

Gestures as Requests for Information: Initiating Repair Operations in German Native-Speaker Conversation

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There are a number of ways in which one can communicate misunderstanding, and in doing so, ask one's speech partners to perform a variety of actions to resolve misunderstandings. From subtle signs, to outright interruptions, we can ask those we converse with to clarify, repeat, or otherwise explain what they have said to aid in our understanding of their previous utterances. This article will discuss the role of gesture in initiating repair in German native speaker conversation, focusing on "head tilt" and "head poke" style gestures (Seo and Koshik 2219) and their use as

requests for information. The focus will be on the use of body orientation toward one's speech partner, for example, leaning forward or orienting one's torso toward a co-participant. Broadly defined, I will be looking at examples that present instances of repair initiation, the initiation being a request for information or confirmation, to which a co-participant orients and responds.

For example, an excerpt from Maria Egbert's 2004 paper on membership categorization features a use of a leaning gesture to this end (1473). As seen below, in line 04, Robi leans toward his conversation

(3) ("frat guys"; AIK, simplified)

01	Tina:	das warn eben auch son paar there were PRT also such few there were also some			
02		frat guys, .hh die burschenschaftler, .hh they burschenschaftler, .hh who	09		*Robi moves torso back to upright position and continues gazing at Tina *die warn tota:l besoffen *they were to:tal drunk *they were to:tally drunk
03		hochgradig () extremely () wanted to be extremely	10		un die frau war an the woman was an the woman was
04		*Robi moves torso towards Tina sein *wollten= be *want ()	06		((continues story telling))
05	Tina:	[=die warn total besoffen [=they were total drunk [they were totally drunk			
06	Robi:	[w- wie hießen die? [h- how named they? [w- what were they called?			
07		(0.6)			
08	Tina:	burschenschaftler. fraternity members. fraternity guys.			

*Data Example 1: Frat Guys/Burschenschaftler, Lines 02 – 09
(Egbert 1473)*

partner, followed shortly by a verbal request for information in line 06, resulting in a translation repair being offered in line 08, with Robi terminating his lean in line 09. I will conduct a more in-depth analysis of this data segment later in the article.

This analysis is based primarily on the work done by Seo and Koshik presented in their 2010 article, which focused on the use of two distinct gestures, the “head tilt”¹ and “head poke,”² in interactions between ESL tutors and tutees. Seo and Koshik found that within their body of data, tutees exclusively used the “head poke” gesture when attempting to initiate repair, while the tutors, the native speakers, used either of the movements or a mix of both the “head tilt” and “head poke”.

With this in mind, and with the understanding that until now the majority of work on gesture in repair initiation has been done in native/non-native scenarios, I will determine the role of gesture in initiating repair or otherwise eliciting more information in cases of incomplete understanding among native speakers, focusing primarily on orientation toward one’s conversation partner or partners, as seen in the “head poke” gesture. I argue that this kind of gesture can serve a similar purpose, to initiate repair in cases of misunderstanding, when used among native speakers as well as when used between speakers of different linguistic proficiency. However, I also intend to show that this gesture is used primarily in order to elicit more information from a speech partner, as opposed to prompting other forms of repair, such as corrections. Specifically, this paper will deal with gesture used in instances of a speaker’s epistemic uncertainty³ to request information from their speech partners, thereby having their partner begin another-initiated repair sequence, the solution

to which is the provision or clarification of information. As the “trouble source” is a speaker’s misunderstanding or lack of information, this may not always be apparent from the transcript, considering that the speaker may not choose to vocalize this, instead making use of a gesture.

I will show this through analysis of five examples from conversations between native German speakers, four of which are accompanied by visual data. All five examples contain instances of other-initiated repair or requests for information begun through the use of, in four of the excerpts, a leaning gesture⁴, and include a continuation of that gesture throughout the repair operation. Additionally, I will consider the role of the coordination of gesture with turns and other apparent regularities evident in the data; for example, in the type of operation conducted and their resolution, in order to identify some particular characteristics associated with the use of gesture to initiate repair in native speaker talk.

Literature Review

In conducting the analysis of the following body of data, a number of resources offering perspectives on the role of gesture in conversation have been considered. The following publications have been presented here with the intent of considering their role in regards to gesture and its characteristics in general, their particular points relevant to gesture as a repair initiator or initiator of requests for information, or their concept of repair in a more general sense, as opposed to discussing the analysis directly.

The 1977 article from Schegloff, Jefferson, and Sacks, “The Preference for Self-Correction in the Organization of Repair in Conversation” is focused on determining the differences in social organization

between self- and other-correction, that is “correction by the speaker of that which is being corrected vs. correction by some ‘other’” (361). The authors contend that while both self- and other-correction are equally valued socially and organizationally related, there does exist a preference for self-correction (“The Preference for Self-Correction” 362). Through an examination of the structure of the initiations, outcomes, and patterns associated with repair operations, Schegloff, Jefferson, and Sacks reach a number of conclusions. Firstly, both self-initiated repairs and other-initiated repairs can yield self-correction; “the opportunity available to [an] other to initiate repair is used to afford [the] speaker of a trouble source a further opportunity to self-repair, which he takes” (“The Preference for Self-Correction” 377). It then follows that self- and other-correction are in fact not opposites, despite the differences between them. Rather, the organization of repair in conversation actually favours the selection of self-correction, which can be reached through either self- or other-initiation, which are in turn organized to favour self-initiation.

