Plurilingual orientations to perceived linguistic asymmetry in NS/NNS interactions

A conversation analytic study of native speaker repair strategies

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26th April 2021

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Abstract

Existing research into plurilingual competence is primarily concerned with understanding speaker attitudes, language acquisition and developing measurement instruments such as the plurilingual and pluricultural competence (PPC) scale (Galante, 2020). Due to an absence of Conversation Analysis (CA) studies into the phenomenon of individual plurilingualism, little is known about its interactional consequences or its manifestation in conversational activities. This research explores the relationship between plurilingualism and conversational repair, an activity that can be enacted on one's own talk (self-repair) or on the talk of another (other-repair). Schleghoff et al. (1977) note that the face-threatening nature of repair gives rise to a preference for self-repair in almost all contexts. However, Norrick (1991) finds that certain speaker dynamics – such as those in teacher/student or native/non-native speaker configurations – can disrupt this organization of repair. This study takes 11 conversations between native and non-native speakers of English as its CA corpus, where the 11 native speakers represent varied PPC scores. The study looks for evidence of repair preferences indexing speaker orientations to linguistic power asymmetries. Analysis reveals that both more and less plurilingual native speakers display a preference for self-repair in conversations with non-native speakers, although native speakers who score higher on the PPC scale tend to orient to the NNS status of their interlocutor and employ a pedagogical stance more readily than those who score lower on the PPC scale.

Keywords: Conversation analysis, repair, native/non-native interaction, plurilingualism, self- vs. other-repair

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1 Introduction

Conversations between native speakers (NS) and non-native speakers (NNS) of a given language have frequently been taken as the unit of study in conversation analysis research. Interest in this particular speaker configuration lies not only in the prevalence of NS/NNS interactions in an era of rapid globalisation, but often in the inherent asymmetry at the heart of the interaction: the asymmetry of speakers' linguistic repertoires. As such, it has traditionally been common to see speakers positioned as incompetent (NNS) versus competent (NS) interlocutor, particularly in the context of second language acquisition (SLA) research that tends to monolingual, native speaker norms. However, the application of Hymes' (1972) sociolinguistic perspective gives rise to a new conceptualisation of both NNS and NS as competent social actors with diverse communicative repertoires that they draw on to participate in equally diverse interactions (Galante, 2020). Such a rethinking allows research to escape "the inadequacy of rigid dichotomies" (centre/periphery, coloniser/colonised, NS/NNS) that globalisation is often accused of reinforcing (Mudimbe-Boyi, 2012, p. xiii). This dynamic approach to identity is increasingly taken up by researchers to investigate the ways in which certain aspects of speaker identities become relevant through talk (Bolden, 2012; Dings, 2012; Kurhila, 2001; Tudini & Liddicoat, 2013).

One aspect of identity that is yet to be explored in terms of its interactional relevance is the linguistic profile of any given interlocutor, particularly that of the NS. While the NNS in any interaction is by definition plurilingual, the language skills of the NS are not taken into account. Yet, these skills are highly likely to be relevant in the unfolding of interaction, particularly in light of the definition of plurilingual competence, which is "the ability to use languages for the purposes of communication and to take part in intercultural interaction" (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 168). Here, a distinction is made between multilingualism and plurilingualism, where multilingualism describes the social norm and plurilingualism

individual use of two or more languages (Galante, 2020). Canagarajah (2009), whose work centres on multilingual South Asian communities, suggests that plurilingual communication is characterised by flexibility, unpredictably and cooperation. In practice this can involve the use of the *let it pass* principle or the mutual adoption of ungrammatical forms, which the plurilingual employs to ensure the smooth continuation of conversation, rather than correct the other's speech according to a set of norms. The possession of plurilingual competence may therefore mark the NS orientation to the non-native status of their interlocutor, as manifested in conversational activities such as repair.

Repair is a strategy used to deal with problems in speaking, hearing and understanding and thereby ensure mutual understanding (Schleghoff et al., 1977). As a conversational activity, it plays an important role in revealing asymmetries in conversation, through the forms that it takes. While Schleghoff et al. (1977) find a preference for repair enacted by the speaker herself (self-repair) in conversations between native speakers, Norrick (1991) finds that asymmetric relationships, such as parent-child, teacher-student and NS-NNS, do not consistently exhibit this preference; other-repair occurs in such contexts "without any marking of its dispreferred status" (Kurhila, 2001, p. 1087). As such, repair patterns are likely to display speaker orientations to the NS/NNS dynamic. Indeed, the relationship between repair and NS/NNS identities has been explored in several studies; Dings' (2012) longitudinal study of a Spanish NS and NNS reveals an evolving relationship between correction patterns and speaker orientation to novice/expert identities in conversation, over the course of the NNS' stay abroad. Similarly, Kurhila (2001) considers whether repair patterns are a function of asymmetrical language repertoires in NS/NNS interactions. This study examines the degree to which repair patterns are a function of plurilingual competence and the degree to which they render the asymmetry of NS/NNS interactions relevant in online video conversations between NS and NNS participants in English. This relevance may be revealed through the use of different kinds

of repair, in particular self-repair versus other-repair. The research question and sub questions are therefore as follows:

To what extent is the linguistic asymmetry of NS/NNS interactions more or less relevant when the NS is more or less plurilingual?

 I. *To what extent do more and less plurilingual native speakers prefer self-repair over other-repair in NS/NNS interactions?*

 II. *How do more and less plurilingual native speakers respectively use repair strategies to achieve mutual understanding in NS/NNS interactions?*

 III. *To what extent does this use of repair strategies reveal an orientation to the linguistic asymmetry of NS/NNS interactions?*

The study finds that while both more and less plurilingual native speakers display a preference for self-repair in conversations with non-native speakers, native speakers with greater plurilingual competence tend to orient to the NNS status of their interlocutor and to employ a pedagogical stance to a greater extent than those who score lower on the plurilingual competence scale.

2 Theoretical Framework

The following chapter draws on literature related to social action theories of language, repair and (plurilingual) communicative competence to build a theoretical framework for the research project.

2.1 Beyond NS/NNS labels: social actors with plural identities

The categories NS and NNS are increasingly being challenged in SLA research. Liddicoat (2016) concludes that the NS is in fact an ideological product whose political consequences shape interactions by marking out speakers in terms of their legitimacy as

language users, where the NNS is perceived to be a less legitimate language user. The notion of legitimacy is closely related to the native speaker norms upon which language teaching is often based. That language learners (L2s) should aim to communicate in the target language like a native speaker is commonly taken as the default goal, yet this has come to be seen as an ideology with sometimes negative consequences for language learning (Cook, 1999). Cook (1999) argues that L2 learners "should be considered as speakers in their own right", rather than "approximations to monolingual native speakers", with the consequence that students, teachers and other interactants will have a positive image of L2 users, rather than perceiving them as "failed native speakers" (p. 185).

To this end, Firth and Wagner (1997) call for a richer conceptualisation of interlocutor identities, one that does not simply position the NNS as a defective communicator through implicit reference to native speaker norms. Indeed, in another context using a different vehicular language, the roles of NS and NNS could be reversed, and the former NS labelled the defective communicator. Instead, research should leave room for different identities (such as gender, age and nationality) or more complex linguistic identities (such as plurilingual ones) to become relevant throughout the interaction, as two interlocutors seek to achieve mutual understanding. This approach allows researchers to employ useful labels, without applying *a priori* assumptions about their importance in the unfolding of interaction. In Tudini and Liddicoat (2013), for example, interactants are shown to take up the position of expert and novice at different points in conversation. Here, the labels novice and NNS tend to be equated, as are expert and NS, yet there are opportunities for both NS and NNS to assume the role of expert and novice in relation to certain discussion content or through the use of another language. The NNS is, for example, likely to have expertise on certain topics of which the NS has less knowledge. If these topics are broached in conversation, the NNS emerges as expert

at this point in interaction. In this way it can be seen that functional labels such as novice and expert allow for a dynamic, flexible approach to speaker identity.

This movement away from *a priori* categorisation here represents a refocusing on the way in which two interlocutors co-construct meaning in interaction, as social actors. In line with theories of language as social action, the criteria for evaluating language is not seen to be grammaticality, but the degree to which situational requirements are met (Holtgraves, 2013). As social actors, interactants must "know how to translate their intentions into linguistic actions in a particular conversational and social context" (Holtgraves, 2013, p. 180). These actions can thus be characterised as "contributions to a joint enterprise", which are necessarily based upon shared assumptions and mental modelling of the other's contributions (Levinson, 2012). The degree to which participants are able to contribute to this enterprise successfully is conceptualised as communicative competence in various models (Canale & Swain, 1980; Hymes, 1992). Canale and Swain (1980) originally defined a three-dimensional model of communicative competence, which includes grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence and strategic competence. While grammatical competence is understood to include knowledge of lexical items, morphology, syntax, semantics and phonology, sociolinguistic competence is concerned with sociocultural rules and rules governing discourse. Strategic competence allows speakers to deal with communication breakdown or threats to mutual understanding. Revisions and new iterations of this model exist, but its relevance here remains the same: the interactant, whether NS or NNS, is a social actor possessing various competences, which she can employ at different points in conversation as they are required and become relevant.

