hh ((laughter))
19 (.)
20 RIC: Oh you know he:rr.=hh ((laughter))
21 CAR: >But I< don’ kno:w ‘er, [-Ehh ] ((laughter))
22 RIC: [(Hee) duh] huh huh `[huh °]
23 CAR: [hh]
24 RIC: $You kno:[w$ hih huh]
25 CAR: ![h]hhhh
26 RIC: [h].
27 RIC: I wouldn’t kno:(h)w.

At line 11, Rich directly requests an account for Carrie’s hyperconfident answer (at lines 3–9), “Why:.” (line 11), and then, without waiting for a response (symbolized in the transcript by the equals sign), produces a candidate account for confirmation: “do you know thee instructor,=hh heh heh.” Rich’s turn-final laughter transforms the conventional sense of knowing someone (i.e., having some type of personal relationship), to the figurative sense of having a sexual relationship. This claim is supported by Carrie’s answer, which involves a prosodically emphatic rejection, “No:” (line 12; stress is symbolized in the transcript by underlining), followed by a defensive explanation that relies on a heteronormative assumption (Kitzinger, 2005) that Carrie is not sexually attracted to women: “(thee) instructor’s a laddy” (line 12).

Subsequently, Rich asks the trouble-source question: “We:ll, do you know ‘er?” (line 14). Rich prefaces this question with Well, which projects his forthcoming disalignment with Carrie’s heteronormative defensive explanation (line 12). Along these lines, insofar as Do you know
her? is possibly understandable as a reasking of the question Do you know the instructor? (line 11), Rich is possibly understandable as presupposing that Carrie is sexually attracted to women (and thus could still figuratively know the instructor in a sexual way). On the other hand, Rich asks Do you know her? (line 14) seriously (i.e., without smile voice or laughter), and thus is possibly understandable as asking a genuine yes/no-interrogative that inquires into the conventional sense of knowing the instructor (which of course can matter for course grades).

In the face of two possible, alternative understandings of Rich’s questioning action, Carrie initiates repair with a full repeat: “Do I know ‘er?” (line 16). Rich treats the full repeat as a mere request for confirmation by responding with “Yeah” (line 17), which is produced as a complete response through final-falling intonation (symbolized in the transcript by the period; Ford & Thompson, 1988). Our focus is on Carrie’s next turn, where she begins to answer Rich’s follow-up question. Initially, Carrie answers with “>I mean< I know ‘er,” (line 18). Carrie’s I know her is a non-type-conforming response (Raymond, 2003), which not only projects her (generalized) trouble with the terms/premises of Rich’s follow-up question, but also makes relevant the expansion of the question-answer sequence (see also Schegloff, 2007). Three additional observations can be made regarding Carrie’s forthcoming expansion. First, Carrie prefaces her answer with I mean, which, in a very general pragmatic sense, forewarns upcoming adjustments (for review, see Fox Tree & Schrock, 2002). Second, Carrie places contrastive stress on “know” (symbolized in the transcript by underlining), which projects a possible alternative sense of knowing (Hitchcock, 1996). Third, although Carrie’s I know her is a grammatically complete unit of talk (Sacks et al., 1974), it is designed to project a lack of completion through nonfinal (i.e., slightly upward-curved) intonation (symbolized in the transcript by the comma; Ford & Thompson, 1988). In sum, Carrie’s “>I mean< I know ‘er,” asserts that she knows the instructor in the conventional sense, but indexes a claim that this answer may not be in line with Rich’s questioning action, which may have made relevant an alternative (e.g., figurative/sexual) sense of knowing. Given that Carrie only has access to Rich’s “Yeah” (line 17), the fact that she is able to produce a relevant response (at line 18) to at least one sense of Rich’s trouble-source question is evidence that she both heard and understood its words and syntactic structure, and that she understood it to be a possible request for information.

