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# Other-language recalibration repair in broadcast news interviews in Rwanda: Relating to the overhearing audience

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## Abstract

Using institutional conversation analysis, this article develops an account of the organisation of *other-language recalibration repair* in broadcast news interviews in Rwanda. Initial observation shows that the structure of other-language recalibration repair is significantly reduced compared to that of repair in everyday conversation. The study argues that this difference is due to the interactional use of the repair practice. To develop this argument, the article draws on the well-documented fact that, in institutional talk, repair can be deployed to serve relevant institutional goals. Analysis of the data not only confirms that, in broadcast news interviews in Rwanda, other-language recalibration is used as a device for relating to the overhearing audience, but it also reveals that this interactional use is consequential to the shape of the repair practice. Notably, analysis reveals that the structure of the repair practice is even more reduced than it was initially thought to be. (News interviews, other-language recalibration, repair, overhearing audience, structural organisation)\*

## Introduction

Using the perspective of institutional conversation analysis (hereafter CA), this article develops an account of the organisation of *other-language recalibration repair* (Gafaranga 2021), an interactional practice I have observed in broadcast news interviews in Rwanda. Here are two examples of the practice. Extract (1) comes from an interview with the Rwandan Minister of Foreign Affairs. The interviewer (IR) is ‘prefacing’ (Clayman & Heritage 2002) a question about international relations. Extract (2) comes from an ‘expert interview’ (Montgomery 2008) on the international jurisdiction of national courts.

(1)<sup>1</sup>

1 IR: uyu murongo urumvikana cyane  
‘This position is very clear especially’

2 ko hari ibyiswe  
'that there is what has been called'

3 → ubukoloni bushya – *néocolonialisme*  
'colonialism new new colonialism'

(2)

1 IE1: hari iya gatatu aho bavuga-  
'there is a third one where they say'

2 huh ntabwo ba:- ho ho  
'huh they are not'

3 baba *précis* – baravuga ngo n'ikindi kintu cyose  
'not specific – they say and anything else'

4 → cyaba kiri linked-  
'which could be linked'

5 IE2: [yego  
'yes'

6 IR: → [gifite aho gihuriye  
which-has where meet  
'with any connection'

7 IE1: → n'ikindi kintu cyose gifite aho gihuriye  
'and anything with any connection'

8 n'inyungu za za Es- za Spain  
'with the interests of Spain'

As these examples show, the practice can be described as a recalibration repair as it changes 'the manner' in which something is said without changing the referent (Lerner, Bolden, Hepburn, & Mandelbaum 2012:193). In the first example, the items *ubukoloni bushya* and *néocolonialisme* (line 3) are semantically equivalent. In fact, the former is a literal translation of the latter. Likewise, in extract (2) the items *linked* (line 4) and *gifite aho gihuriye* (line 6) are semantically equivalent. As for the term *other-language* in the descriptor of the practice, it signifies that the practice

involves the use of two or more languages. Something is said in one language and is subsequently recalibrated using a different one.

In a previous study (Gafaranga 2021), I have described the language choice dimension of the practice. It was observed that, in other-language recalibration, language choice can take the direction Kinyarwanda – French/English (see extract (1)), it can take the direction French/English – Kinyarwanda (see extract (2)), and it can juxtapose French and English as in extract (3) below, which comes from an expert interview on the topic of armed groups in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The expert says that, because of the unconventional nature of insurgents' wars, the United Nations may authorise states to use all means necessary to restore order. He uses the French expression *tous les moyens nécessaires* (line 5) and recalibrates it using English (*all means necessary*, line 7).

(3)

- 1 IE: dusanze ibintu bibera muri aka  
'we find that what is happening in this'
- 2 karere- ari *menace à la paix et à la*  
'region- is a threat to international peace'
- 3 *sécurité internationale. Par conséquent uh*  
'and security. Therefore'
- 4 *nous autorisons les états à employer*  
'we authorise states to use'
- 5 → *tous les moyens nécessaires*  
'all means necessary'
- 6 IR: Umh
- 7 IE: → all means necessary
- 8 kugirango uh uh umutekano ugarurwe mu  
'so uh uh peace can be restored in'
- 9 karere runaka.  
'a given region'

And, although less frequently, all three languages can be involved in one instance. An example of this possibility is extract (4). The interview took place on the eve of

COP 26, a world conference on climate change in Glasgow, Scotland in late 2021. The Rwandan chief negotiator is asked whether parties in climate change negotiations enjoy equal rights. He says that the parties are treated as equal in the negotiations and in the ensuing treaties. He uses the Kinyarwanda item *imishyikirano* (line 2) and recalibrates it first using French (*négociations*, line 3) and then using English (*negotiations*, line 4).

(4)

1 IE: uh mu rwego rw'amasezerano kimwe no  
'uh in treaties as'

2 → mu rwego rw'imishyikirano tugira uh  
'in the negotiations we have uh'

3 → arizo *négociations* cyangwa  
'which are *négociations* or'

4 → negotiations uhh uh buri gihugu cyose  
'negotiations uhh uh each country'

5 uh uh kiba gifite ijwi rimwe uh  
'uh uh has the one voice'

6 kimwe n'ikindi  
'as any other'

Generally, switching from Kinyarwanda serves the function of word clarification or what Bolden (2024:200) calls an 'orientation to intersubjectivity' while switching to Kinyarwanda can be described as 'medium repair' (Gafaranga 2000, 2012), that is, as translating an orientation to 'normativity' (Bolden 2024:204). In this article, I take this research further and develop an account of other-language recalibration as a repair structure.

