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TOPICAL TALK AND REPAIR PRACTICES THROUGH EMBODIED AND MULTILINGUAL RESOURCES IN L2 ARABIC CONVERSATION-FOR-LEARNING

Abstract:

This article draws on conversation analysis as an analytical tool to examine the relationship between repair practices and topical talk in L2 Arabic conversation-for-learning as a language learning activity. Adopting a single-case analysis, the fine-grained analysis shows two key points. First, it is the speaking partner's telling questions that seem to generate the main topic. Second, student's responses to the telling questions, rather than specifying questions, tend to engender expanded discourse of multi-unit turn that involves repair practices that are mainly carried out through embodied and multilingual resources. Furthermore, while these repair practices tend to momentarily put topical talk on hold, they (1) create learning opportunities through participants' orientations to their roles as a language learner and a language expert, and (2) contribute towards elaborating and extending topical talk. This study has implications for the emerging area of CA-informed research to further our understanding of the relationship between repair work and topic management in L2 nonformal institutional talk.

Keywords: L2 Arabic ◆ topic management ◆ word searches ◆ L2 speaking practice ◆ interactional competence ◆ translanguaging ◆ multidialectal practices ◆ multilingual and embodied interactional resources

Introduction

Conversation "is the predominant medium of interaction in the social world" (Drew & Heritage, 1992, p. 19). This is true whether an interaction is taking place in more formal settings (e.g., classrooms, business meetings, patient-doctor consultations, job interviews, etc.) or more

nonformal contexts such as conversations among friends, colleagues, or family members. Conversation is also a principal driving force for language acquisition in general (whether first or additional). Hatch (1978) maintains that "language learning evolves *out of* learning how to carry on conversations" (p. 284; emphasis is original). In this vein, second/foreign language (L2) learners can benefit from conversations because they can serve as the means to learn and to improve their L2 capacities.

Consequently, successful participation in conversation is directly linked to interactional competence, which is "the ability to co-construct interaction in a purposeful and meaningful way, taking into account sociocultural and pragmatic dimensions of the speech situation and event" (Galaczi & Taylor, 2018, p. 226). Such an ability is "distributed across participants and varies in different interactional practices" (Young, 2011, p. 430). These interactional practices include topic management, turn-taking, sequencing, overall structuring, and repair (Galaczi & Taylor, 2018; Hall & Pekarek Doehler, 2011; Wong & Waring, 2010). Furthermore, Heritage (1989) argues that "all manners of conversational procedures are implicated in the management of topic" (p. 29); and since learning is embedded in the topics that are talked about in L2 learning conversations, it is important to understand how topical talk is developed and co-managed in such a conversational context.

While the notion of topic has been generally seen as the primary subject of a conversation in the everyday sense, Seedhouse and Supakorn (2015) explain that from the vantage point of conversation analysis (CA), the focus is on topical coherence as an interactional achievement. This is because topical talk is an interpersonal achievement in the sense that its development is sequential (i.e., through coherent sequences that result from turns-at-talk) and temporal (i.e., turns progress chronologically) (Schegloff, 2007). It is also associated with how interactants orient to their roles, display epistemic stances, and engage in repair practices in interaction (Heritage, 2012; Hutchby & Woofitt, 1998). Hence, topic is not simply a broad subject of conversation; rather, it is a sequentially organized series of actions that are motivated by a drive to achieve and maintain intersubjectivity. Unfortunately, despite its significance, the subject remains under-explored in L2 contexts (Dolce & van Compernolle, 2020; Seedhouse & Supakorn, 2015).

Therefore, the current study sets out to contribute to this emerging area of CA-informed research to furthering our understanding of how topic is jointly achieved and managed in one specific under-explored L2 learning context: Arabic dyadic conversation-for-learning. In this type of L2 interaction, learners meet with an L2 expert to engage in conversations in the desired target language for more extended language use to expand their linguistic repertoire in that

language. Based on an in-depth single-case analysis, the study provides a fine-grained analysis of how repair practices and participants' orientations to their roles in interaction play a key role in co-managing topical talk in a nonformal institutional interaction between an advanced L2 Arabic learner and her L1 Arabic conversation partner.

Topic in the CA tradition

The idea of topic in conversation has been understood in two ways. The first, a commonsensical pragmatic understanding of topic, sees topic as what is being talked about as the primary subject of a conversation. The second way of understanding topic is CA-driven and, consequently, sees topic as an interactional achievement that is sequentially co-managed by interactants. As such, turns in conversations are typically "hanging together because they are somehow 'about' the same thing" (Schegloff, 2007, p. 1), and interactants' awareness of what is being talked about guides their contributions to the conversation. Therefore, the main focus of CA research into topic is on how a topic is talked into being and co-managed by participants throughout the conversation (e.g., how it is initiated, elaborated, closed, etc.).

Consequently, CA research has identified two ways in which topic management occurs: topic initiation and topic shift. Topic initiation refers to the introduction of a new topic at the beginning of a conversation or after the closure of a prior topic; while topic shift is "shifting emphasis within a topic or moving towards a new topic" (Wong & Waring, 2010, p. 104). To move smoothly from one topic to another, interactants employ stepwise topic transitions. As Sacks (1992) argues, "the best way to move from topic to topic is not by a topic close followed by a topic beginning, but by what we call a stepwise move. Such a move involves connecting what we've just been talking about to what we're now talking about, though they are different" (p. 566). However, interactants sometimes shift topics without employing a stepwise topic change; they do this through a "marked" (Sacks, 1992) or "disjunctive" (Jefferson, 1984) way as in the use of *actually* or *by the way* to signal that what is about to be said does not go hand in hand with what is talked about in the previous turn. In addition, a topic can be closed or terminated through collaborative closure-implicative indicators such as preclosing signals (e.g., well, okay), assessment tokens (e.g., oh good, great, awesome, etc.), a series of silences, or long pauses preceding acknowledgement tokens (Wong & Waring, 2010).

