Using Polar Questions as Confirming Forms In Interchange

(استخدام الأسئلة القاطبة كصيغة تأكيد في المحادثة)

المدرس
ميادة رحيم عيسى
May_rahim@yahoo.com

المدرس
لمى صبري دانيال
LumaDanial@yahoo.com

الجامعة التكنولوجية / دائرة البحث والتطوير

Abstract:

There is a kind of challenge the argument put forth by Corbett (1991) that, within

multiple antecedent agreement, the two possible agreement strategies, Resolution and Partial Agreement, can be viewed as semantic and syntactic agreement, respectively. Resolution, while semantically motivated and involving input from all of the agreement controllers, is not the same as semantic agreement in singleantecedent contexts. Partial Agreement, which relies on the morphological features of only one of the antecedents, still requires reference to the semantic features of both antecedents, as this strategy is more likely when the controllers are inanimate.

Instead, I propose that the distribution of the two strategies – which nonetheless reflects the Agreement Hierarchy (Corbett 1979) and the Predicate

Hierarchy (Comrie 1975) – is a product of the cognitive difficulty multiple antecedent agreement contexts pose for the speaker, such that the rules for this context are really part of broader principles within and across languages .The ability to request clarification of utterance is a vital part of the communicative process. In conversation analysis, questions are explicated in sequential terms .They constrain relevant types and forms of response in the next turn , and the specifics of response construction provide resources that inform how questions and their actions and constraints are understood. These polar question are question that are designed to receive a conforming answer of the same polarity as the question, so –called "same Polarity Questions.

Speakers accomplish this bias by formatting the question in accordance with their state of knowledge.

Our case study looks at how polar questions are confirmed. For confirming a polar question like 'Have they gone?', all languages provide two basic alternatives: an interjection type strategy (something like 'Yes') and a repetition type strategy (something like 'They have gone'). Combinations of these are also possible. Does selection of one of these options have a definable pragmatic function? An analysis of cases from English telephone calls shows that interjection type confirmations are used when the confirmation is relatively straightforward in interactional terms, and where the epistemic terms of the question are accepted by the person who is confirming. By contrast, repetition type confirmations are associated with pragmatic functions where the answerer is in some way resisting the epistemic terms of the question, or dealing with a perturbation of the interactional sequence.

We argue that the inherent semiotics of the two strategies explain why they have this distribution; i.e., the researcher do not expect that interjection forms would be standardly used for non-straightforward confirmations, etc.

In other words, the form-function mapping observed in English is a non-arbitrary one. Given that this semiotic motivation for choosing one over the other alternative for confirming polar questions should be present in other languages as well, we predict that the mapping observed in English will be observed in other languages as well.

Section One

Introduction

Language provides our most important tools for carrying out social life. Just about every move we make in navigating the social relationships that define us is made using the vehicle of talk. We do things to people with the things we say. We coerce, cajole, and command. We ask, accept, and agree. We gossip and goad.But given the great diversity in the meanings and structures of different

languages, do we do these things in fundamentally different ways? Is our potential for action a function of the language we speak? Could the human potential for social action be linguistically relative?

The answer, we have argued, is yes. We proposed another type of linguistic relativity, focusing on the consequences that linguistic differences have for the accomplishment of a specific category of social action: agreeing with someone's prior evaluation whereas at the same time admitting greater epistemic authority over the matter evaluated (Sidnell and Enfield 2012; Enfield and Sidnell 2012; cf. Heritage and Raymond 2005).

Our comparative research of Caribbean English Creole, Finnish, and Lao showed that the language specific tools used to realize this action introduce what we call collateral effects and in this way give the action a local spin or inflection (see also Enfield 2007; Sidnell 2007). See Figure 1:

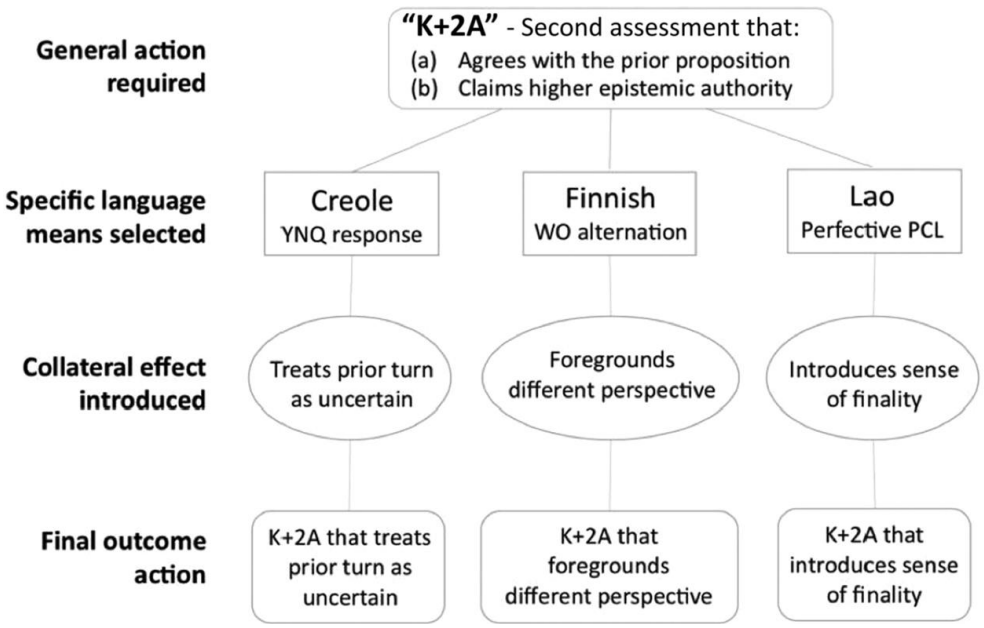

Figure 1 The selection of language-specific formats for achieving a general type of social action, "K-plus agreeing second assessment" (K2A). To achieve a certain action, a speaker has no option but to

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select some language specific means for doing it; these different means introduce different effects in each language, resulting in different final outcomes. YNQ ¼ yes-no question; WO ¼ word order; PCL ¼ particle. From Sidnell and Enfield (2012: 320).

The study revealed a form of linguistic relativity, whereby action in interaction is subject to language specific tweaking's or inflections which, cumulatively, result in significant differences across languages. However, this does not entail a position of extreme or unbridled relativism. The relativity arising from collateral effects is just one of the countervailing forces that shape the design of action in interaction. The other is the universality of natural meaning, by which we mean interpretation grounded in iconic and indexical principles, and not arbitrary conventions (see Haiman 1985). In this paper, the researchers focus on this second force toward universality, as a complement to our earlier work that concentrated on diversity.

Our case study relates to the systems that languages possess for answering polar questions (or "yes/no" questions). In this pragmatic domain we will argue that the form-to-meaning mappings observed are based on non-arbitrary principles, and are likely to imply universality of meaning patterning. Our point is not to demonstrate this universality but to take a first step by offering arguments that would predict it.

Before we proceed, let us establish an important preliminary to our argument. A universal feature of language is the presence of adjacency pairs in conversational dialogue (see, inter alia, Sacks et al. 1974; Sidnell 2010; Stivers et al. 2009). An adjacency pair is a sequence of two utterances, in which the first (called the first pair part), spoken by Person A, sets up a strong expectation (a "conditional relevance") for the immediate production of an appropriate or "fitted" second utterance (called the second pair part), spoken by Person B.

The specific issue in the analysis of question-answer sequences. How do people answer polar questions in different languages? The received view in linguistic typology is that there are "three different answering systems": "(i) yes/no systems, (ii) agree/disagree systems,

and (iii) echo systems" (König and Siemund 2007: 320). The difference between types (i) and (ii) has to do with the interpretation of polarity in relation to confirmation and disconfirmation. Suppose I ask, "He doesn't have phone there does he?". If you want to confirm that he does not have a phone, you would say "No" in English ("No he doesn't have one") but "Yes" in Japanese ("Yes it's true he doesn't have one"). However, despite this important difference in the rules of interpretation, systems of type (i) and (ii) are identical in that they answer polar questions with a kind of interjection that is entirely indexical, getting its meaning solely from the content of the question to which it responds. For both "No" and "Yes", in our example, one has to look back at the question to know what the response actually means.