At line 21, Rich asserts: “Oh you know her :=hh” (line 21; Rich’s primary emphasis is on the word know). Through the exaggerated production of “know” and the addition of laughter, Rich treats Carrie’s answer (at line 18) as referring to the figurative/sexual sense of knowing. (Arguably, Rich intentionally misconstrues Carrie’s answer to further tease her). Rather than responding to Rich’s assertion per se (e.g., by (dis)agreeing with/(dis)confirming it), Carrie uses the grammatical, contrast-marking connective but to produce a continuation/expansion of her initial answer unit (i.e., I mean I know her): “>But I< know ‘er,” (line 22). Mirroring Rich in his prior assertion, Carrie exaggerates the production of “know ‘er,” and adds laughter: “Ehh” (line 22), and thus rejects Rich’s sexualized assertion. In sum, in her multiunit response (across lines 18–22) to Rich’s mere confirmation (line 17), Carrie produces two different types of answer to Rich’s trouble-source question that manage two different senses of knowing the instructor, thereby orienting to her repair-related trouble as involving her lack of understanding of Rich’s questioning action.

Extract 10 is drawn from a call between Joe (the caller) and his mother. Joe’s trouble-source question, “What’s been happening lately” (line 01) comes after a canonical call opening and initiates the conversation’s first topic (Schegloff, 1986).
Extract 10: LEAVE [MTRAc:90:2:23]

14 TS> JOE: What’s been happening lately.
15 (2.1)
16 FR> MOM: What’s been happening lately?
17 JOE: Yea:h.
18 (1.4)
19 MOM: Li:ke- like what.
20 (0.2)
21 JOE: Like >[(with your)]< school (or anything).
22 (0.2)
23 JOE: (W’[=has] an ]yth{thing exciting been going on?
24 MOM: [(Weh-/wha-)]
25 MOM: Y:ea:h >very< exciting. I:’m taking a le:ave.

It is arguable that Joe’s *What’s been happening lately?* implements two possible, alternative questioning actions. First, the question is located in the anchor position of a call opening (Schegloff, 1986), which is a conversational slot that is commonly filled with what Button and Casey (1984) called “topic-initial elicitors,” which open endedly solicit an update (i.e., topic-initial elicitors do not themselves raise the relevance of a specific, newsworthy topic; re updating, see Drew & Chilton, 2000). With its present-progressive syntactic formatting, Joe’s trouble-source question has an affinity with a known topic-initial elicitor in English: *What’s happening?* This first understanding is possibly defeated, though, by a second, alternative one, which is that Joe’s question enacts what Button and Casey (1985) called an “itemized news inquiry.” Joe and his mother speak relatively frequently, and with the addition of *lately*, Joe’s trouble-source question is possibly understandable as soliciting an update on a specific time frame, and thus on a specific, known-in-common issue/event. Complementing this, Joe’s *What’s been happening ... formulation has an affinity with that of What happened*, which is commonly used in reference to problematic events.7 Because such an event has not been discussed previously in this call, it is arguable that Joe’s mom may not be able to recognize it.

Joe’s mom initiates repair with a full repeat: “What’s been happening lately?” (line 16). Joe treats the full repeat as a simple request for (dis)confirmation by responding with “Yea:h” (line 17), which is designed to be complete through final-falling intonation (symbolized in the transcript by the period; Ford & Thompson, 1988); Joe further orients to his completion by waiting (in the 1.4-s silence at line 18) for his mom to answer. The focus of this extract is on what Joe’s mom does next. Eventually, she treats Joe’s mere confirmation as being insufficient by reinitiating repair. The mom begins with “Li:ke-” (line 19), which is slightly stretched (symbolized in the transcript by the colon), and approximates what Lerner (2004) described as a repair-initiatory prompt for action. Lerner examined how, as full turns of talk, speakers can use grammatical items, such as and, for, and like, to target “an inadequate or insufficiently complete or a not yet response-ready turn that has reached possible completion” (pp. 180–181) in order to prompt speakers to say more than they have. However, the mom cuts off and abandons “Li:ke-” (symbolized in the transcript by the hyphen), and shifts to a different practice of other initiation of repair: “like what.” This practice is akin to Egbert and colleagues’(2009) analysis of the repair initiator For what, which can claim that the trouble is an

