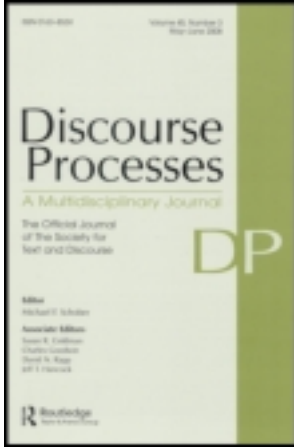


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### Managing Problems of Acceptability Through High Rise-Fall Repetitions

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# Managing Problems of Acceptability Through High Rise-Fall Repetitions

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This article examines one of the ways in which matters of truth, appropriateness, and acceptability are raised and managed within the course of everyday conversation. Using the methodology of conversation analysis, we show that by repeating what another participant has said and doing so with a high rise-fall intonation contour, a speaker claims that the repeated talk is “wrong” and in need of correction. There is an incongruity between two versions of the world—the one presented in the repeated speaker’s talk and the one the repeating speaker knows or believes to be true, appropriate, or acceptable. The ensuing sequences are routinely expanded and morally charged as the participants jostle for epistemic or moral authority over the matter at hand and work to repair the incongruity (even if, in the end, they agree to disagree).

Troubles can arise when a participant of a social interaction says or does something incorrect, inappropriate, or in some other way “unacceptable” (Svennevig, 2008). In the following extract, for instance, Sherry twice uses terms that she subsequently replaces —“package” for “box” and “pepperoni” for “pastrami.”

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## Extract 1 [SBCSAE: 58]

((*Sherry and her son are making pizza*))

- 1 Sher: .hhhhh you know what let's open that box of-  
 2       or that (0.2) package of (0.2) pastrami (0.3)  
 3       not pastrami pepperoni

In cases like these, a speaker retroactively treats an element of her own turn as unacceptable and replaces it through self-repair (Jefferson, 1974). It can also happen that the *recipient* of a turn at talk finds it in some way unacceptable. Faced with this interactional contingency, the recipient must determine whether to address this problem and, if so, how. In this article, we document one practice available, the high rise-fall (HRF) repetition. With this practice, recipients tell prior speakers that (a part of) what they've said/done is "wrong" and in need of correction. That is, they claim the repeated talk is incongruent with what they believe to be correct, appropriate, or acceptable and initiate a repair sequence for addressing this trouble (Schegloff, 2000; Schegloff, Jefferson, & Sacks, 1977). Like many repair initiators, HRF repetitions precisely locate the source of the recipient's trouble—the repeated talk. But, unlike more generic practices, they also strongly delimit the *nature* of this trouble; the problem is not one of hearing or understanding what was said but of accepting it. The HRF pitch pattern is a constitutive part of this delimiting work. Before moving on to a full description of the form and function of HRF repetitions, we briefly discuss alternative practices for managing problems of acceptability.

### MANAGING PROBLEMS OF ACCEPTABILITY

Previous research has shown that recipients who are faced with talk they consider incorrect, inappropriate, or unacceptable have a variety of options available for managing this situation (see, e.g., Drew, 1997, 2003; Haakana & Kurhila, 2009; Jefferson, 1987, 1988, 2007; Schegloff et al., 1977; Svennevig, 2008). To begin, in many cases they can—and perhaps should—simply let it pass. Unlike most troubles in hearing and understanding, it is often unnecessary to address these types of troubles. If a recipient is in a position to notice that something is "wrong," they likely have a good enough grasp of what was said, meant, and done to simply ignore it and allow the conversation to continue (Schegloff et al., 1977, p. 380). This is nicely captured in this exchange discussed by Jefferson (2007).

Extract 2 [taken from Jefferson, 2007, p. 452]

- A: why didn't you tell me  
 B: I knew what you meant

A second reason for ignoring acceptability problems is that addressing them can be socially or morally charged. By claiming that what another has said is wrong, a recipient makes a claim of greater access to and/or authority over the offending issue (Haakana & Kurhila, 2009; Norrick, 1991) and can call into question their coparticipant's competency (Jefferson, 1987; Pomerantz, 1984a; Svennevig, 2008). Ignoring the incongruity avoids these delicacies and, as with all types of problems, provides speakers with more opportunities to notice and address the issue themselves (Schegloff et al., 1977). Finally, addressing these problems can generate rather substantial sequences of arguments, accounts, complaints, and related actions (see Jefferson [1972, 1987] and discussion below). In addition to any interpersonal repercussions, this can greatly delay, and in some cases derail, the activity that was underway (see, for example, lines 5–6 of Extract 6).

Nevertheless, in some cases recipients cannot or will not let an incongruity pass and go about setting things right. The following extracts illustrate what is perhaps the most covert means of doing this.

Extract 3 [taken from Jefferson, 1987, p. 93]

- 1 Cust: mm, the wales are wider apart than that.  
 2 Sale: → okay, let me see if I can find one with wider threads

Extract 4 [Callfriend-6557]

- 1 Ray: .hhh think I have- do I have a demo tape of yours  
 2 (0.2)  
 3 Ray: .h[hhh  
 4 Joe: → [hhhhhhhhhhh you have my album hhhhhh  
 5 Ray: yes: on tape

In Extract 3, the customer refers to the threads of a screw using the term “wales” instead of “threads.” The salesperson addresses this incongruity by re-referencing this item in the course of his next turn, using the correct term (Jefferson, 1987; Kurhila, 2001). Similarly, in Extract 4, Ray checks if Joe has a copy of his “demo tape” (line 1). Joe confirms that he does but embeds within his answer what he considers the appropriate term for his work—“album” (Stivers & Hayashi, 2010).

In cases like these, recipients address an incongruity by embedding a replacement, or correction, within a next turn that forwards the ongoing course of action. Recipients can instead initiate a sequence of repair, suspending sequential progressivity. Two distinct ways of doing this have been discussed in the literature. First, the recipient can indicate a trouble, request that it be fixed, but

“mask” its nature. This strategy gives the speaker another chance to “make things right” without the recipient having officially said anything was wrong.

By not quite “getting” what was said, they [other-initiations of repair: TB/TW] raise the possibility that it was “not quite right,” often leaving the respects in which it was not quite right unexplicated. More to the point for the actual working out of the “problem,” they provide a place in the very next turn in which the prior speaker can make some adjustment in what was said—to make it more accessible, and perhaps more “acceptable.” (Schegloff, 2007, p. 151; see also Pomerantz, 1984b; Svennevig, 2008)

Mom’s “pardon” at line 3 in the following extract demonstrates this practice.

Extract 5 [taken from Drew, 1997]

- 1 Child: put on th' li::ght  
 2 (0.9)  
 3 Mom: → pa:rdon  
 4 (.)  
 5 Child: put on the light please  
 6 (.)  
 7 Mom: ( ) better

Mom does not *explicitly* claim an incongruity. Like “huh?,” “what?,” “hm?,” her “pardon” is “diagnostically open” to the (claimed) problem being one of hearing or understanding what was said (see, for instance, Curl, 2004; Drew, 1997). Nevertheless, as the child’s repair (“please,” line 5) and Mom’s third position assessment (“better,” line 7) show, “the repairable trouble is manifestly not a problem of hearing etc. but rather one associated with the propriety of the prior turn—here the absence of appropriate forms of politeness” (Drew, 1997, p. 95).

In contrast to this relatively “covert” or “off record” strategy, recipients cannot only initiate but actually do the repair themselves. By contradicting (Extract 6) and/or correcting (Extract 7) the source of their trouble, they explicitly indicate their non-acceptance. In Extract 6, Rich is reading back Hyla’s phone number to her. She confirms and then tells him to dial 1 first. This is evidently incongruent with what Rich believes, and he contradicts her as a next action (“no you don’t dial one from here,” line 3).