Egbert’s 2004 article, “Other Initiated Repair and Membership Categorization – Some Conversational Events that Trigger Linguistic and Regional Membership Categorization,” deals with the use of repair mechanisms in processes of membership categorization and the suitability of conversation analysis as a research methodology for intercultural interaction. As membership categorization may be done through the selection of any number of features, such as manner of (possibly incorrect) speech, the article attempts to answer the question of whether or not repair sequences can be used for the purpose of membership categorization, and if so, how. Through

an analysis of several examples of spoken German, both with and without non-native speakers, Egbert determines that, through other-initiated repair, a speaker can assign membership to themselves or to other speech partners. In addition, this process is collaborative, as the categorization can be worked upon further by the speakers, being assigned, rejected, or insisted upon (Egbert 1495). Additionally, as it is the co-participants themselves who co-construct interculturality by “making relevant linguistic and regional categories... the participants show [what is] relevant to them at a specific moment in the interaction” (1495), Egbert’s analysis shows that a researcher cannot always predict what features are relevant for a particular social encounter.

In his book, *Gesture: Visible Action as Utterance*, Kendon provides, in addition to a number of chapters concerning the history of gesture studies and the current state of the field, an overview of the role of gesture as a method of communication within the context of verbal interaction. Kendon reaches two conclusions of particular interest later in the text, in chapters eight and nine, titled “Deployment of Gesture in the Utterance” and “Gesture and Speech in Semantic Interaction,” respectively. In the former, the author explores the relationship between gesture and speech by considering a variety of different ways that the two can be organized within the same utterance. Owing to the various ways spoken and gestural components within a particular utterance can be organized, Kendon concludes that gestural components of communication are “under the control of the speaker in the same way as the verbal component” (156-7). This suggests that gestures should be considered an integral part of an utterance. As gestures are deployed and designed for different

purposes in the same way verbal components are, it follows that they carry some meaning that makes it possible for a more complete utterance to be produced (Kendon 157). Interestingly, it would then follow that gestures carry a meaning that the verbal components do not or cannot adequately express. Otherwise, gestures would not contribute to the “completeness” of the utterance.

In the following chapter, Kendon concerns himself with representational gesturing. In considering an example where the speaker, M, uses various forms of representational gestures, Kendon notes a fluidity of viewpoint present in both M’s use of gesture and his utterances. For example, M could move between an observer viewpoint, providing descriptions as if the object were in front of him, and a character viewpoint, describing the actions of another person, with both spoken and gestural components. This flexibility in changing gestures to fit different symbolic roles shows that not only verbal components of an utterance, but also the gestures, are shaped by the speaker’s semantic aims (Kendon 174). Accordingly, these designed gesture-speech ensembles convey specific meanings through the interactions between both components. It follows that without one component or the other, the meaning conveyed by the utterance could be significantly different.

Goldin-Meadow presents a discussion on the role of gesture within conversation in a general sense in her 2007 article, paying attention to the form of gesture and its relation to and role in combination with spoken language. By assessing how the responsibilities for communication are divided among communicative modes, Goldin-Meadow determined that gesture could take on different forms. When taking on the full burden of communication, that is, acting without

spoken language, gesture takes on a language-like form, becoming tailored to resemble the words for which they are standing in. However, when gesture shares this burden of communication, it “[assumes] instead a global and synthetic form... it conveys information imagistically and... thus allows speakers to convey thoughts that may not easily fit into... conventional language” (Goldin-Meadow 45). Following this line of reasoning, one ought to consider gesture as being equally capable of producing meaningful communication, either accompanied by or separate from spoken language.

Keevallik’s 2013 article “The Interdependence of Bodily Demonstrations and Clausal Syntax” focuses on the production and use of turn constructional units (hereafter TCUs) in interaction between speakers, specifically in the context of dance classes. The author contends that embodied demonstrations are treated as elements within TCUs during these interactions, and that the dancer may choose to include or exclude vocal components. In either case, she leaves temporal space within the spoken syntax for the demonstration. Following this, Keevallik reaches the conclusion that, as there are activities where the entire body is involved in the construction of TCUs, which appear to be able to function with or without vocal accompaniment, there are types of information that rely primarily on gesturing to be fully communicated, such as dance instruction (17-18). It would then follow that other situations could primarily use gesture as a means of communicating information.

Holler and Wilkin have, in their 2011 article on the effect of addressee feedback on co-speech gestures, determined that the same feedback is integral in projecting how co-speech gestures change throughout a particular face-to-face interaction. The authors

found that a speaker's gesture rate remains constant when the feedback they receive from the recipient prompts clarification or elaboration, as opposed to the proportionately fewer gestures performed when feedback suggested the recipient's comprehension (3533). Thus, gesture can be said to be recipient-designed, that is, tailored not only to what is being communicated with the gesture, but also to whom the gesture is made. According to Holler and Wilkin, "speakers appear to conceive of gesture as a useful modality in redesigning utterances to make them more accessible" (3522). Accordingly, it stands to reason that if speakers redesign their own gestures to help with recipient's misunderstandings and are adept at picking up on feedback from their addressees, speakers could reformat their verbal communication instead of their gestures, creating recipient-designed utterances, as evidenced in the analyses below.

The next article I considered is "Gesture and Coparticipation in the Activity of Searching for a Word" by M. H. Goodwin and C. Goodwin. In their paper, the authors begin by raising the issue of how gesture is considered meaningful at all. Through an analysis of word-search sequences accompanied by gestures, Goodwin and Goodwin argue that "a gesture obtains its meaning by virtue of its placement within an activity which is clearly recognizable to the participants" (52). Participants attribute meaning to gestures by virtue of their placement within an activity. Thus, it follows that certain gestures could be seen to become associated with specific classes of activities, from which they may ultimately derive their meaning and become associated with a particular state of events within the conversational context. Following this, the use of gestures such as, but not limited to, forward leans, that produce an orientation to one's

speech partners, could, by virtue of the contexts in which they occur, lead to them being perceived as requests for further information or other types of repair operations. Additionally, Goodwin and Goodwin's thoughts on context here underscore the importance of context-dependent analysis of the data (72).