### Context of literature

The concept of repair is used 'when the forward progress of an in-progress unit ... comes to be momentarily suspended and the focal activity of the interaction becomes removing whatever barrier to that unit's progress is the current source

of trouble' (Hayashi, Raymond, & Sidnell 2013:13). The conversation analytic study of repair in talk-in-interaction was initiated by the now-seminal paper 'The preference for self-correction in the organization of repair in conversation' (Schegloff, Jefferson, & Sacks 1977), and the field has since widely expanded (Kitzinger 2014:229). As a result, a detailed description of the notion of repair, let alone a review of the field as a whole and of individual case studies, is beyond the scope of this article. I only list some select aspects, which I am anticipating to be relevant for the examination of the structure of other-language recalibration repair. First, a repair process comprises three key components: a trouble source/repairable, a repair initiation, and a repair solution. Repair was initially conceptualised based on dyadic interactions, and participants were referred to as *self* and *other*, where *self* meant the producer of the trouble source and *other* meant the recipient of the talk containing the trouble source. More recent studies (e.g. Lerner 1993; Bolden 2013) have problematised the notion of the individual self and allowed for the possibility of 'conjoined participation' (Lerner 1993). Either self or other can initiate and/or execute repair, resulting in four possible repair formats, namely *self-initiated self-repair*, *self-initiated other-repair*, *other-initiated self-repair*, and *other-initiated other-repair*. Repair can be described in terms of the location of the repair solution relative to the trouble source: *same TCU* (turn constructional unity) *repair*, *transition space repair*, *next turn repair*, *third turn repair*, and *third position repair*. Different repair operations are possible. For example, Schegloff (2013) identifies ten different operations for self-initiated same-TCU repair alone. Among these we can retain the 'replacing' operation as it is the one adopted in other-language recalibration repair (see examples above). More importantly, repair may have an interactional import other than removing problems of speech production and understanding.

As I have said above, in ordinary conversation, repair subdivides into four formats, namely self-initiated self-repair, self-initiated other-repair, other-initiated self-repair, and other-initiated other-repair. Other-language recalibration can take any of three formats: self-initiated self-repair (extract (1), (3), and (4)), other-initiated other-repair (extract (2)) and self-initiated other-repair. An example of this last possibility is extract (5).

(5)

- 1 IR: → Wowe uri inzobere mubijyanye na community health  
'You are the expert in community health'
- 2 → cyangwa se- sinzi uko nabisobanura yenda  
'not I-know how I-them-explain'  
'or- I don't know how to explain it'
- 3 IE: → Ubuzima rusange  
Health common  
'Community health'

4 IR: Ubuzima rusange ba-  
'Community health they-'

5 IE: huh

IR uses the English expression 'community health', attempts to recalibrate it (*cyangwa se-*, line 2) (see 'or-prefacing' in Lerner & Kitzinger 2015), fails to and reports his difficulties (*sinzi uko nabisobanura*, line 2). Following this report of trouble, IE provides the repair solution (*ubuzima rusange*) at line 3. We could therefore say that the 'display of trouble' serves as a repair initiator, as 'an invitation to the recipient to join the (word) search' (Reichert & Liebscher 2012:601).

In this respect, the absence of the format other-initiated self-repair and the routine nature of other-initiated other-repair are noticeable. The absence of the format other-initiated self-repair in the data is noticeable as the format is one of the most common patterns of conversational repair (Kendrick 2015). Other-initiated self-repair is common in conversation because of the 'preference for self-repair' (Schegloff et al. 1977; Kitzinger 2014:240). Likewise, the routine nature of the repair format other-initiated other-repair is noticeable as the format, especially its 'unmodulated' version (Schegloff et al. 1977:378), is known to be infrequent in conversation (Schegloff et al. 1977). This is so because of the 'preference for progressivity' in conversation (Schegloff et al. 1977:380; Bolden 2024:200). Together, these departures from ordinary conversation lead to the characteristic CA question 'why that now?', a question which, according to Heritage & Clayman (2010:20), must be asked if one wants to access 'the logic that's built into the conduct of interaction'. Why is the organisation of other-language recalibration repair in broadcast news interviews in Rwanda visibly different from the organisation of repair in everyday conversation? It is the 'logic' of the organisation of other-language recalibration repair in broadcast news interviews in Rwanda that this article intends to elucidate.

Sometimes, repair is 'straightforward' and does 'no more than (fixing) a problem in speaking, hearing or understanding the talk' (Kitzinger 2014:241), but it has also been widely documented that 'repair can ... be used in the service of the action the speaker means to be doing with the talk' (2014:242). These non-straightforward functions of repair, also known as its *interactional uses* (Kitzinger 2014:241), are so diverse (see list in Kitzinger 2014:241–44, 253–55) that, so far, they have only been investigated on a 'case-by-case basis' (2014:242). They have been observed in ordinary conversation as well as in institutional talk. In the latter case, studies have shown that repair can be used to serve specific institutional goals. For example, Romaniuk & Ehrlich (2013) show that, in their courtroom data, participants self-repair so as to present a version of events which is favourable to their side of the case. Edwards & Stokoe (2011:42) show that, in police interrogations of suspects, repair is one of the strategies lawyers deploy in order to 'fulfil their role of helping suspects exercise and understand their legal rights'. Even closer to the purposes of this article is Clayman & Heritage's (2002:158–61) observation that, in news interviews, journalists use self-repair as a strategy for maintaining a 'neutralistic stance', one of the 'ground rules' of interview talk. Based on these and other similar studies, this article argues that,

in broadcast news interviews in Rwanda, other-language recalibration repair is a strategy participants use in order to relate to the overhearing audience, 'the most significant defining feature of broadcast talk' (Hutchby 2003:440).

Research has shown that, when talk involves an overhearing audience, participants orient to it and, conversely, that the presence of an overhearing audience shapes the talk. For example, Stokoe & Edwards (2009) show that, in police interviews, interviewers ask 'ostensibly silly questions', not for the benefit of the current talk situation, but for that of future users of the interviews. Drew (1992) shows that, in cross-examination, attorneys repeat elements of defendants' talk for the benefit of the overhearing jury. Hutchby (2006:108) demonstrates that, in advice-giving-type radio phone-in talk shows, experts package their answers to callers' questions in a specific way (AAI = answer + additional information) so as to provide 'straight answers' to callers' questions and, at the same time, 'display a concern for the possible relevance of (their) advice' for the overhearing audience. And of course, students of news interviews (e.g. Heritage 1985; Heritage & Greatbath 1991; Clayman & Heritage 2002; and others) have documented a variety of practices through which interview participants reveal their orientation to the overhearing audience. I come back to this later in the article. Following in this tradition, this article argues that the organisation of other-language recalibration repair in broadcast news interviews in Rwanda is shaped by its interactional use and is 'adapted in accordance with the institutionally specific' (Romaniuk & Ehrlich 2013:192) task of relating to the overhearing audience.