A very different type of system is implied by type (iii). König and Siemund (2007: 321) repeat a widely made claim, that in an "echo system", "no special answer words at all can be found." The strong implication is that some languages have no forms for "yes" or "no". They state that "Welsh and Finnish are among the languages in our sample possessing such an echo system" (ibid.), implying that these two languages only have this echo system. Nevertheless, in fact both of these languages do have forms that mean "yes" and "no" (see Jones 1999 on Welsh and Sorjonen 2001 on Finnish). They make "echo" type answers available alongside the interjection option, just as English does. The point is that these "types" do not refer to distinct types of language, as is often implied. As far as we are aware, every language has both types of system – interjection and "echo" – though of course there may be differences in usage and distribution of the alternatives. It appears then that when people want to answer a polar question, no matter which language they are speaking, they have the option of using an interjection strategy or an echo strategy.

1-1 Interjection strategy

The interjection strategy for answering polar questions involves the use of words such as English yes and no. These are interjections in the sense defined in traditional grammar (e.g. Bloomfield 1933), that is, words that may stand alone as full utterances in themselves. We

include in the set of interjections not only words like yes and no, but variants such as yeah, yep, nah, nope, as well as marked terms with related but more.

Another oft-cited case of a language without an interjection option is Brazilian Portuguese; this language has slim for "Yes",but it is often said that people "never say it", instead opting for a kind of repetition strategy. It is possible that sim is used, but very rarely. It may be that other interjection strategies are widely used – like uh-huh and mm in English, there may be forms that are overlooked by analysts because of their highly informal character. At present , there is no available study that settles the matter with reference to data from language usage.

Specific meanings like absolutely (not) or of course (not), and forms that are less likely to be listed in formal linguistic descriptions, including vocalizations like mm, and visible responses such as head nods. The set of items that qualify as interjections for answering polar questions is large and varied. All languages will have a set of options, with non-identical alternatives. The precise meaning, function, and distribution of these will differ from language to language. Traditional grammatical treatments , account for the meanings in terms of matching response type to question type (e.g. German ja versus doch , or the English versus Japanese system for confirming a negative question) or in terms of relative politeness or formality (see Vietnamese ừ vs. dạ vs. vâng), but we do not know of an account for why a respondent confirms a question with yes in one context and mm hm or uh huh or nodding in other contexts.

1-2- Repetition strategy

The repetition strategy for answering polar questions involves repeating part or all of a question with adjustments resulting from a shift of deictic Centre: e.g. Did you eat my cake? may elicit I ate your cake as a repetition strategy for giving a confirming answer. This kind of modification in repetition is trivial, but there are many more kinds of transformation upon a question that maybe done within the repetition strategy. An important aspect of this strategy is

transformation by means of replacement of full nominal forms with proforms. Thus, alternative reputational answers to I ate your cake would include I ate it, in which the object noun phrase is replaced with the pronoun it, and I did, in which the entire verb phrase is replaced with the pro-form do. In addition, a repetition type response can be transformed in further ways by the addition of elements like an emphatic auxiliary verb (I did eat your cake) and other kinds of adverbs or particles (I sure as hell did). Despite all of this variation and expressive possibility, these are all cases of what we want to call a repetition strategy of answering.

All languages provide a choice between two options: an interjection strategy (such as yes in English) and a repetition strategy (e.g. repeating a verb or verb phrase). A null hypothesis would be that these two strategies have the same meaning, and that they occur in free variation. But the researcher argue that the two options carry a subtle difference in meaning, and that this difference is due to their natural semiotics, and therefore that the meaning difference should be apparent in all languages.

Interjection strategies carry no inherent propositional content, and require the interpreter to consult the question (spoken by a different person, in first position) for the meaning being conveyed. Therefore, they should universally convey the idea that the answerer generally accepts the terms in which the question was framed. By contrast, repetition strategies, at least in their fullest form, independently convey the propositional content of what is being confirmed. Therefore, they should universally convey the idea that the answerer is being more assertive, taking greater "ownership" over what is being said in the utterance that ostensibly is asserting agreement or confirmation. There may of course be local inferential meanings ranging from resistance (or "pushing back") to independent epistemic access and so on (see Hayano 2011, 2013). More generally however, interjections are wholly dependent upon and indexical of the turns to which they respond and as such they are intrinsically identifiable as responses. By contrast, repetition strategies allow their speakers to

reassert their own independent agency in second position, because repetition strategies are not intrinsically marked as responsive.