Seedhouse and Supakorn (2015), thus, point out that it is not an easy task for researchers to define what is being talked about in a conversation, due to the difficulty in stating what the topic is and in pinpointing the segment of speech to which the topic applies. This challenge, according to them, might be the reason early CA research in this area has been put on the backburner and became of marginal interest in the last three decades. Yet, Seedhouse and

Supakorn cite Schegloff's (2007) focus on topic-proffering sequences and Heritage's (2012) focus on epistemic balances between interlocutors as the two main exceptions in this line of research. Schegloff (2007) focuses on topics as sequences of actions by demonstrating how "preferred sequences engender expansion and dispreferred responses engender sequence closure" (p. 169). In other words, when a topic is proffered, it either gets accepted and consequently elaborated, or rejected and, in turn, closed as soon as it is initiated.

Heritage (2012) focuses on how epistemic imbalances between conversationalists might drive interaction towards equalizing this epistemic status in one of two ways. In the first way, "speakers can position themselves in a relatively unknowing (or K−) position relative to others concerning the matter at hand, thereby initiating sequences by inviting or eliciting information from a projectedly more knowing (or K+) recipient." (Heritage, 2012, p. 33). The second way is when a "knowing (K+) speakers can simply initiate talk concerning the matter at hand, thus launching a sequence, finding a warrant for this conduct by projecting their recipients to be in a relatively unknowing (K−) position" (p. 33). So, these epistemic imbalances tend to engender topic expansions in pursuit of intersubjectivity and achieving a balanced epistemic status (as projected by interactants).

Topic management in L2 contexts

CA research on topic management in L2 contexts is still limited. This dearth of studies may be due to the aforementioned difficulty in studying topic management. To date, a few studies have directly addressed topic management in L2 contexts over the previous decade or so (e.g., Dolce and van Compernolle, 2020; García García, 2015; König, 2013; Seedhose & Supakorn, 2015). König (2013) focused on L2 French conversations between an au-pair student and host family to explore longitudinal changes in topic introductions. The author observed that the student (Julie) was able to make her orientation to introducing topical talk clearer over time, which (1) indicated a development in her interactional competence, and (2) made her a better conversationalist in L2 French. While König (2013) focused on topic introductions, García García (2015) explored conversations among L2 Spanish learners and how they dealt with topic closures in cases where maintaining topical talk became problematic. Both of these previous studies have provided insights on how L2 learners manage topical talk in terms of introducing or closing a topic.

Seedhouse and Supakorn (2015) drew on two important studies related to topic in daily conversation (i.e., Heritage, 2012; Schegloff, 2007) to explore institutional interaction.

Specifically, they looked at topic management in the contexts of L2 assessment and classroom interaction. In this work, Seedhouse and Supakorn (2015) demonstrated that there are two types of topical talk in such contexts: (1) "topic-as-script" which refers to what the instructor or the examiner has decided on in advance to be the main focus of the interaction; and (2) "topic-as-action [which] is how topic is developed or talked into being during the course of the interaction" (p. 399). In this vein, "topic is both vehicle and focus of the interaction" (p. 411). Inspired by these conclusions, Dolce and van Compernolle (2020) examined topic management with a special focus on learner initiation in an advanced L2 Chinese class interaction. The authors illuminated how initiations by learners, through moving out of initiation-response-feedback (IRF) structure, engender a shift from the instructor's topic-as-script to topic-as-action to pursue further possible learning opportunities.

While the contribution of these studies is informative regarding topic management in various L2 contexts above (i.e., interaction in the language classroom between learners and the instructor, among learners, the learner and the host family, and in assessment interviews), very little is known about topic management in L2 conversation-for-learning. Kasper and Kim (2015) argued that conversations-for-learning are best considered as nonformal institutional talk beyond the classroom, where L2 learners meet with an L1 speaker to talk about a wide range of topics that are not decided on in advance. The principal goal of these conversations is to provide learners with a safe environment to practice and, ultimately, improve their desired language. The authors also maintained that research on conversations-for-learning is limited and more studies are needed in this context "to gain a more detailed understanding of how participants organize diverse forms of conversations-for-learning" (p. 406).

One area that is still under-explored is the role of repair practices and participants' orientations within topical talk in L2 conversation-for-learning including advanced learners. Repair practices in particular impact the progressivity of topical talk, and can be divided into four types based on who initiates repair and who completes it. The four types can be summarized as follows: (a) self-initiated self-repair (all done by the current speaker); (b) self-initiated other-repair (as in when the current speaker enters a word search that is solved by the recipient); (c) other-initiated self-repair (e.g., the recipient does a comprehension check, and the first speaker completes the repair); or (d) other-initiated other-repair (the recipient points out the trouble source and completes the repair as in correction) (see Hutchby & Wooffitt, 2008 for more details and examples). Moreover, participants' orientations to actions in interaction are highly important because they can offer insights into the kind of identities or roles participants' co-construct at any point in the conversation. In light of the issues presented so far, the current study explores the roles of repair practices and participants' orientations in how topical talk is

co-managed over a longer stretch of discourse in L2 Arabic dyadic conversation-for-learning between an advanced L2 Arabic learner and an L1 Arabic conversation partner.

Data and Method

This study is part of a larger project on interactive and multilingual practices in L2 Arabic conversations-for-learning, for which approximately 17.5 hours of video-recorded dyadic sessions were collected from 11 participants. Drawing on insights from interactional SLA and the pedagogical knowledge that language learners need to interact in order to learn and to improve their L2 capacities, these conversations-for-learning were established for students enrolled in 3rd and 4th year Arabic classes and minoring in Arabic at a private university in the United States. Each student met individually with their L1 Arabic conversation partner 5-10 times a semester to talk about anything they liked for about 15-30 minutes with the understanding that (1) Arabic is the desired language for these conversations, and (2) their performance is not assessed. Therefore, what precisely should be learned is not specified or determined in advance, but the general pedagogical idea is that through such interactions learners are provided with opportunities to use the vocabulary, grammatical structures, and receive feedback to improve their L2 fluency.

All recorded sessions (46) were conducted in an office on campus. Participants included 10 undergraduate L2 Arabic learners whose ages varied from 20 to 22, and their conversation partner who had about 15 years of university teaching experience. This L1 speaker (the researcher) was the professor of the Arabic courses students were enrolled in that semester and he served as the conversation partner in all sessions. All participants gave consent to be video-recorded. Two Sony high-definition cameras were used for the recordings to capture both participants from different angles in the office.