Extract 6 [Rich & Hyla]

- 1 Rich: oh oh four ei[ght]  
 2 Hyla: [yeah and dial one first

- 3 Rich: → no you don't dial one from here h  
 4 (.)  
 5 Hyla: yes you [do  
 6 Rich: [no you don't h

In Extract 7, Frank is describing a scale model of the solar system and in line 1 compares another planet with Earth as represented by a staple. Earlier in the conversation (data not shown), he had said it was the size of a paperclip. At line 3, Melissa repairs this mistake by providing the correct item (“paperclip”).

Extract 7 [SBC-19]

- 1 Frank: well compared to Earth being a staple (0.5)  
 2 Ron: yeah  
 3 Melis: → uh [paper]cli[p  
 4 Frank: [(ho-)] [hole  
 5 (0.7)  
 6 Frank: or paperclip hole

In sum, previous research has described a variety of ways in which recipients can manage an incongruity arising from a prior speaker's talk. They can let it pass, they can embed a correction into a sequence that progresses the action, or—most relevantly here—they can initiate repair, either “masking” the nature of their trouble or doing a full-blown correction. In this article we document an additional and distinct resource available to recipients. We show that with a HRF repetition a recipient claims that what has been said is “wrong” and that it should be corrected. In a sense, this practice of repair initiation lies somewhere between the two discussed above. On the one hand, HRF repetitions are like covert corrections (“pardon,” Extract 5) in that they initiate repair but leave it to the trouble-source speaker to produce the repair proper. On the other hand, they are like overt contradictions/corrections (“no you don't . . .,” Extract 6) in that they explicitly communicate that the problem is in accepting what was said (not in hearing or understanding it).

## THE PRACTICE AND THE COLLECTION

Before demonstrating what HRF repetitions do, we must first describe precisely what they are. By HRF repetition we are referring to utterances with the following properties:

- They are lexical repetitions of a coparticipant's talk (*other*-repetitions).
- They are positioned immediately after the turn constructional unit containing the repeated talk.<sup>1</sup>
- They initiate repair on the repeated talk.
- They are produced with a high rise-fall pitch contour (see below).

We systematically collected all and only those utterances that matched these criteria from our data set (some 400 recorded interactions, totaling about 80 hours).<sup>2</sup> As is common in this kind of research (see, e.g., Curl, Local, & Walker, 2006; Local & Walker, 2005), we carried out the functional/sequential and the phonetic analysis in tandem, not one after the other. This process yielded approximately 40 instances, and our analysis is based on this collection. The **boxed** utterance in the following extract provides a first example.

Extract 8 [York-NJC] (see Extract 11 below for additional context)

- 1 Bella: who directed [it ]  
 2 Amy: [was] naff  
 3 (0.3)  
 4 Bella: [is it- ]  
 5 Amy: **[Ja:mes] Cameron**  
 6 (0.2)  
 7 Bella: James (.) **[James Cameron]**  
 8 Amy: I think no it can't be he did Titanic didn't he

In line 7, Bella repeats Amy's immediately prior turn constructional unit (the **highlighted** 'Ja:mes Cameron'). It is produced with an HRF pitch pattern, rising 8 semitones (ST)<sup>3</sup> over the first two syllables and falling 17ST. As we see from the subsequent turn, this utterance initiates repair on the repeated item.

<sup>1</sup>We mean "immediately" not in the temporal sense but in the turn-sequential sense. That is, as the next unit of talk (see Benjamin, 2012; Schegloff, 2000). Speakers in fact quite often withhold their HRF repetitions slightly, most likely to create further opportunities for the speaker of the troublesome talk to self-initiate repair (Schegloff, 2000; Schegloff et al., 1977).

<sup>2</sup>Most are casual conversations (both on the phone and face-to-face), though some are institutional interactions (e.g., work-related talk among bankers, politicians, and veterinarians). The participants involved vary considerably in their socioeconomic background, age, and language variety (e.g., many dialects of American and British English are included). Although we make no attempt to document the constancy or variation of HRF repetitions across different social contexts, settings, or groups, the range of data suggests this practice is quite generic.

<sup>3</sup>Semitones (ST) provide a perceptually more appropriate representation of pitch than Hertz (see Couper-Kuhlen, 1996; Nolan, 2003): 12ST = 1 octave.



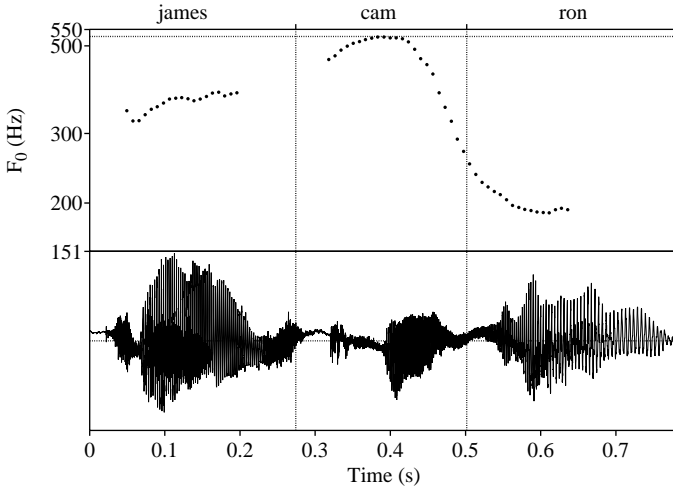


FIGURE 1 Pitch trace and sound-pressure waveform for Extract 8.

Figure 1 shows the labeled waveform and pitch trace. In this and all figures in the article, pitch traces were inspected for tracking errors and then plotted logarithmically relative to the speaker's baseline and topline as calculated on the basis of 1 minute of their speech from the current interaction. Dotted vertical lines mark either word or syllable boundaries. Any nonstandard spelling reflects English syllable structure. In Figure 1 only, a dashed horizontal line shows the speaker's topline of 528 Hz, as the speaker reaches it within this utterance.

An integral part of the design of the HRF repetitions is *how* they repeat some prior talk produced by another speaker. The first point is that they are recognizable as repetitions of a complete "piece" of the prior turn, by which we mean to note that they do not omit and thus frame a "missing" lexical item or grammatical chunk. So, one way their linguistic design helps them accomplish a discriminable action is that they do not indicate a missing (but presumed relevant) item is the source of the trouble.

Another relevant aspect of their linguistic design is their phonetic makeup. The utterances in question are recognizable as *lexical* repetitions, but in certain key respects they are not *phonetic* repetitions of the prior speaker (see, e.g., Couper-Kuhlen, 1996, on quoting and mimicry). We conducted a parametric phonetic analysis (Kelly & Local, 1989a, 1989b; Local & Walker, 2005) of the repeated tokens relative to each other as a set and relative to the words they repeated (for similar methodological approaches, see Curl, 2005; Curl et al., 2006). No evidence

was found of a consistent prosodic relationship between the repetition and the prior turn.<sup>4</sup> Nor was any relationship found between the duration or tempo of HRF repetitions and the corresponding first sayings. That is, after controlling for metrical structures (i.e., ensuring that the stress and rhythm of the first saying and repetition are comparable), some repetitions are faster (i.e., shorter in total duration), some nearly the same tempo/duration, and some slower (i.e., longer in total duration). Generally, the HRF repetitions are perceptually louder than surrounding talk by the same speaker, as well as seeming louder than the talk they repeat, but this is likely due to the speakers' use of higher fundamental frequency (high pitch accents) in the repeated speech.