Section Two

2- Analysis

2.1 Interjection confirmation

Consider first the use of an interjection to confirm a polar question in English. One common context for this usage is in response to what is described as a candidate answer question such as in the following.3" We define "candidate answer question" rather more narrowly than Pomerantz (1988) who introduced the term. For us a candidate answer question canonically takes the form of a [wh-question] [candidate answer] or simply the [candidate answer] with the question elided. For examples here include:

2) NB II:3:r(10)

01 Emma: How old's 'e gunnuh be.

02 (0.7)

03 Emma: Fifty ↑six?

04 Lottie: Ye:ah.

05 (0.3)

06 Emma: Ah'll be darn.

Here a wh-question establishes what is being asked about and, after a delay of (0.7) seconds, the candidate answer "fifty-six" is offered up for confirmation. Confirmation is accomplished by a simple interjection token "Ye:ah."

In the next example, Emma first asks "How is yer artherahtis," but before Lottie can answer appends the polar question, "yih still tak'n sho:ts?". In her response Lottie first confirms the polar question with a simple interjection before providing a response to the wh-question which preceded it. She thus treats the polar question as amenable to straightforward, direct confirmation (see Sacks 1987).

3) NB II:3:r(12)

01 Lottie: Ye[a:h.]

02 Emma: [Yeh a]t's goo:d. u.-How is yer artherahtis, yih still

03 tak'n sho:ts?

04 Lottie: ↑Ye:a:h u- [↑w u l: i]t's: ↑ i-it's ↓awri:::ght <I mean:¼

05 Emma: [°°Ah-ha°°]

06 Lottie: ¼it's e- ↓uh::: (0.2) it ut hurts once'n a [whi:le] but

07 Emma: [Mm hm]

08 (.)

09 Lottie: it's oka:y.¼

Where the question is negatively formatted confirmation is, of course, effected by use of the negative interjection token "no" as in the following:

4) NB I:1:r(3)

01 Guy: He dun'av a phone over there dud'e?

02 Jon: No:.

Other variants include the tokens "uh huh" and "mm hm" as in the following (another Wh+candidate):

5) NB I:1:r(7)

01 Guy: Wt's the name i-San Juan Hi:lls.huh?¼ 02 Jon: ¼hUh huh?.hhhh

03 (0.6)

04 I have the Hunningtin Seacli:ff?

Across all the interjection examples, confirmation is treated as simple matter and, once the question is confirmed, the sequence is either concluded by a third position closing turn or the participants move directly to other matters as in (5). Thus the interjection accepts the terms of the question as posed. Notice also that in each of the

cases above, the question is constructed so as to convey a relatively high degree of certainty. For instance, "He dun'av a phone over there dud'e?" conveys relative certainty as compared to an alternate possible form such as "Does he have a phone over there?". Lee (2014) notes that, whereas "interrogative forms..., indexing the questioner's unknowing stance, tend to be treated as inviting elaboration

that will inform the questioner", formats that encode "questioner's knowing stance, tend to invite confirmation of the matter at hand and possible sequence closure... A minimal, type-conforming token alone is considered adequate, as the questioner claims to be knowledgeable to some degree through the form of question."

To summarize, unelaborated interjection responses treat confirmation as a simple matter, are indexically dependent on the way to which they respond, accept the items of the question as unproblematic and maximize sequence progressivity. Not surprisingly then they are commonly produced in response to questions with a "shallow" epistemic gradient that is, where the questioner conveys relative certainty about the matters asked about (see also, Heritage and Raymond 2012: 183).

2.2 [interjection] [repeat] confirmation

Another frequently occurring pattern is one in which an interjection token is followed by a repeat. The following cases are illustrative.

6) NB IV:11:r(1)

01 Emma: Ah did↑ju[ge:tche] r paper this: morning¼

02 Gladys: [Ahshh]

03 Emma: ¼it wz ou:t'n [fron'v a:r pl↓a:ce.¼

04 Gladys: [m-

05 ¼Yes dear ah di↓:d.

06 Emma: Bud took't over on the porch he didn'know

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07 whether yih w'r u:p.h

08 Gladys: u-Well thank you yes I did

7) NB I:1:r(2)

01 Guy: Wut about dat SAN JUAN ↑HILLS down 'ere.

02 Yuh think we c'get on 'ere?

03 (.)