7For example, in Extract 15 (in text), Marsha’s “What happened today” (line 5) refers to the presence of police at a department store (data not shown).
elided referent necessary for understanding the action implemented by the trouble-source TCU. The mom’s \textit{like what} now treats Joe’s trouble-source question as an underspecified itemized news inquiry (Button & Casey, 1985). It is worth noting that the mom’s \textit{like what} is her second repair-initiation attempt relative to her full repeat, which was arguably designed to address a more fundamental type of understanding trouble dealing with the nature of Joe’s questioning action. That the mom reinitiates repair with \textit{like what} is evidence that she heard and understood the words and syntactic structure of Joe’s trouble-source TCU, and understood it as a possible request for information.

Joe’s answer to his mom’s \textit{like what} orients to her repair-related trouble as involving a lack of understanding of his questioning action, rather than her lack of recognition of a specific, reportable event. First, Joe produces an increment to his trouble-source question: “Like > (with your) < school (or anything)” (line 21). Although Joe provides a candidate event to be reported on (i.e., \textit{your school}), his inclusion of \textit{or anything} works to clarify his trouble-source question as an open-ended, topic-initial elicitor (vs. an itemized news inquiry; Button & Casey, 1984, 1985). When his mom does not answer at line 22, which projects her continued trouble (Schegloff et al., 1977), Joe completely reformats his trouble-source question: “(W’=has) anything exciting been going on?” (line 23). Here, Joe rids his trouble-source question of the possible presupposition of the existence of a particular, reportable event by shifting from a \textit{wh}-question (i.e., \textit{What’s been happening lately?}; line 14) to a yes/no-question that (through the negative-polarity device \textit{anything}; Quirk et al., 1985) prefers a \textit{no}-type answer.

\textbf{Trouble accepting the questioning action.} Our general argument is that the full repeat tacitly claims that an entire action—and, specific to this article, an entire questioning action—is somehow problematic. The precise nature of the problem, and thus how it might be resolved/repaired, is context sensitive and worked out by members on a case-to-case basis. In Extracts 3–10, and in 18 out of the 20 core cases, participants—including both the speaker of the trouble-source question (Extracts 3–8) and the speaker of the full repeat (Extracts 9–10)—orient to the full repeat as addressing trouble \textit{understanding} the questioning action. One frequent explanation for why the full repeats in Extracts 3–10 are treated as addressing understanding trouble is that the format of the trouble-source question \textit{cum prior context} provides for the relevance of possible understanding trouble (e.g., the question is sequentially/topically incoherent with prior talk). However, there are cases where prior context does not (or at least not as strongly) provide such relevance (see Footnote 3). In 2 out of the 20 core cases, the full repeat is oriented to as addressing a different type of trouble, that being the acceptability of the questioning action (re acceptability see Svennevig, 2008).

For one example, see Extract 11, which is drawn from the same call as Extract 9. As context, Rich has been doing research in preparation for delivering a persuasive speech on nutrition (for a college course assignment). Immediately prior to this extract, Rich has been detailing the contents of his speech to his college friend Carla, including his advice to “stay away from milk,” which he characterizes as “liquid flesh” (data not shown). Across lines 1–13, Carla questions, and then challenges, and then accepts Rich’s news about milk.

\textbf{Extract 11: VITAMIN [UTCL:D08a]}

\begin{verbatim}
01 CAR: Milk. I thought milk was good for you.
02 RIC: No.
03 (0.2)
\end{verbatim}
At lines 20–21, Carla initiates a new topic when she asks her trouble-source question: “what vitamin makes your teeth white?” With “What about . . .” (line 20), followed by a large break in the progressivity (Lerner, 1996) of her question, “uh:m (1.0) what-” (line 20), Carla designs her turn so as to project the initiation of a new sequence of action about a related-but-different topic. Note that both the topical theme of Carla’s question (i.e., nutrition), and the interactional roles it embodies (i.e., Carla as unknowing questioner, and Rich as knowing answerer) are coherent/consistent with that of the immediately prior sequence of action that Carla initiated at line 1.