The distinct pitch pattern of an HRF intonation contour was in fact the only regularity. What we describe in words as "high rise-fall" is audible, as well as measurable, as a rise to a peak (a pitch accent) before a (usually) long fall. The range of the rises is 12ST, with a mean of 8.2ST; the range of the final fall is 20ST, with a mean of 12.4ST. In other words, there is more variability in the falling section of the contour than in the rising section.<sup>5</sup>

Although the HRF contour is often described as an indicator of contrastive focus (see, e.g., Cruttenden [1997] for a functional description and Ladd [1996] for a more phonetic/phonological one), we prefer to avoid the use of terms such as focus and contrast, as we take a more interactionist view of speech. It is clear that within any turn, many different functions may be enacted by prosodic means; the traditional linguistic terms for them might be marking focus (whether narrow, broad, or contrastive) and/or referring to given/new information (for an experimental approach that untangles focus from other functions marked by pitch, such as information load, see Xu & Xu, 2005). Although such theoretical constructs may be useful in analyses underpinned by theoretical assumptions that differ from ours, we find no compelling reason to privilege them over our analysis, which relies on the analysis of turn design and participant orientation.

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<sup>4</sup>However, the turn subsequent to the HRF repetition did, in many cases, exhibit some elements of prosodic matching (i.e., similar intonation contour and placement in the speaker's range), but an investigation of that turn is beyond the scope of this article.

<sup>5</sup>One reviewer has questioned how high the pitch peak needed to be to warrant inclusion in our collection; we cannot give a numerical answer to this but instead relied on our systematic impressionistic transcriptions of the data. The contour needed to be recognizable as "the same" as other contours produced by other speakers using different lexical items while simultaneously fulfilling all the other sequential-interactional criteria. Given the multiplicity of functions that pitch/intonation is used to manage in natural interaction, we cannot isolate a cut-off point below or above which a contour could/could not "count" as HRF. Additionally, it should be noted that we are not claiming that HRF pitch contours are the sole means available for pointing out an incongruity in the prior talk. See below for further discussion of the discriminability of the practice we are describing.

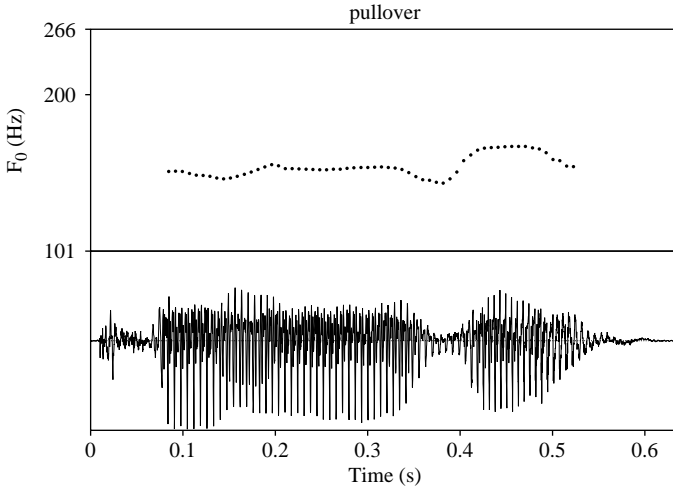


FIGURE 2 Pitch trace and sound-pressure waveform for Extract 9.

To clarify what types of repetition we did include in the collection analyzed here, we should also make clear what we did *not* include.<sup>6</sup> Utterances like Dad’s “pullover” in the following extract were excluded on phonetic grounds (the fourth criterion).

Extract 9 [CF-5635] (see Extract 18 below for additional context)

- 1 Laura: it’s a **pullover**
- 2 (0.2)
- 3 Dad: **pullover**
- 4 Laura: yeah it doesn’t button up front it pulls over your head

Although Dad’s “pullover” repeats, and initiates repair on, an element of Laura’s prior utterance (see her subsequent confirmation and clarification), it is not produced with an HRF pitch contour; it is nearly monotonic, with a 2ST upstep on the final syllable (Figure 2). For this reason we do not consider it an instance of our focal practice (we will, however, use cases like this as a point of comparison; see Discriminability, below).

<sup>6</sup>The findings reported here are not primarily comparative; that is, we include examples of other sorts of repetitions only to support our claim that the HRF repetitions are being used to perform a particular, differentiated function. In Walker & Benjamin, 2013, we present the results of a comparison of the various phonetic realizations of other-repetitions used to initiate repair.

Although Extract 9 was excluded on formal grounds, other utterances were excluded on “functional” grounds (see the third criterion). Typical of most conversation analytic research, we are not examining the use of a linguistic resource *in general* but in a specific action-sequential environment (see, e.g. Schegloff, 1997). Here, we are only interested in HRF repetitions *used as repair initiators*.<sup>7</sup> Excluded from our analysis, then, are utterances like Jen’s “Aiden Hendricks” at line 7 in the following extract (the @ symbol represents a beat of laughter).

## Extract 10 [CallHome-4184]

- 1 Bill: and guess who called here last night (.) looking  
 2 for your address  
 3 (0.7)  
 4 Jen: who  
 5 (0.6)  
 6 Bill: Aiden Hendricks @:: @  
 7 Jen: Aiden Hend[ricks]  
 8 Bill: [ @ @ @ @ @ @ @ @ @ @ @ @ [ @  
 9 Jen: [why [hhhhh  
 10 Bill: [ .hhhhh well  
 11 Mommy and I were sea- seated with his mother  
 12 I’m sure this is why

This utterance *is* an other-repetition (see line 6), and it *is* produced with an HRF pitch contour. However, it does *not* initiate repair. Bill does not clarify, correct, or even confirm Jen’s utterance, nor does she treat this type of response as absent. What is this utterance doing?

In line 6, Bill announces that Aiden Hendricks, a shadow from their past, has just come looking for Jen’s address. He has constructed this news as “surprising” through his pre-announcement at line 1 and his laughter in line 6. In this sequential context, a relevant next action would be to share in Bill’s surprise. And it seems that this is precisely what Jen is doing with her HRF other-repetition—an aligning display of surprise (for relevant conversation analytic work, see Wilkinson & Kitzinger, 2006). To reiterate, despite involving the same linguistic resources, this utterance is excluded from our analysis because it is not initiating

<sup>7</sup>Our argument is not circular. The only functional (action-sequential) requirement was that the utterance initiated repair *of some kind*. That HRF repetitions “turned out” to only manage problems of acceptance (and not hearing and/or understanding) is indeed a finding.

repair. It is an instance of a different practice (see Conclusion for further discussion).

In the remainder of the article, we refer to the participants in terms of the interactional roles made relevant by this practice (rather than by pseudonym). The participant who produces the repetition (the repair initiator) is Speaker B. The participant whose talk is repeated (the speaker of the trouble source) is Speaker A. The syllable upon which the pitch peak is reached is in CAPS and prefaced by a caret symbol (^). Thus, schematically, the sequences under examination have this structure:

A: ... example ... Trouble Source Turn  
 B: ex^AMPlE Repair Initiation

For some examples, we have also included figures consisting of a labeled waveform and pitch trace created using PRAAT version 5.3.15 (Boersma & Weenink, 2012).

## MANAGING INCONGRUITIES WITH HRF REPETITIONS

The data show that participants use HRF repetitions to (1) claim an incongruity between the repeated talk and what they know, think, or believe might be correct, appropriate, or acceptable, and to (2) initiate a repair sequence for addressing it. We first show that in the talk after the HRF repetition, both participants orient to the (un)acceptability of the repeated talk. The second source of evidence is a negative observation: We do not find cases in which HRF repetitions are treated as having claimed some other type of problem (e.g., hearing or understanding). They are thus discriminable from other practices, including other types of repair-initiating other-repetitions (for sources of evidence in conversation analytic argumentation, see Wootton, 1989).

### Subsequent Treatment of the Practice

In all cases in our collection, the participants treat HRF repetitions as having claimed that the repeated talk is wrong and in need of correction. The analysis in this section demonstrates this orientation and documents some of the variation in the collection, both in the nature of the incongruity claimed and the way the participants go about addressing it.