Following this, I considered two of Schegloff's papers, "Body Torque" (1998) and "On Some Gestures' Relation to Talk" (1984). Beginning with the former, Schegloff found that body torque, defined as "divergent orientations of the body sectors above and below the neck and waist" ("Body Torque" 536), had a "capacity to project postural instability and types of potential resolutions [thereof]... [and a] capacity to display engagement with multiple courses of action and interactional involvements" ("Body Torque" 536). Additionally, body torque can actively shape the conversation with which it occurs. Thus, along with the aforementioned capacity to display short-term engagement, body torque has the potential to communicate meaning through providing continual feedback to one's speech partner, and in doing so, shape forthcoming talk. This function can be seen in the data considered in this article, such as in cases of a continued forward lean⁵, which appears in a number of examples.

In "On Some Gestures", Schegloff explores the role of gesture as a pre-indicator of forthcoming repair operations. As with the attribution of meanings to the gesture itself, we are able to associate a gesture's occurrence with a possibility of an upcoming repair initiation with regularity. In short, Schegloff determined that not only a connection between repair and its pre-indication through a deployment of related gestures exists, but also a more general connection

between two parts of discourse via the deployment of related gestures within them (“On some Gestures” 291). Thus, gestures, such as a forward lean, could not only be used to initiate a repair, but could also be indicative of possible forthcoming repair operations.

In Rasmussen’s 2013 article, “Inclined to Better Understanding – the Coordination of Talk and ‘Leaning Forward’ in Doing Repair”, the author attempts to show how a combination of talk and “leaning forward” movements is used to construct repair sequences. Additionally, the author argues for the acceptance of the combination functioning in this manner within the jurisdiction of conversation-analytic studies (14). Through the consideration of a number of examples, Rasmussen identifies an emerging pattern⁶ of repairs. In the discussed examples, the first speaker makes multiple attempts to be understood, including at least one self-repair, during which subsequent repairs are accompanied by “leaning forward” (Rasmussen 13). In the considered examples, not only did the speaker use a combination of talk and gesture to construct a further repair, but this repair also begins closing the previous on-going repair sequence, and is responded⁷ to accordingly (Rasmussen 13).

Given these results, Rasmussen then concludes that not only does this combination of talk and gesture seem to initiate repair, but it is also responded to as though it is, and “participants have treated [the combination] as *possibly* recognizable means of constructing this kind of repair. Accordingly... body movements used and describable in these ways naturally fall within the realm of CA studies” (13). As these resources are used and ordered in a systematic, recurrent manner in which they are socially recognized and oriented to as a method for doing

repair, the author argues that the use of “leaning forward” and talk is consistent with CA (Rasmussen 14).

Lastly, I considered Seo and Koshik’s 2010 article, “A Conversation Analytic Study of Gestures that Engender Repair in ESL Conversational Tutoring”. The authors considered a body of data consisting of excerpts of conversational tutoring sessions between native English speaker tutors and their students, focusing on “head tilt” and “head poke” gestures. The authors determined that the gestures acted “as displays of trouble by a recipient [and engendered] self-initiated self-repair by the original speaker of the trouble source” (Seo and Koshik 2020), and were performed in the same manner as “verbal OI repair initiators, i.e., in the next turn after the trouble source” (Seo and Koshik 2021). It follows from these results that, as in the data set, “language competency [was] not always treated as relevant when repair [was] initiated” (Seo and Koshik 2023). Similar gestures could also be seen to engender repair in native speaker interactions as well as in conversation between experts and learners of a language.

Accordingly, for my analysis I have selected data samples containing gestures apparently used to engender repair operations or requests for information that are analogous to Seo and Koshik’s “head poke” and “head tilt” gestures, as well as Rasmussen’s “leaning forward” gesture. This means that they physically resemble one another to a degree and present a similar orientation to one’s speech partner, with the intent that their analysis will yield conclusions similar to those reached by the aforementioned authors.

Data Corpus

The five data examples chosen for this analysis have been primarily selected from audio and video recordings of face-to-face interaction in German. The examples are taken from two different conversations. Both data sets are recordings of informal social gatherings. Data examples 2-5 come from Emma Betz's 2007/2008 unpublished study. Data Example 1 comes from Maria Egbert's 2004 article, "Other-initiated repair and membership categorization" (1473-4). While Egbert focused on the use of repair as a means to membership categorization, I will be concentrating on the use and function of the leaning gesture in the repair found in the example. Video data for this example was unfortunately unavailable.

The data examples have been placed in the following order due to particulars in the use of the phenomenon: examples 1 and 2 contain use of a forward lean without accompanying speech, example 3 a forward lean with accompanying speech, example 4 a forward lean preceded by speech, and example 5 a head tilt preceded by speech. This way, the analysis moves from instances of gesture in repair without accompanying speech, to instances with it, to instances being preceded by it.

The data sections' transcription conventions follow the Jeffersonian transcription system,⁸ and English translations of the German-language data, when not present in the example, are located in Appendix I. The subsequent analysis follows a conversation-analytic style.