Rich initiates repair with a full repeat: “What vitamin makes your teeth white?” (line 23). There is evidence that Carla orients to her own questioning action (at lines 20–21), post hoc, as being possibly ridiculous. Specifically, in overlap with Rich’s full repeat—at a point where Rich is possibly understandable as initiating a full repeat, but well before Rich’s turn is projectably complete (Jefferson, 1984a)—Carla produces a postcompletion stance marker of laughter, “Hh=hh” (line 24; Schegloff, 1996c). There is also evidence that Carla does not immediately treat Rich’s full repeat as a genuine practice of repair initiation. That is, she produces an extended inbreath at the very end of Rich’s full repeat, “.hhhh” (line 24), which accountably delays her response to the full repeat by approximately 0.2 s. Similarly, Rich does not ultimately treat his full repeat as a genuine practice of repair initiation insofar as he answers Carla’s trouble-source
question before Carla responds to the full repeat. Rich also orients to Carla’s questioning action as being ridiculous insofar as he answers her question *facetiously* with a designedly nonrecognitional (i.e., scientific/technical) reference to vitamin B, “Riboflavin.” (line 25), which does not actually whiten teeth (re reference, see Schegloff, 1996b; re technical terms, see Kitzinger & Mandelbaum, 2007); here, Rich is playing a joke on Carla, or pulling her leg, which Rich orients to by repeating “$Riboflavin.$” (line 29) with a smile voice (symbolized in the transcript by the dollar signs). That Rich is able to provide a relevant answer to Carla’s trouble-source question is evidence that he not only heard and understood its words and syntactic structure, but understood its questioning action.

In sum, although rare in our data (2/20 cases), the full repeat can be deployed to index (and treated as indexing) trouble accepting (Svennevig, 2008) an entire questioning action (vs. part of it, such as a single referent, subject, or presupposition). In these cases (at least in our data), neither participant ultimately treats the full repeat as a genuine practice of repair initiation. Rather, the full repeat is ultimately and contingently treated as an answer preface (Bolden, 2009; Schegloff, 1997). For an example of such a preface, see Extract 12. Ula and Ara are talking about a nonpresent third party whom they both know, but with whom Ara has more contact.

Extract 12: STRESSED WOMAN [CH:6067:3]

01 ULA: I wrote uh- I wrote tuh her,
02 ARA: You [did? ]
03 ULA: [( ] ) I haven’t mailed it yet. hh [hh]
04 ARA: [Oh]:[h] yeah ‘cause she would=a told me., hh[hh]
05 ULA: [hh ] Ri:ght. yeah. how is she?
06 (0.6)
07 –> ARA: How is she? she:’s (. ) .hh i[you] know she:’s: (.2) prob’ly one=a
th(h)uh m(h)ost stressed women on this planet,
08
Unlike Extracts 3–10, but like Extract 11, there are no prima facie reasons to expect that Ara’s understanding of the meaning of Ula’s “how is she?” (line 6) would be problematic. Both participants treat Ara’s full, virtually identical, final-rising intoned repeat of Ula’s question, “How is she?” (line 8), as an answer preface, and not as a genuine practice of other-initiation of repair. Ara immediately progresses from her repeat to an answer: “she:’s (. ) .hh i[you] know she:’s: (.2) prob’ly…” (lines 8–9), and Ula does not treat Ara’s repeat as an initiating action (i.e., Ula does not respond to it). Schegloff (1997) argued that repeat-prefaces to answers, such as Ara’s, regularly “embody the beginning of a disaligning, or otherwise negatively valenced, response” (p. 535; see also Bolden, 2009). Additionally, Bolden argued that repeat-prefaces to answers tacitly claim that questions embody “inappropriate or massively incongruent assumptions” (p. 140). Along these lines, Ara’s “[you] know” (line 8) treats Ula’s question, which presupposes her own lack of knowledge of the third party’s state of being (Heritage, 2007), as being inapposite by treating Ula as having ought to have known the answer.