2.2   From cooperative, monolingual expert to plurilingual actor: NS in action

Plurilingual and pluricultural competence (PPC) is a particular portfolio of communicative competences defined in the Council of Europe's (2001) exposition of the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) as follows:

> Plurilingual and pluricultural competence refers to the ability to use languages for the purposes of communication and to take part in intercultural interaction, where a person, viewed as a social agent, has proficiency, of varying degrees, in several languages and experience of several cultures. This is not seen as the superposition or juxtaposition of distinct competences, but rather as the existence of a complex or even composite competence on which the user may draw. (p. 168)

Following this definition, PPC can be conceptualised as a "multi-dimensional, dynamic and evolving set of continuous variations" (Coste et al., 2009, p. 17), rather than as a fixed category. Jessner (1999) argues that the dynamic nature of plurilingual proficiency is largely related to the metalinguistic awareness of plurilingual speakers, which plays a "central and facilitating role" in acquiring and performing a second or third language (p. 207). This awareness allows them to reflect on their own language use and make comparisons between different language systems.

Based on the above definition, the notion of PPC is highly likely to be relevant to the multilingual, intercultural interactions between NS and NNS. However, while the NS and NNS are, by default, defined by their linguistic capability, this is solely in relation to the vehicular language, which in this study is English. While the NNS is, by definition, plurilingual, the same cannot necessarily be said for the NS, who tends to be characterised as a cooperative, monolingual expert (Firth & Wagner, 1997). The relationship between bilingualism, multilingualism, semilingualism, language loss and the concept of NS is ignored for the most part (Firth and Wagner, 1997). Yet, the possession of PPC is likely to influence the behaviour

of the NS, and the degree to which she can employ her linguistic capital with regard for the situation and interlocutor (Coste et al., 2009).

The consequences of PPC for interaction remain largely unexplored, with some exceptions. Galante (2020) suggests that PPC manifests itself in practices such as translanguaging, intercomprehension and language comparison, which are used with sensitivity to socio-cultural context. Canagarajah (2009) identifies six characteristics of plurilingual communication in English: retention of linguistic distinctiveness, co-construction of intersubjective norms, communication through hybrid codes, consensus-oriented and supportive communication, exploitation of ecology for meaning making, interconnection of language use and language learning. The relative absence of studies investigating plurilingual competence through the lens of Conversation Analysis leaves a gap in knowledge about the concrete interactional consequences of individual plurilingual competence at the level of turn-taking, in repair sequences, for example. However, three of Canagarajah's (2009) characteristics may indicate how repair is constructed by plurilingual individuals, specifically native speakers in conversation with non-native speakers.

The first of these is the consensus-oriented and supportive nature of communication, which is the result of a "more accommodating and less agonistic" approach, according to Canagarajah (2009, p. 19). The *let it pass* principle is illustrative of this approach, which plurilinguals employ to move on with a conversation rather than correct an incorrect or unintelligible item. The second characteristic of note is the interconnection of language learning and language use from a plurilingual perspective, which renders every interaction a learning opportunity. As such, the question is raised of whether the plurilingual NS employs strategies such as repair as pedagogical tools in conversations with NNS. Finally, the retention of linguistic distinctiveness in conversation means that plurilingual individuals are open to redefining what is perceived as an error. It is highly likely that such an approach would have

an impact on repair strategies. This study will investigate the degree to which plurilingual competence impacts the use of repair preferences among native speakers and the degree to which these patterns reveal an orientation to the linguistic asymmetry of the interaction.

2.3   A window onto linguistic (a)symmetry: the preference for self-repair

The asymmetry of exolingual communication (or communication involving speakers with different language repertoires) can become "interactionally salient" as a result of certain activities enacted by the participants (Kurhila, 2001, p. 1084). One such activity is repair, which is a conversational activity that serves to resolve problems in speaking, hearing and understanding in interaction (Schleghoff et al., 1977). Given the model of the ideal native communicator within which language teaching has developed, deviations from native-speaker norms are likely to be seen as potential problems in communication (Coste et al., 2009). As such, it is to be expected that two speakers with different linguistic and cultural profiles will rely on repair strategies to ensure that potential trouble in understanding does not impede mutual comprehension. As Bolden (2012) puts it, conversational repair "addresses problems of intersubjectivity, including those that may be rooted in cultural and linguistic differences" (p. 101). An example of repair is presented in extract (1), taken from a conversation between NS-9 and NNS-9.[1] They are talking about their upcoming internships. NNS-9 initiates repair using the word *sorry*, indicating that she does not understand the question posed by NS-9. NS-9 rephrases, thus enacting repair. Arrows are used to indicate the lines of interest, in this case the trouble source, repair initiation and repair solution.

(1) CONV-9, Internship

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[1] A glossary of transcription symbols can be found in Appendix A.

252		NNS-9	I have to do internship in the morning, like in the day and do my thesis
253			at night.(h)
254	→	NS-9	Did you just did the company just say like, did you (.) apply for a
255			position that was starting on a certain date?
256	→	NNS-9	U:h sorry [re I don't]
257	→	NS-9	[Or how] come how come you're starting so early?
258		NNS-9	Because (.) I just don't want them to wait for a long time. Otherwise,
259			they will probably give this position to other people.

NNS-9 uses an open class repair initiator to indicate that she does not understand. An open class repair initiator (in contrast to a restricted repair initiator) is "not specific about the kind of trouble their speaker experiences" and as such, the interlocutor, NS-9, must interpret the cause of trouble in order to provide a solution that repairs this problem (Bolden, 2012, p. 101). In this case, she perceives the phrasing of her original question to be the problem and therefore rephrases, using a more concise formulation that she hopes will be easier for NNS-9 to understand. In this way, perception of the source of trouble reveals speaker orientations to one another and to interpersonal dynamics. For example, if a speaker perceives trouble to be related to limited linguistic competence, the speaker might provide alternatives to technical vocabulary or paraphrase in simple language, thus showing an orientation to the novice status of their interlocutor (Bolden, 2012).

In any interaction (including NS/NS interactions), trouble sources can be attributed to a range of factors. According to Günthner and Luckmann (2000), communicative problems arise when knowledge is unequally distributed between participants. This can be general knowledge or genre-related knowledge, where general knowledge is defined as knowledge about "physical and social reality", while genre-related knowledge relates to how language is used in certain situations (p. 9). Genre-related knowledge concerns everything from understanding table manners to knowing "the meaning of words or the rules regulating their employment in different communicative situations" (Günthner & Luckmann, 2000, p. 5). In

this study, trouble sources are conceptualised in accordance with Kaur (2011) who defines four categories: performance-related, language-related, ambiguity and gaps in world knowledge. While performance-related trouble is the result of mishearing or slips of the tongue, for example, language-related trouble relates to speakers' knowledge or use of lexical items or grammar in the vehicular language. Ambiguity is the result of "a lack of explicitness on the part of the speaker" and gaps in world knowledge relate to content rather than linguistic features (Kaur, 2011, p. 105). Speaker perception of the source of trouble will dictate the way that they initiate and enact repair. In extract (1), for example, NNS-9 uses an open class repair initiator to initiate repair.

Although it may be necessary to enact repair in order to ensure continued mutual understanding, repair can be a highly face-threatening activity when enacted by one speaker on another. Face is defined as "the public self-image that every member wants to claim for himself" and losing it can be humiliating for speakers (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 61). The act of repair threatens participants' image, as it "entails a judgement by one participant about a gap in the other's speaking ability or world-knowledge" (Norrick, 1991, p. 80). Indeed, in some cases speakers may choose not to enact repair for this reason, even if there is hearable error (Schleghoff et al., 1977). The degree to which this activity is face-threatening thus depends largely on the involvement of each speaker in the activity. The process of enacting repair comprises two stages: initiation and completion. At each stage, there is the possibility that each interlocutor takes up the work of repair. As such, a distinction is drawn between self-initiated and other-initiated repair and self-completed and other-completed repair, resulting in four repair categories: self-initiated self-repair, other-initiated self-repair, self-initiated other-repair and other-initiated other-repair.

2.3.1 Self-initiated self-repair (SISR)

In the case of self-initiated, self-completed repair, the speaker both identifies and resolves the potential problem in communication, as they "monitor their own talk for potential sources of mis- or non-understanding" (Bolden, 2012, p. 102). This type of repair is illustrated in extract (2). NS-2 corrects her use of the word *actor* by replacing it with *actress*.

(2) CONV-2, Actress

251	NS-2	So wha:t did you want to be when you grew up and what do you
252		want to be now? That's a nice one.
253	NNS-2	(1.1) I don't know. (h)
254	NS-2	You don't know? Yeah. That's fair enough.
255	NNS-2	I think like a racecar driver (h). And and now I I don't know. And <u>you</u>?
256	NS-2	What did I want to be? (0.6) I wanted to be: I think for a while I wanted
257 →		to be an actor, (.) or an actress rather.

In this case, the speaker, NS-2, identifies and enacts repair herself, in the same turn, such that repair is accomplished without "emerging to the conversational surface" (Schleghoff et al., 1977, p. 86). That is to say, the flow of talk is hardly disrupted by the repair activity, in part due to the fact that one speaker, NNS-2, does not orient to the repair at all. Self-repair tends to be initiated in three main positions: in the same turn as the trouble source (as is the case here), in the turn's transition space (the point at which the turn could be completed) or in the third turn to the trouble source (the turn the follows that which is subsequent to the trouble source) (Schleghoff et al., 1977).