04 Jon: Ye:s I think so:,

8) NB I:1:r(3)

01 Guy: Is Cliff dow:n by any chance?¼diyuh ↑°know°?

02 (0.3)

03 Jon: ↑Ha:h?

04 Guy: I:ss uh: Bro:wn down-e?

05 (.)

06 Jon: -> Yeah he's do:wn,

07 Guy: Think he'd like to [↑go?

08 Jon: [Played golf with im yesterday et San

09 Clemente.

10 Guy: Yih di:[d.hh

11 Jon: [Uh huh?

12 Guy: Think he'd like tih go:?

13 Jon: I: uh,h I don't ↑kno:w, uh:heh heh hu:h huh.hhh Ah(h)'ll

14 I(c) I c'd go by ed see:,

We can notice that across these cases, an anaphoric or elliptical repeat of some part of the question is appended to the interjection.

Did you get your paper this morning -> (yes dear) I did ⃠

You think we can get on there -> (yes) I think so

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Is Brown down – > (yeah) he's down

Each of these questions is recognizably preliminary to some other action, that is,these questions are not asked solely for their own sake. Rather, they are "headed" somewhere and project the doing of a next action. For instance in (6) Emma asks whether Gladys got her newspaper which subsequently leads her to explain that it was "out in front of our place" and that her husband Bud had taken it over. This then occasions an appreciation by Gladys in line 08. In (7) Guy asks Jon whether he thinks they might be ableget on the San Juan Hills Golf club. The question is recognizably leading to the proposal that they play there that afternoon. Finally, in (9), Guy asks Jon if a mutual acquaintance, Brown, "is down," meaning, it would appear, at his summer house in Newport Beach. This projects a proposal that Brown be invited to play golf with the group thus rounding out a foursome. These questions can be compared with those given as (2)–(5) which do not appear to be preliminary to some other business and thus do not project sequence expansion.Rather, as is most obvious in the case of candidate answer questions, these questions are asked to address some immediate, interactionally relevant issue and are not preliminary to something else. A corollary of this, it seems, is that whereas the questions in (2)–(5) are constructed using the format [declarative] [tag] or as candidate answer questions, those given as (6)- (9) are constructed using an interrogative format. These questions thus convey a deeper epistemic gradient than those in (2) –(5).(see Schegloff 2007; Raymond 2013; Steensing and Heinemann 2013)

The [interjection] [repeat] format appears particularly fitted to confirm questions with a relatively deep epistemic gradient and is used where the recipient means to address both the question posed and the action for which that question is the vehicle (see inter alia Raymond 2003; Heritage and Raymond 2012; Keevallik 2010; Lee 2012 etc.).

2.3 Repeat confirmations

We can compare such cases with those in which confirmation is accomplished by a straight repeat. As Heritage and Raymond (2012: 186) write, while

There are many repetitive responses that are still indexical tied to the questions to which in turn, they respond, they differ from straightforward anaphoric yes-no responses. Specially, they resist the field of constraint in three respects:(i) they ordered the items of the question by asserting, rather than affirming, the propositional content of the prior yes-no question; (ii) they exert agency according to those items, emphasizing more authoritative rights over the data at issue, than the asker had already conceded through the design of the question; and (iii) relative to yes-no responses , they are coordinate with sequence expansion.

Repeat confirmations (with no interjection token) occur in a restricted set of sequential contexts. Specifically, we find this strategy used in the following environments:

a) In response to a first assessment formatted as a polar question (see Heritage and Raymond 2005).

b) In response to a news mark formatted as a polar question such as (9).

9) NB:II:4r(10), 5:50

01 Nancy: ¼I din't get home til (.).hhhh two las'night I met a

02 very:,h very n:i:ce ↓gu:y.

03 Emma: ↑Did(.)ju↓::.¼

04 Nancy: ¼I: rill↑y did. through the↑:se: frien:ds of mi↑:ne?h

c) In response to the formulation of a prior telling formatted as a polar question (see also allusion confirmations, Schegloff 1996). Use of repetition to confirm a polar question is not common in English conversation. Indeed, use of this strategy appears to be linked to a rather specific set of interactional outcomes such as we describe above or such as in what Schegloff (1996) describes as "confirming an allusion".