Data Analysis

In the first excerpt, taken from Maria Egbert's 2004 article on other-initiated repair, Tina is telling Robi about her experiences studying in America,

eventually hitting upon the subject of fraternities. She describes some young men as "frat guys," a fairly common slang term for members of fraternities in North American English. Robi, however, has some difficulty understanding the term, as can be seen in line 6, where he attempts to initiate repair on Tina's utterance by asking, "w- wie heißen die?" referring to the last plural noun in Tina's speech, the "frat guys." Before initiating this repair, he leans in toward Tina, moving his torso from its original position to one closer to Tina, orienting himself towards her, much like the tutees' use of the "head poke" in Seo and Koshik (2010). In doing so, he displays a heightened attention to what Tina is saying. This can be seen as Robi's first attempt at initiating repair, as his transition from being a "passive listener" to being an "active" one, shown through his more attentive body language, indicates that there is something about Tina's utterance that requires closer attention. In this case, an object of apparent mis- or non-understanding.

Tina does not take up this repair initiation⁹, rather continuing with her description of frat guys, stating that "die waren total besoffen;" overlapping this statement, Robi attempts to initiate repair verbally, to elicit more information about the term "Frat guys," this time by explicitly asking, "w- wie heißen die?"; he remains leaning towards Tina. This time, she takes up the repair, and after a slight pause, offers the term "Burschenschaftler" as a possible translation for the term "Frat guys," conducting a replacement in order to explain the term to Robi. This indicates that Tina assesses Robi's problem as being related to the English term, "frat guys," and that it is thus more likely a problem of understanding than of hearing. If she thought he had not heard her correctly, as opposed to lacking knowledge of the term,

(3) ("frat guys"; AIK, simplified)

01	Tina:	das warn eben auch son paar there were PRT also such few there were also some			<i>*Robi moves torso back to upright position and continues gazing at Tina</i>
02		frat guys, .hh die burschenschaftler, .hh they burschenschaftler, .hh who	09		<i>*die warn tota:l besoffen *they were to:tal drunk *they were to:tally drunk</i>
03		hochgradig () extremely () wanted to be extremely	10		<i>un die frau war an the woman was an the woman was</i>
04		<i>*Robi moves torso towards Tina</i> sein *wollten= be *want ()	06		<i>((continues story telling))</i>
05	Tina:	[=die warn total besoffen [=they were total drunk [they were totally drunk [
06	Robi:	[w- <u>wie</u> hießen die? [h- <u>how</u> named they? [w- <u>what</u> were they called?			
07		(0.6)			
08	Tina:	burschenschaftler. fraternity members. fraternity guys.			

*Data Example 1: Frat Guys/Burschenschaftler, Lines 02 – 09
(Egbert 1473)*

she would have repeated “Frat guys,” instead of offering “Burschenschaftler.” Upon hearing this, Robi returns back to his home position, the position he was in prior to line 4, sitting up straight to confirm his understanding of the term and indicating to Tina that she can continue her story, as he now understands what exactly she meant by the term, “Frat guys”. This understanding is indicated in much the same way as his initial misunderstanding was indicated. By moving from an “active” listening stance to a “passive” one, he indicates that the trouble source, the object requiring greater attention, no longer requires this attention. Robi’s use of gesture, in this case being followed by his speech, as opposed to being accompanied by it or occurring afterwards, serves as a repair initiator, attempting to elicit an explanation or clarification from his speech partner, Tina. Only after this attempt at other-initiated repair is not taken up by Tina,

evidenced by the fact that she continues telling her story into line 5, do we see the purpose of the gesture. Robi leans towards Tina, and, failing to attract enough attention to his difficulty understanding what she has said (i.e. failing to initiate repair), he explicitly asks for more information, subsequently revealing the purpose of his gesture. This purpose is further supported by the fact that Robi does not return to his original position until after he is provided with supplementary information about the trouble source.

Data Example 2 (Betz 2007) is an excerpt from a conversation among a group of friends gathered for an evening at the home of two of the speakers, L and B. While the coffee is being prepared, as heard in the background of the audio data, the subject of methods of preparation comes up. In line 122, L begins to talk about conventional methods of production of caffeine-free coffee, “*die konvention*elle method is”, at which point C attempts to interrupt, leaning forward as she does so, offering what appears to be a candidate

Data Example 2: Käsespätzle I – Transcript 30.45-33.15

- 2:08-2:35, Lines 121-152 (Betz 2007/2008)

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121  E:   ähä *
      *E: gaze to C* **
122  L:   *die konventio*n[elle methode is (nämlich ] [mitem) ]=
123          [C: gaze to E* **C: gaze to L** ] [ ]
124  C:   [*chemie* (.) **wahrscheinlich.**] [ ]
125  E:   [ja. ((to C))
126  L:   =haufen [chemie,]
127  E:   [genau. ]
128  E:   mhmh
129  L:   und deswegen hat der bio[laden ] keinen- keinen [koffein]freien=
130  E:   [genau.] [ mhmh ]
131  L:   =kaffee verkauft. ne?
132  E:   ja
133  L:   und die haben jetzt ne methode entwickelt, (.)
134  die: die: die bios=häh [.hh
135  A:   [achso.
136  L:   die machen des mit stickstoff.***
137  E:   mhm, ((=news))
138  L:   und hn- durch stickstoff [irgend]wie wird- wird des koffein=
139  E:   [ja ]
140  L:   =entzo[gen.]
141  A:   [mhmh]
142  L:   .hh wahrscheinlich gibts dieswegen erst seit ein paar [ja]hren=
143  E:   [ja]
144          *C nods continuously*
145  L:   =koffeinfreien kaffee im bio*laden.=ne,*
146  A:   °interess[ant.°=
147  L:   [dacht ich [mir #BOA hast du jahre lang (also) schon]=
148  E:   [( ) (ja das is ja interessant. ja.) ]
149  L:   =diese cheMIEkacke in dich rein[geträufelt,#]
150  A:   [mmm ]hehehehe hehehahaha.
      *gaze shift to A*
151  L:   *>ahja< ich-* ich hab- hast ↑du dich jemals gefragt wie man- wie
      *gaze to E*
152      man koffeinfreien ↑kaffee herstellt.=da*rüber* denkt [man doch]=

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solution to the beginning of L's utterance by answer by attempting to complete her sentence, with “*chemie* (.) **wahrscheinlich.**” E and L then continue the discussion while C looks on, maintaining her forward lean. In line 136, she places her head on her hands, continuing her forward posture until line 152, where she leans back, smiling.