### Sociolinguistic context and data

As indicated above, the practice of other-language recalibration has been observed in news interviews in Rwanda. The sociolinguistic background of these interviews is Rwandan multilingualism. At the macro-societal level, Rwanda is officially multilingual in Kinyarwanda, French, and English (*Constitution of the Republic of Rwanda* 2003/2015, article 8). This sociolinguistic configuration is a result of the country's sociopolitical history, which space limitations do not allow me to detail here. For the purposes of this article, we note the following few facts. Kinyarwanda is the native language of the majority of Rwandans and the vast majority of Rwandans are monolingual in this language (Rosendal 2009, 2010; Samuelson & Freedman 2010). French, by contrast, a former colonial language introduced by the Belgians who ruled Rwanda since the end of the First World War is currently only acquired through formal education and spoken by a small minority of educated elites. As for English, written in the Constitution for the first time less than thirty years ago, it is also acquired only through formal education and is spoken by an even smaller minority of educated elites, although it is increasingly gaining more and more ground. For the purposes of this article, this configuration of the Rwandan repertoire is important because the participants in the interviews I analyse here are members of that bilingual<sup>2</sup> (French/English) elite while the majority of the audience are monolingual in Kinyarwanda. In this context, other-language recalibration can be seen as an attempt to bridge potential language-based communication gaps between interview participants and their audience. In other words, it can be seen as a form of 'language brokering' (Bolden 2012; Greer 2015).

At the level of discourse, a common feature of Rwandan multilingualism is the prevalence of language alternation. In Rwanda, monolingual language use in any of the official languages tends to be consigned to very formal written discourse and to speech addressed to non-Kinyarwanda audiences. Otherwise, even in what would normally be described as ‘highly regulated texts’ (Sebba 2013), language alternation occurs (see Gafaranga 2015, 2017a). In spoken interactions, formal or informal, language alternation is the ‘unmarked choice’ (Myers-Scotton 1993), especially among members of the educated elite. For example, as we see below, Drew & Heritage (1992) make a distinction between ‘formal’ and ‘non-formal’ institutional talk and include news interviews among the former. It is widely reported that, typically, language alternation occurs in informal conversation among bilingual speakers. Therefore, it would not be anticipated in formal institutional talk. However, as I have argued elsewhere (Gafaranga 2021), the interviews in the corpus have been conducted bilingually and have adopted ‘language alternation itself as the medium’ (Gafaranga 2007). However, it is important to note that, as in other language mixing contexts (Auer 1999), this alternate use of languages is perceived, not as a haphazard alternation between two/three separate codes, but as one code, which I have described as ‘Kinyarwanda-for-all-practical-purposes’ (Gafaranga 1998).

A quick example can give the gist of the language choice issue in Rwanda generally and in news interviews in particular. In extract (6) below, three languages are used: Kinyarwanda, French, and English. In line 5, IE1 picks up the English item “an end in itself” and calls for it to be recalibrated on account that it is not Kinyarwanda (line 4). By doing so, he seems to be saying that the element does not belong together with the rest of the talk and, by implication, that the rest of the talk is Kinyarwanda. In reality, not everything else is Kinyarwanda. Kinyarwanda, French, and English (see lines 1, 3 and 6) are used. Linguistic features from different languages are used without any orientation to their languageness, that is, without, as translanguaging scholars would say, ‘watchful adherence to the socially and politically defined boundaries of named ... languages’ (Otheguy, García, & Reid 2015:283). Instead, the medium of the discourse as a whole is formulated to be Kinyarwanda.

(6)

- 1 IE1: *Alternance ni principe*  
‘Power transfer is a principle’
  
- 2 IR: Umh
  
- 3 IE1: heuh ya *démocratie* koko (.) ariko heuh  
‘heuh of democracy because (.) but heuh’



4 → mu Kinyarwanda sinzi uko babivuga-  
 ‘in Kinyarwanda I-don’t-know how they-say it-’  
 ‘I don’t know how to say it in Kinyarwanda’

5 → ntabwo ari an end in itself  
 ‘it’s not an end in itself’

6 IE2: Exactly

Thus, although the interviews in the corpus can, technically speaking, be described as bilingual, I refer to them simply as *news interviews* since the focus of this article is not on language choice.

Before I conclude this sociolinguistic background, I provide a short history of broadcast media in Rwanda. In Rwanda, broadcast media is largely a post-independence phenomenon. The first radio station, Radio Rwanda, was established in 1961 and it remained the sole broadcasting media for the whole of the pre-war era. During the (1990–1994) civil war, two new radio stations were created, namely Radio Muhabura (1991) and Radio Libre des Mille Collines (1992). As instruments of war propaganda, both radio stations stopped broadcasting when the war ended. With the popularisation of the internet at the dawn of the twenty-first century, new radio stations mushroomed, leading to the current count of thirty-five radio stations. As for television, Rwanda TV (RTV), the first public television station, started broadcasting in 1990. As in the case of Radio Rwanda, RTV remained the sole player until 2014 when the government rolled out digital television. Following this migration to digital TV, new stations were created. The current count stands at twelve stations. At the linguistic level, all Rwandan media outlets broadcast in two or all three official languages. Minimally, because they target a Rwandan audience, content is delivered in Kinyarwanda (-for-all-practical-purposes).