We'll begin by returning to the "Cameron" case from above. The participants are talking about the 1996 David Cronenberg film *Crash*, which A has just seen. B asks A who directed the film, and A answers "Ja:mes Cameron" (line 5).

## Extract 11 [York-NJC]

- 1 B: who directed [it ]  
 2 A: [was] naff  
 3 (0.3)  
 4 B: [is it- ]  
 5 A: [Ja:mes] Cameron  
 6 (0.2)  
 7 B: James (.) [James ^CAMeron]  
 8 A: I think no it [can't be he did Titanic didn't he  
 9 B: [hh no he's an action mo@vi@e  
 10 A: well this was action there was car sma[shes ev ]ery two minutes  
 11 B: [yeah but]  
 12 (0.6)  
 13 B: he he: (.) kind of (.) [normally] does films that you (0.3)  
 14 A: [does ]  
 15 B: don't have to think about  
 16 (0.4)  
 17 A: hm: somebody beginning with Cee anyway (.) directed it

As noted previously, B initiates repair on A's answer by repeating it with a rise-fall pitch pattern, rising 8ST and falling 17ST. What we have yet to consider is the *type* of repair this action initiates. As we'll show in below, some repair-initiating other-repetitions are treated as hearing checks (i.e., "is this what you said?") and others as requests for clarification ("what do you mean by this?"). B's HRF repetition, however, is not. Both participants treat it as claiming that James Cameron is *not* the director of this film. The repeated talk is wrong and in need of correction.

Speaker A responds by epistemically downgrading her answer ("I think"), then flat out rejecting/contradicting it ("no it can't be"), and finally checking if she's even got the right person in mind ("he did Titanic didn't he"). Each of these actions treats the HRF repetition as challenging the veracity of her answer. Moreover, in Speaker B's subsequent (overlapping) turn, line 9, she aligns with A's retraction ("no") and then provides the epistemic grounds for her challenge, "he's an action movie," continuing in lines 13–15 to explain that based on what she knows or expects from James Cameron, this film isn't the type of film he'd direct (earlier the participants had described it as "film noir" and "smutty porn"). Speaker B thus confirms that she has heard and understood A's answer perfectly well. Her HRF repetition was both designed and understood to claim it was wrong and in need of correction.

Like many of the cases in our collection, the speaker of the treated-as-problematic talk provides an account for having said what she said. First, with

“well this was action there was car smashes every two minutes” (line 10), A argues that this movie *is* consistent with “action”—B’s description of the movies Cameron directs (see line 9). Second, even as A moves to close the sequence, she maintains some semblance of the appropriacy of her answer—“somebody beginning with Cee anyway (.) directed it.” She thereby claims that her answer, although mistaken, is understandable (it was *sort of* an action movie) and not totally wrong (she has the first letter of the name right).

We also see the HRF repetition speaker working to justify her claim of incongruity. After A’s counter claim about “car smashes” (line 10), B offers a second basis for her challenge, again grounded in her knowledge or beliefs about the issue: Cameron typically directs “films you don’t have to think about” (lines 13–15). So here, and across the collection, we see HRF repetitions generating quite extended sequences of arguments, counterarguments, accounts, and the like. The suspended course of action is resumed only after a “negotiation” of the incongruity, a process that can continue over several turns and indeed in some cases much longer<sup>8</sup> (contrast this with the examples given in Extracts 16–18 below and those discussed in, e.g., Schegloff [2007] and Schegloff et al. [1977]).

The following provides a similar case. The participants have been discussing the current whereabouts of several mutual acquaintances.

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<sup>8</sup>In one case in our collection, the sequence continues for over 4 minutes. Despite a number of attempts by both participants, it is only successfully closed—though the incongruity still unresolved—when a third participant (speaker C) complains off phone from the background about their “arguing” (see below). This rather dramatic case illustrates both the capacity of HRF repetitions and the claim they embody, to derail talk, and the extent to which participants will work to defend their versions of the world (see Conclusion).

[CallHome-5888]

- 1 B: what’s he talking about  
 2 (0.3)  
 3 A: uh- (.) oh he’s getting tired of me arguing about football  
 4 [he’s  
 5 [ @ :: @ [ @ @  
 6 A: [he hasn’t had any [sleep for [ ]  
 7 C: [xx xx (about)] football and you’re  
 8 arguing about your (0.6) your imaginary game  
 9 (0.6)  
 10 A: anyway =  
 11 B: = @ @ @ .hhhh whatever  
 12 C: [come on  
 13 B: [hhhhhh anyway hhh we’ll be coming home in uh... [[*new topic* ]]

## Extract 12 [CallFriend-4175]

- 1 B: uh yeah (I) think he's just (0.3) you know a real standup guy  
 2 or whatever [he's like-] really (.) workaholic [and (every)]  
 3 A: [yeah ] [he got ]  
 4 a job in uh Utah right  
 5 (0.4)  
 6 B: .t [Utah]  
 7 (0.2)  
 8 A: I think so  
 9 B: .t I can't re[member]  
 10 A: [ Ida]ho  
 11 A: Utah  
 12 (0.3)  
 13 A: yeah Utah  
 14 (0.9)  
 15 A: cause he's [(near) ] Idaho  
 16 B: [really ]  
 17 (0.6)  
 18 B: [oh ]  
 19 A: [well] you find out you can ask  
 20 B: yeah I'll find out

At lines 3 and 4, Speaker A asserts that John, the person under discussion, got a job in “Utah.” This assertion is admittedly epistemically downgraded by his use of turn-final “right” (Heritage & Raymond, 2005). B initiates repair by repeating “Utah” with an HRF pitch pattern, rising 10ST on the first syllable and falling 13ST on the second (Figure 3). Again, this action is treated by both participants as claiming that the repeated talk is in need of correction.

As in the previous extract, Speaker A responds to B's HRF repetition by backing down. He first further downgrades the epistemic basis of his assertion of John's whereabouts (“I think so,” line 8), and then provides a candidate correction (“Idaho,” line 10). In this case, however, A goes on to defend not only the spirit of his initial claim but the claim itself. He (re)asserts that John *does* work in Utah (“Utah (0.3) yeah Utah,” lines 11–13). Critically, Speaker B does not align with these actions. Although unable to name where John *is* working (see line 9, “I can't remember”), B maintains his claim that he *is not* working there, first with silence (lines 12 and 14), and then with the potentially doubt-indicative “really?” (see, e.g., Drew, 2003, pp. 930–933).

Speaker A finally abandons his attempt to convince Speaker B of the veracity of his information and invites him to “find out” for himself (line 19). This sequence, initiated by B's HRF repetition, concludes with B clearly displaying



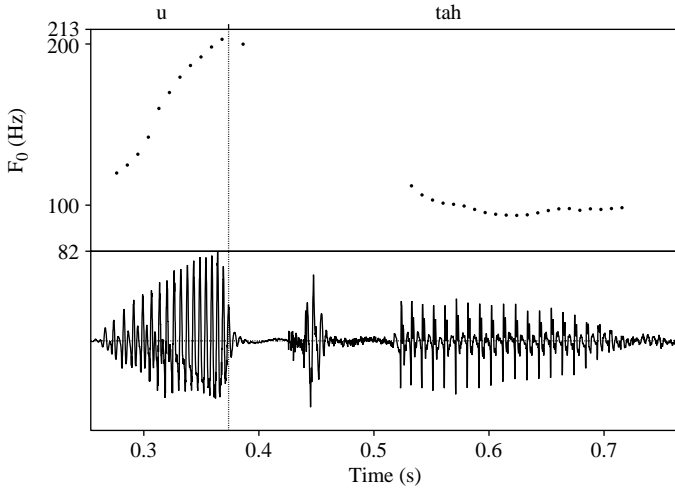


FIGURE 3 Pitch trace and sound-pressure waveform for Extract 12.

that he has still not accepted Speaker A's version of events: "yeah I'll find out" (line 20).