We use the qualifier “ultimately treat” because Rich appears to initially design his full repeat as a genuine practice of repair initiation and not, for instance, as an answer-preface (Bolden, 2009; Schegloff, 1997; see Extract 12 in main text). That is, rather than immediately progressing from his full repeat (at line 23) to an answer of Carla’s question (at line 25), Rich waits approximately 0.2-tenths of a second, in which Carla draws breath (at line 24), and thus Rich provides Carla with an opportunity to respond to his full repeat.
**Alternative Practices of Other-Initiation of Repair for Targeting Entire Actions**

Compared to the full repeat, there are at least two alternative practices of other-initiation of repair that can be used to locate an *entire* TCU, and thus an entire action (e.g., a question-as-a-whole), as the repairable, including open-class repair initiators (e.g., *Huh?*, *What?*, *Sorry?*) (Drew, 1997) and *What do you mean?* (Schegloff, 1997). Open-class repair initiators differ from full repeats insofar as their turn format provides the trouble-source speaker with fewer resources for ruling in or ruling out certain types of trouble, and thus fewer resources for how trouble-source speakers might relevantly fix (i.e., repair) the trouble. In stark contrast to full repeats, when targeting questions, open-class repair initiators can be, and not uncommonly are, treated (and sufficiently so) as indexing hearing trouble. For example, in Extract 13, Bonnie initiates a new sequence of action with her question: “Do you get to see Robin much?” (line 7). Ara initiates repair with “What?” (line 9), to which Bonnie responds by virtually repeating her question: “Do you get to see Robin much?” (line 11).

**Extract 13: ROBIN [CH:4624]**

01 ARA: ‘F=you wan’ I can send this to you,  
(0.5)  
02 ARA: I have a copy of=it,  
(0.4)  
03 BON: [Su:re. ]  
04 ARA: [( ]  
05 BON: Do you get to see Robin mu:ch?  
06 (0.2)  
07 ARA: What?  
08  
09 BON: Do you get to see Robin much?  
10  
11 ARA: mtch=hh Yeah >once in a while.<  

However, like full repeats, open-class practices can also be deployed to deal with (and treated as dealing with) trouble understanding a questioning action. For instance, see Extract 14, which was analyzed by Drew (1997).

**Extract 14: GUITAR [Field:Sept.-Oct.:1988:Side1:Call1]**

01 GOR: mtch Hj William, hów’s thuh guitar playing going,  
02 WIL: Oh not too ba:d at [thuh moment, [( ) ]  
03 GOR: [mtch ph-][Playe]d- (. ) recently?  
04 (0.4)  
05 WIL: Sorry?  
06 GOR: mtch=Have you done any: hh things for thuh school  
07 recently?  
08 WIL: No- no(n)- (. ) not- (. ) not since that last failure,  

As Drew (1997) argued, William’s response (at line 2) to Gordon’s question (at line 1) can be taken to imply that William has played recently, thereby rendering confusing/ambiguous Gordon’s subsequent questioning action: “Played- (. ) recently?” (at line 3). This analysis is supported by Gordon’s response to William’s repair initiator (i.e., to “Sorry?” at line 5). That is, at lines 6–7,
Gordon reformats his entire trouble-source question in order to clarify what it is asking about by replacing the formulation “Played-“ (at line 3) with “Have you done any: .hh things for thuh school” (at line 6; note that Gordon retains the unit-final adverb “recently?” in both versions of the question). As Drew observed, Gordon appeared to have meant his original question at line 3 as inquiring into playing gigs (i.e., performances), not playing the guitar.