The news interviews I analyse in this article were collected on the YouTube channel of RTV, with an explicit claim that they were conducted in Kinyarwanda (but see above). As the channel regularly updates its content with new interviews added almost on a daily basis, I have adopted the data collection strategy of *theoretical sampling* (Ten Have 1999:132–33), a strategy which gives me the flexibility of adding new interesting data as they become available. Since the interviews are publicly available, no major ethical issue in using them as data was identified. Even so, in transcribing the data, details of the personal identities of the participants (e.g. names) have been omitted.

## Context of theory and methods

### *Institutional CA*

As indicated in the INTRODUCTION, this article adopts the perspective of institutional CA. Institutional CA, a branch of CA which emerged in the late 1970s, can generally be described as using CA methods in order ‘to examine the operation

of social institutions in talk' (Heritage 2005:104). More specifically, scholars (e.g. Schegloff 1992; Heritage 2005; Heritage & Clayman 2010; Arminen 2016) recognise three research objectives to institutional CA:

- a. Explicating interactional practices by referring to their institutional contexts;
- b. Understanding the workings of institutions by focusing on their interactional dimension;
- c. Contributing to wider issues 'that are beyond the talk' (Heritage 2005:115)

This article contributes to the first objective. Examples of previous work under this category include Button (1987), Stoke & Edwards (2009), and Gafaranga (2017b). Button has investigated the 'logic' of the features of sequence organisation he had observed in job interviews, Stoke & Edwards have addressed the 'raison d'être' of 'ostensibly silly questions' in police-suspect interviews, and Gafaranga has developed an account of the diverse uses of 'how are you?' in general practice consultations in the UK.

Studies that aim to elucidate interactional practices referring to their institutional contexts share three key methodological requirements. First, they adopt a 'comparative approach' (Drew & Heritage 1992; Arminen 2016). They start by observing similarities and differences (if any) between ordinary conversation and institutional talk and proceed to account for observed differences in terms of the institution's 'fingerprint' (Drew & Heritage 1992). This is important because, if there are no differences, there is no need to invoke the institution. A second important requirement in these studies is to demonstrate, 'from the details of talk or other conduct in the materials that (one is) analyzing' (Schegloff 1992:110), the 'relevance' for participants of the claimed explanatory aspect(s) of the institution. This demonstration is necessary because, without it, there is a risk of falling into the 'positivistic stance, even though the animating concerns may be drawn from quite anti-positivistic theoretical sources and commitments' (1992:102). Third, there is a need to demonstrate the 'procedural consequentiality' (Schegloff 1992:111) of the claimed institution to the talk. Analysts must demonstrate that the fact that talk is conducted in a specific institution has consequences 'for its shape, form, trajectory, content, or character' (1992:111). In turn, this requirement is based on the theoretical position that 'context is talk shaping' (Drew & Heritage 1992; Heritage & Clayman 2010). I have attended to the first methodological requirement in the CONTEXT OF LITERATURE section above and I attend to the remaining two in the ANALYSIS section below.

### ***The broadcast news interview as institutional talk***

According to Drew & Heritage (1992), institutional talk broadly divides into two categories: 'formal' and 'non-formal' institutional talk. Non-formal institutional talk takes place in 'private rather than public contexts' and adopts 'turn-taking procedures (which) approximate conversational or at least "quasi-conversational" modes' (Drew & Heritage 1992:28). Formal institutional talk, by contrast, often adopts specialised turn-taking systems, including the possibility of a 'pre-allocation of turn types' (Drew & Heritage 1992:26). Also, formal institutional talk is often designed for

an overhearing audience. Examples of formal institutional settings include courtrooms, classrooms and, most importantly for this article, broadcast news interviews.

Clayman & Heritage (2002:7) describe the broadcast news interview as ‘a familiar and readily recognizable genre ... [but whose] members share a loose family resemblance rather than a rigid set of defining attributes’. As a genre, the broadcast news interview comprises four main subgenres, depending on the interviewees’ identities, namely *accountability interview* (interviewee: public office holder), *expert interview* (interviewee: somebody with specialist knowledge of a relevant topic), *experiential interview* (interviewee: somebody with first-hand experience of a relevant event), and *affiliative interview* (interviewee: other media professionals, e.g. correspondents) (Montgomery 2008). Interviews may also be described as *one-to-one interview* or as *panel interview* depending on the number of interviewees. However, Clayman cautions against reifying ‘these categories or (treating) them as wholly determined by the ‘objective’ nature of the IEs’ identities. Specific interviews may straddle the boundaries between genres’ (2014:653). Two of these categories are present in my corpus, namely accountability interview and expert interview.

As we have seen, the broadcast news interview is a prototypical example of formal institutional talk. As such, it has a specialized turn-taking system whereby opportunities for action are differentially distributed between/among participants. A simple rule organises turn-taking in news interviews: ‘Interviewers restrict themselves to questioning and interviewees restrict themselves to answering interviewer’s questions, or at least responding to interviewer’s questions’ (Clayman & Heritage 2002:97). More importantly for the concerns of this article is the fact that, in news interviews, talk is designed for an overhearing audience. Research has identified a variety of interactional practices through which interview participants reveal their orientation to this aspect of talk. These include: (i) ‘avoiding receipt tokens during IEs’ elaborated turns’, (ii) ‘displaying understanding for the audience’, and (iii) ‘explicit references to the audience and full-form IE address terms within closings’ (Clayman 2014:636–37). This article argues that, in broadcast news interviews in Rwanda, other-language recalibration is one of the strategies through which interview participants orient to the overhearing audience. In developing this argument and following Schegloff’s recommendations, in the next section, I begin by demonstrating the relevance of the overhearing audience for interview participants.

## Analysis

### **Orienting to the overhearing audience**

According to Schegloff (1992:110), the relevance of an (aspect of) institution must be demonstrated in ‘the details of talk or other conduct in the materials’ one is analysing. One conduct through which interview participants reveal their orientation to the overhearing audience is, according to Clayman, ‘explicit reference to the audience’ (2014:637). In news interviews in Rwanda, it is common practice for participants to explicitly refer to the audience. Here are some examples. Extract (7) comes from an interview with members of a political party (Liberal Party) which is celebrating its thirtieth anniversary. IR has asked IE, a former leader of the party, a question about the legacy of the party. In line 2, IE mentions the youth as the real target of his message (*nabwira urubwiruko...*).

