

Grammar in Interaction:
Polar Interrogative Sequences in Talk-in-Interaction

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Linus: Do you want to play with me Violet?

Violet: You are younger than me (shuts the door)

Linus: (puzzled) she didn't answer my question.

(From Charles Schulz's Peanuts Comic Strip, cited in Labov, 1972a, p.123)

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Dedication

To all victims of the Syrian civil war, 2011 until present.

Abstract

The current study investigates the sequential organisation of the polar interrogative sequence. By implementing Conversation Analysis ethnomethodology, the study explores the action and form-related preferences which underpin the structure and the various trajectories of this type of sequence. The study demonstrates that some language-specific features, such as the conventionally declarative form of polar interrogatives, promote specific types of responses, such as repetitions. In the absence of morphosyntactic marking of polar, interactants orient to epistemic asymmetry and sequential positioning to mark a turn-at-talk as a polar question. One outcome of such orientation is that interactants display high sensitivity towards each other's epistemic rights. Interactants implement various lexical, grammatical and sequential resources to index their level of epistemic access to the issue in question. Responses to polar interrogative questions vary according to the level of knowledge indexed and projected in those questions. The level of knowledge indexed and projected in polar questions would also determine whether a third turn is relevant or not within the polar interrogative sequence. The position of the polar interrogative sequence within talk-in-interaction has also an impact over the form and the extent of the response. The position of the polar interrogative sequence also determines whether a third turn is relevant or not within that sequence. This study also demonstrates that the polar question/response system is strongly biased towards positive format in terms of grammar. Such form-related bias intersects with the action-related bias towards confirmation, agreement and acceptance. Finally, the current study demonstrates that interactants orient to achieving intersubjectivity before bringing the polar interrogative sequence to closure.

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Transliteration conventions

The Arabic in this thesis is transliterated in modified Roman alphabet adopted and modified for Al-Khalil (2005, p.1) and Cowell (1964, p.1)

Consonants:

ب	b	bab (door)
ت	t	ṭajer (merchant)
ث	ṭ	ṭanye (one second)
ج	j	jamal (beauty)
ح	ḥ	ḥubb (love)
خ	x	xabar (news)
د	d	dīn (religion)
ذ	ẓ	haẓa (this)
ر	r	raqam (number)
س	s	samaʔ (sky)
ش	š	šakl (shape)
ص	ṣ	ṣoura (picture)
ض	ḍ	ḍabb (lizard)
ط	ṭ	ṭayr (bird)
ظ	ẓ (non-interdental)	ẓell (shadow)
ع	ʿ	ʿaiyn (eye)
غ	ġ	ġasal (wash)
ف	f	farq (difference)
ق	q	Quran
ك	k	kabīr (big)
ل	l	līl (night)
Dark l	l̥	waḷlah (by God)
م	m	makan (place)
ن	n	najm (star)
ه	h	hawaʔ (air)
و	w	wassīm (handsome)
ي	y	yafʿal (do)
ء	glottal stop	ʔ
ّ	consonant stress like:	bənn sbe (according to)

Short vowels:		Long vowels:	
a	raḥ (shall)	ā	rāḥ (went)
e	baʿref (I know)	ē	bēṭ (house)
i	ʔiza (if)	ī	kīf (how)
o	kutob (books)	ō	kōl (eat: imperative)
u	luġa (language)	ū	šūf (look: imperative)
Schwa ə	šəfət (I saw)		

Transcription conventions

This study adopts Jeffersonian transcription conventions with slight modifications (Schegloff, 2007, pp. 265-269)

- [

[

[

A left bracket bridging two lines or more indicates a point of overlap onset, whether at the start of an utterance or later.

Also, it indicates the start of an activity such as gaze, gestures and head-nods which comes concurrent with a speaker's talk or activity.

Separate left square brackets on two successive lines with utterances by different speakers indicates the same thing.
-]

]

]

A right bracket bridging two lines or more indicates a point at which two overlapping utterances both end.

Also, it indicates the end of an activity such as gaze, gestures and head-nods which comes concurrent with a speaker's talk or activity.

Separate right square brackets on two successive lines with utterances by different speakers indicates the same thing.
- =

Equals signs ordinarily come in pairs – one at the end of a line and another at the start of the next line or one shortly thereafter. They are used to indicate:

 1. If the two lines connected by the equal signs are by the same speaker, then there was a single, continuous utterance with no break or pause, which was broken up in order to accommodate the placement of overlapping talk.
 2. If the lines connected by two equal signs are by different speakers, then the second speaker's utterance follows the first with no discernible silence between them; the second speaker's utterance in this case is "latched" to the first speaker's utterance.
- ==

In the case of an overlap with latching talk by both the speaker and/or one or more co-participants, two consecutive equal marks differentiate between the latches done by the speaker and those done by co-participants.
- (0 . 5)

Numbers in parentheses indicate silence, represented in tenths of a second. What is given here in the left margin indicates 0.5 second of silence. Silences may be marked either within an utterance or between utterances
- (.)

A dot in parentheses indicates a "micropause," hearable but not readily measurable; ordinarily less than 0.2 second.
- : :

Colons are used to indicate the prolongation or stretching of the sound just preceding them. The more colons, the longer the stretching. Each colon represents one beat (tenth of a second) stretch. On the other hand, graphically stretching a word on the page, by inserting blank spaces between the letters, does not necessarily indicate how it was pronounced; it is used to allow alignment with overlapping talk.
- word
word
wOrd
wOrd

Underlining is used to indicate some form of stress or emphasis, either by increased loudness or higher pitch.

Especially loud talk may be indicated by upper case; again, the louder, the more upper case. And, in extreme cases, upper case may be underlined.
- A hyphen after a word or part of a word indicates a cut-off or self-interruption.
- ↑ ↓

The up and down arrows mark sharper intonation rises or falls than would be indicated by combinations of colons and underlining, or may mark a whole shift, or resetting, of the pitch register at which the talk is being produced.

- >< The combination of “more than” and “less than” symbols indicate that the talk between them is compressed or rushed. Used in the reverse order, they can indicate that a stretch of talk is markedly slowed or drawn out. The “less than” symbol by itself indicates that the immediately
- <>
- hh Hearable aspiration is shown where it occurs in the talk by the letter “h” – the more “hs,” the more aspiration. The aspiration may represent breathing, laughter, etc. If it occurs inside the
- .hh inbreath
- hh. outbreath
- ha ha laughter

d(h)i(h)d: The (h) represents laughter infiltrating a word

(()) Double parentheses are used to mark transcriber’s descriptions of events, rather than representations of them. Thus ((cough)), ((sniff)), ((telephone rings)), ((footsteps)), ((whispered)), ((pause)), etc.

() When all or part of an utterance is in parentheses, or the speaker identification is, this indicates uncertainty on the transcriber’s part, but represents a likely possibility. Empty parentheses indicate that something is being said, but no hearing (or, in some cases, speaker identification) can be achieved.

➔ marks the lines that are under discussion

- The punctuation marks are *not* used grammatically, but to indicate intonation. The period indicates a falling, or final, intonation contour, not necessarily the end of a sentence.
- ? Similarly, a question mark indicates rising intonation, not necessarily a question, and a comma indicates continuing intonation, not necessarily a clause boundary.
- ¿ Inverted question mark indicates a rise stronger than a comma but weaker than a question mark.

◦ The degree sign indicates that the talk following it was markedly quiet or soft. When there are two ‘degree signs’, the talk between them is markedly softer than the talk around it.

* an asterisk refers to a creaky sound

£ refers to smiley voice

Abbreviations for particles and grammatical items

Prt	particle
NegPrt	negative particle
Tag	positive tag question
NegTag	negative tag
PRX	prefix
SFX	suffix
V	verb
S	subject
O	object

The verb in Syrian Arabic inflects for tense, number, and gender for both its subject and object (Cowell, 1964). The following abbreviations show the verb inflection for its subject/object. The same symbols below are used to mark some pronouns, such as ‘you’, as singular/plural, or feminine/masculine.

1PS	first person singular
2PS	second person singular
3PS	third person singular
1PP	first person plural
2PP	second person plural
3PP	third person plural
fem	feminine
masc	masculine

Possessives

1PSPoss	first person singular possessive pronoun, e.g. ‘məṣṣrati’ ‘my money’
2PSPoss	second person singular possessive pronoun, e.g. ‘məṣṣrata k Sam’ ‘your money Sam’
3PSPoss	third person singular possessive pronoun, e.g. ‘məṣṣratu/məṣṣrata’ ‘his money/ her money’
1PPPoss	first person plural possessive pronoun, e.g. ‘məṣṣrat na ’ ‘our money’
2PPPoss	second person plural possessive pronoun, e.g. ‘məṣṣrat kon Sam wu Mina’ ‘your money Sam and Mina’
3PPPoss	third person plural possessive pronoun, e.g. ‘məṣṣrat on ’ ‘their money’

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1. The present study

Grammatically speaking, the polar interrogative is an utterance or a statement which expresses uncertainty about its proposition (Cantarini & Torregrossa, 2008) and invites a response that has a grammatical polarity value of either negative or affirmative (Holmberg, 2013; 2016). Affirmation can mainly be done by an affirmative particle such as ‘yes’, and/or by producing a grammatically affirmative response, while negation can mainly be done by a negative particle such as ‘no’, and/or by producing a grammatically negative response (ibid). The following examples illustrate this definition. In the first excerpt, Vera, the caller, is asking Mathew whether his mum is there (line 1). Matthew responds with the negative particle ‘no’ (line 2). When Vera produces an utterance asking Matthew to tell his mum that she has called, he responds with the affirmative particle ‘yeh’ (line 4).

Excerpt (1-i) is taken from the opening of a phone call.

(1-i) from (Raymond, 2003, p. 945) Excerpt 5

1. Vera: → Hello Mahthew is yer mum the:hr love.
2. Matthew:→ Uh no she's, gone (up) t' town, h
3. Vera: → Al:right uh will yih tell'er Antie Vera rahn:g then.
4. Mathew: → Yeh.
5. Vera: Okay.

An example of responding with a grammatically affirmative statement is in excerpt (1-ii) below. The caller Les asks whether the one who has picked the phone is Dana. Dana responds by an affirmative statement without producing ‘yes’ or any equivalent particle (line 2).

(1-ii) from (Raymond, 2003, p. 953) Excerpt 11

1. Les: .hhhhhhhhh Oh hello is that Dana,

2. Dana: It tis.

An example of responding with a grammatically negative statement, without 'no' or an equivalent particle, is in excerpt (1-iii), which is taken from a doctor's consultation. The doctor is trying to manipulate the patient's shoulder to check where the pain is and is asking whether such manipulation hurts. The patient responds to the doctor's query (line 1) by producing a grammatically negative statement without 'no' or any of its equivalents (line 3).

(1-iii) from (Raymond, 2003, p. 955) Excerpt 13

1. Doctor: Does that hurt right there,

2. (0.5)

3. Patient: Mm:, It doesn't uhm I can feel it.

Interactants may sometimes respond with both affirmative particle and statement such as in (1-iv, line 4) below.

(1-iv) from (Raymond, 2003, p. 953) Excerpt 12

1. Trevor: Hello?

2. (.)

3. Les: Oh is that Trevor,

4. Trevor: Yes it's me.

Similarly, interactants may respond with both negative particle and statement as in excerpt (1-v, line 2) below.

(1-v) from (Heritage, 2012a, p. 13) (14)

1. Viv: [Tom doesn't work behin'the juice [ba[r?

2. Shane: [N[o not'ny mo'.

However, the above-mentioned definition of the polar interrogative is rather simplistic and straightforward. As this study unfolds, further definitions and types of the polar interrogative and its response are presented and discussed.

The polar interrogative is one of the most frequently used forms of social organization (Raymond, 2003). It is one of the early language constructs learned by children and it is used ubiquitously in almost every social and institutional setting (*ibid*). Polar interrogatives figure in many essential and vital social contexts such as educational, judicial, medical, scientific and political contexts. Levinson & Torreira (2015) argue that responding to polar interrogatives involves less cognitive complexity than responding to content questions, therefore, it takes shorter time to be processed, and indeed recent studies have found that responding to polar interrogatives takes less time to process than when responding to content questions (Stivers *et al*, 2009; Levinson & Torreira, 2015; Roberts *et al*, 2015). Polar interrogatives initiate one of the core sequences in interaction: the adjacency pair sequence (Schegloff, 1968; 2007), which consists of a first pair part that is responded to by a second pair part. Studying this simple and primordial form of interactive sequence opens the door to further understanding of how interactants manage the turn-taking system and how they initiate and close sequences and conversations (Schegloff & Sacks, 1973). All these factors make researching polar interrogatives interesting and significant.

Since Geoffrey Raymond's seminal conversation analytic research on polar interrogative sequences in American English (2000; 2003), the topic has become of interest to many conversation analysts who started exploring the organization of such sequences mainly in English and subsequently in other languages. The latest study on polar interrogatives has been conducted

by Enfield *et al.* (2018). The study probes responses to polar interrogative questions in fourteen languages including Sign Language of the Netherlands. However, no Arabic language variety has so far been included in a conversation analytic study of polar interrogatives, including Syrian Arabic (SA). One of the factors which makes SA polar interrogative sequences interesting to study is that they differ in form from their English counterparts. One of the main differences between SA and English is that the former does not morphosyntactically mark polar interrogative questions. Apart from tagged questions, a polar interrogative in SA has the same grammatical form of a declarative utterance. Another difference which distinguishes SA polar interrogatives from many other languages, is that those interrogatives are not always marked prosodically in SA; i.e. they do not have rising final intonation such as in Italian where there is no morphosyntactic marking of polar interrogatives (Rossano, 2010). Due to those differences, many questions arise about how SA interactants distinguish polar interrogative turns from declarative ones. How do those differences impact the polar response system and the structure of the polar interrogative sequence in SA? One of the interesting initial observations which highlights such differences is that SA interactants sometimes respond to polar interrogatives with both polarity particles ‘?eh’ and ‘la?’ (‘yes’ and ‘no’) produced consecutively in initial position within the response. How and why would an interactant respond with both yes and no to a single polar interrogative turn? Many other observations, which are fully discussed and investigated throughout this study, make SA polar interrogative sequences interesting and worthy of investigation.

The current study mainly investigates the linguistic and sequential resources which SA interactants use to construct and mark an utterance as a polar interrogative in the absence of morphosyntactic and/or prosodic marking. The current study also casts the light on the polar response in SA and on how the declarative form of the polar interrogative turn would impact the form of such response. Like every other language, SA has its peculiarities which impact the form

and size of the polar interrogative sequence. In this study, I investigate the impact of such peculiarities on the polar question/response system within SA talk-in-interaction with focus on the interrelationship between form and interaction within the SA polar interrogative sequence. Therefore, as the title of this thesis suggests, the main focus of the current study is on form (grammar and other form-related components) with reference to action not vice versa. The study analyses the linguistic and paralinguistic components of each turn within the SA polar interrogative sequence. It investigates how those components are implemented in the organization of the SA polar interrogative sequence and the action(s) it entails. The study does not, however, focus on the myriad types of actions which may be done via polar interrogatives. This explains the current organization of the study.

Following the first two introductory chapters, the study explores the polar interrogative first turn in the sequence in chapter 3. Chapter 3 sheds light on the general structure of the polar interrogative turn and the sequence it initiates (section 3.1). The analysis then moves to exploring the linguistic and sequential resources which SA interactants implement for marking and analysing a turn-at-talk as a polar interrogative (sections: 3.2.1, 3.2.2, 3.2.3, 3.2.4, and 3.2.5). Finally, chapter 3 explores how rhetorical polar questions are constructed and oriented to by SA interactants (3.2.6).

Chapter 4 casts light on the responding second turn in the polar interrogative sequences. The chapter investigates some of the frequent linguistic and paralinguistic resources used in responding to a polar interrogative such as ‘?eh/la?’ ‘yes/no’, nods and headshakes, and repetition (sections: 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, and 4.5). The chapter also explores the role that some language and culture specific preferences play in shaping the responsive turn in SA polar interrogative sequences (sections, 4.4). In its final section (4.6), chapter 4 discusses the impact of sequential position and sequential actions on the form and length of the response.

Chapter 5 explores third position and the absence of third position in the SA polar interrogative sequence. It lists types of third position turns (section 5.2), then it moves on to investigating the absence of third position in some types of polar SA interrogative sequences (section 5.3).

The final chapter in this thesis (chapter, 6) includes a summary and conclusive remarks (section 6.1), in addition to a summary of the perceived implications of the study (section 6.2) and recommendations for future research (section 6.3).

Each chapter starts with the analysis of the simplest forms/components of the phenomenon under scrutiny, then, the discussion moves gradually towards more complex forms/components. For example, chapter 4, which analyses the ‘second pair part’ (SPP), starts with investigating nods and headshakes, then, moves to investigating some lexical and syntactic forms/components of the SPP; it then casts the light on some sequential factors which contribute to determining the length and the form of the SPP.

In order to achieve its aim in investigating the turn-by-turn structure and trajectory of the SA polar interrogative sequence, the current study implements Ethnomethodological Conversation Analysis as its approach.

1.2. Ethnomethodological Conversation Analysis

The current study adopts Ethnomethodological Conversation Analysis as its approach to researching polar interrogative sequences in SA talk-in-interaction. Conversation Analysis (CA) is concerned with studying naturally occurring interactions with the aim of finding the norms which enable interactants to achieve intersubjectivity and to accomplish social actions through interaction (Heritage, 1984a; 1995; Sacks, 1984a; 1984b; Schegloff, 1993; Schegloff & Sacks, 1973). CA considers the spoken use of language as one of the primordial social institutions through which social norms are established, realized, maintained and renewed (Heritage, 1984a). Such norms create expectations of what will come next during the interaction, and whether what will come next confirms those expectations or not. Thus, each turn-at-talk becomes ‘inspectable’ and is ‘inspected’ by the interactants (Schegloff, 2007, p.1) to see to what extent it does conform with those expectations as well as with the local and social context in which the conversation is taking place. A turn-at-talk invites inferences according to which the interactants progress the current project or move to a next one. Those inferences are contingent on what has been said/done and what is expected to be said/done. Such inferences are continually adjustable after the lapse of each “phase” of the on-going activity (Heritage, 1984a, p.60). CA studies all the details and contingencies preceding, accompanying, and following the production of a turn-at-talk as well as the actions accomplished through the turn-by-turn progress of talk-in-interaction. The aim of CA is to uncover the norms to which interactants orient and by which they establish their understanding of each other and the world. Heritage (1989, p.22). has concisely summarized CA approach to interaction in the following extract:

(1) interaction is structurally organized; (2) contributions to interaction are both context shaped and context renewing; (3) these two properties inhere in the details of interaction so that no order of detail in conversational interaction can be dismissed a priori as disorderly, accidental or interactionally irrelevant; and (4) the study of social interaction in its details is best approached through the analysis of naturally occurring data.

Hence, CA adopts an ethnomethodological approach to study interaction; an approach which investigates the turn-by-turn, sometimes beat-by-beat, development of interaction sequences. Naturally occurring mundane conversation is the “central domain of data” for CA researchers (Heritage, 1984a, p.238). Mundane interaction is the predominant way in which humans conduct their social activities and through which they establish intersubjectivity and maintain and renew social norms. Therefore, when it comes to the study of social organization, mundane interaction provides a phenomenal, relevant and orderly material for research (ibid). It takes social research away from theoretical assumptions towards an empirically based account of social organization and social actions (Schegloff, 1996a). The best method to capture mundane data and to make it available for scrutiny is by video or audio recording naturally occurring interactions. The advantages of using recorded data are distilled in the following extract by Heritage (1984a, p.238):

[T]he use of recorded data is an essential corrective to the limitations of intuition and recollection. In enabling repeated and detailed examination of the events of interaction, the use of recordings extends the range and precision of the observations which can be made. It permits other researchers to have direct access to the data about which claims are being made, thus making analysis subject to detailed public scrutiny and helping to minimize the influence of personal preconceptions or analytical biases. Finally, it may be noted that because the data are available in ‘raw’ form they can be reused in a variety of investigations and can be re-examined in the context of new findings.

Selecting CA ethnomethodology as the approach for the current study distances it from hypothetical assumptions and brings it closer to everyday language use which is the primordial social setting through which linguistic norms are established, realized, maintained and renewed (Heritage, 1984a; Schegloff, 1996a). I have, therefore, implemented ethnomethodology with the aim of uncovering both the language-related and the action-related norms which underpin the organization of the polar interrogative sequence in spoken SA. In the following sections, I summarize the basic principles of CA.

1.3. Conversation Analysis

1.3.1. The turn-constructive unit (TCU), the turn-taking and the turn-allocation systems, the adjacency pair and sequences of interaction

CA has developed a model of talk-in-interaction based on the turn-taking system in English language (Sacks, *et al.* 1974). However, studies on other languages, such as the study conducted by Stivers, *et al.* (2009) on the turn-taking system across ten languages, the study of questions and their answers across ten languages by Stivers, *et al.* (2010), and the most recent study by Enfield *et al.* (2018) on polar answers across fourteen languages, all suggest the universality of the turn-taking system model (Clift, 2016a, pp. 74-76 and 138). The turn-taking system utilizes two main resources. The first of these resources is the “turn-constructive resource” and the second is the “turn-allocation resource” (Schegloff, 2000a, pp. 42-43). According to Sacks *et al.* (1974), a turn-at-talk is composed of basic units which are referred to as turn-constructive units (TCUs). TCUs vary in size and form, so they might come in a sentential, clausal, phrasal, or even a single-word form. They may also come in the form of quasi-turns such as ‘uh, huh’ (Schegloff, 1982) and ‘oh’ (Heritage, 1984b). When a TCU reaches a point where its completion, linguistically and/or paralinguistically, becomes possible, transition of speakership would become possible. The point where such transition becomes relevant is referred to as the transition relevance place (TRP) (Sack *et al.* 1974; Schegloff, 1996a). At a TRP, the turn-allocation system starts operating. The turn-allocation system allows the current speaker to select a next-speaker by deploying some interactional means such as directing gaze, using address terms, or talking about something which lies within the next-speaker’s domain of knowledge and experience (Stivers & Enfield, 2010; Stivers & Rossano, 2010, 2012). When the current speaker does not select a next-speaker, a next-speaker may assume speakership (self-select) at the TRP without being selected. When neither the current speaker selects next-speaker nor a next-speaker self-selects, the current speaker has the option either to resume speakership her/himself or to bring

the talk to termination. Excerpt (1-1) illustrates the working of this system. The excerpt depicts three interactants, Sam, Layla and Mido. Mido has resided in Saudi Arabia for a few years and Layla has also resided in the neighboring United Arab Emirates for a few years. All the present interactants are discussing residence permits in those countries and how it is not easy to stay there without proper residence permit and without paying residence fees. After Layla completes her response to Sam's inquiry about such matters (lines: 5, 6), Sam produces the vocalization 'umm' after which Mido self-selects by producing an interjection followed by a question directed to Layla (line 8). Mido's question is a negative polar interrogative which targets some information which lies within Layla's domain of knowledge and experience; what Heritage (2012a, p.3) refers to as "epistemic domain". After Layla delivers her response to Mido's question, a 1-second gap ensues in which no next-speaker is selected or self-selects (line 11). After the lapse of the 1-second gap, Layla, who was the last one to speak, selects Mido as the next-speaker (line 12). For that purpose, Layla deploys gaze and reference to something which lies in Mido's epistemic domain, or to which he has "epistemic access" (ibid). In her question Layla refers to Saudi Arabia; a country in which Mido has lived and has thus experienced. She also uses the second person plural which refers to Mido (and people who resided in Saudi Arabia in general). Once the grammatical structure of Layla's inquisitive turn, including verb and predicate, is complete, Mido, the party selected by Layla, assumes speakership and produces a response to Layla's interrogative (line 13).



Figure: 1-1

(1-1) FTs-19¹

1. Sam: **yəʃni ma fiki təʃʃadi hek bala šī yəʃni** (()
 Prt not can stay-2PS-fem like that without anything Prt (()
 Prt you cannot stay like that without anything Prt (()
2. Layla: **laʔ=**
 no=
3. Layla: **=((upward headshake)) laʔ (.)=**
 =((upward headshake)) no (.)=
4. Mido: **ma fi.**
 NegPrt there is.
 there is no [way].
5. Layla: → **=ma btəʔder ʔaw bəddak taxod ərrisk fiyya muxalafāt**
 =NegPrt can-2PS-masc or you have to take the risk there are penalties
 =you cannot or you have to take the risk and there are penalties
6. → **kəl yom madfūʔ ə: biʃīr**
 every day paid ə: will become
 everyday will become paid for
7. Sam: → **umm**
8. Mido: → **əlʃama .hh ʔuw:ə ma kəntu tədfaʃu rusūm: kə- sanawiyye**
 blindness² .hh and:ə not were-2PP paying-2PP fees: kə- annual
 blindness .hh and ə: weren't you paying annual fees
9. **ʔaw šī** **laʔiqame ʔəlla kīf.**
 or thing for the residence or how.
 or anything for the residence [permit] or how.
10. Layla: → **.hh əmbala, ((two nods while responding, gaze directed towards Mido))**
 .hh of course, ((two nods))
11. **(1)**

¹ Parts of this excerpt are further analysed in sections 3.2.2, 4.3, 4.4.2, and 5.3.2 below.² 'əlʃama', glossed as 'blindness', is a SA swearword which has similar connotation to the English 'blimey'

12. Layla: → ʔəntu bələsʕūdiyye btədfaʕūʔ ((gaze directed towards Mido))

you-2PP in Saudi Arabia [do] you payʔ

13. Mido: → ʔeh laka:n. ((lateral and downward head move))

yes of cou:rsē.

The example above illustrates how the turn-taking and the turn-allocation systems, with the resources they utilize, operate within talk-in-interaction. It shows how speakers select others or self-select and how and when they assume speakership when they are selected or when they self-select. The turn-taking system works on a turn-by-turn and even beat-by-beat basis (Schegloff, 2000a) through locally managed sequences of talk-in-interaction (Sacks. *et al.* 1974; Schegloff, 1980, 1990, 2007). The turn-taking system involves linear progressivity towards the next speaker, next utterance, next turn and the next action (Schegloff, 2007, p.15). “Nextness” (ibid) involves adjacency. The next turn or action is positioned adjacent to the prior one. If anything intervenes between a turn and what is considered as its next, that intervening utterance or action will be hearable as compromising the progressivity of the interaction. Such utterance or action will, then, be inspected for its relevance to what has preceded it or to what is projected to follow it. Even silence, when coming between a turn and its projected next, would be considered as compromising the progressivity of the interaction and as qualifying the contiguity between the turn and its next (Heritage & Pomerantz, 2013; Sacks, 1987; Schegloff, 2007; Stivers & Robinson, 2006). Such progressivity-compromising silence, utterance, or action would be more noticeable if the preceding turn is making some specific type of a second turn relevant next. An example of a first turn which makes the production of a specific type of a second turn relevant next would be the polar interrogative question, which makes a polar response relevant next as example (1-2) below illustrates:

(1-2) from (Schegloff, 2007, p.172)

1. Bee: Dihyuh have any-cl- You have a class with Billy this te:rm?
2. Ava: Yeh he's in my abnormal class.

Bee's question, in line 1, makes a polar response relevant next. Ava orients to this relevance by producing a turn which is prefaced by the positive polarity particle 'yes', and which provides the information that Bee's question is requesting. In case the interactant did not respond to the questioning turn, the absence of a response would be noticeable and accountable. Turns like the ones in excerpt (1-2) above are conditionally related in that the production of the first turn makes relevant the production of the second one. Correspondingly, the production of the second turn (the response) is conditioned on the production of the first turn (the question). Schegloff (1968) terms such pair of turns as the "adjacency pair". The two turns (line 1) and (line 2) in the example above are uttered by different speakers (Bee and Ava) and are adjacent; i.e., placed in a relatively ordered manner, so that the occurrence of the first pair part (FPP) makes relevant the occurrence of a second pair part (SPP) next (Schegloff & Sacks, 1973, p.296). They are also typed. The FPP (line 1) is a question which makes an answer relevant next. Hence, this adjacency pair sequence is of the question-answer type. All adjacency pairs are typed, so that a particular type of FPP invites a relevant and specific range of SPP types to be produced next (ibid; Levinson, 1983, p.303; Schegloff, 2007). The adjacency pair is the core unit in a sequence-in-interaction. The SA excerpt (1-1) above contains three question-answer sequences. In each sequence the interactants are doing specific action(s). The first one is initiated by Sam at line 1 and asks Layla for information about the possibility of residing in the UAE without a permit. The second sequence is initiated by Mido, at line 8, who asks Layla whether residents of the UAE pay annual fees for their residence permit. The third sequence is initiated by Layla (line,12) who asks Mido a reciprocal question about whether residents in Saudi Arabia pay residence permit fees. Talk-in-interaction is formed of sequences, many of which consist of adjacency pairs (Schegloff & Sacks,

1973; Schegloff, 1990, 2007). However, there are main-action sequences, in which a main action, such as information request, offer, invitation, is initiated and delivered, and there are subsidiary sequences which orient to the realization/non-realization of the main activity sequence (Jefferson, 1972; Schegloff, 2007). Some subsidiary sequences may precede the possible production of the FPP of the main-action sequence; those are referred to as pre-sequences (Schegloff, 1988a). Other subsidiary sequences may occur in between the FPP and the SPP and they are referred to as insert sequences (Schegloff, 2007, p.97). Finally, some subsidiary sequences may follow the production of the SPP; those are post-sequences (Schegloff, 1992; 2007). An example of a pre-sequence is found in excerpt (1-3) below.

(1-3) FTs-19³

1. Mido: → **bəḥkīlak halʔəṣṣa:ʕ**
shall I tell you this storyʕ
2. Wess: → **ʔeh.**
yes.
3. Mido: → **hat lanʃuf ə:: ʔləʕna mən ərriyaḍ la jaddeh**
alright let's see ə:: we left from Riyadh to Jeddah
((continues telling a story))

The adjacency pair (lines: 1 and 2) orient to the possible production of a main telling sequence. Mido checks the availability of Wess to hear his story at line 1. Wess responds by the minimal affirmative ‘ʔeh’ which constitutes a go-ahead response (line 2). Following Wess’s go-ahead response, Mido proceeds to the main action which is telling his story. If Wess had produced a SPP indicating that he is not available to hear Mido’s story, the telling would not go ahead. So, a go-ahead SPP is the type of response which progresses talk towards the telling sequence, whereas a blocking response does not. There are other type-specific pre-sequences which orient

³ This excerpt is further analysed in section 5.3.1 below.

to specific types of activity, such as pre-requests, pre-invitations, pre-announcements etc. The type of response which progresses the main action towards realization is termed as preferred, whereas responses which block or delay the progress of the main action towards realisation are termed as dispreferred (Heritage, 1984a; Schegloff, 2007; Pomerantz & Heritage, 2013; also see section 1.3.2. below).

Other subsidiary sequences are insert sequences. These could be classified into two types: post-first and pre-second sequences. The sole type of post-first insert sequence is the repair sequence (Jefferson, 1972; Schegloff, 2007; Schegloff *et al.* 1977). Following the delivery of the basic FPP in the main adjacency pair sequence, the recipient may have some trouble in hearing or understanding the FPP. Such trouble may hinder the production of the relevant SPP. Hence, a repair initiator aims at fixing this trouble and enabling the recipient to produce an appropriate SPP. The following excerpt shows an example of a repair sequence.

(1-4) GTAM-14/2

1. Khan: ə: (2) tsk .hh šqad şalrlak hon bezzabeṭṭ

ə: (2) tsk .hh how long have you been here exactlyṭ

2. Mido: → bəlyu kaiṭ

in the ukṭ

3. Khan: → ((nod)) ʔe,

yes,

4. Mido: şarli: ʔrbaʕ sanawāt (.) taʔrīban ʔrbaʕ sanawat.

I've been [for] four years (.) approximately four years

5. waḷḷah lessa baʔīli kam šahər ḥatta ṭabbeʔ əl ʔrbaʕ sanawāt

Prt still left for me few months to complete the four years

Prt I still have few months to complete four years

Khan asks Mido how long he has been ‘hōn’ ‘here’ (line 1). Mido has trouble in specifying the referent of the deictic adverb ‘hōn’ ‘here’ in Khan’s question (line 1). ‘Hōn’ may refer to both the city and the country in which one lives. To resolve this ambiguity, Mido initiates a repair sequence (line 2) inquiring whether Khan’s ‘hōn’ refers to the country. After Khan responds with an affirmative ‘ʔe’, thus, repairing the trouble, Mido provides the relevant response which specifies the number of years he has so far spent in the UK (lines: 4 and 5). Sometimes, repair is done by the speaker of the repairable turn her/himself. However, such types of repair do not develop into an adjacency pair sequence. Sometimes, recipients may choose to repair the trouble-marked turn themselves. This type of other-repair may develop into an adjacency pair sequence. However, it is very rare and is treated as problematic (Schegloff *et al.* 1977). Pre-second insert sequences are deployed to “establish whether the conditions” are met for the production of a SPP (Schegloff, 2007, p.109). These sequences may get expanded until those conditions are met. In the following excerpt, Wess invites Mido to go and have a haircut with him at a particular barber’s shop (line 2). However, before producing any SPP, Mido asks a series of questions about that barber. At the end of the question series, the conditions allowing a relevant SPP are established, and Mido produces a SPP which accepts Wess’s invitation at line 35.

(1-5) NH11⁴

1. Wess: **bedde rūḥ ʔəḥloʔ šaʕre xaiyyo ʔana,**

I want to go [to] have my hair cut brother I,

2. Mido: **u:h (1) hh. ʔarīb ma hek. maḥall əl ḥlāʔač**

u:h (1) .hh close NegTag the barber shopč

u:h (1) .hh [it is] close isn’t it [that] barber shopč

⁴ This excerpt is further analysed in sections: 3.2.4, 4.4.3, and 4.5 below.

3. Wee: → ʔe:h. (0.2) bətrū btəhloʔ maʕeɛ

ye:s. (0.2) go-2PS have your hair cut with meɛ

ye:s. (0.2) would you like to go and have your hair cut with meɛ=

4. (.)

5. Mido: ((looks at his watch))

6. Wees: wallah ɣallaʔ ə-

Prt the barber ə-

7. Mido: mrattab ʔəlla taʕb [a:nɛ

[is] he good or ba :dɛ

8. Wess: muhtaram.

[respectable. [very good]

((twenty three lines omitted in which Mido asks a series of questions about the barber))

31. Mido: ʔe yaʕlah šu jensitu hādaɛ

yes Prt what [is] his nationality that [barber]ɛ

yes Prt what is the nationality of that barber

32. Wess: mən:: jamyka yəmkɪn.

from:: jamaica maybe.

33. Mido: °mən jamayka°.

°from Jamaica°.

34. Wess: la wallah mən aɣyūbiya.

no Prt from ethiopia.

35. Mido: → °mən jamayka° ʔe mənruḥ maʕnata mnəhleʔ.

°from Jamaica° yes we go then to have a haircut.

The above excerpt also shows how a FPP and its relevant SPP may be some distance apart but still maintain their conditionally relevant relationship as well as the coherence of the main-action sequence.

The last type of subsidiary sequence to be discussed in this section is the post-expansion sequence (post-) which is initiated after the delivery of the SPP of the main-action sequence. Some of those sequences are repair sequences which target some trouble in hearing or understanding the SPP, while other post-sequence repair initiators may express disagreement with its content. News-marks, which mark the SPP as delivering some news (Jefferson, 1981 [1993]), may come after the SPP and prompt sequence expansion. Another type of post-sequence is the follow-up sequence, which attempts to either recycle the main sequence or to pursue something that is considered missing within that sequence (Schegloff, 2007). An example of a post-sequence of this type is available in excerpt (1-6). While Abed is washing his hands, the water tap produces a weird loud noise. Abed jokingly inquires about that noise (line 1).

(1-6) GD11-2/17

((Abed heads towards the water tap to wash his hands, the water tap produces a weird loud noise))

1. Abed: **haiy la ykūn fiyya qənble haʕ**

this NegPrt are in it bombs Prtʕ

are there any bombs in itʕ

2. Mido: **la laʔ ha** **ha**

no no ha ha

3. Abed: → **akī: dʔ**

su: reʔ

4. Mido: → **akī(h)d(h)**

su(h)r(h)e

After Abed asks Mido whether there are bombs in the water tap, Mido responds with a double ‘laʔ’ ‘no’ with laughter (line 2). In overlap with Mido’s laughter (line 1), Abed initiates a follow up question requesting confirmation that there are no bombs in that water tap (line 2). Abed’s

follow up FPP (line 3) indicates that such confirmation is missing in Mido's SPP which only consists of the repeated negative particle 'la?'. Abed's follow up FPP also aims at recycling the joke in order to invite Mido to recycle the joke-acknowledgement token, laughter, which has been almost lost in overlap with Abed's turn (line 3). In response to Abed's post-sequence question, Mido produces a confirming SPP (line 4) by repeating Abed's proposition (see chapter 4, section 4.5). Mido's SPP acknowledges Abed's joke by being infiltrated with laughter.

1.3.2. Preference organization in talk-in-interaction, and the main preferences negotiated within the SA polar interrogative sequence

In excerpt (1-7) below, Sam produces a polar interrogative FPP in the form of a candidate-answer question (Enfield & Sidnell, 2015) asking Layla, who has stayed for a few years in Dubai, to confirm his candidate proposition that life 'əlḥayāt' in Dubai is 'ḥəlwe' 'nice' (line 1). Layla's responsive SPP (line 3) is delayed by the stretched turn-initial 'əl:::' and the stretched prefixed preposition 'la' 'for' in the phrase 'l:amaşlaḥti' 'for my own good'. Towards the possible completion of her SPP, Sam produces an overlapping turn. Sam's overlapping turn (line 4) halts further continuation of Layla's turn and is prefaced by the negative particle 'la?' which projects a negative stance towards Layla's SPP. Sam's turn-initial 'la?' is followed by a specification of what he meant by the word 'ḥayāt' (line 5).

(1-7) FTs-19

- 1.Sam: → šlōn[↑] əlḥayāt bi dubaiy ḥəlwe.
low [is][↑] lif in dubai nice.
- 2.Layla: → ((disengages gaze with Sam and looks downward))
3. → əl::: l:amaşlaḥti əşşəğəl ṭabʕan m:nīh [()] farə?.
the::: for my own benefit the work of course [is] good () [it makes] a difference.
- 4.Sam: → [la? ḥayāt]
[no [the] life]

- 5.Sam: → **kaḥayāt >yəʕni< əjtməʕiyye** [ka,
as a life >Prt< social [life] as,
- 6.Layla: → [kaḥayāt
as a life] **ktīr ḥəlwe,** [it is] very nice,
- 7.Sam: **ḥəlwe, ((two nods))**
nice, ((two nods))
- 8.Layla: **ṭabʕan ḥəlwe**
of course nice

Layla's SPP (line 3) assesses work; it does not answer Sam's polar interrogative which prefers an assessment of life, not work, in Dubai. As a result, Layla's SPP does not meet the preference of the action initiated by Sam's FPP. After Sam produces a post-second repair (Schegloff, 1992) which specifies that Sam's polar interrogative (line 1) is seeking an assessment of life in Dubai not of work there, Layla produces a SPP which provides the sought for assessment (line 6). This time, Layla's SPP is not delayed and is received by a positively aligned confirming repetition by Sam (line 7). A FPP prefers a SPP of the same type which progresses the action initiated by the FPP towards accomplishment (Sacks, 1987; Schegloff, 1988b; 2007). A SPP which does not fulfil that end is oriented to as not meeting the preferences of the FPP. Such SPPs are termed as dispreferred (ibid; Pomerantz & Heritage, 2013). Research conducted by conversation analysts so far demonstrates that both the producer and the recipient orient to the dispreference of such SPPs (Heinemann, 2005; Heritage, 1984a; Pomerantz, 1984a; Pomerantz & Heritage, 2013; Sacks, 1987; Schegloff & Sacks, 1977; Schegloff, 2007). Delaying the response is one practice which displays respondents' orientation to their own SPPs as dispreferred (Pomerantz, 1984a). Delay compromises one of the main features of the adjacency pair sequence, the feature of adjacency, since a delay in producing the SPP distances it from its relevant FPP. As noted in example (1-7) above, Layla's preferred response (line 6) is contiguous with Sam's prior turn (line

5) to the extent of being in overlap with its turn-final beat. Whereas her dispreferred SPP (line 3) comes noticeably delayed past Sam's interrogative FPP. Other indications of a dispreferred SPP are: adding accounts, elaboration, and/or mitigation to the dispreferred content of the SPP (Heritage, 1984a; Levinson, 1983; Schegloff, 1988b, 2007). Furthermore, dispreference has sequential consequences. It usually leads to the expansion of either the SPP itself or the sequence as a whole, whereas preferred SPPs are mostly closure-relevant in that they progress the sequence towards consummation and closure (Schegloff, 2007). In the example above, the sequence, in which Layla's dispreferred SPP (line 3) occurs, is expanded, whereas, after she produces the preferred SPP in line 5, an exchange of positively aligned assessments between her and Sam follows (lines: 7 and 8), after which the sequence comes to termination.

The organization of preference/dispreference is not limited to the action which a FPP initiates, it extends to the form and design of the FPP and its relevant SPP. The following excerpt illustrates an example of a polar interrogative sequence in which the SPP has a preferred form relevant to its FPP. Mido is asking Wess whether his mobile phone operates on 3G⁵ (line 1). Mido uses positive format to construct his polar interrogative turn. Wess's SPP (line 2) follows Mido's FPP with no delay, nor elaboration or expansion. Wess's response aligns with Mido's question in terms of grammatical polarity, since it is positively framed. The SPP also aligns with the polar interrogativity of the FPP by being prefaced with the polarity marker 'ʔeh' 'yes'. There is no expansion to this sequence, on the contrary, it comes to termination straight after the delivery of the SPP.

⁵ According to Cambridge Dictionary online (2020), 3G technology [...] is used in mobile phones on which you can use the internet, watch television, etc. 3G is short for 'third generation', and 4G technology [...] gives mobile phone and computer users more advanced features than 3G. 4G is short for "fourth generation".

(1-8) NS14-4⁶

1. Mido: **hāda three jī.**

this [one] [is] 3G

2. Wess: **?e three jī ((turns towards Sam)) ?ənti əlli ʕandak three jī ↑ ?əlla four jī samɛ**

yes three G ((turns towards Sam)) you which have-2PS 3G ↑ or 4G samɛ

yes 3G ((turns towards Sam)) the one you have [is] 3G ↑ or 4G samɛ

Excerpt (1-9), below, shows an example where the SPP is misaligned in form with the FPP. Ali is asking Mido, who is video recording the conversation, whether he will present the whole conversation for his research (line 1). Ali uses a positively framed polar interrogative FPP for that purpose. Mido's SPP (line 3) is delayed by an inter-turn mini-pause (Jefferson, 1988) and by the particle 'waḷḷah' which projects dispreference when it is in a turn-initial position (Helani, 2008).

(1-9) GD11-2/21

1. Ali: **bəddak tqaddim əlḥiwār kəllū:?**

you want to present the conversation all of it?

are you going to present all the conversation?

2. **(.)**

3. Mido: **waḷḷah mū kəllū la? bass ə: ?əṭaʕ mənnū.**

Prt not all of it no only ə: extracts from it.

Unlike Wess's SPP in excerpt (1-8: line, 2) above, Mido's SPP in this example has the polarity marker 'la?' 'no' delayed and not in turn-initial position. In addition, Mido's SPP contains an elaborative TCU in which there is another element of delay and perturbation, 'ə:'. In terms of

⁶ This excerpt is further analysed in section 4.4.1 below.

action, Mido's SPP provides a relevant answer to Ali's interrogative FPP. However, Mido's SPP is dispreferred in terms of form. Firstly, the negative polarity of Mido's SPP does not align with Ali's positively framed FPP. Secondly, the polarity marker in Mido's SPP is delayed, in other words, Mido's SPP does not immediately conform with the polar type of Ali's interrogative FPP.

A third example which illustrates dispreference in form is shown in excerpt (1-10) below, however, in this example it is the FPP which displays features of dispreference. Mido and Khan are PhD students and asking each other about the progress of their research. Mido is asking Khan whether, during his research supervisory board meeting, the board has assigned him with tasks to do for his research (line 24). Mido uses a negatively framed polar interrogative for that purpose. Khan's responsive SPP (lines: 26 and 27) is produced without delay or expansion. It is prefaced by the polarity marker 'la?' and it aligns with the polarity of Mido's interrogative FPP.

(1-10) GTAM14-2⁷

24. Mido: **aha:: halla? ʔənte ʔəl board meeting əl maɖi ma ʔalabu mənnak ši nihāʔiyyan,**

aha:: Prt you the board meeting the past NegPrt they asked from you anything at all,

aha:: Prt at the last board meeting didn't they ask anything of you,

25. **[ma ʔalūlak šu lāzem ətsawwi literature review kaza.]**

NegPrt they told you what you have to do literature review anything.

didn't they tell you what you have to do for the literature review or so

26. Khan: **la (0.2) la (.) ma fi =**

no (0.2) no (.) NegPrt there[is] =

no (0.2) no (.) there isn't =

27. **=ma ʔalabu ši nihaʔiyyan muḥddad.**

not they asked anything at all specific.

they haven't asked for anything specific at all.

⁷ This excerpt is further analysed in section 4.3 below.

In the example above, the negatively framed TCU in Mido's FPP which starts by the SA negative operator 'ma' is delayed by the turn-initial particle 'halla?' together with a whole TCU consisting of a noun phrase. After the completion of the first negated TCU (line 24), Mido adds an elaborative TCU, also negatively framed (line 25). Both the turn-initial delay and turn-final elaboration display Mido's orientation to his own FPP as problematic. It will be discussed later in this thesis that some forms of polar interrogative FPPs are oriented to as problematic or dispreferred in SA (see chapter 3 section 3.2.5.).

It is noticeable in both examples (1-8) and (1-10) that the preferred SPPs are prefaced by a polarity marker; 'ʔeh' in example (1-8: line, 2) and 'la?' in example (1-10: line, 26). By being prefaced with a polarity marker, those SPPs conform with the type of interrogative initiated by the FPP, which is a polar-type interrogative. This form-related preference is what Raymond (2000, 2003) refers to as type-conformity. A type-conforming SPP, in a polar interrogative sequence, is prefaced with, or at least includes, a polarity marker such as 'yes/no', in SA 'ʔeh/la?', or similar particles. A SPP which does not contain a polarity marker is non-conforming. The following English examples (1-11) and (1-12) below further illustrate the interactants' orientation to the preference for type conformity. In the first example (1-11), Mum responds to Les's polar interrogative turn (line 1) with a SPP prefaced with the positive polarity particle 'yes'. Mum's response (line 2) is not delayed and it does not contain elaboration or accounts.

(1-11) from (Raymond, 2003, p.942) Excerpt (1)

1. Les: Uh didyuh get yer garlic tablets.
2. Mum: Yes I've got them,

In (1-12) taken from an interview, the interviewee's response (lines: 2, 3 and 4) to the interviewer's polar interrogative FPP (line 1) is not prefaced with, nor does it contain a polarity

particle. The interviewee's SPP comes delayed with 'well' (Schegloff & Lerner, 2009; Raymond, 2000) and a (0.5) pause. In addition, the response is followed by elaboration after 'but' (line 4)

(1-12) from (Raymond, 2003, p. 960) Excerpt 16

1. I → .hhh Did you do any work (.) fer pa:y (0.1) last wee:k.
2. R → .hh We:ll,
3. (0.5)
4. R → I'm still getting paid but school's ou:t (.) so:.
5. (0.6)
6. I Okay, s:o:.

Type-conformity comes under the umbrella of turn design and form-related preferences. Raymond (2000) found that type-conforming SPPs are preferred and more common in American English polar interrogative sequences than non-conforming ones. The current research also investigates the form-related preference for type-conformity in SA polar interrogative sequences.

Another observed preference in SA polar interrogative sequences is the preference for epistemic congruence (Hayano, 2011; Heritage, 2012a; Heritage & Raymond, 2005, 2012; Stivers *et al.* 2011). The notion of epistemic access has been referred to in section (1.3.1) above. Each individual has access to her/his own domain of knowledge and experience (Heritage & Raymond, 2005). Individuals may index such access grammatically in their turn such as in the example below from a phone call between Jenny and Ida. Jenny is telling Ida that she saw a friend they both know, Janie, in the morning on the day of that call (line 1). Jenny uses declarative format to index her epistemic access to the incident of seeing Janie. Jenny also uses the past tense to confirm her primary right of access to that experience (Goodwin & Goodwin, 1987; Stivers, 2005). When that experience is challenged by Ida's question (line 5), Jenny produces another

5. DOC: → You're divorced (°cur[rently,°)

6. PAT: [Mm hm,

Interactants may use evidentials to upgrade or downgrade their epistemic access to specific domains of knowledge such as in the following example. Nancy is taking evening classes with a group of students which Emma is talking about. Emma produces an assessment of those students at (line 1) as 'they need a good job'. Emma who is not taking classes with those students prefaces her assessment with the epistemic downgrading evidential 'I think'. When Nancy talks about them, she uses the assertive 'of course' (Stivers, 2011). It is Nancy who works with those students and who has more access to their affairs than Emma.

(1-15) from (Heritage, 2012a: p. 9) (8)

1. Emm: → I THINK SOME a' these kids need a good JO:B though too.

2. (0.5)

3. Emm: Get ou:t'n do a liddle wor:k.

4. (.)

5. Nan: → Well of course all the kids in this: p'ti_lar class y_ih

6. know,h are eether full time stud'nts or they work during

7. th'day en go tuh school et ni:ght,

The example above shows how each interactant marks her epistemic status towards the issue under discussion by using evidentials. Emma marks her epistemic status as downgraded relative to Nancy's, and Nancy marks her epistemic status as upgraded relative to Emma's. The way interactants mark their epistemic status towards a state of affair is termed by Heritage (2012a) as their epistemic stance. Congruence between epistemic stance and the status which it indexes is preferred in interaction, while epistemic incongruence is dispreferred (Heinemann *et al.* 2011;

Heritage, 2012a; Stivers *et al.* 2011). In other words, speakers are expected to assert matters to which they have epistemic access and not to assert matters to which they lack epistemic access. This preference corresponds to Grice (1975) maxim of quality according to which one should try not to say that for which she/he lacks adequate evidence. For example, in the doctor-patient exchange in (1-14) above, the doctor adopted a not-knowing epistemic stance by asking the patient about her marital status. After the patient gave the doctor some clue about that matter, the doctor upgraded his epistemic stance by producing a declarative guess about the patient's marital status. In both turns (question in line, 1) and (declarative guess in line, 5) the epistemic stance which is indexed in the form of the doctor's utterance matches his epistemic status, or, in other words, there is congruency between the doctor's epistemic status and the indexed stance in both turns. Interactants index their level of epistemic access by various interactional means, such as sequential positioning (Heritage & Raymond, 2005), social and sequential context (Pomeratnz, 1980; Sacks, 1984; Schegloff, 1996b), grammar and form (Bolinger, 1957; Heritage, 2012a; Heritage & Raymond, 2012; Raymond, 2003; Rossano, 2010 [on Italian]; Schegloff, 1996a, 2007), semantic meaning and lexical items (Enfield, 2012 [on Dutch Tzeltal and Lao]; Heinemann *et al.* 2011 [on Danish and Swedish]), and even by particles such as the change of state token 'oh' (Heritage, 1984b, 1998, 2002b) which indicates that the recipients of an informing turn have their epistemic status upgraded from not-knowing to knowing (*ibid.*). SA interactants are no exception as they use the same resources just mentioned to index their level of access to knowledge and information. However, in polar interrogative sequences, epistemic access is not always grammaticalized in SA. Unlike English, there is no morphosyntactic marking of polar interrogatives in SA. Most polar interrogative FPPs in SA have a declarative form. A polar interrogative claims lack of epistemic access to a proposition, and it invites the recipient to confirm it (Bolinger, 1978; Levinson, 2012). Declaratives have assertive grammatical forms (Sadock & Zwicky, 1985). The form of a declarative, therefore, claims epistemic access

(Heritage, 2012; Heritage & Raymond, 2012). When a declarative is used as a polar interrogative, it displays a mismatch between its form (assertive) and its action (inquisitive). The declarative form of the SA polar interrogatives, therefore, creates incongruency between the action it is doing, which is seeking information/confirmation, and its grammatical form which claims epistemic footing and access to the proposition it queries. The outcome is a mismatch between the epistemic status of the questioner, which is supposed to be lack of knowledge, and the epistemic stance indexed in the form of his/her polar interrogative turn (Heritage, 2012a). Example (1-16), below, illustrates such a phenomenon. Sam works in an investment company and Mido is trying to find whether it is possible to buy shares through that company. Mido's turn (lines: 1, 2, 3, 4) is a pre-request which inquires about the possibility of buying equity shares through Sam's company. The turn consists of a hypothetical first part (before the (0.8) pause), and a part which proposes some information about Sam's company (line 2; after the (0.8) pause). Mido's turn is in declarative format with falling final intonation, it has no turn-final tag or any lexical or prosodic marking to distinguish it from any other declarative in SA. A (0.2) gap follows Mido's FPP in which Sam does not immediately respond, thus, projecting dispreference. Mido then adds an increment to his FPP (Bolden *et al.* 2012; Schegloff, 2001, 2016). That increment consists of the epistemic assertive adverb 'akīd' 'surely' (line 4).