As C leans forward and offers a candidate solution to the question, mimicking a “head poke” gesture favoured by the questioning tutees in Seo and Koshik 2010, she displays an uncertain understanding of the subject through her use of the word,

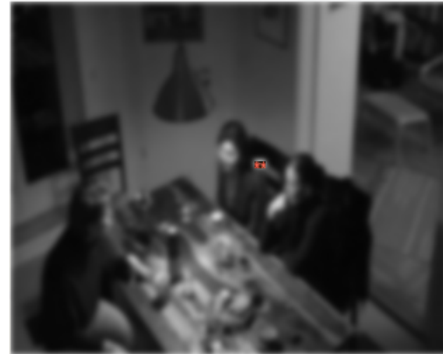
“wahrscheinlich.” This uncertain understanding, paired with the orientation towards her speech partners, primarily L, indicates an attempt to elicit more information on the subject from her speech partners. Namely, offering information in the hope that her possible knowledge will be confirmed. This is an attempt to initiate repair, seeking a deeper or further explanation of the subject they are discussing. Additionally, C's leaning in indicates a shift from “passive” to “active” listening. Like an inquisitive student in Seo and Koshik's study (2010), she orients

herself to her speech partners, indicating that what they are saying requires a higher degree of attention on her part, apparently due to her incomplete or limited understanding or knowledge of the subject. This is supported by C's behaviour after providing her candidate solution. Throughout the conversation, she remains oriented to her speech partners until such point as the conversation begins to move away from the topic, in line 151, at which point she leans back from the group. While her speech partners do not appear to address C directly, the question of how caffeine-free coffee is produced is considered and answered during the course of the conversation. Thus, as the topic shifts in line 151, and a more complete description of the subject has been offered, C leans back, confirming what appears to be a completed repair.

In Data Example 3, recorded later in the conversation at L and B's home, L has begun to pour the coffee, at which point, in line 182, C turns to L and offers the statement, "CARobkaffee war auch so", in reference to the prior discussion of caffeine-free coffee. This occurs not long before. L appears to understand this utterance as a question, prompted by the tag "oder (wie/nicht)" in line 183, since she responds by beginning to explain some qualities of Caro-Kaffee¹⁰. L and E then continue this explanation of the qualities of Caro-Kaffee while C remains in a leaning stance, displaying orientation to both L and E in succession. C remains in this stance until line 196, at which point she leans back in her seat and says, "aha. Okay," displaying her newfound understanding. C's statement in line 182, despite not carrying the rising intonation often typical of a question, can be determined to be a repair initiation, specifically a request for more information.



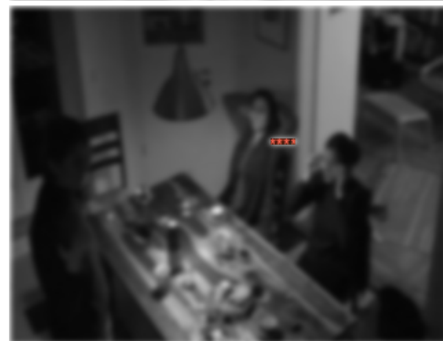
* = original position,
~ 2:08



** = nods,
leans forward,
~ 2:18



*** = head on hands,
leaning forward,
~ 2:21



**** = leans back,
~ 2:35

Data Example 2: Käsespätzle I – Video Stills from segment 2:08-2:35 (Betz 2007/2008)

Sitting arrangement (clockwise from bottom left):
L, C, E. A not present in visual data.

Data Example 3: Käsespätzle II – Transcript 33.15-35.30 - 0:42-0:55, Lines 180-198 (Betz 2007/2008)

180 *L nods while still pouring*
 181 A: *mh=hm* *
 ((to L:)) **
 182 C: CArobkaffee war auch so. | E: (
 183 (.) oder (wie/nicht). | A: j (h) a
 184 L: carokaffe ist getreide= | E: (
 185 =kaffee, das ist völlig |
 186 harmlos_=
 187 E: ((to C:)) ja:=
 E: nod nod ***
 188 L: =*malzkaffee*=
 189 E: =mmh hm hm
 *C: gaze from !
 190 C: das ist=äh sowieso ent[koffein*ie[rter,*
 191 E: [des hat- [ne des l
 192 [s=hat kein koffei:n,[weils nich wie kaffe
 193 L: [das hat-des hat nie-[des ist ja kein kafi
 E: gaze to L
 194 E: *(0.1)* >ja.<
 195 L: des: nur aus getreide, feigen, zicho[rie,
 196 C: [aha.
 197 A: mhmhm
 198 E: ja.

Additionally, her initiation and maintenance of this orientation throughout her speech partners' utterances shows a shift into and maintenance of an "active" listening pose, indicating that the subject of discussion requires greater attention and was thus likely to be the subject of repair. Lastly, her leaning back and disengaging herself from her speech partners, as she produces tokens confirming her understanding, indicates that the repair has been completed and she understands the new information. As she moves from a position oriented to her speech partners, listening actively, to a disengaged, relaxed pose, she indicates that the increased attention is no longer required.