2.3.2 *Other-initiated self-repair (OISR)*

In other cases, the trouble in talk may be identified by another speaker but left to be corrected by the speaker herself, as in extract (1). Here, both speakers are at some point oriented to the repair process, with NS-9 initiating the repair sequence and NNS-9, enacting it. Although repair cannot be said to disrupt talk here, it does come closer to the conversational surface than in extract (2) by involving both speakers. Other-repair is almost always initiated in the turn

subsequent to the trouble-source turn (Schleghoff et al., 1977). Speakers use a variety of devices to initiate other-repair, of which open-class and restricted repair initiators comprise two categories. Speakers may also use repetition or partial repetition to initiate repair, or employ phrases such as *You mean* to indicate an understanding check or offer a possible interpretation of the previous turn (Schleghoff et al., 1977).

2.3.3 *Self-initiated other-repair (SIOR)*

In extract (3) this pattern is reversed, with the speaker (NNS-6) identifying potential trouble in her own talk and signalling this to her interlocutor (NS-6) through a question. In the turns that follow, NS-6 provides several possible repair solutions, finally landing on one that is acceptable in line 494.

(3) CONV-6, James Corden

476 477	NNS-6	Yeah like I'm so into (.) Korean culture too well now less but I was into it a lot. Like 2018 I started (.) you know, BTS?
478	NS-6	I do know BTS yes. (h)
479 480	NNS-6	So 2018 they went to Ellen Show I loved watching the The Ellen Show in USA. (.) So they were the [guests]
481 482	NS-6	[The] Ellen Show. O:h yeah, they were weren't they. I've see I've seen them on Jonathan Ross in England (2.5) Yeah, they did.
483 484 →	NNS-6	They also love going to England. Like how was the show? They were doing the Jimmy::?
485 →	NS-6	Jimmy Kimmel were they on that? That's American.
486	NNS-6	No, the <u>other</u> guy like the one that made the cuts movie musical.
487	NS-6	Jonathan [Ross?]
488	NNS-6	[James]
489	NS-6	Oh James Corden?
490 491	NNS-6	(.) Maybe? I don't know. There are so many Jimmys and James in the TV reali like TV shows. (h)
492	NS-6	Oh the carpool karaoke:?
493	NNS-6	Yeah. Tha that one. That guy?
494	NS-6	Yeah, that's James Corden.

In this extract, repair becomes the main business of talk, as both speakers are oriented to its occurrence and put previous conversation on hold in order to complete repair.

2.3.4 *Other-initiated other-repair (OIOR)*

Finally, the category of repair with the greatest face-threatening potential is that which is both initiated and completed by the other speaker. In extract (4) when NS-2 perceives NNS-2's sentence to be unfinished, she finishes it herself in the next turn, thus offering a solution without request. NNS-2 accepts this solution in line 155.

(4) CONV-2, End in sight

149		NNS-2	Yeah, I don't know. I think it's also because there is a vaccine now.
150			And it's just like, yeah, we kind of have to sit (0.8) sit until everybody
151			is vaccinated or something.
152		NS-2	Yeah.
153	→	NNS-2	So it's kind of that there is kind of an end in
154	→	NS-2	(.) there's an end in sight [for sure]
155		NNS-2	Yeah, yeah, maybe (h)

Extracts (3) and (4) demonstrate how expert/novice dynamics are made relevant through other-repair in particular, as speakers draw on the linguistic or other content knowledge expertise of one speaker to resolve potential problems in understanding that stem from the novice status of the other. Schleghoff et al. (1977) find that other-repair is dispreferred by speakers, who demonstrate a consistent preference for self-repair in all instances, regardless of whether repair is initiated by the speaker or her interlocutor. However, orientation to expert/novice statuses may render other-repair less face-threatening and have the consequence that other-repair initiated and/or enacted here is less uncommon than in another context, such as in NS/NS interaction. Norrick (1991) finds, for example, that the NS' ability to use her particular set of linguistic resources to the advantage of mutual understanding may be grounds for her to enact other-repair on the NNS. In Norrick's words (1991), "other-correction usually

serves to balance out any differences in background knowledge, and so furthers understanding, the interaction, and progress toward the common goal" (p. 80). The organisation of repair may therefore be different when asymmetries between interlocutors become relevant, varying according to how interlocutors perceive their respective roles in an interaction.

Norrick (1991) finds that other-repair by NS on NNS can be enacted in the spirit of power or of solidarity. It is likely that this spirit will have an impact on the degree of face threat and will be visible in the repair solution offered. Other-repair may, for example, be less threatening if it is modulated, embedded or minimal. Modulated repair solutions may be provided in question format as in extract (3), where the repair is marked with uncertainty, offered as one possible solution (Schleghoff et al., 1977). This question format may also be used to check understanding, or as a guess. Furthermore, the degree to which repair is exposed or embedded can have an impact on its face-threatening nature (Jefferson, 1987). Extract (3) is a good example of exposed correction, where repair has become the main interactional business while previous conversation is put on hold or discontinued (Jefferson, 1987). By contrast, speakers can also embed other-repair in their talk without discontinuing the talk in progress. Finally, speakers can choose to provide minimal or non-minimal repair solutions, which may indicate their orientation to a NS/NNS dynamic. While minimal repair solutions simply provide the needed information through repetition, for example, non-minimal solutions not only serve to provide the specific repair needed, but also offer additional information (Kurhila, 2001). The speaker might, for example, make a metalinguistic commentary, explaining the reason for the repair, or perhaps reformulate the entirety of the previous utterance (rather than the problematic word alone) in line with native speaker norms. Non-minimal solutions can be found the parent/child, teacher/student and NS/NNS conversations analysed by Norrick (1991), who points to the "pedagogical tendencies" that non-minimal other-repair can reveal (p. 71). This pedagogical stance may allow NS to enact repair without modulation, as Dings (2012) finds:

If an imbalance in background knowledge or language ability is perceived, the more competent speaker may adopt a somewhat pedagogical stance and perform other corrections with few or no mitigating moves, a stance that is accepted by both interactants as a way to help the less-competent speaker reach higher levels of competence. (p. 1504)

In summary, this study conceptualises both native and non-native speakers as social actors with different portfolios of communicative competence, both of whom have the potential to be experts and to exhibit plurilingual competence in interaction. They may each initiate and enact repair on themselves or their interlocutor in order to solve communication problems related to performance, language, ambiguity or gaps in world knowledge. Depending on how repair is constructed and modulated, it can be more or less face-threatening and reveal orientations to NS and NNS statuses. This framework will be used to explore the extent to which the linguistic asymmetry of NS/NNS interactions is more or less relevant when the NS is more or less plurilingual.

3 Data and method

In the following section the data collection method and analysis are outlined. In order to answer the research questions, it was necessary to examine real interactions between native and non-native speakers of English, which were analysed using the framework of conversation analysis (CA) (Schegloff et al., 1974).

3.1 Participants

3.1.1 Recruitment and profiling

Participants were recruited on the basis of a convenience and snowball sampling strategy, relying on willing participants from the researcher's personal and academic network

to sign up and recruit further participants (Dörnyei, 2007). Such a strategy is appropriate for this kind of qualitative study, which seeks to glean "rich and varied insights into the phenomenon under investigation" – in this case plurilingual orientations to perceived linguistic asymmetry in NS/NNS interactions – rather than measure the degree to which the sample is representative of a population (Dörnyei, 2007).

Upon signing up for the study, all participants were asked to complete an electronic consent form and questionnaire relating to their linguistic profile.[2] For native speakers, this included 22 questions measuring plurilingual and pluricultural competence (PPC) taken from Galante's (2020) validated PPC scale. The scale contains 22 items relating to individuals' linguistic and cultural attitudes, specifically their flexible and creative use of language and cross-cultural awareness. Examples of items relating to each of these themes (language and culture) include *When talking to someone who knows the same languages as I do, I feel comfortable switching between one language to another language* and *It's difficult for me to accept cultural differences when talking to people from different cultural backgrounds*. Individuals use a 4-point Likert scale to indicate whether they strongly disagree, somewhat disagree, somewhat agree or strongly agree with each item. The scale as a whole measures a single construct connecting language and culture, as theorised in the Common European Reference Framework (CEFR) by the Council of Europe (2001). Galante (2020) explains the meaning of the scale and PPC scores as follows:

> Individuals with high PPC levels are able to use language according to the social situation, overcome breakdown in communication through the use of different languages, be aware of 'otherness,' identify similarities and differences among cultures,

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[2] The exemplar consent form and questionnaire can be found in Appendix B.

understand different cultural practices and norms, and use language in a sociolinguistically appropriate manner, including mixing languages or alternating them at the discourse level. (p. 5)

By quantifying this competence, the researcher was able to consider how PPC impacts orientations to linguistic asymmetry in NS/NNS interactions and thus answer the RQ.

3.1.3 Profiles

A total of 21 participants took part in the study, comprising 11 native English speakers and 10 non-native English speakers. For the purposes of this study and in the interests of collecting a sufficiently large sample, the variety of English spoken by the native speaker was not specified, nor the mother tongue of the non-native speaker. It was however important to recruit NS participants with a range of PPC scores in order to answer the research questions. Among the NS participants, PPC scores ranged from 2.82 to 3.82, with a mean of 3.31 (SD= .33). Given that the scale ranges from 1 to 4, this mean can be considered to be high. That is to say, NS participants had relatively high PPC. A summary of NS profiles can be found in Table 1, arranged in order of PPC score.