Relative to open-class repair initiators, the practice *What do you mean?* (i.e., its unmarked version; Schegloff, 1997) appears to be much more similar to the full repeat. We are not able to conduct a thorough comparison because we have access to very few cases of *What do you mean?*, let alone ones used to target questions. For one example, see Extract 15, which is drawn from the opening of a call between two friends, Priscilla and Marsha.

**Extract 15: BULLOCKS [Trio 2]**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>PRI:</th>
<th></th>
<th>MAR:</th>
<th></th>
<th>PRI:</th>
<th></th>
<th>(   )</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01</td>
<td>Hello::</td>
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<td>()</td>
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<tr>
<td>02</td>
<td>MAR:</td>
<td>Priscilla?</td>
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<tr>
<td>03</td>
<td>PRI:</td>
<td>Ye::ah.</td>
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<tr>
<td>04</td>
<td>(   )</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>05</td>
<td>MAR:</td>
<td>What happened today.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06</td>
<td>(0.6)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>07</td>
<td>→ PRI:</td>
<td>Wha=:do=:you mean.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08</td>
<td>MAR:</td>
<td>What happened at (. ) wo:rk (. ) at Bullocks this evening.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>09</td>
<td>PRI:</td>
<td>.hh W’ll &lt;I don’t&gt; kno:::w.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

At line 5, Marsha initiates the call’s first topic early and thus urgently (by preempting the how-are-you sequences; Schegloff, 1986) with an *itemized news inquiry*: “What happened today.” (line 5; Button & Casey, 1985). Marsha’s itemized news inquiry presumes that Priscilla knows about a particular event. Priscilla’s ability to provide a relevant response is problematized by the fact that: (a) she objectively does not know about the event indexed by Marsha’s itemized news inquiry (see Priscilla’s “W’ll <I don’t> kno:::w.” at line 9); and (b) she may not even know that she does not know about it because Marsha’s itemized news inquiry merely indexes (i.e., does not specify) an event that has not been discussed previously. In response to Priscilla’s “Wha=:do=:you mean.” (line 7), Marsha reasks her trouble-source question by rebeginning with, “What happened. . .” (line 8), inserts a location, “at (. ) wo:rk (. ) at Bullock,” and replaces “today.” with the more specific time formulation: “this evening.”

There appear to be at least two major differences between the repair-initiation practice *What do you mean?* and the full repeat. First, *What do you mean?* overtly claims that the repair-related trouble involves understanding the questioning action (Schegloff, 1997), and we might speculate that it is more conventionally tailored to understanding trouble. By contrast, the full repeat provides less indication of what the repair-related trouble involves (which, based on previous extracts, can range from understanding to accepting the questioning action), and thus less indication of how the trouble-source speaker should repair the problem. Second, and perhaps relatedly, *What do you mean?,* as an interrogative, strongly “invokes a claim that [its speaker] lacks certain information . . . and that the addressee has this information” (Heritage, 2007, p. 2). It may not be a coincidence that, in Extract 15, Priscilla objectively does not know about the event indexed by Marsha’s itemized news inquiry. By contrast, the full repeat is merely composed of a repeat, and thus makes fewer concessions to the trouble-source speaker’s position of epistemic authority (We say “fewer” concessions because the full repeat does prosodically make such a concession with its interrogative, or final-rising,
intonation). Indeed, in many of the full repeat cases analyzed above, there is evidence that the person who initiates repair does know what the trouble-source question might possibly (but only possibly) be asking about. In the case of the full repeat, the issue appears to be not *what do you mean,* but *which of multiple possible meanings is your question designed to implicate.*