(7)

- 1 IE: euh icyambere navuga yuko- euh ikiz-  
'euh first thing I'd say is that- euh the good-'
- 2 → nabwira urubyiruko nkanabasaba  
'I'd say to the youth and I'd ask them'
- 3 gukurikiza (.) ni icyubatswe n-  
'to preserve what has been achieved'
- 4 n'ubufatanye bw'amashyaka  
'by parties working together'

Extract (8) comes from a panel interview with known panafricanists on the status of Rwanda on the international scene. IR asks IE what he would tell the overhearing audience (*ikintu wabwira abatwumva*) about this status in a few words (line 4).

(8)

- 1 IR: kuri iyi myaka 27 ish- ishize uRwanda  
'about the last 27 years since Rwanda'
- 2 rwibohoye ariko tubirebeye mu  
'got liberated but looking at it from'
- 3 ruhande mpuzamahanga  
'an international perspective'
- 4 → uuu- ikintu wabwira abatwumva  
uuu- a-thing you-would-tell those-to-us listen  
'what would you tell the audience'
- 5 nko mu munota umwe ni iki?  
'in one minute or so'

Also consider extract (9), which comes from a panel interview on the eve of the referendum that removed the presidential term-limit clause from the Constitution (2003/2015).

(9)

- 1 IR: mwagiye muri *technique* cyane=  
'you have made it very technical'
- 2 IE: yeah
- 3 =y'amategeko- ni ukuvuga ngo  
'regarding law procedures- it means that'
- 4 → abakurikira iki kiganiro  
'those who are following this programme'
- 5 → urimo kubabwira ngo nta  
you-are them-telling that no  
'you are telling our audience that no'
- 6 mushinga w'itegeko wakwakirwa  
'draft bill can be accepted'
- 7 usaba:- usaba ko (.)  
'if it leads to'
- 8 abanyarwanda babuzwa uburenganzira bwo (...)  
'Rwandans losing their right to (...)'

In lines 1–3, IR tells the interviewees that they have made the discussion very technical in terms of legal procedures and goes on to formulate IE's contribution and, in lines 4 and 5, he says in so many words that the interviewee's talk had been addressed to those "who are following this programme".

Since, as this evidence shows, participants are aware of the overhearing audience as the real recipients of their talk, we can anticipate more or less safely that this orientation to the audience has repercussions on the organisation of talk and is consequential to it. As Heritage & Greatbatch (1991:109) put it, 'the footing of news interviews as talk oriented towards the overhearing audience is managed at all points over the course of the talk and not merely at these points where an overt reference to the audience or some other specially audience-directed activity takes place'. One point where this orientation is managed, I want to argue, is in the specific organisation of other-language recalibration repair.

### **Formulating other-language recalibration repair as talk directed to the overhearing audience**

Garfinkel & Sacks (1970:351) use the term *formulating* to refer to ‘conversationalists’ practices of saying-in-so-many-words-what-we-are-doing’, of ‘explicitly naming the kind of action one is doing’ (Fele 2023:84). According to Depermann (2011:117), ‘formulations are a principal means participants use to display and secure that their interactions are self-explicative, intelligible and accountable’. Any aspect of talk, not just the actions accomplished, can be formulated (Garfinkel & Saks 1970:351). In the news interviews in the corpus, participants sometimes formulate the status of other-language recalibration as talk addressed to the overhearing audience. That is to say, participants may, in addition to recalibrating their talk, say in so many words that their action is for the benefit of the overhearing audience. Consider extract (10). A high-ranking government official has been asked to comment on media reports that the ruling party stands accused of atrocities during the civil war era (1990–1994). The official reacts saying that these allegations are scandalous.

(10)

- 1 IE: Wenda mu ijambo abantu bakunda gukoresha  
‘to use a word people like to use’
  
- 2 mu Rwanda-abantu bakubwira ko ibi bintu-  
‘in Rwanda - people say that these things-’
  
- 3 ba- bakubwira ngo  
‘they- they say that’
  
- 4 → ni agahomamunwa  
it-is a-shut-mouth  
‘it is scandalous’
  
- 5 → cyangwa ni *scandale* ku bavuga igifaransa.  
‘or it is *scandale* for those who speak French’

In the extract, IE recalibrates a Kinyarwanda item (*agahomamunwa*, line 4) using its French equivalent (*scandale*, line 5) and, in addition, specifies that he does it “for those (of the audience) who speak French”. A second case is extract (11). Participants are debating the situation of somebody who is appearing in court in Rwanda, appealing a sentence he has been given for terrorism charges. The defendant has changed his defence strategy, moving from an earlier guilty plea to the denial of guilt. Because

of this, participants are saying that, now, he could also be accused of obstructing justice. IE uses the English phrase “obstruction of justice” (line 2). IR thinks this expression could be challenging (*amagambo akomeye*, line 5) for the audience and asks IE to translate, that is, to recalibrate it for the audience (*wayasemurira abantu*, line 7) and IE complies in subsequent talk (not shown).

(11)

- 1 IE: Aho ngaho harimo ikindi kibazo.  
‘Here there is an additional problem’
- 2 → Harimo obstruction of justice.  
‘There is obstruction of justice.’
- 3 Uri kumva?  
‘You understand?’
- 4 icyo rero ni ikindi kibazo gikomeye cyane  
‘That’s another difficult problem’
- 5 IR: aha- uvuze amagambo akomeye  
‘Here you’ve used difficult words’
- 6 y’icyongerezaaa  
‘of English’
- 7 → wayasemurira abantu?  
you-them-translate-for people?  
‘can you translate them for people?’