Table 1: Participants: Native speakers

Participant	PPC score
NS-1	2.82
NS-2	2.86
NS-3	2.91
NS-4	3.23
NS-5	3.27
NS-6	3.36
NS-7	3.45
NS-8	3.50
NS-9	3.55
NS-10	3.64
NS-11	3.82

3.2 Procedure

Each native speaker was matched with a non-native speaker for a conversation. One non-native speaker took part in two conversations with two different native speakers and is referred to as NNS-8 and NNS-9 in CONV-8 and CONV-9 respectively. Matches were made on the basis of individual availability but were otherwise randomly determined. Conversations lasted between 26:23 and 56:49 minutes.[3]

Conversations took place via video conferencing software, Microsoft Teams and Zoom. The researcher joined for the first few minutes of each call to introduce participants to one another and to explain what was expected of them. They were aware that the study concerned interactions between native and non-native speakers of English but were not informed of the particular focus of analyses. The researcher provided participants with prompts that they could discuss to stimulate conversation, but participants were also free to ignore these prompts and choose their own topics of conversation.[4] They were advised to speak for approximately 30 minutes although the length of conversations varied as described above. Before leaving the meeting, the researcher started the recording, which ended automatically when the two participants left the meeting.

3.3 Data analysis

3.3.1 Initial transcription and coding for repair

The conversations were transcribed in the first instance using the transcription software otter.ai up to a maximum of 30 minutes, due to the tight timeline of the research project. The

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[3] A list of conversations can be found in Appendix C.
[4] The list of prompts can be found in Appendix D.

initial output was reviewed and corrected for obvious errors.[5] In order to identify moments of interest in the conversations, the researcher reviewed the transcripts making notes on the interaction and highlighting all instances of repair. Based on these initial findings and using Nvivo to code the transcripts, repair extracts were categorised as examples of self or other-initiated repair and self or other-completed repair. Furthermore, the researcher collected extracts where repair could have occurred but did not.

3.3.3   Frequency analysis of repair

Using the output from Nvivo, the number of instances of each repair category were counted for both native and non-native speakers in each conversation. These quantitative results were compiled and presented in two frequency tables: one summarising the results for NS and NNS and another showing the breakdown for each conversation. Using the tables, repair category frequencies were compared for NS and NNS speakers and for more and less plurilingual native speakers. Due to the time and space constraints of this 10-week study, no further statistical analysis was conducted.

3.3.4   Final transcription and analysis of repair extracts

The researcher then selected interesting repair extracts from each category to analyse using the framework of CA. CA is the "the description and explication of the competences that ordinary speakers use and rely on in participating in intelligible, socially organized interaction" (Heritage & Atkinson, 1985). CA researchers study naturally occurring interactions at the level of participants' turns and lexical choices, using recordings and transcripts as object of analysis. The aim is to understand the organisation of human interaction (Schegloff et al., 1974). Once

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[5] A transcript of each conversation can be found in Appendix E.

the key repair extracts were identified, these were transcribed in detail according to Jefferson's (2004) transcription system to illustrate overlapping talk and pauses, among other features.[6] Each sequence was analysed on a turn by turn basis, in accordance with Schleghoff et al. (1974). This systematic approach allowed the researcher to analyse the relationship between each turn and the distribution of turns among speakers involved in the interaction. It provided a detailed picture of when and how repair was (or was not) enacted and thus the degree to which linguistic asymmetry was indexed by means of this conversational activity in the interactions studied.

The qualitative data was also triangulated with the PPC scores of NS participants in order to determine the degree to which PPC affects the frequency of certain repair patterns and their structure.

4 Results and Discussion

In the following chapter the results of the research will be outlined and discussed in relation to the theoretical framework. First, the quantitative results and analysis are presented in order to determine whether there is a preference for self-repair in the conversations. Some extracts are included here to support the findings. This is followed by the qualitative results and the analysis of illustrative examples of repair, through which speaker orientations to linguistic asymmetry can be evaluated. Both quantitative and qualitative findings are considered with respect to the PPC scores of NS participants in order to determine whether there is a quantitative or qualitative difference between more and less plurilingual NS participants in their use of self and other-repair strategies.

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[6] A list of the transcription symbols used can be found in Appendix A.

4.1 Quantitative findings: Repair frequency and PPC

4.1.1 *Preference for self-repair*

In order to determine whether speakers in these 11 conversations exhibited a preference for self-repair, all instances of repair were counted and categorised based on who initiated and completed the repair and with respect to their NS or NNS status. The results of this quantitative analysis are summarised in Table 2.

Table 2: Summary Repair Frequency Table

	Self-repair			Other-repair		
	SISR	OISR	TOTAL	SIOR	OIOR	TOTAL
NS	191	24	215	0	10	10
NNS	136	5	141	6	7	13
TOTAL	279	29	356	6	15	23

In summary, it is clear to see that self-repair is preferred over other-repair in these conversations. In particular, repair initiated and completed by the speaker herself (SISR) is by far the most common found in analysis of these interactions for both native and non-native speakers. For native speakers, the second most common repair strategy was other-initiated self-repair (OISR), while for non-native speakers other-repair (both SIOR and OIOR) was more common than OISR. There were no instances of SIOR found for native speakers.

These overall findings are consistent with those of Schleghoff et al. (1977), who maintain that self-repair and other-repair and not structurally equivalent, but rather that self-repair is preferred over other-repair. However, a closer look at the data with regard to the native and non-native status of the speaker reveals three patterns of interest. First of all, native speakers corrected themselves more often than non-native speakers. This may run contrary to expectations, given that the NS is the linguistic expert in this context. However, as the linguistic

expert, the NS is also able to monitor her speech more closely for mistakes (Bolden, 2012) and to correct these herself, without other input.

Second of all, none of the 11 NS participants initiated repair that was completed by their NNS counterpart (SIOR), while there were six instances of this for the NNS. NNS SIOR often takes the form of cooperative word searches, as in extract (5). NNS-1 and NS-1 are discussing COVID-19 vaccination programmes in different countries. NNS-1 co-opts the support of NS-1 to check if she is using the right word in line 290. NS-1 confirms in line 291.

(5) CONV-1, Vaccine shortage

287		NNS-1	Oh, yeah, that must be scary. But may maybe because you're not um
288			(.) oh let me look up for this word, because I didn't know this. But I I
289			heard I read that they were doing the same in the Netherlands
290	→		because they were (1.6) ah (2.5) shortage? Is [that a word?]
291	→	NS-1	[Yeah] I think
292		NNS-1	Yeah they were shortage on vaccines.

This repair sequence, SIOR, helps to explain the absence of NS SIOR. It reflects speakers' mutual orientation to the expert-novice dynamic that is found in NS/NNS interactions (Dings, 2012; Tudini & Liddicoat, 2013). NNS-1 draws on the expert linguistic skills of the NS to finish her sentence and thus positions herself as the novice at this moment in the interaction. Reversing the roles in extract (5) would create an unlikely sequence: the NS asking the NNS whether *shortage* is a word. The absence of NS SIOR thus becomes comprehensible. The NS either never needs help finding words or finishing sentences, due to expert language skills, or, if she does, she does not ask the NNS for help as she perceives her interlocutor to have inferior or novice language skills. What is more, as Norrick (1991) finds, the degree of face-threat implied by repair, changes when speaker roles are reversed. While it is acceptable for the NNS to signal a gap in her own linguistic knowledge and for the NS to acknowledge this gap by offering a solution, the reverse would imply a greater face-threat. SIOR for the NS

is thus dispreferred, as evidenced by the frequency findings, in line with the preference organisation found by Schleghoff et al. (1977).

The second finding of interest relates to other-initiation: non-native speakers were far more likely to initiate repair on native speakers than native speakers on non-native speakers. Consistent with Schleghoff et al. (1977), native speakers then tended to enact repair themselves, rather than the non-native speakers enacting other-repair. This results in OISR. By contrast, when native speakers did initiate repair on non-native speakers, they also tended to enact other-repair on the NNS, rather than the NNS enacting self-repair. This results in OIOR. A closer look at the data may explain why this is the case. An example of NS OISR is presented in extract (6). NS-8 and NNS-8 are talking about their university education.

(6) CONV-8, Bachelor's

176	→	NS-8	I see. I see. No fair enough. So where did you do your bachelor's?
177	→	NNS-8	You mean, my major o:r?
178 179 180	→	NS-8	Um so (.) ah, well, I guess because so for us the bachelor's is kind of the first three years after sixth form. So from like 18 to 21 years old (1.7). So the first yeah university basically.
181 182	→	NNS-8	Yes. So my bachelor? I (.) I don't quite understand, but bachelor's bachelor's university, right?
183 184 185	→	NS-8	Uh no so the bachelor's is the is the qualification. So you have your bachelor's degree. And then once you've done a bachelor's, you can then do a master's degree.
186		NNS-8	Yeah.
187 188		NS-8	So if you if you like, so what you and Evie are doing at the moment would be a master's degree.
189		NNS-8	Yes.
190 191		NS-8	And then what (.) whereas what Evie and I did (.) for sort of four years, the four years we were at university, is the the bachelor's degree.
192 193 194		NNS-8	Yeah, yeah. (0.8) Yeah. Okay. my bachelor in China. I was studying English, (.) actually, most of the slike mostly:, it's about lit lit literature. Okay. And also translation the linguistic too some language thing.