Moving to Data Example 4, this data excerpt deals with a conversation during which the participants, Cora ("C"), Boris ("B"), Elia ("E"), Daniel ("D"), and Anna ("A"), are engaged in a game of cards. During this excerpt, cards are being dealt until line 75 (~1:33), at which point C leans forward towards the rest of the group, and while doing so asks "was wird das jetzt?" inquiring as to the state of the

Data Example 3: Käsespätzle II – Video Stills from segment 0:42-0:55 (Betz 2007/2008)

Sitting arrangement (clockwise from bottom left): L, C, E, A.



* = original position

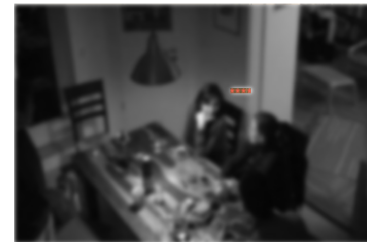
** = leans forward/
orients self

* ~ 0:41, ** ~ 0:42

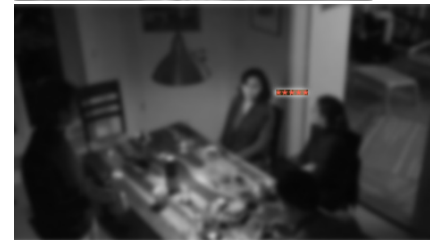


*** = body orientation
follows speaker

**** = orients self
towards new
speaker
~ 0:51



***** = returns to
original position
~ 0:55



game. This does not immediately elicit a particular verbal response from the other players. D comments to A, "auch gut," and B hands cards to C. This is instead a possible nonverbal response to C's inquiry. Having heard C's question, B responds by handing her the correct number of cards for the particular situation. However, C then further exposes her confusion regarding the game state by asking, "oh mit

*Data Example 4: Kartenspieler I – Transcript 18.25–21.25 –
1:34–1:41, Lines 75–83 (Betz 2007/2008)*

75 C: *was wird das jetzt? **leans forward
76 D: auch gut. *to A
77 B: muh muh *gives cards to C
78 C: oh mit [zwei karten?]
79 B: [(obacht/oha/ohja)]
80 E: [(Zwietwagen) und Familienberaterin
81 A: und (.)=
82 A: kann ich=
83 C: genau ***adjusts stance, turns torso away from conversation, puts cards
down beside her

*Data Example 4: Kartenspieler I – Video Stills from segment 1:34–
1:41 (Betz 2007/2008)*

Sitting arrangement (clockwise from bottom left): E, A,
B, C, D.



* = original position
** = leans forward
*** = leans back, puts cards down

zwei Karten?”, possibly inquiring as to why she was handed the cards. This time, B responds by providing what appears to be an affirmative speech token, the “oha/ohja” in line 79, confirming that C in fact has understood the game state despite her apparent confusion. Then, during A’s utterance in line 83 (“genau”), C turns her torso away from the group and

places her cards on the couch beside her (~1:41). In both lines 75 and 78, C attempts to initiate repair due to her misunderstanding or lack of understanding of the state of the card game. When her first attempt, accompanied by the “leaning forward” gesture and displaying orientation towards her speech partners, fails to attract attention, she tries again, but does not move from her position, remaining oriented towards her speech partners, indicating that there is still an issue of misunderstanding that needs to be resolved. Even after having received a confirming speech token from B, indicating that she has in fact understood, she remains in her forward-oriented stance to indicate that she is not yet satisfied with the information she has been given and there ought to be a further repair conducted. She signals both the attempted initiation of repair and the completion of repair with her body orientation. Following this, we see her turning her torso away from the group and in doing so, orienting herself away from her speech partners, indicating that the repair sequence has been completed.

Data Example 5: Käsespätzle III – Transcript 30.45-33.15

- 0:38-0:46, Lines 30-43 (Betz 2007/2008)

30 (0.2) ((L takes a step towards coffee maker))
 31 L: man hört es wenn=s fertig ist, gell?
 32 *E points w/right hand to coffee maker*
 33 E: mh, mh, **des ist eigentlich auch fertig* jetzt.
 34 (0.8)
 35 A: nee: . noch nicht [ganz.]
 36 L: [noch] nicht g[anz]ne? [(ne?)]
 37 A: [neene: .] [noch nicht] ganz
 38 fertig.=
 39 L: =aber ich (darf/durf) die schon ausmachen, oder?
 40 E: ach[so ***willste an[las]sen bis es]] auf]hört (so/zu):
 41 L: [° ([])°]
 42 A: [((nod))]
 43 L: ich hab- mach das so selten.

Data Example 5: Käsespätzle III – Video Stills from segment 0:38-0:46 (Betz 2007/2008)

Sitting arrangement (clockwise from bottom left): L, C, E,
 A. L is standing, only the top of her head can be seen.