The focus of this study was identified following the CA practice of "unmotivated looking" (Psathas, 1995, p. 45), which means that the analyst works through the data to unpack noteworthy interactional phenomena that emerge from the data itself instead of having a focus that is predetermined prior to data analysis. To this end, the video recordings were watched several times as the researcher took notes on the data and began preliminary transcriptions of interactional practices that deemed to be of pedagogical significance in this particular context. Then these episodes were fully transcribed and analyzed line-by-line using a modified version of the system developed by Gail Jefferson (2004) (see Appendix A for transcription conventions).

After working through the video data, the phenomenon of repair practices and participants' orientations to their role in how topical talk is introduced and co-managed over a longer stretch of discourse became exceptionally noteworthy. Because this phenomenon has proved to be typical in the corpus, a single episode from the beginning of a conversation-for-learning session between a 4th year female learner (Nour) and her conversation partner (Zaid) (all names are pseudonymous) was extracted for an in-depth analysis for this study. At the time of the study, Nour was a fourth-year university student registered in an Arabic Media course. Nour had studied Arabic for 3 years at her current university and had just fulfilled a summer study abroad program in Morocco.

The entire excerpt extracted for analysis in this study is three minutes and 57 seconds long. Drawing on the CA practice of a single-episode analysis (Hutchby & Woofitt, 1998; Schegloff, 1987), it is possible to showcase the interactive mechanism by which topic is co-managed in a longer stretch of discourse in the current conversation-for-learning context. In the excerpt, Arabic has been transliterated for the convenience of all readers (see Appendix B for transliteration conventions). The default font (Courier New) is used for Arabic while English (that occurs as part of the interaction) is in italics. Moreover, default bold font is used to provide the author's English translations of participant conversations as needed. All participant names that appear in these excerpts are pseudonyms.

Findings

In what follows, the analysis of the single episode focuses on illuminating two key points. First, it is the speaking partner's telling questions that seem to generate the main topic. Second, student's responses to the telling questions, rather than specifying questions, tend to engender expanded discourse of multi-unit turn that involves repair practices that are mainly carried out through embodied and multilingual resources. Moreover, while these repair practices tend to momentarily put topical talk on hold, they (1) create learning opportunities through participants' orientations to their roles as a language learner and a language expert, and (2) contribute towards elaborating and extending topical talk.

Initiating main topic through telling questions

Excerpt 1 illuminates a typical topic initiation practice in this conversation-for-learning session. The reader will notice that the topic of the conversation is the student's experience with her home stay family in Morocco. First, Zaid (referred to as Z in the excerpts), the L1 Arabic conversation partner, offered a first-pair part initiation of the topic by asking about the student's experience with her host family (line 1). Then the student, Nour (referred to as N in the

excerpts), in a second-pair part (lines 2-31), responds to the question by providing a telling about her experience and how she felt while living with the family. And finally, Zaid offers an assessment of the content of Nour's telling through *jamiil* 'awesome' and *mumtaaz* 'excellent,' which can work as a sequence-closing third to terminate the sequence (Schegloff, 2007).

Excerpt 1

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 1   Z:   kayfa kaanat  tajrubatukii     maʕ   al-ʕaaʔilah?
           How    was   your experience  with  the family?
 2   N:   tajrubatii   kaanat mizyyaanah (.) ħilwah bizzaaf
           my experience was      good          really good
 3        uhm maa >kaanš< ʕindii ʔayy ʔax >ʔaw ʔuxt<  fii ʔamriika,
               I did not have    a brother or a sister in   the US
 4        uhm (.) ↓wa kaan ʕindii ʔuxtayn wa ↑ʔax waaħid,
                   and I had two sisters  and a brother ((in Morocco))
 5        wa haadhaa (.)  kaan tajribah (.) jadiidah lii
           and this was a new experience for me
 6        wa (.) kaan >ʕindii< zamiilatii
           and       I had      my roommate
 7        Wa (.) haaða ʔayḏan ↑kaan tajruba jadiidah.
           and    this was also a new experience
 8        ↓wa laakin uhm
           and  but
                       +looks down

 9        uhm (3.0)
           +looks aside
10        °it's li::ke my favorite thing°
11        uhm (1.0) juzʔii al-mufaḍḍal
                     my favorite thing
12        ((looks back at Zaid))
13        fii   at-tajrubah   kaanat uhm (.)
           in    the experience  was
14        kaanat yaʕnii (.) ↑ʔaṣbaħat al-ʕaaʔilah
           it was like       the family became
15        miθl ʕaaʔilatii al-ħaqiiqiyyah fii ↑mirikaan
           like  my real family in the US
16        uhm (1.0) yaʕnii ↑daaʔiman ʕindamaa rajaʕt,
                     like  whenever I came back
17        uhm (.) min aṣ-ṣaf ʔilaa al-bayt,
                   from class to the house
18        natakallam    ʕan  yawmii uhm (2.0)
           we would talk about my day
19        wa:: ʔasʔilat ʔummi al-maɣribyyiah uhm
           and   my Moroccan mother's questions
20        ↑kayfaaš:: kaan el-yawm,
           how        was  the day?
21        kayfaaš:: kaan al-duruus
           How       were classes?
22        wa maaðaa taʕallamtii fii ↓ad-dars
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            and what  did you learn in class?
23          wa:: maaðaa kaanat ad-duruus fii:: ↑haaðihi as-simaanah?
            and  what  were the topics          this    week?
24          yaʕnii (.) miθl ʔummii fii mirikaan tasʔal ↑nafs al-ʔašyyaa?
            so same things that my mom in the US would ask about
25          wa haaðaa kaan mumtiʕ.
            and this was like exciting
26          wa liðaalik uhm (.) lam ʔašʕur bil-
            so therefore      I didn't feel any-
27          is (.) is it (.) <↑ɣurbah?>
                            homesickness?
28          is it like homesickness?
                  +looks at Zaid
29    Z:    naʕam.
            yes
30    N:    yaʕnii lam ʔašʕur bi al-ɣurbah ʔabadan
            like   I didn't feel homesick at all
31          ↑bisabab ʕaaʔilatii.
            because of my family
32    Z:    jamiil (.) mumtaaz.
            awesome    excellent
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A more detailed examination of this excerpt, however, demonstrates that the student's expanded discourse of multi-unit turn includes repair work that involves embodied resources, and multilingual practices that momentarily put topical talk on hold. In line 1, Zaid is projecting the role of the "interaction manager" who is the expert that can proffer a topic through asking the questions and keeping the interaction going (Kasper, 2004; Kasper & Kim, 2015). Nour (the learner) is assuming the role of the learner and, therefore, follows her L1 Arabic conversation partner's lead, and aligns with his request by providing a detailed relevant answer to his question about her experience with the host family. Such categorical membership in this context (i.e., conversation-for-learning) is the default throughout the period of the conversation session, as is also documented in previous studies on conversation-for-learning (e.g., Al Masaeed, 2016, 2018, 2020, 2023; Hauser, 2003, 2008; Kasper, 2004; Kasper & Kim, 2015). This interaction shows a sequencing practice for topic initiation and topic management (Wong &Waring, 2010, pp.56-57). There seems to be a mutual understanding between the two interactants of the nature of this type of speaking session: It is for the student to practice her Arabic. Therefore, topic initiation is done through a telling question rather than a specifying question (Thompson, Fox, & Couper-Kuhlen, 2015). This is evidenced from (1) the conversation partner's limited talk (line 1), and (2) the student's claim of the floor and her multi-unit turn to elaborate on her answer to the conversation partner's question (lines 2-28). In so doing, Nour's experience with her host family in Morocco is the main topic or topic-as-script.