This OISR pattern helps to explain the frequency findings for NS OISR and NNS OIOR. Extract (6) reveals an orientation to expert-novice roles at this point in the interaction, as NS-8 employs linguistic or cultural expertise to help NNS-8. Similarly, when NS participants indicated trouble in NNS talk, they tended to solve it themselves rather than let the NNS do so. This results in NNS OIOR. The same explanation can be used: the NS employs linguistic or cultural expertise that she believes the NNS to be lacking.

The initial frequency findings support the assertion of Schleghoff et al. (1977) that speakers prefer to self-repair and that the occurrence of other-repair is highly constrained. Despite the asymmetry in participants' linguistic repertoires, other-repair remains a face-threatening act that speakers tend to avoid. Nonetheless, there are several points in conversation when this threat to face is deemed less important than the threat to mutual understanding, at which point other-initiation and other-repair become acceptable and an expert-novice dynamic between NS and NNS emerges. This is consistent with Norrick (1991), who argues that "a perceived asymmetry in responsibility for correctness and ability to achieve it overrides the usual organization of corrections" (p. 63).

4.1.2 Relationship between PPC and repair preferences

It then remained to be seen whether plurilingual and plurilingual competence (PPC) influences NS repair preferences. It was therefore necessary to consider how the frequency of each repair category varied between each of the 11 conversations. In this way, it was possible to see if speakers with different PPC scores exhibited different repair preferences. The results of this further categorisation are presented in Table 3. It is important to restate that conversations with a higher number represent a NS with a higher PPC score; that is to say, NS-8 from CONV-8 has a higher PPC score than NS-7 in CONV-7.

Table 3: Detailed Repair Frequency Table

Conversation	NS		NNS		Both	TOTAL
	SR	OR	SR	OR	IR	
CONV-1	24	2	20	1	2	49
CONV-2	28	2	8	3	1	42
CONV-3	5	0	19	1	1	26
CONV-4	12	0	7	0	0	19
CONV-5	10	0	10	0	0	20
CONV-6	18	2	23	2	0	45
CONV-7	25	0	4	2	0	31
CONV-8	28	1	11	1	0	41
CONV-9	18	1	6	2	0	27
CONV-10	15	1	17	0	0	33
CONV-11	32	1	16	1	0	50

In summary, the frequency of self- and other-repair instances (individually and combined) does not seem to be connected to PPC in these conversations. The repair categories that were found to be the least frequent – NS OR and NNS OR – tended to have a low frequency in all conversations.

This suggests that the face-threatening nature of other-repair is always pertinent, regardless of whether the NS has a high or low PPC score. Canagarajah's (2009) suggestion that the *let it pass* principle is more likely to be used by plurilinguals is not supported by the quantitative data here; the frequencies suggest that both more and less plurilingual native speakers prefer to move on with a conversation instead of correcting an incorrect or unintelligible item. The frequency findings suggest that PPC does not interfere with the preference for self-repair. Taken alone, the results do not indicate any relationship between PPC and repair construction, at the level of self- and other-initiation and completion. However, the quantitative results provide limited information about the way in which repair is initiated and completed by speakers. While both more and less plurilingual native speakers may both prefer self-repair, the way in which they initiate and enact repair, or the way in which they employ their varied linguistic capital, may be different.

4.2   Qualitative findings: Repair turns and PPC

Repair took many forms in these 11 conversations. In order to determine the degree to which individual repair instances render linguistic asymmetry relevant, a selection of illustrative OISR, SIOR and OIOR repair extracts will be presented, as these repair categories reveal interpersonal dynamics (in contrast to the solo activity of SISR). The examples are analysed with respect to the type of trouble source (performance-related, language-related, ambiguity, gaps in world knowledge), choice of repair initiators and repair solution modulation, in order to establish how asymmetries are exposed. Examples are given for both native and non-native speakers where possible and for native speakers with higher and lower PPC scores.

4.2.1   OISR

Other-initiated, self-repair took place in both directions, with both NS and NNS participants initiating repair at times to ask for clarification or repetition of a word or phrase. Sometimes these were initiated by open-class repair initiators such as *What?* or *Sorry?* and other times using a restricted repair initiator to precisely locate the trouble source. Both NS and NNS participants initiated repair due to ambiguity, gaps in world knowledge and language-related and performance-related trouble, although NNS participants initiated repair more frequently on the basis of language-related misunderstanding than their NS counterparts.

In extract (7), NS-5 and NNS-5 are discussing cities in the Netherlands. When NNS-5 mentions a place name, NS-5 does not hear it due to overlapping talk, a kind of performance-related trouble. NS-5 initiates repair with a restricted initiator, clearly indicating that NNS-5 should repeat the place name *Breda*. NNS-5 repeats the original trouble source and adds additional information (*where I am now*). NS-5 accepts the repair in line 423.

(7) CONV-5, Breda

417		NS-5	But I think that's mainly it. But yeah (.) I was in that place in Sint-
418			Michielsgestel twice, and Den Bosch as well because its right next to
419			it but=
420	→	NNS-5	=A:h yeah Den Bosch is nice (.) I think. [It's close to Breda]
421	→	NS-5	[It's really ()]. Close to what?
422	→	NNS-5	Close to Breda (.) like where I am now.
423		NS-5	Okay. Yeah. It's really pretty.

While the overlapping talk seems to be the cause of trouble here, NNS-5's non-minimal repair solution indicates an orientation to another potential source of trouble: a lack of knowledge of the geography of the Netherlands on the part of NS-5. Thus, in this particular extract, linguistic asymmetry in English is not relevant, but rather asymmetry in another kind of knowledge that positions the NS as novice and the NNS as expert. In this way, through the activity of repair, participants orient to a novice-expert dynamic that is not structured around the linguistic asymmetry as might be expected (Tudini & Liddicoat, 2013). Not only does NNS-5 draw on content expertise, but also upon strategic communicative competences which allow her to meet situational requirements through her language use, in this case to deal with potential misunderstanding by providing contextual information (Canale & Swain, 1980; Holtgraves, 2013). The plural and dynamic nature of speaker identities thus comes to the fore (Firth & Wagner, 1997).

It is to be expected that repair dynamics and implications change depending on which speaker enacts repair. In extract (8), NNS-1 and NS-1 are discussing education and careers. NNS-1 uses a restricted repair initiator to locate a trouble source in the talk of NS-1.The restricted repair initiator (*A what?*) in line 68 precisely locates the trouble source as the words *vague job*. NS-1 provides a minimal repair solution immediately, repeating the original utterance in the turn subsequent to the repair initiation.

(8) CONV-1, A very vague job

66		NNS-1	[Oh ok ()]. And what are you working on?
67	→	NS-1	Um, I am, it's a very vague job (h)
68	→	NNS-1	A what?
69	→	NS-1	A very va:gue job
70		NNS-1	Oh

The repair solution – repetition of the trouble source – suggests that NS-1 understands the trouble to be one of hearing (performance related), rather than linguistic understanding. Indeed, this repair solution would not be out of place in an NS/NS interaction between speakers with the same mother tongue and cultural background. On the other hand, a speaker displaying an orientation to language-related trouble might enact repair by means of reformulation or offer a non-minimal solution to explain the meaning of the word *vague*, for example. This would also imply a pedagogical stance, which Canagarajah (2009) cites as a characteristic of plurilingual communication. However, NS-1, the NS participant with the lowest PPC score, does not reveal any orientation to the linguistic novice status of the NNS through her repair activity, nor broader metalinguistic awareness (Jessner, 1999). Either NS-1 does not perceive this trouble source to be related to the novice linguistic status of her interlocutor, or she chooses not to orient to this asymmetry, likely due to the threat to face that this orientation would imply.

Another example of OISR can be found in extract (9), which follows a discussion about baking between NNS-6 and NS-6. NNS-6 initiates repair in line 148 in the form of a question and NS-6 goes on to provide several possible solutions in the lines that follow, in order to allow conversation to continue.

(9) CONV-6, Pancake Day

147	→	NS-6	They look so: nice, so fluffy. (h) Did you have Pancake Day last week?
148	→	NNS-6	Mmhm like uh wait, pancake here? You say?
149	→	NS-6	You know do you have Pancake Day Mardi Gras?
150		NNS-6	Oh, day? No, you do a Pancake Day?

151	NS-6	<u>Yeah</u>. (h) Oh my god it's the best day of the <u>year</u>.
152	NNS-6	Wha: (h)
153	NS-6	Shrove Tuesday?
154	NNS-6	[Really?]
155	NS-6	[() in Ma]rch. Yeah, I think it's the same as Mardi Gras. And you, you
156		just have like, pancakes because it's before Lent. (.) You know, like the
157		40 days until Easter?