* = original position, ~ 0:38

** = head tilt, ~ 0:42

*** = head tilt ends, ~ 0:42

In the last example, Data Example 5, there is a deviation in the data set to be found, in that it now concerns an instance of a “head tilt” as opposed to a forward lean. Taken from data collected earlier in the conversation at L and B’s home, we see the hosts and their guests gathered around the kitchen table. In line 31, L asks, “man hört es wenn=s fertig ist, gell?”, asking if they would be able to hear the coffee maker produce some sort of noise when the coffee is prepared. In response to this, E produces the tokens “mh mh”, and pointing towards the coffee maker, stating “des ist eigentlich auch fertig jetzt.” However, as A begins her utterance in line 35 after a brief pause, “nee: . noch nicht [ganz.]”, E tilts her head in the direction of her hosts, presumably in response to A’s statement, contradictory as it is to her own. As A continues to speak, L interrupts, and the two continue to speak over one another until line 39, at which point L asks, “=aber ich (darf/durf) die schon ausmachen, oder?” During this exchange, E’s head remains in a tilted position. E then responds to L’s utterance by producing the token, “achso,” at which point she returns to her original position.

Much like the use of leaning gestures in the other examples discussed in this paper, gesture, in this case a head tilt, can be seen here to be prompting the production of an explanation. After E states “des ist eigentlich auch fertig jetzt,” in line 33, in response to L’s question in line 31, there is a brief pause followed by A negating what E has just said by producing the token, “nee” at the beginning of line 35. In response to this, E begins the head tilt gesture while looking toward her speech partners with a “thinking face”. Much as in the use of a leaning gesture, E orients herself towards her speech partners, indicating that there is a trouble source of some kind requiring her increased attention by producing the token “nee”.

Additionally, as E’s initiation of the gesture immediately follows a disagreeing statement of A’s, the gesture indicates that the statement or subject of discussion is the source of misunderstanding or difficulty. By initiating the gesture, E has indicated that she does not immediately understand why what she said was perceived as wrong by A, and attempts to encourage A to elaborate. This possible aim is further supported by E’s reaction to L’s utterance in line 39. After a series of interruptions and overlaps between L and A in lines 35-37, L finally produces a more complete sentence, “aber ich (darf/durf) die schon ausmachen, oder?” Following this, E produces the token “achso,” indicating that she now understands the conversation’s topic (Golato and Betz 7), or at minimum has reached a new understanding thereof, as indicated by the rest of her utterance. She continues to speak on the topic, no longer concerning herself with her past statement, presumably due to being influenced by the new information she has just received from L.

Preliminary Findings

Through a consideration of the above data, it could be determined that leaning gestures which produce an orientation towards one’s speech partners can be said to be initiators of repair, primarily in seeking additional information. As in three of the aforementioned examples, head tilt gestures appear to follow this trend as well. Though due to the lack of examples in the body of data, it is more appropriate to state that these gestures certainly appear as though they could follow a similar model as leaning gestures, if not definitively. However, while they may appear to follow a similar model, head tilt gestures and head poke/leaning gestures could be related to different types of actions or repairables.

In each example, there exists a trouble source of some sort, presented by one of the interlocutors, to which another of the speakers responds with a forward lean or head tilt, either followed or accompanied by verbal turns. While this gesture is not always noticed or acted upon immediately, hence the possible production of speech that follows the production of the gesture, the receiving party eventually responds to it in some fashion. In effect, a gestural initiation, followed by a verbal initiation of repair, produces a sort of pursuit or insistence. This response is tailored to the recipient, who is generally perceived as experiencing difficulties in understanding. Generally, a confirmation or clarification of previous information, or the presentation of new information to help with the gesturer’s perceived difficulties in understanding is then produced.

This view is supported by the gesturer’s continuation and subsequent termination of the gesture in response to the speaker’s new contributions. In all of the data excerpts, the gesture was maintained

throughout the repair operation, as the initiator's speech partner or partners continued speaking, being dissolved only when the initiator indicated understanding of the preceding conversation by returning to a home position or producing a change of state token¹¹. Additionally, in all examples the gesture was either followed or accompanied by verbal speech acts, perhaps indicating the necessity or prevalence of speech in native-speaker conversation when using leaning/orienting gestures to initiate repair; head tilt gestures also appear to follow this pattern¹².

Conclusion

This article could have a number of possible research implications for the field, however the strongest of which I argue for is a possible alteration of perceptions concerning context. If one can analyze gesture within a particular context, such as the ESL tutoring sessions recorded by Seo and Koshik, I argue that the gesture ought to be considered equally within other contexts, especially given the importance of context-sensitive evaluation espoused by Goodwin and Goodwin (1986). I would argue that not only is the meaning of a gesture attributed to it by the contexts within which it is used, much like the connotations of spoken language, but that context is in turn dependent on the socio-cultural framework within which it is found. Accordingly, one ought to consider the use of gesture within a varied set of different socio-cultural frameworks if one is to understand the function of a particular gesture in a more complete sense, either in general human communication or in specific language and socio-cultural groups.

Additionally, as has been recently established by Rasmussen (2013) in the context of speech-gesture combinations, this paper provides more support for

the acceptance of gesture as a method for doing repair within CA studies. The above data shows that speakers use body movements, particularly forward leans, systematically and recurrently in an attempt to initiate some kind of repair (in the case of this paper, primarily requests for information), and that these methods are socially recognized by other participants as being attempts to initiate repair.

In terms of directions further research could take, the role of eye contact could be considered in greater detail, as it appeared to follow body-orienting gestures. In all examples, the information-seeking party exhibited some form of eye contact with or visual orientation towards the other party or parties during the execution of a gesture. This may also be an important element in repair initiations in native speaker conversation. Secondly, the role of different gestures in repair initiation between native speakers ought to be considered, such as the head tilt, and other potential uses of leaning/orienting gestures, as well as possible overlap in function of different gestures.

¹ Directly facing one's speech partner while tilting one's head to the side, as opposed to a tilt to establish eye contact with a person to one's right or left.

² Defined as "a head poke forward, accompanied with a movement of the upper body forward toward the recipient" (Seo & Koshik 2219).