In addition, the learner's multi-unit-turn response exhibits a repair segment (8-12) and a repair sequence (27-29). Those two repair practices demonstrate how topic-as-script (topical talk) is put on hold due to the initiation of two types of repair (i.e., topic-as-action) that employed embodied and multilingual practices. In lines 2-7, Nour is describing her experience with her family, but lines 8-12 exhibit an interesting repair segment. In line 8, she uses the hesitation marker *uhm* and looks down, and then uses another *uhm* followed by a three-second pause while looking aside (line 9), which can be read as entering a word search. At line 10 Nour utilizes her first language (English) to produce °*it's like my favorite thing*° in a sotto voce delivery, which is part of the repair segment that is solved through providing the Arabic equivalent after her employment of *uhm* and a 1-second pause in line 11; and in line 12 she looks back at Zaid to indicate the end of her word search through a successful self-initiated self-repair. Nour's gaze shift (looking down instead of at Zaid) was co-oriented to as not inviting a candidate solution. This is evidenced from her continuous attempt to solve the word search, and by Zaid's lack of attempt to interject to complete the repair. This repair segment also demonstrates the interlocutors' mutual orientation to the nature of the speaking activity as a speaking practice event with the goal of giving the learner the opportunity to practice her L2. Therefore, Zaid did not seem to feel the urge to provide her with a candidate translation for her English utterance despite her use of *uhm* and the 1-second pause in line 11.

The repair sequence (lines 27-29) is different from the previous repair segment in the sense that Nour seems to orient to Zaid as the L2 expert that she (as language learner) can rely on for metalinguistic assistance, if need be. This is done through her employment of a yes-no question (is (.) is it (.) <↑ɣurbah?>) that is structured in a multilingual manner where she starts it in English and then completes it with a candidate lexicon in Arabic, her L2. This is followed by a repetition (and insertion of *like*) of the question completely in English this time (line 28) while gazing at Zaid. In so doing, Nour shifts orientation from topical talk to L2 learning. With the question, she orients to Zaid as the L2 expert and herself as L2 speaker learner. Zaid orients to these interactional practices (i.e., the repetition of the question, the use of English, and the eye gaze) as a direct request for confirmation of the correct candidate word; consequently, he responds with *yes* in line 29. Nour then uses that word in her next line and continues her topical talk (i.e., evaluation of her experience with the host family in Morocco) signaling the end of this repair sequence.

So, it seems from those two repair practices that there is a shift from topic-as-script to topic-as-action in order to solve word searches. This is done through two practices of repair in this excerpt: Self-initiated self-repair and self-initiated other-repair. In the first, the learner indicates her will to pursue self-repair alone through avoiding a direct request for assistance and through

disengaging her eye gaze (looking down and aside) (Goodwin, 1986; van Compernolle, 2017). Self-initiated other-repair, on the other hand, is achieved through a direct request of assistance that is coupled with eye gaze to indicate invitation to the conversation partner to provide assistance. Again, once repair is achieved, the learner resumes her topical talk (30-31), and then the conversation partner closes the main sequence by providing an assessment of the content of the telling in the learner's response to his initial topical question (i.e., topic-as-script) in line 1.

Gradual shift from one aspect of the main topic to the next: telling vs. specifying questions

Excerpt 2 next demonstrates how topic is managed through shifting focus to another aspect of the same topic to be the new focus of the conversation through another telling question. After Zaid provides his evaluation of Nour's recount of her experience with the host family in third turn (line 32) in the previous excerpt, he stays on topic to pursue another aspect of her experience through asking her about the kinds of activities she did with them (line 33). This gradual shift from one aspect of the topic to the next is also known as *stepwise topic shift* in the CA literature (see e.g., Sacks, 1992; Wong & Warring, 2010). Once again, Nour shows her alignment with this role through responding to his request and providing a related answer in lines 34-58.