The trouble source here seems to be a cultural one, namely the concept of Pancake Day. The initial response of NS-6 in line 149 implies that the trouble source might be language related, as she provides an alternative (French) name for this traditional day – *Mardi Gras* – in case NNS-6 is more familiar with this term. She also tries to use an alternative English name for Pancake Day in line 153. When it becomes clear that this is not the case, NS-6 goes on to add further explanation in line 155 and reveals an orientation to the asymmetry in cultural or general knowledge repertoires that provoke this misunderstanding. Once again, the repair pattern reveals an orientation to expert-novice roles, as the NS employs cultural expertise to help the NNS, as NS-8 did to help NNS-8 in extract (2) and NNS-5 did to help NS-5 in extract (3). What is more, NS-6, who scores relatively high on the PPC scale, makes an easy movement between *Pancake Day* and *Mardi Gras* which is reminiscent of the hybrid codes and translanguaging used by plurilingual speakers, according to Canagarajah (2009) and Galante (2020) respectively.

Considering these two examples of OISR from CONV-1 and CONV-6, it can be seen that the NS-6 employs her linguistic and cultural resources more extensively to enact repair than NS-1, who has a lower PPC score. To be precise, NS-6 draws on a linguistic repertoire that includes both French and English, offering three terms to describe the same concept and an extended explanation when these are not understood by her interlocutor. Meanwhile, NS-1 does not employ new resources enact repair, simply repeating the trouble source in English when NNS-1 signals misunderstanding. As a result, extract (9) from CONV-6 reveals an

orientation to asymmetry that extract (8) from CONV-1 does not. This symmetry can best be characterized as cultural, rather than linguistic, in that the trouble source is a gap in world knowledge between NS-6 and NNS-6, where NS-6 is the cultural expert at this point in the interaction. The same pattern of OISR is found in extract (6) from CONV-8, whose NS participant has a relatively high PPC score and extends her linguistic resources to enact repair. This repair construction seems to belong to more plurilingual native speakers in this study. However, it is important to note that the repair solution provided by NS-1 in extract (8) – – repetition of the trouble source – is not exclusive to NS participants with lower PPC scores, but is also found in CONV-4, CONV-6 and CONV-7.

4.2.2 SIOR

Self-initiated other-repair was only enacted on NNS talk, never upon NS talk. The trouble sources were mostly language related, with one case being the result of a gap in world knowledge.

In extract (10), NS-8 and NNS-8 are discussing travel in Europe. There are two instances of repair. The first of these is other-initiated by NNS-8 in line 101. NNS-8 uses the words *You mean* to mark this turn as an understanding check; rather than assert other-correction, she offers up this information for acceptance or rejection and NNS-8 accepts (Schleghoff et al., 1977). The SIOR begins in line 104. NNS-8 offers up two nouns (*Germany* and *German*) and asks NS-8 which of the two can fill the slot; NS-8 offers a solution in the very next turn.

(10)   CONV-8, Germany or German?

99 100	NS-8	Definitely. Ye:ah yeah. (.) It's definitely worth doing. Are there any places in particular you want to visit?
101	NNS-8	You mean which country?
102	NS-8	Yeah, yeah.
103 104 →	NNS-8	Yeah. Actual actually a lot (.) like Italy. And also Denmark, maybe German, Ger Germany or [German?]
105 →	NS-8	[Ge] Germany. Germany is the country.
106	NNS-8	Ger[many]
107	NS-8	[Yeah yeah] (h)
108	NNS-8	And I'm not su:re. But I but now we we cannot go anywhere.

NNS-8 initiates repair by formulating a question. By monitoring her own talk, she anticipates the potential misunderstanding that could occur if she uses the wrong word and therefore initiates repair. The linguistic nature of her question reveals an orientation to the linguistic expertise of NS-8 and renders the linguistic asymmetry relevant (Kaur, 2011; Tudini & Liddicoat, 2013). This dynamic is reinforced by the response of NS-8: rather than provide the minimal answer – which would simply be *Germany* – she explains why this is the right noun to use, demonstrating her own metalinguistic awareness, a characteristic of plurilingual speakers (Jessner, 1999). The activity of repair, which is exposed here, thus becomes a teaching opportunity, as NS-8 "assumes a pedagogical stance", as do teachers, parents and native speakers in Norrick's (1991, p. 63) findings. This has the potential to be a highly face-threatening act, implying judgement about the speaking ability or world knowledge of the other speaker. However, the perceived asymmetry in linguistic repertoires renders the dynamic acceptable to both speakers. NS-8 is understood to enjoy more extensive linguistic competences in English and may therefore use her particular set of linguistic resources to deal with the gap in knowledge, thus contributing to the common goal of mutual understanding. This instance of SIOR both relies on and reproduces an asymmetrical relationship between NS and NNS, where the NS is positioned as expert and the NNS as novice. Challenging this

asymmetry seems impossible in relation to a language-related trouble source; as the frequency findings show in 4.1.1, NS participants never have recourse to their NNS interlocutor for linguistic support for reasons of face-threat, lack of need and perception of their interlocutor as a linguistic novice.

In extract (11), NNS-2 describes his experience of post-travel quarantine. He is looking for the word *basement* and initiates repair through a question, with the words *How you call it*. NS-2 provides the solution in the very next turn.

(11)   CONV-2, Basement

190		NS-2	Oh how was <u>that</u>?
191		NNS-2	Yeah, it was (h) boring (h). Yeah I could use one one toi we have one
192			spare toilet could use this and shower in our (.) yeah how you call it
193	→		the in the house like very down?
194	→	NS-2	Oh (h) very dow like the basement kind of [thing]
195		NNS-2	[Yeah.] In the basement we have like this (.) this shower when you're
196			working in the garden, and you don't want to go into the real

Once again, the repair requested and offered is language-related, revealing the NS and NNS status of each speaker clearly. By contrast to extract (10), in which the enactment of other-repair is exposed, other-repair in extract (11) is embedded in the talk of NS-2 between laughter, a repetition of *very down* and the modulation *kind of thing*. In this way other-repair is not asserted and does not become the interactional business. Nonetheless, NNS-2 accepts the solution by saying *Yeah* and taking up the word *basement* in his next turn. The result is that NNS-2, whose speech has been the object of other-repair, shows a clearer orientation to the activity of repair than NS-2 who provides the repair solution. This is no surprise when the preference for self-repair is considered (Schleghoff et al., 1977); speakers can more comfortably orient to gaps in their own knowledge than in the knowledge of their interlocutor.

Considering these examples of SIOR from CONV-8 and CONV-2, it can be seen that NS-8 displays a clearer orientation to the activity of repair than does NS-2, who has a lower

PPC score. In both extracts, the trouble source is language related, however, NS-8 is more clearly concerned with this activity as a language-learning opportunity than NS-2, in line with Canagarajah's (2009) finding that language learning and use are tightly connected from a plurilingual perspective. It seems that speakers, specifically native speakers, who adopt a pedagogical stance consider the opportunity for language learning to be more important than the possible threat to face that other-repair implies.

4.2.3   OIOR

Other-initiated other-repair is enacted by both NS and NNS participants in the 11 conversations, although more frequently by NS upon NNS than vice versa. Trouble sources are mostly language related. NS participants tend to enact language-related OIOR to provide the NNS with a missing a word, while NNS participants tend to rephrase the talk of the NS to clarify or make it simpler. Some trouble sources are the result of ambiguity or gaps in world knowledge

In extract (12), when NS-6 mishears NNS-6 and repeats the name of an actor incorrectly, NNS-6 corrects her by providing the right name.

(12)   CONV-6, Toby Maguire

393		NS-6	Which one do you prefer Marvel or DC? (2.1) Big question.
394		NNS-6	Like I cannot choose because sometimes like you know, when I was
395			little I started seeing the (.) the old Spider Man movies and I loved
396			like the Tob:y Maguire, the actor and [that was]
397	→	NS-6	[I don't know]. (0.9) Honestly, I'm so bad. Tommy Ma:guire. Spider
398			Man. [Oh Toby Maguire]
399	→	NNS-6	[Toby Toby]
400		NS-6	Oh, I have seen him I do know who that is

It is not clear whether NS-6 mishears the name Toby due to the way that NNS-6 pronounces it or due to simply mishearing. If either actor perceives the trouble to be a result of NNS-6's pronunciation, then the repair solution in line 399 can be categorised as self-repair in

the third turn to the trouble source, as NNS-6 corrects her own speech. In any case, the repair also exposes an asymmetry in world knowledge, as NS-6 is not familiar with this actor. By contrast to SIOR extracts (10) and (11), this moment in interaction positions NNS as expert and NS as novice and in this way brings the dynamic and multifaceted nature of speaker identity to the fore (Firth & Wagner, 1997). While language-related trouble is closely tied to a particular speaker dynamic (NS /NNS, competent/incompetent) in this data, trouble related to mismatched world knowledge can provoke new dynamics and see all speakers, whether NS or NNS, occupy a position of power.

In extract (13), NS-3 and NNS-3 are talking about Dutch pronunciation and have just discussed the sound of the letter *g*.

(13)   CONV-3, Dutch prononciation

203	→	NNS-3	[is] (.) amazing (h). And also (.) the the o:w, ow, ow, I I can't
204	→	NS-3	Ow (1.7) oh
205		NNS-3	Yeah=
206		NS-3	=Like that yeah
207		NNS-3	Yeah. I can't do that

The repair solution offered by NS-3 in line 327 is provided without clear initiation from NNS-3. That said, NS-3 may understand NNS-3's uncertainty as an invitation to enact repair. NS-3 tests out two solutions, two possible pronunciation options for the Dutch vowel combination *ui*. NNS-3 accepts one of these solutions – it is not clear which – in the following turn.