(1-16) NS14-1

1. Mido: → **maʕnāta bass baʔa ʔiza ʔabbena ʔiza ʔabbena yəʕni masalan**

this means when Prt if we like if we like Prt for instance

this means that if we would like if we would like for instance

2. → **nəʕtəri ʔashom kaza ʔan ʔarīʔkon (0.8) nəsbət əl ʔaman ʕāliye ʕandkon.**

to buy shares anything through your (0.8) the rate the security [is] high at yours.

to buy shares or anything through [your company] (0.8) the security rate is high with your [company].

3. → **(0.2)**

4. → ʔakīd.

surely.

5. Sam: → °laʔ ʕāliye [ʕanna°=
 °no high at ours° =
 °no it is high with us° =
 6. Mido [ha ha

7. Sam: =bass huwwe ʔannu haiy ʕarkətna bətbīʕ la muʔassasāt

=but it is that it is our company sells to businesses

=but [the only thing is] that our company sells to businesses

8. Sam: ma [bətbīʕ la: ʔafrād,
 NegPrt sell-3PS-fem to: individuals,
 [it doesn't] sell individual [customers]
 9. Mido: ah ma bətbīʕ la ʔafrād.
 oh NegPrt sell-3PS-fem to individuals.
 oh it [does] not sell individual [customers].

Sam responds with a laʔ-prefaced assertive SPP (line 5). Sam's turn-initial negative polarity particle 'laʔ' neither disconfirms what precedes it, nor what follows it. It just displays a negative stance towards Mido's epistemically incongruent FPP (see chapter 4 section 4.2), thus, marking it as dispreferred. It also delays the production of the actual answer which confirms Mido's proposition that security level at Sam's company is high. In this polar interrogative sequence, the FPP is oriented to as problematic and dispreferred. There is a mismatch between Mido's epistemic status, which is not-knowing about Sam's company, and the form of his FPP, which is an assertive declarative proposition about Sam's company. Questions which assert a state of affairs that is fully within the respondent's epistemic domain are referred to as B-event (Labov & Fanshel, 1997). The SA declarative form of the polar interrogative FPP poses two challenges to SA interactants; firstly, recognizing it as a polar interrogative at all, and, secondly, dealing

with the dispreference of the epistemic incongruence inherent in it. This phenomenon and its impact on the form and size of the SA polar interrogative sequence are investigated throughout this study.

The last preference to be discussed in this section and which plays an important role in shaping the SA polar interrogative sequence is the general social preference for agreement (Goffman, 1956; Mollenaar & Smit, 1996; Sacks, 1987). An agreeing SPP usually confirms the proposition of its relevant FPP, addresses its preferences and aligns with its grammatical polarity (Sacks, 1987, p.57; Koshik, 2002; Heritage, 2002; Heritage & Raymond, 2012; Heinemann, 2003; 2005). Out of the five SA polar interrogative examples included in this section, only one case (excerpt: 1-9) exhibits a disagreeing misaligning SPP. However, the SPP (line 3) in that example is clearly delayed and mitigated. All the SPPs in the other examples are aligned with the polarity of their relevant FPPs and confirm their entailed propositions. 83.8% of the polar interrogative sequences analysed for this study contain SPPs which exhibit alignment with the polarity of their relevant FPPs. The preference for agreement in SA polar interrogative sequences is further explored in chapter 1, section 1.3.2 and chapter 4, section 4.2.

In SA, once a polar interrogative FPP is initiated, all the above-mentioned preferences – position-related preferences, form-related preferences, the preference for epistemic congruence, and the preference for agreement and alignment – will be oriented to and negotiated by the interactants as the sequence progresses. The current research investigates the impact of these preferences and their negotiation on the form and size of the SA polar interrogative sequences and its components.

1.4. The language

The subject of the current research is Syrian Arabic (SA). SA is a language spoken in the Syrian Arabic Republic; a country in the Middle East. The main reason behind the selection of this language for the current study is that the researcher is native to the language and its cultural setting. CA emphasizes that analysts should possess both linguistic and cultural knowledge of the language they are investigating (Hutchby & Wooffitt, 2008). In order to understand what participants are doing within talk-in-interaction, a researcher needs to have ‘access to the interpretative and inferential resources which the participants are relying upon’ (ibid, p. 106). Those inferential and interpretative resources are grounded in the cultural and the linguistic knowledge which the participants possess. A conversation analyst should be fully aware of such interpretative resources in order to conduct her/his research efficiently.



Source: Google Maps

Syrian Arabic language has its roots in the Semitic language family. Ancient Semitic varieties spoken in the Levant region were Ugaritic, Aramaic and Canaanite (Huehnergard, 2005; see diagram ‘A’ below). Aramaic was the dominant language in the region, where modern Syria is, from the ninth century BCE (Fales, 2011) until the seventh century CE (Weninger, 2011). Aramaic is still spoken today by some minorities in Syria, such as the inhabitants of the town of Maaloula 40 miles to the north of Damascus (Knauf, 2010). Syriac, one of the varieties of

Aramaic, is still spoken in some parts in north east Syria (ibid). Table (i) below shows variations of Aramaic spoken in the region since the ninth century BCE up to present days.

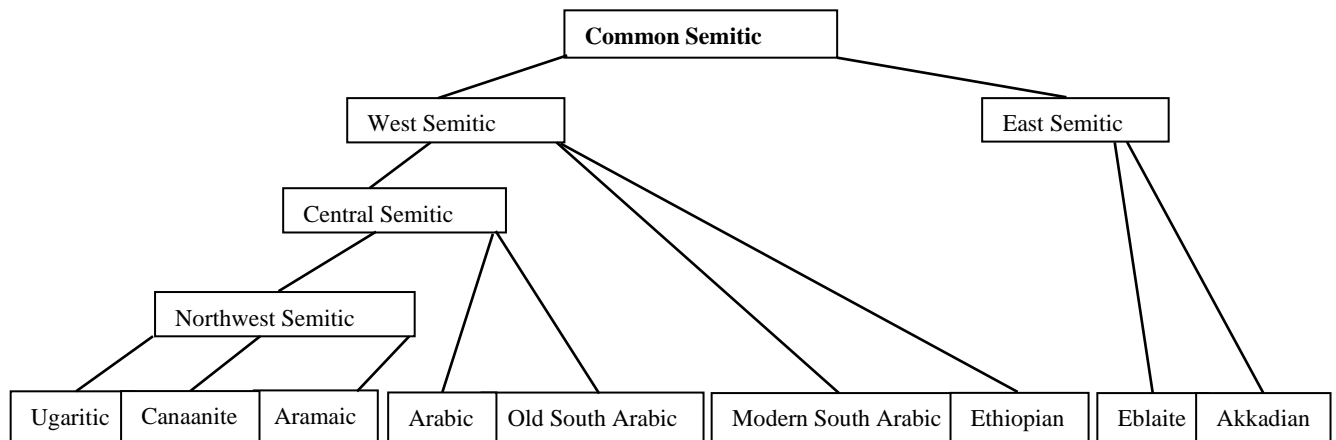


Diagram A (adopted from Huehnergard, 2005, p. 162)

Ancient Aramaic 900–700 BCE	Western archaic: Yaʿudi, Sukkot	Western progressive: Damascus	Eastern: Gozan			
Imperial Aramaic 700–200 BCE	Standard Aramaic					
Middle Aramaic 200 BCE – 200/300 CE	Local sub-standard					
	Palestinian Jewish	Nabatean	Hatra Edessa (Old Syriac)		Palmyra	
Late Aramaic 300 CE – present	Western		Eastern			
	Galilean	Christian Palestinian	Western Syriac	Eastern Syriac	Baby- lonian	Mandaic
Modern Aramaic	Malula		Turoyo, Urmia, etc.			

Table (i) from Knauf (2010, p. 205)

Syrian Arabic still contains elements from those ancient Semitic varieties. One of those elements, which is directly related to the current study, is the negative operator ‘ma’. ‘Ma’ has been used in all Central Semitic and North Semitic languages as an impersonal interrogative pronoun equivalent to the English ‘what’ (Al-Jallad, 2017, 2019; Holger, 2011; Huehnergard, 2005; William & Hunt, 2007). The usage of ‘ma’ as such has also been depicted in Biblical Hebrew,

which was greatly influenced by Aramaic (Edzard, 2011). However, in some rhetorical constructs, ‘ma’ has a negative connotation such as in the following Hebrew example from the Old Testament:

‘ma-bbə-yādīrāfâ’ (Samuel 1, 26:18)

‘what evil is in my hand’

Rhetorical interpretation: there is no evil in my hand

(Al-Jallad, 2019, p.319)

According to Jallad (2017, p. 319), the rhetorical ‘ma’ has been later grammaticalized in Arabic into a ‘proper negative adverb’. In modern SA, the morpheme ‘ma’, in addition to its negating function, is still used as an impersonal pronoun. In the following example (1-17), Sam displays his surprise when Wess tells him that he drinks diet coke while on diet.

(1-17) NS14-2⁸

1. Sam: **wu btəšrab dayt kolaġ**
 and you drink diet colaġ
2. Wess: **((two nods))**
3. Sam: **((looks at Mido then back to Wess))**
4. **(0.5)**
5. Wess: → **ma hi dayat.**
 that it [is] diet.
 it is [for] diet.

Wess responds to Sam by asserting the existential fact that the coke he is drinking while he is on diet is a *diet* coke. This is done by prefacing his turn with the pronoun ‘ma’, which functions here as an existential pronoun and not as a negative particle.

⁸ This excerpt is further analysed in section 4.6.5 below.

The negative polarity particle ‘lā’ has been depicted in Ugaritic as a particle which negates verbal as well as non-verbal constructs (Bordreuil & Pardee, 2009; William & Hunt, 2007). In modern SA, ‘lā’, and its variant ‘la?’, are used as independent negative polarity particles.

Typology of the verbal clause in modern SA is either VSO or SVO with the possibility of OVS (Brustad, 2000). There are two main aspects of the verb in SA; perfective and imperfective (Cowell, 1964). Future is formed by prefixing ‘b’ to the imperfective verb or by posing the particle ‘raḥ’ before the verb (Jarad, 2013). In some SA varieties, the prefix ‘ḥa’ also indicates future tense in the verb. The verb in SA is inflected for person, number, gender and aspect. The inflected form of the verb could include both subject and object. Therefore, having the negative operator ‘ma’ before the verb would, sometimes, not only negate the verb, it would negate the whole proposition of the verb phrase as in example (1-18) below:

(1-18) GD11-3/31

1. Abed: hh. fakent ?əstafād ?ənni::

hh. so I used to benefit [form] Prt

2. halmufradāt eddīniyye ?ətʃallam fiyya

those vocabulary religious I was learning them

those religious vocabulary I was learning

3. Ram: → ((turning head and gaz towards Abed))

((turning head and gaz towards Abed))

wu kan- wu kənt bʃa-

and it was - and I was hones-

and it was- and I was hones-

wu ma- ma | btaʃrəfa | ?a: ?abəl.((nod))

and NegPrt- not | you know them | be: before.((nod))

and you didn't know them before. ((nod))

4. Abed: → ma | ?aʃrəfa | qabəl.

NegPrt | I know them | before.

I didn't know them before.

5: Ram: ((nod)) uhm

The verbs ‘btaʕrəfa’ and ‘ʔaʕrəfa’ are inflected for aspect, person, number and gender, as the translation clarifies. Therefore, the preceding negative operator ‘ma’, negates the proposition that: Abed himself knew (in the past) those (vocabulary items).

Syrian Arabic is not one homogenous variety. There are a few geographically distributed varieties of SA, however, the varieties selected for this study are those which correspond to Damascus spoken dialect in terms of negation (Ferguson & Ani, 1961). Apart from varieties in the far south and some south western regions, verbal negation in SA is done by posing the negative operator ‘ma’ before the verb, while non-verbal negation is done by posing the operator ‘mu’ before the predicate, adjective, noun or adverb (Cowell, 1964; Brustad, 2000) with some exceptional cases in which ‘ma’ could be used for non-verbal negation. In some regions, such as in the north west and Aleppo, ‘mu’ is inflected for gender to become ‘maw’ for masculine and ‘māy’ for feminine. Some varieties, in the far south and south western regions, negate verbs by appending the suffix ‘əš’ to the verb. Non-verbal negation in those varieties is done by posing the operator ‘muš/məš’ before predicates or non-verbal constructs (Murphy, 2014). In those varieties, a verbal negation suffix ‘əš’ may come at the end of the utterance which constitutes the verb (Qassas, 2012), therefore, it is in a delayed position relative to the particle ‘ma’ which precedes the verb in Damascus-corresponding varieties. CA analyses interaction turn-by-turn utterance-by-utterance, syllable-by-syllable, gesture-by-gesture and even-sound-by-sound, therefore, the position of the negative operator pre-verbally or post-verbally makes a difference in the projection of a TCU and/or a turn-at-talk. ‘Ma’ projects negation before the verb is produced, while the suffix ‘əš’ allows the production of the verb before negation is fully projected. In order to maintain consistency, only varieties which project negation before the verb (Damaskan-like) have been selected for this study. Affirmative is the default in SA, since there is no morphosyntactic marking of affirmative.

1.5. The data

1.5.1. Type of data and data collection

The data collected for the purpose of the present study consists of collections of both audio and video recordings of naturally occurring mundane Syrian Arabic conversations. All the videos/audio recordings transcribed and analysed for this study contain conversation between native speakers of SA whose dialects do not use the verbal negation suffix ‘əš’ (see section 1.4 above). One video in which one of the participants speaks Jordanian Arabic – a variety which uses verbal negation suffix ‘əš’ – has been excluded from the collection. The video data amounts up to c.7 hours of recordings, while the audio data consist of recorded telephone calls (c. 1.5 hours). The count of hours of recordings is not deemed as significant as the number of instances of polar interrogative sequences which have been analysed for this study. Three hundred and fifteen SA polar interrogative sequences have been analysed for this study putting the count in close proximity to the number of the samples (325) which Raymond (2000) has analysed for his seminal study of American English yes/no questions. The video samples, which contain those sequences, consist of almost all the clearly audible and complete polar interrogative sequences in the data. Samples which, to a great extent, are not clearly audible, or which have been cut off due to technical issues in cameras or upon participants’ request, have been excluded. The video recordings are all done in non-controlled settings; none of the recordings have been done in a lab or an interview room. They are mainly shot in restaurants, public parks, cafés or private houses where friends are gathering for a meal or a chat. All the conversations captured represent a natural flow of sequences of talk about topics which the participants picked in real time; no specific topic or talk has been pre-decided, prescribed or elicited either by the participants themselves or by the researcher (Lynch, 2002). The researcher’s involvement is reduced to the extent that the researcher has not been present in some of the recorded videos where participants are told to video record themselves (Potter, 2002). None of the sampled video has been electronically

manipulated. Such arrangements have kept the data collected for this study as natural as possible (Jackson, 2018; Potter & Shaw, 2018). In order to reduce the participants' reaction to the presence of the camera/recording device or the recording device (Labov, 1972b), participants have been told that they can switch the camera off or ask for the recording device to be switched off at any time during the recording process. Nevertheless, participants' reaction to the recording device has been referenced when explicitly apparent within the sequence (see excerpt 5-24 in chapter, 5: section 5.2.4).

To further rule out the researcher's involvement, SA samples from other CA studies on other topics have been cited in this research. Some 20 of the 315 analysed samples are taken from data collected by Al-Khalil (2005) and Helani (2008) with due credit to each of these researchers every time their data is presented in this thesis. The aim is to show that certain phenomena under scrutiny in this study occur in other settings recorded by other CA researchers of Syrian Arabic and for other purposes than those of the current study.

1.5.2. Identifying polar interrogative sequences and their features within the data

Apart from question tags (Cowel, 1964; this study chapter 3 section 3.2.1), the polar interrogative is not marked syntactically in SA. Multiple factors have been taken into account when identifying a turn-at-talk as a polar interrogative in the data. Generally speaking, a polar interrogative 'advances a hypothesis for confirmation' (Bolinger, 1987, p. 104). According to Cantarini & Torregrossa (2008), a polar interrogative expresses uncertainty with respect to a specific proposition and invites the addressee to ascertain what she/he knows about that proposition. Conversation analysts consider the polar interrogative as a turn-at-talk which puts forward a candidate proposition and invites the addressee(s) to confirm/affirm or disconfirm/reject that proposition (Heritage and Raymond, 2012; Enfield, 2010, 2012). Accordingly, and for the purpose of this study, a turn-at-talk which puts forward a proposition, expresses uncertainty about such a proposition and/or invites the addressee to confirm/disconfirm or affirm/reject that

proposition, is analytically approached as a polar interrogative. For example, an understanding check displays uncertainty about whether the addressee is attentive and has understood what the speaker has said (see chapter 4 section 4.6.4), therefore, understanding checks have been analytically approached as polar interrogatives.

Ritualized disbelief turns in surprise sequences (see chapter, 4, section 4.6.2) express disbelief which, at least putatively, corresponds to uncertainty. Such turns have also been analytically approached as polar interrogatives. I have also used findings from past research as guidelines in identifying some turns as polar interrogatives. The study of surprise as an interactional achievement, by Wilkinson & Kitzinger (2006), shows that polar interrogatives are used in some expressions of ritualized disbelief in English.

Past CA research highlights the use of polar interrogative to construct rhetorical questions across languages (Heritage, 2002, Koshik, 2002, Heinemann, 2008; Stivers & Enfield, 2010). In a research on the syntactic analysis of negation in Levantine Arabic, of which SA is a variety, Qassas (2012) shows that polar interrogative is used to construct rhetorical questions. Therefore, I included polar interrogative rhetorical questions in my analysis (see chapter 3, section 3.2.6). Questions advancing a candidate answer for confirmation have also been analytically approached as polar interrogatives (Enfield & Sidnell, 2015; Pomerantz, 1988). Alternatives which propose only two contrastive options are also included as polar interrogatives (Stivers & Enfield, 2010).

The position of the turn in the sequence has also been taken into account when identifying that turn as a polar interrogative. Questions in general, including polar interrogatives, initiate sequences (Sacks *et al.* 1974; Schegloff, 2007), so they are usually in sequence-initial position. Therefore, in order for a turn to be identified as a polar interrogative in this study, it must come in sequence-initial position.

Finally, interactants' orientation to a turn-at-talk as polar interrogative has also been taken into account in identifying some turns as polar interrogatives. Interactants' orientation is discussed in detail in chapter 3.

All the above factors have been collectively taken into account when analysing or identifying a turn-at-talk as a polar interrogative within the current study. Some polar interrogative types may behave differently in SA when compared to their counterparts in other languages, they may do different actions and, consequently, they may receive different responses. Nevertheless, such types are still included in this study to highlight their SA-specific behavior and to demonstrate the crosslinguistic variable orientation to those types.

CA analyses data inductively (Jackson, 2018); it examines a broad range of phenomena then discovers the orderliness of such phenomena (Sacks, 1984a). CA is data driven and nothing really can be pre-determined before exploring the data. Since the current study adopts CA approach, a broad range of data and phenomena which are relevant to the topic of this research have been examined and presented within this study, not in the aim of proving a pre-determined hypothesis, but in the aim of illustrating the interactional order which lies underneath the organization of polar interrogative sequences in SA. It is important to note that the findings of this study are not deemed conclusive and/or exhaustive of all the types and features of polar interrogative sequences and their components in SA; future research may unveil other types and features which the current study and its data may not have captured.

The range of actions embodied within the polar interrogative sequences analysed for the current study includes: information-seeking polar interrogatives, assertive and rhetorical polar interrogatives, News-marks, news announcements, alignment-elicitors, requests, offers, suggestions, understanding checks, other initiated repair, and displays of ritualized disbelief. There must be many other actions that a polar interrogative embodies in SA, however, as the

main focus of the current research is on form rather than on action, I leave investigating the possible actions which a SA polar interrogative turn could initiate to future research.

1.5.3. Transcription, transliteration and data presentation

The video and audio recordings collected for this study have been first transliterated into the Roman Alphabet according to the transliteration conventions adopted by Cowell (1964, p.1) and Al-Khalil (2005, p.1). (see Transliteration conventions, p. 1 above). Work by those two researchers is focused on Syrian Arabic and Cowell's work is one of the major references on the language; that is one reason behind selecting the transliteration conventions which they have adopted. Other reasons for selecting such conventions is that they are widely used and very similar to those used in the Encyclopedia of Arabic Language and Linguistics published by Brill (2006). The data has then been transcribed according to Jefferson's transcription conventions (1984) which were developed for English; however, it is adaptable to Arabic data when the latter is transcribed into the Roman alphabet (cf. Al-Khalil, 2005; Helani, 2008). According to Jefferson's transcription conventions, what appears as punctuation marks has different function from their conventional grammatical one. For example, a full stop '.' indicates that there is a terminal falling intonation. The conventions also adopt special symbols to show pauses in tenths of a second, places where talk overlaps, laughs and smiling voice (see Transcription conventions, p. 2-3 above). Following each line of transcription, two lines are provided: the first line is a literal word-by-word gloss from SA to English; the second one is an idiomatic English translation. However, there are positions where only one line of translation suffices, such as when translating a free standing '?eh' as 'yes'. Spaces between words in the transcribed lines, and in their glossing lines, do not represent a break in talk. Those spaces are there to help the vertical alignment of each word/phrasal verb from the transcribed line with its gloss (see Leipzig Glossing Rules, 2015). The English description of events, included between double parenthesis, is not repeated in the translation lines since it is already written in English. Some English morphemes and lexical

items, which have no counterparts in SA, but are necessary for understanding the meaning of the Arabic utterance, are added to the translation, however, between square brackets. Some expletive particles are abbreviated in the translation such as: ‘Prt’ for particles and ‘1PS’ for first person singular (see Abbreviations for particles and grammatical items, p. 4 above). Some ethnographic details, which explain the cultural context of the relevant conversation, are added in footnotes. Each cited excerpt is labeled according to the data set from which it has been taken. Each label includes the code of the data set and the serial number of the video/audio in the collection. For example, ‘GD11-3/31’ refers to an extract taken from a video set coded as GD11 with the serial number 3/31. This labeling system makes referring back to the data an easy task for current as well as for future analysis. Labels of excerpts from phone calls have the capitalized word ‘CALL’ in them. When possible, illustrative figures have been provided to show gaze and gestures. Each figure is given a label which corresponds with the excerpt it illustrates. Data from other sources is given a different format to distinguish it from the data I have collected. Some modification has been applied to excerpts from Al-Khalil (2005) and Helani (2008) in terms of transliteration to make them consistent with the transliteration conventions adopted for this study. Three exemplars are provided from the data to support each point of argument in this thesis. This follows CA convention according to which at least three exemplars are required to illustrate that a practice is not idiosyncratic to a particular episode of interaction (Clift, 2016a, p. xvi). Finally, a brief statistical analysis of the data has been provided and referred to throughout this thesis (see chapter, 2, section 2.4).

1.6. Participants and research ethics

Participants in the study are all adult native speakers of SA – seventeen participants – most of whom have been residing in the United Kingdom for a few years. Some of the participants are,

1. Sam: →	yəʔni ma fiki təʔʔadi hek bala ši yəʔni	()
	Prt not can stay-2PS-fem like that without anything Prt	()
	Prt you cannot stay like that without anything Prt	()
2. Layla:		laʔ=
		no=

3. Layla:	=((upward headshake))	la? (.)=
	=((upward headshake))	no (.)=
4. Mido:		ma fi.
		NegPrt there is.
		there is no [way].

5. Layla: → =ma btəʔder ʔaw bæddak taxod ərrisk fiyya muxalafāt
 =NegPrt can-2PS-masc or you have to take the risk there are penalties
 =you cannot or you have to take the risk and there are penalties

Prior to data collection, all the participants were briefed on the nature of the study. They were told that they would be video/audio recorded in naturalistic non-controlled environment (see section 1.5 above). The participants' identities have been kept anonymous and they each have been given pseudonyms. Some terms which may refer to the interactants' identities, jobs or place of residence have been either deleted or replaced by fictitious referents. The participants' consents have been diligently obtained through signing a consent form which clarifies all the previously noted issues about the research and which asserts confidentiality. The collected written data is kept in a locked drawer, and all software data is saved on a password-protected PC. The participants have been informed that only the researcher and his supervisor at the University of Essex would have access to the data. A third party might be granted access to the data for the sake of Linguistic or sociolinguistic research only, under the provision they sign a consent to adhere to the same anonymity and confidentiality terms of this current project. The participants have also been given the freedom to withdraw from participating at any time (see appendix: i). Finally, to avoid indirect advertisement, names of shops and local commercial institutions that are included in the data have been replaced by fictitious referents.

Chapter 2: Relevant studies and their applications in the current research

Over the last four decades, CA researchers have conducted many studies on polar interrogative sequences in English and other languages, the latest of which is Enfield *et al.* (2018) which investigated polar answers in fourteen languages including the Sign Language of the Netherlands. However, no CA study has been done on Syrian Arabic polar interrogative sequences as to the date of this thesis. The current study is the first CA study to analyse the SA polar interrogative adjacency pair sequence, and the first study to put the grammatical structure of the SA polar interrogative questions and their answers under the CA microscope. However, this study benefits from past studies on other languages as well as some studies on Syrian Arabic. The following three sections list the major studies which the current research benefits from.

2.1. Studies from the first CA generation

The first CA studies approach polar interrogative sequence under the umbrella of ‘Questions’. Schegloff (1968) compares question-answer sequences to summons-answer sequences. He has found that those two types of sequences have common characteristics. They both consist of a sequenced pair in which the first pair part obligates a responding second pair part. In both sequence types, the first pair part also constrains what has to be produced as a response in the second pair part. Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson (1974) have included the notion of ‘sequenced pair’ in their seminal research on the turn-taking system in interaction. They highlight the adjacency relationship between a question-answer pair within the sequence. They highlight the role of a question in allocating the next turn to a next speaker. They also suggest that a questioning FPP imposes some syntactic constraints on its answering SPP. The current study probes the syntactic and sequential features which mark a turn as polar interrogative in SA and enable that turn to allocate a specific type of response to a next speaker. One of the findings by

Sacks *et al.* (1974) which bears direct relevance to the current study is their analysis of tag-questions as a potent resource which speakers use to recruit a responsive SPP (see chapter, 3, section 3.2.1). Schegloff (1996a) has investigated the turn's structure and the relationship between grammar/form and interaction. He argues that grammatical components include gestures, intonation, facial expressions, gaze and even vocalizations such as 'uh'. All such components and resources are coordinated to produce the target action(s) in interaction. Schegloff (1996a) calls for a different approach to exploring units of talk; an approach which takes into consideration all linguistic, paralinguistic, sequential and contextual resources which are deployed in interaction. The current study adopts this approach and, in addition to syntax and lexis, it explores all the detectable components which contribute to constructing the polar interrogative FPP, its responsive SPP and any third position talk/action that may follow.

Since polar interrogatives may be used for "distribution of knowledge" and "transfer of information" (Raymond, 2003, p. 94), and since those types of interrogative are the main focus of this study, past studies on distribution of knowledge have been reviewed for the purpose of this current research. One of the first CA studies which probe this domain is Pomerantz (1980). Pomerantz differentiates between direct access to information, which she terms as "type-1 knowables", and indirect access obtained through hearsay or any other indirect process, which she terms as "type-2 knowables" (p. 187). Pomerantz found that some speakers use type-2 knowables to elicit information from their addressees without resorting to direct questioning. Her research has opened the door for further research on epistemics in CA. The current study explores how SA interactants share and distribute knowledge between each other and whether downgrading one's epistemic access to certain information could be used as a resource to constructing polar interrogative turns in SA. Domains of knowledge are expressed and asserted in interaction through multiple resources. Schegloff (1996b) demonstrates that repetition is one resource which interactants use to assert their primary access to some information, or stance, to

which their interlocutors have referred. According to Schegloff, the question in line 7, in the excerpt below, receives repetition as a response because the producer of the question has referred to the content of the question prior to the production of that question.

(2-1) from Schegloff (1996b, p. 178) Excerpt 5 (BB gun)

1. Bonnie: C'd yuh bring it to the meeting?
2. (0.4)
3. Bonnie: → the lo:ngest one you [hav]e.
4. Jim: S[ure.]
5. (0.4)
6. Bonnie: [An]
7. Jim: → [The] longest one?
8. Bonnie: → The longest one.

Bonnie uses repetition as a response in the example above to assert that the content of Jim's question has been conveyed by her prior to his questioning turn. Schegloff argues that interactants use repetition in this way to confirm that they have already alluded to the content of the repeated turn. Repetition, in such positions, does the action of confirmation, and it asserts that the speaker has primary access to what has been repeated. Repetition is investigated in this study in two positions: first, as a response to a polar interrogative turn, and second, in third position after a response is produced.

2.2. Contemporary studies

Questions and their answers have become a major field of interest for contemporary CA researchers. Questions, in general, and yes/no questions, in particular, set multifaceted constraints on their responsive SPPs (including grammatical, sequential, epistemic and action-related constraints). It is within CA analysts' interest to uncover those constraints and how they contribute to the progress of talk towards the accomplishment of various social actions and the achievement of mutual understanding between interactants. The current study constitutes a continuation and a contribution to this line of research with focus on polar interrogative sequences in SA. The work of Geoffrey Raymond (2000, 2003) has already been referred to in chapter 1, section, 1.1 as one of the seminal projects on polar interrogatives in CA. His study uncovers a significant form-based preference organization in polar interrogative sequences in American English, which is the preference for type-conformity (see chapter 1 section 1.3.2. for details on type-conformity). He has noted that interactants orient to type-conforming responses to polar interrogatives as preferred. Type-conforming responses, according to him, promote social alignment. The current study is inspired by Raymond's main course of research, it adopts his terminology and builds on his findings. The preference for type-conformity in SA polar interrogative sequences is also explored in this study and findings are compared with Raymond's findings on American English.

Type-conformity has been further probed by Heritage and Raymond (2012) within the scope of acquiescence, agency and resistance in SPPs responding to polar interrogative FPPs in English. The two researchers demonstrate that responding with a type-conforming SPP indicates the recipient's acquiescence and acceptance of the terms of the interrogative FPP. A type-conforming SPP also indexes its dependence on the production, form, and implicature of the FPP. On the other hand, responding with a non-conforming repetition indexes the respondent's independent agency with regard to the issue in question. In terms of form, a repetitive response is indexically

independent of the FPP especially when it is a full repeat of the FPP excluding the interrogative elements. Repetition is frequently used as a response to polar interrogatives in SA; therefore, findings by Heritage and Raymond (2012) have been used as a point of reference when investigating such a phenomenon. A comparison is made between type-conforming responses and non-conforming repetitive ones in SA and findings of the current research are compared to Heritage and Raymond's findings for English.

Enfield *et al.* (2018) have recently extended research on acquiescence and agency in responses to polar interrogatives by comparing the use of interjection responses, i.e. responses which contain polarity particles such as 'yes/no', with repetitive responses (responses which contain repetition but no interjections) across fourteen languages. Enfield *et al.* argue that interjection-type responses are pragmatically "unmarked" forms of response, whereas, repetitive responses are "marked" forms of response to polar interrogatives. They suggest that selecting repetition as a response to polar interrogatives is dependent on local contingencies within the interaction. Those local contingencies are either language-related or context-related contingencies; some of the context-related contingencies are related to cultural factors. An example they provide is the response system in $\ddot{\text{A}}$ khoe Haillom; a language spoken by a hunter-gatherer tribe in Namibia. The tribe's cultural norms are against interpersonal coercion and acquiescence, therefore, $\ddot{\text{A}}$ khoe Haillom interactants prefer to respond with agentive repetition rather than with the acquiescent yes/no interjections. The current study extends Enfield *et al.*'s research to SA as it probes the topic of agency and acquiescence in polar interrogative sequences in this language (see chapter 4 section 4.5). It also investigates the relationship between the type of response and the social action which it implies.

In a study on negative-interrogatives and question tags in American English, John Heritage (2002) has found that certain types of polar negative interrogative do not do questioning; they rather display the speaker's assertive stance towards their proposition. As a result, such type of

interrogative is usually responded to with a challenging rather than a type-conforming answer. In contrast, turn-final tags, even if their preceding turn was negatively formatted, receive mainly type-conforming answers. Heritage's study (2002) builds on Schegloff's (1996a) study which differentiates between actions done in turn-initial positions and those done in turn-final positions. A grammatical construct, such as negative interrogative, when posed at the very beginning of the turn, projects an assertive rather than an inquisitive action. However, adding a question tag in turn-final position renders the action more inquisitive-like. Polar negative interrogatives are thoroughly investigated in this study. They are investigated in chapter 3, which focuses on the FPP of the SA polar interrogative sequences (see section 3.2.5), and they are further investigated in chapter 4 when discussing how SA interactants respond to such type of polar interrogatives (see section 4.4.1). Findings of Heritage (2002) and other related studies, such as Koshik (2002) and Heineman (2008), are used as a point of reference and findings of the current study are compared with findings of those studies.

Among the preferences which have been explored while investigating polar interrogatives is the preference for the same polarity. In her research on negation in interaction in Danish conversation, Heinemann (2003; 2005) has found that, in Danish, polar questions prefer responses of matching polarity. In other words, a positively framed polar FPP prefers a positively framed SPP as its response, and a negatively framed FPP prefers a negatively framed response. She argues that this preference intersects with action-related preferences so that SPPs of matching polarity embody preferred actions relevant to their FPPs, while SPPs of opposite polarity embody dispreferred actions. Such findings further highlight the correlation between form and action in interaction; a topic which the current study explores in SA polar interrogative sequences. The current study investigates whether the SA polar interrogative system prefers same or different polarity. It also investigates the impact of such a preference on the organization of the polar investigative sequence, and its implementation in actions.

It was noted in section (2.1) above that one of the criteria which relates to the study of polar interrogatives in interaction is epistemics. Heritage and Raymond (2005) have investigated how interactants index epistemic authority and subordination in talk-in-interaction. Part of their study probes the role of polar interrogatives in upgrading or downgrading the interactants' epistemic stance in assessment sequences. Heritage and Raymond found that first-position assessments can be epistemically downgraded by adding a turn-final question tag. In other words, a first turn which has a turn-final tag in an assessment sequence, indexes less assertive stance towards the assessed than turns which do not contain turn-final tags. However, turn-final question tags operate differently when added to second-position assessments, i.e. assessments produced as a response to a first position assessment. When added to second-position assessment, tags mark this assessment with higher level of assertion thus upgrading its producer's epistemic stance towards the assessed. Question tags are grammatical resources and Heritage and Raymond's findings provide further evidence that grammar is positionally sensitive in talk-in-interaction (Schegloff, 1996a); the same grammatical construct may act differently in different sequential positions. The current study also explores how epistemic access could be indexed in the grammar implemented in the turn as well as its position within the sequence and the interaction. Question tags, and their behavior in different sequential positions, have also been given attention within the current study (see chapter 3 section 3.2.1).

More research on epistemics by Heritage (2012a) differentiates between epistemic status and epistemic stance in interaction. While epistemic stance may be indexed in the form and/or the position of a turn-at-talk, epistemic status may only be inferred from the context. For example, when an interlocutor is asked about her/his personal experiences, she/he is held as having a higher level of epistemic access to those experiences than the questioner. The questioner's downgraded epistemic access to such experiences is indexed in the questioning form of her/his turn. The questioned party is contextually considered as having higher degree of access to that information

since they constitute her/his own personal experience. The epistemic status of the questioned party, then, is contextually implied. If the questioned party responded with ‘I don’t know’, then they will be held accountable for the epistemic stance they have assumed towards something which is contextually known to be their own experience. Heritage (2012a) argues that congruency between epistemic stance is a preference to which interactants orient in interaction. The epistemic stance indexed in the form/position of a turn-at-talk is preferred to be congruent with the epistemic status of the speaker of that turn. Other CA researchers, such as Stivers *et al.* (2011) on English, Heinemann *et al.* (2011), on Swedish and Danish, and Hayano (2011) on Japanese, have come to the same conclusion which proposes that a turn that displays congruence between the epistemic status of the interactants (what they really know) and the epistemic stance indexed in their turns (what the turn tells that they know) is preferred. In contrast, an incongruent relationship between epistemic status and stance is oriented to as dispreferred. The current study explores how epistemic stance is indexed in SA polar interrogatives and in their relevant responses. It explores SA interactants’ orientation to the congruency/incongruency between the epistemic stance indexed in the polar interrogative turn, or in its response, and the epistemic status of the producers of those turns. The current study investigates the consequences of a congruent/incongruent relationship between epistemic stance and epistemic status in polar interrogative sequences, and the impact of such congruence/incongruence on the structure of the polar interrogative FPP, its responsive SPP and the polar interrogative sequence as a whole.

CA researchers have recently become concerned to apply CA findings on languages other than American English. One of the major cross-linguistic CA studies in this field is the research done by Stivers *et al.* (2010) on questions and their responses in ten languages: Yèl̥Dnye, Italian, Korean, Dutch, Danish, Japanese, Lao, Tzeltal, ṭĀkhoe Haillom, and American English. The study has come up with important findings with regard to the question and response systems, including polar interrogative questions, in those languages. Those findings are too numerous to

list in this chapter, therefore, I will just list those which I have found directly relevant to the current study:

- In Dutch, Englert (2010) has found that only 34.19% of the polar interrogatives in his data are formed syntactically with subject-verb inversion while the majority either have the same form of a declarative (38.03%) or are declaratives with a turn-final interrogative tag (27.78%). The majority of Dutch declarative questions contain information to which the listener has more epistemic access than the speaker. Dutch speakers may sometimes use inferential connectives, such as *dan* (then), *dus* (so, therefore), and epistemic modal adverbs, such as *misschien* (maybe, perhaps) to downgrade their epistemic access to the issue in question. By doing so, Dutch speakers “assigning question status to declarative utterances” (p. 2671). Dutch speakers use repetition to assert their epistemic access to the questioned information.
- In Japanese, Hayashi (2010) demonstrates that prosody and/or epistemic access are used to mark a declarative turn as polar interrogative. When a speaker produces a turn which makes a claim about a state of affairs which lies within the addressee’s epistemic domain, the addressee orients to that turn as polar interrogative by either confirming or disconfirming its proposition. Japanese interactants also use repetition to assert their epistemic authority with regard to the proposition in question.
- Lao speakers also implement lack of epistemic access to mark some declarative turns as polar interrogatives (Enfield, 2010). These turns are not even marked prosodically, therefore, it is only the epistemic asymmetries, implied by other means than interrogative morphosyntax or prosody, which mark those turns as polar interrogatives. Lao speakers use paralinguistic resources to confirm/disconfirm the proposition of a polar interrogative turn, where a head toss would mean confirmation or ‘yes’, and a headshake would mean disconfirmation or ‘no’.

- Brown (2010) found that speakers of Tzeltal also use lack of epistemic access to mark declarative turns as polar interrogatives. To this end, Tzeltal speakers use what Brown terms as “dubitative” particles (p. 2631) to downgrade their epistemic access to certain information, thus inviting the addressee(s) to supply or confirm the missing or non-confirmed information.
- Polar interrogatives in Yèlī Dnye are similar to their counterparts in SA in that they are not morphosyntactically or prosodically marked (Levinson, 2010). Yèlī Dnye speakers, therefore, implement lack of epistemic access to mark a turn-at-talk as polar interrogative.
- In Italian, there is no morphosyntactic marking of polar interrogatives which distinguishes them from declaratives, however, rising turn-final intonation is one of the main resources which Italian speakers use to mark polar interrogativity (Rossano, 2010). Other resources used for that purpose are epistemic asymmetries and turn-final tags.

The above-mentioned languages bear some similarities to SA in the way they mark polar interrogatives and construct their responsive turns. The current study feeds into the above-mentioned cross-linguistic line of research, benefits from findings on other languages and compares them to SA. Some of the findings of the current research demonstrate that a range of sequential organization practices with regard to polar interrogative sequences in SA have their analogous practices in other languages.

2.3. Arabic studies

No CA study of polar interrogative sequences in SA has been documented at the time of writing. Therefore, most of the past resources on Arabic which feed into the current study are from grammatical and syntactic studies on the topic. In terms of investigating grammar and grammatical structure of the components of SA polar interrogative sequences, this study benefits

from past studies on Arabic in general and Syrian Arabic in particular. One of the main resources in this field is Cowell (1964) who provides detailed analysis of Syrian Arabic grammar. It shows that SA polar interrogatives are not syntactically marked and have the same structure as declarative sentences. It also highlights the role of question tags in constructing polar interrogatives in SA. Brustad (2000) has also conducted a similar descriptive on four Arabic varieties: Moroccan, Egyptian, Kuwaiti and Syrian. Her comparative approach is useful as it helps to define which of these varieties is similar to SA in terms of constructing polar interrogatives and their responses. According to Brustad (2000), there are similarities between Kuwaiti Arabic and Syrian Arabic in terms of the form of the polar interrogative sentence, using tags, and negation in responses. Murphy (2014) has also provided extensive descriptive analysis on the realization of negation in Syria Arabic. He shows how the particles ‘ma’ and ‘mu’ are used to negate verbal and non-verbal constructs in SA. He also emphasizes that the SA negative particles ‘ma/mu’ always precede what they negate, unlike in English where ‘not’ comes after the modal verb it negates. The position of those particles in the sentence is also one the focal topics in Qassas’s (2012) syntactic analysis of negation in Levantine Arabic, of which SA is a variety. Qassas argues that ‘ma’ occupies a higher position within the sentence and, in addition to its negative function, it functions as a complementizer, and this may explain its assertive force in some expressions (see example, 1-17 in chapter 1 section 1.4 above). According to Qassas (2012), ‘ma’ occupies the ‘force’ position in the sentence; a high position which projects “topic”, “focus” and “inflection” (see Rizzi, 1997, p. 288). The position of the negative particle in the SA polar response is of crucial importance to the organization of the polar interrogative sequence as it can project negation and, sometimes, disconfirmation from the very beginning of the polar response. This position of ‘ma’ is investigated in the current study (see chapter 4 section 4.3).

In terms of Conversation Analysis, this study benefits from Helani’s (2008) study on topic transition sequences and topic change in Syrian Arabic. Helani’s study provides a thorough

analysis of the organization of topic initiation, topic shifting and topic closure in SA. Helani's study provides some foundational work related to implementing CA in investigating Syrian Arabic conversation. It constitutes an introduction to the study of sequential organization in SA as it investigates how topical sequences are initiated and closed in SA. Some of its findings, such as the use of the positive polarity particle 'ʔeh' in topic shifting and as a new topic initiator, are highlighted within the current study.

An earlier study by Al-Khalil (2005) also adopted CA in investigating the usage and functions of four recurrent discourse markers in Syrian Arabic conversation: *hallaʔ*, *yaʕnē*, *ṭayyeb*, and *lakan*. Al-Khlail shows that the functions of each of those markers vary according to its position within the conversation. The current study benefits from Al-Khalil's analysis of those discourse markers, especially the particle 'yəʕni' which indexes a downgraded epistemic stance (see chapter 3 section 3.2.2).

2.4. Applying past findings: initial observations

Bearing in mind all the above-mentioned findings in the literature, I started with a quasi-statistical analysis of the phenomena relevant to the topic of the current research. The statistical findings are summarized in the following two tables:

Number of samples of polar interrogative turns collected for this research	315
Percentage of samples analysed for this research	100%
Count of polar interrogative turns in video data set	247
Count of polar interrogative turns in phone calls data set	68
Count of SA excerpts presented in this study (including repeated ones)	179

Table (ii) Overall frequency of polar interrogative turns

Instance	Number			Percentage		
	Calls	Video	Total	Calls	Videos	Total
?eh-marked SPPs	16	71	87	23.53%	28.7%	27.6%
laʔ-marked SPPs	15	39	54	22%	15.78%	17.1%
‘?eh’-prefaced SPPs	19	60	79	28%	24.3%	25%
‘laʔ’-prefaced SPPs	15	33	48	22%	13.36%	15.24%
Intra-turn delayed conformity	3	15	18	4%	6%	5.7%
Tag-marked FPPs (67% of tags get type-conforming SPP)	6	18	24	8.8%	7.3%	7.62%
yəʃni-marked FPPs (63% of tags get type-conforming SPP)	10	28	38	14.7%	11.33%	12%
Candidate-answer FPPs	00	13	13	00%	5.26%	4.1%
SPPs with nods	N/A	47	47	N/A	19%	14.9%
SPPs with head shakes	N/A	17	17	N/A	6.88%	5.4%
SPPs of opposite syntactic polarity to their FPPs	16	35	51	23.5%	14.17%	16.19%
Negatively framed FPPs	22	38	60	32.35%	15.38%	19%
Polar interrogative sequences with no third	28	127	155	41.17%	51.41%	49.2%
Polar alternative FPPs	4	14	18	5.9%	5.67%	5.7%
Type-conforming SPPs	31	110	141	45.58%	44.53%	44.76%
SPPs with repetitive elements (including both type-conforming and non-conforming SPPs)	27	103	130	39.7%	41.7%	41.26%
FPPs with positively framed propositions	46	209	255	67.65%	84.62%	81%
Positively framed SPPs	56	206	262	82.35%	83.4%	83.17%

Table (iii) Distribution of FPPs and SPPs across all polar interrogative sequences

Table (iii) above shows the tokens and percentages of certain phenomena, components, and types of FPPs/SPPs selected to be analysed for this study. As mentioned in section (1.5) above, the data consists of two sets: the video dataset and the phone call dataset. The ‘percentage’ section shows the percentage of the occurrence of the instance/phenomenon in each data set and in correlation to the total number of samples collected for this study. For example, in the first row, the percentage of ?eh-marked SPPs in phone-call data samples is 23.53%, the percentage of ?eh-marked SPPs in video data samples is 28.7%, while the percentage of ?eh-marked SPPs in all collected samples (both phone and video) is 27.6%. The dark-grey highlighted cells show similar percentages across both call and video data sets.

One of the main points of reference I have used in approaching the data analytically is Raymond’s notion of type-conformity (2000, 2003). I have also approached question tags bearing in mind

relevant findings by Cowell (1964) on Syrian Arabic, Heritage (2002) on English, Heritage and Raymond (2005) on English, and findings the on other languages mentioned in sections (2.2) above. Other phenomena that I have examined are candidate-answer questions (Pomerantz, 1988), alternative questions (Bolinger, 1978; Koshik, 2005b; Stivers et al. 2010), third position (Lee, 2016; Schegloff, 2007, 1992), repetitive SPPs (Heritage & Raymond, 2012; Schegloff, 1996b; Stivers, 2005), and other phenomena, some of which are not included in the table above. It is important to note here that it is the relevant phenomenon which guided my analytical approach rather than the frequency of such a phenomenon. The frequency/infrequency of a phenomenon is, in itself, a phenomenon worthy of being investigated. For example, the table above shows that the majority of tag-marked and *yəʕni*-marked polar interrogatives receive a type-conforming SPP (see chapter, 3 sections: 3.2.1 and 3.2.2). The table also shows that a small percentage of the polar SPPs in the data are *ʔeh*-prefaced or *laʔ*-prefaced. It also shows a low percentage of negatively formatted FPPs, candidate-answer polar interrogatives and polar alternatives. Some percentages are very similar across both data sets, such as type-conforming SPPs and SPPs with repetitive elements. Each of those statistics reflect a phenomenon worthy of investigation in order to uncover the organizational elements which underpin each of those phenomena. The current study, however, does not encompass all the phenomena which could be elicited from table (iii) above. Other analysts may perceive in the above-noted statistics many other different phenomena than the ones which the current study encompasses.

As the data analysis progressed, some other phenomena which appear specific to SA surfaced. Those are related to syntactic negation, types of polarity in SA (syntactic type vs. interjection type), and the dynamics of selecting positive versus negative polarity format in both the FPP and its responsive SPP (see chapter, 4, sections: 4.2, 4.3 and 4.4). Those phenomena are also noted in the table above. As displayed in table (iii), SPPs of opposite syntactic polarity to their FPPs constitute a very low percentage in the data. However, one of the salient statistical findings,

which would catch the observers' attention, is that the FPPs and SPPs in the data are overwhelmingly positively formatted (81% for FPPs and 83.17% for SPPs). The current study investigates those phenomena, and others related to SA polar interrogative sequences, in the aim of finding the organizational elements which yield such phenomena and the frequency/infrequency of each of those phenomena. The organizational elements which constitute the focus of the current research are the interactional, linguistic and sequential elements which underpin the organization of the SA polar interrogative sequence.

Chapter 3: Polar interrogative sequences and their first pair parts (FPPs) in Syrian Arabic

“... now I see the light! ‘In the Beginning was the *Act*, I write.’” Goethe: Faust III

Introduction

This chapter starts the analysis of the SA polar interrogative adjacency sequence by casting light on its main components with focus on the first pair part. As I have noted in chapter 1, section (1.1), each chapter will start by exploring the simplest form/component of the phenomenon under investigation, then, it moves gradually towards more marked/complex forms/components. Following a brief introduction, this chapter starts by casting light on the basic structure of the SA polar interrogative sequence and by introducing the simplest unmarked form of the FPP; the FPP which has no lexical, syntactic or prosodic marking as a polar interrogative (section 3.1). The discussion, then, moves to exploring more complex and marked forms of the polar interrogative FPP, (section 3.2).

A polar interrogative sequence in Syrian Arabic starts with a polar interrogative turn which is known standardly as a question (Bolinger, 1957; Quirk *et al.* 1985; Sadock & Zwicky, 1985). A question “embodies a fusion of grammar and social action” (Heritage, 2002, p.1427). Its grammatical form can initiate an adjacency pair sequence in which the question is the first pair part (FPP) which makes a response relevant as a second pair part (SPP) (Sacks *et al.* 1974; Schegloff, 1968, 2007). The actions which a question could initiate are too many to be counted; they range from filling an epistemic gap to invitations, offers, suggestions, complaints and too many other actions. However, in terms of sequential function, a questioning FPP restricts its relevant SPP to being responsive to it (Bolinger, 1957; Heritage, 2012a). For example, in excerpt

(3-1) below, Wess asks Mina, who is pregnant and about to deliver, whether there is a hospital close to where she lives (line 1). Mina lives in one of London's suburbs.

(3-1) OQH-19

1. Wess: **fi** **məstaʃfa ʔrīb mən ho:nɪ**

there [is] a hospital close to he:reɪ

2. Mina: **hon fi** **ʔeh chersi.**

here there [is] yes chertsey.

At line 2, Mina produces a turn incorporating the information sought by Wess by, first confirming that there is a hospital close by, then by providing the name of the area in which the hospital is. Responsiveness includes addressing the action-related component of the question, which is providing the sought-after information in the example above. Responsiveness also includes addressing the form-related components. Wess's FPP is a positively framed polar interrogative which invites Mina to either confirm or disconfirm whether there is a hospital near where she lives. By producing a positively framed confirmation, Mina is addressing both the positive form of Wess's FPP and the grammatical confirmation it is seeking. Her SPP also addresses the polarity component in the FPP by having the polarity marker 'ʔeh' included. In terms of action, Mina's SPP has filled the information gap which Wess's FPP is seeking to fill. Form-related components include both linguistic and paralinguistic elements, such as morphosyntax, lexis, non-verbal vocalisations, prosody, pauses (absence of linguistic components), gestures, gaze and facial expressions. A preferred SPP is the one which addresses both form and action preferences, just as in the example above where Mina's SPP has addressed both the form and action preferences in Wess' FPP. Polar interrogatives add a more specific form-related component which is type-conformity. Since those questions are polar in form, they make relevant SPPs which address their polarity. In American English, polarity preference is addressed by prefacing

the SPP with one of the English polarity particles ‘yes’, ‘no’ or any equivalent (Raymond, 2000, 2003). The preferred locus for marking the polarity of the turn is its beginning, since turn beginnings could project the form and action of the turn (Schegloff, 1996a), and they are less vulnerable to overlap (Schegloff, 1987, 2000a). In American English, therefore, a type-conforming SPP is preferred to have the polarity marker as its turn-initial component, otherwise it would be termed as non-conforming (Raymond, 2000), as excerpt (3-2) shows.

(3-2) from (Raymond, 2003, p. 949) Excerpt 9

1. Mark: W’l dih you talk aboutcher future? .hh
2. (0.2)
3. Bob: → No:. [Nothing so intricate .h
4. Mark: [Oh.

Bob’s responsive SPP to Mark’s polar interrogative FPP (line 1) is prefaced with ‘no’. Apart from the 0.2-second inter-turn delay, the SPP does not exhibit any sign of dispreference (see chapter 1 section 1.3.2). It is receipted by the change of state token ‘oh’ which marks a change in its producer’s epistemic status from not-knowing to knowing (Heritage, 1984b). This means that the SPP has filled the information gap which the FPP entails. The English polar interrogative FPP above constructs its grammatical polarity morphosyntactically by inserting the modal verb ‘did’ before the pronoun ‘you’. In Syrian Arabic (SA), such syntactic marking is absent. Apart from question tags, polar interrogatives in SA have the same grammatical form as declaratives. Such form invites other preferences, such as the preference for asserting epistemic primacy, to compete with type-conformity in SA (see chapter 1 section 1.3.2, also see chapter 4 section 4.5). Before proceeding to more details about how such preferences are addressed and negotiated, it is necessary to have a look at the general structure of the SA polar interrogative sequence.