Extract 13 provides a third example. In this case, A does not immediately back down or correct herself in the face of B's HRF repetition.

Extract 13 [Field:3B:1:5]

- 1 A: oh how's Mary keeping cause uh her allergies are they:
- 2 (0.5) / ((A breathing))
- 3 B: well she came in blotchy the other day and they didn't (.)
- 4 couldn't decide what it was
- 5 (0.3)
- 6 A: hm:
- 7 B: I mean I feel
- 8 A: .hhh
- 9 (0.2)
- 10 B: uh::::m: (0.3) I mean she seems very well she certainly lost
- 11 some: weight and she looks ever so nice she's g- obviously had
- 12 some new:.hh clo:thes which (0.2) you know (.) suit her very well
- 13 A: oh good
- 14 B: yes so: that- (.) that's very ni:c[e in fact we find =
- 15 A: [hm:
- 16 B: = we're wearing more of the same colors we have to be careful

- 17 B: .hh[hh]  
 18 A: [o:]h:  
 19 (.)  
 20 B: @[:  
 21 A: [ye:s:  
 22 (.)  
 23 A: [cause sh-  
 24 B: [(well) beige and navy  
 25 (.)  
 26 A: .hh oh yes cause she can't wear blue:  
 27 (0.5)  
 28 B: she^ CAN' T wear blue =  
 29 A: = no: that's one of the colors she's allergic to  
 30 (0.3)  
 31 B: well that's funny she was wearing all blue the other  
 32 da[:y  
 33 A: [.hhhh oh eh she has to wear a specific sort of blue  
 34 .hhh uh-one: (.) e-eh she can only wear things .hhh  
 35 that don't have indigo in them  
 36 (.)  
 37 B: oh:::  
 38 (0.7)  
 39 B: well- and she-[told me how this'd suddenly started =  
 40 A: [((sniff))  
 41 B: = over the last (.) year two years [an-  
 42 A: [ye:s  
 43 B: the sun is another one isn't it

As the extract begins, the speakers are engaged in a discussion of the rather extreme allergies of Mary, a work colleague of theirs. B goes on to report that they are beginning to dress alike and that they “have to be careful” (line 16). After some laughter but little uptake from A, B increments her turn with “(well) beige and navy” (line 24), and A then produces “oh yes cause she can't wear blue.” In the next turn, B repeats “she can't wear blue” with an HRF pitch contour, rising 5ST and falling 17ST, with the pitch peak realized on the vocalic portion of the word “can't” (Figure 4).<sup>9</sup> With this action, she claims that A's statement is

<sup>9</sup>This extract, as well as a few other cases in our collection, has a final rise rather than the more common final fall. However, we can find no difference between the few HRF + rise cases and the HRF + no rise. Therefore, we conclude that the HRF is the most salient aspect of the repetition, with the final pitch movement dealing with other, possibly unrelated, issues.

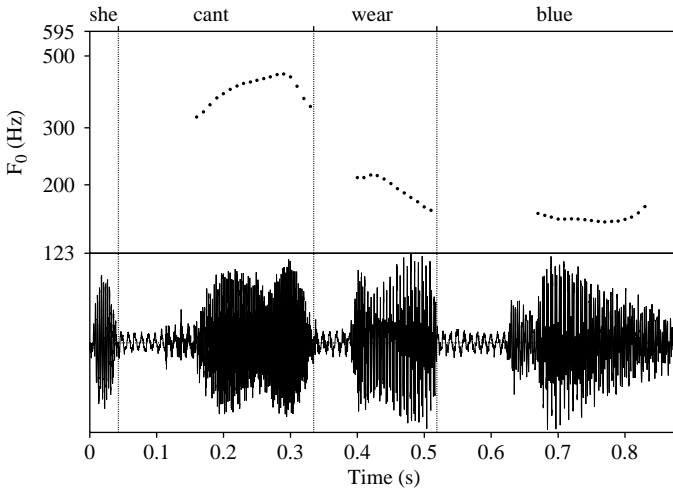


FIGURE 4 Pitch trace and sound-pressure waveform for Extract 13.

false. Mary *can* wear blue—B herself has just claimed that “navy” is one of the colors she and Mary have both been wearing.

Compared with the previous two examples, Speaker A does not immediately back down in the face of B’s HRF repetition. Instead, she confirms (“no”) and then evidences her prior claim: she [Mary] can’t wear blue because “that’s one of the colors she’s allergic to” (line 29). B does not accept this response. In the following turn she describes a recent first-hand experience that is entirely incompatible with A’s claim, explicitly signaling this epistemic lack of fit with a preface (“well that’s funny she was wearing all blue the other day,” lines 31–32). The design of this turn clearly shows that she is (and, with her HRF repetition, was) challenging the veracity of A’s earlier statement.

The next extract shows that the incongruity claimed by HRF repetitions need not arise from the truth or accuracy of the repeated talk but can extend more broadly into matters of its moral appropriacy or acceptability. In this extract, B does not display doubt about what A has said, but he does display that he doesn’t like it. This case also shows that instead of backing down from (Extracts 11–12) or evidencing (Extract 13) their prior talk, Speaker A can simply confirm B’s HRF repetition. As this and similar cases show, this action embodies an act of *resistance* (compare with Robinson, 2009): Speaker A is standing firm in the face of B’s claim of incongruity, maintaining the acceptability of *her* version of the world.

## Extract 14 [CallFriend-6093]

- 1 A: I found out who: is going to be my: (.) my: house  
 2 m- house sisters whatever mates  
    ---11 seconds omitted---
- 3 A: we like to know where we're living next year okay @  
 4 we're girls we're like that  
    ---70 seconds omitted---
- 5 A: and then the third girl h (0.2) .hhhh is Jolene  
    ---55 seconds removed---
- 6 A: .hhhhhh and then we have a: hhhhh German .hhhhhhhhh American  
 7 who's  
 8 been- raised in Germany who's for the first time been the States  
 9 [ .hhhh ]hhh
- 9 B: [m hm]
- 10 A: and then there's a: **French guy** hh  
 11 (.)
- 12 A: Raphael  
 13 (0.7)
- 14 B: **a French^ GUY**
- 15 A: yeah hhhh
- 16 B: you're having a guy in your girl house  
 17 (0.4)
- 18 A: we have t- two guys we need guys we're:  
 19 we would never live in a house alone  
 20 (0.4)
- 21 B: uh @: [: : :]
- 22 A: [(oh sorr]y) that's Latin (y'know)/(no)
- 23 B: that's what
- 24 A: that's Latin  
 25 (0.2)
- 26 B: well I don't know (if it's) Latin or not  
 27 (1.0)
- 28 B: (m) (0.3) but if that's the way y- it's gonna go that's the way it'll go

As the extract begins, A is describing the people she'll be sharing a house with the following year. As the lines 1 to 5 illustrate she has described it as a house of girls. At line 10, she mentions the last person in the house, "and then there's a French guy." Speaker B responds with a, HRF repetition (line 14). The entire HRF contour is located on the monosyllabic word "guy" and rises 6ST and falls 8ST, ending in creaky voice.