This repair example is particularly interesting because it involves a language other than English and the solution provider (the NS) expresses uncertainty about the repair itself; it is unique in this regard. This combination of factors has an interesting effect: the asymmetry is seemingly collapsed as both speakers reveal themselves to be novice Dutch speakers. Unlike

extracts (10) and (11), for example, the NNS does not defer to the linguistic authority of the NS and does not directly co-opt her support. This may reveal something about NNS-3's perception of NS-3's competences in Dutch: he does not expect her to be able to provide a repair solution, as she is, as far as he knows, a non-native, beginner like him. The repair solution NS-3 does provide is offered in a spirit of solidarity identified by Norrick (1991) and contributes to a highly collaborative repair sequence, as both speakers work together to make meaning on equal terms.

In extract (14), NS-7 and NNS-7 discuss future travel plans. NS-7 offers an alternative, in this case a downgrade of what NNS-7 has just said. NNS-7 accepts this downgrade in the following line.

(14)   CONV-7, Australia

344		NS-7	Where are you gonna go next, then?
345		NNS-7	Wherever the:y hire me?
346		NS-7	Yeah, exactly (h)
347		NNS-7	I mean, like, dream wise, I would love to go to Australia or
348			something. But I know it's like, impossible. Like not impossible, but
349	→		(0.5) really difficult.
350	→	NS-7	More difficult.
351		NNS-7	Yeah. But just something in Europe is fine.

Orientation to the activity of repair is minimal in this example. This is clear in the way that NNS-7 continues the conversation immediately after accepting repair in line 350. There does not seem to be any real threat to mutual understanding here, but NS-7 offers a repair solution nonetheless. Perhaps she takes the hesitation in line 348 as an indication that NNS-7 is uncertain of her next words and therefore tries to offer support by providing an alternative. The repair may also serve as a form of agreement, as the phrases *really difficult* and *more difficult* are so similar that it is almost a case of repetition. The dynamics between the speakers are not very clear. Neither symmetries in language nor in world knowledge emerge here, in a

sequence that would equally be unsurprising in NS/NS interactions. It shows that the conversational activity of repair does not necessarily reveal asymmetries between speakers.

In these conversations, OIOR emerges as a site where different kinds of expertise can be demonstrated, such as content expertise and expertise in languages other than English. Furthermore, in extracts (13) and (14) OIOR is not highly face-threatening; in extract (13) it creates an opportunity for participant collaboration, while in extract (14) OIOR hardly comes to the conversational surface. In this way, OIOR does not emerge as the disruptive force that might be expected in these interactions. NS PPC score does not seem to have an influence on the use of OIOR in these conversations.

4.2.4 *Incomplete repair*

Finally, there were four instances of incomplete repair found in these conversations. These were occasions when repair seemed to be initiated or required but was not completed.

In extract (15), NNS-3 struggles to finish his sentence. His question formulation indicates repair initiation, however NS-3 does not offer a solution. The word *whatever* indicates that NNS-3 has given up on this repair initiation.

(15)   CONV-, Other way around

185		NNS-3	Nah yeah no. I I think if you go at it, like, seriously, you, you
186			probably (.) have an easier time to learn that. Um um bu:t yeah, it's
187			still distinct enough so that (.) that it's Yeah, you wouldn't get it like,
188			from the begin be– yeah from the start. What I heard often, though is
189			that um that the other way around is um is it is (.) or in the other way
190	→		(1.2) um around? Uh whatever
191		NS-3	Hm
192		NNS-3	Um it is easier to understand German (.) fro:m Dutch ears [um]
193		NS-3	[Oh okay]=
194		NNS-3	=than it is to understand Dutch from from from Germany

The absence of repair can be interpreted as NS-3 not noticing the initiation, not knowing how to solve it, or (more likely) *letting it pass*. That is to say, NS-3 chooses to continue with the conversation rather than interrupt talk with the activity of repair. Yet the need for repair has already interrupted the flow of conversation and repair enacted sooner would allow conversation to continue more quickly. Instead then, this can be interpreted as an aversion on the part of NS-3 to enact repair. Given that such an SIOR would reveal a clear orientation to the linguistic expertise of NS-3 and the relative novice status of NNS-3, NS-3 may actively choose not to repair the speech of her interlocutor in order not to highlight the linguistic asymmetry.

In total, there are four instances of incomplete repair in these conversations, all of which, if complete, would result in SIOR on the basis of language-related trouble on the part of the NNS. All four instances are found in CONV-1, CONV-2 and CONV-3, in which the native speakers have the lowest three PPC scores. Therefore, in these conversations, aversion to enacting repair is a characteristic of native speakers with lower PPC scores.

5   Conclusion

This study sets out to explore the degree to which plurilingual and pluricultural competence impacts the organisation of repair in interactions between native and non-native English speakers, and the degree to which this organisation exposes linguistic asymmetries between speakers. According to Schleghoff et al. (1977), speakers in any interaction will demonstrate a preference for self-repair over other-repair, which can be highly face-threatening in nature. Norrick (1991) caveats this finding with the contention that certain asymmetric or expert/novice dynamics, such as the NS/NNS dynamic, render other-repair more acceptable to speakers at certain points in interaction. As such, repair patterns can reveal asymmetries in interactions. The data showed a strong overall preference for self-repair over other-repair in all

conversations, involving native speakers with varied PPC scores. This suggests that PPC does not interfere with the preference for self-repair. When other-repair did occur, it was more commonly enacted on non-native speakers than on native speakers, implying a speaker orientation to the linguistic expert/novice dynamic. In summary, both more and less plurilingual native speakers preferred self-repair over other-repair, although both set aside this preference at points where the threat to mutual understanding outweighed the dispreference for other-repair.

The interactional consequences of higher and lower PPC scores for repair were considered in relation to Canagarajah (2009), who finds that plurilinguals experience language use and language learning as tightly connected and are more accommodating in their communication and flexible about what they perceive as error. The former (the connection between language use and learning) was observed in the repair patterns employed by more plurilingual native speakers; native speakers with high PPC scores were more likely to take advantage of trouble sources and repair opportunities to explain language use to their non-native counterpart, thus revealing a pedagogical orientation to the asymmetric language dynamic. Meanwhile, use of the *let it pass* principle, which is used to ensure the smooth continuation of conversation rather than disrupt conversation with repair, was most evident in three cases where the non-native speaker needed or explicitly initiated repair. This resulted in incomplete repair. These cases were in conversations with the three native speakers who scored lowest on the PPC scale. In summary, highly plurilingual native speakers were associated with a pedagogical attitude to repair, while the least plurilingual native speakers were seen to seek conversational harmony rather than enact other-repair. In this way, it can be seen that the face threatening nature of other-repair has a different quality or consequence in conversations with more or less plurilingual native speakers; it is more consequential for the organisation of repair in conversations with less plurilingual native speakers.

This study goes some way to shedding light on the interactional consequences of plurilingual competence, on which conversation analytic research has hitherto been limited. The findings translate plurilingual attitudes theorised by Canagarajah (2009) and Jessner (1999) among others into turn-by-turn activities, specifically in relation to repair. They also provide further evidence for the preference for self-repair in all conversations (Schleghoff et al., 1977), while also supporting Norrick's (1991) finding that asymmetrical power dynamics between speakers can alter this preference at certain points in conversation. Finally, the study demonstrates that linguistic asymmetry does not always disrupt conversation, but rather is only oriented to when it is relevant for the unfolding of interaction (Kurhila, 2001). In the context of the field of intercultural communication, this is an important reminder that communication across languages and cultures is more often about understanding rather than misunderstanding.

It is necessary to further explore the interactional consequences of plurilingual competence for repair and other conversational activities. Further research should examine a larger sample of conversations and use advanced statistical methods to analyse frequency findings, in order to reveal hidden relationships in the data. Studies may also follow a more semi-experimental structure allowing for greater control over participant linguistic profiles. In this study, the English proficiency of non-native speakers varied although proficiency was mostly very high. This may affect the frequency and type of repair instances that occur. Furthermore, all conversations were virtual due to the global COVID-19 pandemic. Research on virtual interactions, particularly using the CA framework, is limited. The field would benefit from further studies into this widespread form of communication, which may have different characteristics compared to face-to-face communication. Finally, further research should explore the consequences of plurilingual approaches to repair and other conversational activities on the non-native speaker. The perspective of non-native speakers was not given much attention in this study and as such it would be interesting to include interviews with non-

native interactants to understand how they experience pedagogical and *let it pass* approaches to repair, for example.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Transcription Symbols Glossary (Jefferson, 2004)

[A *left bracket* indicates the point of overlap onset.

]   A *right bracket* indicates the point at which two overlapping utterances end.

=   *Equal signs* indicate no break or gap.

(0.0)   *Numbers in parentheses* indicate elapsed time by tenths of seconds.

(.)   *A dot in parentheses* indicates a brief interval (± a tenth of a second) within or between utterances.

_   *Underscoring* indicates some form of stress, via pitch and/or amplitude.

::   *Colons* indicate prolongation of the immediately prior sound. The longer the colon row, the longer the prolongation.

(h)   *Parenthesized 'h'* indicates plosiveness. This can be associate with laughter, crying, breathlessness, etc.

()   *Empty parentheses* indicate that the transcriber was unable to get what was said.