We will consider this last environment in more detail in what follows. Essentially what we see in this subset of cases is that a first

speaker is engaged in an extended telling towards which she adopts either a positive or negative stance. Where this comes to a point of recognizable completion the recipient produces a polar question in which she asks about some aspect of the state of affairs described by formulating an upshot of the telling. This turn is designed as a declaratively formatted inference to which "huh?" is appended thus making it a polar question. In response to this the initial teller responds with a repeat formatted confirmation.

The following cases illustrate:

10) NB:II:2r(18)

01 Nancy: [L e t-] I:] hu [n:No: I haf to: uh

02 call Roul's mother,h I told'er I:'d call'er

03 this morning I [gotta letter] from'er en

04 Emma: [°(Uh huh .)°]

05 Nancy: .hhhhhh A:nd uhm

06 (1.0)

07 Nancy: .tch u-So: she in the letter she said if you

08 ca:n why (.) yihknow call me Saturday morning

09 en I jst haven't h [.hhhh]

10 Emma: [°Mm h]m:°¼

11 Nancy: ¼'T's like takin a beating.

12 (0.2)

13 Nancy: kh[hh ↑hnhh hnh]-hnh- [hnh

14 Emma: -> [°M m : : :,°] [No one heard a wo:rd hah,

15 Nancy: >Not a word,<

16 (0.2)

17 Nancy: Hah ah,

18 (0.2)

19 Nancy: n:Not (.) not a word,h

20 (.)

21 Nancy: Not et all, except Roul's mother gotta call

11) NB:II:5r(9–10), 5:50

01 Emma: So[u It's terr:]ible up

02 Lottie: [°O h : : : °]

03 (.)

04 Emma: ↑It's TERR:IBLE up.hhh ↑we lie:- (0.4) We absolutely lie:

05 star:k naked on the be:d,

06 (0.2)

07 Emma: .hh with ↑MAYbe a sheet o:n about two uh'↓clock.

08 (0.6)

09 Lottie:-> It's that ho:t h[u: h?]

10 Emma: [Tha:t's] that ho:t.

11 (0.4)

12 Emma: Be[lieve it er] no:t an'] en we got the air conditioning¼

In (10) Nancy tells Emma that she must call the mother of her husband, Roul, who has apparently run off and cut all ties with his family (wife, children, mother). Nancy expresses some reluctance to make the call reporting that it is like "taking a beating". Emma's question in line 14 ("No one heard a wo:rd hah,") formulates an inference based on Nancy's just prior talk – specifically, from the facts that Nancy's mother in law wants her to call, that Nancy feels obligated to do so, and from the fact that Nancy describes the situation as "like taking a beating" Emma can surmise, it seems, that no one has heard anything from Roul.Emma's question takes the form of an

extreme case formulation (Pomerantz 1986) to which the tag "huh?" is appended thus leaving Nancy very little room to upgrade or expand. She manages the situation by use of a repeat formatted confirmation which itself is first repeated and subsequently reformatted as the elliptical "not at all" before being qualified with "except Roul's mother got a call" (see Sacks 1987).

In (11) Emma is telling her sister Lottie how hot it has been where she lives (not Newport Beach). Initially she describes the heat as "terrible" but then goes on to detail that she and her husband "absolutely lie stark naked on the bed" and, after Lottie fails to respond, expands by saying "with a sheet on about two o'clock". At this point Lottie asks "It's that hot, huh?" and Emma confirms with a repeat formatted "(that's) that hot".

In both these cases the question comes in response to a telling that describes a somewhat extraordinary state of affairs – extreme heat in (11), extreme negligence by a husband in (10). These descriptions are thus designed to elicit an expression of affinitive stance from the recipient. We can see how these formulation questions do that by conveying some upshot of the telling using a [declarative] [tag] form that conveys a "knowing stance". In these cases, then, the recipient of a telling ends up authoring or formulating an upshot of that telling. As such, confirmation by repetition can be seen as a reassertion of primary rights to talk about what is, after all, the initial teller's own experience. At the same time the original teller, by confirming with a repeat rather than an interjection, conveys their own involvement – indeed asserts it – in the telling (see Goffman 1957).