Excerpt 2

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33  Z:    uhm (.) maa hiya al-ʔanšiṭah al-lati ʕamaltiihaa maʕ al-
           ʕaaʔilah?
                        what are the activities you did with your family?
34  N:    uhm fii al-masaaʔ šaahattu uhm ʔaflaam hindiyyah
                in the evenings I watched Indian Movies
35        ↑maʕ >ʔuxtii al-maɣribiyyah< liʔannahuu (1.3)
           with my Moroccan sister because
36        yaʕnii (.) al-ʔaflaam al-hindiyyah mašhuurah,
           like Indian movies are popular
37        mašhuurah >bizzaaf< fii al-maɣrib.
           very popular in Morocco
38        wa uhm ʔaḥyaanan ʕindamaa ↑laa yakuun ↑hunaak subtitles
           and      sometimes  when     there are no
39        ʔutarjim min al-luɣa >al-hindiyyah< ʔilaa al-luɣah al-
           ʕarabiyyah
                I would translate from Hindi to Arabic
40        wa  haaðaa  kaan  mumtiʕ  ↑laha  wa  kaan uhm uhm
           and this    was  good   for her and it was
41        mufiid lii liʔannii ʔasma- ʔanaa ʔumaaris bi
           useful for me because I hea- I practice with
42        is it ↑ʔumaaris bi? like practice?
                I practice with?
43  Z:    ʔumaaris.
44  N:    ↑ʔumaaris at-tarjamah min ʔaiy luɣaat ʔuxra
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            I practice translation from any other languages
45          ?ila al-ʕarabiyyah.
            to Arabic
46          wa ʕindamaa er- wa ↑?ayḍan yawm al-ʕiid ((a Muslim Holiday))
            and when oh and also during the Eid day
47          saafarnaa ?ilaa bayt xaalatii al-maɣribiyyah
            we travelled to my Moroccan Aunt's house
48          uhm ((looks aside))
49          uhm xaarij    ad-daar al-bayḍaa? ((Casablanca)).
                outside   Casablanca
50   Z:     mhm (.) ↑xaarij ad-daar al-bayḍaa??=
                    outside Casablanca?
51   N:     =xaarij ad-daar al-bayḍaa?
            outside   Casablanca
52          like suburbs
53   Z:     naʕam (.) fii uhm (1.0) ḍawaaḥii
            yes       in           suburbs
54   N:     ḍawaaḥii ḍawaaḥii=
            suburbs suburbs
55   Z:     =naquul ḍaaḥyah=
            we say suburb
56   N:     =ḍaaḥyah
            suburb
57   Z:     wa ḍawaaḥii=
            and suburbs
58   N:     =ḍawaaḥii ad-daar al-bayḍaa?
            suburbs of Casablanca
59   Z:     ad-daar al-bayḍaa?
            Casablanca
                  +nods
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The reader will note that the repair sequence in lines 42-44 demonstrates a self-initiated other-repair (Schegloff, Jefferson, & Sacks, 1977). At line 42, Nour initiates repair targeting *?umaaris bi* (line 41) through a yes-no-question format to request Zaid's confirmation for whether she can use the preposition *bi-* 'with' after the verb *?umaaris* 'to practice,' following that with a translation of the verb in English to be clear, a practice that she engaged in in line 28 in the previous excerpt. In line 43, Zaid responds to this request not with yes or no as in the previous sequence in line 29, but through providing Nour with the correct use of the verb *?umaaris* (indicating that there is no need for bi) without proffering any metalinguistic explanation. Nour accepts this plug-in and appropriates it in her next turn to resume her topical talk (line 44). This interactional practice engenders a language learning opportunity that is made possible through putting the ongoing sequence (topic-as-script) on pause while solving Nour's word search.

Another type of repair sequence that puts the ongoing topical talk on pause takes place in lines 50-59. Zaid's other-initiated repair through repeating the trouble-source *xaarij ad-daar al-bayḍaa?* with a rising intonation in line 50 indicates his lack of understanding of what Nour

meant by visiting her Moroccan aunt "outside Casablanca." In lines 51-52, Nour responds through repeating the utterance in question and providing explanation of what she meant in English (*like suburbs)* as her way of completing the repair. In the next line, Zaid shows his understanding through providing the Arabic word *ḍawaaḥii* for 'suburbs.' Nour accepts this proffered plug-in and repeats it twice in line 54 to indicate a closure of this repair sequence. However, Zaid does not leave it there like he did in previous sequences, but rather latches his turn onto Nour's to expand his metalinguistic assistance by providing Nour with =*naquul ḍaaḥyah=* 'we say suburb' the singular form of the word. Latching her turn onto Zaid's, Nour (line 56) repeats the singular form (suburb). Zaid (line 57) goes on to add *wa ḍawaaḥii* 'and suburbs.' To close this sequence, Nour shows her grasp of the new word through appropriating it in line 58, to which Zaid repeats the last part of her turn and nods in line 59 indicating his acceptance of the sequence closure.

This repair sequence elucidates the ways in which the ongoing topic is shifted through engaging in repair practices and the use of multilingual resources to maintain mutual understanding in talk-in-interaction and how the participants orient to the conversational event as a language learning activity in which they have a mutual understanding of their roles as a language learner and a language expert. In this vein, ongoing topical talk is momentarily put on hold till the repair sequence (which engenders a learning opportunity) is taken care of.

Following the closing of the previous repair sequence that took place towards the end of Nour's response to Zaid's question regarding the activities she did with her family, Zaid starts a sequence of specifying questions (lines 60-68). These questions were about Nour's city of residence, the school she was studying at, and when and where she started learning Arabic, as can be seen in Excerpt 3.

Excerpt 3
```
60      wa fii ?ay madiinah kuntii?
        and which city were you in?
61  N:  uhm (.) sakantu fii ↑Meknes
                   I lived  in  Meknes
62  Z:  mhm wa (1.0) fii ?ay madrasah darastii al-luɣah al-ʕarabiyyah?=
            and         in which school did you study Arabic?
63  N:  =darastu fii:: ((name of school omitted))
        I studied at
64  Z:  Hilu (.) m- mata  wa ?ayn ↑bda?tii diraasat al-ʕarabiyyah?
        cool       and when and where did you start learning Arabic?
65  N:  bada?tu diraasat al-luɣah al-ʕarabiyyah munðu θalaaθ sanawaat,
        I started learning Arabic three years ago
66      fii jaamiʕat ((name of School omitted))
        at the university
67  Z:  naʕam (.) ?antii:: (.) bada?tii hunaa?=
```

```
            ok          you         started   here?
 68  N:    =naʕam.
            yes
```

Nour's answers are formatted in what would seem to be the default manner for a specifying question-word interrogative, in contrast to a telling question (Thompson et al., 2015). The questions are asking for specific pieces of information. Therefore, Nour does not seem to orient to these serial questions as the type of questions that require elaborate responses like the previous ones in Excerpts 1 and 2. Zaid also does not seem to be interested in pursuing an elaborate answer for his questions either. This serial questioning seems to put the topic focus (i.e., the activities she did with the family) on hold. Consequently, as Excerpt 4 next shows, Zaid moves on to engage in another topic shift through bringing this sequence to closure via providing an assessment (*mumtaaz* 'excellent') of Nour's responses, and shifting topic focus to go back to activities Nour did with her Moroccan host family.