Phonetically, this particular example is slightly more complicated than the others presented so far in this article because of a change in stress in the repetition. Speaker A has used what many would call narrow focus in stressing the “new” information in her turn at line 10: “a: French guy” (we have added underlining to indicate stress). This turn design matches her prior turns in which she has been listing the nationalities of her other new housemates; she continues to focus (in both a technical and nontechnical sense) on nationality here. Speaker B, in his repair-initiating turn, shifts the stress or prominence to “guy” (“a French guy”). With this feature of the HRF repetition’s design, he locates precisely the source of the incongruity; this person’s gender is the problem, not his national origin (Bolinger, 1958, 1965; Ladd, 1980).<sup>10</sup>

In response to B’s HRF repetition, A offers a simple confirmation (“yeah,” line 15)—it is indeed a French guy that she’ll be living with. If B were signaling a trouble of hearing what was said, this may well have been sufficient, and the suspended activity could have resumed (cf. Extract 16 below). However, as their subsequent talk makes clear, both participants understood that this was *not* the trouble. First, B does not accept A’s confirmation. Rather than providing a sequentially relevant next action, he pushes on with “you’re having a guy in your girl house?” (line 16), again accenting “guy.” This spells out more explicitly the incongruity he claimed through his HRF repetition—it’s a problem that he’s a “guy” specifically because it is a “girl house.” He does not, however, explicitly claim that this state of affairs is inappropriate or unacceptable, as saying “you can’t do that” or even “does your mother know” would have. Nevertheless, this is precisely how A treats his actions. She accounts for the described conduct, first as a matter of safety (“we need guys we would never live alone,” lines 18–19) and then on cultural grounds (“that’s Latin,” line 22).<sup>11</sup> This shows that A understood—and with her confirmation *resisted*—the nonaligning import of B’s HRF repetition.

Speaker B’s subsequent response provides further evidence that his trouble was indeed the moral unacceptability of A’s living arrangements. First, he implicitly aligns with her treatment of his prior turns simply by passing on the opportunity to clarify them. He doesn’t say, for instance, “No I didn’t mean that” or “I wasn’t being critical.” Second, what he does do is begrudging acquiescence—“if that’s the way it’s gonna go, that’s the way it’ll go” (line

<sup>10</sup>We see no reason that the HRF contour could not be doing the function we claim—initiating repair on an incongruity—and simultaneously marking narrow focus. See the previous discussion of contrast and focus.

<sup>11</sup>Unfortunately, what she means by this is rather opaque, at least to outsiders like us. Relevant, however, is that both participants are Hispanic-American and throughout this conversation have strongly oriented to their Latin backgrounds, for instance, by contrasting or in other ways distancing themselves from “Americans.”

28) conveys that because she has made up her mind, there is little he can do, all the while maintaining a nonaligning stance.

These cases have shown that HRF repetitions claim that something is wrong and launch a sequence to address it. In the final case, Extract 15, the incongruity is grounded not in what A has described (i.e., not in some state of affairs external to the current interaction) but in the action itself. Speaker B claims that it was not designed appropriately for him, at this interactional juncture. This case also shows that Speaker B sometimes continues speaking after the repeat, immediately spelling out the nature of the incongruity being claimed.<sup>12</sup>

Speaker A has called a friend and been put on the phone with this friend's roommate. They know *of* each other but have never spoken (or perhaps only once; see lines 17–20).

Extract 15 [Callfriend-6065]

- 1 A: hi Roy  
 2 B: hi  
 3 A: hi how are you  
 4 B: how are you  
 5 (.)  
 6 A: okay:  
 7 (0.4)  
 8 A: what's new@: @ @  
 9 B: what's ^ NEW um: =  
 10 A: = @ @ @ [@ @  
 11 B: [well that implies that we've spoken in the past [and so]  
 12 A: [ @ @ ]  
 13 @ @ [.hhh [ o[kay tha[t's true ]  
 14 B: [there've [b- [ (0.3) [that there've] been developments  
 15 since the last time we spoke  
 16 (0.2)  
 17 A: .hhh I think I spoke to you once didn't I  
 18 (0.3)

<sup>12</sup>Schegloff (1997) and Bolden (2009) document similar cases of “repeat + talk” turns in English and Russian, respectively. Bolden's collection of repetitions with and without subsequent talk by B contrasts clearly in terms of action. The former deal “with issues of intersubjectivity or understanding while repeat prefacing is reserved for problematizing actions (that are quite clearly understood)” (p. 140). In contrast, in our collection of HRF repetitions, we do not see any difference across the two subsets. All serve, in Bolden's words, to “problematize” actions that are clearly understood.

- 19 B: um I don't know but [that's o]kay  
 20 A: [like ]  
 21 A: @ [@  
 22 B: [I'm just giving you a hard time

After the opening sequence, A launches a first topic with “what’s new” (line 8). B responds with an HRF repetition, rising 5ST and falling 8ST, followed by a turn-projecting “um” (Clark & Fox Tree, 2002; Schegloff, 2010). In his turn continuation, line 11, he explicitly spells out the nature of his problem: In his words, what’s new “implies that we’ve spoken in the past . . . that there’ve been developments since last time we spoke.” There’s an incongruity, he claims, between the nature of their relationship and the presuppositions embodied in the design of A’s topic elicitor. Unlike “what’s up” or “what’s going on,” this formulation asks for updates, and you cannot get updates from someone you have never spoken to before. B is thus claiming that this action was designed inappropriately for him, as a recipient (note, though, that A defends her use of this expression: “I think I spoke to you once didn’t I,” line 17, claims that her presupposition was, in fact, not so unfounded).

In this section, we have shown that HRF repetitions are treated by both relevant participants—the repeating Speaker (B) and repeated Speaker (A)—as claiming that the repeated talk is “wrong.” In some cases it is a matter of veracity: B claims what A has said is incorrect or inaccurate (Extracts 11–13). In other cases, it is a matter of moral appropriateness or acceptability: Although not doubting the repeated talk, B is not happy with it (Extract 14). In still other cases, B’s problem is not with moral conduct or state of affairs described but in the immediate contextual appropriateness of A’s action (Extract 15).

We have also shown that HRF repetitions launch a sequence in which correction of the repeated talk is relevant. Sometimes Speaker A immediately self-corrects, backs down, or otherwise aligns with B’s claim (Extracts 11–12). In other cases they resist, offering evidence for the repeated talk (Extract 13) or a simple confirmation (Extract 14). Critically, in the face of resistance Speaker B pushes again, often with a more explicit claim of epistemic or moral authority over the offending issue. As these cases make clear, HRF repetitions do not merely point out something curious or surprising in A’s talk, asking for clarification or comment. They are used to explicitly claim that this repeated talk is “wrong” and in need of correction.

### Discriminability

In this section, we briefly compare HRF repetitions with a number of other repair-initiating other-repetitions. This will help discriminate our practice and support our argument that the HRF pitch contour is a constitutive part of the interactional work HRF repetitions do.

Repetition has long been identified as one of the principal methods available for initiating repair on a coparticipant's talk.<sup>13</sup> Typical of this research is the recognition that other-repetitions can be used to manage a wide array of troubles. The following cases, for instance, appear to be addressing hearing and understanding problems.

Extract 16 (continuing Extract 11)

- 1 A: hmm: somebody beginning with **Cee** anyway (.) directed it  
 2 (0.2)  
 3 A: @ @  
 4 (0.4)  
 5 B: **C**: [ee]  
 6 A: [ .hhhh yeah  
 7 (0.3)  
 8 B: Kubrick?<sup>14</sup>

Extract 17 [SBCSAE-05]

- 1 A: and then we went to **the chalk-** (0.3) fair  
 2 and then he took off with Tobias =  
 3 B: = **the chop fair**  
 4 (0.2)  
 5 A: the chalk  
 6 (0.2)

<sup>13</sup>For conversation analytic work on English, see Jefferson (1972), Schegloff et al. (1977), Kelly and Local (1989), Sacks (1992), Schegloff (1997), Drew (2003), Wilkinson and Kitzinger (2006), Sidnell (2010), Robinson and Kevoe-Feldman (2010), and Robinson (2006, 2009, in press). For conversation analytic work on a variety of other languages, see Sorjonen (1996), Selting (1996), Kim (1999), Wu (2006), Svennevig (2008), Englert (2008), and Bolden (2009). Within linguistics, there is a substantial, and in some cases overlapping, body of literature exploring the design and use of echo questions. See, for example, Bolinger (1957), Halliday and Hasan (1976), and Iwata (2003). To the best of our knowledge, the present article is the first to tie repetitions with this phonetic design (HRF) to this type of trouble (acceptance). The closest is a suggestion by Robinson and Kevoe-Feldman (2010). In their analysis of repair-initiating other-repetitions of entire actions, they observe that in contrast to final *rising* pitch, final *falling* pitch seems to delimit the nature of the trouble to problems of acceptance (p. 236). Although this certainly aligns with our work in some ways, our repetitions involve a more complex pitch movement and are both partial and full.