These cases thus establish a use of repetition to confirm a telling-recipient's formulation of upshot as a practice. We can now consider a deviant case in which in precisely such a situation, a speaker confirms with an interjection rather than a repeat and the participants orient to this as problematic and worthy of sanction. As Heritage and Raymond note (2012: 187) "there are actions in which an affirmative type conforming response can be too acquiescent, and imply insufficient agency and commitment to a course of action being assented to." In

the following, Jim has asked Frank about the waves at the beach (line 01) and after Frank estimates their size (line 03) Jim offers the assessment "Christ thirty feet" (in the previous call there is mention made of a news report about this7). A first indication of trouble comes when Frank initiates repair of this assessment at line 09 and when Jim asks if the waves come "all the way up to the houses" Frank disconfirms, indicating that the waves extend just to where the sidewalk ends. Frank thereby minimizes a possible news item that Jim has treated as something potentially tellable/assessable (see Sidnell 2012 for discussion).

12) NB: III:2r(4–5)

01 Jim: Bye now.h Ho:w u-how big er those waves down theh.

02 (0.4)

03 Frank: Oh:: about (.) thirty foot I guess

04 (1.7)

05 Jim: Chris[t thirty fee]:t.

06 Frank: [Big enough::]

07 (.)

08 Jim: Thet's[hh

09 Frank: [He::h?

10 Jim: Thirty fee(h)eet,[·hh Is]

11 Frank: [↑Ye:h.]

12 Jim: Is it all a'way up tih the houssiz?

13 (0.5)

14 Frank: Oh: ↓no:. ↓No it's jis comes uup (.) Yihknow where the:-

15 uh(p) (0.4) Uh you ben down here before['avenche.]

16 Jim: [Y a a h.]

17 Frank: Wheh the sidewalk is?

18 Jim: Ye:ah?

19 Frank: Whur it ends,

20 (.)

21 Jim Goes[all the way] up there?]

22 Frank: [They c'm up] tuh the:]re,h Yea:h.

23 Jim: Je:sus Christ must be so:methin uh[:?

24 (F): [(.tch)

25 Frank: °↑mnYe:ah,° hhh ((wearily))

26 Gits pretty hh (.).hh[hh

27 Jim: [Don't sound so (h)amp(h)itious¼

28 Frank: ¼[.ehh

29 Jim: ¼[fer Ch(h)rise'sake [(h)ih suh.hh]¼

30 Frank: [Y e : h]¼

31 Jim: ¼sou' l(h)i'yuh k(h)uh g(h)o tuh sleep'n the pho(h)one.

32 Frank: eheh huh [heh heh [huh huh-eh.hhh

33 Jim: [heh [heh

34 Frank: I [jis woke ↑U]:P [huh] heh] heh ↑h]ih

Notice then that when Jim produces the polar question, "Je:sus Christ must be so:methin uh:?" at line 23 he is apparently pursuing a more emphatic response from Frank. Frank, however, responds with a simple interjection confirmation (at line 25). Now although there are clearly other factors that contribute to Jim's hearing of this "yeah," it is noteworthy that Jim treats the interjection response as warranting sanction saying, "Don't sound so ambitious" and going on to say that Frank sounds as though he is going to go to sleep on the phone. Thus both in the very fact of sanctioning Frank's response and in the very design of talk that does this, Jim orients to the interjection response as

somehow insufficient, indeed, as specifically lacking in agency (i.e. produced as though by someone falling asleep). We speculate that alternative responses such "oh it's something" or "it's crazy" would not have attracted such response.

In all the cases of confirmation by repeat then a speaker can be seen to be reclaiming ground, either as the initial author of something that has just been independently authored and animated by another as in the case of confirming an allusion or as one who authentically and independently arrives at an assessment to which she finds herself responding. Lee (2012: 426) writes along these lines: "Repetitional responses are thus used to exert and contest epistemic agency over the terms within which the response should be constructed."

Section Three

Conclusion

The present analysis of the functional differentiation in confirmation formats is also supported by the evidence from context of use. Thus in the case of certain rituals, such as the royal wedding with which we began, it can be observed that confirmation by repeat (rather than interjection) is more or less normatively required. Although the felicity conditions of the ritual apparently require only confirmation with no restriction on what form that takes, in practice repeat-confirmations (e.g. "I will", "I do") are preferred. When seen in the light of performative theories of ritual (e.g. Rappaport 2002 [1999]; Tambiah 1985) this fits exactly with our analysis. According to Rappaport and others, a ritual is effective to the extent that persons participate in it and do so explicitly (preferably with witnesses and so on). That is, ritual effectiveness presupposes the active – or, agentive – engagement of the participants. In a highly consequential (status-changing) ritual such as a wedding agentive participation is conveyed by repeat-formatted confirmation.