3.1. The basic structure of the polar interrogative sequence in SA, and the unmarked FPP

The basic form of the SA polar interrogative sequence consists of an adjacency pair in which the FPP is the polar interrogative turn and the SPP is its response. Sometimes, following specific contingencies (to be discussed in chapter 5), SA interactants add third component(s) to the core adjacency pair. Apart from tag-marked questions (see section 3.2.1 in this chapter), SA does not mark polar interrogative turns morphosyntactically. In other words, most of the polar interrogative turns in SA come in the form of declaratives (Cowell, 1964; Brustad, 2000). Examples (3-3, 3-4, 3-5) below illustrate this SA-specific feature. In the example below, Sam is asking Wess, who is on diet, whether he exercises while dieting (line 1). After Wess responds to that question (lines: 2 and 4) by saying that one would not have the energy to do exercise while dieting, Sam produces a polar interrogative turn asking him whether he feels tired while on that diet (line 5).

(3-3) NS14-2

- 1. Sam:** **wu ma ʕamtəlʕab riyada () ma betɖurr həlak,**
 and NegPrt playing-2PS exercise () NegPrt harm yourself,
 and you [are] not doing exercise () don't you harm yourself,
- 2. Wess:** **ərryada halla? bass əl marhali əttālti xamsa wu ʕəšrīn daʔia maši.**
 exercise now only the stage the third stage five and twenty minutes walking.
 exercise now only [during] the third stage twenty-five minutes walking.
- 3. Sam:** **bass.**
 only.
- 4. Wess:** **ma əɖərr həlak (.) laʔənni ʔʕlan ʔənti ma ʕandak ʔaqa təʕmil riyada huwwi.**
 NegPrt harm yourself (.) because basically you NegPrt have energy for doing exercise it [is].
 you don't harm yourself (.) because basically you won't have the energy to do exercise in any case.

5. Sam: → **bəṯḥəss ḥālak taʕbā:n?**

you feel yourself ti:red?

you feel tired?

6. (0.5)

7. Wess: → **((nod)) ʔe:h bəṯḥəss ḥālak mkassil wu xamūl šwaiy.**

((nod)) yes you feel yourself lazy and lethargic a bit

((nod)) yes you feel lazy and lethargic a bit

The differences between Sam's polar interrogative FPP (line 5) and Wess's declarative SPP (line 7) are the nod, the turn-initial 'ʔeh', the reformulation of the word 'taʕban' 'tired' into 'mkassel wu xamūl' 'lazy and lethargic', and the mitigating word 'šwai' 'a bit' in Wess's SPP. The final rising intonation in Sam's FPP has no counterpart in Wess's SPP. However, the repeated verb/subject construct 'bəṯḥəss ḥalak' 'you feel yourself' stays the same in both the polar interrogative and its declarative answer. In (3-4) below, there is even no intonation marking on the FPP and both the FPP and SPP are almost identical. Khan asks Mido whether he has visited Syria since he arrived at the UK (line 4).

(3-4) GTAM14-2

1. Khan: **jīt beṣṣēf tabaʕ ʔlfēn wu ʕašra maʕnāta,()**

you came in summer of two thousand and ten this means, ()

you came in summer two thousand and ten this means, ()

2. Mido: **ʔe šēf ʔalfēn wu ʕašra.**

Yes summer two thousand and ten.

3. (1)

4. Kahn: → kamān ma rjəft nzəlt ʕa sūria.

also NegPrt went-2PS back down to syria.

also not went you back to syria.

you didn't go back to syria either.

5. Mido: → >wallah< ma rjəft nzəlt ʕa sūria.

>Prt< NegPrt went-1PS back down to syria.

>Prt< not I went back to syria.

>Prt< I didn't go back to syria.

The only differences between Khan's polar interrogative FPP (line 4) and Mido's SPP (line 5) are the turn-initial 'kamān' 'again' in Khan's FPP and the turn-initial particle 'wallah' 'by God' in Mido's SPP. Neither of those turn-initial components is a question word or a polarity marker. Khan's polar interrogative FPP has falling final intonation, which makes it no different from Mido's declarative SPP in terms of prosody. The main difference between the two adjacency pair parts is that Khan's FPP is about something which lies within Mido's epistemic domain not his, while Mido's SPP is about something which lies within his epistemic domain not in Khan's. A similar instance is in example (3-5). After Sam answers Mido's question (lines: 1 and 2) about some specific companies, Sam asks Mido whether those companies have their equity shares traded in the market (line 5). Mido's SPP (line 6) orients to Sam's FPP as a turn which is seeking confirmation. This orientation is manifested in the production of a positive repetition (Heritage & Raymond, 2012; Schegloff, 1996b).

(3-5) NS14-1

1. Mido: fa wallah (0.5) ʔəntu ((several brisk nods with hand gesture towards Sam))

so Prt (0.5) you-2PP ((several brisk head nods with hand gesture towards Sam))

2. **marr ʕlek hadol əššarikāt. btətʕāmalu fiyyo:n aw ʔəssa** $\left[\begin{array}{l} (\quad) \\ (\quad . \quad) \\ (\quad . \quad) \end{array} \right]$.
 came across you these companies. you deal with them or yet
 did you come across these companies do you deal with them or not yet
3. Sam: **ʔkīd.**
 sure.
4. **ʔana ma ba- ma baʕərfon bass ʔkīd yaʕni,**
 I NegPrt kno- NegPrt know them but sure Prt,
 I don't kno- I don't know them but I'm sure Prt,
5. Sam: → **fi ʔəlon ʔashom mutadāwale.** $\left[\begin{array}{l} (\quad) \\ (\quad) \\ (\quad) \end{array} \right]$ **((two lateral headshakes))**
 there [are] for them shares traded. ((two lateral headshakes))
 [do] they have traded shares ((two lateral headshakes))
6. Mido: → **fi ʔəlon ʔashom.** **((nod))**
 there [are] for them shares. ((nod))
 they have shares. ((nod))

Both the FPP and SPP in the example above have declarative forms and falling terminal intonation. All the polar interrogative FPPs, in the three examples above, have no syntactic marking to distinguish them from their declarative responsive SPPs. In two of them (3-4 and 3-5), there is even no prosodic marking to distinguish them from each other. The data shows that prosodic marking is not a feature which accompanies all polar interrogatives in SA. Prosodic marking may be implemented to index certain actions such as displays of ritualised disbelief (see chapter 4 section 4.6.2). However, there is no one-to-one relationship between prosody and polar interrogatives in SA. All the SA examples presented in this study support this claim. In some of these examples the polar interrogative FPPs have terminal rising intonation, while in others the polar interrogative FPPs have their intonation contour terminally falling (even with question tags), and in some other examples the intonation contour is completely flat. This is in line with Couper-Kuhlen's (2012) findings in English according to which:

[A] meaningful generalization about final intonation in questions can only be made within conversational activity types and together with specific syntactic question forms. There are no consistent patterns for final intonation either across conversational activities irrespective of syntactic type or across syntactic types irrespective of conversational activity. (p. 132)

Therefore, the current research does not focus on prosody in SA polar interrogative sequences as such a topic needs a dedicated research.

In the absence of syntactic and prosodic marking, SA interactants rely on two other major resources to mark a turn and orient to it as polar interrogative. The first resource is sequential position. All the polar interrogative FPPs discussed in examples (3-3 to 3-5), above, come in first position in a sequence which is initiated after the completion of a prior sequence. Sequence-initial position, then, is an important resource used in marking and analysing a FPP as a possible polar interrogative. The second resource is epistemic asymmetries⁹ implied by other means than interrogative morphosyntax or prosody (see chapter 1 section 1.3). All the FPPs discussed in the examples above seek confirmation of something which is within the recipients' domain of knowledge and experience. This type of questioning is referred to as B-event. When an utterance by speaker A talks about state of affairs which lies in speaker B's domain of knowledge, it attracts a response in which speaker B either confirms or disconfirms that state of affairs (Heritage & Roth, 1995; Labov & Fanshel, 1977). In SA, epistemic asymmetry is a major resource in marking and orienting to a turn as a polar interrogative. The following sections discuss these resources in more detail while showing components and types of the SA polar interrogative FPP.

⁹ The term 'epistemic asymmetry' refers to the differential between what speakers know and what they assume their recipients know (Sidnell, 2012). Epistemic asymmetry could be marked by grammatical constructs, such as tense (Goodwin & Goodwin, 1987; Heritage, 2012b; Stivers, 2005), and/or interrogative inversion. Interactants may also use evidential terms, such as 'maybe' or 'absolutely' (Stivers *et al*, 2011; Stivers, 2011), to refer to the level of knowledge/certainty they possess. Knowledge differentials may also be inferred from the context as in the case of the guru-disciple relationship (also see chapter 1, sections: 1.3.1 and 1.3.2 for more details on how epistemic access and asymmetries could be marked in interaction).

3.2. Other types of polar interrogative FPP in SA and their components

In addition to B-events, illustrated in section (3.1) above, polar interrogatives in SA may come in the following forms: statements followed by tags, epistemically downgraded FPPS, questions advancing candidate answers, polar alternative questions, negative interrogatives, and rhetorical questions. I start by discussing tag-marked polar interrogatives.

3.2.1. Tag-marked polar interrogatives

Question tags in SA are among the resources which SA interactants use to mark a turn-at-talk as a polar interrogative FPP that makes a responsive SPP relevant next (Stivers & Rossano, 2010). Example (3-6) below shows an instance of one of the SA tags ‘ma hēk’ (line 1). Mido is asking Wess whether his smartphone is model ‘five’.

(3-6) NS14-4

- | | | |
|------------|--|--|
| 1. Mido: → | hāda five ma hēk | <div style="display: inline-block; vertical-align: middle;"> <div style="display: inline-block; vertical-align: middle;">ma:?</div> <div style="display: inline-block; vertical-align: middle;">NegPrt?</div> <div style="display: inline-block; vertical-align: middle;">isn't:?</div> </div> |
| | This [is] five NegTag
This is five isn't it | |
| 2. Wess: → | | <div style="display: inline-block; vertical-align: middle;"> <div style="display: inline-block; vertical-align: middle;">°?eh°. = ((slight eyebrow flash))</div> <div style="display: inline-block; vertical-align: middle;">°yes°. =</div> </div> |
| 3. Wess: | = bass yānzil əssix bəʃtīk əl five ()

=when released the six PRX-give-1PS the five ()

=when the six [model] will be released I will give you the five () | |
| 4. Mido: | xalaş (.) hēk tamām,

alright (.) that's perfect, | |

Mido prefaces his FPP with the declarative TCU ‘hāda five’ ‘this [is] five’, then he adds the negative interrogative construct ‘ma hēk’ ‘isn't it so’ (Cowell, 1964, p. 386; Murphy, 2014, p. 83) which immediately receives a SPP from Wess. The immediate response it receives is the

affirming polarity marker ‘ʔeh’ which indexes Wess’ orientation to the tag as a polar interrogative.

Most of the tags in SA are negatively formatted by including the negative particles ‘ma’, ‘mu’, and their variations. Sometimes the tag consists only of the particle ‘ma’ or ‘mu’. Sometimes the particle ‘hēk’ ‘so’ follows ‘ma’ or ‘mu’ in the tag. In some Northern Syrian dialects ‘mu’ is inflected for gender becoming ‘maw’ for masculine and ‘māy’ for feminine. Tags in SA could be considered as a morphosyntactic resource since most of them use the negative operator ‘ma’ and ‘mu’ in combination with the generic lexeme ‘hēk’. SA tags are shown in table (iv) below.

Table (iv)

Negatively framed tags
Mu
Ma
Mu hek
Ma hek
Positive tags
‘ah’ with rising terminal pitch

Only three cases of turn-final ‘ah’ have been found in the data. In those cases, the particle is doing the same action of a tag, and similarly oriented to as a tag. This is illustrated in excerpts (3-7, 3-8, and 3-9) below. In the first example (line 3) Ali is telling how the girls in his accommodation consider him a brother. Abed produces an echo question (Keevallik, 2010) which repeats, in English, part of what Ali has said in line 1. Abed’s interrogative turn consists of two TCUs, the first one is an assertive ‘big brother’, the second TCU is ‘ah’. Abed’s turn receives an en passant ‘ʔeh’ as its immediate response from Ali who then continues to relate the story about the two girls he is talking about.

(3-7) GD11-2/12¹⁰

1. Ali. ʕambiʃūfūna bs- ʕambiʃū- ʕambifakrūne əl ʔaxx el ʔakbar ʔəlon

they look at 1PP in the fl- they loo- they think I [am] the brother the elder to them

they consider me in the fl- they consid- they think I am their elder brother

2. ʕandi belsa

kan ()
I have in the fl at ()
there in my fl at ()

3. Abed: →

big brother ahɛ

big brother Tagɛ

big brother Tagɛ

4. Ali: ʔeh tentēn wəħdi yūnaniyie wū wəħdi ingl- iglezəyi tərkyie.

Yes two girls one greek and one engl- english turkish.

The turn-initial polarity particle ‘ʔeh’ in Ali’s response exhibits his orientation to Abed’s ‘ah-tagged’ turn as a polar interrogative. In (3-8) below, Wess is asking Mido about the bus trip from his town to London. Wess’s interrogative turn consists of an assertive part ‘wurrəhli bəlbəʃ həlwi’ ‘and the trip is nice’ after which he produces the particle ‘a:h’ at turn-final position (line 1). Mido responds to Wess’ FPP with an immediate repetition of the adjective ‘həlwe’. Positively framed repeats are used to confirm the proposition of a polar interrogative FPP in SA (see chapter 4 section 4.5) as well as in English (Heritage & Raymond, 2012; Schegloff, 1996a; Stivers, 2005).

(3-8) NH11-4

1. Wess: → wurrəhli bəlbāʃ həlwi a:h?

and the trip by bus [is] nice Tag?

2. (0.2)

¹⁰ This excerpt is further analysed in section 5.3.1 below.

particle ‘ah’ which, at some positions, does the same action as ‘?eh’, therefore, turn-final ‘ah’ could be analysable as a positive tag. Example (3-10) below illustrates how ‘ah’ is used as a positive response to a polar interrogative FPP. In this excerpt Mido is inquiring about the possibility of buying equity shares through Sam’s company (line 1). Sam responds with ‘ah’ which, here, does the same action as an affirming ‘?eh’ (line 2).

(3-10) NS14-1

1. Mido: **halla? ?əntu brokers yəʕni byeʔder əl wāhed yeštəri ʕan ʔarīʔkon ?ashom.**

Prt you brokers Prt can-3PS the one buy-3PS through you shares.

Prt are you brokers Prt can one buy shares through you.

2. Sam: → **((nod)) ah,**

((nod)) yea,

3. Mido: **mumken.**

possible.

[it is] possible

4. Sam: **((nod)) mumken,**

((nod)) [it is] possible,

Mido is requesting buying equity shares through Sam’s company; an action which cannot be done at the time of the interaction. Therefore, Mido is requesting a deferred action (Lindström, 1997 [on Swedish]). Lindström has found that, in the case of deferred requests, a single affirming token is not oriented to as a firm granting of the request (also Schegloff, 2007 [on English]). Such requests prefer a SPP which implies sufficient agency and repetition could do that (Heritage & Raymond, 2012; also see chapter 4, section 4.5). This explains, Mido’s second polar interrogative (line 3) which almost repeats the gist of his first polar interrogative (line 1), thus indicating that there is still something missing in Sam’s response (Heritage, 1984a, pp. 248-249). Sam then

responds with a confirming repetition rather than just an affirming token. However, Mido's 'mumken' 'possible' (line 3) displays his analysis of Sam's 'ah' as implying a positive response.

7.62% of the polar interrogatives analysed for this study are formed with tags. More than half of the tag-marked polar interrogatives in the sampled data (18 out of 30) get an 'ʔeh or equivalent' within the SPP. Only four of the 18 samples have 'ʔeh' delayed. None of the tag-questions in the collected data receives 'laʔ' except one instance in which the SPP has 'laʔ', however, after a turn-initial 'ʔeh' (excerpt 3-11 below). In this excerpt, Wess is asking Mido about the duration of the trip from London to the latter's town. Wess produces a declarative TCU, 'hiyye saʔtēn' 'it [is] two hours' followed by the negative tag 'mu haik'. With no delay, Mido responds with an 'ʔe:' prefaced SPP. This 'ʔe:' does not affirm Wess's proposition in line 1. Instead, it delays the production of the laʔ-prefaced TCU which disconfirms Wess's proposition that the journey takes two hours; the journey, according to Mido, takes one hour (line 2). Delaying the laʔ-prefaced TCU indicates the dispreference of 'laʔ' within this sequential context (Heritage, 1984a; Pomerantz & Heritage, 2013).

(3-11) NCALL14-1

1. Wess: **hiyye sāʔtēn mu haikə**

it [is] two hours NegTagə

it [is] two hours isn't itə

2. Mido: ➔ **ʔe: (.) laʔ hiyye sāʔa mən liverpool street la ʕanna sāʔa,**

yes: (.) no it [is] one hour from liverpool street to our [place] one hour,

The example above is one of the many examples in this study which illustrate that the SA particle 'ʔeh' in turn-initial position within the SPP is not always used to confirm the proposition of a FPP (see chapter 4 section 4.2). It is used here to delay the dispreferred SPP by a component which is contiguously preferred to the preceding negative interrogative tag (Sacks, 1987). Heritage (2002) has found that negative interrogatives, in English, prefer an agreeing SPP. The

SA example above and the two examples following below indicate that SA interactants orient to the same preference (see section 3.2.5. this chapter, also chapter 4 section 4.4.2). The turn-initial ‘?eh’ in response to a negative interrogative tag, at least ostensibly, addresses that preference. Example (3-12) below also shows a negative tag receiving an ?eh-prefaced SPP where the ?eh does not project a confirming response. Mido is telling Sam about some companies working in Kurdistan and how if the political situation there improved, those companies’ share prices might increase. Sam produces an overlapping turn (line 4) which disagrees with Mido’s assumptions. Sam proposes that there is stability in Kurdistan, however he mitigates the assertion of his declarative proposition by adding the tag ‘mu hek’ ‘isn’t it so’ which invites Mido to confirm/disconfirm it.

(3-12) NS14-1

1. Mido: .hh məşkəlt kərdəstān bass əl- əlwadʕ əssiyāsi

.hh the problem of kurdistan [is] only th- the situation political

.hh the problem in kurdistan is only th- the political situation

2. əlwadʕ əssiyāsi byəzboʔ hadol əššarikāt kəllayata mənnon

the situation political stabilizes these companies all of them among them

[once] the political situation stabilizes all these companies including

3.

haiy əššærke ()
this company ()

4. Sam: → bass fi əstəqrar bkurdəstān mu hek.

but there [is] stability in kurdistan NegTag.

but there [is] stability in kurdistan isn’t there.

5. Mido: → ?eh bass baʔa fi lessa xilafāt bēna wu bēn əl ʕiraq ʕala::.

yes but Prt there [are] still disputes between them and Iraq regarding::.

6. (.)

7. → $\left[\begin{array}{l} \text{Şala taşdîr ən nafəţ wu ma} \\ \text{regarding exporting oil or not} \end{array} \right] \text{taşdîr ənnafəţ wu kaza,}$
 exporting oil and such things,
8. Sam: $\left[\begin{array}{l} \text{((two nods)) ?eh şaḥ.} \\ \text{((two nods)) yes right.} \end{array} \right]$

Although Mido's responsive SPP (line 5) is prefaced with ?eh, the 'bass' 'but' which follows projects a change of trajectory and adumbrates disagreement (Steensig & Asmuß, 2005). The TCU which follows the 'bass' in Mido's SPP disagrees with Sam's proposed assessment of the situation in Kurdistan. Mido, however, elaborates in his SPP by producing an account for its entailed disagreement. Following the completion of Mido's turn, Sam produces an aligning agreeing turn in third position. Mido's SPP although misaligned with Sam's FPP in terms of action, still maintains alignment in terms of polarity as it has the same positive polarity of the TCU which includes the proposition in the FPP. Mido's SPP is also prefaced by the agreement token 'eh' which contiguously addresses the preference for agreement which the turn-final negative tag in Sam's FPP embodies. This example further illustrates that in a negative-tag-marked polar interrogative environment there is a preference for a type-conforming SPP prefaced with an agreement token that is contiguously positioned with the tag. Example (3-13) below, further supports this line of argument. In this excerpt, Mido is asking Wess whether there are nightclubs in a district he wants to visit in London. Mido's question consists of a declarative TCU followed by a negative tag (line 2).

(3-13) NCALL14-1¹¹

1. Wess: → **ma fiyya şe ()**
 NegPrt in it thing ()
 there is nothing in it ()

¹¹ This excerpt is further analysed in section 5.2.5 below.

2. Mido: → ʕambətʔəlli ʔənnu fiyya[↑] nightclubs () mu hēk?
 you are telling me that in it [there are][↑] nightclubs () NegTag?
 you are telling me that there are[↑] nightclubs there () aren't you?
3. Wess: → ʔeh bass hadōli bass yōmēn bass yōm əljəmʕa: wəssabət.
 yes but these only two days only day Friday: and saturday.
 yes but these are [open] only for two days on friday and saturday.
4. Mido: aha:: jəmʕa wussabət ʕahī::,
 aha:: friday and saturday right::,

Wess's SPP (line 3) is prefaced with an 'ʔeh' followed immediately by a 'bass' which adumbrates disalignment in terms of action (Steensig & Asmuß, 2005). The turn-initial 'ʔeh' in Wess's SPP does not project full confirmation of the proposition in Mido's FPP. As in examples (3-11) and (3-12) above, this turn-initial 'ʔeh' does not do confirmation or even affirmation, it is positioned to addresses the sequential preference for contiguity and the form-related preferences of type-conformity and agreement which the turn-final negative tag makes relevant.

It is noticeable that none of the tag-marked FPPs in the examples cited in this section so far has received a SPP which is negated by the syntactic negative operators 'ma/mu'. Even those SSPs which disconfirm the proposition of the FPP do not contain syntactic negation by 'ma/mu'. In example (3-14) below, Abed disconfirms Mido's tag-marked FPP, however, without using a single disconfirming particle or construct. Mido is asking Abed whether a flatmate of his is European (line 1). Abed's response is a positively formulated single-word SPP, which provides the nationality of the flatmate (line 2).

(3-14) GD11-9¹²

1. Mido: → **wu ə- oroppi ma heke. wu w-.**

and ə- european NegTag. and w-.

and ə- [he is] european isn't he. and w-.

2. Abed: → **briṭani ((food in his mouth))**

british

7. Mido: **?iṭali.**

italian

8. Abed: **briṭani ↑**

british ↑

9. Mido: **um briṭani,**

um british,

10. Abed: **((nod))**

Abed does not negate the proposition of Mido's tag-marked FPP, instead he provides a replacement for Mido's proposed nationality of Abed's flatmate (Lee, 2016, p. 61). A replacement response disconfirms the proposition of the FPP without negating it (ibid). According to Lee, disconfirming by a replacement is more cooperative and aligning than disconfirming by negation.

All tag-marked polar interrogatives in the data receive positively framed SPPs, except the one cited in excerpt (3-15) below. In this single example in which a negatively framed SPP is the response to a tag-marked polar interrogative, the producer of the tag-marked polar interrogative challenges that response. The response itself is delayed and so is oriented to as dispreferred. Mido is having lunch with Wess in central London. Mido proposes that the market on that day is busy

¹² This excerpt is further analysed in section 5.2.3 below.

(line 1). Mido adds a negative tag to his proposition, thus inviting Wess, who works in a shop in central London, to confirm that proposition (line 1).

(3-15) NMC11¹³

1. Mido: → fī ḥarakət zabāyən ma he::k.

there [is] movement [of] customers NegTag.

it is busy with customers isn't i::t.

2. Wess: → (1) ((upward headshake then a nod during the 1-second gap))

3. əl yōm ma fi ḥaraki wa||ah.

today NegPrt there [is] movement Prt.

today it's not busy Prt.

4. Mido: uhm

5. Wess: maiyti bəl marra,

it is dead completely,

it is too quiet,

6. (0.2) ((Wess offers Mido food))

7. Mido: ((accepting the proffered food)) kafu

thanks

8. (0.2)

9. Wess: mḥaḍḍir ḥālak əl yō:m?

prepare-2PS yourself toda:y?

are you ready today?

10. Mido: → ʕajīb maʕ ʔənni wa||a:h zaḥme,

strange though Prt: [it is] packed,

that's strange although it is packed,

¹³ This excerpt is further analysed in section 5.2.2 below.

11. → əl ɒfəd stɪt əlʃama m:- kətfak kətfak ɖahɾak ɖahɾak əlbaʃar

the ɒfəd stɪt blɪndnəs m:- ʃəʊldə tu ʃəʊldə bæk tu bæk ðə pi:pl¹⁴

in ɒfəd stɪt blɪndnəs pi:pl wəz ʃəʊldə tu ʃəʊldə bæk tu bæk

Wess's negative response (line 3) is delayed by 1-second gap in which he produces a disaffiliative headshake (see chapter 4 section 4.1). It is further delayed by the adverbial 'əl yōm' 'today'. Such adverbial phrase could be flexibly positioned within the "sentence" in Classical Arabic (Abbas, 1991, p. 190). As a variety of Arabic, SA exhibits the same organisation where an adverb is flexibly positioned within the turn; it could be placed at the beginning, at the end, and in the middle of the turn. However, it cannot be placed between functional items which are syntactically bound. The possibilities below are all grammatically correct in SA, except the last one (e) in which the adverbial phrase comes between the negative operator and the item it is negating.

- a. **əl yōm** ma fi ɖaraki wa||ah
today not there [is] movement Prt
- b. ma fi ɖaraki **əl yōm** wa||ah
not there [is] movement today Prt
- c. ma fi ɖaraki wa||ah **əl yōm**
not there [is] movement Prt today
- d. ma fi **əl yōm** ɖaraki wa||ah
not there [is] today movement Prt
- e. ma **əl yōm** fi ɖaraki wa||ah*
not today there is movement Prt*

Placing that adverbial phrase 'əl yōm' at a turn-initial position further delays the production of the syntactically negated TCU in Wess's SPP. Because he works in the market, Wess orients to marking his independent and primary epistemic access to the issue by producing a negated repeat

¹⁴ 'Shoulder to shoulder back to back' is a Syrian idiomatic expression which indicates that a place is packed with people.

instead of an interjection such as ‘la?’ (Enfield & Sidnell, 2015, p. 134; Heritage & Raymond, 2012; Stivers, 2011; Stivers & Hayashi, 2010). However, Wess’s negated repeat receives a non-committal ‘uhm’ (Enfield *et al.* 2012) from Mido in third position. After Mido’s ‘uhm’, Wess further upgrades his epistemic primacy by elaborating on his response and telling that the market is dead (line 5). Wess then moves to a new sequence in which he offers Mido food, after Mido’s rejection of the offered food, Wess initiates a new sequence asking Mido whether he is ready that day. Mido has a party to attend on that day. However, Mido does not respond to Wess’s FPP (line 9), and, instead, he produces a turn which retrospectively challenges Wess’s negatively framed SPP (line 3) by stating that the streets are crowded on that day (line 10), thus implying that the market should be busy. The 315 polar interrogatives collected for this study contain only the example above in which a tag-marked FPP receives a negatively framed SPP and that single example shows that such an occurrence is challenged and oriented to as dispreferred.

Apart from (3-15), all the examples in this section show that tag-marked polar interrogatives in SA receive either a SPP marked by a positive-polarity particle or which is positively formatted. Tags call forth a combination of preferences which invite a SPP to align, at least in form, with the tag-marked FPP. Since tags in SA are mostly negatively framed, they invite their recipients to confirm their proposition (Heritage, 2002; Koshik, 2002; also see section 3.2.5 below). SA tag-marked FPPs, therefore increase the constraints for an agreeing response next (Heritage, 2002; Stivers & Rossano, 2012, p. 71). Tags play significant role in eliminating the epistemic incongruence which the SA declarative form of a polar interrogative entails. All the propositions preceding the tags in the examples in this section so far are declaratively framed. Declarative utterances are assertive in form (Heritage & Raymond, 2005). Therefore, when used as questions, they claim almost equal epistemic footing to the issue in question as that of the recipient. Adding a tag at turn-final position mitigates this assertiveness and establishes the recipient as the one who is entitled to confirm the proposition of the question (*ibid*). In other words, turn-final tags

assert the epistemic rights of the recipient, therefore, they reduce the incongruency between the epistemic status of the questioner and the assertive stance indexed by the declarative form of the proposition of the question. When recipients of the tag-marked question produce an acquiescing ‘?eh’, they acknowledge that the tag-marked question is acknowledging their primary epistemic rights to the issue in question. Therefore, a tag-marked question promotes the relevance of a type-conforming ?eh-marked SPP. The turn-final position of the tag utilises the general preferences for contiguity in conversation (Sacks, 1987). According to this preference, a contiguously positioned SPP first addresses the turn-final components of a FPP. When tags, especially negative tags, occupy turn-final position, they promote the production of a SPP which would first respond to them and address their form-related preference for an affirming agreeing response (Heritage, 2002). Tags, especially negative tags, have a syntactic structure in which the syntactic negation operators ‘ma/mu’ (Al Sharif, 2014) are either used on their own or positioned before the generic demonstrative free morpheme ‘hek’ (Murphy, 2014). Therefore, SA tags morphosyntactically mark a turn as polar interrogative. Tags, then, embody further constraint, morphosyntax, which makes a response relevant next (Stivers & Rossano, 2012). Their morphosyntactic marking invites a response which orients to the turn they occupy as inquisitive rather than assertive (unlike the case with B-events). To sum up, turn-final tags in SA are powerful resources which make an aligning acknowledging and agreeing response relevant next.

SA tags, however, exhibit position-sensitivity in talk-in-interaction. In some positions they lose their interrogative functionality and do not get responses at all as examples (3-16 to 3-18) illustrate. In example (3-16), Salim initiates an assessment sequence in which the first pair part evaluates Bulgaria as nice (line 6). Hamid, who has been to Bulgaria, produces a second position assessment which agrees with and confirms Salim’s evaluation of Bulgaria by repeating it (line 8). Hamid even upgrades his epistemic stance by adding the turn final question word ‘šəbak’ loosely translated as ‘what’s up with you’. Such expression implies that such assessment is too

obvious to be mentioned. Salim responds to Hamid's upgraded second assessment by producing an upgraded third position assessment (line 9). Salim follows his upgraded assessment by the tag 'mu hek'. A mini-pause follows that tag in which Salim receives no response. After the pause, Salim starts a new sequence by asking Hamid which country is more beautiful: Germany or Bulgaria. The intra-turn pause, together with Salim's continuation after that pause, index that both parties orient to the tag 'mu hek' in Salim's turn (line 9) as non-response-relevant.

(3-16) NDCALL16

- 1.Salim:** **haiy şūrtak wēn ?ēxəda tabʕīt əl:: whatsapp?**
 this picture-2PSPoss where have you taken it for the:: whatsapp?
 your picture on whatsapp where is it taken?
- 2.** **(1)**
- 3.Hamid:** **bəlgārya,**
 bulgaria,
- 4.Salim:** **wēn?**
 where
- 5.Hamid:** **bəlgār[↑]ya**
 bulgAr[↑]ia
- 6.Salim:** **bəlgārya:: wallah həlwe,**
 Bulgaria:: Prt [it is] nice,
- 7.** **(0.4)**
- 8.Hamid:** **?eh həlwe bəlgārya šəbak.**
 yes nice bulgaria what's up with you.
 yes bulgaria is nice what's up with you.
- 9. Salim:** **jamīle mu hek. (.) bass ?ena hiy ?ahla ?almānya ?əlla bəlgārya?**
 beautiful NegTag (.) but which is more beautiful germany or bulgaria?
 beautiful isn't it (.) but which is more beautiful germany or bulgaria?

According to Heritage and Raymond (2005), tags in second position assessments are used to upgrade their speaker's epistemic stance with regard to the assessed object. An upgraded epistemic stance is not a feature of a question, the main feature of which is a subordinate epistemic stance (ibid; Levinson, 2012). Hamid does not produce a response to Salim's tag-marked turn (line 9), nor does Salim pursue a response to it (Pomerantz, 1984b). Neither of the con-interactants, then, orient to this tag-marked turn, which is an upgraded assessment responding to a prior assessment, as making a response relevant next, or, in other words, as a question.

A similar instance is in example (3-17) below. The friends in this excerpt are talking about the UAE and cities in the UAE. Wess is telling Mido that Layla has told the latter that Abu Dhabi is different from Dubai (line 1). Layla produces 'not really', in line 3, which negates what Wess has asserted to Mido. Layla's 'not really', implies that there is no difference between the two cities (see line, 8). After Layla's 'not really' (line 3), Wess produces a standalone tag 'mu hek' with flat intonation. While Wess is producing that tag, his gaze is directed towards Layla (see figure 3-17). Wess's tag does not get a response from Layla. Mido's following turn (line 6) does not respond to Wess's tag. Layla, in line 7, responds to Mido's assessment, not to Wess's tag (Mido has visited both cities).

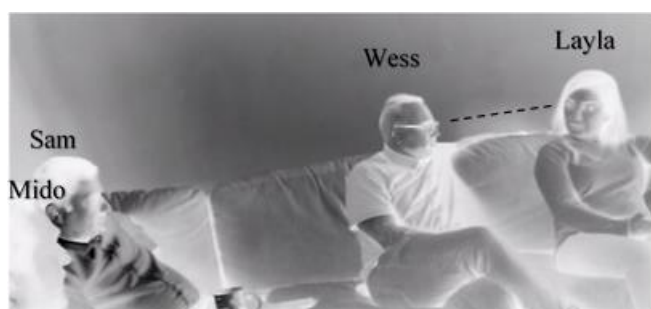


Figure: 3-17 (lines: 4-5)

(3-17) FTs-19

1. Wess: ((gaze directed towards Mido)) **bass hiy ʔālətlak dubai ʔbu ʔabi btəfri? ʕan dubai**
 but she has told you dubai abu dhabi [is] different from dubai
2. Mido: **ʔeh**
 yes
3. Layla: → ((looking at Wess)) not really
4. Wess: → ((turns towards Layla))
5. → **mu hek,**
 NegTag,
 isn't it,
6. Mido: → **ma kəl halʔad fih farəʔ bēnaton. ((gaze towards Layla))**
 not to that extent there [is] difference between.
 there is no big difference between them.
7. Layla: **not really**
8. Layla: **hallaʔ ʔabu ɖabi: in terms of rent ʔabʕan ʔaɣla mən::: dubai**
 Prt abu dhabi: in terms of rent of course [it is] more expensive than::: dubai

Wess's tag (line 5) is produced in a second position to Layla's 'not really' turn and is doing alignment with it. Wess's tag is negatively formatted and is therefore aligned in form with Layla's negatively formatted 'not really'. Wess's tag does not receive a response or any aligning second because it is not seeking alignment, it is doing alignment within this sequential position. As in example (3-16) above, the co-interactants, in this example, orient to the second-position tag as non-response-relevant.

The final example to support this argument is in excerpt (3-18) below. The friends are talking about dieting and healthy foods. Following Mido's assessment of fish as a food which does not

increase the level of blood cholesterol (line 2), Sam utters a standalone tag with rising final intonation, however this tag does not receive a response or an aligning second.

(3-18) NS14-2

1. Wess: **yəʃne əssamak huwwi ʔħsan še**

Prt fish it [is] the best thing

Prt fish is the best of all

2. Mido: → **wu ma byərfaʃ əlkolestrol**

and NegPrt raises the cholesterol

and it doesn't raise the cholesterol level

3. Sam: → **((shifts gaze from Wess towards Mina then towards Mido)) ma hēk?**

NegTag?

isn't it?

4. Mina: **((gaze directed towards Wess)) əssamak šaw- btəšwīh ʔəlla šlon.**

the fish gril- you grill it or how.

5. Wess: **btəšwee (.) ma fe še t- məʔle ma fe še məʔle bəzzēt ha dir balak**

You grill it (.) NegPrt there [is] thing t- fried NegPrt there [is] thing fried in oil Prt be careful

you grill it (.) nothing should be fried nothing should be fired in oil be careful

Sam's negative tag (line 3) is aligned in polarity with the prior negatively framed assessment uttered by Mido (line 2). Sam's tag is in a second position to Mido's assessment and it is doing alignment with it, therefore it does not make a response or an aligning SPP relevant next. Sam's second-position tag does not receive a response from any of the parties to this conversation who orient to it as non-response-relevant. The three examples above further demonstrate the positional sensitivity of SA polar interrogative constructs. Unlike English, where morphosyntactic marking plays a significant role, in SA when a tag-marked turn is not in a sequence-initial position, it is not oriented to as a polar interrogative which makes a response relevant next (cf. Heritage & Raymond, 2005). The following example shows that even in second position, a tag-marked turn

is oriented to as response-relevant in English. In the example below, Jenny and Vera are talking about Vera's grandsons. Jenny produces an assessment of Vera's grandson, James, describing him as a 'little devil' (line 1). Vera, who has primary epistemic rights to assess James, being his Grandmother, produces an assessment of him as a 'little bugger' followed by a negatively framed tag. Vera's second-position tag-marked assessment receives an agreeing 'yeh' from Jenny.

(3-19) from (Heritage & Raymond, 2005, p. 29)

1. Jen: → Yeh James's a little divil ihhh [↑]heh heh
2. Ver: [That-
3. Jen: [.huh .hh [h He:-
4. Ver: → [James is a little bugger [isn'e.
5. Jen: → [Yeh-
6. Jen: Yeah [(into) ev'rythi]ng.

The English speakers in the example above, have oriented mainly to the morphosyntactic marking of the second-position turn (line 4) to make it response-relevant, and, consequently, to place it in an initial position of an interrogative sequence. The SA examples above reveal different orientation by SA interactants to second-position tags. They orient to them as non-response-relevant. This argument supports the claim that SA interactants orient mainly to position and epistemic asymmetry, rather than to morphosyntactic marking, to make a turn-at-talk response-relevant; whether this turn is tagged or not.

Summary of finding in section 3.2.1

Analysing the deployment of tags as markers of polar interrogative in SA provides further evidence that the organisation of polar interrogative in SA talk-in-interaction is reliant on two major resources, the first of which is sequential position (Schegloff, 1996a, 2007) and the second

is epistemic access (Heritage, 2012a). Tags utilise both resources in making a polar response relevant next. Turn-final tags, in SA, invite confirmation/disconfirmation next by downgrading the epistemic stance that a declaratively formed prior TCU indexes in the turn. Furthermore, the negative form of most of the SA tags and their turn-final position invite a contiguously agreeing SPP next (Heritage, 2002; Sacks, 1987). The form and position related preferences, which SA tags utilise, promote the production of a SPP which projects agreement or type-conformity (Raymond, 2003) from its very beginning. A turn-initial ‘?eh’ would do both type-conformity and form-agreement, however, turn-initial ‘?eh’ does not always project an affiliative agreeing action. Due to their morphosyntactic structure, tags constitute a morphosyntactic resource which sets another constraint which makes a polar response relevant next. Turn-final tags, therefore, are powerful resources which recruit a type-conforming, aligning, agreeing, and acknowledging SPP. However, when SA tags are placed in second position in a sequence, interactants orient to them as doing other actions than interrogative. Therefore, SA interactants do not orient to second-position tag-marked turns as interrogatives. Those turns are shown not to receive a response. The study of SA tags adds to the understanding of the relationship between form/grammar and interaction. It also provides further evidence on the positional sensitivity of grammar in interaction (Schegloff, 1996a).

3.2.2. The epistemic-downgrade marker *Yəʃni*

Downgraded epistemic access plays an important role in marking a turn at-talk as a polar interrogative in SA. As discussed in section (3.2.1), tags are a morphosyntactic resource by which SA interactants index a downgraded epistemic access that invite confirmation by a more-knowing party, projectably the recipient. There are lexical resources which SA interactants use for downgrading epistemic access. Those are evidentials which display lack of knowledge or uncertainty about the matter in-question such as, ‘*Yəmkən*’ ‘maybe’, *kanni* ‘it seems’ ‘*bʒən*’ ‘I

8. Firas: → **yaʕni? ma- ma fhəmt ənnizām tabaʕak,**

Prt? not- not [I have] understood the system of yours,
which means? not- I haven't understood your [work's] system,

9. → **nizām muḥamāh yaʕni? wəlla nizām šərkət taxlīs ʕuqū:d wəlla šu.**

system legal Prt or system companies managing contracts or what.
is it in the legal sector Prt or business sector or contracts' management or what.

10. **(0.5)**

11. Wess: **la? əššərki ʔana: hiyyi ʕanda ʔutela:t wu ʔana ʕam ()**

no our company it has hotels and I am ()

12. **msajlīn ʕanna ʕandon mašakil wu əstəfsarāt ʔana ʕamsāʕdon fiyya.**

[people] subscribed with us they have problems and inquiries I help them with them.

[people] subscribed with us when they have problems and inquiries I help them.

13. **(0.2)**

14. Firas: **A:h ((two brisk nods))**

15. Wess: **yaʕnē ʕassistəm (.) bsāʕdon ʕassistəm bass**

Prt the system (.) I help them with the system only

16. Stan: **mawared bašariyye:.**

resources human:.

human resources:.

17. **((Firas shifts gaze towards Stan))**

18. Firas: → **yaʕni? mətəl ma bə- mətəl nəhna mənsamīh bsūria mawared bašariyye?**

Prt like what t- what we call in Syria resources human?

Prt like what t- what we call in Syria human resources?

19. **(0.2)**

20. Wess: **xədmīt ʕumālā? ↑ xədmīt ʕumāla?.**

service customers ↑ service customers.

customer service ↑ customer service.

21. Firas: xədmət ʕumalāʔ.

service customer.

customer service.

Firas's *yəʕni*-marked candidate-answer question (line 9) receives the negative polarity particle 'laʔ' as its immediate response (line 11) after which Wess produces a description of his company, however no job title is provided yet. Stan, who is overhearing the conversation, suggests 'human resources' as a guess at Wess's job. Following Stan's guess, Firas produces a turn asking Wess to confirm that guess, a turn prefaced with '*yəʕni*' (line 18). Wess responds by providing the title of his job (line 20). Three interrogative turns in this example are marked with '*yəʕni*', one of them is a standalone '*yəʕni*' which the recipient orients to as a repair initiator (line 4). The other two *yəʕni*-marked turns (lines: 9 and 18) are oriented to as: firstly, seeking information; secondly, seeking confirmation of some proposed information. Such usage and orientation to those *yəʕni*-marked turns highlight the epistemic-related work which this particle does in SA talk-in-interaction. '*Yəʕni*' indexes an epistemic gap. This is clear in the example above when Firas' standalone '*yəʕni*' (line 4) indicates that the epistemic gap, which his question in line 1 seeks to fill, is still unfilled. The laughter which accompanies '*yəʕni*' in this turn is an indicator of trouble (Jefferson, 1984b); the trouble is that Wess's response has not filled that gap. In line 18, '*yəʕni*' prefates a turn which is advancing a proposition for confirmation, i.e. a polar interrogative. In line 20, '*yəʕni*' prefates another request for confirmation. Wess disconfirms the *yəʕni*-prefaced proposition in this turn, not by grammatically negating it, but by providing a replacement response (Lee, 2016).

The practice of using *yəʕni* to index an information gap could also be seen in excerpt (3-22) in which Mido is asking his fellow graduate teaching assistant Khan whether forty is a pass mark (line 1). Khan responds with an affirming 'ʔeh' accompanied with a nod. Mido, however, repeats

part of his polar interrogative turn in line 3. Repeating the question means that there is something missing in the response (Heritage, 1984a, pp. 248-249). Khan responds to the repeated turn with a nod (line 4). After that nod, Mido produces a *yəʕni*-marked interrogative which requests the confirmation that forty is a pass mark, however, it is a bare pass. To that turn Khan responds with the affirming ‘*ʔeh*’ followed by the confirming ‘*tamāman*’ ‘exactly’, after which Mido produces the positive receipt token ‘*ʔe:h*’ and the sequence comes to termination.

(3-22) GTAM14-2¹⁵

1. Mido: **hallaʔ arbʕīn najahʔ**

Prt forty [is] a pass [mark]ʔ

2. Khan: **((nod)) ʔeh.**

((nod)) yes.

3. Mido: **arbʕīn najahʔ,**

forty is a pass [mark],

4. Khan: **((nod))**

5. Mido: → **bass ʔal ʔedd yəʕni šahəʔ.**

but on the verge Prt pulled.

but [it is] on the verge [of failure] Prt bare pass.

6. **(0.2)**

7. Khan: → **((nod)) ʔe tamāman.**

((nod)) yes exactly.

8. Mido: **((opens his mouth with a smile then turns his head and nods))**

9. Mido: **ʔe:h.**

ye:s.

¹⁵ This excerpt is further analysed in section 5.2.3 below.

The example above illustrates that SA interactants use ‘yəŋni’ to indicate that an epistemic gap is still unfilled. ‘Yəŋni’ indexes downgraded epistemic access by showing that the proposition in its turn is inferred from something that has already been said or from the context. Yəŋni-marked turns invite the projectably-knowing recipient to confirm the inferred proposition. The claim that yəŋni-marked turns seek confirmation rather than just affirmation is evident in the fact that the standalone ‘?eh’ SPP (line 2 above) is oriented to as insufficient, neither is the nod. After Khan produces the confirming ‘tamāman’, Mido produces the third-position particle ‘?eh’ which marks the SPP as fulfilling the action which the yəŋni-marked FPP has sought to accomplish (Heritage, 1984b, also see chapter 5 section 5.2.1).

In the following example Abdul is asking Mido whether it is proper for one to give money to someone in order to get her/him to insult someone else. A (0.5) pause follows Abdul’s FPP (line 5) where no response is produced by his interlocutor Mido. When Abdul does not receive a response, he adds an increment to his question to pursue response (Bolden *et al.* 2012); this increment is marked with ‘yəŋni’ (line 7). Following Abdul’s ‘yəŋni-marked increment, Mido produces a SPP prefaced by ‘?eh la?’ ‘yes no’ combination (see chapter 4 section 4.2) followed by the confirming assertive particle ‘tabŋan’ ‘of course’.

(3-23) GD14-2¹⁶

1. Abdul: ((gaze towards Mido)) ka?ənni maṭalan ŋam?ollak

as if for example PRX-tell-2PS

as if I were telling you for instance

¹⁶ This excerpt is further analysed in section 4.2 below.

2. **xāy ʔana bədde ʔəʕtīk yəʕni (.) ʔeʕak mænna bədde ʔəʕteek mīt pound**
 brother I want to give you Prt (.) you are far from that¹⁷ I want to give you a hundred pound
 brother I want to give you Prt (.) this is not directed to you I want to give you a hundred pound
3. **xaməsmye halli hænne wu baʔullak subb ʕala flān minənnās.**
 five hundred whatever and I tell you to insult at someone among people.
 five hundred whatever and I tell you to insult someone.
4. Rafi: **hay ʔana**

bsəbb ʕleh
here I am I insult him
here I am I'm [ready to] insult him
5. Abdul: → **biʕīr halḥaki?**
 possible this rhetoric?
 is that proper?
6. **(0.5)**
7. Abdul: → **manṭiqyyan yaʕni.**
 logically Prt.
 logically speaking yəʕni.
8. Mido: → **°ʔeh laʔ tabʕan°. ((shifts gaze towards Rafi))**
 °yes no of course°.

Abdul's first polar FPP (line 5) asks about something which lies within the epistemic domain of both Abdul and his interlocutor Mido. It is a culturally common sensical issue which Abdul broaches. Therefore, Mido orients to this polar FPP (line 5) as a rhetorical question which asks about something very obvious and does not need to be confirmed. Polar rhetorical questions do not usually make a response relevant next in SA (see section, 3.2.6 below). Abdul's yəʕni-marked increment (line 7), however, recruits a response from Mido. Within this argumentative discussion

¹⁷ 'ʔeʕak mænna' is a parenthetical TCU which embodies an idiomatic expression. When a SA interactant tells about bad behaviour or bad characteristics, she/he may use 'ʔeʕak mænna' to indicate that such bad behaviour or characteristics do not apply to the co-interactant.

between Abdul and Rafi, Abdul has turned for Mido to seek the latter's support. Mido's lack of verbal response does not display the required support sought by Abdul. Abdul's *yəʕni*-marked increment (line 7) is, therefore, produced in an environment where there is something still missing after the production of his first polar FPP (line 5). A confirming response from Mido, which supports Abdul's argument, is still missing. Abdul's *yəʕni*-marked increment is the resource by which he pursues such supportive response.

The examples in this section so far offer empirical evidence that the SA particle '*yəʕni*' indexes an epistemic gap and downgrades the epistemic stance of its speaker, thus inviting the recipient to fill that gap by either supplying the missing information or by confirming a candidate proposition. All *yəʕni*-marked polar interrogatives in the data are oriented to as such. The majority of the *yəʕni*-marked polar interrogatives in the data (63%) receive type-conforming SPPs.

Due to its epistemic downgrading function, '*yəʕni*' could be used to mitigate the assertiveness of SA declaratively formed polar interrogatives, especially B-events; as examples (3-24 to 3-26) illustrate. In the first example (3-24), the friends are having dinner in a restaurant. Following Abdul's turn in which he describes the food as not fattening (line 1), Mido initiates a *yəʕni*-marked turn asking whether Abdul is on diet (line 2). Abdul responds to Mido's *yəʕni*-marked turn with an *ʔeh*-prefaced *wallāh*-final confirming SPP (Helani, 2008).

(3-24) GD14-2

1. Abdul: ((shifts gaze towards Mido)) *baʕdēn hāda əl ʔakəl ma bisammen*

after all this the food [does] not fatten

and such food is not fattening

2. Mido: → a:h (.)
- | | | | |
|---------|-----------------|-------|-----------------|
| a:h (.) | doing-2PS diet | Prt:. | doing-2PS diet |
| a:h (.) | are you dieting | Prt:. | are you dieting |
3. Karam: ((to Rafi)) šū şar bəššay ()
- | | |
|-------------|--------------------------|
| ((to Rafi)) | what happened to tea () |
|-------------|--------------------------|
4. Abdul: → ?eh wa||ah.
- yes wa||ah.
5. Mido: aha ↑

In example, (3-25) below, Sam is inviting his guests to go out to his garden, Wess produces a yəŋni-marked polar interrogative asking his friends to confirm that they ‘want’ to sit outside (line 3). Sam responds with a standalone stretched ‘?eh’ and Mido confirms that they want to sit outside by producing a modified repetition (line 5).

(3-25) FUD-19

1.Sam: ya||ah ətfəddalu ətfəddalu

Prt come on come on

let's go come on come on

2.Mido: ya||ah

Prt

let's go

3.Wess: → bədkon təfdu barra yəŋne,

you want to sit outside Prt,

4.Sam: → ?e:h.

Ye:s.

((all start to move))

5.Mido: → **nəʔʕod bəlhawāʔ ətʔaləq.**

we sit in the air fresh.

we sit in the fresh air.

The last example which illustrates the mitigating effect of *yəʕni* in B-events is in excerpt (3-26) below. Layla is talking about residence regulations in the UAE. Sam asks her whether she could reside in that country without anything (he means without a permit) (line 3). He uses a *yəʕni*-marked negative interrogative for that purpose. Layla responds to Sam's FPP with a *laʔ*-prefaced negatively framed SPP in which she also provides some details about the issue in question (lines: 4, 5, 7, 8).

(3-26) reproduced from (1-1) chapter 1 section, 1.3.1

1.Layla: **əntaha əʕʕəǧəl əntahet ətkansalet automatically already ʔiqāmtak**

terminated the employment terminated cancelled automatically already your residence permit

[once] your employment is terminated your residence permit is automatically cancelled

2.Mido: **hallaʔ wu ʔəntu ma** ()

Prt and you-2PP not ()

3. Sam: →

yəʕni ma fiki təʔʕadi hek bala ʕi yəʕni ()

Prt not can stay-2PS-fem like that without anything Prt ()

Prt you cannot stay like that without anything Prt ()

4. Layla: →

laʔ=

no=

5. Layla: → **=((upward headshake)) laʔ (.)=**

=((upward headshake)) no (.)=

6. Mido:

ma fi.

NegPrt there is.

there is no [way].

7. Layla: → =ma btəʔder ʔaw bəddak taxod ərrisk fiyya muxalafāt

=NegPrt can-2PS-masc or you have to take the risk there are penalties

=you cannot or you have to take the risk and there are penalties

8. kəl yom madfūʔ ə: bişir

every day paid ə: will become

everyday will become paid for

9. Sam: umm

All the *yəʕni*-marked polar interrogative FPPs in the three examples above are B-events which ask about something within the addressee's epistemic domain. It is noticeable that all these FPPs receive type-conforming SPPs. Declarative B-events in SA mostly receive repetition, as it has been noted in section (3.1) above, and as it is further demonstrated in chapter 4, section (4.5.). However, the three *yəʕni*-marked B-events above have all received *ʔeh/laʔ*-marked SPPs, some of which do not include repetition at all. When questioners downgrade their epistemic access to the issue in question, they cede epistemic primacy to the recipients, especially when it comes to B-events which target domains of knowledge and experiences which the recipients are more entitled to assert than the questioners. A declarative B-event is inherently assertive. However, when this assertiveness is downgraded by a linguistic resource such as '*yəʕni*', it is oriented to as acknowledging the recipients' epistemic rights and inviting them to confirm those rights. A *yəʕni*-marked turn, therefore, exhibits epistemic congruency between its form and its action (questioning). Marking a polar interrogative FPP with an epistemic-downgrade marker such as '*yəʕni*' promotes the relevance of a SPP which acknowledges the questioning action of the FPP and orients to the polar-interrogativity entailed in it; such orientation is indexed in the type-conformity of the SPP.