<sup>14</sup>This example highlights the difficulty of rendering the relevant sounds of an interaction in readable English orthography. Both speakers produce [si:] for the letter "C". Although the subsequently proffered candidate name, Kubrick, is spelled with a "K", there is no orientation by either participant to this being an incorrect or improbable guess, even though the orthographic transcription may bias readers toward that interpretation.



- 7 B: [oh            ]  
 8 A: [ the cha]lk f[air]  
 9 B:                    [un]hunh  
 10 A: .hhhhh and he took off with Tobias

Extract 18 [CF-5635; expansion of Extract 9]

- 1 A: ... I do not want that one. hhh but there's a blue one  
 2     (.)  
 3 A: it's all blue  
 4     (0.7)  
 5 B: just is it is it [(.) reg]ular ski like a s[mooth    ]  
 6 A:                    [xx xx]                    [it's a **pu** ]llover  
 7     (0.4)  
 8 B: huh?  
 9 A: it's a **pullover**  
 10    (0.2)  
 11 B: **pullover**  
 12 A: yeah it doesn't button up front it pulls over your head  
 13 B: all [blue huh]  
 14 A:    [and it    ]yeah and it has a hood

In response to Speaker B's repair-initiating other-repetition, Speaker A confirms (line 6, Extract 16), repeats (line 5, Extract 17), or clarifies (line 12, Extract 18) what B has repeated. B then treats this repair as sufficient by resuming the suspended course of action, perhaps following a third position receipt ("oh," line 7, Extract 17; Heritage, 1984). Schematically

- 1 A: Trouble-source  
 2 B: Repair-initiating other-repetition  
 3 A: Confirmation/repetition/clarification of the trouble-source  
 4 B: Resumption of the suspended course of action

These extracts show that some repair-initiating other-repetitions can manage problems in hearing and understanding. Critically, however, those produced with *HRF* pitch contours cannot. Each of the approximately 40 cases in our collection are treated by the participants as managing problems of acceptability, as detailed in the previous section.

What separates cases like those exemplified in Extracts 16–18 from the practice documented in this article is the phonetic design of the repair-initiating other-repetition. Figure 5 shows the monotonicity of the repair initiator in Extract 16; the 2ST rise on the repair initiator in Extract 18 was shown in Figure 2. The

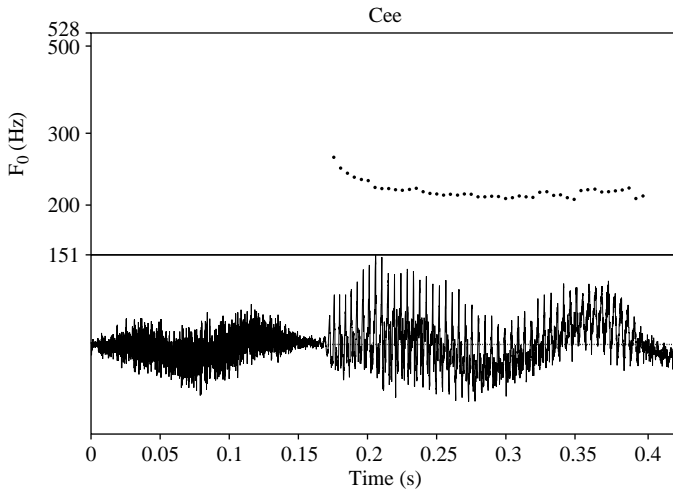


FIGURE 5 Pitch trace and sound-pressure waveform for Extract 16.

repair initiation in Extract 17 is produced with a fall to mid; however, no pitch trace can be extracted due to overlapping speech on the recording. Thus, a difference in sequential trajectory is directly linked to a difference in the phonetic realization of the repeated talk (see also Walker & Benjamin, 2013). HRF repetitions are a discriminable practice, with their phonetic design playing a constitutive part.

Before concluding, it is important to clarify the “direction” of our argument. We are *not* claiming that HRF repetitions are the *only* type of repair-initiating other-repetitions that can manage acceptability problems. Indeed, most research (see note 13) suggests otherwise. For instance, other-repetitions produced with final rising pitch have long been known to be capable of managing these kinds of problems too (for a recent account, see Robinson, in press). Extract 19 illustrates this.

#### Extract 19 [CallHome-6071]

- 1 B: well:you know but it would be nice to meet a guy with a
- 2 real job who can support himself.hhhhh I mean not even
- 3 someone who will (.) you know pay for me necessarily but
- 4 hhh (0.3) somebody who can just like pay for himself: you
- 5 know and would pay for me once in a wh[file
- 6 A: [ .thh well can't Geoffrey
- 7 (1.0)

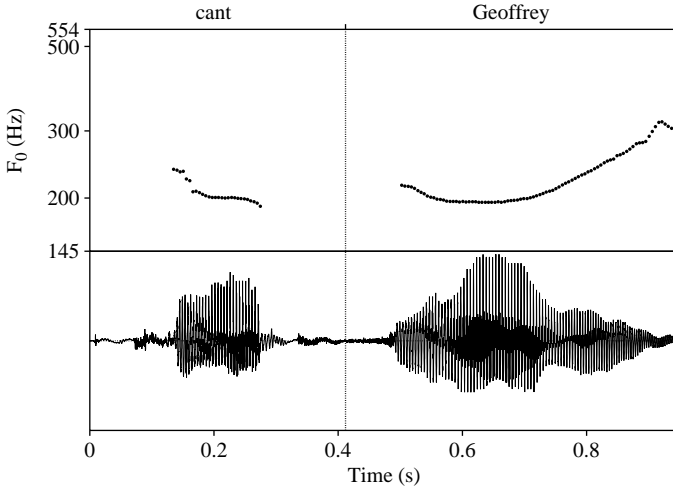


FIGURE 6 Pitch trace and sound-pressure waveform for Extract 19.

- 8 B: can't Geoffrey  
 9 A: couldn't Geoffrey =  
 10 B: = yeah he could  
 11 (0.4)  
 12 A: yeah so  
 13 (0.3)  
 14 A: .hhh[h]  
 15 B: [but you know (0.9)  
 16 A: .hhhh[h]  
 17 B: [Geoffrey is like (0.4) mister noncommittal I hated that  
 18 wishy washy shit that he did that hot and cold stuff

B's turn in lines 1–5 is hearable as complaining about the guys she dates. With his “well can't Geoffrey” in line 6, A provides a possible exception to her troubles/misfortunes (this turn ties elliptically back to B's “somebody who can just like pay for himself,” line 4). In line 8, B initiates repair by repeating “can't Geoffrey” with a pitch rising 8ST across the entire utterance, as shown in Figure 6.<sup>15</sup>

Through its present tense construction, A's “well can't Geoffrey” (the trouble-source action) presupposes Geoffrey's current and continued relevance for B. In fact, B and Geoffrey are no longer dating, something A should know—he was

<sup>15</sup>Experienced readers of waveforms will notice that “Geoffrey” is, of course, a pseudonym.

told earlier in this very call. We see it is precisely this incongruity that A addresses in his repair. He redoes his turn with the correct *past* tense (“couldn’t Geoffrey,” line 9).