As Garfinkel & Sacks (1970:353) say, in talk-in-interaction, formulating is rather infrequent. However, despite its scarcity, formulating is generally agreed to be one of the most powerful sources of evidence in CA (Sidnell 2014:81–82). On this basis, we can proceed with confidence that, in news interviews in Rwanda, other-language recalibration is a device for relating to the overhearing audience even when it is not formulated as such.

### ***The procedural consequentiality of audience-directed talk***

So far, I have demonstrated that participants in news interviews in Rwanda orient to the overhearing audience explicitly referring to them, among other practices. And I have provided evidence that other-language recalibration is done for the benefit of the overhearing audience. In the data, this function is sometimes explicitly formulated by participants themselves. I now turn to Schegloff's (1992) second recommendation regarding the study of institutional talk, namely procedural consequentiality. Specifically, in this section, I show that the fact that other-language recalibration repair is talk addressed to the overhearing audience shapes the organisation of the repair practice.

*The absence of other-initiated self-repair.* As we have already seen, a key structural feature of other-language recalibration repair is the absence of the other-initiated self-repair format. Typically, interlocutors do not initiate self-repair on each other's talk. A rare exception, which in my view confirms the norm, is extract (11) above. In the extract, IR invites IE to self-repair ("can you translate them for people?", line 7) and provides an account for this invitation ("you've used difficult words", line 5). This account not only points to the 'dispreferred' nature of other-initiation in this context (Pomerantz 1984), but also suggests that IR initiates repair because he is unable to accomplish it himself (see other-initiated other-repair below). Since other-language recalibration is done for the benefit of a third party, namely the overhearing audience, it is very easy to see why other-initiated self-repair is rare, if not impossible. Other-initiation of self-repair in other-language recalibration is avoided for exactly the same reason that receipt tokens are avoided in news interviews in general. In news interviews, receipt tokens are avoided because their use would make the situation look as if co-present participants were the real recipients of the talk (Clayman 2014:636). Just like the use of receipt tokens, other-initiation of repair is a recipient's action. On receiving an interlocutor's talk, the recipient either produces the next relevant action or they initiate repair on it. In other words, in news interviews, participants avoid initiating other-language recalibration repair in the format other-initiated self-repair on interlocutors' talk in order to avoid being seen as the recipients of that talk.

*Respecifying other-initiated other-repair.* We have also seen that, in other-language recalibration, the format other-initiated other-repair is common. In passing, we can note that repair in this format is always initiated and executed by the interviewer (see extracts (2), (12)–(14)). If other-language recalibration is seen as talk directed to the overhearing audience and that the fact that it is always initiated and executed by the interviewer is taken into consideration, an account of this repair format turns out to be straightforward. The format other-initiated other-repair in other-language recalibration can be likened to what Clayman (2014: 636–37) terms 'displaying understanding for the audience'. To do this, IR 'simply provides an adequate reformulation of the interviewee's previously stated position' (Heritage 1985:108). In the case at hand, IR simply changes the language of IE's talk. More importantly, we have already seen that broadcast news interviews have a specialised turn-taking system characterised, among other things, by 'action pre-allocation' (Clayman & Heritage 2002:37). The interviewer asks questions and the interviewee answers them (Clayman 2014:631). It would appear that



the same differential distribution of interactional actions obtains at the level of other-language recalibration. The interviewer can initiate and execute repair on interviewees' talk, but interviewees can only initiate and execute repair on their own talk.

Heritage (1985:108) identifies a three-step sequence over which IRs display understanding of IEs' talk for the overhearing audience: statement + reformulation + confirmation. This three-step structure is evident in extract (2) and is also found in extract (12). Participants are talking about inter-Africa trade. IE notes that, for it to be possible, cargo aircrafts have to be bought. In the extract, the item *indege z'amacargo* in line 1 is recalibrated as *indege z'imizigo* in line 5 and the repair is confirmed by repeating the proposed repair solution in line 6.

(12)

- 1 IE: → (...) *indege z'amacargo*  
(...) aircrafts for freight  
'freighters'
  
- 2            *zitarab- Kugurwa.*  
'which are not yet avail- to buy'
  
- 3            *Afurika igomba gutekereza*  
'Africa needs to think'
  
- 4            [*kuko niba dufite isoko-*  
'because if we have a market-'
  
- 5 IR: → [*indege z'imizigo*↓  
'aircrafts for freight'
  
- 6 IE: → *z'imizigo. Niba dufite*  
'for freight. If we have'
  
- 7            *isoko rinini ry'Afurika (...)*  
'the big African market (...)'

Even more interesting is extract (13). An MP from the ruling party is saying that, except for economic development, everything is ready for the country to take off.

The recalibration of the item “economic development” in line 6 is undertaken at line 8 and the recalibration is confirmed at line 9.

(13)

1 IE1: (...) huh mu rwego rw’ imiyoborere hh  
‘(...) at the level of governance hh’

2 tumaze kuba strong (.) bihagije  
‘we are strong (.) enough’

3 n’ib- n’ibindi birakorwa kugirango  
‘and everything is being done for’

4 tube ev- tube even stronger (.)  
‘us to be’

5 ariko hari ikibazo cya  
‘but there is still the problem of’

6 → economic development.