Finally, it is important to note that, although '*yəʕni*' is used in marking turns as questions and polar interrogatives in SA, not all *yəʕni*-marked turns are interrogative. '*Yəʕni*' is an evidential

marker which could be used in affirmative turns as well such as in example (3-27) below. In the excerpt below, Abed is telling his friends about a handsome guy he knows. He uses ‘yəʕni’ in line 2 to mark what follows it as inferred from prior talk; that, since that guy is handsome, girls would like him.

(3-27) GD11-2/19

1. Abed: **ya¹⁸ sīdi¹⁹ bass hwūe bʕaraḥa kan šabb heke wasīm əʕaraḥa**

Prt master but he honestly was a young guy like that handsome honestly

Prt my master but he was handsome and young honestly speaking

2. → yəʕni: btəʕjəbū wū byəʕjob ʔayy bənet.

Prt: 3PS-fem-like-2PS and 2PS-masc-like any girl.

Prt: he would like any girl and any girl would like him.

3. Ram: **ʕajbak ʔə ha ha ha**

you like him yes ha ha ha

In the sequential position above, ‘yəʕni’ is not marking the turn as interrogative. This positionally sensitive behaviour of ‘yəʕni’ further supports the argument in this thesis that SA interactants orient to the sequential position of a turn to mark and analyse it as a polar interrogative. When ‘yəʕni’ is in a sequential position where the interactant is talking about knowledge or experiences which are not directly in her/his own epistemic domain, ‘yəʕni’ invites the projectably-knowing addressee to confirm/disconfirm the proposed knowledge/experience. However, when ‘yəʕni’ is used in a sequential position where the speaker is talking about her/his own direct knowledge and experience (what Pomerantz, 1984 terms as type-1 knowables), ‘yəʕni’ does not solicit the recipient’s confirmation.

¹⁸ Ya: is an Arabic particle used to summon people or to preface an address term.

¹⁹ Sidi: is a respect address term which could be used between friends as well.

Summary of findings in section 3.2.2

Highlighting the usage of the epistemic-downgrade particle ‘yəʃni’ in SA further demonstrates that epistemic access is one of the major resources which SA interactants rely on in marking and analysing a turn-at-talk as polar interrogative. Epistemic-downgrade markers mitigate the assertiveness which is inherent in the declarative form of the SA polar interrogative FPP. Therefore, FPPs marked with epistemic-downgrade items exhibit congruency between their form and their action, which is seeking information or confirmation of some proposed information. An epistemic congruent polar interrogative FPP is preferred in SA and is oriented to as doing questioning rather than assertion. SA interactants acknowledge the askability of such FPPs by responding with type-conforming SPPs. ‘Yəʃni’, is positionally sensitive. When it is used with turns which address issues that lie within the addressee’s epistemic domain, it marks that turn as seeking confirmation. However, when it is used in a turn which addresses issues within the speaker’s epistemic domain, it is not oriented to as marking that turn as interrogative. The organisation of ‘yəʃni’ in SA polar interrogative sequences further supports the argument of this thesis, which claims that SA interactants orient mainly to epistemic access and position in marking and analysing a turn-at-talk as polar interrogatives. The organisation of ‘yəʃni’ also illustrate the SA interactants’ sensitivity towards epistemic rights. When a FPP is epistemically congruent and acknowledges the addressee’s epistemic rights, the addressee orients to it by acknowledging its polar interrogativity; this is done by responding with the preferred type-conforming SPP (Raymond, 2000, 2003).

3.2.3. Candidate polarity

SA interactants may mark their turns as polar interrogatives by advancing a candidate answer for confirmation. They may ask a question but provide a candidate answer to it, inviting the recipient to confirm whether that answer is the correct one (Enfield & Sidnell, 2015; Sacks, 1992a). Hence, a candidate-answer FPP establishes polar interrogativity through making the

confirmation / disconfirmation of the candidate proposition relevant next (Pomerantz, 1988). Excerpt (3-28) contains an example of a SA candidate-answer interrogative. Sam is asking Wess about the duration of the first stage in a diet that the latter is on. Sam's question is initially hearable as a wh- as he utters the wh- word 'kam' 'how long' (line 1). However, adding a candidate answer at turn-final position renders that turn -into polar interrogative.

(3-28) NS14-2

- 1. Sam:** **halla? ʔawwal marḥale kam kam:: kam ʔə-. ʔəsbūʔ?**
 Prt the first stage how how:: how [long] ʔə-. [one] week?
- 2. Wess:** **ʔawwal marḥali ʔsbūʔ tani marḥali: ʕašər ʔasabīʕ.**
 The first stage [is] [one] week [the] second stag:e [is] ten weeks.

Since a polar interrogative “advances a hypothesis for confirmation” (Bolinger, 1978, p. 104), it indexes some knowledge with regard to the issue in question. Hence, a polar interrogative displays more upgraded epistemic status than a wh- question usually does (Levinson, 2012). Adding a candidate answer to a wh- interrogative renders it into polar interrogative and marks it as more assertive than a wh- question (Heritage & Raymond, 2013). In the excerpt above, Wess responds to Sam's candidate proposition with repetition followed by an elaboration about the duration of the second stage of the diet; something which Sam has not inquired about. By offering a candidate answer, Sam is upgrading his epistemic stance with respect to an experience which lies in Wess's epistemic domain. Wess is the one on diet and he is attributed with higher epistemic position regarding that subject. A merely agreeing 'ʔeh' as a SPP to such candidate-answer FPP would endorse the upgraded epistemic stance of Sam. However, repetition resists such implied upgrade by asserting its speaker's "epistemic and social entitlement" to the issue being addressed (Heritage & Raymond 2012, p. 185). Wess further confirms his epistemic access to the topic by providing further unsolicited information. Example (3-29) further illustrates that SA recipients

conformity in this example. This is different in English (cf. Pomerantz, 1988) where type conformity is still given priority over epistemic congruency in candidate-answer polar interrogative sequences as the following example illustrates. A school attendance clerk is calling the mother of a pupil with regard to his absence, but the pupil, Renee, answers the phone, then the clerk questions him about the absence.

(3-30) from (Pomerantz, 1988, p. 368)

1. Clerk: Well how- have you been home from school i:ll Renee,
2. (0.5)
3. Stud: Yeah
4. (2.0)
5. Clerk: Okay, when was the first day that you were out ill
6. (2.2)
7. Stud: I don't know
8. Clerk: → Well you know how long it's been, couple weeks? or what.
9. Stud: → Yeh

The attendance clerk advances a candidate answer when he asks the student about the duration of his absence (line 9). The student, without any delay or mitigation, responds with the positive polarity marker 'yeh', hence giving priority to addressing the preference of type-conformity when responding to that yes/no-type interrogative FPP. No repetition or elaboration is produced following the type-conforming 'yeh'.

Before moving to example (3-31), which further illustrates SA interactants' orientation to prioritize epistemic congruency over type-conformity in candidate-answer polar interrogative sequences, it is worth to mention that only 4.1% of the SA polar interrogatives analysed for this

study are constructed as candidate-answer questions; none of those receives ʔeh/laʔ as its immediate response and most of them receive repetition as a SPP. In (3-31) below, Mido is asking Mina about the job she likes to do. He starts his interrogative turn as a wh-question then following a mini-pause, he upgrades it by adding a candidate answer (line 1). Mina orients to Mido's FPP as assertive by responding with two consecutive repeats of Mido's candidate answer (line 2).

(3-31) NS14-2²⁰

1. Mido: **šu bəṯḥəbbi təštəgli əššəgəl šu bəṯḥəbbi təštəgli (.) tadrīs ə::**

what like-2PS-fem work-2PS-fem the job what like-2PS-fem to do (.) teaching ə::

What [do] you like to do for a job what [do] you like to do (.) teaching ə::

2. Mina: **baḥəbb əttadri- əttadrīs baḥəbbə.**

I like teach- teaching I like it.

It is noticeable that Mina, midway through her utterance of the first repeat, cuts off the repetitive TCU and repairs it by producing a modified repetitive TCU in which she changes the word order from that in the FPP. In the FPP, Mido utters the verb 'bəṯḥəbbi' 'you like' before the candidate suggestion 'tadrīs' 'teaching'. Mina, in her repair-modified repeat, puts the noun 'tadrīs' before the deictically modified verb 'baḥəbbə' 'I like'. The modified second repetition marks Mina's SPP with further independence from the FPP (Stivers, 2005). In terms of preferences, Mina's SPP addresses the preference for asserting her independent epistemic stance rather than addressing type-conformity (for more detailed analysis of this example, see chapter 4 section, 4.5). After all, Mina is the one entitled to know what she likes.

²⁰ This excerpt is further analysed in section 4.5 below.

Summary of findings in of section 3.2.3

In all three SA examples above, there are two preferences competing; the preference for type-conformity and the preference for epistemic congruence. When two such preferences are in competition within the SA polar interrogative sequence, the preference for epistemic congruency is prioritised. Since epistemic access is one of the main resources to which SA interactants orient for marking whether a turn-at-talk is asserting or questioning, their social behaviour exhibits sensitivity to preferences related to epistemic access. Epistemic rights are well guarded in SA talk-in-interaction. Therefore, when a polar interrogative turn violates the preference for epistemic congruency, it is resisted and oriented to as dispreferred. One sign of such resistance in the polar SPP is the departure from type-conformity (Raymond, 2003). An assertive polar interrogative, then, promotes the relevance of the preference for epistemic rights' assertion over the preference for type-conformity in SA polar interrogative sequences (see chapter 4, section 4.5 for further support to this claim).

3.2.4. Polar alternatives

Polar alternatives take the form of a question with two contrastive candidate options of which the recipient is invited to select only one. The SA data in this study shows low frequency of polar alternatives; only 5.7% of the collected samples. An instance of a polar alternative is illustrated in example (3-32) below. Wess is inviting Mido to go with him to have a haircut at a barber's shop that Wess knows. As Wess starts to talk about that barber (line 6), Mido produces a turn which asks whether that barber is good or bad (line 7). Wess, then, is invited to confirm one of those two contrastive alternatives. Wess responds with the upgraded assessment 'muhtaram' which means that the barber is respectable or, in other words, very good (line 8). Wess does not select to confirm any of the alternatives offered by Mido, instead, he produces an upgraded assessment of that barber.

(3-32) reproduced from (1-5) chapter 1 section, 1.3.1

3. Wee: **ʔe:h (0.2) bətrū btəhloʔ mafəʕ**

ye:s. (0.2) go-2PS have your hair cut with meʕ

ye:s. (0.2) would you like to go and have your hair cut with meʕ=

4. **(.)**

5. Mido: **((looks at his watch))**

6. Wees: **wallah ʔallaʔ ə-**

Prt the barber ə-

7. Mido: → mrattab ʔalla taʔb **a:nɛ**

[is] he good or ba :dɛ [referring to the barber]

8. Wess: →

muhtaram.

[respectable. [very good]]

9. Mido: **ʔddeh byaxod hād.**

how much charges he.

how much does he charge.

In the next example, Layla has been talking about Emirate Airways. Wess turns to her and asks about another airways company in the UAE, Etihad Airways; he asks Lalya whether it is the same or different from Emirate Airways (line 1). After some turn-initial delay, Layla selects the second alternative offered by Wess ‘muxtaliʔ’ ‘different’ putting it in a full-sentential turn (line 2).

(3-33) FTs-19

1.Wess: → fi- fī ((turns towards Layla)) ʕandon əlittiḥad airway nafsūʕ ʔalla muxtalif.

ther- there is ((turns towards Layla)) they have etihad airways [is] it the same or different.

2.Layla: → **ʔəl:: ʔayaran əlʔittiḥad muxtalef.**

the:: airways etihad different

the:: etihad airways is different

3.Wess: **bass huwi ʔimarati mū:ʔ**

but it [is] emirati NegTag?

but it is emirati isn't it?

The full sentence which Layla produces in line 2 is grammatically independent from Wess's FPP; an independence which asserts Layla's epistemic primacy to the issue in question. Therefore, the form of Layla's SPP indexes an upgrade of her epistemic stance. This practice is somehow similar to example (3-32) where Wess produces an upgrade of one of the alternative assessments offered to him in Mido's FPP (line 7).

SA interactants may select to respond to polar alternatives by ʔeh/laʔ-prefaced SPPs such as in examples (3-34) and (3-35) below. In (3-34), Rafi is asking Mido about his stay in the Saudi capital Riyadh. Abdul takes part in the conversation and asks Mido whether that stay was after or before the latter did his master's degree (line 6). Mido responds with 'laʔ' after which he offers a modified alternative which does not confirm the proposition that his stay was after the master's degree, it confirms that the stay was after the BA degree (line 7). Mido's response, therefore, does not confirm any of the alternatives advanced by Abdul. The turn-initial 'laʔ' projects disagreement and what follows, although aligning in form (some lexical items repeated and polarity is matching), is not aligning in action.

(3-34) GD14-2²¹

1. Rafi: **kam səne ɖallēt taʔrīban.**

How [many] years you stayed approximately.

²¹ This excerpt is further analysed in section 4.4.3 below.

3. Mido: **wa||ah ɖallēt fiyya tmənnə snīn.**
Prt I stayed in it [for] eight years.
4. Rafi: **uf:: ʕumur**
uf:: a lifetime
5. Mido: **ʕumur**
a lifetime
6. Abdul: → **hay baʔd əl majəstair ax midoʔ ʔəlla ʔbəl.**
this [is] after the master's brother midoʔ or before.
7. Mido: → **laʔ hay baʕd əl bī aiy baʕd əl bakaloryos.**
no this [is] after the BA after the bachelorette.
8. Abdul: **((nod)) uh**

In example (3-35, line, 1), Hamid, in a phone call, is asking Salim whether he has submitted a visa application to a specific country²² or not. Salim prefaces his SPP (lines: 2 and 3) with a curtailed form of the SA polarity particle ‘ʔeh’ after which Salim produces a TCU which neither confirms nor disconfirms any of Hamid’s proposed alternatives. As in example (3-35) above, Salim’s SPP, although prefaced by ‘ʔeh’, does not display agreement with any of the proposed alternatives, instead, it offers a slightly different proposition.

(3-35) NDCALL16²³

1. Hamid: → **ʔənti ʔaddamət ši:ʔ ʔəlla ma fi.**
you have submitted anythingʔ or NegPrt there [is].
have you submitted anythingʔ yet or not.
2. Salim: → **ʔe hallaʔ taʔrīban yaʕni əl:- ələ- ɖəmn ələ:: process. (.)**
yes now nearly Prt the: the- within the:: process. (.)

²² The name of the country is not mentioned for confidentiality reasons.

²³ This excerpt is further analysed in section 4.4.3 below.

3. **qəmn əlʕa- ʕa-** $\left[\begin{array}{c} \text{mēšīn} \\ \text{we are progressing} \end{array} \right] =$
 within the proce- por-
- 4.Hamid: $\left(\quad \right)$
- 5.Salim: **=bəl- bəlʕamaliyye lanʕuf,**
 =with- with the process let's see,
- 6.Hamid: **umm good luck ()**

In example (3-36) a polar alternative FPP receives a challenging SPP. Abed is telling his friends about a guy he knows who possesses scientific and educational knowledge, however, Abed is criticising that guy for not believing that God exists and for claiming that he could convince people that God does not exist. At this point in the conversation, Mido asks Abed whether that guy could convince him [that God does not exist] or not (line 3). Mido's FPP advances two contrastive propositions. Abed responds with a SPP prefaced with the SA word 'fašar', translated literally as 'it's a lie', this is followed by a modified repeat of the verb 'yəqneʕ' 'to convince' inflected in first person singular (line 4). The word 'fašar' is a challenging word which does the same action as the English 'of course not'. 'Of course' is a response which challenges the askability of the question (Stivers, 2011). Mido produces laughter in third position as an indication of trouble in Abed's challenging SPP (Jefferson, 1984b).

(3-36) GD11-4

- 1.Abed: **btəttallaʕ ʕleh heke kel hal maʕrife wū byiji byəḥkīlak**
 you look at him like that [with] all that knowledge [he has] and he comes [and] says to you
2. **ana beqneʕak ʔənni ma mawjood aḷlah astagferuḷḷah °astagferuḷḷah°**
 I convince you that NegPrt exists god I ask forgiveness of god °I ask forgiveness of god°
 I [can] convince you that god does not exist god forgive me god forgive me²⁴

²⁴ Abed is asking for God's forgiveness for himself, because he uttered the phrase 'God does not exist'. Abed is a believer in God.

3. Mido: → **daxlak byəqneʕak** ↑ **?əlla ma byəqneʕakɿ=**
 you think he convince-2PS ↑ or NegPrt convince-2PSɿ=
 [do] you think he [can] convince you ↑ or notɿ=
4. Abed: **=fašar**²⁵ **yəkneʕni.**
 =It's a lie [that] he convinces me.
 =I challenge that he [can] convince me.
5. Mido: **ha ha ha**

Abed's response (line 4) resists the terms of Mido's FPP by challenging its askability and by departing from type-conformity.

All the alternative polar interrogative FPPs in the examples in this section have received SPPs which display some resistance to the terms of those FPPs; this even includes type-conforming SPPs. Polar alternatives constrain the recipient to the contrastive alternatives they offer. Selecting either of those alternatives entails deselecting the other. SA interactants depart from such constraints by either producing an upgraded SPP, a type-conforming SPP which offers a replacement of both alternatives, or even by challenging their askability as in example (3-36) above.

Summary of findings in section 3.2.4

Polar alternative questions sound ostensibly like an attenuated version of candidate-answer questions. While a candidate-answer question advances one proposition to be confirmed by the recipient, alternative polar questions offer two candidate propositions. However, the contrastive implicature of the proposed alternatives means that selecting one of them involves deselecting the other. Therefore, SA interactants orient to such polar alternatives as constraining and

²⁵ 'Fašar' is a Syrian Arabic idiomatic expression which is specifically used for challenging a person a or a proposition.

assertive. Consequently, SA interactants orient to resisting the terms of such polar interrogatives and to departing from their constraints.

3.2.5. Negative interrogative

Negative interrogatives have been found to do assertion rather than questioning in English talk-in-interaction (Heritage, 2002; Koshik, 2002) and in Danish as well (Heinemann, 2008). Speakers use this format to assert a stance towards a state of affairs. Therefore, negative interrogative can be used for criticism, complaints, accusations and challenges (ibid). Excerpt (3-37), in English, illustrates the assertive function of negative interrogative in that language. Emma is calling Margie to thank her for a lunch invitation. Emma compliments Pat, one of the guests at that lunch. Emma uses negative interrogative format (line 7) to do so. The turn which Margie produces (line 8) after receiving Emma's negative interrogative is not just an acquiescing 'yes', it is another negative interrogative asserting Margie's independent stance towards assessing Pat. The independence of Margie's stance is indexed by the word 'pretty' which is an upgrade of Emma's 'doll' in line 7. Margie's negative interrogative does not receive an affirming/disaffirming response next, instead, it receives another upgraded assessment of Pat by Emma (line 10). Such a turn displays Emma's orientation to Margie's negative interrogative (line 7) as an assertive stance-taking turn rather than a questioning FPP in a polar interrogative sequence.

(3-37) from (Heritage, 2002, p. 1428)

1. Emm: =Oh honey that was a lovely luncheon I shoulda called you
2. s:soo [:ner but I:]l:[lo:ved it.Ih wz just deli:ghtfu[:l. =
- 3.Mar: [(f) Oh:::] [°()] [Well =
4. Mar: =I wz gla[d y o u] (came).]
5. Emm: ['nd yer f:] friends] 'r so da:rlɪ:ng,=

6. Mar: =Oh::[: it wz:]
7. Emm: → [e-that Pla:t isn't she a do:[:ll?]
8. Mar: → [iY e]h isn't she pretty,
9. (.)
10. Emm: → Oh: she's a beautiful girl.=
11. Mar: =Yeh I think she's a pretty gir[l.
12. Emm: [En that Reinam'n::

This section explores the organisation of negative interrogatives in SA and investigates whether they are also oriented to as assertive stance-taking turns as the case in English.

Nineteen percent of the collected polar interrogative FPPs in the data are negatively formatted. SA interactants use the negative particles ‘ma, mu, maw, māy’ usually in turn-initial or TCU-initial position to construct a negative interrogative FPP. An example of a SA negative interrogative FPP is illustrated in excerpt (3-38) below. Wess is telling Mido about Spain, which he has recently visited. When Wess mentions the word ‘asār’ ‘ruins’, Mido asks him whether he has visited the city of Granada where there is Al Hambra Palace, which is a historical landmark in Spain (line 22).

(3-38) NCALL4-1²⁶

- 16. Wess:** əl balad fiyya masahāt šasiʕa wu ma fiyya zahmi ktīr
the country in it there [are] areas vast and NegPrt in it traffic too much
there are vast areas of land in the country and there is not much traffic
- 17. Mido:** aha
aha
- 18.** (0.5)

²⁶ This excerpt is further analysed in section 5.2.3 below.

19. Wess: **wu xadār wu nahər wu asār**
and vegetation and a river and ruins
20. Mido: → **mumtaz wallah.**
excellent Prt.
21. **(0.2)**
22. **ma rəḥət ʕala: ↑ granāda?**
NegPrt went-2PS to: ↑ granada?
haven't you visited: ↑ granada?
23. **(0.5)**
24. **ʔaʃr əlḥamraɿ**
palace alhambraɿ
alhambra palaceɿ
25. Wess: → **la wallah kan busy ktīr ətṭallaft ʕalinternet bəddak təḥjuz ʔabl: əbʔsbūʕēn.**
no Prt was busy too much I looked on the internet you need to book before two weeks.
no Prt it was so busy I looked on the internet you need to book two weeks in advance.
26. Mido: → **aḥa aywa:: təḥjuz ʔabl: əbʔsbūʕēn.**
Oh okay:: book-2PS before: two weeks.
Oh okay:: you book two weeks in advance.

Mido's polar interrogative FPP (line 22) is negatively framed by being prefaced with the negative operator 'ma'. After a delay of 0.5-second in which Wess does not produce a response, Mido pursues response by extending his FPP with an increment (Bolden *et al.* 2012; Ford *et al.* 2002; Schegloff, 2000b, 2016). Following Mido's increment (line 24), Wess responds with a laʔ-prefaced SPP which includes an account for why he did not visit Al Hambra Palace. Providing an account displays Wess's orientation to his own response as accountable. Wess's account TCU starts after the 'la wallah' 'no [by God]' TCU. Such account marks the 'la wallah' TCU as the accountable part of the response. The 'la wallah' does not negate the already negative proposition of Mido's FPP, which, in grammatical form, hypothesizes that Wess 'did not' go to that place.

Wess's 'la wallah' actually confirms that he did not visit that place. This confirmation of the hypothesis of the FPP is oriented to as accountable. Compare the example above with (3-39) below.

(3-39) NCALL14-1

1. Wess: **ma bæddak tərjaʃ tənzil ʕalandon ʔəltəlle mənʃan əlʔaʕdi mənʃan əlhay.**

NegPrt want-2PS return-2PS come-2PS down to london you told me for the sitting for the thing.

don't you want to come back to london as you told me for the meeting for that thing.

2. Mido: **wallah mænna nərjaʃ nənzel: (0.2) ə:: ənʃūfak wu nʃūf ə: səri barki,**

Prt 1PP-want 1PP-return 1PP-come down: (0.2) ə:: 1PP-see-2PS and 1PP-see ə: sari perhaps,

Prt we [I]²⁷ want to come to london (0.2) ə:: to see you and maybe to see sari

At line 1, Wess uses negative interrogative format to ask Mido whether he will come back to London, where Wess lives, for [a video shoot]. Mido responds with wallah-prefaced positively framed turn which confirms that he will come back to London (line 2). After (0.2) pause Mido produces a TCU in which he accounts for why he will come to London; it is to see Wess and Sari. The first TCU in Mido's response does not confirm the negation in Wess's FPP. Mido does not say that he 'will not' come back to London; the SPP confirms that he will. The turn-initial 'wallah' in Mido's response delays the production of the actual answer (Helani, 2008). The two examples above show different forms of SPP in response to negative interrogative. The first one, in example (3-38), confirms the negative proposition of its FPP. The second SPP (example, 3-39) does not confirm the negative proposition of its FPP. However, in both cases the producers of those SPPs orient to them as accountable, and, in both cases, the SPP is delayed, which is an indication of dispreference (Heritage, 1984a; also see chapter 1 section 1.3.2). This gives the impression that the negative interrogative FPPs, in the two examples above, do not specifically

²⁷ First person plural can be used in Syrian Arabic to refer to first person singular.

make confirmation or disconfirmation relevant next. Negative interrogatives are themselves confirmatory and assertive (Heinemann, 2008; Heritage, 2002; Koshik, 1999, 2002). They assert their speaker's stance towards the issue in question, and they make relevant the exposure of the recipient's stance towards that issue. Wess's account for not visiting Al Hambra Palace in (3-38) makes the action of visiting that place as something missing; something that he should have done. In (3-39), Mido's account to go to London to see Wess and the other friend also refers to the act of going back to London as something that Mido should do. Such orientation within those two SPPs mirrors what the negative interrogative in their FPPs implies. In the first example, the negative interrogative FPP implies that Wess should have visited Al Hambra Palace while in Spain. In the second example Wess's negative interrogative implies that Mido should come back to London. This argument applies to example (3-40) as well. In a phone call, in which Wess is introduced to Firas who owns a small Syrian-food restaurant, Wess asks Firas whether he serves Shawarma²⁸ in his restaurant. Wess uses alternative format in which the second alternative is negatively framed (line 1).

(3-40) MNCALL19

1.Wess: → ʕandak šāwerma kamān mu: wəlla ma ɣaʔtət šāwerma ləssa.

you have shawarma too NegTag or NegPrt put-2PS shawarma yet.

you have shawarma too haven't you: or you haven't added shawarma yet.

2.Firas: → la waʕlaḥ ləssaʕ yaʕni əllḥumat ləssaʕ muʔaqqatan waʔʔafnaha.

no Prt not yet Prt meats not yet temporarily we stopped it.

no Prt not yet Prt meat not yet temporarily we stopped serving it.

3. (0.2)

4. Firas: → laʔanno əlmaḥal əbšaraḥa bass təji bəʔšufu ʔənte zḡr

because the place to be honest when you come you'll see it yourself [is] small

²⁸ Shawarma is a famous Syrian dish in which the main ingredient is thin small slices of meat.

5. **yaʕni bæddo maḥal ʔakbar mən hek.**

Prt it needs a place bigger than this.

Firas responds by confirming the negative proposition in Wess's FPP; that he has no shawarma (line 2). After (0.2) pause, Firas provides an account for not having or serving meat in his restaurant, thus, orienting to Wess's FPP as implying that Firas *should* have shawarma in his Syrian-food restaurant. The discussion in this section so far demonstrates that negative interrogatives are not usually oriented to as questions in SA. Just like in English (Heritage, 2002), they are oriented to as stance-assertors and stance-elicitors to which the recipients may respond by asserting their own independent stance towards the issue in question.

A negative polar interrogative FPP rarely receives ʔeh/laʔ as a response in SA. Only twelve out of sixty negative interrogatives in the data receive ʔeh/laʔ-marked SPPs. However, the ʔeh/laʔ in those twelve SPPs are either delayed or accompanied with components which either assert, or account for the stance taken in the SPP. The three following examples briefly illustrate this pattern. In (3-41), after Abed says that he does not eat skin off meat, Mido produces a repair initiator in the form of a negative interrogative FPP directed to Abed and referring to his preference for not eating skin off meat (line 3). Abed responds with a modified repeat, which specifies that he does not eat the skin of chicken. Abed's repeat is followed by 'laʔ' (line 4).

(3-41) GD11-2/17

1. Abed: **yaxi ana ma ʔākol jəld bəṭṭess şaḥni şar zīʕa əlʕāde (.) laʔənni ma ʔākol jəld**

Prt I NegPrt eat-1PS skin you feel my dish has become a mess actually (.) because-1PS NegPrt eat skin
brother I don't eat skin off meat you see my dish is actually a mess (.) because I don't eat skin off meat

2. **(1)**

3. Mido: → ma btakol jələd,

NegPrt 2PS-eat skin,

You don't eat skin [off meat],

4. Abed: → jəld eljeje la?

skin [off] chicken [meat] no.

5. Mido: → leh (.) maʕ ʔənni ʔal biʔülū ə::

why (.) even though they say ə::

It is noticeable, in the example above, that after Abed produces his SPP, Mido asks him 'leh' 'why' (line 5). This wh- word in third position asserts that Mido's negative interrogative FPP (line 3) does not imply polar interrogativity. It is an undercover wh- question which questions Abed's practice of not eating the skin off meat, in other words, it implies criticism of Abed's practice (Heinemann, 2008). Abed's SPP is prefaced by a modified repetition. Modified repeats assert the independence of the SPP and the stance it indexes (Stivers, 2005). When they are placed turn-initially, they resist the terms of the FPP (Bolden, 2009; Heritage & Raymond, 2012; Raymond, 2000; Stivers & Hayashi, 2010). After that repeat, Abed produces the polarity particle 'la?' in turn-final position. Placing the polarity particle 'la?' in a TCU/turn-final position constitutes a "delay in conformity" (Raymond, 2000, pp.100, 243). Delayed conformity is an indication of dispreference (ibid). Negative interrogatives prefer SPPs which align with the stance they imply and agree with the proposition they assert (Heritage, 2002). 'La?' does not display agreement, therefore, it is dispreferred in this context. Placing it in turn-final position delays the production of such dispreferred item and distances it from the FPP. The example above illustrates Abed's resistance to the terms of Mido's negative interrogative FPP; a FPP which criticizes a practice that Abed follows and which, at the same time, invites Abed to agree with its entailed stance.

In (3-42) below, Mido is asking Wess whether, after staying overnight at Mido's, he can leave for London the next day in the morning. After a significant delay of 1.2-second (Jefferson, 1988), Wess responds with a turn-initially delayed 'la?' after which he produces an account for his inability to leave in the morning.

(3-42) NCALL14-1²⁹

1. Mido: **ma btəʔder tərjaʃ tāni yom əʃʃəbəh:ɪ**

NegPrt 2PS-can go back next day morning:ɪ

can't you go back next day in the morning:ɪ

2. **(1.2)**

3. Wess: ➔ **əla: ʕande ʃəgəl (.) ma baʕrif baʔa ʃlōn.**

ə=no: I have work (.) NegPrt 1PS-know Prt how.

ə=no: I have work (.) I don't know then how.

Mido's negative interrogative turn implies that Wess should be able to leave in the morning, therefore it functions as an assertive suggestion which invites Wess to agree. Negative interrogatives are generally skewed towards a response which agrees with their implied assertions. As in example (3-41: line, 4) above, delaying 'la?' in the SPP (line 3) below asserts that 'la?', which is a disagreement marker, is not preferred as a response to a negative interrogative.

In (3-43) below, a negative interrogative FPP receives the combination of 'ʔeh la?' 'yes no' from one recipient and a challenge from another. The friends are talking about obtaining a building-development permit in London, after a lengthy description, by Sam, of the procedures and the requirements for obtaining such permit. Layla provides an assessment that there is nothing easy

²⁹ This excerpt is further analysed in section 5.3.2 below.

interrogative by saying that there is no way for comparison [between Syria and the UK]. Layla's turn challenges the askability of Wess's negative interrogative.

Summary of findings in section 3.2.5

In SA, negative interrogative is particularly problematic in terms of the preferences it makes relevant. It makes relevant two conflicting preferences. Due to its assertive implicature, it prefers an aligning agreeing response, however, according to the same-polarity preference in SA (see chapter 4 section 4.4.1), it prefers a negatively framed response. In terms of action, negative interrogatives may entail criticism of the recipient but at the same time they invite her/him to agree with such criticising stance. Therefore, SA interactants resist the terms of the negative interrogatives in their SPPs to the extent of challenging them.

3.2.6. Rhetorical questions

Rhetorical questions are questions to which the questioner knows the answer, and the recipient(s) know that the questioner knows the answer (Koshik, 2005a). Rhetoricals, therefore, do not do questioning, they rather assert an already known state of affairs (Quirk *et al.* 1985; Heinemann, 2010). It is worthy to note that only six rhetorical questions have been found in the 315 polar interrogative samples analysed for this study. In those examples, the rhetorical question receives either a minimal alignment token or no SPP at all. The following example (3-44) illustrates this practice in SA. Abed is discussing the topic of love and loyalty with his friends. He produces a polar interrogative turn (line 4) inquiring whether one would cheat on the woman whom he loves and intends to propose.

(3-44) GD11-11

1. Abed: **iza ḥabeb bənet (0.5)** **wū ḥabəba** **fəʃlan wū bəddak tuxṭuba**

If you [are] in love with a girl (0.5) and you [are] in love really and you want to propose to her

2. Abed: **wū šarīfe wū ʔādamiyeh wū kwayise**

And [she is] honest and nice and good

3. Ali: **ṭayyeb**

alright

4. Abed: → **bta-txūna ši?**

you cheat on her ever?

would you ever cheat on her?

5. **(.)**

6. → **ma bətxūna yaxi.**

NegPrt cheat-2PS on her my brother.

you don't cheat on her my brother.

7. Ali: → **((lateral head shake)) l:aʔ.**

no:.

A mini pause at line 5 follows Abed's polar interrogative turn, after which he himself produces the answer to the question. During the pause, the addressee, Ali, does not produce any response. However, after Abed produces the answer to his question, Ali produces a standalone 'la?' which aligns with the negative polarity of Abed's answer. The non-response by Ali during the mini-pause in line 4 displays his orientation to Abed's question as non-response-relevant. Abed does not pursue any further response, thus, orienting to his own FPP as non-response relevant. Example (3-45) below further illustrates such orientation to rhetorical questions in SA. In the excerpt below, Abed is telling his friends about a research in which he was a participant. The research involved language proficiency test in which Abed scored in the nineties. Upon mentioning this mark, he asks his friend whether there is any higher (line 4). He does not receive a confirmation or disconfirmation to this effect, instead, he receives an aligning assessment 'həlu' 'nice' from Mido (line 5). When Abed repeats his polar interrogative turn with more specific

Extreme case formulations are used to assert the speaker's stance with regard to the topic of his/her turn-at-talk (Pomerantz, 1986).

Summary of findings in section 3.2.6

Rhetorical questions are very assertive turns. Therefore, in terms of epistemic access they are not marked or oriented to as questions in SA. They do not make an answer relevant, however they may seek an aligning response. As a result, rhetoricals do not usually initiate a polar interrogative sequence in SA.

Conclusion of chapter 3

This chapter highlights the basic structure of the SA polar interrogative sequence with a focus on the structure and types of the FPP in that sequence. It has demonstrated that SA interactants orient to two main resources to mark and analyse a turn-at-talk as polar interrogative. The first resource is related to sequential position, and the second resource is related to epistemic access. There is a spectrum of epistemic rights according to which recipients of a turn-at-talk orient to it as either polar interrogative or assertive. The more a turn-at-talk concedes the epistemic rights of its speaker to the recipient, the more likely it would be oriented to as interrogative, and the more response-relevant it is. The more a turn-at-talk assigns epistemic access to its speaker the less likely it would be oriented to as doing questioning and the less response-relevant, or, at the least, the less answer-relevant it is. This chapter moved across that epistemic spectrum from the more concessionary tags and *yəʃni*-marked polar interrogatives to the less concessionary B-events, candidate-answer questions, polar alternatives and negative interrogatives reaching the end of the spectrum at which there is the most assertive rhetorical question, which is called a 'question' by default. This chapter highlights the preferences each of these polar interrogative types make relevant next and how those preferences get negotiated from the very moment the FPP initiates

the polar interrogative sequence. The chapter has also demonstrated the position sensitivity of polar interrogatives in SA. It has revealed that tag-marked turns are oriented to as interrogatives when they occupy the first position within the sequence, whereas in second position they lose their interrogativity. Such finding further supports Schegloff's (1996a) findings which imply that grammatical structures have no fixed function; their functions vary according to their position within the interaction. The same applies to *yəʃni*-marked turns which do questioning only in sequential contexts where they index an epistemic gap. The chapter has also demonstrated that SA interactants orient to candidate-answer questions and polar alternatives as assertive, limiting and constraining questions, therefore recipients of such FPPs produce SPPs which depart from their terms and constraints. This chapter has also illustrated that negative interrogatives are problematic in SA due to the competing, sometimes conflicting, preferences they make relevant next. SA interactants use various resources to address such preferences, ranging from challenging the askability of the FPP to producing a SPP which resists the terms of the negative interrogative FPP.

Finally, this chapter demonstrates that type-conformity in SA is one of the preferences which are made relevant by polar interrogative FPPs, however when in competition with other preferences, it may get marginalised in favour of preferences which the structure, the indexed epistemic stance, and the position of the FPP make more relevant next. For example, tags utilise morphosyntactic structure, position and epistemic concession to make the preference for type-conformity more relevant than other preferences. Whereas, B-events do not deploy any of the resources which tags deploy for that purpose, therefore they do not make type-conformity more relevant when competing with other preferences such as epistemic congruence. The same applies to the assertive candidate-answer questions, polar alternatives, negative interrogatives and rhetorical. The latter type is too assertive to get any answer at all in SA.

Chapter 4: The second pair part (SPP): Responses to polar interrogative

FPPs in Syrian Arabic

‘You will know them by their fruits’ Matthew 7:15-20

Introduction

Chapter 3 has demonstrated that the preferences which a FPP makes relevant may sometimes be in competition with each other. For example, type-conformity may be in competition with epistemic rights. Since epistemic access is a major resource in marking and analysing a turn as doing polar interrogative, the preference for asserting epistemic access is prioritised when competing with type-conformity. This chapter extends this line of argument to highlight how those preferences are negotiated within the SPP and how some of those preferences are prioritized over others. This chapter explores how the negotiation of the various preferences, which a polar interrogative FPP makes relevant, impact the type, form and length of the polar SPP in SA. The chapter starts by investigating the simplest components of the SPP, nods and headshakes and the particle ‘?eh/la?’ ‘yes/no’ (sections: 4.1 and 4.2), then it gradually moves towards analysing more complex forms and components of the SPP, such as the syntactic components (section 4.3), the polarity component (section .4.4), and repetitive SPPs (section 4.5). The discussion, then, moves to investigating some sequential factors which contribute to determining the length and form of the SPP (section 4.6).

The structure of any turn in talk-in-interaction is the product of various constraints (Sacks *et al.* 1974; Schegloff, 2007). Some of these constraints are of a sequential nature, such as conditional relevance and the position of the turn within the sequence (Schegloff, 1968, 2007). Other constraints are of linguistic nature, such as semantic coherence (Schegloff, 2007; Englert, 2010; Levinson, 2012), grammar (Schegloff, 1996a), lexicon (Sacks *et al.* 1974), and prosody (Couper-

Kuhlen, 2012). Some constraints are of a paralinguistic nature such as gaze and gestures (Goodwin, 1980; Rossano, 2013; Schegloff, 1984). Each of these constraints plays a significant role in shaping the form and action of a turn-at-talk. Each type of polar interrogative FPP in SA makes some specific preferences and constraints relevant next. The responsive SPP inherits those preferences and constraints (Sacks *et al.* 1974; Schegloff, 2007; Schegloff, 2009; Levinson; 2012; Holmberg, 2013). However, this does not mean that the SPP will satisfy all those preferences and abide with all the constraints made relevant by the FPP. Interactants negotiate those preferences in their SPPs giving priority to some, marginalizing some and departing from others. SA interactants use various form-related and position-related resources for the negotiation of those preferences and constraints within the SPP. I start by discussing the simplest resources: the non-verbal head nods and headshakes to find what actions they do when used in the SPP in the SA polar interrogative sequence.

4.1. Nods and headshakes in SPPs

Nods have been found to contribute to the organisation of face-to-face interaction in English (Stivers, 2008), and Japanese (Kito & Ide, 2007; Lee & Tanaka, 2016; Maynard, 1987). Also, in Tzeltal, nods and headshakes accompany responses to interrogatives (Brown, 2010). 26.7% of the responses to polar interrogative FPPs in the video data collected for this study, have nods/headshakes in them with the majority going for nods at 19.4%. Six percent of the SPPs in the video data consist solely of nods or headshakes. The fact that a nod and/or a headshake can constitute a whole turn in SA talk-in-interaction indicates that those components are capable of doing actions on their own.

The investigation in this section starts by exploring the role of nods. Examples (4-1) and (4-2) below contain instances of SPPs with nods. In excerpt (4-1) Sam is asking Wess whether he has

a diet book to which he has referred in prior talk (line 1). Wess responds with the positive ‘?eh’ preceded by a nod (see figures: 4-1a and 4-1b). Later in line 3, Sam requests the book’s name. Upon receiving that request, which is in the imperative form, Wess produces a nod-prefaced response while he is looking in his pocket for his mobile phone and telling Sam that he will comply with his request by sending him the name of that book via email (lines 6 and 5).



Figure: 4-1a (line 1)



Figure: 4-1b (Wess's nod at line 2)

(4-1) NS14-2

1. Sam: **ʔab hāda ʔəlləktāb ʕandak ya:hɛ**

Prt this the book have-2PS it:ɛ

Prt this book you have it:ɛ

so have you got that book:ɛ

2. Wess: → **((nod)) ʔeh.**

yes.

3. Sam: **ʕaʔini ʔəsmu barki blāʔi online.**

give me its title maybe I [could] find it online.

4. Wess: → **((one nod while rummaging in his pocket))**

5. bəʕməllak email.

I'll make you an email.

I'll send you an email.

6. Sam: **()**

7. Wess: **ʕande əyyah bəlbēt.**

I have it at home.

8. (1)

Sam's polar interrogative (line 1) is a pre-request. Wess's nod+?eh turn responds positively to that pre-request by affirming its proposition. Wess's positive nod+?eh contributes to progressing talk from the pre-request sequences towards the main request sequence. After Sam initiates the request (line 3), Wess responds with a compliance indicative turn, this turn is prefaced by a nod. In excerpt (4-2), Wess is telling his friends about a healthy sugar brand. Mido asks whether this sugar is also from a shop that Wess has previously referred to (line 1). Wess produces a nod-marked repetitive response which confirms Mido's proposition. Both the polar interrogative FPP and its responsive SPP in this example are positively framed.

(4-2) NS14-2

- 1. Mido:** hād mən health shop³⁰ kamān,
this [is] from health shop too,
- 2. Wess:** ((shifts gaze towards Mido))
- 3.** → ((nod)) health shop | kamān,
health shop | too,
- 4. Mido:** wallah məнна ngayyer ()
Prt we want to change ()

solicit an aligning affiliative response (see section 4.6.4 below). Ali's responsive SPP (line 33) consists of two components: a nod and the confirming word 'ṣaḥḥ' 'right' (Schegloff, 1996b, 2007). The 'ṣaḥḥ' is doing the solicited alignment by confirming what Abed has just said and the 'nod' is the part which is doing affiliation.

(4-3) GD11-2/12³¹

14. Abed: .hh maʕleš (.) kam bār fi hōn?

.hh nevermind (.) how many bars [are] here?

15. wallāhi wala baʕref wala wāḥ fiyon wala fətt ʕala wāḥed.

Prt not 1PS-know any of them never entered to one.

I swear to god [that] I don't know any of them and I [have] never been to any one.

((thirteen lines omitted in which Ali and Abed argue about going to bars))

29. Abed: [ʔ:- ə-] ʕala ḥasab yəʕni ʕamqəllak [ma- ma bt- maf-] =mabtəʔman əl fətnə=
[ʔ:- ə-] it depends Prt I'm telling you not you not av- maf- =you cannot avoid temptation=

30. Ali:

31. Mido:

32. Abed: =ʕrəft ʕlayi kī:f?

=know-2PS me how?

=do you know what I mean?

33. Ali: → ((nod)) ṣaḥḥ.

right.

34. Abed: ma btaʔref ʔēmat masalan betnām waḥde: səkrāne ʕakətfak.

NegPrt know-2PS when for instance sleep-3PS-fem woman: drunk on shoulder-2PSPoss

You don't know when for instance a drunk woman might sleep on your shoulder.

In excerpt (4-4) below, Abed is talking about Syrian culture and how it is unacceptable if two people are kissing in public. At the end of his telling sequences, he produces the polar alternative

³¹ This excerpt is further analysed in section 4.6.4 below.

‘ṣaḥḥ ʔəlla la?’ ‘right or not’. This construct is similar to the English tag question ‘right?’ (Stivers, 2008, p.46) which interactants may use to pursue affiliation (ibid).

(4-4) GD11-10

1. **Abed:** **baʕdēn ərrazīle munkara yəʕni=**
after all debauchery is unacceptable Prt=
2. **Abed:** **((gaze directed towards Ali))=halla? iza ənte betšūf ḥade taḥət bināytak**
=now if you see someone down at your condominium
3. **.hh ʕambibūs bənət yəʕni: bteḍrəbū ṣaḥḥ ʔəlla la?ʔ³²**
.hh kissing a girl Prt: you will beat him up right or not?
4. **Ram:** **°um°. ((brisk nod before putting food in his mouth))**
5. **Ali:** **((slight nod while eating))**
6. **Abed:** **yaxi rūḥ bibētak lesh bəl ʕa-³³ bəlšareʕ ṣaḥḥ wu**

lla la??
brother go in your house why in pub- in the street right o r not?
go and [do it] at your home why in pub- in the street right o r not?
7. **Ram:** →

ṣaḥḥ.
right.

ṣaḥḥ.
right.
8. **Mido:** **((nod))**

Both Ali and Ram produce nods (lines 4 and 5) as a response to Abed’s polar interrogative (line 3). However, Ram produces the vocalization ‘um’ with his nod. Enfiled (2012) has analysed ‘um’, in English, as a non-committal particle which does not confirm the speaker’s stance. It is an acknowledgement token by which speakers display understanding but not endorsement of the preceding turn (Jefferson, 2002). ‘Um’ in SA is a vocalisation which has no specific semantic meaning, therefore, it could be analysed similarly. Ali produces a nod-only response (line 5)

³² Kissing in public is not acceptable in Syrian culture.

³³ Most probably that Abed was about to say ‘bəl ʕämme’ ‘in public’.

while he is eating. Ram's and Ali's responses affiliate with Abed's polar interrogative turn, however neither of them aligns with his arguments. Abed orients to their non-aligning, non-committing responses by repeating his polar alternative question in line 6. Upon receiving Abed's repeated polar interrogative, Ram produces the confirming and aligning repetition 'ṣaḥḥ', while Mido affiliates with Abed's FPP by producing a nod-only SPP, however, Mido does not produce any aligning item (line 8). The data suggests that nods in SPP in SA polar interrogative sequences do affiliation but not alignment with the FPP. Alignment is done through other means such as affirmation, confirmation, acceptance and/or compliance.

In excerpt (4-5) below, Layla is telling Mido, Wess and Sam that Abu Dhabi is more expensive than Dubai (line 1). Upon receiving Layla's informing, Wess produces a ritualised disbelief (Wilkinson & Kitinger, 2006), and Sam produces a question (line 3) which asks Layla to confirm what she has just said. Layla responds to Sam with the affirming 'ʔeh', after which Mido asks a similar question to the one Sam has just asked, however Mido receives only a 'nod' as a response from Layla (line 6). The matter which Mido's FPP is asking Layla to confirm has already been affirmed and settled and Layla's nod is only affiliating with the display of surprise which Mido indexes in his polar interrogative turn (line 5).

(4-5) FTs-19

- | | |
|-----------------|--|
| 1.Layla: | halla? ʔabu ɖabi: in terms of rent ʔabʕan ʔaɖla mən:: dubai
Prt abu dhabi: in terms of rent of course [it is] more expansive than:: dubai |
| 2.Wess: | ((flash of eyebrows)) [wallaḥ?
by god?
really? |
| 3.Sam: | [ʔabu ɖabi ʔaɖla mən dubai?
abu dhabi [is] more expensive than dubai? |

4.Layla: ʔeh.

yes.

5.Mido: ʔabu ʔabi[↑] ʔaɣla mən dubai:.

abu dhabi[↑] [is] more expensive than dubai:.

6.Layla: → ((nod))

7. (1)

The discussion about nods in SA so far corresponds with findings on English by Stivers (2008), according to which nods are oriented to as sufficient responses within a sequential context where only affiliation is solicited. However, nods are oriented to as insufficient when alignment is sought.

The discussion in this section will now move to exploring headshakes in SA polar SPPs. SA interactants may produce either lateral or upward headshakes while responding to a polar interrogative FPP. The first example to illustrate the use of a headshake in a polar SPP is (4-6) below. Mina and her husband Sam are talking about a time at which Mina thinks that Sam's father was in the UK. Mina uses polar interrogative to invite Sam to confirm that, however Sam challenges Mina's proposition and negates it by producing two consecutive negative polarity particles 'la? la?' with a headshake (see section 4.2. on the challenging function of turn-initial 'la?').

(4-6) NS14-2

1. Mina: bas kan ʔabūk mawjūd?

but was your father here?

2. Sam: → la? la?, tsk ((with lateral headshake))

no no, tsk

8. Mido: → ʔe hiyye kānet mušræfti bəl:.. ((with two nods))

yes she was my supervisor in the::

9. Khan: → ((two nods))

Mido responds to Khan's negative interrogative by a *laʔ*-prefaced SPP. The turn-initial '*laʔ*' is accompanied with a headshake. Mido's SPP is negated by two negative polarity items (Alqassas, 2012), '*lessa*' 'yet' and '*wala*' 'not any'. However, it is not grammatically negated by '*ma*', therefore, it is not syntactically aligning with the negative interrogative FPP (see section 4.3). The headshake in this example is used within an environment which is infused with negativity misalignment and disaffiliation. Khan receives Mido's headshake-marked SPP with two headshakes (line 5). However, Khan's following positively framed polar interrogative (lines: 6 and 7) receives an *ʔeh*-prefaced positively-aligned and affiliative SPP from Mido (line 8). This positive and aligning SPP is accompanied with two nods. Khan receives that SPP by two affiliative nods (line 9). While a nod is produced in a positive aligning and affiliative environment, a headshake is produced in a negative misaligning and disaffiliative environment in the example above.

Example (4-8) below, also shows that while nods are used in aligning and affiliative environment, a headshake is used in misaligning environment. Wess announces some news about him having a job interview. Following Wess's news announcement (line 1), Mido produces a guess that the interview Wess is talking about is for a job that Mido previously knew about. Wess produces a replacement answer (Lee, 2016) which disconfirms the proposition in Mido's FPP. Wess's SPP therefore, does not align with Mido's FPP in terms of action as it disconfirms its proposition, neither it aligns with the FPP's polar-type interrogative as it is non-conforming. This misaligning SPP of Wess is prefaced with a headshake. A headshake in this example projects misalignment and disaffiliation.



Figure: 4-8a (line 2, Mido is sitting opposite Wess)



Figure: 4-8b (Wess's headshake at line 3)

(4-8) NMC1³⁵

1. Wess: ʔəsbūʔ əl jaiy ʕandi muʔābali ʔəltellak?

week the next I have an interview I told you?

next week I have an interview have I told you?

2. Mido: əbnafsu hāda əššəǵəl?

at the same that job?

at that same job?

3. Wess: → ((with eyebrow flash and upward headshake)) tsk bi jewellers.³⁶

tsk at jewellers.

4. Mido:	[aywa jewllers]	(.) a:ʔa::a	[šaǵle ʕaʔīme hāda]
	okay jewellers	(.) a:ʔa::a	something great that [is]
	okay jewellers	(.) a:ʔa::a	that is great
5. Wess: →	[((nod))]		[((two nods))]

6. (1) ((during this gap Wess turns his face away and disengages gaze with Mido))

7. Mido: hāda kif biyʕʕi bəssaʕa ʔəlla bərratebʕi

that how it pays per hour or by salary?

that [shop] how does it pay per hour or by salary?

³⁵ This excerpt is further analysed in sections 5.2.5 below.

³⁶ To avoid indirect advertisement, the Jeweller shop at which Wess is having an interview is given the fictitious name 'Jewellers'.

Nevertheless, Mido's display of surprise 'a:ʔa::a' and the positive assessment that follows (line 4), which both exhibits a positive aligning stance towards Wess' news, receive affiliative nods from Wess (line 5).

Summary of findings in section 4.1

This section has discussed the use of nods and headshakes in the SPP in SA polar interrogative sequences. It has demonstrated that nods are used in the SPP to display affiliation with the project of the FPP. Nods indicate a positive stance towards the FPP, whereas headshakes project a negative stance towards it. Headshakes are used with SPPs which resist the terms of their FPPs, therefore, contrary to nods, headshakes project disaffiliation and misalignment with the preceding FPP.

After discussing nods and headshakes, which usually occupy the very beginning of the response, the discussion now moves to exploring verbal resources deployed in the SPP. I start from two relevant resources to polarity in SA; those are the polarity particles 'ʔeh' 'yes' and 'laʔ' 'no'. The following section attempts to investigate the actions those particles do and how they are oriented to in SA talk-in-interaction, in general, and in polar SPPs in particular.