Excerpt 4
```
 69  Z:    mumtaaz (.) uhm maaða  faʕaltum      fii: al:-ʕiid?
            excellent           what did you all do during Eid?
 70  N:    uhm (.) ↑faqaṭ  saafarnaa ʔilaa ad-daar al-bayḍaaʔ wa uhm
                         we just traveled  to    Casablanca        and
 71        ((looking aside))
 72        ↑how do you say met? Like uhm (1.2)
 73        istaqaabalt? ((wrong word)) uhm like=
            +looks back at Zaid
 74  Z:    =maa fii ista-
            There is no ista-
 75        (2.0)
 76  N:    like I met with
 77  Z:    qaabalt
            I met
 78  N:    ↑qaabalt ok yeah.
            I met
 79        qaabalt maʕ  xaal- uhm (1.0) zawj xaalatii al-maɣribiyyah
            I met   with uncle-        my Moroccan aunt's husband
 80        wa ʔiben xaalatii al-maɣribiyyah
            and my Moroccan aunt's son
 81        wa huwa ʔustaað al- °math=°
            and he's a teacher of the-
                                +looks aside
                                +Z looks down
 82        muẓaaharaat?
            Protests
            +looks back at Zaid
 83  Z:    muẓaaharaat.
            Protests
            +Zaid looks up towards Nour
```

```
84  N:    muẓaaharaat (.) is it?
          +tilts head back looking at Zaid
85        muẓaaharaat?
86  Z:    muẓaaharaat yaʕnii::
          protests like…
87  N:    math
88  Z:    ri- ↑riyyaaḍiyyaat
                 math
89  N:    riyyaaḍiyyaat oh my God
                 +looks down and puts hands on face
90        yeah huwa ʔustaað ar-riyyaaḍiyyaat fii ad-daar al-bayḍaa?
                 he is a math teacher in Casablanca
91  Z:    naʕam.
          yes
```

In line 69 Zaid employs a stepwise technique again to shift topic focus through providing an assessment of what has been talked about thus far, and asking Nour about what she did during the Eid day, which was mentioned in line 46 in Excerpt 2 as part of the activities she did with her host family. In so doing, Zaid brings this aspect of the main topic to be the new focus of their topical talk. Nour starts her turn to talk about what she did on the Eid day by stating that they went to Casablanca and as she attempts to add more information, she produces the hesitation marker *uhm* at the end of line 70 and looks aside in line 71, which signals disengaging from the social interaction and entering a word search. In line 72, while still looking aside, she employs English to produce the question *how do you say met?* That immediately followed by *like* and *hum*, which means she is still working on solving this word search alone. However, she shifts her gaze back at Zaid in line 73 to produce *istaqaabalt* in a rising intonation as a candidate word for *met*. At this time, Zaid orients to this as a call for him to intervene, so he responds with *maa fii ista- 'there is no ista-'* (i.e., ista- is not part of the word). The 2-second silence that follows this feedback in line 75 shows that it is not immediately accepted by Nour as we have seen in previous cases above. Nour's lack of acceptance is more evidenced via her expansion on what she was really looking for but again in English by stating *Like I met with* in line 76. Zaid produces the correct *qaabalt 'I met'* this time. It seems that Zaid's feedback through telling Nour to drop the ista- part of the candidate utterance in line 74 is not working; thus, he opts to provide her with the correct word, which gets accepted by Nour with no hesitation in line 78 through repeating the word and producing the packaged receipt tokens *ok yeah* that also works as a signal to closing this repair sequence to go back to addressing the main topic of the conversation. This is also more evidenced in the next line (79) where Nour appropriates this proffered plug-in in her multi-unit turn (extended discourse) elaborating on what she did with her host family during Eid.

Once again, the orientation of the interlocutors towards their roles in this speaking activity as an L2 learner and an L1 expert is on tap and can be invoked whenever needed throughout the conversation. In fact, this practice is displayed again through another repair sequence that expands over several turns through lines 81-90: Nour is talking about her trip to Casablanca with her family on the day of Eid and the people they visited there. Among the people she talked to is her Moroccan aunt's son. In line 81, Nour wants to provide more information about the aunt's son by stating *wa huwa ʔustaað al-* 'and he is a teacher of the-' and then looks aside (while Zaid directs his gaze down) and in a sotto voce manner employs English to produce 'math' (which can be heard as self-talk) but then comes up with *muẓaaharaat* 'protests' with a rising intonation as a candidate word in Arabic, and shifts her eye gaze back towards Zaid, indicating a request for his confirmation of the word. Zaid, in line 83, repeats the word *muẓaaharaat* as and looks at Nour. Nour repeats the word but does not accept the confirmation; she goes on to question its appropriateness via the question *is it muẓaaharaat*, coupled with tilting her head back and looking at Zaid (lines 84-85). This rejection engenders further expansion to maintain intersubjectivity. So Zaid, at this point, produces the utterance *muẓaaharaat yaʕnii::*, which can be translated as 'protests like…' with lengthening the last vowel of the word *yaʕnii:* to invite Nour to elaborate on the meaning she is looking for. Nour aligns with this request by providing the word *math* in line 87. Zaid then, in line 88, provides the Arabic word *riyyaaḍiyyaat* for math as the candidate word that Nour is looking for. Nour accepts it right away (line 89) and puts her hands on her face and produces the expression *oh my God* in English so as to stress that she is embarrassed to have confused the two words. This is evidenced in her next line (90) when she says *yeah* and then appropriates the new word in the rest of the turn to describe the aunt's son as a math teacher.

Of interest here is Zaid's wrong confirmation of the word candidate that Nour put forward, and Nour's challenge of Zaid's confirmation. It seems that when Zaid was looking down, he disengaged from the social interaction and, therefore, missed the part where Nour was talking about the aunt's son, especially the part where she, in a lower voice, used the English word math in line 80. Had he heard the word math in that context, there is a good chance he would have rejected the candidate solution *muẓaaharaat* for math. Nour's rejection of his confirmation merits attention as she usually does not challenge Zaid's confirmation since he is the language expert. This point demonstrates that categorical membership is dynamic and that speakers can challenge the status quo when needed to achieve intersubjectivity in talk-in-interaction. This is done through the use of English to question whether Zaid understands what word she is looking for.