³ A lack of information/possession of uncertain information/mis- or nonunderstandings.

⁴ "Head tilt" and/or "head poke" gestures.

⁵ Follows a similar form to the body torque, albeit appears much less pronounced.

⁶ The pattern: 1. A's 1st attempt. 2. A's 2nd attempt/1st repair. 3. A's 3rd attempt/2nd repair, through combination of talk and "leaning forward" (Rasmussen 13).

⁷ The response pattern: 1. A's closure initiating 3rd attempt/2nd repair through the combination of talk and "leaning forward." 2. B's closing response constructed through the combination of talk and "leaning forward" (Rasmussen 13).

⁸ Included throughout the paper in both transcribed and

video data are a number of red asterisks and annotations; these asterisks are used to indicate what part of the transcript corresponds to a particular image, taken from the associated video data, and to draw attention to the gestures displayed therein.

⁹ This is perhaps due to Tina not having visual contact with Robi at the moment; however, without video data, this is unclear.

¹⁰ Caro-Kaffee is a brand of caffeine-free beverage,

generally considered a coffee substitute.

¹¹ The difference in produced indicators of understanding could indicate the presence of difference phenomena; this distinction is however beyond the intended scope of the paper.

¹² However, as repair initiations can differ in form (audio and/or visual components), there is likely a difference in their specific function or to which repairs or trouble sources they correspond.

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| Appendix: Translations of Data Examples |

Data Example 2: Käsespätzle I – 30.45-33.15

- 2:08-2:35, Lines 121-152

```

121      E:  uhuh *
          *E: gaze to C* **
122 L:  *the conventio*n[al method is                ] [(with a) ]=
123          [*C: gaze to E* **C: gaze to L**          ] [          ]
124 C:          [*chemicals* (.) **probably.**] [          ]
125 E:          [ja. ((to C))
126 L:  lot of [chemicals,]
127 E:          [exactly. ]
128 E:  mhmh
129 L:  and thats why the organic food [store ] doesnt- doesnt sell
          [decaffeinated=
130 E:          [exactly.]
          [ mhhm ]
131 L:  = coffee. Right?
132 E:  yes.
133 L:  and now they've developed a method, (.)
134 the: the: the organic food s=huh [.hh
135 A:          [oohh
136 L:  they make it with nitrogen.***
137 E:  mhm, ((=news))
138 L:  and hn- due to nitrogen [some]how de caffeine is- is=
139 E:          [yes ]
140 L:  =extrac[ted.]
141 A:  [mhmh]
142 L:  .hh th↑ats probably why its only been a few [yea]rs since they've
          had=
143 A:          [yeah]
144          *C nods continuously*
145 L:  =decaff coffee at the organic food *store.=right,*
146 A:  °interes[ting].°=
147 L:  [that's what I th[ought #WHOA (so) for years you
          been ]=
148 A:  [( )](yeah well that's interesting.
          yeah)]
149 L:  =dripping that CHEmical shit into [yourself,#]
150          [mmm ] hehehehe hehehahaha.
          *gaze shift to A*
151 L:  *>oyeah< i-* ive- did ↑you ever ask **** yourself how to- how
          *gaze to E*
152 to make decaffeinated ↑coffee.= that *isn't* something [you
          think]=

```

Data Example 3: Käsespätzle II – 33.15-35.30

- 0:42-0:55, Lines 180-198

```

180      *L nods while still pouring*
181 A:  *mh=hm* *
          ((to L:))
          **
182 C:  CARocoffee was also like that. | E:  (
183      (.) or (how/not). | A:  ye(h)s tru(h)e=hehehehe
184 L:  caro coffee is corn= | E:  (
185      =coffee, that is totally |
186      harmless_=
187 E:  ((to C:)) ye:s=

```

E: nod nod

 188 L: *=malt coffee*=
 189 E: =mmh hm hm
 C: gaze from L to E
 190 C: that is=um anyhow de[caffei* [nated,*]
 191 E: [that does- [no that does] not have an-
 192 [tha=has no caffei:ne. [because its not made with coffee
 beans.]

 193 L: [it has-that has never-[that is not coffee. (because's not
 of)]
 E: gaze to L
 194 E: *(0.1)* >yes.<
 195 L: that: only of corn, figs, coffee[weed,
 196 C: [ahem. okay. *****
 197 A: mhmhm
 198 E: yes.

Data Example 4: Kartenspieler I – 18.25-21.25

- 1:34-1:41, Lines 75-83

75 C: *what's this now? **leans forward
 76 D: also good. *to A
 77 B: muh muh *gives cards to C
 78 C: oh with [two cards?]
 79 B: [(attention/oh/oh yeah)]
 80 E: [(second car/rental car) und fa]mily counselor
 81 A: and (.)-
 82 A: can i-
 83 C: indeed. ***adjusts stance, turns torso away from conversation, puts
 cards down beside her

Data Example 5: Käsespätzle III – 30.45-33.15

- 0:38-0:46, Lines 30-43

30 (0.2) ((L takes a step towards coffee maker))
 31 L: you can hear it when=its finished, right?
 32 *E points w/right hand to coffee maker*
 33 E: mh^mh, **this is actually also done*
 34 (0.8)
 35 A: no:. **not quite [yet.]
 36 L: [not] quite y[et]^no? [(^nono^)]
 37 A: [nono:.] [not quite] yet
 38 finished.=
 39 L: =but i (can) turn it off already, or?
 40 E: oh [yeah *** (can you [leave] it on until it) st]ops (so):
 41 L: [°([])°]
 42 A: [((nod))]
 43 L: i hav- do that so infrequently

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