**DISCUSSION**

This article used conversation analysis to describe a practice of other-initiation of repair designed to locate an entire action (vs. only part of one) as the repairable: The full virtually identical, final-rising intoned repeat of a sentential turn-constructional unit (i.e., a full repeat). Specifically, we examined how the full repeat is deployed to deal with one type of action, the question (i.e., a first pair-part whose primary action is one of requesting information in the vernacular sense). We demonstrated that the full repeat works to delimit the nature of the trouble by ruling out that of at least hearing-what-was-said and understanding-that-a-question-was-asked (see Footnote 3). We demonstrated that the full repeat tacitly claims that the questioning action is somehow problematic. The precise nature of this problem, and thus how it might be resolved/repaired, is context sensitive and worked out by members on a case-to-case basis. In the vast majority of our cases (18/20), participants orient to the full repeat as addressing trouble understanding the questioning action, that is, trouble understanding the thrust of the question-as-a-whole, or what it is getting at, or what is meant by its asking. In all of these cases, prior context provides for the relevance of this type of misunderstanding, which participants appear to then rule in as a type of trouble. For example, many of the trouble-source questions examined are sequentially and/or topically incoherent with prior talk (Drew, 1997), such that they come out of the (interactional) blue or out of left field. However, there are also occasions (2/20 cases) where the full repeat is oriented to as addressing trouble accepting (Svennevig, 2008) the questioning action, thereby characterizing it as being, for example, ridiculous. In these cases, prior context does not (or at least not as strongly) provide for the relevance of possible misunderstanding, which participants appear to then rule out as a type of trouble.

It is important to note that the function for which a practice of other-initiation of repair is treated can be different than the function for which it was designed. Pomerantz (1984) argued that the resolution of other-initiation of repair is organized by a preference for prioritizing hearing and understanding trouble over acceptability trouble. According to Pomerantz, the resolution of hearing/understanding trouble is not only more sequentially expeditious in terms of promoting the progression (Schegloff, 2007) of the trouble-source action and its sequence, but also more avoidant of interpersonal conflict, which can itself delay progressivity by making relevant what Jefferson (1987) called attendant activities, such as blaming, apologizing, etc. Although the vast majority of the full repeats in our data are *treated* as claiming trouble understanding a questioning action, full repeats can simultaneously raise the relevance of both understanding trouble and acceptability trouble. For example, in Extract 4, Peter’s full repeat of Debbie’s question *Do you read?* raises the relevance of at least two versions of what the question is asking about, one of which is insult implicative (i.e., *Can you read?*), and the other of which is relatively benign (i.e.,

9Pomerantz (1984) actually uses the term *agreement* (vs. acceptability) trouble, but here we employ the more general notion of acceptability trouble (Svennevig, 2008) in order to sidestep the related, but highly complicated, issue of “disagreement.”
Do you read as a hobby?). In Extract 6, Moe orients to one possible version of Bill’s question Do you know nirvana? as being silly. In Extract 9, Carla orients to one possible version of Rich’s question Do you know her? as constituting a sexual tease.

This article only focused on full repeats of questions, or first pair-parts whose primary action is one of soliciting information. In our data of approximately 80 hours of mundane conversation, we only have two instances of full repeats being used to initiate repair on other types of actions, both announcements. It may be that, relative to other sequence-initiating actions (e.g., announcements), questions are more prone to being misunderstood because they are frequently carriers of additional social actions aside from seeking information (Steensig & Drew, 2008), such as teasing (e.g., see Extract 9).

The full repeat appears to be a relatively rare practice of other-initiation of repair. One explanation for this rarity is that, because the primary function of talk-in-interaction is the performance of action (Schegloff, 1995), and because the recognizability of action, per se, forms the bedrock of intersubjectivity (Schegloff, 1992), speakers are highly accountable (Garfinkel, 1967) for working diligently to ensure that action is sensible. This is, in part, why Garfinkel (1963), in his classic study of trust, resorted to attempting to experimentally induce a senseless action. Relative to trouble involving components of actions (e.g., person references, technical terms, etc.), trouble with action, per se, appears to be a higher order, and much more rare, type of trouble.

REFERENCES