7 IE2: huh

8 IR: → Iryo ni [iterambere ry’ ubu-  
That’s development of (wealth)  
‘That’s economic development’

9 IE1: → [Iterambere ry’ubukungu  
development of wealth  
‘economic development’

However, on a second look, the account of this repair format turns out to be not as straightforward as it first appears. Two key questions can be asked. First, if IE’s talk

is addressed to the overhearing audience, how come IR initiates and effects repair on it? Other-initiation of repair is the preserve of the talk recipient (see above). In addition, according to Schegloff and colleagues (1977:380), ‘other-correction’ is impossible in principle. However, Schegloff and colleagues (1977:380) also note that there may be environments, such as storytelling, where participants act as a ‘team’ and, as such, can correct each other overtly. This idea of talking teams is further developed in Lerner (1993:237) who shows that talking teams may consist either of ‘enduring social units (e.g. couples)’ or of ‘momentary associations’. Either way, these teams are talked into being in a variety of ways. Crucially, as Lerner says, in a team, ‘one party (may) speak on behalf of a co-participant or report on their speech and action’ (1993:230). Interestingly, other-correction is given as a good example of an action which can be done on behalf of a co-participant. Bolden (2013, 2024) takes the idea of talking teams even further and shows that one particularly fertile environment for team formation is when talk is addressed to third parties. In such circumstances, a participant may operate a correction on behalf of a co-member and do so ‘for their recipients’ (Lerner 1993:230). Thus, according to Bolden (2024:211), ‘within-team correction might be considered as a form of repair that is closer to self-correction than other-correction’. It is along these lines that the question above can be answered. IR claims co-membership with IE and produces a recalibration repair on his/her behalf for the benefit of the overhearing audience.

Second, as the data shows, the so-called confirming step consists overwhelmingly of repeats of previous turns (e.g. extract (2), (12), and (13)). A rare exception can be found in extract (14). IR asks IE why some people (himself included) move from allegiance to the current government to allegiance to the opposition and the other way round. In answering the question, IE starts by quoting a famous musician from Ivory Coast who is reported to have said that only stupid people don’t change.

(14)

- 1 IE: yaravuze ngo *tout change, tout évolue* (.)  
‘he said everything changes, everything evolves (.)’
- 2 *sauf les imbéciles ne changent pas.*  
‘only stupid people don’t change’
- 3 IR: Byose birahinduka usibye ibiburabwenge  
everything changes except stupid ones  
‘everything changes only stupid people’
- 4 [nibyo (bidahinduka)  
are-the-ones who-do-not-change  
‘don’t change’

- 5 IE: → [*voilà. Tout change, tout évolue*  
 'that's it. Everything changes, everything evolves'
- 6 *sauf les imbéciles ne changent pas*  
 'Only stupid people don't change'

In quoting the singer (lines 1 and 2), IE uses French. In lines 3 and 4, IR recalibrates the quote using Kinyarwanda and, in line 5, IE ratifies the recalibration. Exceptionally, here, IE does not repeat IR's prior talk. Instead, he uses the emphatic French agreement token *voilà*.

Research has identified two main types of repeat in talk-in-interaction, namely repair initiating repeat and registering repeat (Schegloff 1997; Persson 2015; Rossi 2020; etc.). The function of a registering repeat is to register receipt 'of the preceding turn and the actions done in it' (Schegloff 1997:527). That is to say, through registering repeat participants do being the recipients of the talk in the prior turn. Repeat in other-language recalibration seems to be of this second category as it does not initiate repair on prior talk. However, there is a problem. Since, in all other aspects, interview participants avoid recipient actions (e.g. avoidance of receipt tokens, Clayman 2014:636; avoidance of other-initiated self-repair (see above)), why would they do otherwise here? Why would interview participants register receipt of talk (other-language recalibration in the preceding turn) which is not addressed to them?

Arano (2018) has focused on what he/she calls 'post-other-correction repeat' in multilingual interaction between native and non-native speakers. They identified a three-step structure consisting of self-initiation + corrective demonstration + third position self-correction. As it can be seen, the structure is similar to that of other-correction as described in Schegloff and colleagues (1977:378–79), but it is also different in very important ways. In their work, the repair solution is a 'candidate solution', is 'low on the confidence/certainty scale', and is 'proffered for confirmation/rejection'. In Arano's study, as the label indicates, step two is high on the certainty scale and is a 'demonstration of correct behaviour'. And this is so because of the underlying asymmetry of expertise/knowledge between participants. As a result, while, in Schegloff and colleagues (1977), the third step is a confirmation/rejection, in Arano, it is a 'third turn self-correction'. Arano suggests that the same structure can be found in other settings characterised by asymmetries, including workplace settings (2018:17). One can therefore argue that, in other-language recalibration in news interviews, a similar process is at work. IE overhears IR's recalibration, uses it as a 'corrective demonstration' and self-repairs in turn three. To put it simply, IE claims the recalibration repair for him/herself and deploys it for the overhearing audience. Thus, the format of other-language recalibration previously described as other-initiated other-repair can be re-analysed as two imbricated self-initiated self-repairs, one by IR (claiming membership in a talking team) and one by IE (after a corrective demonstration), both undertaken for the benefit of the overhearing audience.

*Respecifying self-initiated other-repair.* If other-language recalibration is seen as talk addressed to the overhearing audience, the format we have previously analysed as self-initiated other-repair too needs to be reconsidered. As we have seen, typically, self-initiation of other-repair is done indirectly through ‘displays of trouble’ (Reichert & Liebscher 2012), for example, ‘other-languageness formulation’ (Gafaranga 2015). This can be seen in extract (5). A further example of the use of other-languageness formulation is extract (15). Participants are talking about the tendency Rwandan parents have of sending their children abroad for better opportunities.

(15)

- 1 IE: (...) mbese muri make *mentalité* (.)  
‘(...) in a few words *mentality*’
  
- 2 → mu gifaransa niko navuga wenda-  
in-French is how-I-would-say maybe  
‘that’s how I would say it in French’
  
- 3 [kumva ko hanze hari ubuzima-  
‘to feel that life is better abroad’
  
- 4 IR: [ni imyumvire mbese↓  
it’s a mentality like  
‘it’s like a mentality’
  
- 5 IE: Imyumvire (.) cyane cyane  
‘Mentality (.) mostly mostly’
  
- 6 nicyo numv- nicyo kibazo  
‘that’s what I feel- that’s the problem’

At line 1, IR describes the parents’ tendency using the French noun phrase *mentalité* and, immediately after, he indicates its other-languageness (*mu gifaransa niko navuga wenda*, line 2). Subsequently, IR provides the recalibration (*imyumvire*, line 4).