To summarize, the previous excerpts have demonstrated that it is telling questions rather than serial questioning sequences that engender expanded discourse. Moreover, the excerpt showed how the participants had to engage in repair sequences (topic-as-action) to take care of repair work that put topical talk on hold. In the last excerpt next, we examine how telling questions might provide opportunities for the learner to elaborate and extend topical talk.

Extending current main topic through a telling response

So far, we have seen how the main topic was initiated (Excerpt 1) and shifted (Excerpts 2 and 4) through telling questions by Zaid as the interaction manager. We have also seen that Nour's responses to these types of questions involve repair segments and sequences that tend to put topical talk on hold till repair is completed. Excerpt 5 next highlights how the advanced learner seems to extend the current main topic (i.e., activities she did with her family during Eid) through new turn construction units (TCUs) in lines 92, 104, and 107, which also involve repair work.

Excerpt 5

```
92 N:    wa .hh ʔayḍan mšiina li(h)-daaxil al-madiinah,
         and    also we went       inside the city
93       yaʕnii ↑daaxil ad-daar al-bayḍaa?
         like    inside    Casablanca
94       li uhm
         for
          +looks aside
95       li taswiiq  ʔaw uhm at-tasawwuq?
         for marketing or      shopping?
         +looks back at Zaid
96 Z:    naʕam.
         yes
97 N:    at-tasawwuq li-yawm al-ʕiid uhm mumkin malaabis
         shopping for the Eid maybe clothes
98       ʔaw uhm uhm
         or
             +looks aside
99       ((looks at Zaid)) jewelry?
100 Z:   mujawharaat.
         jewelry
101 N:   is it?
         +looks aside with hands on lips and then looks upward
102 Z:   ziinah, uhm ↑ḥilii wa mujawharaat ((synonyms for jewelry))
103 N:   OK malaabis wa mujawharaat.
            clothes and jewelry.
         +nods
104      uhm wa fii yawm al-ʕiid faqaṭ yaʕnii ʔakalna,
         and on the Eid day we like just ate
105      ḥalawyyaat kaθiirah  wa:: ʔayḍan,
         a lot of sweets       and  also
```

```
106        šifnaa >ʔaflaam hindiyyah> wa nʕisna.
           we watched Indian movies, and then went to sleep
107        wa (.) ʔayḍan kaan hunaaka uhm (2.5) šayʔ θaqaafii  miθl
           and    also there was            something cultural like
108        taqliidii  fii aθ-θaqaafah al-maɣribiyyah (.) yaʕnii
           traditional in the Moroccan culture       like
109        al-banaat uhm (1.5) talbas al-banaat ḥawaayij taqliidiyyah,
           the girls          the girls wear traditional clothes
110        uhm miθl ḥawaayij ↑ʕurs ↓maɣribii
              like a Moroccan wedding clothes
111        wa uhm (1.0) taʔxuð al-ḥinna ʕala al-yad
           and         they get Henna on their hands
112        wa uhm haaðaa ʕaadatan  li (.) ↑al-banaat aṣ-ṣaɣiirah
           and     this is usually for      little girls
113        wa laakin ʔummii al-maɣribiyya qaalat lii wa (.) li-zamiilatii
            but my Moroccan mother said to me and to my roommate
114        yaʕnii >tafaḍḍaluu<
           like go ahead
                +go ahead hand gesture
115        wa yaʕnii (.) labasnaa nafs al- al-ḥawaayij wa ↑ʔaxaðnaa ṣuwar=

           so we wore    the same clothes and took pictures
116  Z:    ah fiʕlan?
           oh really?
117  N:    miθl al-ʕaruus al::-maɣribiyyah so.
           like a Moroccan bride
                            +shrugs
118  Z:    mhm mumttaz (.) ((continues))
              excellent
```

As noted earlier, at the end of Excerpt 4, Nour and Zaid projected a closure to a repair sequence on what kind of job her Moroccan aunt's son did (i.e., a math teacher). Nour was able to take the metalinguistic plug-in that Zaid provided her with and appropriate it in her next turn, to which Zaid responded with *naʕam* 'yes' to confirm her correct use of the metalinguistic plug-in and signal acceptance of her projection to close the repair sequence. Therefore, Nour goes on to extend the telling. This is evidenced from the turn-initial *wa ʔayḍan* 'and also' in line 92 to elaborate on the topic through stating that *wa ʔayḍan mšiina li-daaxil al-madiinah* 'and also we went inside the city.' This addition is topic-related since it addresses yet another activity that she did with her family during Eid, which is shopping in the city of Casablanca (92-103). During this sequence, Nour again engages in two types of repair. The first is a self-initiated self-repair to solve a word-search for "shopping" (lines 94-97), while the second is self-initiated other-repair to solve a word-search for "jewelry" (lines 98-103).

While the first repair sequence shows how an advanced learner is capable of engaging in a successful self-repair, the next sequence (second repair) merits special attention because it shows yet another example of when Nour challenges the conversation partner's proffer of the

candidate word to solve her word-search for "jewelry." The reader will note that, in lines 98-99, Nour enters a word search that is projected through the use of the hesitation marker uhm twice while looking aside in between before she shifts her gaze back at Zaid and employs English to produce the word jewelry with a rising intonation. Zaid in the next line (100) orients to this as a request for a metalinguistic assistance and, consequently, provides her with the Arabic word *mujawharaat* as a candidate solution. Nour does not accept this metalingual plug-in right away in line 101 and close the sequence; but rather she shifts her gaze to the side questioning the appropriateness of the candidate solution through the question format *is it* and places hands on lips while looking upward with a thinking face. Reading this as a dissatisfaction with his metalinguistic plug-in, Zaid goes on to proffer the following synonyms *ziinah, uhm ḥilii wa mujawharaat* at line 102 to solve Nour's word-search. Nour, at this point, appropriates this proffered plug-in through the agreement token *OK* along with a nod and appropriating the word *mujawharaat* in her topical talk in line 103, bringing this expanded word search sequence to closure. This epistemic challenge/misalignment shows how interactants negotiate categorical memberships (i.e., language learner vs. language expert) that come with the nature of this institutional speaking activity. Nour is an advanced L2 learner who just came back from Morocco after spending the summer there, and it is possible that she would have another word in her linguistic repertoire, although this is not supported in the current interaction.