So here we have a *non*-HRF repetition used to manage a problem of acceptability. A relevant question is how cases like these differ from ours. Although a full comparison is beyond the scope of this article, we’d like to note two important differences. First, unlike our HRF cases, the repair initiator B has used can also manage hearing and understanding problems (again, see Robinson, in press). Second, unlike in our HRF cases, the incongruity does *not* become the focus of the interaction. Speaker A does not apologize for his “mistake” or account for it. He simply corrects it. Similarly, Speaker B does not subsequently criticize him, laugh, and so on. She simply resumes the suspended sequence (“yeah he could,” line 10).

Perhaps, then, the “diagnostic openness” of other-repetitions with final rising pitch affords the possibility of addressing acceptability problems covertly, as we see here (compare this with the use of “huh?,” “what?,” “pardon?,” etc. discussed above). In contrast, HRF repetitions—by design—explicitly claim that A is “wrong” and bring the incongruity into interactional focus.

## CONCLUSION

In this article, we have described a practice for claiming that a coparticipant’s talk is “wrong” and in need of correction. The data suggest that HRF repetitions claim an incongruity between two versions of the world—the one presented in the repeated speaker’s talk and the one the repeating speaker knows or believes to be true, appropriate, or acceptable. Both participants orient to this claimed incongruity, resulting in expanded, varied, and socially charged sequences.

Previous research on repair-initiating other-repetitions has shown they can manage a wide array of troubles—from hearing the repeated talk, to understanding its sense or its action import, to doubting or accepting it. An important question, then, is how repeated speakers are able to work out *why* their prior turns are being treated as problematic and, consequently, how to respond (see, e.g., Robinson, in press). In this article, we have shed some additional light on how they manage this analytic task. We have shown that, at least when the other-repetition is produced with HRF intonation, their coparticipants *tell* them, in gross terms, what type of trouble it is.

This study thus contributes to a body of literature that demonstrates how repair initiators and trouble types are less than fully independent (see Benjamin, 2013; Egbert, Golato, & Robinson, 2009; Robinson, 2006; Robinson & Kevoe-Feldman, 2010; Selting, 1988, 1996; Sidnell, 2007; Walker & Benjamin, 2013). Contrary to conventional wisdom in the repair literature, this work shows that

repair-initiating participants can offer quite detailed analyses of what type of trouble they are having with the prior talk. In this way they play an active role not only in *locating* the source of trouble (Schegloff et al., 1977) but in *diagnosing* its nature. Discovering these “diagnostic practices” has required a careful analysis of the linguistic details of repair initiators, in this case of their phonetic design in particular.

This work also demonstrates the importance of distinguishing between linguistic resources, interactional practices, and actions. First, it shows that even within a potential practice category such as repair-initiating other-repetition, different aspects of turn design (i.e., linguistic resources) can do distinctive work (see also Robinson & Kevoe-Feldman, 2010; Selting, 1996; Walker & Benjamin, 2013). Lexical repetitions with a non-HRF pitch pattern, even when clearly initiating repair, are used and treated differently from HRF repetitions. This work thus reiterates the point that it is crucial to regard repetition as a linguistic resource—as a *component* of a practice—rather than a practice in itself (see also Curl, 2004; Curl et al., 2006).

Second, we have shown that although lexical repetitions with an HRF pitch contour may, in other action-sequential contexts, be used to “do surprise” (see, e.g., Extract 10), such uses do not automatically initiate repair. Different interactional practices may deploy the very same linguistic resources to perform different actions. Our findings, then, do not support the (widespread) view that intonation contours have “meanings” independently of their instantiation in a particular turn at talk (see, e.g., Cruttenden, 1997; Ladd, 1996; Pierrehumbert & Hirschberg, 1990; Wichmann, 2000). Indeed, the use of a similar intonation contour, but with a different interactional/sequential outcome, only supports the contrasting argument that cognitive/emotional states such as surprise or astonishment are interactional achievements, not static properties of certain pitch configurations (Local & Walker, 2008; Selting, 1996). Cruttenden (1997, pp. 92–93), in trying to unpick what he concedes are two very different meanings of the rise-fall contour, namely “impressed” vs. “challenging,” makes a similar point in his discussion of the local meanings of tones in English: “. . . but in this case of the meaning of rise-fall, the explanation seems to lie in different speaker-listener relations.” Thus, even though he is clearly of the opinion that intonation contours *can* be assigned meaning, the local occasions of their use are still named as the deciding factor in how they are actually understood.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup>Cruttenden’s assertion that one (local) meaning of the rise-fall contour is “challenging” fits nicely alongside our analysis, but the fact remains that we disagree with the practice of assigning meaning to pitch (or any phonetic parameter) outside of the actual context of use.

HRF repetitions are noteworthy for an additional reason. They exemplify another way in which asymmetries in the access to and authority over knowledge and conduct become, or are made, relevant in social interaction (see, e.g., Heritage, 2012; Heritage & Raymond, 2005; Stivers, Mondada, & Steensig, 2011). The act of claiming that something is “wrong” is another resource that participants have for patrolling and defending their knowledge and beliefs about how things are or should be. As these extracts show, this includes not only beliefs about the facts of the world—for example, who directed a particular movie (Extract 11)—but also about what counts as acceptable conduct—for example, having a “guy” living in an “all girl house” (Extract 14)—and about the way actions should be designed for particular recipients (Extract 15). Thus, these claims of unacceptability embody not only epistemic claims of greater access to, or authority over, the offending issue but also address issues of moral impropriety. These claims are implicit in the repair-initiation itself but, as we have seen, can become quite explicit in the ensuing sequence as the repair-initiating and trouble source speakers jostle for epistemic or moral primacy.

The sequences engendered by HRF repetitions show that there can be more to addressing an incongruity than merely pointing it out. In a study of other-corrections, Jefferson (1987, p. 88) noted the following:

In the course of the business of correcting we can find such attendant activities as, e.g. ‘instructing’[...], ‘complaining’[...], ‘admitting’[...], ‘forgiving’[...], ‘accusing’[...], ‘apologizing’, ‘ridiculing’, etc. That is, the business of correcting can be a matter of, not merely putting things to rights, [...] but of specifically addressing lapses in competence and/or conduct.

Although HRF repetitions differ from other-corrections in certain ways (see above), they share an important commonality: In addition to being a resource for (re-)establishing a shared understanding of what’s right, they’re a resource for holding others accountable for being wrong (see also Robinson, 2006).

And, indeed, it is the norm in our collection for the repeated speaker to work at length to make their prior talk accountable, on occasion even after admitting it was wrong (see, e.g., Extract 11). Despite the fact that “fighting back” or resisting the claim of incongruity is a high-cost option—by expanding the repair sequence, this speaker runs the risk of being unable to progress his or her previous activity—participants repeatedly do so. Therefore, there must be a moral benefit to disputing the claim of incongruity flagged by HRF repetitions. These sequences thus attest to the importance participants place on displaying themselves as competent interactants who produce accountable social actions.

Finally, our description of the sequences engendered by this type of repair initiator contributes to Heritage’s (2012) notion of an “epistemic engine” as one of the drivers of social interaction. The data show how conversational

sequences can emerge, in part, from interactants' insistence on displaying who knows what (and whether what they know is "right") and who's who (to each other and to others in the world). With an HRF repetition, one speaker disputes another's implicit claim of what is true or acceptable, making their own implicit claim of greater knowledge or moral authority. *This* claim, in turn, regularly leads to more talk in which both speakers work toward creating a symmetrical balance of shared knowledge or understanding (even if, in the end, they agree to disagree).

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