While there is evidence that the display of trouble by one participant can make a recalibration by the interlocutor relevant, the issue is whether it makes other-language recalibration by next speaker ‘conditionally relevant’ (Schegloff 1968). This is important because the latter possibility would be incompatible with the view that other-language recalibration is talk addressed to the overhearing audience. A closer observation of the data reveals that displays of trouble do not make other-language

recalibration by an interlocutor conditionally relevant. In extract (5), at line 2, IR displays trouble, stops speaking and, immediately after, IE provides a recalibration. In extract (6), by contrast, at line 4, IE1 produces an other-languageness formulation but no recalibration follows. A similar situation occurs in extract (16) below.

(16)

- 1 IE: (...) kuburyo bafasha abasaza kongera  
'(...) in order to help the elderly to'
  
- 2 kugira- guhuza amafaranga  
'again- reconcile the money'
  
- 3 bakira n'aho ifaranga rigeze mu  
'they receive and the value of the franc'
  
- 4 → byerekeranye no:- mu Kinyarwanda  
they-related to in Kinyarwanda  
'regarding- in Kinyarwanda'
  
- 5 → ntabwo nzi uko mbivuga- inflation  
No I-know how I-say  
'I don't know how to say it- inflation'
  
- 6 IR: Umh
  
- 7 IE: kugirango bo badakomeza guhomba (...)  
'so they continue to be able to (...)'

Between these two extremes, we find situations such as the one in extract (17) where IE displays trouble (line 4) and goes on to provide the recalibration himself (line 6).

(17)

- 1 IE1: icyo Putin yashakaga- (.) ni ukuvuga ngo  
'What Putin wanted- (.) it means that'

- 2            iyo udéc- iyo usigninze decree  
               ‘when you *dec-* when you sign a decree’
- 3    IR:        Umh
- 4    IE1: →    harya ubwo mu Kinyarwanda ni iki?  
                   by the way in Kinyarwanda is what?  
                   ‘by the way what is it in Kinyarwanda’
- 5            nii- huh ni ni iki ni iki cya perezida (.)  
               ‘it’s- huh it’s it’s what of the president’
- 6            →    ni iteka rya pe[rezida  
                   it-is decree of president  
                   ‘it is a decree of the president’
- 7    IR:        [Iteka  
                   ‘decree’
- 8    IE2:        Iteka  
                   ‘decree’
- 9    IE1:        Huuh (.) iyo usigninze icyo kintu  
                   ‘when you sign that thing’
- 10            uba urecognizinte ikindi gihugu  
               ‘you recognise another country’

There are also situations such as extract (15) where both participants orient to producing a recalibration and end up producing the same recalibration in overlap (lines 3 and 4). All this suggests that, in other-language recalibration repair, the format initially thought to be a case of self-initiated other-repair is analysable as word search repair (Schegloff et al. 1977; Brouwer 2003; Dressel 2020; etc.) and, within it, displays of trouble, not as initiating actions, but ‘as accounts ... for not having produced’ a recalibration (Brouwer 2003:538). Under this view, the format self-initiated other-repair is only apparent. As in the case of what initially appeared to be other-initiated other-repair (see above), the actual structure is that of two imbricated self-initiated self-repairs, the only difference being that, here, action-type pre-allocation does not obtain.

## Summary and conclusion

Adopting a comparative perspective, this article opened by noticing organisational differences between repair in ordinary conversation and other-language recalibration repair in broadcast news interviews in Rwanda. It was observed that, while repair in everyday conversation can take any of four formats (self-initiated self-repair, self-initiated other-repair, other-initiated self-repair, and other-initiated other-repair), other-language recalibration repair can only take three of these. Therefore, the article set itself the aim of accounting for the observed variance, that is, of investigating the 'logic' of this structural reduction. Based on available literature according to which repair can be deployed, not to solve any problems of production/reception of messages, but 'in the service of the action the speaker means to be doing with the talk' (Kitzinger 2014:242), I took as my working hypothesis that, in broadcast news interviews in Rwanda, other-language recalibration repair is used as a strategy for relating to the overhearing audience and that, in turn, this interactional use of repair is consequential to its shape. Analysis of the data confirmed this hypothesis. It confirmed the hypothesised interactional use of other-language recalibration repair and its consequence for the shape of the interactional practice. To be sure, analysis revealed that the structure of other-language recalibration is in fact even more reduced than it had originally been thought to be. The structure of other-language recalibration repair consists, not of three formats as initially thought, but of only one, namely self-initiated self-repair.

This finding advances our understanding of repair in talk-in-interaction, of the relationship between talk and its institutional context, and of talk in news interviews, albeit in a small way. But it also calls for further research. There is a need to know whether other-language recalibration repair is specific to the particular sociolinguistic context of Rwanda or whether it is a feature of bilingual contexts generally. If other-language recalibration is found in other sociolinguistic contexts, there is a need to know whether it adopts the same structure or whether its organisation is context-sensitive. More importantly, there is a need to investigate the structure of other-language recalibration repair in ordinary conversation. In this article, I have taken as a 'benchmark' (Heritage 1997) the organisation of repair in conversation in general. Clearly a more reliable benchmark would have been the structure of other-language recalibration repair in everyday conversation, had it been available.

## Notes

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<sup>1</sup> Transcription conventions can be found in the [Appendix](#).

<sup>2</sup> In this article, the terms *bilingual* and *bilingualism* are used with in a generic sense to mean 'more than one language', except when reference is made to society, in which case the term *multilingualism* is preferred.

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## Appendix: Transcription conventions

A simplified version of Jefferson's (2004) transcription system has been followed, with transcription details limited to what is needed for the purpose of this analysis (see Ochs 1979).

Language contrast: Kinyarwanda, *French*, *English*; note that, in some cases, an item is transcribed as French or as English solely based on its pronunciation as perceived by the author.

→	line containing a target element
-	cut-off
(.)	hearable pause (not measured)
ba:	longation
[overlap	onset

Two-line transcription adopted except where, in the target item, Kinyarwanda syntax is significantly different from English syntax. In this case three-line transcription is adopted.