4.2. The interjections 'ʔeh/laʔ' in polar interrogative sequences

Turn-initial 'ʔeh/laʔ' are not exclusively used to project a turn's polarity. 'Laʔ' may preface positively framed turns, and 'ʔeh' sometimes prefaced negatively framed turns. Some turns in SA might be prefaced by both 'ʔeh/laʔ' consecutively, and the data shows always the order of 'ʔeh' first followed by 'laʔ' in those cases. This section highlights the important role that turn-initial 'ʔeh/laʔ' play in the negotiation of the preferences which are made relevant by the production of the polar interrogative FPP.

I start this discussion by illustrating that turn-initial ‘la?’ does not always and exclusively project a negatively framed SPP. Examples: 4-9, 4-10 and 4-11 show cases where that particle prefaces syntactically-positive turns. In excerpt (4-9) Wess is introducing Sam to Layla and he is telling her that Sam’s father is a novelist. Following that exchange, Wess asks Sam whether his father’s novels have been translated (line 7). Wess does not receive a response for this polar interrogative. He then adds an increment to pursue response (Bolden *et al.* 2012). In this increment, Wess modifies his polar interrogative turn by making it into a polar alternative (see chapter 3: section 4.2.4), the second alternative being projectably negative (as the ‘ma’ before the overlap in line 9 indicates).

(4-9) PD-19

1.Wess: ((turning towards Layla)) **bass huwi abūh bšakəl ʕam (bšakəl** **raʔise)**

but he his father generally main ly

2.Sam:

riwaʔi ↑
[is] a novelist ↑

3.Wess: **kātib ruwaʔe**

writer novelist

4.Layla: **u:h**

5.Sam: **kāteb ruw- kāteb ə:** **ruwaʔi**

writer nov- writer ə: : novelist

6.Layla: **((two nods))**

7.Wess: →

halla? **tarjamūlu, e::m**
now they [have] translated, for him e::m

8.Wess: **(1.2)**

9.Wess: → **əlriwayāt (.) wulla ma** **()**

the novels (.) or not ()

10.Sam: →

la tarjamulo:
no they [have] translated them for him

11. Wess: → tarajamon? ↑

he translated them? ↑

12. Sam: tarjam ʔe:h. (0.2) ə: laʔalmani laʔənglizi la: ktīr luḡāt

he translated ye:s. (0.2) ə: to german to english to: many languages

In line 10, Sam responds to Wess's interrogative FPP in overlap before Wess completes the projectably negative part of his turn. Sam prefaces his response with 'la' 'no' and follows it by the positively formatted TCU 'tarjamulo:'. Sam's delay in producing a SPP to Wess's FPP projects dispreference. The turn-initial 'la' in his SPP (line 9) does not project a negative response which aligns with the negative 'ma' in Wess's FPP. This turn-initial 'la', being a negative particle, does not align with the first positively framed part of Wess's FPP (line 7). The turn-initial 'la?' in this overlapping position does not serve to disconfirm Wess's proposition, nor negates what follows it. It is in a position where it resists and blocks the production of the projectably negative part of Wess's SPP. The resistance in Sam's SPP is projected even before it has been produced; this is indexed by the delay in its production. Delays distance SPPs from their relative FPPs and project dispreference. Wess orients to such dispreferred resistance in Sam's SPP by repeating his polar interrogative turn in line 11. Repeating the question is an action which indexes either trouble or something missing in the response (Heritage, 1984a; Schegloff, 1996b, 2007) and this is what Wess's repeated polar interrogative indicates. Sam's father is a well-known Syrian novelist³⁷ and it is obvious, at least in Sam's terms, that his novels should have been translated into other languages. The turn-initial 'la?' in Sam's SPP is produced as a negative stance marker. It marks his negative stance towards Wess's question and towards the production of a negative proposition which may suggest that his father's novels have not been translated. However, this 'la?' does not disconfirm Wess's first positively framed TCU. Furthermore, this

³⁷ For confidentiality and privacy reasons, the name of that novelist is not disclosed in this thesis.

‘la?’ does not negate what follows it, although it is a negative polarity particle. The turn-initial ‘la?’ in the example above is used for purposes other than projecting a negatively framed TCU, it is not used to project the polarity of the turn which it prefaces, it incorporates a negative resisting stance towards the preceding FPP.

Excerpt (4-10) also shows an instance where turn-initial ‘la?’ does not project a negative response but is used to challenge the askability of the question. Wess is asking his brother Hamid, who lives in a European country, when ‘they’ [the authorities] will give him ‘papers’; by ‘papers’ he means a residence permit. After Hamid answers with a negative response, Salim, a co-interactant, produces an appender question (Sacks, 1992a, p.660; Schegloff, 1997, 2000c) which proposes that Hamid does not even get a salary in that country (line 4). Hamid does not respond to Salim’s interrogative immediately, thus projecting dispreference. Wess then repeats Salim’s question to Hamid about the salary (line 7). When no response is produced by Hamid, Wess himself produces the response prefaced by ‘la?’ followed by a positively framed assertion that ‘they’ give him [Hamid] a salary (line 10).

(4-10) NDCALL16

1.Wess: **ṭayib halla? ʔenti ʔēmta bəddu yēʔtuk əlwara?** [↑]
Prt now you when they will give you the papers [↑]

2. (0.6)

3.Hamid: **ma ɥayeʔtu** ()
 not will they give ()
 they will not give ()

4.Salim: → WALA RĀTIB?
NOR SALARY?

5.Hamid: ʔḥsan mən ǧayre ktīr ʔana
better than others by far I [am]

6.Wess: wala-

nor-

7.Wess: → wala rātibɿ

nor salaryɿ

8.Hamid: ḅʃarāḥa:

honestly

9. (0.5)

10.Wess: → ((lifts his head up and directs gaze towards Salim)) la? rātib byəʔtwu:.

no salary they give him:.

11. (0.2)

12.Hamid: ʔeh byəʔtūne kəll ʃe.

yes they give me everything.

13.Salim: → ʃabyəʔtūk kəll ʃī rateb wu bēt?

they are giving you everything salary and house?

14.Hamid: → la bēt ʔe:h bass ()

no house ye:s but ()

15.Salim: ʃʔadd fih ʔrbaʃmiyye ʔəlla xaməsmīt yoro.

how much [is] it four hundred or five hundred euros.

The turn-initial ‘la?’ in Wess’s response aligns with the negative polarity item ‘wala’ in both his and Salim’s polar interrogative FPPs (lines 4 and 7), however, it does not project a negative response. What follows that ‘la?’ is a positively framed assertion which does not align with the negative polarity of the FPP to which it responds. Wess is Hamid’s brother and he knows about his brother more than Salim, their friend, does. Wess has recalled that ‘they’ give his brother a salary, so he himself knows the response to Salim’s inquiry as well as to his own inquiry about Hamid’s salary. Wess’s question about his brother’s salary is no longer relevant because Wess knows the answer. By producing the turn-initial ‘la?’, Wess is resisting the askability of his own

question (line 10). In line 12, Hamid further asserts his brother's SPP that he gets a salary. Following that assertion, Salim uses a positively framed polar interrogative to ask Hamid whether 'they' give him everything including salary and accommodation (line 13). Hamid responds to it, in line 14, with a *laʔ*-prefaced SPP, however Hamid's SPP does not negate the proposition in Salim's FPP, on the contrary, it confirms that proposition. Turn-initial '*laʔ*' also does not project negation here, nor does it disconfirm the proposition of the FPP. Furthermore, an affirmative '*ʔeh*' which comes after the TCU '*bēt*' 'house', asserts the positive format of Hamid's *laʔ*-prefaced SPP. The turn-initial '*laʔ*' is deployed here, not for the purpose of projecting a negative disconfirming SPP, but for the purpose of resisting and challenging the askability of Salim's question. Hamid has just stated, in line 12, that 'they' give him everything. Wess has just asserted that 'they' give Hamid a salary (line 10), therefore questioning those things again is no longer relevant. This example further demonstrates that turn-initial '*laʔ*' does not always project negation or disconfirmation in SA polar SPPs. It is used as a resisting tool and a negative-stance marker. Excerpt (4-11) below asserts the normativity of using turn-initial '*laʔ*' to challenge the askability of a preceding polar interrogative. Mido is calling Wess after the latter has come back from a holiday in Madrid, Spain. Mido produces a polar interrogative FPP asking Wess to confirm whether the area in which he has been to is close to the sea, however, upon recalling that Wess has been to the capital Madrid, and that this area is far from the sea, Mido immediately answers his question himself. Mido's response to his own FPP is prefaced by a stressed '*laʔ*' (line 2).

(4-11) NCALL14-1

1. Mido: **baʔa ənbasaʔət əmnīh wallah ()**

so you enjoyed [it] well Prt ()

2. → **hiyye ʔarībe mnəlbahər hay əlmanʔiʔa? laʔ madrīd ʔənte bəlʕaʕime,**
 it [is] close to the sea this area? no madrid you [were] in the capital,
 is it close to the sea this area? no madrid you [were] in the capital,
3. **bʕīde ʕan əlbahər hay.**
 [it is] far from the sea that [area].
4. **Wess:** **um.**

The turn-initial ‘laʔ’ in (line 2) is placed within this position to index Mido’s orientation to his own question as inapposite. It challenges the askability of his own question, since he already has the answer available; and it repairs the trajectory of his initiated sequence which initially invites his co-interactant to respond.

To conclude, turn-initial ‘laʔ’ does not always project the polarity of the SPP and it is not always used to disconfirm the proposition of the FPP. It is used to negotiate other preferences such as resisting a dispreferred interrogative format (example, 4-9) and challenging the askability of a FPP (examples 4-9 to 4-11). Turn-initial ‘laʔ’, then, resists the terms of the preceding FPP.

The discussion now moves to investigating the usage of the positive polarity particle ‘ʔeh’ in SA talk-in-interaction, in general, and in polar SPPs in particular. Helani (2008) argues that turn-initial ‘ʔeh’ is used in first position in topic-proffer sequences and it marks what follows it as disjunctive from prior talk (p.245) as the example below illustrates. After an exchange about breakfast and lunch, MH proffers a new topic about a car trip that HN was planning. The topic-proffer FPP is in the form of a news inquiry prefaced with ‘ʔeh’ (line 38).

(4-12) modified from (Helani, 2008, p.237)

30. HN: Ma fi fṭūr lā.
 not there [is] breakfast no.
 there is no breakfast no.
31. MH: Hehh ()
32. HN: Bteji ṣal ġada ʔhala ew sahla=
 [you come for dinner [you're] welcome
33. = abo [::
34. .hhh
35. (0.9)
36. MH: .hhh mhhh
37. (1.2)
38. MH: → ʔEh ʔeš šār maʕkon
 yes what happened to you
39. HN: Waḷḷah ma šar ši
 Prt not happened anything
 Prt nothing has happened

‘ʔeh’ is also used as a go-ahead continuer as example (4-13) illustrates. Mido is asking Sam whether applying for a building development permit in London is a similar process to that in Syria. Mido’s question is a two-part conditional (lines 1, 2, 4). After the completion of the first part of the conditional question, Sam produces ‘ʔeh’ (line 3) after which Mido continues his turn by producing the second part of it.

(4-13) RM-19

1.Mido: wu daxlak hon iza əlwahed bəddu yʔaddem ʕal: mwafaʔt əlbaladiyye

and [I'd like] to ask you here if one wants to apply to: a permit from the council

2. menšan hek šaglat

for such things

3.Sam: → ?eh.

yes.

4.Mido: kīf mətəl ʕanna bi sūryya?

how [is it] like we have in Syria?

Sam's 'ʔeh' (line 3) is oriented to as a go-ahead continuer in the example above. 'ʔeh' is also used as an agreement token. In (4-14) below, Abed produces an assessment of the impact of climate on people's character. Mido displays agreement with Abed's assessment by producing a standalone 'ʔeh'.

(4-14) GD11-2/18

1. Abed: ((gaze directed towards Mido)) halla? ʕan jadd

now seriously

2. lek əljaww biʔasser ʕaltabīʕa

look the climate impacts the character

3. Mido: → ?eh.

yes.

‘teh’ is used for marking news receipt. In the example below, Mido orients to Abed’s turn (line 4) as something that he has no previous knowledge about, or in other words, Mido orients to

Abed's turn as news (Maynard, 1997). Mido receives that turn with an 'ʔeh' which has final rising intonation (line 5).

(4-15) GD11-3

1. Mido: **ana baʕref sam**

I know sam

2. Abed **sam**

3. Mido: **sam**

4. Abed **sam kān maʕi hāda: bel:: qəsəm**

sam was with me that [guy] at the department

5. Mido: → **ʔeh?**

yes?

6. Abed: **fakān ə- maʕi bilajnet əl mūʔtamarāt,**

so he was ə-with me in the board the conferences,

so he was ə-with me in the conferences board,

The 'ʔeh' particles used in all the above examples (4-12 to 4-15) have one feature in common which is that they all display a positive stance towards the project of the preceding turn. 'ʔeh' is also used in polar SPPs to mark a positive stance towards the preceding FPP. The first example to illustrate such practice is in excerpt (4-16). In this excerpt, Abed is telling Ram and Mido about a time when he became fond of the BBC. While Abed is delivering his turn (lines 2, 4, 7), Ram utters a positively framed polar interrogative turn asking Abed whether it was BBC iPlayer which the latter is referring to (line 8).

(4-16) GD11-3/32

1. Ram:
2. Abed: ((turns towards Mido))
- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>1. Ram:</p> <p>2. Abed: ((turns towards Mido))</p> | <p>()</p> <p>fi fatra: mnəlfatrāt kamān twallaʕət bi:: əl bi bi si</p> <p>there [was] a time: among times also I became fond of:: the BBC</p> <p>there was a time when I also became fond of the BBC</p> |
|---|---|
3. (0.4)
4. Abed:
- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>masalan bass šu</p> <p>for instance but what</p> <p>for instance but how</p> | <p>yşīr fīni masalan ʔana: šu qūl (.) ʔana wu ʕambəʔtar</p> <p>happened to me for instance I: what 1PS-say (.) I while having breakfast</p> <p>it happened to me I used to say (.) while I'm having breakfast</p> |
|---|---|
5. Ram: ((turns head and shifts gaze towards Abed))
6. °>bi bi si<° ((shifts gaze downward away from Abed))
- °>BBC<°
7. Abed:
- | | |
|-----------------|---|
| <p>7. Abed:</p> | <p>badal ma ʔəʔtar</p> <p>instead of having breakfast</p> |
|-----------------|---|
8. Ram: → ((turns head and shifts gaze towards Abed))
- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>8. Ram: → ((turns head and shifts gaze towards Abed))</p> | <p>bi bi si ʔay player,</p> <p>BBC iPlayer,</p> |
|--|---|
9. Abed: ((turns head and shifts gaze towards Ram))
10. Abed: → ʔe: la waʕlah əl bi bi si əʕṣādiyye əl news ʔalʕa,
- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>yes: no Prt the</p> <p>yes: no Prt [it was] the</p> | <p>BBC the regular the news shown,</p> <p>regular BBC the news show,</p> |
|--|--|
11. Ram:
- | | |
|-----------------|--|
| <p>11. Ram:</p> | <p>ʔe:h (.) uhm:: ((turns his head and shifts gaze downward away from Abed))</p> <p>ye:s (.) uhm::</p> |
|-----------------|--|

Abed responds to Ram's interrogative turn (line 7) by a 'ʔe:'-prefaced SPP in which the turn-initial 'ʔe' is followed immediately by the negative polarity particle 'la' then the TCU-final particle 'waʕlah' 'by God' (line 10). The positive turn-initial 'ʔe:' aligns in polarity with Ram's positively framed FPP, however, it does not project an aligning confirming SPP. Abed's

elaboration which follows that ‘la-wallah’ TCU further disconfirms the proposition in Ram’s FPP. Schegloff (2007) notes that a SPP responds firstly to the format of the FPP which it addresses, then it responds to the action which that FPP seeks to progress. In terms of form, the turn-initial ‘ʔeh’ in Abed’s SPP (line 10) addresses the polarity of the FPP and aligns with it. In terms of action the following la-marked TCU misaligns with the action projected and preferred by the FPP, which is confirming the proposition it entails. Aligning with the polarity of the FPP is one of the form-related preferences in SA (see section 4.3 below). In the case of the example above, two form-related preferences are made relevant next by the initiation of Ram’s polar interrogative FPP. Those preferences are: type-conformity and same-polarity. Either ‘ʔeh’ or ‘laʔ’ could address the preference for type-conformity, however, it is only ‘ʔeh’ which could address the SA preference for same-polarity in this sequential position. The competition between those two preferences has been resolved in this sequential context by prioritising the particle ‘ʔeh’ which addresses the preference for same polarity over ‘laʔ’ which does not. ‘Laʔ’ is, then, delayed, and it is delayed by ‘ʔeh’.

Excerpt (4-17) further illustrates this phenomenon in SA. Wess is calling his brother Hamid, who lives in a European country. Wess asks Hamid whether he is staying in a camp; in a tent (line 7). The word ‘muxayyam’, which is glossed here as ‘camp’, has a specific connotation in SA. It comes from the root word ‘xayma’ which means ‘tent’. Therefore, ‘muxayyam’ in SA refers to a place full of tents.

(4-17) NDCALL16

- 1.Wess:** wēnak ʔənti,
 where [are] you,
- 2.Hamid:** ()
- 3.Wess:** A:Hʔ
- 4.Hamid:** ()

5.Wess: **ma ʕambəsməʕak ʕalle ʕalle ʕōtak**

NegPrt hear-1PS you raise raise your voice

I don't hear you raise your voice

6.Hamid: **bəlmadīne[↑] bəttown**

in the city[↑] in town

7.Wess: → **bəlmadīne, (.) ʔēʕid bəlmuxayyam bəlxaiymi?**

in the city, (.) you [are] staying in a camp in a tent?

8. **(1)**

9.Hamid: → **ʔe:h (.) laʔ hallaʔ ʔēʕid belka:mp.**

ye:s (.) no now I stay in the camp.

10. **(0.4)**

11.Wess: **ʔšu hāda lkamp ʔišraḥle (.) ma ʕambəfham ʔna**

what [is] that the camp explain to me (.) NegPrt understand I

what [is] a camp explain to me (.) I don't understand

After a significant 1-second delay, which projects dispreference, Hamid responds to his brother's polar interrogative FPP by an 'ʔeh' prefaced SPP, however, following a mini-pause, Hamid produces a 'laʔ' prefaced TCU in which he tells his brother that he is staying at a camp (line 9). Wess's FPP contains the term 'bəlxaiymi?' 'in a tent' in turn-final position. Hamid is not living in a tent; later in the call he tells his brother that he is living in a room in shared accommodation. The turn-initial 'ʔeh' in Hamid's SPP aligns with the positive polarity the FPP. The following 'laʔ' does not align with the polarity of the FPP and it disconfirms its proposition. Various preferences are in competition within this sequence. The negotiation of those preferences involves first addressing the form-related preferences among which same-polarity has been given precedence (this is indexed by beginning the SPP with 'ʔeh'). The form-related preference for type-conformity is addressed next; this is indexed by the TCU-initial 'laʔ' which prefates the actual answer to Wess's FPP and which addresses its action-related preference, however, by

disconfirming its proposition rather than by confirming it. According to Cambridge Online Dictionary (2019), the word camp refers to “an area where people are kept temporarily for a particular reason”. It is not necessarily an area full of tents, it might be a proper shared accommodation. Hamid’s *laʔ*-prefaced TCU disconfirms Wess’s orientation to the word ‘muxayyam’ as tent-related and confirms his own orientation to the word ‘camp’ as a temporary accommodation.

Excerpt (4-18) below, illustrates that turn-initial ‘*ʔeh*’ does not necessarily project a positive confirming SPP. Abdul is asking for Mido’s opinion about whether it is proper for a person to give money to another for the purpose of getting the latter to swear at a third party. Abdul uses positively formatted polar interrogative for that purpose (lines: 5 and 7).

(4-18) expanded from (3-23) chapter 3, section 3.2.2

1. Abdul: ((gaze towards Mido)) *kaʔənni maʔalan ʕamʔollak*

as if for example PRX-tell-2PS

as if I were telling you for instance

2. *xāy ʔana bədde ʔəʕʔik yəʕni (.) ʔeʕak mənna bədde ʔəʕʔeek mīt pound*

brother I want to give you Prt (.) you are far from that³⁸ I want to give you a hundred pound

brother I want to give you Prt (.) this is not directed to you I want to give you a hundred pound

3. *xaməsmyye halli hənne wu baʔullak subb ʕala flān minənnās*

five hundred whatever and I tell you to insult at someone among people

five hundred whatever and I tell you to insult someone

³⁸ ‘*ʔeʕak mənna*’ is a parenthetical TCU which embodies an idiomatic expression. When a SA interactant tells about bad behaviour or bad characteristics, she/he may use ‘*ʔeʕak mənna*’ to indicate that such bad behaviour or characteristics do not apply to the co-interactant.

which lies within the shared knowledge-domain of the participants and is biased towards disconfirmation. The term ‘*manṭiqyyan*’ ‘logically speaking’ increases this bias as it renders confirming the proposition of that FPP counter to logic and common sense. Mido’s SPP first addresses the form-related same-polarity preference with the turn-initial ‘*ʔeh*’ as Abdul’s FPP is positively formatted. However, the turn-initial ‘*ʔeh*’ in Mido’s SPP is immediately followed by ‘*laʔ*’ which addresses type-conformity and the action which Abdul’s FPP has made relevant, i.e. disconfirming that such behaviour is proper. After ‘*laʔ*’, an assertive ‘*ṭabʕan*’ ‘of course’ follows which orients to Abdul’s polar interrogative as very obvious by challenging its askability (Stivers, 2011). Abdul adds another increment seeking further response from Mido (line 9). By adding this second polar interrogative about the issue, Abdul orients to Mido’s SPP (line 8) as dispreferred (Heritage, 1984a). Mido responds to Abdul’s second polar FPP by repeating the same format from his previous SPP ‘*ʔeh laʔ ṭabʕn*’ (line 10), however, this time Mido adds some elaboration marking an orientation to mitigating the challenging implicature of ‘*ṭabʕan*’ in his SPP. ‘*ʔeh laʔ*’-prefacing also addresses the preference for agreement in SA polar interrogative sequences. By beginning with the agreement particle ‘*ʔeh*’, the ‘*ʔeh laʔ*’ prefaced turn initially addresses the preference for agreement with the FPP, at least ostensibly in form, even if it later disagrees with the action entailed in the FPP.

‘*ʔeh laʔ*’-prefacing is not exclusive to polar SPPs in SA. Such a practice is implemented in other types of sequences as the following examples illustrate. In example (4-19) Hamid is telling his brother and Salim that there are no racist people in the area in which he lives. His informing turn comes after his brother says that there are racists everywhere (line 3). Hamid’s informing turn is ‘*ʔeh laʔ*’-prefaced (line 6).

(4-19) NDCALL16

- 1.Salim:** **bi:- ʕalaʔ bəlmanʔiʔa əssəkin fiyya ʕunʕuriyīn ʔāl.**
 in:- Alaʔ in the area where he lives there [are] racist [people] he said.
- 2.Wess:** **ʔe fī ʕunʕuriyīn ↑ ʔe:h**
 yes there [are] racists ↑ ye:s
- 3.** **fī ʕunʕuriyīn bkəll mħall ʔatta hōn.**
 there [are] racists everywhere even here.
- 4.Salim:** **okay:.**
- 5.Wess:** **yal!ah xams daʔāyiʔ**
 Prt five minutes
- 6.Hamid:** → **ʔe:h laʔ ʕandi ma fi.**
 ye:s no here NegPrt there [is].
 ye:s no here there is none.
- 7.Salim:** **ʕando ma fi ʔada bəlmanʔiʔa ↑**
 where he is NegPrt there anyone in the area ↑
 there isn't anyone [racist] in his area ↑

Excerpt (4-20) is the last episode of a lengthy telling sequence in which Layla tells her friends that life in the UAE is expensive. Before closing that sequence, she produces a summary assessment in which she states that the UAE is as expensive as the UK. Layla's summary assessment turn is 'ʔeh laʔ'-prefaced (line 7).

(4-20) FTs-19

- 1.Layla:** **.hh mətla mətəl hōn**
 .hh [it is] like like here
- 2.** **hallaʔ kīf nəħna mnəstaʕmel əlkahraba ʔwu: lalhīting ((turns towards Sam))**
 Prt how we [are] using electricity and: for heating

- 3.Sam:** **naʕam**
alright
- 4.Layla:** **hunīk** **lalmukayyifāt**
there [they use it] for air conditioning
- 5.** **(0.5)**
- 6.Sam:** **uh**
- 7.Layla:** → **ʔeh laʔ** **ḡalyie** **yaʕə mətəl hōn.**
yes no [it is] expensive Prt like here.
yes no [it is] as expensive Prt as here.
- 8.Mido:** **umhum:: ((with many consecutive nods))**

The two above examples (4-19) and (4-20) are cited to illustrate that ‘ʔeh laʔ’-prefacing is a normativity in SA talk-in-interaction. However, investigating ‘ʔeh laʔ’-prefacing in types of sequences other than polar interrogatives is beyond the scope of the present study.

‘ʔeh laʔ’-prefacing demonstrates that the positive polarity particle ‘ʔeh’ does not necessarily project an affirming or a confirming SPP in the SA polar interrogative sequence. It is a resource which may be used for addressing some preferences, such as the SA form related same-polarity preference, and the preference for alignment and agreement. In some cases (example 4-16, 4-17; even in example 4-18 where the SPPs, lines 8 and 10, include a challenging element), turn-initial ‘ʔeh’ is used to delay a dispreferred action by a preferred token. It is important to emphasize that no instance of ‘laʔ ʔeh’-prefacing has been found among the 315 samples collected for this study. This highlights the preference for agreement, at least initially in form, in SA polar interrogative sequences. In addition to being grounded in form, the preference of agreement in SA may have its roots in the Syrian culture. Syria is an Middle Eastern Arabic state which maintains a hierarchal authoritarian patriarchal culture (Manea, 2011), in which children are taught from

early age to respect and obey parents and grown ups, women are taught to obey their husbands and people are told to obey officials and high ranked social personae. In such culture, blatant disagreement, expressed in straightforward syntactic negation (see section 4.3 below), is problematic as it may display some sort of rebellious behaviour on the part of the disagreeing interactant. Therefore, as this study reveals, disagreement is usually done tactfully in SA interaction, and one way of doing that is by prefacing a disagreeing turn by an ostensibly agreeing item such as ‘?eh’.

Summary of findings in section 4.2

This section has demonstrated that the polarity markers ‘?eh’ and ‘la?’ have other functions than just marking or projecting polarity in SA talk-in-interaction. They are used in negotiating competing preferences which are made relevant by the initiation of the polar interrogative sequence. Turn-initial ‘la?’ may be used for alignment with the negative polarity of the FPP when it is negatively formatted. Turn-initial ‘la?’ may be used to challenge the askability of the FPP, resist its terms, or block its production. Turn-initial ‘?eh’ may also be used for addressing the preference for same-polarity when the FPP is positively formatted. As an agreement token, turn-initial ‘?eh’ may be used to mark agreement. In ‘?eh la?’-prefacing construct, the turn-initial ‘?eh’ marks initial agreement, at least in terms of polarity, with the FPP. It is used in this construct to delay a dispreferred action by an ostensibly preferred object.

4.3. Syntactic vs interjection polarity in SA

Since turn-initial ‘?eh/la?’ does not always project the polarity of the SPP, SA interactants orient to other resources to project and mark the polarity of a turn-at-talk. This may be evidenced in examples (4-21 to 4-23) below, where turn-initial ‘?eh/la?’ are not recycled after overlap in favour of other resources which project the polarity of the SPP. In the first example, Mido, a PhD

student, asks his fellow PhD student Khan whether the supervisory board have asked him to do any work [for his research]. Mido's polar interrogative FPP (lines 24 and 25) consists of two parts, both are negatively framed. In overlap with the second part of the FPP, Khan starts producing his SPP. Khan starts with 'la' then he recycles it with another 'la' while Mido is listing what the board could have told Khan to do. After a mini pause and as Mido produces the 'generalized list completer' 'kaza' 'something' which projects the completion of his turn (Jefferson, 1990, p.66), Khan produces the negative morpheme 'ma' with the existential 'fi' 'there is' (line 26).

(4-21) reproduced from (1-10) chapter 1 section, 1.3.2

21. Khan: kul ʔsbūʔ (.) betqaḍḍi waqtak əbʔarīqa šəkəl

every week (.) you spend your time in a way different

every week (.) you spend your time differently

22. (0.5)

23. .hh yaʕni

.hh Prt

24. Mido: aha:: halla? ʔənte ʔəl board meeting əl maḍi ma ʔalabu mənnak ši nihāʔiyyan,

aha:: Prt you the board meeting the past NegPrt they asked from you anything at all

aha:: Prt at the last board meeting did they ask anything of you

25. [ma ʔalūlak šu lāzem ətsawwi literature review kaza.]

NegPrt they told you what you have to do literature review anything.

haven't they told you what you have to do for the literature review or so

26. Khan: la (0.2) la (.) ma fi =

no (0.2) no (.) NegPrt there [is] =

no (0.2) no (.) there isn't =

27. =ma ʔalabu ši nihaʔiyyan muḥddad.

=not they asked anything at all specific.

=they haven't asked for anything specific at all

When Khan's SPP emerges into the clear after the overlap (Schegloff, 1987, p.74), only the negative operator 'ma' gets recycled out of what has been intercepted by the overlapping talk (line 26). After 'ma' Khan repeats the verb 'ṭalabu' 'they have asked' and the negative polarity adverb 'nihaʔiyyan' 'at all' from the first part of Mido's interrogative turn. The operator 'ma' negates the following verb with its predicate, but it does not negate the negative polarity adverb 'nihaʔiyyan' (see chapter 1 section 1.4). Mido's interrogative FPP is negatively formatted. According to the form-related SA preference for same polarity (see section 4.4.1 below), an aligning SPP to Mido's FPP should be of the same polarity. When Khan recycles his turn-beginning (Schegloff, 1987), Khan prioritized addressing that preference by starting with the negative particle 'ma' which projects the polarity of the SPP from the very *recycled* beginning. By not recycling the 'laʔ', Khan indexes his orientation towards this particle as dispensable (Schegloff, 2004) in addressing the same-polarity preference and in projecting the turn's polarity. The following example (4-22) depicts similar practice but with the particle 'ʔeh'. The excerpt is taken from a friends' gathering at a restaurant. Abdul says first that he would not order food, then he changes his mind. Rafi criticizes him, in line 1, by reminding him that he previously had said that he did not want to eat.

(4-22) GD14-2

1. Rafi: ʕa ʔasās ma baddak tākol.

It was the case NegPrt want-2PS to eat-2PS.

It thought you don't want to eat.

2. Abdul: wallah baddi yəʕni ʔanno bəddi ʔəʔʕod hēk ʔanno ʔətfarraj ʕlēkon.

Prt I am going to Prt that I want to sit as such that I watch at you.

Prt shall I Prt shall I then sit [just] like that and watch you [eat].

3. Rafi: →

ʔeh ʔeh =
Yes yes =

4. Rafi: → =ʔətfarraj↑ ()
 =watch↑ ()

Abdul responds to Rafi's criticism by a polar interrogative which questions the possible situation of sitting and watching his friends eat in case he did not order food (line 2). Rafi responds to Abdul's turn, in overlap, with 'ʔeh' followed by another 'ʔeh' (line 3). However, when Rafi's SPP emerges into the clear (line 4), he does not recycle the 'ʔeh', he just produces a positively framed repetition of the verb 'ʔətfarraj' repeated from Abdul's polar interrogative FPP. Affirmative mode is unmarked in SA, i.e., no particle is needed to construct syntactic affirmation (Cowell, 1964; also see chapter 1, section 4.1). Abdul's FPP is positively framed, so it prefers a positively framed SPP. Rafi's recycled turn-beginning (line 4) is positively framed. It addresses the preference for same polarity, and it projects the polarity of the SPP without the need to recycle the particle 'ʔeh'. Example (4-23) also illustrates a case where syntactic negation gets recycled rather than the interjection 'la?' following an overlap. In the excerpt below, Sam is asking Layla about whether one could stay in the UAE without anything (line 1); by which he means: 'without a residence permit'. He uses negative interrogative format for the purpose.

(4-23) reproduced from (1-1) chapter 1 section, 1.3.1

<p>1. Sam: → yəʕni ma fiki təʔʕadi hek bala ʕi yəʕni</p> <p>Prt not can stay-2PS-fem like that without anything Prt</p> <p>Prt you cannot stay like that without anything Prt</p>	[<p>()</p> <p>()</p> <p>()</p>
<p>2. Layla: →</p>	]	<p>laʔ=</p> <p>no=</p>

3. Layla: → =((upward headshake)) **la? (.)=**
 =((upward headshake)) no (.)=
4. Mido: **ma fi.**
 NegPrt there is.
 there is no [way].
5. Layla: → =**ma btəʔder ʔaw bəddak taxod ərrisk fiyya muxalafāt**
 =NegPrt can-2PS-masc or you have to take the risk there are penalties
 =you cannot or you have to take the risk and there are penalties
6. **kəl yom madfūʔ ə: bişīr**
 every day paid ə: will become
 everyday will become paid for
7. Sam: → **umm**

After Layla's SPP emerges into the clear, the overlapped *laʔs* are not recycled; Layla produces 'ma' followed by a reformulation of the verb 'fiki' in Sam's interrogative FPP into 'btəʔder'. The two verbs have the same meaning 'you can', however in Aleppo, where Sam comes from, they use 'fik' or its variant 'finak', whereas in Damascus, where Layla comes from, they use 'btəʔder' or its variant 'btəgder'. The first item in Layla's SPP, after the overlap, is the negative particle 'ma' which straight projects the alignment of her SPP with Sam's FPP in terms of polarity. The 'ma' also projects the negative polarity of what follows it, while the unrecycled 'laʔ' is marked as dispensable in marking and projecting the negativity of that turn.

Turn beginnings are very important loci for projecting the plan and the action(s) of the turn. To prevent turn beginning from being impaired by overlap, interactants may use appositionals; those are turn-initial items which do not project the plan and action(s) of the turn (Schegloff, 1987).

Those [appositionals] can be placed at the beginning of a turn without necessarily reflecting any plan for the turn's construction. As initial items, they allow a start even before a prior turn has been completed, and should they be impaired, not being organically implicated in a plan for the turn's construction, their impairment need not involve the impairment of the understanding of the turn.

(Schegloff, 1987, p. 74)

In English, those are particles such as 'well', 'so' and 'yeah'. For the reason mentioned in Schegloff's quote above, those particles do not get recycled when they are impaired by overlap. What gets recycled is the core elements which project the plan and the action of the turn (ibid). Using 'ʔeh/la?' in SA as appositionals (as illustrated in the three examples above) supports the argument in this section that these particles, when in turn-initial position, are oriented to as dispensable in projecting or marking the form, the polarity, and/or the action(s) of the SPP.

Summary of findings in section 4.3

The argument in this section highlights that SA interactants orient to syntactic polarity rather than to interjection polarity in projecting and marking the polarity of the SPP. Syntactic polarity is constructed by the presence or the absence of the negative operators (ma, mu or their variants), while interjection polarity is marked by 'ʔeh/la?' and their variants.

4.4. Polarity in SA

4.4.1. Preference for same polarity in SA polar interrogative sequences

It has been noted in sections 4.2 and 4.3 above, that the FPP in the SA polar interrogative sequence prefers a SPP which aligns with it in terms of polarity. This section further investigates the preference for same polarity in those sequences. The analysis starts with example (4-24)

below. Layla is telling Sam that she has looked for liquorice juice³⁹ in London. Before she completes her telling turn, Mido produces laughter, then Sam proposes that she has not found that juice (line 3). This comes in overlap with Layla's continuation of her telling (line 4). Sam's polar interrogative FPP is negatively framed and invites Layla's confirmation/disconfirmation next. After emerging from the overlap, Layla responds, with no delay or mitigation, to Sam's FPP. Her SPP is negatively formatted with 'ma' (line 5).

(4-24) PD-19

1. Layla: **dawwart bikəll landan ʔənno lāʔi ʕərəʔ sūs**

I have searched in all london to find liquorice juice

I have searched all london to find liquorice juice

2. Mido: **ha ha**

3. Sam: → **ma laʔētīh.**

NegPrt found it.

not found you it.

you [have] not found it.

4. Layla: **ma kān=**

NegPrt was [there]=

there wasn't=

5. Layla: → **=ma laʔēt.**

=NegPrt found-1PS.

=I [have] not found [it].

6. (1)

³⁹ Liquorice juice is a popular Syrian juice and it is customary to have it at breakfast during the holy month of Ramadan. Mido is laughing (line 2) at the fact that Layla is looking for this type of juice, popular in Syria, in London.

In the next example, Abed is offering advice to Ali, who is in the habit of going to bars and nightclubs, against such practice. When Abed completes delivering his advising turn, Ram, a co-interactant, produces a positively framed question asking Ali to confirm that he is listening to Abed's advice. Without delay Ali responds to Ram with a positively framed repeat of the verb 'sameʕ' 'I'm hearing [listening]'. followed by what sounds like a joke to which Ram, Mido and Ali himself respond with a burst of laughter.

(4-25) GD11-2/12⁴⁰

1. Abed: **yəʕni la trūḥ ʕal bar ma btəji laʕandak**

Prt [do] not go to the bar NegPrt comes to you

Prt [do] not go to the bar it won't come to you

2. Ram: → **sāmeʕ ya ali::?**

you hear [that] Prt ali::?

are you listening ali::?

3 Ali: → **sāmeʕ ()**

I'm listening ()

4. Ram: **ha ha ha ha**

5. Mido: **ha ha ha ha**

6. Ali: **ha ha ha ha**

In the example below, the SPP is prefaced by 'la?', however, it aligns with the FPP in terms of syntactic polarity. Khan and Mido are PhD students and Khan is telling Mido about some issues with his supervisor. When Khan says that there is a Saudi guy who has the same issues, Mido

⁴⁰ This excerpt is further analysed in section 5.2.4 below.

inquires whether that Saudi guy has the same supervisor as Khan (line 3). Mido's FPP is positively framed.

(4-26) GTAM14-2

1. Khan: **wu bəʕtəqəd ʔənni nafs əl waḍəʕ maʕ hāda əššabb əssuʕoodi əlli waqqaft maʕo**
 and I believe that the same thing [happened] with that guy the saudi who I stood with
2. **.hh (0.2) ə:**
3. Mido: → **nafs əssupervisor.**
 [the] same supervisor.
4. Khan: → **laʔ supervisor muxtalef tamāman.**
 no supervisor different completely.
 no a completely different supervisor.
5. Mido: **aha**

Khan's SPP (line 4) is in a preferred contiguous relationship with its FPP. It contains no accounts or mitigation. Khan's SPP, thus, is oriented to as preferred, even though it is prefaced by 'laʔ', which disconfirms the proposition of the FPP and which has the opposite polarity to Mido's FPP. Khan's SPP, however, still syntactically aligns with the polarity of the FPP. Khan's SPP does not have the syntactic negation operator 'ma'. This example further demonstrates that the interactants have oriented to the syntactic polarity of the SPP rather than the polarity indexed in the interjection 'laʔ'. It is noticeable that the SPPs in examples (4-24 and 5-25) above are not type-conforming but are still produced without delay or mitigation. What is common between the three above examples is that all the SPPs in them align with their FPPs in terms of syntactic polarity.

Like in Danish (Heinemann, 2003; 2005), the polar interrogative FPP in SA exhibits a preference to a SPP of matching polarity. SPPs which do not match their FPPs in terms of syntactical

polarity, in SA, display signs of dispreference as example (4-27) below shows. In this excerpt, Wess is asking Sam whether his cell phone has 3G or 4G service (line 2). At the time of the conversation there were either of these services provided to cell phone customers. Wess's FPP is positively framed.

(4-27) expanded from (1-8) chapter 1 section, 1.3.2

1. Mido: **hāda three jee.**

this [one] [is] 3G

2. Wess: → **ʔe three jee ((turns towards Sam)) ʔənti əlli ʕandak three jī ↑ ʔəlla four jee samɔ**

yes three G ((turns towards Sam)) you which have-2PS 3G ↑ or 4G samɔ

yes 3G ((turns towards Sam)) the one you have [is] 3G ↑ or 4G samɔ

3. Sam: **(0.2)**

4. tsk ((lift his head up and rubs his chin with his hand))

5. → ʔe::h wallahi ma baʕref.

ye::s Prt NegPrt 1PS-know.

ye::s Prt I don't know.

After a 0.2-second delay followed by a visual display of pensiveness (line 4), Sam produces a ʔeh-prefaced SPP of an opposite polarity (negative) to that of the FPP. The turn-initial 'ʔe::h' is stretched by two tenths of a second. This formulation of the turn-initial 'ʔe::h' further contributes to delaying the actual answer. Another resource used to delay the answering TCU is the particle 'wallahi' 'by God'. These delays index Sam's orientation to his own SPP as dispreferred. Sam's SPP is dispreferred on the level of action as it is an epistemic disclaimer whereas questions usually prefer a knowing response (Keevallik, 2011). Sam's SPP is prefaced with 'ʔe::h', therefore it acknowledges the positive polarity of the FPP, however, his answering TCU is

negatively framed, therefore, it does not align with the polarity of the FPP. In terms of form, Sam's SPP is type-conforming, however it misaligns with the FPP in terms of syntactic polarity.

The next excerpt shows another example of an epistemic-disclaimer SPP, however it is not as delayed as the one in example (4-27) above. In this excerpt, Wess is asking Sam to do a blood test to check his blood cholesterol level. When Sam tells Wess that he had it checked the year before, Wess asks him whether the cholesterol level was over the limit by then (line 3). Wess uses negative interrogative format for his question.

(4-28) NS14-2

1. Wess: **ħallil nəsbət əl koləströl tabəfak**

check the level of the cholesterol of yours

check your blood cholesterol level

2. Sam: **wallāh ?ana řalhədd (0.2) la?ənni ħallalt əssəne əl mađiye ?āluli řalhədd**

Prt I [am] on the verge (0.2) because I did [blood] analysis the year the last they told me on the verge

Prt I am near the limit (0.2) because I did a blood test last year and they told me that I am near the limit

3. Wess: **→ ma fi ziyadi?**

NegPrt there [is] excess?

[is] there no excess?

4. Sam: **→ ma bařref ?aluli řalhədd yařni ?iza zad řwaiy ?ənte řandak koləströl.**

NegPrt 1PS-know they told me it [is] one the verge it means if it increases a bit you have cholesterol.

I [do] not know they told me that it is near the limit if it increases a little bit you have [high] cholesterol.

Unlike in (4-27), Sam produces his epistemic-disclaimer SPP, in example (4-28) above, without any delay. Sam's SPP, at least initially, is not preferred in terms of action as it incorporates an epistemic disclaimer, however it aligns with the FPP in terms of polarity. It is of the same negative syntactic polarity as the FPP. Sam's SPP in this example is in a preferred contiguous relationship with its FPP. As Schegloff (1996a, 2007) puts it, it is the form-related preferences

which get addressed first. The only form-related preference which is addressed first and foremost in Sam's SPP is the SA preference for same-polarity. When the SPP is projected to depart from that preference (such as in example 4-27), it is distanced from the FPP and displays multiple indications of dispreference. When the SPP is projected to observe that preference (such as in example 4-28), it is in a contiguous relationship with the FPP, and it displays indications of preference.

Out of the 315 polar interrogative FPPs analysed for this study, only 51 receive SPPs of opposite syntactic polarity; this constitutes 16.19% of the sampled data. All of those opposite-polarity SPPs are marked with dispreference; they are either delayed, mitigated, non-straightforward, followed by an account, accompanied by a challenge, or sometimes they get challenged in third position by the producer of the FPP. I briefly cite three examples below to further support this argument. The first example (4-29) shows a negatively framed SPP responding to a positively framed FPP. In this excerpt, Abed is telling that he was looking to marry someone, but it did not happen, so later he thought of going to London to look for a woman from the Islamic community to marry. At the TRP of Abed's telling turn (see chapter 1, section 1.3.1), Ali starts a polar interrogative turn prefaced by the particle 'baqa' 'so' which shows that his incipient turn is based on what he has just heard from Abed (Bolden, 2006). Ali's turn (line 12) proposes that Abed has 'tried' [Ali means for marriage]. Upon receiving Ali's polar interrogative, Abed initiates a repair sequence, thus projecting dispreference and distancing his possible SPP from Ali's FPP (Schegloff, 2007). After Abed's repair initiator, Ali repeats the positively formatted verb 'saṣēt' from his previous polar interrogative turn (line 12).

(4-29) GD11-3/22

5. Abed: **ʔe ɥatta ɥ- qəltella ɥakkīli əiyaha**

yes even ɥ- I told her to talk to her

6. **wū šufi šū q- šū betqūl (.) ʕəmra tməntaʕəš senne**

and to see what q- what would she say (.) her age [is] eitheen years

7. **(0.2)**

8. **.hh bass subḥan aḷḷah ma aḷḷah kātəb naʕeeb ma tiyassaret.**

.hh but praise be to aḷḷah NegPrt aḷḷah has written destiny NegPrt it was faciliated.

.hh but god be praised he⁴¹ did not prescribe that such a thing will happen.

9. **(0.4)**

10. **Abed: ḥatta marra xaṭarli rūḥ ʕalandan yəʕni fi əjjaliye əl ʔeslāmiyye hunīk aktarɿ**

even one time I thought to go to london Prt there [is] the community Islamic there moreɿ

even one time I thought of going to london Prt the Islamic community there are more than hereɿ

11. **wū fi mən bəriṭaniya** **kamān.**

And there [is] from britain

too.

12. **Ali: →**

baqa sa- baqa saʕēt ʔnte,

[so tri- so you have tried you,

13. **Abed: → ah?**

14. **Ali: → saʕēt,**

you have tried,

15. **Abed: → laʔ yəʕni mani saʕēt bass yəʕni kənt yəʕni,**

no Prt not-1PS have tried but Prt I was Prt:,

no Prt I have not tried but Prt I was,

16. **Abed: →** **() ʔe bass ()**

() yes but ()

17. **Ram: → mawjūde mawjūd** **əl mawḍūʕ yəʕni.**

it [is] there it [is] there

the issue Prt.

18. **Ali: ((shifts gaze towards Mido)) bəjīzi əjīzi.**

for marriage marriage.

⁴¹ 'he' here refers to God.

19. Abed: $\left[\begin{array}{c} \text{la la?} \uparrow \\ \text{no no} \uparrow \\ (\quad) \end{array} \right]$

20. Mido: $\left[\begin{array}{c} (\quad) \end{array} \right]$

Abed's delayed SPP (line 15) is type-conforming by being prefaced with the polarity particle 'la?', however, it is infused with mitigation; this is marked by the three-time repetition of the mitigating particle 'yeʕni' (Al-Khalil, 2005; also see chapter 3 section: 3.2.2). In addition, there are two 'bass' 'but' particles in his turn marking disagreement and misalignment (Steensig & Asmuß, 2005). The negative format in Abed's turn disconfirms Ali's positively framed proposition about Abed trying for marriage. While Abed is still in the process of producing his SPP, Ram comes in overlap with a challenging turn stating that the issue [marriage] was there [in Abed's plans]. Ali comes in overlap with Ram repeating the word 'əjīzi' 'marriage' thus insisting on his and Ram's challenging stance. Abed's opposite-polarity SPP in excerpt (4-29) is delayed, mitigated and challenged, even though it is type-conforming. Hence, the conversationalists in this excerpt have oriented to the dispreference of opposite-polarity, rather than to the preference of type-conformity. In excerpt (4-30) below, the opposite-polarity SPP (line 4) does not get challenged, however it is delayed and accompanied by a challenge. Sam is asking Wess about meals he could have while on a diet.

(4-30) NS14-2⁴²

1. Sam: **ṭab ʔəʕ ʔəʕ ʔəʕu () əl wajbāt,**
 so what what what () the meals,
2. Wess: **ʕande beef dice () chicken məšwiyyi () laḥəm ʕandak fish**
 I have beef dice () chicken grilled () meat and there [is] fish

⁴² This excerpt is further analysed in section 5.3.2 below.

3. Sam: → **ma btakol šalaṭa?**

NegPrt eat-2PS salad?

don't you eat salad?

4. Wess: → **məšwiyyi šalaṭa ṭabʕan,**

grilled⁴³ salad of course,

5. (2)

While Wess is listing the meals, Sam produces a negatively framed interrogative asking whether salad is included in Wess's diet (line 3). Wess responds to Sam's FPP by a positively framed SPP in which he asserts that salad is included. He does that by producing the polarity-unmarked noun 'šalaṭa' followed by the assertive challenging 'ṭabʕan', which challenges the askability of Sam's question (Stivers, 2011). Wess's response itself is delayed by the word 'məšwiyyi' 'grilled'⁴⁴ in turn-initial position. Example (4-30) thus illustrates another case of an opposite-polarity SPP that is marked with dispreference.

The last of the three examples to demonstrate the dispreferredness of opposite-polarity SPPs in SA polar interrogative sequences is shown in excerpt (4-31) below. The dispreference of the SPP in this example is marked by a delay and by the non-straightforwardness of the SPP. Wess (in prior talk) has told his friend Salim about another friend who does research on Syrian dialects. Salim, who is from Aleppo, asks Wess whether that friend wants to study the Aleppo dialect. Salim uses a negatively framed FPP for that purpose (line 1).

⁴³ 'grilled' is part of the prior TCU in which Wess said meat and fish; he meant that meat and fish, not salad, should be grilled. Therefore, the response 'salad of course' is actually delayed by the word 'grilled' as it comes between the response and the FPP, thus compromising their contiguity.

⁴⁴ See footnote 19 above.

(4-31) ND-16

1. Salim: → **ma bæddo əllahje əlḥalabiyye?**

NegPrt want-3PS the dialect of aleppo?

doesn't he want the dialect of aleppo?

2. Wess: **ha ha**

(0.5)

3. Wess: → **biṣīr (lak ʔab[↑]oi)**

it works (Prt address term)

it works m[↑]ate

4. Salim: **um**

Wess's response comes delayed after a laugh, produced by himself, and 0.5-second gap. Wess's SPP comes in positive format, however it does not straightforwardly answer Salim's question whether that friend *wants* the Aleppo dialect or not. Wess says that it [referring to the dialect] works (line 3), then he utters a traditional Aleppo address term. All the examples in this subsection illustrate that SA interactants orient to the dispreferredness of a SPP which does not match its relevant FPP in terms of syntactic polarity. Such SPPs may get delayed, challenged, may be accompanied with mitigation or they may incorporate a challenge to the FPP.

4.4.2. Negative interrogative revisited

In some cases, the preferences which a negative interrogative FPP makes relevant clash with the SA preference for same polarity. The preference for same polarity involves producing a SPP which has the same syntactic polarity of the FPP. In case of responding to a negative interrogative, same polarity invites the recipient to respond with a negatively framed SPP. However, in cases where the negative interrogative FPP entails accusation, challenge or criticism of the recipient (Heinemann; 2008; Heritage, 2002), responding with an aligning negative turn

would confirm such criticism or challenge. A case in point is illustrated in example (4-32) below. The excerpt below is a continuation of the conversation quoted in excerpt (4-22) in section (4.3) above where Abdul is being criticised by Rafi for changing his mind about ordering food. Prior to this conversation, Abdul says that he is not hungry. In the excerpt below Rafi repeats his implicit accusation of Abdul being inconsistent. Rafi uses a negatively framed interrogative to deliver his criticising turn in line 8.

(4-32) GD14-2⁴⁵

7. Abdul: **waḷḷah ʔana ma:ni jūʕan ʔana akalt (0.5) ʔayyeb ʕarāyes wu waraʔ ʕanab ()**
 waḷḷah I'm not hungry I've eaten (0.5) anyway arāyes and vine leaves⁴⁶ ()
 ((six lines omitted in which the interactants order food from the waiter))
8. Rafi: ➔ **abdul. ((forward bend)) mū ma baddak takolč**
 abdul. ((forward bend)) NegPrt NegPrt want-2PS eatč
 abdul. ((forward bend)) wasn't [the case] not you want to eatč
 abdul. ((forward bend)) didn't you [say] that you wouldn't eatč
9. **(1)**
10. Abdul: ➔ **taḍmunan maʕ əššabibe waḷḷah.**
 in solidarity with the guys Prt.

After a significant delay of 1-second (Jefferson, 1988; Stivers, *et al.* 2009), Abdul produces a positively framed SPP which neither confirms nor disconfirms Rafi's negated proposition. Non-straightforwardness (also see example 4-31) of the SPP is one resource by which SA interactants depart from the terms of a negative interrogative FPP which makes relevant a SPP which displays agreement (positive) and at the same time aligns with the polarity of the FPP (negative). Abdul's SPP departs from both those clashing preferences by being non-straightforward.

⁴⁵ This excerpt is further analysed in section 5.2.4 below.

⁴⁶ Arāyes and vine leaves are two popular Syrian dishes.

A similar instance can be found in excerpt (4-33) below. Mido is asking Wess whether he remembers someone called Marwan Shekho⁴⁷. Mido uses negative interrogative format in his question (line 1). After a 1-second gap, Wess produces a response of opposite polarity (positive), which is further delayed by the turn-initial ‘mm:::’. Wess’s response neither confirms nor disconfirms Mido’s negative proposition. Wess’s SPP contains the dubitative adverb ‘yəmkin’ ‘maybe’ which further asserts the non-straightforwardness of that SPP. By being non-straightforward, Wess’s SPP departs from the clashing preferences which the negative interrogative has made relevant.