Our account suggests that agency – taken here to refer to a complex set of elements of an individual's flexibility and accountability in relation to action; cf. Kockelman (2007, 2013), Enfield (2013) – in response is partly a matter of how dependent the

interpretation of the response turn's semantic/propositional content is on what has been produced prior by the other speaker. For simplicity's sake, we will speak here of the elements of agency implied by Goffman's well-known distinction between the "author", "animator", and "principal" components of speaker hood (1979). Thus, if you say "Isn't that cool?", when I say "Yeah" then the content of what I'm saying has actually been entirely authored and animated by you in the prior turn; I'm just saying "look back at what he just said and you'll see what I'm saying". At the other extreme, if I say "That is cool" then I'm explicitly asserting the entire semantic/propositional content within the form of my own turn, and thus my turn is formulated as if I had said it independently, and thus,prior context (i.e. your prior turn) is not needed for the interpretation of what I am saying with my 2nd position move.

The alternatives for confirmation can be seen to vary on this scale; for instance in the example above "it is" is less dependent for its semantic resolution on the prior turn than "yes", but is more dependent than saying "it is cool". Adding "cool" gives the second position speaker some ownership via the fact that she has animated the key predicate; stressing a finite auxiliary gives second position speaker ownership over the fact that she is asserting this proposition (see Stivers 2005); replacing the prior turn's predicate with "gorgeous" adds a re-authoring, thus implying independent access to the state of affairs being described, etc. Thus while it is possible to understand this in scalar agency terms, one should not lose sight of the fact that agency is made up of multiple components, it is not just a scale from "less" to "more" (see Enfield 2013).

In our discussion here, we have proposed an analysis of the functional differentiation and associated meanings of alternate formats for the confirmation of polar questions. Although we have drawn on records of English conversation, because the analysis is based on the semiotics of natural meaning, it should hold cross-linguistically. Thus we predict that in all languages interjection confirmations tend to accept the terms of the question to which they respond whereas repeat confirmations are more assertive. Our analysis is also meant to

suggest a program of research into the semiotics of natural languages, one that is based on their primary use in naturally occurring, spontaneous interaction. If we are going to understand the nature, extent and limits of linguistic diversity we argue that this will require extensive research into the countervailing forces of natural meaning on the one hand and historically shaped diversification on the other as these are realized in and through interaction.

الخلاصة:

إن القابلية على طلب توضيح للتلفظ او الحديث هو جزء حتمي وضروري في عملية التواصل في تحليل المحادثة ، فان الاسئلة مرتبة بحسب تسلسل المصطلحات، فهي تمثل أنواع وصيغ متداخلة ومرتبطة من الاجابة بالتبادل. أن خصوصية الاجابة تحدد المصادر التي تعلم وتخبر كيف ان الاسئلة وافعالها ونمطها المحدد يجب ان تفهم. أن هذه الاسئلة القطبية هي اسئلة مصممة لاستلام الاجابة الموكدة لنفس السؤال عن الاجابة الحتمية ولهذا تسمى (الاسئلة القطبية المتشابهة). المتحدثون ينجزون هذه القاعدة من خلال تأكيد السؤال بحسب معرفتهم.

إن البحث ينظر الى كيفية تأكيد هذه الاسئلة على سبيل المثال ل تأكيد السؤال (هل ذهبوا)، فان إجابة هذا السؤال بجميع اللغات يكون بشطرين اثنين، استراتيجية صيغة الربط مثل كلمة (نعم) أو صيغة التكرار او الاعادة (هم ذهبوا) ويمكن المزج بينهما، وان تأكيد صيغ الربط هي المستخدمة عندما يكون ال تأكيد واضح نسبيا" في المصطلحات، وكذلك عندما تكون المصطلحات الملهمة للسؤال مقبولة من قبل الشخص المؤكد، وبالتناقض فان صيغة ال تأكيد بالإعادة مرتبطة مع الوظائف القواعدية عندما تكون الاجابة في نفس طريقة رفض مصطلحات الالهام لصيغة السؤال أو تتفاعل مع فترة التقاطع التي تكون موجودة في تتابع المحادثة .

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