Line 103 also shows Nour's projection of sequence closing through her falling intonation upon completing her delivery of the news of going shopping for clothes and jewelry for the Eid. But in line 104, after using the hesitation marker *uhm*, Nour adds another increment to the current topic in a similar manner to the previous increment she did in line 92. The increment this time (lines 104-106) is to talk about what she did on the Eid day, rather than what she did during the Eid period. To be more specific, Nour mentions eating a lot of dessert (105), watching Indian movies, and going to sleep (106). The falling intonation delivery of *wa nʕisna* 'and we went to sleep' as the last activity of what she did on the Eid day projects sequence closing. But Nour extends the topic once again through adding a third increment that highlights her engagement in wearing traditional clothes that girls specifically wear during Moroccan weddings (107-115). In line 116, Zaid responds to this with the news mark *ah fiʕlan* 'oh really?' with a slightly rising intonation, which can be seen as an invitation for elaboration (Wong & Waring, 2010). Nour responds to this through adding a short elaboration by stating *mithl al-ʕaruus al::-maghribiyyah* 'like the Moroccan bride' followed by a shrug and the use of the stand-alone "so" (Raymond, 2004) to signal her will to bring the sequence to closure. In the last line of this Excerpt (118), Zaid accepts this signal for closing the sequence through producing *mhm mumtaaz* 'mhm

excellent' as an assessment of the content of Nour's response as a telling about the activities she did during the Eid.

Discussion and Conclusion

This study adopted a single-episode analysis (Hutchby & Woofitt, 1998: Schegloff, 1987) to demonstrate that (1) it is the speaking partner's telling questions that seem to generate the main topic; and (2) it is student's responses to the telling questions, rather than specifying questions, that tend to engender expanded discourse of multi-unit turn that involves repair practices that are mainly carried out through embodied and multilingual resources. Additionally, while these repair practices tend to momentarily put topical talk on hold, they (a) create learning opportunities through participants' orientations to their roles as a language learner and a language expert, and (b) contribute towards elaborating and extending topical talk. Therefore, this study has substantial implications for the emerging area of CA-informed research to further our understanding of effective language learning practices in the current context (i.e., conversation-for-learning).

The analysis has demonstrated how a topic is initiated through a telling question (Thompson et al., 2015) by the speaking partner, and expanded through the learner's telling response. This is interactionally achieved in the following manner: Zaid (the conversation partner) introduces a new topic through a question about Nour's experience with her host family; Nour, in turn, shows acceptance through providing a related response to which Zaid produces an assessment of the content of the telling to signal sequence closure. The second section illuminates the gradual shift from one aspect of the main topic to the next, also referred to as stepwise topic shift (Sacks, 1992; Wong & Warring, 2010). Zaid does this (in Excerpts 2 and 4) by staying on topic to pursue another aspect of Nour's experience with her host family in Morocco: the kinds of activities she did with the family in general and during Eid in particular. And the final section focused on how the learner utilized new TCUs in lines 92, 104, and 107 for extending current topic as part of her telling response (Excerpt 5).

From a bird's-eye view, the reader would see that the entire interaction is about the learner's experience with her host family during her study abroad in Morocco (the main topic of the episode). It shows the general structure of this dyadic conversation-for-learning session involving an advanced learner, and how the topic is managed on the surface. But the fine-grained analysis elucidates several insights about this interaction. While both participants orient to Zaid's role as the interaction manager (Kasper & Kim, 2015), there seems to be a mutual

understanding that it is the learner who can hold the floor as much as possible to focus on topical talk unless progressivity is compromised or there shows a need for linguistic assistance.

Additionally, since the nature of this interaction does not seem to show a competition to the floor, the learner tends to display a preference for pursuing self-repair alone through shifting her eye gaze down and aside to avoid a direct request for linguistic assistance. But whenever Nour seems not to be able to complete self-repair, other-repair is indicated by Nour through a direct request of assistance that is coupled with eye gaze at Zaid. One interactional practice to achieve and maintain intersubjectivity is the employment of participants' entire linguistic repertoire, which has been instrumental in repair practices in this study. In so doing, the interactants' orientation to their roles as a language learner and a language expert is omnirelevant throughout their interaction. Furthermore, having no competition to the floor gives the learner more time to elaborate on topical talk through extending her telling response.

Consequently, it is through these interactional practices and participants' orientations that topical talk is comanaged to create opportunities for learning. Conversations-for-learning is "a concrete, dynamic activity, co-constructed through participants' agency and their joint and coordinated action" (Kasper, 2004, p. 553); and it is through the detailed scrutiny that we are able to illuminate pedagogical insights regarding the role of telling questions and telling responses and how they allow for repair work, and regarding participants' orientations in managing topic in such a nonformal institutional L2 learning context. The common sense belief that L2 learning evolves out of conversation should be founded on the understanding of how interaction is constantly driven by an effort to achieve and maintain intersubjectivity.

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APPENDIX A: transcription notations (adapted from Jefferson, 2004)

.	final falling intonation
?	rising intonation
,	continuing intonation
::	prolonging of sound
<u>w</u>ord	stress
<u>Wo</u>rd	The more underlining, the greater the stress
WORD	loud speech
◦word◦	quiet speech
↑word	raised pitch
↓word	lowered pitch
>word<	quicker speech
<word>	slowed speech
=	latch or contiguous utterances of the same speaker
(2.5)	length of a silence in tenths of a second
(.)	untimed perceptible pause within a turn
((looks aside))	transcriptionist comment
+	this plus sign marks the onset of a non-verbal action (e.g., shift of gaze, pointing)

Appendix B: transliteration conventions (Adapted from Alhawary 2018)

Arabic Sound	Transcription Symbol
ب	b
ت	t
ث	θ
ج	j
ح	ḥ
خ	x
د	d
ذ	ð
ر	r
ز	z
س	s
ش	š
ص	ṣ
ض	ḍ
ط	ṭ
ظ	ẓ

ع	ʕ
غ	γ
ف	f
ق	q
ك	k
ل	l
م	m
ن	n
ه	h
و	w
ي	y
ء	ʔ (glottal stop)
ّ	consonant double lettering
Short vowels:	
َ	a
ِ	i
ُ	u
Long vowels:	
ا	aa
و	uu
ي	ii
Diphthongs/Monophthongs:	
َو	aw
َيْ	ay