(4-33) PD-19

1. Mido: **ma btətzakkar marwān šēxo?**

NegPrt remember-2PS marwan šēxo?

don’t you remember marwan šēxo?

2. **(1)**

3. Wess: **mm::: yəmkin samfān bəlʔəsəm.**

Mm::: maybe I have heard of the name.

There are other resources which SA interactants may use in order to depart from the clashing preferences which a negative interrogative makes relevant. One of those resources is challenging the FPP. Examples (4-34 and 4-35) illustrate such practice. In excerpt (4-34) Mido is asking Layla, who stayed in the UAE for a few years, whether she used to pay annual fees for her residence permit. Mido constructs his FPP as a negative interrogative (line: 1, 2).

⁴⁷ Marwan Shekho was a Syrian TV figure who used to preach Islamic religion on air between the eighties and the nineties of the last century.

(4-34) reproduced from (1-1) chapter 1 section, 1.3.1⁴⁸

1. Mido: → əɫɬama .hh ʔuw:ə ma kəntu tədɬaɬu rusūm: kə- sanawiyye
 blindness .hh and:ə not were-2PP paying-2PP fees: kə- annual
 blindness .hh and ə: weren't you paying annual fees
2. ʔaw ši [ɬalʔiqame ʔəlla kīf.
 or thing for the residence or how.
 or anything for the residence [permit] or how.
3. Layla: → .hh əmbala, ((two nods while responding, gaze directed towards Mido))
 .hh of course, ((two nods))

In line 3, Layla responds to Mido's FPP with the challenging particle 'əmbala' 'of course' with no delay. A similar particle is used by Ali in excerpt (4-35) below, when Mido asks him, using negative interrogative, if the former meets up with women when he goes to town.

(4-35) GD11-3/24

1. Mido: ʔəntə bettown ma ɬambetʒabbet⁴⁹ ɬalak lamma bətrūh ɬaššəgəl kaza.
 you are in town not you looking after yourself when you go to work so.
 you are in town aren't you picking up women when you go to work [or] so.
2. [betšūf ši,
 you see something,
3. Ali: → [ʔəlla ɬammənʒab bit bass baʔa ma ()
 of course we are picking up but Prt NegPrt ()

Ali responds to Mido's FPP with no delay, even in overlap, by producing the challenging particle 'ʔəlla' 'of course' followed by a positively framed confirming repeat of the term 'ɬammənʒabit', however, with some misalignment to follow marked by the particle 'bass' 'but' (line 3). What is

⁴⁸ This excerpt will be further analysed in chapter 5, section 5.3.2 below

⁴⁹ The term 'ɬambetʒabbet ɬalak' is a Syrian term which men use to refer to picking up women.

common between ‘ʔalla’, ‘əmbala’ and similar particles is that they do not get syntactically negated by ‘ma’. Like the English ‘of course’ there is no syntactic negation for such particles. Because these particles are neutral in terms of syntactic polarity, they neither depart from nor address the SA preference for same polarity. They simply assert the recipient’s stance towards the issue in question, while rejecting the terms of the negative interrogative FPP by challenging its askability. Heritage (2002) has found that the most preferred way of responding to negative interrogative FPPs in English is by challenging them. The same applies to SA as the examples above demonstrate.

Negative polarity items are other resources which SA interactants use to address the conflicting preferences which a negative interrogative FPP makes relevant. SA interactants may select to depart from syntactic negation constraint by using negative polarity items NPIs such as ‘ləssa’ ‘yet’ which has a negative implicature (Alqassas, 2010 [on Levantine Arabic]; Murphy, 2014 [on Syrian Arabic]; Quirk *et al.* 1985, p.808 [on English]). The following example illustrates the usage of ‘ləssa’ as a negative polarity item. In the excerpt below, AR is telling SI about his driving lessons. SI produces a negatively framed interrogative questioning the fact that AR has not taken the driving licence (line 185). SI’s negative interrogative turn, thus, entails criticism of AR not having obtained the licence so far.

(4-36) modified from (Helani, 2008, p.158)

185. SI: →	Ma axadet el= el= el driving licence	yaʕni?
	NegPrt have take you the= the= the driving licence	PART?
	not have take you the= the= the driving licence	PART?
	have not you taken the driving licence	PART?
186. AR: →		wallah lessaʕ
	Prt	not yet

187. AR: bass uh:: inša::llah gariban fi faḥs
 but uh:: god will::ing soon the is a test

At the TRP of AR's negative interrogative FPP and in overlap with the turn-final mitigating particle 'yaḥni', SI produces his SPP (line 186). The SPP is a waḥlah-prefaced 'ləssa' followed by the change of trajectory particle 'bass' 'but' then a TCU prospecting a soon-to-come test. The initial 'waḥlah' delays the production of the actual answer which starts with the NPI 'ləssa'. The following 'bass' prefaced TCU indexes the recipient's orientation to the criticism entailed in SI's FPP.

In the following excerpt (4-37), a similar organisation is evident when the NPI 'wala' 'not any' is used in responding to a negatively framed interrogative FPP. In the excerpt below, Layla is telling her friends about the double-decker 380 airplanes in the UAE. Mido asks her whether she tried it (line 4). Layla responds with the affirmative 'ʔeh' followed by the assertive challenging 'laka:n' 'of course'. Following Layla's SPP, Mido turns to Wess and asks him whether he tried it (line 6). Mido uses negative interrogative format for that purpose.

(4-37) FTs-19

- | | | |
|----------|--|--------------------|
| 1.Layla: | əhnīk əl three ei- ə::: əl three eighty | [haiy əlṭabʔən |
| | there the three ei- ə::: the three eighty | that double-decker |
| 2.Mido: | | [((three nods)) |
| 3.Mido: | three eighty ʔeh wow ((with three nods)) jarrabtiyya ši marra? | |
| | three eighty yes wow ((with three nods)) you have tried it one time? | |
| | three eighty yes wow ((with three nods)) have you ever tried it? | |
| 4.Layla: | ʔeh laka:n. | |
| | yes fof cou:rese. | |
| 5.Mido: | Oouh | |

6.Mido: → ((turns towards Wess)) ʔante ma jarrabta ʔəbn əl ʔammɛ

you NegPrt have tried it cousin

haven't you tried it cousin

7.Layla:

ʔšəgleh

ʔa [great] thing

8.Wess: → ((presses his lips and flips his lower lip with two slight brisk headshakes)) wala marra.

not any time.

not at all.

9.Layla: ʔana jarrabta mən dubai la: new york ↑

I have tried it from dubai to: new york ↑

Wess responds to Mido's negative interrogative FPP with a SPP prefaced with the NPI 'wala' 'not any'. However, the production of this NPI is slightly delayed by a visible display of disaffiliation (see section 4.1 above). NPIs do not include the syntactical negation morpheme 'ma', however, they are still negative-implicative. They do not align with the syntactic negation in the FPP, however, since they are negative implicative items, they acknowledge the negation in the FPP. It is noticeable that the production of the NPIs in the two examples above is delayed within the SPP. NPIs are delayed within the SPP turn itself in all the samples in the data. In example (4-38) below, the NPI 'ləssa' comes after the turn-initial polarity particle 'la?'. Khan is asking Mido whether he submitted any written work to his supervisor (line 3). Mido responds with a type-conforming la?-prefaced SPP followed by the NPIs 'ləssa' and 'wala' (line 4).

(4-38) reproduced from (4-7) section, 4.1 this chapter

1. Khan: šu ʔalaqtak maʔ əssupervisor

how's your relationship with the supervisor

2. Mido: **la kwayse əlḥamdulillah əl ʕalaqa maʕ əssupervi** **[sor.]**
no it [is] good thank god the relationship with the supervisor sor
3. Khan: → **m- m a qaddamtəlla ši maktüb?**
m- Neg Prt you submitted to her thing written?
you haven't submitted anything written to her?
4. Mido: → **((backward headshake)) laʔ lessa wala ši maktüb** **[nihaʔyyan.]**
((backward headshake)) no yet not any thing written at all.
((backward headshake)) no not yet anything written at all.
5. Khan: **((two backward headshakes))**

Mido's SPP is type-conforming which indicates turn-initial preference, however, the turn-initial headshake in that SPP projects disaffiliation (see section 4.1 above). The NPI 'læssa' is delayed and not produced in turn-initial position. NPI-marked SPPs may display some indications of preference as they acknowledge the negative polarity of the FPP. However, since they do not align with the negative interrogative FPP in terms of syntactic polarity, they still display some indications of dispreference such as the slight delays depicted in the three examples above.

4.4.3. The preferred polarity in SA

The data collected for this study shows a bias towards positive format in both the FPP and the SPP in SA polar interrogative sequences. 81% of the sampled polar FPPs embody a positively framed proposition. Correspondingly, 83.17% of the sampled polar SPPs are positively framed. The bias towards syntactic positivity can be depicted in instances where the polar interrogative FPP contains both positive and negative formats such as in example (4-39) below. Mido is asking Wess to confirm that he will be free on Wednesday. First, Mido asks Wess whether he is free on that Wednesday (line 1). After Wess confirms that he is free (line 3), Mido receipts Wess's response with a repeat, then he produces a more specific question (line 4). This FPP consists of two parts; the first one, which asks whether Wess is free all day, is positively framed, while the second part of this FPP, which asks whether Wess has no work at all on that day, is negatively

framed. Wess selects to respond, positively, only to the first positive part from Mido's FPP (line 5). By doing so, Wess's SPP has departed from the preference for contiguity, according to which the SPP is preferred to answer the part of the FPP which is nearest to it (Sacks, 1987). The SPP's departure from the preference of contiguity is in favour of orienting positively to the positive part of the FPP.

(4-39) NCALL14-1⁵⁰

1. Mido: əl ʔarbiʕaʔ əl jayə hāda↑ əlli huwwe baʕəd kam yom ʔənte faði:ʔ

the Wednesday the coming this↑ the one that [is] after few days you free:ʔ

this coming wednesday after few days you are free:ʔ

2. (0.5)

3. Wess: ʔeh faðe:ʔ,

yes free:ʔ,

4. Mido: → faði (0.5) a:h faði kəll ənnhar ma ʕandak šəḡəl nihaʔiyyan.

free (0.5) a:h free all day NegPrt have-2PS work at all.

free (0.5) a:h free all day you don't have any work at all.

5. Wess: → ʔeh faðe ʔe:h kəll ənnhar.

yes free ye:s all day.

A similar case is in excerpt (4-40) below, in which Abdul is asking Mido whether he has good friends in Saudi Arabia or not. Abdul's FPP consists of two parts; the first part is positively framed and asks whether Mido has good friends in Saudi Arabia. The second part of Abdul's FPP is a negatively framed TCU which proposes that Mido has none (line 1). Mido selects to respond, positively, only to the first positive part from Abdul's FPP. By doing so, Mido's SPP departs from the preference for contiguity in favour of the preference for positivity.

⁵⁰ This excerpt is further analysed in section 5.2.3 below.

whether his stay in Saudi Arabia was before he did his master's degree or after. Even though Mido's SPP (line 6) is prefaced by the negative polarity particle 'la?' which it disconfirms both propositions in Abed's FPP, it does not contain any syntactical negative operator, neither a NPI. The disconfirmation in Mido's SPP is done without syntactic negation.

(4-42) reproduced from (3-34) chapter 3 section, 3.2.4

((four lines omitted in which Mido tells that he stayed ten years in Saudi Arabia))

5. Abdul: **hay baʔd əl majəstair ax midoʔ ʔəlla ʔbəl.**

this [is] after the master's brother midoʔ or before.

6. Mido: → laʔ hay baʔd əl bī aiy baʔd əl bakaloryos.

no this [is] after the BA after the bachelorette.

7. Abdul: **((nod)) uh**

A similar practice is evident in example (4-43). In this excerpt, Wess is asking Salim about how to cook a specific dish. Wess uses a positively framed polar interrogative to ask Salim whether he fries the avocados *with* the eggs (lines 1 and 3). After a 0.4-second pause, Salim produces a SPP which disconfirms the proposition in Wess's FPP, however without using syntactic negative format, NPIs or even the negative particle 'la?' (line 5).

(4-43) ND16

1.Wess: **Had əl avogado:**

THis the avocado

2.Salim: **um**

(0.2)

3.Wess: → əbtəʔlī maʕon?

you fry it with them?

4. (0.4)

5.Salim: → ʔaxer šī baḥəṭṭo.

the last thing add-2PS-3PS.

this is the last thing you add.

6.Wess: A:h

7.Salim: ((nod))

8. (1)

9.Salim: laʔanno ʔiza bəṭḥəṭṭa maʕon bəlʔawwal biməşş əzzēt kəllo,

because if you add it with them from the beginning it sucks the oil all of it,

10.Salim: ma btəʔder təʔli əlbēḍ.

NegPrt 2PS-can-2PS fry the eggs.

you will not be able to fry the eggs.

This subsection has demonstrated that there is a bias and a preference for positive polarity, especially syntactic positive polarity, in SA polar interrogative sequences. It has also demonstrated that in some cases where this preference is in competition with other preferences, it is favoured and given precedence over those preferences. This subsection has so far illustrated that in some cases SA interactants disconfirm the proposition of the polar interrogative FPP without implementing any negative item from the language.

Summary of findings in section 4.4

This section has tackled one of the core organisations in the SA polar interrogative sequence, the form-related organisation of polarity. The focus in this section has been on grammar and its impact on the negotiation of preferences within the SA polar interrogative sequence. The section highlights the role of the SA polarity preferences in shaping the grammatical form of the SPP within the sequence. One of the major findings of this study is that the SA polarity particles ‘ʔeh/laʔ’, when in turn-initial position, do not always project corresponding polarity. SA interactants orient to this feature by not completely relying on those particles in projecting and/or

determining the polarity of a turn-at-talk. Instead, SA interactants orient to the syntactic structure of the turn to determine or project its polarity. Syntactic polarity in SA is constructed by the presence or absence of the negation operators ‘ma/mu’ and their variants. Posing the operator ‘ma’ before verbal constructs or ‘mu’ before non-verbal constructs marks syntactic negation in SA, while affirmative mode is unmarked in this language. ‘?eh/la?’ are used for purposes other than just marking polarity. ‘la?’ is used to express negative stance including resistance and challenge. ‘?eh’ is used for expressing positive stance including progressing a telling sequence, displaying reciprocity and attentiveness, acknowledging the positive polarity of the FPP and delaying a dispreferred TCU. The multifunctionality of ‘?eh’ and ‘la?’, their non-projectability of corresponding polarity and the interactants’ orientation to syntactic polarity undermine the status of the preference for type-conformity when it competes with syntactic polarity in the SA polar SPP. The SA polar response, therefore, cannot be taxonomized as a ‘yes/no’ response.

This section has also identified a SA-specific preference, which is the preference for same polarity in the polar interrogative sequence. According to this preference, polar interrogative FPPs prefer SPPs which align with them in terms of syntactic polarity. I have demonstrated by empirical evidence that SPPs which match their FPPs in terms of polarity are produced and positioned in a preferred relationship to their FPPs, while opposite-polarity SPPs are produced and positioned in a dispreferred relationship to their FPPs. I have also demonstrated that syntactic polarity is what matters when interactants orient to the polarity of the SPP. Interjective polarity and negative polarity items are not as strongly oriented to as syntactic polarity in SA when marking the polarity of a turn-at-talk. Finally, I have noted that both the polar interrogative and the polar answering systems in SA are positively biased. As a result, positive polarity is preferred over negative polarity in the formation of the polar interrogative FPP as well as in its relevant SPP. The data shows that all invitation and offer sequences are initiated with a positively formatted FPP. The SA preferences for positivity and same polarity increase the relevance of

producing a positive agreeing SPP when the FPP is in positive format. Therefore, implementing a positively formatted FPP in invitation and offer sequences would increase the relevance of a positive stance SPP, in other words, an accepting SPP. For the sake of illustration, I cite the following three FPPs which are taken from sequences that are fully discussed in other sections within this thesis. The first two FPPs (i and ii) incorporate invitation and the last FPP (iii) incorporates an offer.

(i) reproduced from (1-5) and already discussed in chapter 1 section, 1.3.1

3. Wee: ((to Mido)) **bətrū btəhlo? maʕeɛ**

go-2PS have your hair cut with meɛ

would you like to go and have your hair cut with meɛ

(ii) reproduced from (4-47) to be discussed in chapter 4 section, 4.5

3. Mido: → ((lifts head up and directs gaze towards Sam)) bətrūhu nəʔ[↑]ɔd bkofi Café.

go-2PP 1PP-sit[↑] in café Café.

go you we sit[↑] in café Café

would you like to go and sit[↑] in café Café.⁵¹

(iii) reproduced from (4-53) to be discussed in chapter 4 section 4.6.1

1.Salim: ((to Wess)) **ʔad- ə: nsāwi šaiy?**

ʔad- ə: 1PP-make tea?

so- ə: shall we make tea?

The above polar interrogative FPPs are positively formatted and they all get acceptance (see full examples in their relevant sections).

⁵¹ To avoid indirect advertisement, the name of that café is given the fictitious name 'Café'.

Since positive polarity is preferred in both the FPP and its relevant SPP in SA, negative interrogative FPPs are oriented to as dispreferred and problematic in this language. According to the preference for same polarity a negative interrogative prefers a negatively formatted SPP; such preference clashes with the SA general preference for positive polarity. In terms of action, negative interrogatives also prefer recipients to respond with agreeing SPPs (Heritage, 2002). This preference also clashes with the SA form-related preference for same polarity, as agreeing SPPs are generally positively formatted, while the preference for same polarity makes relevant a negatively formatted SPP when the FPP is negatively framed. SA interactants select to depart from such conflicting preferences by producing a non-straightforward SPP which does not agree, nor it disagrees with the negative interrogative FPP. They also might respond with items such as the challenging ‘*tabʕan*’ ‘of course’ which cannot be syntactically negated by ‘*ma*’. SA interactants may also use NPIs, which are lexical rather than syntactic negation elements, to address the negative polarity of the FPP. In this case the SPP, while still not syntactically negative, would acknowledge the negative format of the FPP.

4.5. Repetitive SPPs

This section investigates repetitive SPPs and the contingencies which invite repetition as a response in SA polar interrogative sequences. I start this discussion by analysing the three examples below which contain repetitive SPPs. In the first excerpt (4-44), Sam is telling his friends about his plan to demolish his garage in order to build an extra flat. Mido asks whether the council would allow Sam to do that (line 5). Sam responds with a repetition of the verb ‘*samah*’ ‘allow/permit’ inflected in first person singular as ‘*samahūli*’. This modification of the verb reflects change of speakership. Sam also changes the tense of that verb from the imperfective

into perfective to mark further assertion of his primary epistemic access to the matter in question (line 6).

(4-44) RM-19

1.Sam: **btənhədem wu btətʔammar ʔabəʔ**

it [could be] demolished and rebuilt [as] a flat

2.Mido: **Mmmm**

3.Wess: **fəkra həlwi ()**

idea nice ()

good idea ()

4.Mido: **ʔeh walla**

yes Prt

5.Mido: → btəsməhlak əl:baladiyeʔ

would allow you the council?

Would the council allow you?

6.Sam: → ((turning towards Mido)) samaḥūli,

they have allowed me

7.Mido: **Uu TAMĀM**

Uu PERFECT

Sam's repeat is modified so as to index that Sam's epistemic access to the issue in question has been established prior to Mido's question and independently from it (see Stivers, 2005 [on English]). Sam's SPP confirms the proposition entailed in Mido's FPP, and it also confirms his own epistemic stance with regard to the questioned issue. Mido's epistemic stance is indexed in the subjunctive (would they allow it), whereas Sam's stance is indexed in perfective (they have already allowed it). Both epistemic stances are indexed in the grammatical form of each of the interactant's turns. The issue in question, which is Sam's plan to demolish his garage and rebuild it as a flat, is fully within his domain of knowledge and experience.

In (4-45), Wess is telling his friends that he is at the last stage of his diet in which he can eat everything except for one day a week on which he eats only meat. Mido asks him whether, by doing so, he maintains his weight (line 129). Wess responds with a modified repetition. Wess replaces the final word ‘wadeŋ’ ‘condition’ from Mido’s FPP with ‘wazne’ ‘my weight’ in his SPP, thus, indexing that the SPP confirms his own state of affairs independently from Mido’s FPP (line 130). By producing such lexically modified repetition, Wess asserts his primary epistemic access to the issue in question, his weight; something which is fully within his domain of experience.

(4-45) NS14-2⁵²

- 121. Mido:** **ṭab iza xalset əl marḥale əttaniye btərja? btakōl əlli baddak yah?**
 Prt if finished the second stage go-2PS back eat-2PS whatever want-2PS it?
 so if the second stage is over you go back to eat whatever you want?
- 122. Wess:** **kəl marḥali- əttaniyyi əlle ?ana halla? fiyya əl marḥali əttaniyyi əl ?xīra,**
 every stage- the second which I [am] now in the stage the second the final,
 every stage- the second stage at which I am now the final one,
- 123.** **(0.5) ((adjusts his seat so he can face Mido))**
- 124. Wess:** **bakul əlle badde əyyah baʔa xalaş ṭabīŋe.**
 I eat whatever want-1PS Prt that’s it normal.
 I normally eat whatever I like.
- 125.** **(0.2)**
- 126.** **bass fih ŋande yom waḥed bəl ?sbūŋ,**
 but there is I have day one in the week,
 but I have one day a week,
- 127.** **(0.4)**
- 128.** **bakul laḥm,**
 I eat meat.

⁵² This excerpt is further analysed in section 4.6.5 below.

129. Mido: → bətdədəl mħafez ʕala əl waḏeʕi

you stay maintaining the condition

you maintain this condition

130. Wess: → bḏall mħafiz ʕala wazne.

I stay maintaining weight-1PSPoss.

I maintain my weight.

131. (1)

In (4-46) below, Mido produces a candidate-answer question asking Mina what she likes to do as a job (line 1).

(4-46) expanded from (3-31) chapter 3 section, 3.2.3

1. Mido: → šu bəthəbbi təštəgli əššəḡəl šu bəthəbbi təštəgli (.) tadrīs ə::.

what like-2PS-fem work-2PS-fem the job what like-2PS-fem to do (.) teaching ə::.

What [do] you like to do for a job what [do] you like to do (.) teaching ə::.

2. Mina: → baḥəbb əttasri- əttadrīs baḥəbb.

I like teach- teaching I like it.

3. Mido: >bəthəbbi əttadrīs< maʕnata mālek ḡēr

> you like teaching< this means NegPrt for you except

you like teaching this means you only have

4. ə:: šu biʔūlūlū qualified teacher status (.) kew tī ʔes.

ə:: what they call qualified teacher status (.) QTS.

Mido's polar interrogative consists of two parts, the first of which is a wh-interrogative asking generically what job Mina likes. This part includes the verb 'bəthəbbi'. The second part of Mido's FPP consists of the candidate answer 'tadrīs'. Therefore, in terms of word order, the verb 'bəthəbbi' comes before the object 'tadrīs' in Mido's FPP. Mina starts to respond to Mido's polar interrogative FPP by repeating the verb 'bəthəbbi' 'you like' inflected in first person singular as 'baḥəbb'. Following the verb 'baḥəbb', Mina starts producing a repeat of the candidate answer

‘tadrīs’, however, she cuts off her repetitive TCU and repairs it from being a repeat of the verb-followed-by-object construct, which Mido has used in his FPP, into object followed by the verb ‘baḥəbbo’ which is anaphorically bound to its object by the suffixed morpheme ‘o’. Word order is flexible in the Arabic sentence; subject-verb-object, verb-object-subject and object-verb-subject are all grammatically possible (Brustad, 2000). Mina’s repair of the word order in her SPP orients to the departure from the terms of Mido’s FPP and to the confirmation of her independent epistemic stance towards the matter in question. She indexes her primary and independent epistemic access by constructing her SPP in a grammatical form that is independent from the one implemented in the FPP. Mina’s SPP confirms the B-event proposition of Mido’s FPP. Moreover, it confirms her own independent access to that proposition which is about something which completely lies within her domain of experience.

In the three examples above, the polar interrogative FPP is a declaratively formatted B-event which asks about something which completely lies within the recipient’s domain of knowledge and experience (Labov & Fanshel, 1977), such as when Mido asks Mina about what job she would like to do (excerpt, 4-46). None of the polar interrogative FPPs above have a tag or an epistemic downgrading element, such as ‘yəʕni’, appended to it. A Declarative format is usually implemented for assertion (Enfield, 2011; Heritage & Raymond, 2005; Schegloff, 2007). Therefore, when a declarative polar interrogative FPP proposes a state of affairs which lies within the recipient’s epistemic domain without any mitigation of the questioner’s epistemic stance, it asserts rather than questions that state of affairs. The declarative form of the polar FPP, in such cases, exhibits a state of incongruence between the form of the question (assertive) and the action it is doing (questioning). It also creates an epistemic incongruence between the stance which it indexes, which is almost an equal epistemic access to that of the recipient (Heritage & Raymond, 2012), and the status of the questioner which implies limited epistemic access relative to the recipient (Heritage, 2012a). Recipients of such interrogatives resist their assertive forms and the

epistemic incongruency they entail by first, not producing a dependent type-conforming SPP (Raymond, 2000, 2003), and secondly, by producing repetition as a response. Repetition asserts the recipient's epistemic primacy (Heritage & Raymond, 2005, 2012; Schegloff, 1996b; Sorjonen, 2001); at the same time, repetition orients to the declarative polar interrogative turn as requesting confirmation (Heritage & Raymond, 2012; Schegloff, 2007; Stivers, 2005). Therefore, repetition addresses the FPP's preference for confirmation, and, at the same time, it rebalances the epistemic incongruence entailed in it. In such sequential contexts, SA interactants use repetition, not because the polar response system in SA is inherently an 'echo' system (Sadock & Zwicky, 1985), but as a result of an orientation to addressing the local contingencies and preferences which a polar FPP entails and makes relevant next. Repetition in SPPs does the following two actions: the first of which is orienting to the polar FPP as a request for confirmation, and the second action is confirming its producer's epistemic primacy and independent epistemic access to the issue in question.

Repetitive SPPs are not only used in information seeking polar interrogative sequences. SA interactants implement them in other action sequences such as invitations. Excerpt (4-47) below illustrates such usage. In this excerpt, while the friends are in the park, Mido initiates an invitation to Sam and Mina (a married couple) to a café. Mido uses a positively formatted polar interrogative to perform that action (line 3).

(4-47) NS14-1⁵³

1. Mido: ((turns his face and directs his gaze towards Sam and Mina))
2. Wess: ()

⁵³ This excerpt is further analysed in section 5.2.1 below.

3. Mido: → ((lifts head up and directs gaze towards Sam)) bətrūhu nəʔ[↑]ʕod bkofi Café.
 go-2PP 1PP-sit in café Café.
 go you we[↑] sit in café Café
 would you like to go and sit[↑] in café Café.
4. Sam: → ʔəh mən rūh,
 yes we go,
5. Mina: → °mən rūh°.
 °we go°.
6. Mido: ((shifts gaze towards Mina)) ʔə[↑]:h.
 Ye[↑]:s.
7. Mina: → ((three nods))
8. Sam: mətəl ma bəthəbbu yaʕni [ʔəntu mnaʕmīn əl ʔaʕde.
 as what you like Prt you-2PP [are] organising this meeting.
 as you like Prt you are the organisers of this meeting.
9. Mido: ʔəh.
 yes.
10. Mido: ()
11. ((Mido and Mina get up and get ready to leave))

Having directed his gaze towards both Sam and Mina, Mido, then, turns his gaze only towards Sam and asks him if they (Sam and his wife) would like to go to that café. Sam responds with an ʔeh-prefaced repetitive SPP, in which he repeats the verb from Mido's FPP 'bətrūhu' in first-person plural 'mən rūh'. Sam's verb is in plural, thus indicating that he is speaking on behalf of his wife as well. Mina echoes his response (line 5), however, without the turn-initial 'ʔeh'. By not including the deictically dependent particle 'ʔeh' Mina's response exhibits more independence than her husband's with regard to accepting/rejecting Mido's offer. If Mina echoed her husband's SPP as it is with the 'ʔeh', it would be grammatically and anaphorically linked to it and dependent on it as well as on Mido's FPP (Raymond, 2000, 2003), whereas responding with repetition only asserts her independent agency to accepting/rejecting the invitation. Later

(line 8), her husband Sam explicitly states that he has given up agency to that matter (going to the café) to the organisers of the meeting, who are Mido and Wess. This explicit surrender of agency accounts for his acquiescent turn-initial type-conforming ‘ʔəh’ in line 4 (Heritage & Raymond, 2012, p. 188). In contrast, Mina’s SPP prioritises agency over acquiescence. In addressing the preferences of the FPP, Mina, in her response, has prioritised independent agency over type-conformity within this sequential context.

The two following examples further demonstrate the usage of repetition for asserting independent agency in SA polar SPPs. In the first excerpt, (4-48), while Sam, Mina, and Mido are discussing possible vocational courses which Mina would like to undertake, Wess comes in overlap addressing Sam and his wife, with a positively formatted polar interrogative FPP which initiates an invitation (line 5). At (line 7), Sam responds to Wess by repeating the verb ‘mənṛūḥ’ ‘we go’, from the FPP, inflected in first-person plural.



Figure: 4-48 (line 5; Mina and Sam’s gaze is directed towards Mido who is sitting opposite them)

(4-48) NS14-3⁵⁴

1. Mido: **diploma in public interpretation services public public interpretation services**
2. Mina: **((two slight nods; her gaze and Sam’s are directed towards Mido))**

⁵⁴ This excerpt is further analysed in section 5.3.1 below.

3. Mido: **hēk yəʕni ya dee pee ʔai ʔes_ya** **dee pee ʔes (0.5)**
 Such as D P I S or D P S (0.5)=
4. Mina: **((three nods))**
5. Wess: → **((looking at his smatphone))** **bətrūho nətfarraj ʕala:: (.) spiderman** [↑] **sri dī.**
 go-2PP 1PP-watch on:: (.) spiderman [↑] 3D
 Would you like to go and watch spiderman [↑] 3D.
6. **((lifts his head up and directs gaze towards Sam and Mina))**
7. Sam: → **°mən rūh°.**
 °we go°.
8. Mido: **((to Mina)) əsʔali ʕannu.**
 ask-2PS-fem about it.
 ask about it.
9. Mina: **((two nods))**

Sam, in the above example, assumes independent agency over accepting/rejecting Wess's invitation. He indexes that agency by producing a repetitive non-conforming SPP. Mina in this excerpt is busy talking with Mido about a totally different topic, therefore she is not engaging in Wess's invitation sequence. The following example also highlights the use of repetition for asserting agency when it comes to deciding on invitations. Wess is inviting Mido to join him and have a haircut at a barber's shop which Wess knows. Wess uses positively framed polar interrogative for that purpose (line 3).

(4-49) expanded from (1-5) chapter 1 section, 1.3.1

1. Wess: **bedde rūh ʔəhloʔ ʕaʕre xaiyyo ʔana,**
 I want to go [to] have my hair cut brother I,
2. Mido: **u:h (1) hh. ʔarīb ma hek. maħall əl ɣlāʔaɕ**
 u:h (1) .hh close NegTag. the barber shopɕ
 u:h (1) .hh [it is] close isn't it [that] barber shopɕ

3. Wee: → ʔe:h. (0.2) bətrū btəhlo? maʕeɛ

ye:s. (0.2) go-2PS have your hair cut with meɛ

ye:s. (0.2) would you like to go and have your hair cut with meɛ

4. (.)

5. Mido: ((looks at his watch))

6. Wees: wallah ɣalla? ə-

Prt the barber ə-

7. Mido: mrattab ʔəlla taʕb [a:nɛ

[is] he good or ba :dɛ

8. Wess: muhtaram.

respectable. [very good]

((twenty-three lines omitted in which Mido asks a series of questions about the barber))

31. Mido: ʔe yaɫɫah ʃu jensitu hādaɛ

yes Prt what [is] his nationality that [barber]ɛ

yes Prt what is the nationality of that barber

32. Wess: mən:: jamyka yəmkɪn.

from:: jamaica maybe.

33. Mido: °mən jamayka°.

°from Jamaica°.

34. Wess: la wallah mən aɫyūbiya.

no Prt from ethiopia.

35. Mido: → °mən jamayka° ʔe mənruḥ maʕnata mnəhɫeʔ.

°from Jamaica° yes we go then to have a haircut.

Following an extended pre-second sequences (Scehglof, 2007), Mido produces an accepting SPP which repeats two words from Wess's FPP 'bətroo btəhlo?' inflected in first person plural 'mənrooh maʕnata mnəhɫeʔ'. Mido is using that form of non-conforming modified repetition to assert his independent agency over accepting/rejecting the invitation.

Due to their grammatical and epistemic independence (Keevallik, 2010; Raymond, 2000) SA interactants use repetitions not only for asserting epistemic independence, but also for asserting the independence of their agency towards matters which require actions (Heritage & Raymond, 2012).

Finally, it is worthy to note that all invitation initiating polar interrogative FPPs in the three examples above are positively formatted (see summary of findings of section 4.4. above). According to the preference for same polarity, such format invites the respondent to produce a matching positively framed SPP; most likely an accepting one.

Summary of findings in section 4.5

Epistemic congruence (Heinemann *et al.* 2011) is a preference (Hayano, 2011, p. 70; Heritage & Raymond, 2013, p. 136) which gets negotiated within the SA polar interrogative sequence. Polar interrogatives in SA come mostly in declarative form. This creates a mismatch between the form of the question, which is declarative and the action of the question, which is inquisitive. The argument in this section illustrates that SA interactants orient to such incongruence by producing a repetitive SPP. By using repetition, SA respondents reassert their epistemic primacy which the question itself presupposes. Repetition in the SPP, thus rebalances the epistemic incongruence in the FPP by asserting the respondent's primary epistemic right. Repetition also addresses the interrogative form of the FPP by confirming its proposition, or by disconfirming it when repetition in the SPP is negatively formatted. It has been found that interactants in other languages use repetition for the same purposes as in SA; in English (Heritage & Raymond, 2005, 2012; Schegloff, 1996b, 2007; Stivers, 2010), in Tzeltal (Brown, 2010), in Yéǎ Dnye (Levinson, 2010), in Italian (Rossano, 2010), in Dutch (Englert, 2010), in ʔÁkhoe Haillom, (Hoymann, 2010), in Finnish (Hakulinen & Sorjonen, 2011; Sorjonen, 2001), in Japanese (Hayashi, 2010) and in Estonian (Keevallik, 2010).

Repetition is indexically independent, therefore it can be used to exhibit independence when agency is in question. SA interactants index their independent agency towards an action, such as accepting/rejecting an invitation, by producing a repetitive response when they are asked to perform such an action.

4.6. Sequential preferences

The data collected for this study shows that, at some loci and for some specific types of actions, the extent of the SPP in a polar interrogative sequence is minimized. What the argument in this section considers as a minimal SPP is based on Schegloff's (2007, p.171) definition according to whom: "response turns composed of a single TCU, and a brief one, or several brief TCUs (especially if they are redundant or repetitive) are ways of embodying minimal responses". Minimisation of responses is found in topic proffering sequences in English (*ibid*). This practice has also been depicted in Yèlì Dnye where responses to polar tags are always kept minimal (Levinson, 2012, p. 29), and in some specific sequences in Estonian (Keevallik, 2010). This section investigates the organisation behind the minimisation of the SPP within specific types of SA polar interrogative sequences. These sequences are: repair insert sequences, displays of ritualised disbelief, pre-telling sequences, understanding checks, and sequences where the question is asking for something too obvious to be questioned.

4.6.1. Insert repair sequences

When recipients of a FPP find some trouble in hearing or understanding the FPP, or part of it, they may initiate a repair sequence (see chapter 1 section 1.3.1). The repair sequence itself consists of adjacency pair in which the FPP is the repair-initiator and the SPP is the turn which repairs the trouble source (Schegloff *et al.* 1977). Some repair sequences are initiated after the delivery of the main FPP of an adjacency sequence. These are referred to as insert sequences

(Schegloff, 2007, p.97) because they are inserted between the main FPP and the main SPP of an adjacency pair sequence. Polar interrogatives are sometimes used in such repair sequences. The repair initiator in that case offers a candidate repair for confirmation. An example of this practice in SA is in excerpt (4-50) below. Wess and Salim are talking to Hamid on the phone and at the same time conversing with each other. Salim asks Hamid if ‘they⁵⁵’ took his passport (line 2). After a lengthy gap, Hamid initiates a repair sequence asking Salim to confirm that it is the passport which he is asking about (line 4). Salim responds with a standalone affirming ‘ʔe:h’ (line 5), after which Hamid answers Salim’s question about the passport (line 6).

(4-50) NDCALL16

- 1.Wess:** **hallaʔ ʔana bəḥsin rūḥ ʔa ʔlamanya ma ʕande məškli**
 now I can go to germany NegPrt have-1PS problem
 now I can go to germany I do [not] have a problem
- 2.Salim:** **ʔe::h ʔəl: jawāz safarak ʔaxadūhɛ**
 ye::s the passport-2PSPoss they have taken itɛ
 ye::s have they taken your passportɛ
- 3.** **(1.6)**
- 4.Hamid: →** **əjawā↑:z.**
 the passport.
- 5.Salim: →** **ʔe:h.**
 Ye:s.
- 6.Hamid:** **laʔ,()**
 no, ()
- 7.Salim:** **ʔeh mnīḥ.**
 yes [that’s] good.

The repair sequence in the example above is inserted between the main FPP (line 2) and its responsive SPP (line 6). It is noticeable in the example above that the components of the repair

⁵⁵ The referent of ‘they’ is not disclosed for the reason of confidentiality.

sequence are kept to a minimum (Schegloff, 2007, p.171). The FPP is one word ‘əjawa:z’ and the SPP is a standalone ‘ʔeh’. Excerpt (4-51) below shows another example of a repair insert sequence. Wess and Mido are talking about a protest that has taken place in central London on the same day of their meeting. After Mido and Wess run a discussion between them about the cause of those protests (the government’s austerity policy) and politics, Wess tells Mido that some American tourists whom he once met had told him that such ‘thing’ would never happen in the United States (line 28). At this point, Mido initiates repair by producing a polar interrogative FPP (line 32), in which he requests Wess to define the referent of the generic term ‘haşşe’ ‘this thing’ in his telling turn (line 31).

(4-51) NMC11

14. Wess: **əl yōm kan fī muḏaharāt hōn.**

today were there protests here.

there were protests here today.

15. Mido: **waḷḷahġ**

Prtġ

reallyġ

16. Wess: **ḏəḏḏ əl ḥəkūm(h)i(h)**

against the governme(h)nt(h)

((twelve lines omitted in which Wess and Mido talk about politics))

28. Wess: **əja ʕande zabāyin amērkiyīn**

came to me costumers american

some american costumers came to me

29. Mido: **ʔe:**

yes:

30. (2) ((Wess is chewing a piece of chocolate))

31. Wess: → ʕambiyʔulo haşşe mustaḥīl yəḥşal bi- bi amerka

they are saying [that] such things never happens in- in america

32. Mido: → **ah ʔənnu yʃīr cuts** [**wu yetzaharu ənnās=**
 oh that happens cuts and protest-3PP the people=
 oh that such cuts are imposed and people will protest=
33. Wess: →] **((nod)) ʔe:**
[((nod)) yes:
34. Mido: → **=yʃīr halcuts əlli ʃəmbisawuwon hōn yeʃni.**
 =happens these cuts which they are doing here Prt.
 =that such cuts which are imposing here to be imposed [there] you mean.
35. Wess: → **((slight nod))**
36. Mido: **smeʃt ktīr ʔal rawāteb ʔata laʃʃərta ʔāl beddon yənazzlulon yəhon wu rawāteb ə::**
 heard-1PS a lot about salaries even for the police they said they want to reduce them and the salaries of:
 I have heard a lot about salaries they even want to reduce police salaries and the salaries of::
37. **(2)**
38. Wess: **bi ʃəmru ma ʃār muəzaharāt bi amerca**
 never NegPrt happened protests in america
 never have protests taken place in america

Mido's two-part turn in lines (32, 34) requests that Wess confirms whether he has been referring to the cuts or the protests by the word 'haʃʃe' in his telling turn (line 31). In overlap with the second part of Mido's repair initiator, Wess produces the shortened form of the particle 'ʔeh' (line 33). Due to the overlap of the token 'ʔe' with Mido's talk which might have rendered it inaudible, Mido asks for a further confirmation of the repair that Wess has produced. Wess responds to Mido's second repair-initiator (line 34) by even a more minimal SPP (a slight nod) in line 35. After Wess delivers his minimal affiliative token, this repair sequence comes to a closure. Preferred SPPs are closure-relevant (Schegloff, 2007, p.117). An indication that Wess's minimal SPP at line 35 is oriented as preferred is that it brings the sequences to closure allowing the progress of further on-topic talk by Mido. Wess's minimal free-standing 'ʔe', in line 33, and, his single nod (line 35) both display his orientation to the minimisation of the SPP in this repair

insert sequence. Further evidence that SA interactants orient to minimising SPPs within similar sequential context is provided in the following examples (4-52 and 4-53).

In excerpt (4-52), AY initiates a repair sequence (line 499) following a question by MH about the former's work. AY repair initiator is in the form of a polar interrogative. MH responds to AY's repair initiator with a SPP prefaced by the positive particle 'ʔeh' which is followed by a polar interrogative TCU (line 501). However, AY orients to the minimization of the SPP in this repair sequence by coming in overlap with MH's SPP, immediately after the 'ʔeh', with a blocking 'la' (see section 4.2. above) after which he produces a SPP which confirms that he left his job (line 499).

(4-52) modified from (Helani, 2008, p. 244)

499. MH: Hallaʔ ʔente ʕamteʕteḡel ʔella lāʔʔ

Prt you [are] working or not?

500. (0.5)

501. AY: Bʔeʕ ala- el ʕeḡel el ʕadiʔ=

in what ala- the job the usualʔ=

in what in the- the usual jobʔ=

502. MH: → =ʔEhʔ= d- taraktoḡ

= yesʔ= d- I left itḡ

503. AY: →

Lā

No

504. Lā taraket ma=el meʕkle ma: hada,

No I [have] left not= the the problem not: that,

By coming in overlap immediately after 'ʔeh' AY orients to that minimal article as a sufficient SPP within this sequential context. Furthermore, AY's overlapping turn blocks any extension to

the repair SPP and, therefore, orients to the minimisation of such turn within this sequential context.

Example (4-53) further demonstrates that SA interactants orient to the minimization of SPPs in repair insert sequences. In the excerpt below, Salim offers to make tea. He uses polar interrogative to construct his offer (line 1). After Wess responds with ‘umm?’ and ‘maʃʔul’, which do not confirm his acceptance of Salim’s offer, Salim initiates a repair sequence asking for a confirmation of Wess’s acceptance of the offer. Salim’s repair initiator (line 5) is done at a very minimal level; it consists only of the positive tag ‘a:h?’. Wess responds to Salim’s repair initiator by a standalone ʔe:h’ (line 6). After the closure of the repair sequence, Wess asks Salim whether *he* wants tea. Asking this question after the completion of the repair sequence, not before, further displays Wess’s orientation to the minimisation and the quick closure-relevance of the repair insert sequence.



Figure: 4-53 (Salim bringing tea)

(4-53) ND16⁵⁶

- 1.Salim** ʔad- ə: nsawi ʃaiy?
 ʔad- ə: 1PP-make tea?
 so- - ə: shall we⁵⁷ make tea?
- 2.Wess:** umm?

⁵⁶ This excerpt is further analysed in sections 5.2.5 below.

⁵⁷ SA speakers sometimes use first-person plural to refer to first-person singular. In this example it is Salim who goes to the kitchen and makes the tea for both himself and Wess (see figure 4-53). This asserts that he is referring to himself by the first-person plural in this example. This also asserts that the action he is doing by his polar interrogative turn (line 1) is an offer to make tea.

3. (2)
4. Wess: → ((nod)) maʔul.
reasonable.
5. Salim: → a:hɛ
tagɛ
6. Wess: → *ʔe:h*
ʔe:s
7. Wess: → ((nod))
8. Wess: ʔənti bæddak šaiy↑?
You want tea↑ ?
9. Salim: umm

Repair insert sequences come between the FPP and SPP of a main action sequence, thus, they compromise the contiguous relationship between the FPP and its relevant core SPP (Pomerantz, 1984a; Sacks, 1987; Schegloff, 2007). For the same reason, repair insert sequences compromise the progressivity of action sequences towards the realisation of their action(s) (Clift, 2016a; Stivers & Robinson, 2006). If an insert sequence is expanded, it will further disrupt the progressivity of the sequence and further distance the possible SPP from its relevant FPP. Therefore, minimising repair insert sequences, or, at least their SPPs, prevents any further disruption of contiguity and progressivity within the main adjacency sequence or the telling or informing sequences. The minimisation of repair insert sequences therefore is oriented to as a preference in SA talk-in-interaction (also see chapter 5 section 5.3.1).

4.6.2. Ritualised disbelief repair within surprise sequences

Recipients of information may display surprise if the information is contrary to their expectation (Heritage, 1984b; Wilkinson & Kitzinger, 2006). Surprise sequences consist of an adjacency pair in which the FPP contains the surprise source and the SPP constitutes the surprise token, or the display of surprise. Example (4-54) illustrates this type of sequence.

(4-54) from (Wilkinson & Kitzinger, 2006, p.161)

1 Emm: .hhh We BEEN tuh PA:LM SPRINGS.
 2 (0.2)
 3 Lot: Oh: God ah be't it's
 4 [ho:[:t.
 5 Emm: [.hh[hunderd'n fiftee:n.h ← surprise source
 6 (0.2)
 7 Lot: Oh::go::sh. ← surprise token

The example above is taken from a phone call in which Emma is talking about a recent trip. Lottie asks her about the heat in the place which Emma has been to (lines 3, 4). Emma's answer about the excessively high temperature (line 5) constitutes the surprise source to which Lottie responds with a surprise token (line 7). Wilkinson & Kitzinger (2006) suggest that a structurally contiguous relationship between the surprise and the surprise token is preferred in English. However, sometimes interactants insert sequences which contribute to the production of the surprise token, one of those sequences is a repair insert sequence which is usually initiated by FPPs which Wilkinson & Kitzinger (2006, p.168) term as "displays of ritualised disbelief" (also see, Heritage, 1984b, p.339). These displays of ritualised disbelief may come in the form of polar interrogative. An example of such insert sequences can be seen in excerpt (4-55) below.

(4-55) from (Wilkinson & Kitzinger, 2006, p.196)

1 Dee: [I] mean hyou're talkin' a hundred pound'v a
 2 ↑wedding cake today Mar[k
 3 Mar: [.tlk Are you really? ← ritualized disbelief
 4 Dee: Ya:h. ← confirmation
 5 (0.2)
 6 Mar: Go:sh ↑.huhh ↑huh huh huh↑ .hhh ← surprise token
 7 (Why don't you all joi:n.) [((sniff)) huhhhh
 8 Dee: [We:ll this is it dear ((continues))

In the example above, Mar orients to Dee's telling about an excessively big amount of the cake by a repair initiator, in polar interrogative format, in line 3. Dee responds with a minimal confirming 'Ya:h', after which Mar produces the surprise token (line 6). A minimal SPP within such a sequence is preferred because it reduces the distance between the surprise source and the surprise token, thus sustaining the structurally preferred contiguous relationship between them (Sacks, 1987). SA interactants orient to this preference by minimising the SPP in such insert sequences. In SA, the minimal token 'ʔeh' or any of its equivalents may be implemented in responding to displays of ritualised disbelief when they implement polar interrogative format as excerpt (4-56) shows. In this excerpt, Wess is talking about his diet. Mina asks him to confirm that he has lost six kilograms in four months (line 343). Wess's response tops her expectation as he tells her that he actually lost ten kilograms (345).

(4-56) NS14-2⁵⁸

- 339. Wess:** **wu hiyyi- (.) šlōn ʕajbətne ʔənnu əl wāḥed ma ʕandu waḷḷah waʔt əyrūḥ ʕajjim**
 and it [is]- (.) how I like it it is because the one NegPrt have-3PS Prt time to go to the gym
 and it [is]= (.) why I liked it because I don't have time to go to the gym
- 340.** **wu kaza bəššəgəl (0.2) əl maši (mufid) (0.5) ʔana kəlyom bənzil maši**
 and so at work (0.2) the walking (useful) (0.5) I everyday I go down walking
 and I have work (0.2) walking is useful (0.5) I walk everyday
- 341.** **mən piccadilly sircuss la victoria**
 from piccadilly circus to victoria
- 342. Mina:** **mətəl ()**
 like ()
- 343. Mina: → sətt kiliyyāt? ((with eyebrows flash)) bʔarbaʕ šhūr sətt kiliyyāt.**
 six kilos? ((with eyebrows flash)) in four months six kilos.
- 344.** **(0.5)**

⁵⁸ This excerpt is further analysed in section 5.3.1 below.

345. Wess: → **nzəlt ʕaʕər kilijjā:t**

I went down ten kilo:s

I lost ten kilo:s

346. Mina: → **ʔʕaʕra↑** ((keeps her mouth open after uttering this TCU))

ʔten↑

347. Wess: → **ʔe:h.** ((with a blink of the eyes))

ye:s.

348. Mina: → ((turns body, face and gaze towards Sam, with mouth still open)) () °ha ha°

349. Sam: → ((turns towards Mina and nods))

350. Mina: → ((bends her head down then lifts it up))



Figure: 4-56 (line 346: Mina's display of ritualised disbelief)

A repair initiator usually “singles out some or all of the prior talk for special attention, as not meeting the recipient’s expectations in some way” (Wilkinson & Kitzinger, 2006, p.168). This is what Mina’s repetitive turn (line 346) is doing as it allocates the item which is the source of unexpectedness (surprise) in Wess’s answer (354). Mina’s repair initiator implements a polar interrogative FPP with rising terminal intonation (Wilkinson & Kitzinger, 2006; Rossano, 2010 [on Italian]). Wess responds to Mina’s FPP with the minimal token ‘ʔe:h’ (line 347). Mina’s FPP is positively framed and Wess’s ‘ʔe:h’ aligns with its polarity and promotes the progress of the sequence towards the production of the surprise token which is here constructed as an embodiment (lines: 346, 348 and 350).

Another example of a repair ritualised disbelief FPP in the form of a polar interrogative is shown in excerpt (4-57) below. Wess is telling Mido about his working hours. Upon receiving

information about Wess's long working hours (some of which is inaudible), Mido produces a surprise token consisting of the stretched SA complaint marker 'uf::' followed by invocation of God (line 138). Mido then recycles his surprise by producing a repair ritualised disbelief asking Wess to confirm that he has just finished work (line 138).

(4-57) NCALL14-1

136. Wess: → ə:: bikūn ʕande šəḡəl tane yōm (lašūf) tane yōm šəḡḡal məssabʕa wu rəbəʕ.

ə:: there will be I have work next day (let me see) the next day I am working from seven and quarter.

ə:: I have work the next day (let me see) the next day I have work from quarter past seven.

137. → ()

138. Mido: → uf:: ya ʔilahi halla? ʔatta xallaš šəḡlak.

Uf:: Prt my god now until finished work-2PSPoss.

Uf: oh my god you have just finished your work.

139. (0.5)

140. Wess: → um

141. Mido: () ʔddeh ʕarлак таʕa la nəḥsob sabʕa tmane təsʕa ʕašra əḥdaʕš

() how long have you been [working] let's count seven eight nine ten eleven

142. ətnaʕš waḥde təntēn tlāte ʔrbʕa ʕxamse sətte°

twelve one two three four °five six°

143. → ʕarлак əḥdaʕšar sāʕa šəḡḡal ʔəbn əlʕa:mm:ʔ

have-2PS been eleven hours working cousin?

you have been working for eleven hours cousin?

144. Wess: → ʔəh halla? təsəʕ saʕāt tmən saʕāt baʕa halla? ərjəʕət ʕal bēt.

yes Prt nine hours eight hours so now came-1PS back home.

yes Prt nine hours eight hours so it's just now that I have arrived home.

145. Mido: → um

146. Wess: traffic wu zaḥmi: ()

traffic and crowded: ()

[there was] traffic and the [streets] [were] crowded: ()

Upon receiving Mido's ritualised disbelief, Wess, at line 140, produces a minimal response consisting of 'um' which can be used as an affirming token in SPPs (Enfield, *et al.* 2018). After the production of that minimal token, the display of surprise is recycled by Mido (lines: 141, 142, and 143), who initiates another repair ritualised disbelief (line 143) in polar interrogative format. Wess responds to the recycled surprise by the affirmative 'ʔeh' which is then followed by the particle 'halla?' which marks a start of a new sequence (Al-Khalil, 2005). The new sequence consists of series of repairs at the end of which Wess produces a precise number of his working hours (Drew, 2003). Wess's SPPs in both ritualised disbelief repair sequences are minimal in size but aligning in action, therefore they can progress the talk towards the surprise token with no delay. However, in the second ritualised disbelief sequence which starts at line 143, Wess orients to it more as a repair sequence following which he repairs his first report on the long working hours.