?   *A question mark* indicates rising intonation

Appendix B: Consent Form and Questionnaire

MA Thesis Intercultural interactions between native and non-native English speakers

Sign up for a conversation!

Interested in meeting new people? Understanding different perspectives? Learning about other cultures? Simply want to chat?

 The pandemic presents us with fewer opportunities to meet new people and have conversations beyond our immediate circle. Many people have felt very isolated and many have sought out new, creative ways to make social contact with friends and strangers near and far. Virtual tools can make it incredibly easy and less intimidating to meet people we do not know, who live in different parts of the world and who have different life experiences. And I want to make the most of that!

 As part of a study in intercultural communication, I will be matching native and non-native English speakers to have a conversation (in English) for around 30 minutes on Microsoft Teams. I will provide you with a set of prompts that you can use to guide your conversation, or you are free to discuss whatever you like. Matches will be made at random, based on availability and your native language. Anyone with conversational proficiency in English is invited to join! Apart from that, I only ask that you bring an open mind and sense of curiosity.

  What to expect? 1.   Once I have matched you to another participant based on your availability and native language, I will send you a calendar invitation and Microsoft Teams for the call, as well as some conversation prompts. 2.   I will join you both for the beginning

of the call to introduce you to one another, to the study and to answer any questions that you may have. 3.   I will then start the recording and leave you both to your conversation.

4.   The conversation should last for approximately 30 minutes but can be shorter or longer if you prefer. You can simply leave the call when you are finished. 5.   That's it! It's up to you if you choose to stay in touch with your conversation partner and there is no obligation to do so.

If you like the sound of it, please complete the following survey to register your interest. It should take about 5 minutes. You are first asked to provide consent, before completing a short questionnaire relating to your linguistic profile. Once completed, I will be in touch to connect you with another participant. Thank you for your interest!

Information and Consent Form

Background and purpose of the study

 The study is carried out by a Master's student from Utrecht University, investigating intercultural interactions between native and non-native speakers of English. The study is part of a Master's thesis.

 How will the study be carried out?

 You will participate in a conversation of around 30 minutes with another participant in the study. Conversation partners are matched such that a native English speaker meets with a non-native speaker. There is no expectation regarding the content of conversations. The conversation will take place on Microsoft Teams and both video and audio will be recorded.

 What is expected of participants?

 You are invited to take part in a virtual conversation (via Microsoft Teams) of 30 minutes or

more with one other participant. During the conversation you are free to discuss any topics of interest. The conversation should last for at least 30 minutes but can also be longer or shorter as suits you. You are free to leave the meeting at any time, without any explanation or negative consequences. You are free to share as much or as little information with your conversation partner as you like.

Possible advantages and disadvantages of the study

There are no direct advantages to taking part in this study. However, your participation and data will contribute to a study in intercultural communication, which explores interactions between native and non-native English speakers. Possible disadvantages include the time that you are asked to dedicate to the conversation. Furthermore, the researcher is not responsible for the content of conversations and the behaviour or opinions of your conversation partner during the conversation. Matches will be made at random. However, you are free to leave the conversation and study at any time, without any explanation or negative consequences.

Voluntary participation

Participation in this study is voluntary. You can end your participation in the study at any time, without any explanation and without any negative consequences. If you end your participation, we will use the data collected up to that point, unless you explicitly inform us otherwise.

Data collection

As part of the study and in case of follow-up research, the researcher will collect some of your personal data, including contact details, a description of the languages that you speak and a video recording of your conversation. In accordance with the guidelines provided by the VSNU Association of Universities in the Netherlands, the researcher is required to keep the research data for at least 10 years. The raw data, including recordings, language description and contact details will only be accessible by the researcher herself. Anonymous

transcriptions of the conversations will form part of the thesis and will therefore be publicly accessible. By taking part in this study, you agree to the collection and treatment of your data as described here.

Reimbursement

No reimbursement is provided for your participation.

Complaints procedure

If you would like to submit a complaint about the study, please contact the thesis supervisor at a.m.micklos@uu.nl.

Further information

For more information about the study now and throughout the research process, do not hesitate to contact the researcher, Evelyn Henderson-Child, by email at e.m.f.henderson-child@students.uu.nl or by phone on ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮.

I confirm: that I have been satisfactorily informed about the study via the information letter; that I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about the study and that any questions I may have asked have been satisfactorily answered; that I have had the opportunity to carefully consider my participation in this study; that I am voluntarily participating. I agree that: the data collected will be obtained for scientific purposes and retained as stated in the information letter; video and/or audio recordings may also be made for scientific purposes. I understand that: I have the right to withdraw my consent for the use of data, as stated in the information letter.

○ Yes (1)

○ No (2)

Thank you for taking part in this study!

Please provide a few personal details and fill out a short questionnaire. This should take around 5 minutes to complete.

English Do you have conversational proficiency (or higher) in English?

   ◯ Yes (1)

   ◯ No (2)

Name What is your full name?

_____

✳

Email What is your email address?

_____

Phone number What is your phone number? Please include the country code.

_____

✱

Age How old are you?

_____

EN NS? Is English your native language (or one of your native languages)?

○ Yes (1)

○ No (2)

Native lang What is your native language(s)?

_____

L2s Do you speak any languages other than your native language? Please list these below, regardless of your proficiency in each.

_____

End of Block: Participant Details

Start of Block: PPC

PPC Lastly, please complete the questionnaire below.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Somewhat agree (3)	Strongly agree (4)
1. When talking to someone who knows the same languages as I do, I feel comfortable switching between one language to another language. (1)	○	○	○	○
2. I do not accept different cultural values when talking to people from other cultural backgrounds. (2)	○	○	○	○
3. When speaking in one language, I may use words of another language in the same sentence to make it easier to communicate. (3)	○	○	○	○
4. I never make adjustments in my communication style if the person I am talking to comes from a different cultural background. (4)	○	○	○	○

5. I can use the knowledge I have in one language to understand the same topic in another language. (5)

○　　　○　　　○　　　○

6. When communicating with people from different cultural backgrounds, I make adjustments in my communication style (if necessary) when talking to them. (6)

○　　　○　　　○　　　○

7. I speak at least two languages, but I can also understand some words and expressions in other languages. (7)

○　　　○　　　○　　　○

8. I can identify common behaviours from my cultural background and explain them to someone from another cultural background. (8)

○　　　○　　　○　　　○

9. When talking to someone who knows the same languages as I do, we should communicate in one language only. (9)

⟨○⟩ ⟨○⟩ ⟨○⟩ ⟨○⟩

10. People from other cultural backgrounds should behave like me so we can understand each other. (10)

⟨○⟩ ⟨○⟩ ⟨○⟩ ⟨○⟩

11. When talking to someone who knows the same languages as I do, I do not feel comfortable mixing two (or more) languages in conversation. (11)

⟨○⟩ ⟨○⟩ ⟨○⟩ ⟨○⟩

12. I understand there are differences between cultures and that what can be considered 'strange' to one person may be considered 'normal' to another. (12)

⟨○⟩ ⟨○⟩ ⟨○⟩ ⟨○⟩

13. I do not feel comfortable discussing differences in cultural values when talking to people from different cultural backgrounds. (13)

○ ○ ○ ○

14. When speaking in one language, I may use a word or expression in another language to better explain a concept or idea. (14)

○ ○ ○ ○

15. Because I am aware of different cultures, it's easy for me to accept different values and behaviours from people who come from other cultural backgrounds. (15)

○ ○ ○ ○

16. When learning about a new topic, I never use more than one language. (16)

○ ○ ○ ○

17. I must have similar values and beliefs as a person from another cultural background so we can understand each other. (17)

○ ○ ○ ○

18. Because I speak two languages (or more), I can learn a new language more easily. (18)

   ○   ○   ○   ○

19. When communicating with people from other cultural backgrounds, I do not try to explain if they misunderstand what I mean. (19)

   ○   ○   ○   ○

20. I can recognise some languages if they are similar to the languages that know. (20)

   ○   ○   ○   ○

21. If I am talking to someone who can speak the same languages as I do, we should both speak in one language only and not mix languages. (21)

   ○   ○   ○   ○

22. I know there are differences in behaviours between cultures. (22)

   ○   ○   ○   ○

Appendix C: List of Conversations

Conversation	NS	NNS	Duration
CONV-1	NS-1	NNS-1	50:28:00
CONV-2	NS-2	NNS-2	31:09:00
CONV-3	NS-3	NNS-3	55:49:00
CONV-4	NS-4	NNS-4	29:36:00
CONV-5	NS-5	NNS-5	38:56:00
CONV-6	NS-6	NNS-6	46:47:00
CONV-7	NS-7	NNS-7	35:33:00
CONV-8	NS-8	NNS-8	33:35:00
CONV-9	NS-9	NNS-9	26:23:00
CONV-10	NS-10	NNS-10	36:36:00
CONV-11	NS-11	NNS-11	32:16:00

Appendix D: Optional Conversation Prompts

1. What are you most looking forward to doing as we move out of the pandemic?

2. How have you stayed creative during lockdown?

3. What was the highlight of your week?

4. What did you want to be when you grew up? And now?

5. What is the weirdest object that you have in your room right now? What is its story?

6. What do you do to connect with your local community?

7. Where do you feel that you belong most?

Appendix E: Transcripts

Please contact Evelyn Henderson-Child on e.m.f.henderson-child@students.uu.nl for the full

transcripts.