In excerpt (4-58) below, Ram produces a display of ritualised disbelief (line 39), which does not receive any response at all from his interlocutor Mido as there is turn competition between Ram and Abed who, prior to Ram's ritualised disbelief turn, has asked Mido a question.

(4-58) GD11-2/18

36. Mido: → bessʔoodiye ktīr nešrab beera bala kuḥool wū fi šampain

In saudi arabia a lot we drank beer without alchohol and there is champagne

in Saudi Arabia we used to drink a lot of non-alcoholic beer and there was champagne

37. šampania °bidoon ku-° saʔudi šampain.

champagne° without alcho° saudi champagne.

38. Abed: ((gaze/body towards Mido)) hāda elli ʔəja məšwaiy wū raḥ mnēn hāda:.

that who came a while ago and went where from [is] that:.
that [guy] who came and went a while ago where is he: from.

39. Ram: →((gaze/body towards Mido with eyebrows flash)) šambania bidū- bidūn kuḥū:!?

champagne withou- without alcohol:?

40. Mido: **hāda brīṭani,**
 that [guy] [is] british,
41. Abed: **brīṭani hāda.**
 british that [is]
 british he is.
42. Mido: **?eh.**
 yes.
43. Abed: **um.**
44. Ali: **waḷḷah mbayyen əʔlēh ʕarabi mxāwi ha ha**
 waḷḷah he looks like arabs a brother ha ha
45. Ram: **ha ha**
46. **(2)**
47. Ram: → **ə: šambania bidūn kuḥūlɛ**
 ə: chmpagne without alchoholeɛ
48. Mido: → **((two nods)) um.**
49. Abed: **bšakəl ʕām əlbrīṭaniyyīn ə:: (0.8) bardīn.**
 In general the british ə::: (0.8) [are] cold.

After receiving no response to his first ritualised disbelief turn (line 39), Ram repeats his display of ritualised disbelief in line 47. Mido responds to that by two nods followed by the minimal token ‘um’ (line 48). However, Abed comes in overlap and continues his preceding talk. Mido’s minimised response (line 48) indexes his orientation to a minimal SPP within this ritualised disbelief sequence within the surprise environment in this example. In all three examples above, SPPs in the repair ritualised disbelief sequences are minimal. Displays of ritualised disbelief do not do questioning, they rather display a stance that something in the preceding turn is of special attention (Wilkinson & Kitzinger, 2006). SA interactants orient to them as such by producing a SPP which aligns with such stance. A minimal alignment token in this case addresses the action initiated by the ritualised disbelief turn and keeps the SPP extent minimal, thus allowing a quick

and uninterrupted progress of the surprise sequence from the surprise source FPP to the production of the surprise token SPP.

Finally, all the repair ritualised disbelief turns in the data have rising terminal intonation. This shows a link between this type of prosody and the action of displaying ritualised disbelief.

4.6.3. Pre-telling sequences

Polar interrogatives are also used in pre-sequences, such as pre-requests, story prefaces and topic proffers (Helani, 2008; Schegloff, 1988a, 2007). The data shows that in some types of SA polar pre-sequences SPPs are standardly minimised. An example of such type of a polar interrogative pre-sequence is shown in excerpt (4-59) below. In this excerpt, Ram initiates a pre-telling sequence (line 3) by producing a polar interrogative asking Ali whether he remembers a specific incident that happened to them in the past (Sacks, 1974; Sidnell, 2010).

(4-59) GD11-3/26

1. Ali: $\left[\begin{array}{ccc} \text{ha} & \text{ha} & \text{ha} \end{array} \right]$
2. Abed: $\left[\begin{array}{ccc} \text{ha} & \text{ha} & \left[\begin{array}{c} \text{ha} \end{array} \right] \end{array} \right]$
3. Ram: → ((gaze towards Ali)) $\left[\begin{array}{l} \text{btətzakkar bass baʕatna} \left[\begin{array}{l} \text{əl- lamma kənnə} \end{array} \right] = \\ \text{you remember when we sent} \quad \text{while} \quad \text{we were} = \\ \left[\begin{array}{c} \text{((quick nod))} \end{array} \right] \end{array} \right]$
4. Ali: →
5. Ram: =ʕamnədro:s laddaktor=
 =studyi:ng to the doctor [professor]=
6. Ram: ((shifts gaze towards Mido))
7. Ram: $\left[\begin{array}{l} =\text{baʕatnalə əl ʔimēl əssāʕa xamse.} \\ =\text{we sent him the email o'clock five.} \\ =\text{we sent him an email at five o'clock.} \end{array} \right]$
8. Abed: ((gaze towards Mido)) $\left[\begin{array}{l} \text{yə- həʔʔon hon lahəll- ləllbaqāʕa} \\ \text{yə- put them here those those things} \end{array} \right]$
 ((advances a rubbish bowl to Mido))
9. Mido: ((nod)) uhm ((shifts gaze from Ram towards the bowl))

10. Ram: **baʃatnalʊ suʔal ((shifts gaze towards Abed)) əssāʃa xamse,**

we sent him a question ((shifts gaze towards Abed)) o'clock five,

we emailed him a question at five o'clock

11. **jāwabənnə ʃalēh sətte wu nuʃʃ əʃʃubəh.**

he replied to it [at] six and half morning.

he replied to it at half past six in the morning.

Ram's turn, in line 3, is a "reminiscence recognition solicit" which pre-empts an assisted story telling sequence (Lerner, 1992, p. 255). The story happened to both Ram and Ali and Ram is telling it to Abed and Mido. Ali, being the prospective storytelling assistant, responds to Ram's reminiscence recognition solicit with a slight head nod (line 4) which indicates his affiliative stance towards the story telling. Upon receiving that minimal token, Ram continues his storytelling sequence. By responding to Ram's pre-telling turn with a minimal non-verbal token, Ali orients to the minimisation of his own SPP within this pre-telling context. The minimised size of Ali's SPP contributes to an immediate and non-delayed progress of talk towards the main action sequence, which is telling the story (for more supportive examples on the minimisation of pre-telling sequences, see chapter 5, section 5.3.1).

4.6.4. Understanding checks

In SA talk-in-interaction, speakers sometimes tend to check and confirm that their co-interactants are attentive to their talk. Therefore, they might produce a sequence which consists of a FPP which asks the recipients to confirm that they are attentive and have understood the ongoing talk. These understanding checks can come in the form of polar interrogative FPPs in SA as the following three examples illustrate. In excerpt (4-60), while Wess is talking about his diet, his interlocutor Sam produces a turn in which he tells Wess about girls staring at him (line 100). Wess looks back then turns towards Sam and produces the polar question 'ʃhəmt ʃlayyi?' which checks whether Sam was attentive to him (line 102). Understanding checks invite their recipients

Wess's check (line 102) receives a minimal 'ʔeh' with a nod from his co-interactant Sam. Wess orients to Sam's minimal SPP (line 103) as an adequate response after which he resumes his talk about the diet.

In example (4-61) below, Abed is offering his friends advice against going to nightclubs. Part of Abed's advising turn (line 30) is overlapped by laughter from Ali and Mido (lines 31 and 32). Following those spells of laughter, Abed produces an understanding check requesting his addressee Ali to affirm that he has understood what Abed has just said (line 32).

(4-61) reproduced from (4-3) section, 4.1 this chapter

- 29. Abed:** [ʔ:- ə-] ʕala ʔasab yəʕni ʕamqəllak [ma- ma bt- maf-] =mabtəʔman əl fətnə=
[ʔ:- ə-] it depends Prt I'm telling you not you not av- maf- =you cannot avoid temptation=
30. Ali: ha ha ha
31. Mido: ha ha ha
32. Abed: =ʕrəft ʕlayi kī:f?
=know-2PS me ho:w?
=[do] you know what I mean?
33. Ali: → ((nod)) ʕaħħ.
right.
34. Abed: ma btaʔref ʔēmat masalan betnām waħde: səkrāne ʕakətfak.
NegPrt know-2PS when for instance sleep-3PS-fem woman: drunk on shoulder-2PSPoss
You don't know when for instance a drunk woman might sleep on your shoulder.

Ali responds to Abed's understanding check with a nod followed by the TCU 'ʕaħħ' 'right' (line 33). The SA acknowledging token 'ʕaħħ', like the English 'right/that's right', is a closure relevant item (Beach, 1993; Button, 1990). A minimal, closure-relevant SPP within this sequential context orients to the non-expansion of this sequence. Expanding this sequence would compromise the

progressivity of the main ongoing sequential activity, which is Abed's delivery of his advice. In excerpt (4-62), Abed is telling his friends about how he discovered that his flatmate, who seemed so naive, was in a relationship with one of their female flatmates without anyone knowing about it. While Abed is telling his story, Mido is not holding gaze with him and is busy eating. Upon finishing his story, Abed produces a turn which checks Mido's uptake and understanding of what he has already said (line 17).



Figure: 4-62a (line 13)



Figure: 4-62b (overlapped line: 14, 15 and 16)

(4-62) GD11-2/13⁶⁰

1. Abed: ʔana baʕref wāḥe:d
I know a guy
2. Ali: uhu
3. Abed: waḷḷahi kənt ʔāxədu ʔənni:: yəmken:: bala muʔaxaze ma biqūm maʕu
Prt I thought of him that maybe excuse me not erects with him
Prt I thought that he excuse me [to say that] he cannot have an erection
4. biyəxjal yəmken
he [feels] shy perhaps
he is [a] shy [person] perhaps
5. Mido: [uhu]
6. Ram: [ha ha ha]
7. Ali: [ha ha ha]
8. Abed: [ha ha () ktīr wū kaza
 [ha ha () too much and so]

⁶⁰ This excerpt is further analysed in section 5.3.1 below.

9. Abed: .hh fatfājaʔət baʕəd fatra: ʔənni ʕambəhki marra medri kīf bšakəl ʕ:adi ha[↑]
 .hh but I was surprised after a while: when I was speaking to him I don't know how [it was] casual ha[↑]
10. (0.2)
11. qəltəllu:: ənša||ah heke əbmazeḥ (.) ənša||ah mʔabbet ʔumūrakɿ
 I said to him:: Prt Prt jokingly (.) hopefully you [are]look after your affairsɿ
 I jokingly said to him:: that (.) I hope that you are doing wellɿ [with women]
12. qalli ʔeh (0.2) qəltəllu >ʕamteḥki mazeḥ əlla jadd?< qalli ʔe wa||ah.
 he said yes (0.2) I said to him > are you joking or being serious< he said to me yes Prt.
13. qəltəllu mīn ʕandakɿ (.) qalli haiy əlli kānet maʕi bəlməṭbax məšway el həndiye.
 I said to him who [do] you haveɿ (.) he said that [one] who was with me in the kitchen a while ago the indian. [girl]
14.

ṭələʕ ezzalame	mʔabbat ḥalu wū kaza: wū yəʕni	ḥakāha ʔənni bikell seqa=
It appeared that the guy was doing well	and so: and Prt	he said that with all confidence
15. Ram:

ha	ha	ha	ha
----	----	----	----
16. Ali

ha	ha
----	----
17. Abed: → =((gaze directed towards Mido)) =fhemt ʕlaiyi

kīf?
how?
I mean?
18. Mido: → ((with gaze down towards his plate while eating))

um

19. Ram: → ((with gaze directed towards Abed))

ʔe:. ha ha
ye:s. ha ha
20. Ali: ((lifts his head up to gaze at Abed, at the same time, moves his right hand to point at Ram))
 sʔal ʕan:- sʔal hazzalame (.) ʔe ma xalla kətəf ma nām ʕleh

wu u-	=
and an-	=
and an-	=
ha ha ha	

 ask about:- ask this guy (.) yes NegPrt left-3PS a shoulder NegPrt sleeping on
 ask about- ask this guy (.) he never left [a woman] without laying his head upon her shoulder
21. Mido:



Figure: 4-62c (Abed's understanding check line 17 with overlapping lines 18 and 19)

Abed's understanding check receives the minimal 'um' from Mido in line 18. In overlap, Ram produces 'ʔeh', followed by laughter which appreciates the joke implicated in the story which Abed has told (Jefferson, 1978). However, Ram's SPP is still minimal in extent as it only includes 'ʔeh' and brief laughter. Both Mido and Ram in this example orient to the minimisation of their SPPs which respond to Abed's understanding check. Ram has been more attentive to Abed's telling than Mido; his ʔeh+laughter SPP displays his attentiveness and alignment with Abed's. Mido was not as attentive as Ram and his noncommittal 'um' (Enfiled, 2012; Schegloff, 1982) only acknowledges Abed's understanding check as making a minimal SPP relevant next. Mido's 'um' also displays his orientation to Abed's understanding check as not making confirmation/disconfirmation relevant next.

In the examples above, speakers produce understanding checks upon noticing that their co-interactants are engaged in an activity which may distract them from being attentive. The interactants oriented to the minimisation of the SPP which responds to an understanding check FPP. An extended understanding check sequence may compromise the progressivity of the main ongoing activity. Furthermore, understanding checks do not do questioning as much as they seek to align the co-interactants' attention to an ongoing activity such as telling a story. Therefore, a minimal aligning token can be oriented to as an adequate response to understanding checks in SA.

4.6.5. Questions to which the answer is too obvious

Some polar interrogative FPPs, in SA, may seek confirmation of something that is contextually obvious, or something which has already been established, or explicitly asserted in prior talk. The data shows that such FPPs receive minimal SPPs in SA. The first example to illustrate this is in excerpt (4-63) below. In the extract below, Wess is telling his friends about the third stage in a diet he is on. Mido produces a B-event statement requesting Wess to confirm that, at this stage, Wess can maintain that 'condition' [his weight] (line 129). Wess responds with a repetitive

SPP in which he asserts that he will maintain his weight (line 130). However, after 1-second pause, at line 132, Sam produces almost the same question that Mido has just asked, and, in the same B-event format as Mido's turn (line 129).

(4-63) expanded from (4-45) section, 4.5 this chapter

129. Mido: → bətdədāl mħafez ʕala əl waḏeʕi

you stay maintaining the condition_i

you maintain this condition_i

130. Wess: → bədāl mħafiz ʕala wazne.

I stay maintaining weight-1SPoss.

I maintain my weight.

131. (1)

132. Sam: → bətdədāl mħafez ʕala waznak.

you stay maintaining weight-2SPoss.

you maintain your weight.

133. Wess: → ah.

yea.

134. Sam: ʔab hāda ʔəlləktāb ʕandak yā:hə

Prt this the book have-2PS i:tə

so have you got that book_i

Wess does not respond to Sam's B-event polar interrogative with a confirming repetition as he has done in line 132 when responding to a similar question by Mido. Wess responds to Sam's B-event FPP with the minimal affirmative particle 'ah' 'yes'. Following Wess's minimal response, the sequence comes to termination and Sam initiates a new polar interrogative sequence (line 134).

In excerpt (4-64) below, Sam asks Wess whether one could eat ‘ššaiybiyyāt’⁶¹ while on diet (line 208). Sam produces that question right after Wess has told him that he should not eat carbohydrates or sweets.

(4-64) NS14-2

204. Wess: → bass ma btākul (.) našawiiyyāt wu səkkariyyāt

but NegPrt eat-2PS (.) carbohydrates and sweets

but you [should] not eat (.) carbohydrates and sweets

205. Mina: halla? iza jarrabna bass marra ?əsbūš š?add biyəḏʕaf huwwe ()

now if we tried only once [one] week how much lose-3PS weight he ()

now if we tried only one [time] [for one] week how much weight [is] he going to lose ()

206. (0.8)

207. Wess:

208. Sam: → mumken ?ākul ššaiybiyyāt?

possible

eat-1PS ššaiybiyyāt?

can

I eat ššaiybiyyāt?

209. Wess: → ((lateral headshake)) la?. (0.5) ?awwal ?əsbūš btəxsar fih s- kiliyyen

((lateral head shake)) no. (0.5) the first week you'll lose in it s- two kilos

((lateral head shake)) no. (0.5) during the first week you will lose two kilos

210. Sam: ((two nods))

Wess responds to Sam's query about the possibility of eating ‘ššaiybiyyāt’ with a free-standing ‘la?’ ‘no’ accompanied with a head shake, then, after a 0.5-second gap, he proceeds with his talk about the diet (line 209). Not being allowed to eat ‘ššaiybiyyāt’ while on diet is inferable from the context and from what Wess has already explicitly mentioned in line 204. Wess's minimal negative-stance marker ‘la?’ orients to Sam's question as inapposite within that context (Heritage, 1998). Responses to questions to which the answer is plain may even be reduced to

⁶¹ ‘ššaiybiyyāt’ are northern Syrian cream-stuffed, carbohydrate-rich sweets.

just a nod as in example (4-65) below. Wess is telling Sam that one can drink diet cola while on diet (line 259). Following that, Sam produces a display of ritualised disbelief (Wilkinson & Kitzinger, 2006) prefaced by the God-invocating ‘waḷḷah’ which, somewhat like the English ‘Jesus!’, displays surprise within such a context. Upon receiving no response, Sam produces a polar interrogative FPP (line 262) asking Wess to confirm what he has just mentioned. Wess responds to that turn with an assertive repetitive SPP (line 263) followed by an assessment that it is a ‘diet’ cola, so, it could inferably be considered as a diet drink. However, even after receiving this confirmatory assertive SPP, Sam repeats his interrogative about drinking diet cola in line 265.

(4-65) expanded from (1-17) chapter 1 section, 1.3.2

259. Wess: → ṭabʔan btəḥsin təšrab dayt kola (.) əlbaddak yā:h

obviously you can drink diet cola (.) whatever you want i:t

obviously you can drink diet cola (.) whatever you want

260. Sam: → waḷḷah? btəšrab dayt kola?

Prt you drink diet cola?

really? you drink diet cola?

261. (0.2)

262. → wu ʔante ʕamtəʕmel hēk bəl ʔəsbūʕ əl ʔawwal btəšrab dayt kola?

while you are doing this during the week the first you drink diet cola?

while you are doing that during the first week you drink diet cola?

263. Wess: → btəšrab dayat kola ma fi məškli.

you drink diet cola NegPrt there [is] problem.

you drink diet cola there's no problem.

264. Sam: ((lookst at Mido then shifts gaze towards Wess))

265. → wu btəšrab dayt kolaʕ

and you drink diet colaʕ

266. Wess: → ((two nods))

267. Sam: ((shifts gaze towards Mido then back towards Wess))

268. Wess: (0.5)

269. **ma hi dayat.**

that it [is] diet.

it is [for] diet.

Wess responds to Sam's repeated polar interrogative (line 265) with only two nods. The answer to Sam's inquiry about drinking diet cola while on diet could be inferred from the context; the drink is a *diet* drink. In addition, this has explicitly been confirmed in Wess's elaborative turn (line 263). Wess's minimal non-verbal SPP (line 266) displays his orientation to Sam's question, as inapposite within this context. Responding with a minimised SPP in the three examples above, displays the respondents' orientation to the interrogative FPPs as already confirmed, therefore, they do not need further confirmation. Such orientation works on the epistemic level of analysing a turn-at-talk as doing polar interrogative. Questioning involves lack of epistemic access. One of the main actions that a question does is seeking to fill an epistemic gap (Levinson, 2012). When there is no epistemic gap to fill, and where epistemic access has already been established, a question would be oriented to as inapposite. Minimal responses to such question constitute just an acknowledgement or affiliation/disaffiliation with their form as questions.

Summary of findings in section 4.6

The argument in this section shows that the extent of the SPP within the SA polar interrogative sequence is determined by some sequential contingencies which accompany its production. The position of the sequence, its type and the sequential context within which the sequence is produced, all have impact on the extent of the SPP and the sequence itself. When the polar interrogative sequence is produced in a position where its expansion may compromise the progress of some ongoing activity, then, interactants will orient to the minimisation of that sequence. When a polar interrogative FPP is simply seeking alignment such as in ritualised disbelief turns, or in understanding checks, respondents will orient to it as such by responding

with an alignment token rather than an extended elaborative SPP. When a polar interrogative is asking for something that is contextually obvious or which has been confirmed in prior talk, respondents orient to it as not doing questioning, because the answer to it has already been made available. In this case interactants may produce minimal acknowledging, affiliative or disaffiliative tokens as a response to such questions.

Conclusion of chapter 4

This chapter has discussed the main preferences, contingencies and resources which contribute to shaping the SPP in the SA polar interrogative sequence. I started the analysis by investigating the usage of the minimal non-verbal nods and headshakes in the SPP. I demonstrated that nods and headshakes are used for displaying affiliation and disaffiliation respectively in SA. The discussion then moved to exploring the core components of the polarity system in SA. Throughout this discussion, I have demonstrated that the interjections ‘?eh/la?’ ‘yes/no’ in SA do not always project and/or construct the polarity of a turn-at-talk. They are multi-functional particles whose function varies according to the sequential context and the interactional contingencies which surround them. Therefore, SA interactants do not orient to these particles as always projecting corresponding polarity when they preface a turn. SA interactants rather orient to the syntactic structure of the turn in order to project and determine its polarity. Syntactic polarity in SA is constructed by the presence or absence of the negative operators ‘ma’, ‘mu’ and their variants. When doing negation, either of those particles is positioned before what it negates. Therefore, these particles could project the polarity of a turn/TCU from the very beginning of that turn/TCU. The polar answering system in SA, therefore, could not be termed as a ‘yes/no’ system, since ‘?eh/la?’ do not always project the polarity of the turn. The polarity system in SA is rather based on and established by syntactic polarity. I have demonstrated throughout sections (4.2.), (4.3.) and (4.4.) of this chapter that SA interactants orient to syntactic polarity rather than

to ?eh/la?-marked polarity. As a result, when the preference for type-conformity is in competition with syntactic polarity, the latter gains precedence over the former. In such cases, interactants either do not include ‘?eh/la?’ at all in their SPPs or they delay the production of such particles until syntactic polarity is established.

This chapter has also demonstrated that the SA polar interrogative FPPs prefer responses of matching polarity, i.e., negatively framed FPPs prefer negatively framed SPPs and positively framed FPPs prefer positively framed SPPs. The majority of polar interrogatives in the data are positively framed, therefore, according to the preference for matching polarity, the majority of the SPPs are preferred to be positive. The polar interrogative system in SA, therefore, could be considered as positively biased. Such a polarity system which prefers aligning matching polarity could also be considered as strongly skewed towards agreement. The preferred SPP within this system is the one which agrees with its FPP at least in terms of syntactic polarity.

After discussing the polarity system in SA, I moved to discussing another preference the negotiation of which plays significant role in determining the structure and action of the SPP in the SA polar interrogative sequence; that is the preference for epistemic congruence (section 4.5). I have demonstrated that, due to lack of morphosyntactic marking of polar interrogatives in SA, SA interactants orient to epistemic access and epistemic stance in analysing a turn-at-talk as either polar interrogative or as assertive. A downgraded epistemic stance may index an interrogative turn, while an upgraded epistemic stance may index assertion. The declarative form of most of SA polar interrogative FPPs indexes assertion. This creates incongruence between the epistemic stance which the form of the FPP indexes (assertive) and the inherently subordinate epistemic status of it as a question. In such case, the SPP attempts to rebalance such epistemic incongruence. In order to rebalance such incongruence, SA interactants deploy repetition in the SPP as a resource by which they reset the epistemic parameters within the polar interrogative sequence. SA respondents use repetition, and, in particular, modified repetition to confirm their

primary epistemic access to the matter in question, thus indexing that they have the right to confirm/disconfirm it. By indexing a primary epistemic status, respondents mark the questioners' epistemic status as subordinate, thus rebalancing the epistemic incongruence marked in the questioners' declarative assertive FPP. Due to its grammatically independent form, repetition can also be implemented to assert the respondent's independent agency towards an action which a polar interrogative FPP is requesting that respondent to perform. An example is when an invitation is made by implementing polar interrogative FPP, the recipients may use repetition to index their agency in accepting or rejecting that invitation. Implementing repetition as a polar response in SA, therefore, is not due to an inherent feature of SA as an echo language, it is rather the product of locally managed preferences which orient to syntactic polarity rather than interjection-polarity and to the preference for epistemic congruence. These findings are fully in line with findings by Enfield *et al.* (2018). According to Enfield *et al.* CA demonstrates that there is no crosslinguistic evidence that one could taxonomize a polar response system in a language as 'echo', 'agreement/disagreement' or 'yes/no' (Sadock & Zwicky, 1985). The type of the SPP is rather the product of local contingencies within the interaction together with cultural background factors.

The last section (4.6) in this chapter discusses sequential and epistemic-related preferences which contribute to the form and extension of the SPP within the SA polar interrogative sequence. The section demonstrates that in repair insert sequences the interactants orient to minimising the extent of the sequence or, at least, its SPP. The aim of such orientation is to prevent the repair insert sequence from distancing the FPP from its relevant SPP in the main adjacency sequence in which the repair sequence is inserted. Minimising the repair insert sequence allows the main sequence to be resumed without an extended break in contiguity. The section has also demonstrated that SA interactants orient to the minimisation of SPPs in pre-telling polar interrogative sequences. The minimisation of the SPP in such sequences is based on the

preference for progressivity (Heritage, 2007; Sacks, 1987; Stivers & Robinson, 2006). Minimising the size of the SPP and the sequence within such positions allows progressing the talk, with no delay, towards the targeted telling sequence.

There are polar interrogative sequences in which the interactants orient to the FPP as not seeking information or confirmation; they rather orient to it as seeking alignment. One type of these sequences is the repair ritualised disbelief sequences produced to adumbrate the production of a surprise token when displaying surprise is made relevant. In such sequences, SA interactants produce a minimal aligning token to progress talk towards the production of the surprise token. Another type of polar sequence in which the FPP seeks alignment rather than confirmation is the understanding check sequence. In this sequence, polar interrogative producers target checking the attentiveness of their co-interactant(s). Recipients of such FPPs orient to them, not as doing questioning, but as seeking to realign their attention with the ongoing talk. Therefore, SA interactants respond to such FPPs with a minimal aligning SPP to display that their attention has been realigned with the ongoing talk. Finally, when the polar interrogative FPP requests confirmation of information that has already been confirmed or made obvious either in prior talk or through context, SA recipients orient to it as not doing questioning by responding with a minimal acknowledging, affiliative or disaffiliative token, rather than with an answer. The preference for minimising the SPPs in such sequences stems from the orientation to epistemic congruence. When the epistemic gap which the polar interrogative is seeking to fill has already been filled, the questioning action of the polar interrogative becomes non-relevant.

Chapter 5: The organisation of third position in Syrian Arabic polar interrogative sequences

“... the end is in the beginning and lies far ahead.”

Ralph Ellison, *Invisible Man*

Introduction

Chapter 4 has discussed the SPP in SA polar interrogative sequences. The chapter has demonstrated that the SPP is a product of negotiating a set of form and action related preferences that are made relevant by the production of the polar interrogative FPP. This chapter focuses on what comes after the SPP but still “within-sequence talk” (Schegloff, 2007, p. 118); what could be termed as ‘third position’ (ibid; Jefferson & Schenkein, 1978; Sacks, 1992b). The significance of third position in inquiry sequences has been noted since the early days of CA. Sacks (1992b, p. 426) points to third position as one of the “‘understanding positions’” in which the interactants can either claim or demonstrate understanding of a preceding turn. Jefferson (1981 [1993, p. 24]) has also noted that an inquiry projects “‘at least a three-turn sequence’”, thus acknowledging that third position can be considered as part of inquiry sequences. Other CA researchers have discussed third position elements as well. Heritage (1984, 1998) has investigated the English particle ‘oh’. He has found that, when used after receiving an answering SPP, it registers the change of the state of the recipient from not-knowing to knowing, or from not-noticing to noticing. Goodwin (1986) has found that third-position assessments contribute to sequence closure, whereas continuers such as ‘uh’ and ‘uhm’ may prompt expansion of the sequence when they are placed in third position. Schegloff (1992) notes that third position can be implemented for the initiation of repair to re-establishing intersubjectivity before closing the sequence. Beach (1993) has discussed the use of ‘okay’ in third position. He notes that ‘okay’ registers the acceptance of the action entailed in the SPP. Third position repetition is used to confirm that the

recipient of a SPP has primary epistemic rights to the content of that SPP (Schegloff, 1996b). Figurative expressions may be implemented in third position to bring a whole topic to closure (Holt & Drew, 2005). Third position laughter has been found to contribute to sequence and topic closure (Holt, 2010, 2011). News-marks are also used in third position to register the content of the SPP as delivering news (Jefferson, 1981 [1993]). Third position can also be used for displays of surprise (Wilkinson & Kitzinger, 2006). Schegloff (2007) provides extensive analysis of various third position types in English. He illustrates that the production of third position is relevant in some sequential positions. Its absence in such positions is noticeable, thus leading to the pursuit of that missing third (pp. 129-141). According to Schegloff, third position displays a stance towards the sequence, a stance which would lead either to the closure of the sequence or to its expansion. Schegloff also argues that the form, position and action of a third position utterance is determined by the sequential contingencies which accompany its production (*ibid.*).

This chapter explores the types, forms and the sequential organisation of third position in SA polar interrogative sequences. It highlights the contingencies accompanying the presence as well as the absence of third position talk in the SA polar interrogative sequence. For the purpose of this study, any within-sequence utterance or gesture which comes after the SPP and is structurally relevant to it will be termed as a 'third'. Any utterance after the SPP which starts a new sequence is excluded from this analysis as it will be the FPP of a next sequence. I start by introducing the notion of intersubjectivity, which is a recurrent theme in this chapter (section 5.1). Section (5.2) starts by investigating simple forms of third position in the SA polar interrogative sequences; the standalone particles 'ʔeh', 'aywa' and 'ah' (section 5.2.1); then, the discussion moves to investigating more complex forms (sections: 5.2.2, 5.2.3, 5.2.4 and 5.2.5). Section (5.2.4) explores laughter in third position. I do not take laughter as simple as a standalone particle, such as 'ʔeh', because laughter is a vocalization which can embody various social and sequential actions (Holt, 2010, 2011, 2012; Jefferson, 1979, 1984b). Following the discussion of third

position in SA polar interrogative sequences, I move to investigating the absence of this position in some of those sequences (section 5.3).

5.1. Third position and intersubjectivity

Before commencing the analysis of third position in the SA polar interrogative sequence, it is important to cast some light on the notion of intersubjectivity and to discuss the relationship between intersubjectivity and the organisation of third position in those sequences.

There is no-clear-cut definition of the term ‘intersubjectivity’ as each branch of Anthropology approaches this notion from a different angle. Nonetheless, I will discuss a few definitions and highlight the points that they have in common. From a linguistic point of view, Traugott (2003, p. 128) defines intersubjectivity as:

the explicit expression of the SP/W’s [speaker/writer] attention to the ‘self’ of addressee/reader in both an epistemic sense (paying attention to their presumed attitudes to the content of what is said), and in a more social sense (paying attention to their ‘face’ or ‘image needs’ associated with social stance and identity).

and it involves

SP/W’s [speaker/writer] attention to AD/R [addressee/reader] as a participant in the speech event, not in the described situation.

Traugott defines the “described situation” as “the conceptualised world that is talked about” (ibid).

Accordingly, intersubjectivity is an expression of attention to the addressee that is focused on the speech event rather than on conceptualization. Traugott, later, explains that the expression of such attention is a faculty which “natural languages, in their structure and their normal manner

of operation, provide for the locutionary agent” (2010, p. 33). To sum up, intersubjectivity is expressed in speech and focused on speech events.

Developmental psychology views intersubjectivity as a “deliberate sharing of experiences about objects and events”; and it is “grounded in concrete contexts of reciprocal interaction” (Brinck, 2008, p. 116). More simply put, intersubjectivity could be viewed as “a shared understanding of what an interaction is about” (Reimers and Fogel, 1992, pp 82).

Both definitions above have in common the following elements: language, speech, interaction and sharing. Albeit Traugott’s definition is focused on the speaker, it does not neglect the role of the addressee as the interactant to whom the speaker’s “expression of attention” is directed. In other words, the speaker’s “explicit” expression of attention, according to Traugott, is intended to be shared with the addressee. When social scientists discuss the notion of intersubjectivity they also refer to shared understanding, shared experience (Heritage, 1984a), and shared “stock of knowledge” (Schutz, 1962, cited in Heritage, 1984a, p. 56). Shared understanding, experiences, and shared knowledge can all be typified and communicated through language (*ibid*).

According to the above-mentioned approaches, intersubjectivity may be viewed as experiences, attention, and understanding which could be shared through language in interaction. Such a summative view is almost identical to CA’s approach to the notion of intersubjectivity (*cf.* Heritage, 1984a). CA, however, includes in its definition of intersubjectivity the notion of grasping the “subjective meaning of one’s actions” including their “goals, intentions and motivations” (*ibid*, p. 57). CA views interaction as a goal-oriented activity through which interactants not only share attention, knowledge and experiences, but through which they also accomplish or attempt to accomplish certain actions. The process of projecting those targeted actions (goals), by the speaker, and grasping them, by the addressee, constitutes another dimension of intersubjectivity. CA investigates how intersubjectivity, as explained above, is

achieved and maintained on a turn-by-turn basis in talk-in-interaction. According to CA, interlocutors start the interaction with the *assumption* that they share common knowledge, common experiences and attention to each other's attitudes and self-image. They also anticipate certain goals of the interaction, then, as the interaction unfolds, they either confirm such assumptions or readjust them. Interactants also inspect whether the other's actions confirm their anticipations or disconfirm them (ibid, pp. 56-59). Where those actions do not confirm the interactants' anticipations, interactants adjust those anticipations. This process takes place on a turn-by-turn and even a TCU-by-TCU basis rendering each TCU and each segment of talk "inspectable" and "inspected by co-participants" (Schegloff, 2007, p. 1). The aim of such inspection is to find, or establish, the common ground on which intersubjectivity may be based. An example which Heritage (1984a) provides is when a first speaker initiates a question assuming that her/his question would receive either an answer or an account for the inability to answer. In excerpt (5.i) below, Mom initiates a sequence by producing a turn that is grammatically formed as a polar interrogative (line 1). However, Kid does not orient to that turn as a question, but as a news announcement about who will be going to a specific meeting. Kid's orientation, as such, is manifested in his response (line 2) which is a question asking who will be attending, rather than an answer to Mom's FPP (line 1).

(5.i) from Heritage (1984, p. 257) (16) (Terasaki, 1976:45)

1. Mom: Do you know who's going to that meeting?
2. Kid: Who.
3. Mom: I don't know!
4. Kid: Ou::h prob'ly: Mr Murphy an' Dad said prob'ly Mrs Timpte an' some o' the teachers.

In third position, Mom produces the utterance ‘I don’t know’ (line 3), which indicates that Mom, has actually no information or news to announce. Following Mom’s third position utterance which corrects Kid’s misunderstanding of the action of her sequence-initial turn, Kid readjusts his assumption that Mon’s turn (line 1) is a news announcement and orients to it as being a real question asking for information. Kid’s re-adjustment is displayed in his provision of the information which Mom’s turn (line 1), as a question, is asking for. In each turn, participants publicly display their understanding of the prior turn, if any, and their assumptions about what may follow next. Speakers of an FPP attend to their interlocutors’ understanding of the FPP, which is displayed in the SPP. In case the interlocutors’ displayed a misunderstanding of the actions of the FPP in their SPP, speakers of the FPP have, in third position, the opportunity to correct their interlocutors’ misunderstanding; in such case, producers of the SPP may publicly readjust their understanding by offering an updated understanding in the next turn. When producers of the FPP bypass such opportunity, producers of the SPP may conclude that the understanding they displayed in the SPP is adequate. Heritage (1984a) concludes that “[a]ny ‘third’ action, therefore, which implements some ‘normal’ onward development or trajectory for a sequence, tacitly confirms the displayed understandings in the sequence so far” (p. 258). This argument so far explains how interactants establish, share and sustain understanding on a turn-by-turn basis throughout the course of interaction. It also illustrates how the turn-taking system and the positions it provides for interlocutors – FPP, SPP and possibly third position – allows for understanding to be publicly displayed, shared updated and sustained. This argument also emphasizes the role which third position plays in updating and sustaining shared understanding, i.e., intersubjectivity in interaction. The following sections explore that role of third position and investigate the organization of its presence in some SA polar interrogative sequences and its absence in others.

5.2. Third position in SA polar interrogative sequences

This section probes the sequential organisation which lies behind the production of talk, or other interactional elements, in third position in SA polar interrogative sequences. The section introduces the various types and forms of thirds within such sequences. Excerpt (5-1) below, contains three polar interrogative sequences all of which contain thirds. However, each sequence has a different type of third. In this excerpt, Mido is informing Mina, who is aspiring to obtain a professional qualification in the UK, about a diploma which qualifies her to work as an interpreter. He informs her that he has met a person who obtained that qualification then got a job with the Home Office. Over the course of Mido's telling sequence, Mina asks several polar interrogative questions seeking information about that diploma and the person who Mido is talking about (lines: 4, 19 and 36).

(5-1) NS14-3

1. Mido: **əltəʔēt biwaḥed kərdi ʔana (0.2) ʕāməla laššahāde (.) biyəštəḡel bəllə:**

met-1PS with one kurdis h I (0.2) he did the certificate (.) he works at:

I have met a kurdis h guy (0.2) who's got the certificate (.) he works at:

2. **maʕ əllajʔīn bəl home office** **byəštəḡel**

with the refugees at the home office he works

3. Sam: **((nod))**

4. Mina: → **huwwe dēres ʔadab inglizi.**

he [has] studied literature English.

has he studied english literature.

5. Mido: → **huwwe: (0.5) ʕal- ʕalbakaloria** **ʔddama hek (.) əššahāde (.) dəblōm.**

he: (0.5) on th- on the baccalaureate he applied like that (.) the certificate (.) diploma.

he: (0.5) on the basis of a baccalaureate degree he applied just like that (.) [to obtain] the certificate (.) a diploma.

6. Mina: → **((lifts her head up and opens her mouth, then, nods three times))**

7. Mido: **ma baṭṭawwel kamān šaḡlāt ʕašr šhūr** ()
 NegPrt takes long too a matter [of] ten months ()
 It [does] not takes long too it [is] a matter of ten months ()
8. Mina: ((lifts her head up))
9. ((slightly opens her mouth then closes it))
10. Mido: **ʔu wu bəttarjmi bi ʔq- biʔqsām əššərṭa bi kaza yəʔni**
 ʔu and you interpret in st- in stations police and thing Prt
 ʔu and you interpret in st- in police stations and similar [places] Prt
11. **ʔwwə:: hāda šəḡəl əttarjame ʔəlu leš laʔənnu ʔənti btətʕāqadi maʕ šərkā:t**
 and:: this work [in] interpretation [is] nice why because you sign a contract with companies
12. ((two nods))
13. (1)
14. Mido: **ma ʕandek dawā:m ə:: laʔənnu unrestricted mānek malzūme bdawām**
 NegPrt you have working hours ə:: because unrestricted NegPart-you restricted to working hours
 you don't have specific working hours ə:: because you are not restricted to specific working hours
15. **hənnə byəbʕatūlek saʕāt (.) wu ʔənti btəxtāri əssaʕāt əlli bəddeḡ yāha**
 they send you hours (.) and you choose the hours that you want them
 they send you [optional] hours (.) and you choose the time which suits you
16. Mina: ((turns to Sam)) ()
17. Sam: ()
18. Mido: **ktīr mumtāz**
 very excellent
 terrific
19. Mina: → **ḡatta mumken baʔdar ʔštəḡel məlbē:t?**
 even [is it] possible [that] I can work from home?
20. (0.5)
21. Mido: → **ə:: məlbē:t (.) ma laʔ ma bəʕtəʔed laʔənnu huwwə əššəḡəl ʔḡyānan**
 ə:: from home (.) NegPrt no NegPrt 1PS-think because it [is] the work some times
 ə:: from home (.) not no I don't think so because this work some times
22. → **b- bətrūḡi masalan interpreter** yəʕni=
 b- you go for instance [as] an interpreter Prt=
23. Mina: → ah

24. Mido: → =ə: bətrooḥi masalan [()]
 =ə: you go for instance ()
25. Mina: → yaʕni hēk() yaʕni ʔana biʕarāḥa () ʔaḥsan ši=
 Prt that () Prt I honestly() [this is] the best thing=
26. Mina: = [()]
27. Mido: šu raʔyak bšəḡl əttarjame ya bu [() hāda laʔənnu mureeḥ] =
 what opinion-2PSPoss in work interpretation Prt bu () this because relaxing
 what do you think of working in interpretation bu () this is because it [is] a relaxing [job] =
28. Mina: aḥsan šəḡl. ((turns to Sam)) ma?
 the best job ((turns to Sam)) NegPrt?
 [it's] The best job ((turns to Sam)) isn't it?
29. Sam: ((face down busy looking at his smart phone)) ((one nod, then another slighter nod))
 ((five lines omitted in which Mido tells Mina more about the nature of the job))
35. (3) ((Mina is looking at Sam's mobile phone while he is searching the internet, then she lifts head up and shifts gaze towards Mido))
36. Mina: → ʔəltəlli dəblō:m? (0.2) ʔənnu bāxod dəblōm [()]
 you told me [it is] a diplo:ma? (0.2) Prt I obtain a diploma ()
37. Mido: → hiyye dəblōm [()]
 it [is] a diploma ()
38. Mina: ((two nods))
39. Mina: → °ʔeh°. ((shifts gaze towards Sam then does two nods))
 °yes°.
40. Sam: ((looking at his smart phone)) () ʔab jəbli hayi šəḡlət əttarajme ()
 () Prt get me this the thing [about] interpretation ()
 () Prt get me [information about] this interpretation job ()

In the first polar interrogative sequence (lines: 4, 5, 6) Mina receipts Mido's SPP with a visual display (line 6), after which Mido continues talking about the diploma but not about the topic of Mina's question, which is the guy who got that diploma. In the second sequence (lines: 19 to 25), Mina receipts Mido's SPP (lines: 21 and 22) with the particle 'ah' (line 23), after which Mido

continues to talk about the same topic of Mina's polar interrogative, which is the possibility of working as an interpreter from home. Mina receipts Mido's continuative turn with a comment and an assessment in line 25. Finally, in the last polar interrogative sequence Mina produces a FPP requesting Mido's reassertion that the qualification he has been talking about is a diploma (line 36). Mido responds with a confirming repetitive SPP which Mina receipts with a combination of head nods and the positive particle 'ʔeh', after which the sequence comes to an end. Sam, who has not been so far involved in this interchange, starts a new sequence, however, on the same topic of the diploma. The SPPs in the above three polar interrogative sequences are different from each other; in the first polar sequence, the SPP (line 5) disconfirms the proposition of the FPP, however, without implementing negative format. In the second sequence, the SPP disconfirms the proposition of the FPP by implementing negative format, then it provides an account for that negation (lines: 21 and 22). Mina receipts this turn with 'ah'. Mido, then provides a further positively framed account (line 24) which Mina receipts with a comment and an assessment (line 25). In the last sequence (lines: 36 to 39), the SPP is a repetition-prefaced turn. This one is receipted by affiliative nods (see chapter 4, section 4.1) accompanying the positive particle 'ʔeh'. It is noticeable that different actions follow each type of third in the three examples above. Following the 'nods' (line 6) and the 'ah', there is a continuation of talk by the producer of the SPP. However, following the assessment and the 'ʔeh', the sequences come to a closure. This section casts the light on the different types of thirds in the SA polar interrogative sequence, the action which each type implements and the sequential organisation which underpins the selection and the form of each of these types.

5.2.1. The particles 'ʔeh', 'Aywa' and 'Ah' in third position

I start this discussion by exploring the type of third which the last polar interrogative sequence (lines: 36 to 39) in example (5-1) incorporates; that is the positive particle 'ʔeh'. The sequence is reproduced below.

uses positive polar interrogative format (line 189) to inquire whether Wess knows of any such place (line 189).

(5-2) NCALL14-1

188. Mido: **bass bədna maḥall hādi:: jəddan mafi ḥatta musīqa mafi əykūn hādi**
 but we need a place quiet:: very NegPrt there even music NegPrt there should be quiet
 but we need a very quiet place [where] there is not even music, nor anything it should be quiet

189. → əbtaʃrefənnə ši maḥall hē:kɛ
 do you know [of] such a place like that?

190. (0.5)

191. Mido: **hədū? hədū? ktīr əykūn.**
 quiet quiet very be.
 [which] is very very quiet

192. Wess: → **byəltəʃa hēk še taʃa mnəʔʃod ʃanna hon bəl ḥadīʔa mafi məškli.**
 it could be found such thing come we sit here in the garden NegPrt-there problem:.
 something like that could be found come [and] we sit here in the garden no problem:.

193. Mido: → **ʔəh.**
 yes.

194. (0.2)

195. ʔəh ʃaḥī halla? əl jaww ʔḥla halla:ʔ xarj əlwahəd yəʔʃod bəl ḥadīʔa,
 yes right Prt the weather [is] nicer now: it's suitable one [could] sit in the garden,

196. əljaww həlu halla? ġer šəkəl.
 the weather [is] nice now different.
 the weather is nice now it has changed.

197. Wess: **ʔəh yom əl ʔrbiʃāʔ ʃambiʔulo hō:n**
 yes the day the wednesday they say here
 yes they say on wednesday

198. Mido: **uhm**

199. Wess: **ʔənnu fi šams (baʔa) mnəʔʃod bəlḥadīʔa.**
 that there [is] sun (so) 1PP-sit in the garden.
 there will be sunshine (so) we sit in the garden.

the English ‘okay’ does in the third position in polar interrogative sequences. Speakers of Arabic who reside in English speaking countries tend to code-switch between the two languages (Abalhassan, & Alshalawi, 2000), therefore, I start with an example where a SA resident in the UK uses the English ‘okay’ in third position in a polar interrogative sequence. Excerpt (5-4) is taken from a phone call between Salim and Wess on one side and Hamid, Wess’s brother, on the other side. Salim and Wess are asking Hamid about his accommodation in the country where he lives.

(5-4) NDCALL16

1. Wess: ((talking on the phone to Hamid)) **ṣēṭīnak ḡərḡi wəlla ʔēʔid bə::* bəlm- mah- mahajaʔ.**

they [have] given you a room or you [are] staying in::* in the w- war- ward.

2.Salim: **ḡərḡe.**

[a] room.

3.Hamid: **ḡərḡe. ()**

[a] room. ()

4. **(0.2)**

5.Wess: **A:h ḡərḡi lawaḥḍak yəʔne.**

A:h [a] room on you own Prt.

6. **(1)**

7.Hamid: **ʔe:h.**

ye:s.

8.Salim: → **wu fiyya manāʔfa wu fiyya šawar wu fiyya ə:- ʔ fia washin ma-**

and in it utilities and in it shower and in it ə:- ʔ there is washing ma-

and there are utilities in it and there is a shower and there is ə:- ʔ there is washing ma-

9. → **ə: fiyya: ḡassāleʔ**

ə: in it washing machine?

ə: there is a washing machine?

10. **(1)**

11. Hamid: → əllaʔ hiyi:

[hayi əššāglāt]
	these things	
	[are] all shared.	

 kəlla muštarak.
- ə=no these:
12. Wess:

[muštarak kəllu]
	shared	
	all of it	
13. Salim: → okay.
14. (0.5)
15. Hamid:

[()]
	ʔeh mnīḥ.	
	yes [that's] good	
16. Salim:

[	ʔeh mnīḥ.	]	kwayyes laʔ əm- bravo iza hek.
	yes [that's] good		great no əm- bravo if that's [the case].
17. Wess: ʔeh mnīḥ a:.
- yes good a:.

At lines 8 and 9, Salim uses polar interrogative format to ask Hamid whether there is a shower and washing machine in his room. Hamid's SPP is significantly delayed by 1-second (Jefferson, 1988; Stivers *et al.* 2009), which projects dispreference (Pomerantz & Heritage, 2013). Following this delay, Hamid produces a *laʔ*-prefaced SPP. The turn-initial *laʔ* in Hamid's FPP is further delayed by 'ə'. Such delay adds to the projectability of dispreference in Hamid's SPP which actually disconfirms the proposition of Salim's FPP. Following the completion of Hamid's disconfirming SPP, Salim produces the English 'okay' in third position. Hamid's third-position 'okay' does not challenge Salim's SPP, it does not ask for an account of why Hamid responded the way he did. However, unlike 'ʔeh', third-position 'okay' in the example above is directed towards a dispreferred SPP. A gap follows Salim's third-position 'okay', after which Hamid produces something inaudible in the recording (line 15). Salim responds to Hamid's turn by a positive assessment (line 16), after which Wess takes the floor.

From the code-switched 'okay' I move now to investigating the SA particle 'aywa'. I start this investigation by analysing an example of third-position 'aywa' in excerpt (5-5) below. The

excerpt is taken from an extended episode in which Hs is telling his friends Tm and Tl about a girl who used to call him at a very early hour in the morning. Tm then wonders whether that girl has no school to go to in the morning (line 48). Tm uses negative interrogative format to construct his inquisitive turn.

(5-5) modified from (Al-Khalil, 2005, p. 199)

42. Hs: xayyō bass šū biddak bil-haki wallah šahr

brother but what want-2PS with-talking Prt a month

brother but if you want the truth Prt a month

43. Tm: [heh huh

44. Tl: [ma tnām

[you don't sleep

45. Hs: yəʕnē tšawwar (.) yəʕnē ahyānan masalan tiḥkē sāʕa tsakker

Prt imagine (.) Prt sometimes for instance she speaks for an hour she hangs up

46. noş sāʕa iğfal bihal- noş sāʕa trod tiṭṭiṣel

for half an hour I sleep during that half an hour she calls again

47. (1.7)

48. Tm: tayyeb hiyyi ma ʕanda madrasi?

Prt she [does] not have school?

Prt doesn't she go to school?

49. Hs: → lāʔ hiyyi biʔiyyam iṣ- šēf hay aktar šē

no that [was] during days [of] sum- summer that was mostly

no that was mostly during summer

50. Tm: → aiwā:h

okay

Due to its assertive nature, negative interrogative prefers an agreeing response (Heritage, 2002). However, Tm's negative interrogative FPP receives a *laʔ*-prefaced, disagreeing, disconfirming SPP of the opposite syntactic polarity to that of the FPP (see chapter 4, section: 4.4). As has been demonstrated in chapter 4, such features incorporate a dispreferred SPP in SA polar interrogative sequences. Tm receives this dispreferred response with 'aywa' in third position. Third-position 'aywa' in this example, like the code-switched 'okay' in example (5-4) above, receipts a dispreferred SPP, but it does not contest it or invite for an account on its dispreferredness. In other words, it accepts the SPP with its dispreference. The next example (5-6) further clarifies the function of third-position 'aywa'. SI produces a negative interrogative FPP (line 185) asking about whether AR has obtained a driving licence. AR produces a *wallah*-prefaced SPP which disconfirms that he has obtained a driving licence (line 186). AR's SPP matches SI's FPP in terms of negative polarity, however, through using a NPI not through syntactically structured negation (see chapter 4, section: 4.3). A disagreeing, disconfirming, SPP which does not match its FPP in terms of syntactic polarity is dispreferred in SA polar interrogative sequences. The dispreference of AR's SPP is indexed by the turn-initial delaying particle *wallah* (Helani, 2008) and by the elaboration contained within the SPP (lines: 187 and 188). The elaboration in AR's SPP orients to SI's FPP as implying a criticism of him not yet obtaining the driving licence.

(5-6) modified from (Helani, 2008, p.158)

185. SI: → Ma axadet el= el= el driving licence	yaʕni?
NegPrt [have0 taken you the= the= the driving licence	Prt?
not have taken you the= the= the driving licence	Per?
haven't you obtained the driving licence	Prt?
186. AR: →	wallah les saʕ
	Prt not yet

‘aywa’ were a positive stance marker, like ‘?eh’, then it would endorse the SPP as having addressed the preferences made relevant by the FPP. A positive stance in third position is closure-relevant. The proposal here is that third-position ‘aywa’, displays acceptance of the dispreferred SPP, but it does not endorse it as preferred. It does not mark a positive stance towards it. Therefore, it is not closure-relevant within this sequential environment. Example (5-7) below further supports this line of argument. In (5-7), Sam is asking Mido, who is a PhD student, about the word count of a PhD thesis. Sam proposes fifty thousand as the word count of the thesis then appends a negative tag to his proposition, thus rendering his turn into polar interrogative (line 4). Mido’s response is delayed by the stretched ‘ə::’ in (line 2) and, although it is prefaced by ‘?eh’, it does not incorporate a confirmation of Sam’s proposition, neither disconfirms it. Following the completion of Mido’s SPP, Sam produces ‘aywa’ in third position (line 5). Mido, however, does not orient to this ‘aywa’ as closure-relevant as he produces an expansion to his SPP following the production of that ‘aywa’. In this expansion (line 7), Mido almost repeats what he has said before in line 2 reasserting that the word count is from sixty to eighty thousand and excluding Sam’s proposed fifty thousand. Mido, thus, insists on his stance. Sam receives Mido’s insisting expansion with an eyeroll, which displays exasperation (Clift, 2014), and a pressing of his lips, which displays withholding further talk (Heritage & Sorjonen, 1994; Raymond, 2013). Following that visual display, which orients to no further talk on the same topic (word count), Sam initiates another sequence about the possibility of expanding his MA dissertation to make it into a PhD thesis.

(5-7) NS14-3

1. Sam: ʕaddəktorāh xamsīn ?alf mū hēk?

the Phd [thesis] [is] fifty thousand NegTag?

a Phd [thesis] is fifty thousand [words] isn’t it?

2. Mido: ə:: ?əh ↑ btətrāwah ʔasab əljāmʕa (.) hiyye ↑

ə:: yes ↑ it varies depending on the university (.) it [is] ↑

3. (.)

4. **nəḥna tabaḥna mən səttīn la tmanīn ʔalf,**
 we ours from sixty to eighty thousand,
 our [thesis] [is] from sixty to eighty thousand,

5. Sam: → **aywy.**
 okay.

6. (.)

7. Mido: → **ʔaʔall ši səttīn ʔalf aktar ši tmanīn ʔalf↓**
 the least [is] sixty thousand the most [is] eighty thousand↓

8. Sam: ((rolls his eyes and presses his lips in an upward movement))

9. **ṭayyeb maḥnāta nafsa ʔana bawasseḥa↓**
 Prt this means the same I expand it ↓
 so this means that I [can] expand the same⁶²↓

10. **bəʔder bawasseḥa ḥatta tṣeer ʕaddəktorah mū hēkə**
 I could expand it till it becomes the PhD [thesis] NegTagə

Davidson (1984) notes that ‘Okay’ is used in English to receive dispreferred actions. The example below illustrates that finding.

(5-8) from (Davidson 1984, p. 127)

1. A: You wan' me bring you anything?

2. (0.4)

3. B: No: no: nothing.

4. A: AW:kay.

⁶² Prior to this extract, Sam has mentioned that he has a research ready from his master's degree, and he is here asking whether he could expand that research to make it into a PhD thesis

Third-position ‘okay’ in the example above (line 4) receipts a SPP which does not align with its relevant FPP in terms of polarity and which rejects the offer that the FPP has initiated. The SPPs in the SA polar interrogative examples (5-5 to 5-7) above all incorporate dispreferred actions and are all receipted by ‘aywa’. Beach (1993) suggests that the English third-position ‘okay’ initiates the move towards sequence closure, but it does not always effect immediate closure. This is somehow similar to the case of the SA third-position ‘aywa’ which marks the move towards closure, but it does not necessarily effect immediate closure because it does not display a positive stance towards the SPP it is receipting. Although ‘aywa’ does not bear full resemblance to the English ‘okay’, which could be used as an assessment and as a verb as well (Pillet-Shore, 2003), the SA particle ‘aywa’ behaves with some similarity to ‘okay’ in third-position within polar interrogative sequences. That is why I have glossed and analysed it as ‘okay’ within such position. Finally, it is important to note that the three instances above are the only instances found in the data of free-standing ‘aywa’ in third position. The example from Al-Khalil (5-5) does not show in its original transcript what comes after ‘aywa’. Therefore, I can only demonstrate that the third-position ‘aywa’ in that example is in receipt of a dispreferred SPP, but I cannot conclude whether it is closure or expansion-relevant within that context. Only two instances of ‘aywa’ have been depicted within composite thirds in polar interrogative sequences (see section 5.2.5. below for discussion of ‘aywa’ in composites).

The third particle to be investigated in this subsection is ‘ah’. The first illustration of this particle’s usage in third position in a polar interrogative sequence is in excerpt (5-9) below. Wess is telling his friends about some products which he buys for his diet and the shop from where he gets them. Mido, then, produces a negative interrogative FPP (line 229) which indexes a stance proposing that the ‘health shop’ from where Wess gets his diet products is expensive. Mido’s negative interrogative SPP invites Wess to agree with that stance (Heritage, 2002, also see chapter 3 section 3.2.5)

(5-9) NS14-2

224. Wess: ʔəl ʔōtbrān bəʔjību mən heath shop

the oatbran I bring it from health shop

225. Mina: ((leans forward towards Wess and looks him in the face)) mən wēn?

from where?

226. Mido: hea [lthe shop.

227. Wess: [health shop.

228. Mina: [aha ()]

229. Mido: → [bass mu ġāli šwaiy? health shop?

but NegPrt expensive a bit? health shop?

but isn't health shop a bit expensive?

230. Wess: → ((two lateral headshakes)) wonnə: (0.2) xaməsmīt grām one fifty nine.

((two lateral headshakes)) one: (0.2) five hundred grams one fifty nine. [pond]

231. Sam: ((gaze and face towards Mina)) ()

232. Mido: aha

233. Wess: → ((turns face towards Mina then Sam)) mu ġale.

not expensive.

234. Mido: wu ʔddeh addeh (0.2) biʔaḍḍi kām yōm.

and how long how long (0.2) it lasts how many days.

Following the completion of Mido's FPP, Wess produces a SPP which neither confirms nor disconfirms the proposition of that FPP. Instead, Wess's response provides information on how much the oat bran, which he gets at that shop, costs (line 230). Mido receives Wess's response with the SA receipt particle 'aha:' (line 232). After which, Wess produces a turn which disconfirms Mido's proposition (line 233). Mido, then, initiates a new sequence in which he asks Wess how long the oat bran lasts. Like the English 'oh' (Heritage, 1984b), third-position 'aha:', in this example, orients to Wess's turn (line 230) as delivering some information which effect a change in Mido's epistemic status from not knowing about the price of that product to knowing it. Mido's third-position 'aha:', however, does not bring the sequence to immediate closure as,

following the production of this particle, Wess produces a turn which is structurally relevant to the sequence in which he disconfirms Mido's FPP (line 229). What is missing in the informing first part of Wess's SPP (line 230) is the confirmation/disconfirmation which Mido's polar interrogative makes relevant next. Wess provides this missing component as a disconfirming expansion following Mido's third-position 'aha:'. Hence, third-position 'aha:' in this example seems to invite more elaboration. The example below further supports this assumption. In the excerpt below, Mido, Sam, Wess and Mina are discussing the situation within which their families are being trapped in war-blighted Syria. Sam is telling Mido that the only family he has in Aleppo is his sister and her family who are currently living in danger. At this point Mido produces a negative interrogative turn inquiring whether they intend to leave dangerous Aleppo (line 21).

(5-10) NS14-1

1. Sam: ʔna ʔæxti: yəʕni bħalab əl waðəʕ ʔswaʔ bʔalf marra
I sister:-1PSPoss Prt in aleppo the situation worse by a thousand times
I my sister: Prt in aleppo the situation is a thousand times worse
2. (0.5)
3. .hh yəʕni hallaʔ biħala:b (0.2) kəll nhar ənnās ʕambətmūt
.hh Prt now in aleppo: (0.2) every day people [are] dying
4. kəll nhar $\left[\begin{array}{l} \text{yawmyyan} \\ \text{on a daily basis} \end{array} \right] =$
every day $\left[\begin{array}{l} \text{ya aʕlāh} \\ \text{oh god} \end{array} \right] =$
5. Mido:
6. Sam: =ħatta hallaʔ bəlmanāʔeʔ əl ʔamne yəʕni=
=even now in the areas the safe Prt=
=even now in the safe zones Prt
7. Mina: wu hallaʔ ʕār fi ħisār bəl (mafraʔ)
and now there [is] a siege at the (junction)

22. Sam: → **waḷḷahi ma tamm ʕandi ana ġēr ʔəxti.**

Prt NegPrt left for me I except my sister.

Prt no one is left [of my family] except my sister.

23. Mido: → **aha**

24. Sam: **hiyye wu wlāda (0.2) ʔəxti mətmasske ma btəṭlaʕ hiyye wu jōza yəʕni ma biyṭlaʕu.**

she and her children (0.2) my sister [is] holding on NegPrt go-3PS-fem out she and her husband Prt NegPrt go out.

she and her children (0.2) my sister is holding on [to staying] she won't leave she and her husband Prt [will] not leave.

25. Mido: → **aha**

26. Sam: → **axi šaġle ʕaʕbe yəʕni əṣṣarāḥa əyrūḥu.**

my brother something difficult Prt to be honest [that] they leave.

my brother honestly it is difficult for them Prt to leave.

27. **(0.5)**

28. Mido: → **.hh ana ahli kamān mətmasskīn bəllādʔiyye,**

.hh I my family also [are] holding on to [staying] in latakia,

The second TCU, 'ṭayyeb yəṭlaʕu', in Mido's negative interrogative FPP (line 21) indicates that the action which this turn incorporates is a display of stance rather than a request for confirmation. Sam's response in line 22 is prefaced by 'waḷḷahi' which projects dispreference (Helani, 2008). After the turn-initial 'waḷḷahi' Sam proceeds with a non-conforming negatively framed TCU which does not answer Mido's inquiry about the intention of Sam's family to leave. In third position (line 23), Mido produces the particle 'aha' which indicates uptake of the information provided by Sam but does not endorse his SPP as answering Mido's FPP. Sam orients to the 'aha' as such by producing a continuation of his turn (line 22) in which he addresses Mido's stance by providing an account of why his sister's family do not leave Aleppo. Following Sam's continuative turn, Mido produces another 'aha' (line 25). Sam orients to that second 'aha' as non-endorsing of what he has already said by producing a further account of the issue. A 0.5-second gap follows in which Sam adds no further talk. Mido then produces a turn in which he agrees with Sam's account by referring to some similarities between the latter's condition of his sister and Mido's own family's condition. Mido's agreement is structurally indexed in his turn

(line 28) by the conjunctive ‘kamān’ ‘also’ which marks what follows it as bearing similarity to what has preceded, and the repetition of the word ‘mətmasskeen’ from Sam’s response (line 24). Repeating the SPP or part of it indexes confirmation and agreement (Scheglogg, 1996b, also see section 5.2.3 below). After Mido’s agreeing turn (line 28) he moves to talk about his family’s life conditions in the city of Latakia. It took Sam a few TCUs to address all the preferences in Mido’s FPP (line 21) and reach an agreement-marked closure of the sequence. Mido’s third position ‘ah’ has contributed to Sam’s expansions and to reaching the preferred closure-relevance of the sequence. A similar practice can be found in excerpt (5-11). Mido meets Sam after a long time, so he asks him about his news and his work. After Sam answers by saying that he is still at the same place, Mido uses polar interrogative to initiate a repair sequence which aims at clarifying the referent of the generic noun ‘əšši’ in Sam’s response. Mido’s repair initiator proposes a candidate understanding of Sam’s answer (Antaki, 2012). Sam disconfirms Mido’s proposition (line 6), yet he does not provide the name of his current workplace. Following Sam’s SPP (line 6), Mido produces ‘aha:’ in third position. After Mido’s ‘aha:’ Sam produces more information about his new workplace, however, it is not until Mido blatantly asks about the name of Sam’s company that Sam produces the required information (line 10).

(5-11) NS14-1

1. Mido: .hh ə:: (.) əl muhəm šu axbārak sam.

.hh ə:: (.) the important [is] what your news sam.

.hh ə:: (.) okay what’s you news sam.

2. Sam: wa||ah əl ɥamdəllā:h (maši əlɥal)

Prt thank god (it’s ok)

3. Mido: wu kīf šəɣlak (.) wen halla? safyā:n.

and how [is] work-2PSPoss (.) where now you ended up.

and how’s your work (.) where have you ended up now.

4. Sam: wa||ah bnafs əšši.

Prt at the same thing.

5. Mido: → ((sniffs)) bəl bankɘ
at the bankɘ
6. Sam: → laʔ ma tarakt əl bank mən zamā::n.
no that I left the bank since ti::me [ago].
no I left the bank [long] time ago.
7. Mido: → aha: [:
8. Sam: → hallaʔ ʕambəštəgəl bšərke taniye () zǧīre ()
now I'm working in a company another () small ()
now I'm working at another company () small ()
9. Mido: šu əsma šərkətak.
what [is] the name [of] your company.
10. Sam: kompaniata.⁶⁴
11. Mido: kompaniata.
12. Sam: ((nod))

The example above further demonstrates that the answerer, Sam, orients to third-position ‘aha’ as indexing some missing components in the SPP. Sam subsequently supplies more information. All SPPs within the polar interrogative sequences in the examples (5-9 to 5-11) above start by providing some information, however this is not the information pursued by the FPP. Recipients receipt such information by ‘ah’. Respondents orient to this third-position particle as indicating that there is still something missing, so they expand their SPPs by producing what possibly could be missing in their response. Schegloff (2007, p. 137) notes that third-position ‘oh’, to which ‘ah’ is the SA counterpart, does registration of information but it does not display a stance towards the preceding SPP. It does not do acceptance or agreement - both elements that warrant the intersubjective closure of the sequence. Third-position ‘oh’ on its own without an action-accepting element may adumbrate the expansion of the sequence (ibid). The three examples above demonstrate that SA interactants use third-position ‘ah’ to prompt expansion of SPPs until

⁶⁴ For confidentiality reasons, the real name of Sam’s company is given the fictitious name ‘companiata’.

intersubjectivity is established. This is the point where sequence closure may be deemed as relevant.

The different actions which the three particle ‘?eh’, ‘aywa’ and ‘ah’ implement in third position demonstrate that third-position in the SA polar interrogative sequence is not just a locale where interactants display their reciprocity and uptake of the response to a polar interrogative FPP, it is a position where SA interactants reflect on the polar interrogative sequence as a whole. In third position, SA interactants mark the SPP as preferred, dispreferred or as missing some preferences which are made relevant by the initiation of the FPP. SA has made available various resources for indexing such stances in third position. Third-position ‘?eh’ is used in SA polar interrogative sequences to receive a preferred SPP, whereas ‘aywa’ is used to receive dispreferred SPPs. Both particles accept the SPP. However, it is ‘?eh’ which endorses the SPP as preferred by displaying a positive stance towards it. A preferred SPP is closure-relevant (Pomerantz & Heritage, 2013; Schegloff, 2007), therefore ‘?eh’ marks the closure relevance of the sequence by endorsing the SPP as preferred. Third position ‘aywa’ does not display the same endorsing stance towards its SPP, therefore it does not necessarily bring the sequence to immediate closure as it marks the SPP as dispreferred. However, by accepting the SPP, ‘aywa’ initiates the first move towards closing the sequence. The third particle investigated in this subsection is the receipt token ‘ah’ which registers the preceding SPP as informing, however, it neither marks it as preferred nor as dispreferred. Recipients of this third-position particle, therefore, may orient to it as not indexing agreement with or acceptance of their SPPs. Recipients, then, expand their SPPs by supplying elements which address preferences of the FPP that their first responsive attempt(s) have not so far addressed. Both co-interactants may continue prompting and expanding the sequence until they re-establish intersubjectivity and achieve agreement. By doing so, interactants collaboratively bring the sequence to closure.

5.2.2. Assessments

Assessments are used as closing thirds in English (Goodwin, 1986; Heritage, 2012; Jefferson, 1981, 1984a; Schegloff, 2007). Assessments are also used in third position within some SA polar interrogative sequences as example (5-12) below illustrates. Mido is visiting Sam in his new house for the first time. Upon noticing that there is a chimney in the living room, Mido asks Sam whether he is using it (line 1). Sam's response comes in overlap with the last component of Mido's FPP. Sam's SPP confirms the proposition of Mido's FPP with some turn-initial hedging which specifies that he uses it 'a little bit in winter' (line 4).

(5-12) FTs-19

- | | | |
|---------|---|---|
| 1.Mido: | → | wu ʃam bəʃagǵəlu lahāda əl: :: əl chə- ((pointing at the chimney))
and [are] you operating that the: :: the chi-
and [are] you using that the: :: chi- |
| 2.Sam: | → | bəʃʃəte ʃwaiy ʔeh bʃagǵəlo. ((with two nods))
in winter a little bit yes (I use it) ((with one nod)) |
| 3.Mido: | | əlchimney.
the chimney. |
| 4.Mido: | → | həluǰ
niceǰ |
| 5.Mido: | | uhum (0.2) la nəʔʃod lahza
uhum (0.2) to 1PP-sit one moment
uhum (0.2) I will sit one moment |

Following Sam's response, Mido produces the SA positive generic assessment 'həluǰ' 'nice' (line 4) after which he moves to the next activity, which is taking a seat. Sam produces no further talk on the chimney topic. Both interactants then orient to the closure-relevance of this sequence following Mido's assessment. Sam's SPP, in this sequence, is marked with preference. In terms of form, it is type-conforming and of the same polarity as its relevant FPP. In terms of action, it

confirms the proposition of the FPP and provides details about it. Mido's third-position assessment is positive in both form and implicature. Another example of third-position assessment can be found in excerpt (5-13) taken from a video which shows the friends having lunch in the garden of Sam's new house and chatting about cities in England. When they talk about Chelmsford, Sam asks Mido about the population of that city. When Mido provides a number 'million', Sam receives it with the particle 'waḷḷah' (line 6), which is glossed here as 'really' which does ritualise disbelief and marks the preceding turn as a source of surprise. Ritualised disbeliefs invite an aligning confirmation of the unexpected (surprising) news (Wilkinson & Kitzinger, 2006, p.169). Mido, in line 7, responds to Sam's ritualised disbelief with a mitigated confirmation of his news (Drew, 2003). Upon receiving Mido's confirmation, Sam produces an assessment of the city as 'big', thus displaying his agreement with Mido's proposition.

(5-13) EOS-19

1.Sam: **yaʕni chelmsford kam ʕadada kam ʕadad səcāna.**

Prt chelmsford how many the count how many the count [of its] population.

Prt how many inhabitants are in chelmsford.

2. **(0.2)**

3.Mido: **waḷḷah ktīr waḷḷah biyǰū:: (0.2) laḥzah hah marra axdt ʔəḥṣaʔiyye ʕala**

Prt too many Prt they approximately:: (0.2) one minute hah one time I had the statistics about

4. **(1)**

5.Mido: **taʔrīban raḥ yiṣīru malyon yəʕni.**

nearly will become-3PP a million Prt

nearly they [are] about to become a million Prt.

6.Sam: **waḷḷah[↑]**

Prt [↑]

[really][↑]

7.Mido: **((nod)) um hek ši[↑]**

((nod)) um something like that[↑]

8.Sam: **madine kbīre.**

city big.

a big city.

9.Mido: **?eh. ((puts food in his mouth))**

Yes.

Sam's third-position assessment (line 8) aligns with Mido's SPP in terms of grammatical polarity and implicature. However, the sequence here does not terminate immediately after Sam's assessment. Mido produces an agreeing 'eh' after which the sequence comes to closure. Mido's 'eh' (line 9) endorses Sam's assessment as the preferred turn within this position. Such endorsement indexes that intersubjectivity has been established and closure, therefore, is relevant (see section 5.2.1 above).

In the polar interrogative sequence (lines: 14 to 24) in excerpt (5-14) below, the respondent keeps expanding his SPP until the producer of the FPP produces a positive assessment in third position following which, the sequence comes to termination. The friends are discussing the qualities of different smartphones. Mido advances a hearsay proposition (Pomerantz, 1980) which assesses Wess's phone as complex to use (line 14). Mido's proposition is appended by the adjective 'ṣaḥi:' 'right:' which cedes the confirmation of such proposition to Wess.

(5-14) NS14-4

- 14. Mido: →** **kīf əššəǧl ʕlēh (.)**

fi nās ʕambiʔūlu	mʕaqqad sway ṣaḥi:ǧ
there are people saying	complicated a bit right:ǧ
some say that	it is complicated right:ǧ
- how the work on it (.) how does it work (.)
- 15. Wess: → ((holds his phone up))**

() wu haiy
() and this
- 16. Wess: →** **laʔ mū mʕaqqad šoof. (.) hāda (əlchārger)**
- no NegPrt complicated see. (.) this is the (charger)
- no it is not complicated see. (.) this is the (charger)

17. → (0.2)
18. **hāda əl cover tabafu**
 this is the cover belongs to it
 this is its cover
19. **(bass yūṣal) xaməstaʃʃ bəlmiyyi**
 (when it reaches) fifteen per cent
20. → (0.5)
21. → **hāda byəṣḥan byəʃtīk ʕəmər tāni lalbaṭṭāryy ()**
 this charges gives you life another to battery ()
 this starts to charge giving you extra battery life ()
22. → (0.8)
23. Wess: → **wu bnaʃs əlwʔət brotection.**
 and at the same time [it is] protection.
24. Mido: → **kwayyəs ↑**
 good ↑
25. (2)
26. Wess: **hāda huwwi. ((advancing the phone to Mido))**
 this [is] it.

Wess's SPP (line 16) is distanced from the FPP. Although it is type-conforming, it is still dispreferred as it is of an opposite polarity to that of the FPP and, in terms of action, it disconfirms the proposition of that FPP. Following a 0.2-second pause, in which Mido does not produce any talk, Wess elaborates on his SPP by providing several TCUs which describe the good qualities of his smartphone. It is noticeable that after each of those TCUs a gap follows in which Mido does not produce any talk, albeit that some of those gaps (lines: 16, 17, 20 and 22) constitute TRPs where change of speakership is possible. By withholding talk in those positions Mido displays his orientation to Wess's disconfirming, opposite-polarity SPP turn (line 16) as dispreferred (Schegloff, 1995, 2000b, 2001, 2007, 2016). Dispreference is expansion relevant and Wess keeps expanding his SPP until Mido produces the generic assessment 'kwayyəs' 'good'

in line 24, after which the sequence comes to termination. Mido's assessment in this example is positive in both form and implicature. Mido's third-position assessment actually does not target the first TCU from Wess's SPP (line 16) which is dispreferred; it endorses what has just preceded it. Mido's assessment is distanced from the dispreferred TCU in Wess's SPP. However, it still displays a positive stance towards something that Wess has said later in his turn. As Schegloff (2007, p. 124) puts it, assessment in third position is a "stance taken up". When such a stance is positive, it licences the closure of the sequence. All third-position assessments in the three examples, above, display positive stance towards what has just preceded them. It has been argued, in section (5.2.1) above, that displaying a positive stance in third position is one element which brings the polar interrogative sequence to termination. Positive assessments are used in this position to mark that there is something preferred or at least positive which the interactants could intersubjectively agree on and agreement is closure-relevant (Pomerantz, 1984a; Pomerantz & Heritage, 2013; Schegloff, 2007). It is important to mention that only one instance of a negative third-position assessment has been found in the data collected for this study. The negative assessment in this example, illustrated in excerpt (5-15) below, is not closure-relevant, nor is it adjacent to its relevant SPP. This example has been analysed in chapter 3, section (3.2.1) when discussing dispreferred SPPs to tag-marked FPPs. In this excerpt, Mido is proposing that the markets are busy on the day of his meeting with Wess. Mido backs his proposition with a tag, thus inviting Wess, who works in a shop in Oxford Street in central London, to confirm it. Wess's SPP (line 3) comes as dispreferred both in form, as it is of opposite polarity to Mido's FPP, and in action, as it disconfirms the FPP's proposition (Raymond, 2003).

(5-15) expanded from (3-15) chapter 3 section, 3.2.1

1. Mido: → **fī ḥarakət zabāyən ma he::k.**

there [is] movement [of] customers NegTag.

it is busy with customers isn't i::t.

2. Wess: → (1) ((upward headshake then a nod during the 1-second gap))
3. əl yōm ma fi ɣaraki wallah.
 today NegPrt there [is] movement Prt.
 today it's not busy Prt.
4. Mido: → uhm
5. Wess: maiyti bəl marra,
 [it is] dead completely,
 it is too quiet,
6. (0.2) ((Wess offers food to Mido))
7. Mido: ((accepting the proffered food)) kafu
 thanks
8. (0.2)
9. Wess: mḥaḍḍir ḥalak əl yō:m?
 prepare-2PS yourself toda:y?
 are you ready today?
10. Mido: → ɣajīb maɣ ʔənni walla:h zaḥme,
 strange though Prt: [it is] packed,
 that's strange although it is packed,
11. → əl oxford street əɣama m:- kətfak kətfak ɣahrak ɣahrak əlbašar
 the oxford street blindness m:- shoulder to shoulder back to back the people
 in oxford street blindness people were shoulder to shoulder back to back
12. Wess: → əl yōm kan fī muḥaḥarāt hōn,
 today were there protests here,
 there were protests here today,
13. Mido: → wallaḥ
 Prtḥ
 reallyḥ
14. Wess: ɣəɣḍ əl ḥəkūm(h)i(h)
 against the governe(h)nt(h)
15. (2)

Mido first receives Wess's SPP with the continuer 'uhm' (Schegloff, 1982) in third position. Such continuers are non-committal (Enfield, 2012) and expansion-relevant items (Goodwin, 1986; Stivers, 2009). By using such item in third position, Mido does not display agreement or endorsement of Wess's dispreferred SPP; if anything, using such item in third position invites an expansion which could remedy or mitigate the dispreferredness of the SPP (Lee, 2016; also see section 5.2.1 above). After receiving no remedial expansion from Wess, Mido produces the assessment 'ʕajīb' 'strange' (line 10) which casts doubt on Wess's SPP, thus displaying a negative stance towards it. In this sense, Mido's assessment is negative in implicature, although not in form. Mido's assessment is at some distance from the SPP, therefore it is not in a preferred contiguous relationship with the turn it targets. Upon receiving Mido's negative assessment, Wess accounts for why the market is busy (line 12); it is not because of too many shoppers, it is because there has been a protest on that day. Wess's account clarifies the misunderstanding involved in Mido's claim of busy markets and re-establishes intersubjectivity. Mido receives Wess's account as news, thus displaying a positive stance towards it (Maynard, 1997, 2003). Mido's news-mark turn marks the beginning of a new sequence and the closure of the previous one. Third-position negative assessment in this example is expansion relevant, it is produced within a dispreference-marked and expansion-relevant environment and it does not bring the sequence into immediate closure. This example, however, further demonstrates that SA interactants orient to intersubjectivity and agreement as a warrant to closing the sequence. Achieving intersubjectivity is one of the main preferences that third-position addresses in SA polar interrogative sequences.

5.2.3. Repetition

Sacks (1992b, p. 426) notes that repeats may be used in third position for claiming understanding of the prior turn. Schegloff (1996b, p. 178) has also highlighted the role of third-position repeats in receiving or registering "an utterance which was produced in second position as a response to

some first position utterance”. This subsection investigates third-position repeats in SA polar interrogative sequences. The first example to illustrate the use of third-position repeat is in excerpt (5-16). This excerpt is taken from a telling sequence in which Abed is telling Mido and Ram about a guy who used to sleep around with women even though he had a girlfriend. At line 5, Mido asks Abed about the nationality of that guy. For that purpose, Mido uses a tag-marked polar interrogative which invites Abed to confirm the proposition ‘oroppi’ ‘European’ as the nationality of that guy.

(5-16) expanded from (3-14) chapter 3 section, 3.2.1

1. Mido: **baʔa ʔəltelli tasaʔaʕš waḥde jab ʕala ġərəftu hada:ʔ**
 so you told me nineteen girls bring-3PS to his room that: [guy]?
 so you told me that he brought nineteen girls to his room?
2. Ram: **wū ʕandu girlfriend,**
 and he’s got [a] girlfriend,
3. Mido: **wū ʕandu girlfriendɿ**
 and he’s got [a] girlfriendɿ
4. Abed: **((nod))**
5. Mido: → **wu ə- oroppi ma heke. wu w-.**
 and ə- european NegTag. and w-.
 and ə- [he is] european isn’t he. and w-.
6. Abed: → **briʔani ((food in his mouth))**
 british
7. Mido: → **ʔiʔali.**
 italian
8. Abed: → **briʔani ↑**
 british
9. Mido: → **um briʔani,**
 um british,
10. Abed:→ **((nod))**

Abed responds to Mido with a non-conforming positively framed SPP in line 6 consisting of the word ‘briṭāni’ ‘British’. As Abed responds with food in his mouth, Mido initiates repair in third position (Schegloff, 1992) requesting Abed to confirm that what Mido heard him say is the word ‘ʔiṭali’ ‘Italian’, which bears some resemblance in SA pronunciation to the word ‘briṭāni’ (line 7). Abed responds by repeating his prior turn, with rising intonation to make it sound clearer. Mido receives this repaired version of Abed’s response with an um-prefaced repetition. Mido’s repair initiator ‘ʔiṭali’, at line 7, as well as his repeat at line 9 display his uptake of Abed’s prior responses. The first display of uptake does not match Abed’s prior response (line 6), it gets repaired in next turn. The second display of uptake ‘briṭāni’ does match Abed’s prior response and receives an affiliating nod from Abed (line 10). Third-position repetition in this example is used to register the prior turn as a response to a FPP and to display the recipient’s uptake of that response. Shortly after Mido displays his uptake which matches Abed’s response, the repair sequence comes to closure. The three following examples further clarify the organisation of third-position repetition in SA polar interrogative sequences. Excerpt (5-17) below is taken from a phone call between Mido and Wess after the latter has got back from a holiday in Spain. There are two polar interrogative sequences in the excerpt below. In the first sequence (lines: 8 to 10) Mido uses tag-marked polar interrogative requesting Wess to confirm a proposed assessment that his trip to Spain was wonderful. Wess responds to Mido’s polar interrogative FPP (line 8) with a type-conforming SPP in which he first confirms the proposition of Mido’s FPP, then he elaborates by producing another assessment of the trip. Mido receives Wess’s SPP with a repetition of the first part of that SPP, the part which constitutes the type-conforming confirmation ‘ʔeh wallāh’ ‘yes by God’. After producing this repetitive third, Mido initiates a new sequence (line 10).

(5-17) expanded from (3-38) chapter 3 section, 3.2.5⁶⁵

- 6. Mido:** **wa||ah tamām əl ɥamdəllah ʔassalāme**[↑]
 Prt perfect thanks to god for your safe [return][↑]
- 7. Wess:** **a||ah əysallmak (>a||ah əysallmak ɿ <) kānit holiday: rāʔiʕa**
 god keep you safe (>Allah keep you safe ɿ<) it was a holiday: amazing
 god keep you safe (>Allah keep you safe ɿ<) it was an amazing holiday
- 8. Mido:** → **kānet rāʔiʕa ma hē::kʔ**
 It was amazing NegPrt?
 It was amazing wasn't it?
- 9. Wess:** → **ʔeh wa||ah taɣyīr šəkəl.**
 yes Prt change [of atmosphere].
 yes by god [it was] a change of scene.
- 10. Mido:** → **ʔeh wa||ah (.) kīf halʔəsbānia šəftənnə əyyaha.**
 yes Prt (.) how that spain 1PS-saw-1PP it.
 yes by god (.) how did you find spain.
- 11. Wess:** **wa||ah ɥəlwi wu xəḍār wu-**
 Prt [it is] nice and green and=
- ((four lines omitted in which Wess describes Spain))**
- 16. Wess:** **əl balad fiyya masahāt šasiʕa wu ma fiyya zaɥmi ktīr**
 the country in it there [are] areas vast and NegPrt in it traffic too much
 there are vast areas of land in the country and there is not much traffic
- 17. Mido:** **aha**
- 18.** **(0.5)**
- 19. Wess:** **wu xəḍār wu nahər wu asār**
 and vegetation and a river and ruins
- 20. Mido:** **mumtaz wa||ah.**
 excellent Prt.

⁶⁵ This excerpt is further analysed in section 5.2.5 below.

21. (0.2)

22. → **ma rəḥəṭ ʕala: ↑ granāda?**

NegPrt went-2PS to: ↑ granada?

haven't you visited: ↑ granada?

23. (0.5)

24. → **ʔaʃr əlḥamraʕ**

palace alhambraʕ

alhambra palaceʕ

25. Wess: → **la waḷḷah kan busy ktīr əṭṭaḷḷaʕt ʕalinternet bəddak təḥjuz ʔabl: əbʔsbūʕēn.**

no Prt was busy too much I looked on the internet you need to book before: two weeks.

no Prt it was so busy I looked on the internet you need to book two weeks in advance.

26. Mido: → **aha aywa:: təḥjuz ʔabl: əbʔsbūʕēn.**

Oh okay:: book-2PS before: two weeks.

Oh okay:: you book two weeks in advance.

27. Wess: **yaḷḷah sidi ʔeh ma fi hal məʃkli yəʕne ()**

Prt master yes NegPrt there that problem Prt ()

It's alright master no worries Prt ()

28. Mido:

yaḷḷah əlj- əljayyat aktar mnərrayḥat.⁶⁶

Prt the com- the coming more than the missed.

it's alright the times that are coming are more than those which have passed.

29. (.)

30. Mido: **=inʃaʔaḷḷah (.) ʔeh mnīḥ waḷḷah kwayyes (.) hənne ʃu byəʃtəḡelə: ʔarāybak hunīk.**

=Prt (.) yes good by god great (.) they what work-3PS your relative there.

godwilling (.) yea that's good waḷḷah great (.) what does your relative do there.

In the second sequence (lines: 22 to 26), Mido produces a negative interrogative which asserts a stance implying that Wess should have visited Al Hambra Palace in Granada while in Spain.

⁶⁶ This is a Syrian idiomatic expression which people say when they have missed something, they express that it is not a big deal and the time will come when they will fulfil what they have missed.

Wess responds by disconfirming that he has visited that palace. He prefaces his SPP with the disconfirming ‘la wallāh’ ‘no by God’, after which he produces an account for why he has not visited that palace (for more detailed analysis of this sequence, see chapter 3, section 3.2.5). Mido receives Wess’s response with a composite third (see section 5.2.5 below) which consists of the receipt token ‘aha’, followed by the non-endorsing ‘aywa’ (see section 5.2.1 above), then a repetition of part of Wess’s SPP. What gets repeated in third position is the account which Wess has provided and which marks his orientation to Mido’s negative interrogative as an asserted stance towards visiting that palace rather than a FPP which asks for confirmation/disconfirmation. Wess’s account displays his understanding of Mido’s FPP as incorporating a specific marked stance. This display of understanding is what gets repeated in third position. The disconfirming ‘la wallāh’ is not repeated in third position in this sequence, unlike the turn-initial ‘ʔeh wallā’ in the prior sequence (lines: 8 to 10) which gets repeated in third position. The ‘ʔeh wallā’, in the first sequence is the preferred confirmation which Mido’s FPP in line 8 solicits. That ‘ʔeh wallā’ displays Wess’s understanding of Mido’s FPP as a request for confirmation. What gets repeated in third position in both sequences, then, is the part of the SPP which displays the respondent’s understanding of the action that the FPP is doing. In other words, the part that gets repeated is the part which addresses the preference(s) of the action which the FPP initiates. A similar instance is in excerpt (5-18) below. Wess is on the phone to his brother Hamid who lives in Germany. Wess asks his brother whether the Syrian immigrant population has reached a million in Germany. Wess’s FPP is marked with assertiveness. He first produces an assertive declarative statement which assumes that there are almost one million Syrians in Germany, then he follows it with a negative interrogative which further asserts his stance towards that figure (line 1). Wess’s negative interrogative invites Hamid to agree with the stance it implicates. Hamid orients to Wess’s FPP as seeking agreement by responding with an upgraded agreement (Pomerantz, 1984a) in line 3. In third position Wess repeats Hamid’s

upgraded agreement with infiltrating laughter (line 3). Wess, in this example, repeats the element which displays Hamid's understanding of the FPP, and which addresses the preference of that FPP.

(5-18) NDCALL16

1. Wess: → ʔe hallaʔ ʃar fiya malyōn sūre taʔrīban ʔalmānya ma[↑] ʃār fiyya malyōn[↑]
 yes, now become in it one million syrian approximately germany NegPrt[↑] become in it one million[↑]
 yes there is now approximately one million syrians in germany haven't[↑] they become one million[↑]
2. (0.2)
3. Hamid: → ʔaktar,
 more
4. Wess: → ha ha ʔa(h)kta(h)r
 ha ha m(h)o(h)re
5. Hamid: ()
6. Hamid: ()
7. Wess: əlʕama
 blindness

The following example further demonstrates that what gets repeated from the SPP in third position is the elements which display the respondent's understanding of the FPP and address its preferences. In the excerpt below, Mido is asking Wess for information on what bus he should take to get back home. Mido proposes bus number '25' first, then, upon receiving no response from Wess, repairs his inquisitive turn proposing the 'N8' bus number (line 61).

(5-19) NMC11

57. Mido: → baxod[↑] ʔəltelli bāʃ əl xamsa wu ʕəʃrīn[↑] ma he:k.
 I take[↑] you told me bus the five and twenty[↑] NegTag.
 you told me to take the twenty five bus didn't you.

58. Wees: ((putting food in his mouth)) ((brisk nod, then offers food to Mido)) *ṣwayġ*
a littleġ
59. Mido: → *twenty five (.) lā*
twenty five (.) no
60. *iza masalan (0.5) xallaṣna ṣassāṣa ətnaṣeš waḥde.*
if for instance (0.5) we finished at o'clock twelve one.
if for instance (0.5) we finished at twelve [or] one o'clock.
61. Wess: ((eybrows flahs with a slight nod))
62. Mido: → *ʔəlla əl ʔən eight?*
or the en eight?
or the N8?
63. Wess: → ((head shake then wipes his mouth)) *iza xallaṣt ṣassaāṣa ətnaṣeš ətnaṣeš wu nəṣ*
if you finished o'clock twelve twelve and a half
if you finished at twelve half past twelve
64. Mido: *ʔe*
yes
65. Wess: → *xod ʔən fifteen*
take en fifteen
take the N15
66. Mido: → *ʔən fifteen,*
N15
67. Wess: → ((nod))
68. Mido: *Wein biywaṣṣelni Hāda.*
Where it takes me This.
where [does] that [bus] take me
69. (1)

Wess produces a conditional SPP (lines: 63 and 65), the second part of which (line 65) provides the answer to Mido's FPP. Mido repeats that part from Wess's SPP in third position (line 66). This is the part which displays Wess's understanding of Mido's FPP as an information-seeking turn and which addresses its preference by providing the required information. The final example

to highlight this orientation towards third-position repeats is (5-20) below. Mido is calling Wess to organise a video shoot with him. After Wess blocks the possibility of meeting soon by stating that he has no [free] weekend for a month, Mido attempts a second try to organise the meeting by inviting Wess to his town (line 72). After a lengthy delay, Wess responds with a TCU that begins with a blocking ‘la’ followed by a rejecting ‘la?’, both of which are dispreferred components. However, midway through that TCU, Wess cuts it off and repairs it by producing a TCU which indicates that he is free on Wednesday (line 74). In third position, Mido repeats the word ‘əl ʔarbiʕaʔ’ ‘Wednesday’ (line 76) which refers to Wess’s availability for a visit. The same applies to the word ‘faḍi’ ‘free’ (line 82) which repeats the part of Wess’s SPP (line 81) that refers to his availability.

(5-20) expanded from (4-39) chapter 4 section, 4.4.3.

68. Wess: ə: ha ha ma: ma ʕande weekend laħalla? mən hōn la šahər yəʕne taʔrīban
 ə: ha ha NegP: NegP have-1PS weekend for now from now to a month Prt nearly
 ə: ha ha I do:n't I don't have a weekend free for nearly one month from now
69. Mido: ha ha
70. Mido: mən hōn la šahər (0.2) ʔeh ya||ah ma fi məšəkle
 from now to a month (0.2) yes Prt NegPrt there problem
 for a month from now (0.2) ok Prt no problem
71. mən hōn la šahər baʕəd šahər mnəji mənšūf .hhh mənšūf
 from now to a month after a month we come we see .hhh we see
 in a month I can come after a month and see .hhh I see
72. → ah ʔayyeb ʔante bəṭħəbb təji laħō:n?
 Prt Prt you like-2PS to come here?
 ah then would you like to come here?
73. (2)

74. Wess: → **la la:ʔ ʔana šū bəje-⁶⁷ əl ʔarbiʔā:ʔ ʕande faɖe lašūf ma baʕri lašūf**
 no no: I what will br- the Wednesday I have free let me see NegPrt 1PS-know let me see
 no no: what will br- wednesday I have it free let me see I don't know let me see
75. **iza laʔēt tiket ərxīša la hōn bəje**
 If I found a ticket cheap to here I'll come
 I'll come if I find a cheap ticket
76. Mido: → **əl ʔarbiʔaʔ**
 the wednesday
 on wednesday
77. Wess: **iza: bass ətticket ʕandak ʕayra ǧali** ↑
 if: but the ticket at yours has become expensive ↑
 if: but the ticket to your place has become expensive ↑
78. **lašūf bə:- bʔalliʕ ʕal interne:t iza laʔēt tiket ərxeeša bʔəllak**
 let me see I'll- I'll look on the interne:t if I found a ticket cheap I'll tell you
 let me see I'll- I'll look on the interne:t if I find a cheap ticket I'll inform you
79. Mido: → **əl ʔarbiʔaʔ əl jaye hāda** ↑ **əlli huwwe baʕəd kam yom ʔənte faɖi:ʔ**
 the Wednesday the coming this ↑ the one that [is] after few days you free:ʔ
 this coming wednesday after few days you are free:ʔ
80. **(0.5)**
81. Wess: → **ʔeh faɖe:,**
 yes free:,
82. Mido: → **faɖi (0.5) a:h faɖi kəll ənnhar ma ʕandak šəǧəl nihaʔiyyan.**
 free (0.5) a:h free all day NegPrt have-2PS work at all.
 free (0.5) a:h free all day you don't have any work at all.
83. Wess: **ʔeh faɖe ʔe:h kəll ənnhar.**
 yes free ye:s all day.
84. Mido: **ʔayyeb xarəj nəʕmel əttašwīr əl ʔarbiʔā:ʔ**
 ok possible 1PP-do the video recording the wednesday?
 ok is it possible that we do the video recording on wednesday?

⁶⁷ Wess is about to say: 'what will bring me', however, he repairs it.

In the examples (5-16 to 5-20) above, the part of the SPP which gets repeated in third position is the part that displays the respondent's understanding of the FPP, and which meets the preferences of that FPP.

In some cases, SA interactants may select to repeat the FPP or part of it in third position. The first example to illustrate this practice is in excerpt (5-21) below. Mido and Khan, who both work as graduate teaching assistants (GTAs), are discussing issues related to their work. Mido asks Khan whether forty is a pass mark for students. Khan produces a minimal SPP in line 2, thus orienting to Mido's FPP as asking for something obvious since the latter is working as a GTA and is supposed to know about such things (see chapter 4, section: 4.6.5). However, Mido repeats his FPP (line 3). Khan persists in his orientation towards Mido's inquiry as obvious and responds with an affiliative nod as a response to Mido's repeat. At this point, Mido pursues further confirmation by producing a *yeʔni*-marked question. The repetition of the FPP, in line 3, indicates that there is something still missing in Khan's response (Heritage, 1984a; Schegloff, 1996b, 2007). The *yeʔni*-marking in Mido's question (line 5) further highlights that there is something missing in Khan's response (see chapter 3, section: 3.2.2). In line 5, Mido specifies that he is asking whether forty is a bare pass mark.

(5-21) reproduced from (3-22) chapter 4, section 3.2.2

1. Mido: **hallaʔ arbʕīn najaḥʔ**

Prt forty [is] a pass [mark]ʔ

2. Khan: **((nod)) ʔeh.**

((nod)) yes.

3. Mido: ➔ **arbʕīn najaḥ,**

forty is a pass [mark],

4. Khan: **((nod))**

5. Mido: → **bass ʔal ʔedd yəʕni šəhəʔ.**

but on the verge Prt pulled.

but [it is] on the verge [of failure] Prt bare pass.

6. (0.2)

7. Khan: → **((nod)) ʔe tamāman.**

((nod)) yes exactly.

8. Mido: **((opens his mouth with a smile then turns his head and nods))**

9. Mido: → **ʔe:h.**

ye:s.

Khan's freestanding 'ʔeh' (line 2) affirms Mido's proposition but does not address the action of confirmation which his FPP seeks. Mido's third-position repeat (line 3) pursues such confirmation. When Khan produces the sought-after confirmation in line 7, Mido produces the endorsing third-position 'ʔeh' indexing that the sought-after preference has been addressed (see section 5.2.1 above). The sequence comes to a closure at that point. A similar instance is in excerpt (5-22). While Layla is informing Mido, Wess and Sam that Emirates airlines is globally ranked as one of the top airlines, Sam comes in overlap asking her whether that airline's ticket is expensive (line 17). Because of the overlap and because Layla has not held Sam's gaze while he is delivering his turn, he recycles his question (Schegloff, 1987) in line 19. Towards the completion of Sam's polar interrogative FPP (line 19), Layla comes in overlap with a minimal SPP consisting only of the affirming particle 'ʔeh' (line 20). Sam repeats part of his FPP in third position (line 21).

(5-22) FTs-19

9. Layla: **əlimaratiyye raqam wāhed**

emirates [airways] [is] number one

- 10.Sam: [uh ((nod))
- 11.Mido: [aha : ((nod))
- 12.Layla: (ʕa hād) taʕnīf əlʕālam hāda mu taʕnīfi
 ʔa this [is] ranking on the world this [is] not my ranking
 ʔa this [is] a global ranking this is not my ranking
13. Mido: uhmm
- 14.Layla: əlimaratiyye məʕʕərikat əlaʕālamyye əlli ʔāxde=
 emirates airlines is among the companies international which have obtained=
 emirates airlines is among the international companies which have=
- 15.Wess: ʔeh
 yes
- 16.Layla: =taʕnīf ʕalami
 =ranking global
 =global ranking
- 17.Sam: → ĠALIye:ɛ
 EXPEnsive:ɛ
- 18.Layla: ((shifts gaze towards Sam))
- 19.Sam: → ġaliye::↑ biṭa ʔta:ɛ
 expensive::↑ its tic ket:ɛ
 it's ticket is expensiveɛ
- 20.Layla: → ʔeh ((nod))
 yes
- 21.Sam: → ġaliy e,
 expen sive,
- 22.Wess: ((turns towards Layla)) fī:
 there : [is]
- 23.Layla: hallaʔ ʔhyānan bətlāʔi oferāt
 Prt sometimes you find offers
 however sometimes offers can be found
24. Layla: hallaʔ masalan bəʕʕəf waʔt əddeniye ktīr šōb
 now for example in summer the time [when] the weather [is] too hot

25. bišajjʕu ənnās tiji ʕalimarāt biyʕəmlu ʔasʕar həlwe

encourage-3PP people come to the UAE they make prices good

they encourage people to come to the UAE so they offer better prices

26.Sam: [həlu

nice

27. Mido: [uhm

Layla's minimal 'ʔeh' response, in line 20, marks her orientation to Sam's FPP as asking for something obvious. However, Sam does not orient to his polar interrogative (line 19) as such; he orients to it as asking for confirmation. Sam does not orient to Layla's freestanding 'ʔeh' as doing confirmation; he pursues such missing preference by repeating part of his FPP in third position. Following Sam's third-position repetition, Layla produces a turn (lines: 23, 24 and 25) in which she talks about the possibility of price offers by those airlines. In doing so, she implicitly confirms the proposition of Sam's polar interrogative FPP (line 1) that their tickets are expensive. Following Layla's expansion about the offers, Sam produces a positive assessment which marks his agreement and warrants the closure of the sequence (see section 5.2.2 above). The third example is a case which adds further support to the argument that third-position repeat of the FPP or part of it locates the preferences which the SPP has not addressed. In the excerpt below, Wess, in line 49, asks Mina about the brand of her smartphone. He proposes 'i-phone S' as its brand and follows that proposition by the tag 'mu'. While Mina is still busy with her phone, Wess adds an increment to his question specifying '5-S' as the proposed brand (line 51).

(5-23) NS14-4

49. Wess: → ((nod)) uhum ʔənte ʕandik ʔay fōn ess mū:ʔ

((nod)) uhum you have aiy phone es NegTag?

((nod)) uhum you have iPhone S isn't it?

50. (0.2) ((Mina is looking down at her smartphone))

51. Wess: → **five ess.**
 five es
 5S
52. Mina: **((lifts her head up and directs gaze towards Wess))**
53. → **((nod)) ess**
 ((nod)) es
 ((nod)) S
54. Wess: **wu five**
 and 5
55. Mina: **((one nod while she is looking down at her smart phone))**
56. Mido: **mætəl hāda ((holding Wess's smartphone))**
 like this [one]
57. Wess: **?eh hāda mætlu (?eh) ((with a nod))**
 yes this one [is] like that (yes)

Wess's FPP requests Mina to confirm that her phone is a '5-S'. Mina responds by repeating only the 'S' part, however she does not repeat the '5' part from Wess's FPP. Wess's third-position repetition is of the missing '5' part which has not been confirmed by a repetition in Mina's SPP, like the 'S' part. Wess's third then points to a preference that has not been addressed in Mina's SPP, the preference for full, not partial, confirmation of his proposition.

All the FPPs in the above examples (5-16 to 5-23) incorporate requests for confirmation. Requests for confirmation may be used as vehicles for various actions, such as requests for information, invitations, repairs, and many other actions (Schegloff, 2007; Raymond, 2003, 2013; Steensig & Heinemann, 2013). The preferred SPPs for such FPPs are the ones which do the required confirmation and address the action for which those FPPs are the vehicle. In such sequential environment, SA interactants use third-position repetition to register the preferences that a SPP has addressed and those which it has yet to address. Partial repetition of the SPP points out the elements in the SPP that have addressed the preference(s) of the FPP. On the other hand,

a partial or full repetition of the FPP points to preferences which the SPP has failed to address, thus prompting the respondent to address them in a possible expansion. The findings in this subsection fully conform with Schegloff's (2007, p.126) description of third-position repeats as "equivocal" with regard to either bringing the sequence to closure or leading to its expansion. When the form and action preferences of the FPP are addressed within the SPP, third-position repeat registers that, thus making closure relevant next. Where there are some preferences which are yet to be addressed, third position repeat of the FPP, or part of it, highlights them as missing and prompts the respondent to address them; in which case, third-position repeat makes expansion of the sequence relevant. The findings in this subsection reassert that third position is the last locale within the sequence where interactants can negotiate what preferences have been met and what preferences are yet to be met. It is the position where interactants register their understanding of the SPP as well as their co-interactants' understanding/misunderstanding of the preferences entailed within the FPP. The aim of such register is to bring the sequence to an intersubjective and agreement-marked closure.

5.2.4. Laughter

Third position in SA polar interrogative sequences is sometimes occupied by laughter. This subsection investigates the organisation of third-position laughter in SA polar interrogative sequences. Third-position laughter is rare in the data collected for this study. Only nine instances of third-position laughter are depicted among the 315 polar sequences analysed for this study. One of these instances is found in excerpt (5-24) below in which Ali, Ram, Mido and Abed are discussing the topic of going to nightclubs. Abed is against that, and he is trying to dissuade his friends from such activities.

(5-24) expanded from (4-25) chapter 4 section, 4.4.1

1. Abed: iza ənte bətbəʃʃed ʃan haʃʃaɣla:t aʃʃah bibəʃʃeda ʃannak

if you keep away from such thin:gs god will keep them away from you

2. Mido: (0.2) uhm

3. Abed: yəʃni ʃambəħkīlak wujhet nəzər ə: ʃāret maʃi (.)

Prt I'm telling you a point of view ə: it happened to me (.)

4. Abed: yəʃni la trūħ ʃal bār ma btəji laʃandak

Prt [do] not go to the bar NegPrt comes to you

Prt [do] not go to the bar it won't come to you

5. Ram: → sāmeʃ ya ali::?

you hear [that] Prt ali::?

are you listening ali::?

6. Ali: → sāmeʃ ()

I'm listening ()

7. Ram: → [ha ha ha ha]

8. Mido: → [ha ha ha ha]

9. Ali: → [ha ha ha ha]

10. Abed: → qasman billāh ʃam bəħkīlak (0.2) ʃabb halla? hōn masaln kām bār fi.

I swear to god I'm tellin g you (0.2) ok now here for instance how many bars [are] here.

11. Ali: →

ʃaffile hal kamera () ha ha ha

switch off that camera () ha ha ha

12. Ram: →

ha ha ha ha

13. Mido: →

ha ha ha ha

14. Abed: .hh maʃleʃ (.) kām bār fi hōn?

.hh nevermind (.) how many bars [are] here?

15. waʃʃahi wala baʃref wala wāħ fiyon wala fətt ʃala wāħed

Prt not 1PS-know any one of them never entered to one

I swear to god [that] I don't know any of them and I [have] never been to any one

16. Mido: uhum



Figure: 5-24 (line 11: Ali is pointing at the camera
and asking Mido to switch it off)

After Abed completes his turn (lines: 3 to 4) in which he is advising Ali against going to clubs, Ram produces a polar interrogative FPP (line 5) which requests Ali to confirm that he is listening to Abed's advice. Ali responds with a confirming repetition (line 6) followed by some inaudible talk. Ram comes with a laugh in third position. Ali reciprocates Ram's laughter (line 7) and so does Mido (line 8). However, Abed does not reciprocate laughter with the other parties. After Ali, Ram and Mido bring their laughter turns to completion, Abed starts a new sequence on the same topic: going to bars (line 10). Ali then produces a turn which overlaps with Abed's topic-continuation turn (line 11). Ali's overlapping turn consists of two TCUs, the first is an imperative asking Mido, who is filming the conversation, to switch off the camera. The second TCU consists of laughter (line 11). Ali's laughter in this position is also reciprocated by Ram and Mido, but not by Abed. Instead of reciprocating the laughter, Abed carries on talking about the same topic, however, by initiating a new sequence (line 14). By producing only bursts of laughter, the three recipients orient to Abed's advice sequences as a source of trouble (Jefferson, 1979, 1984b). Ali's overlapping turn (line 11) which is not relevant to what Abed is talking about and which asks Mido to switch off the camera further displays his orientation to Abed's advice turns as problematic; since switching off the camera may indicate that he is about to go into some heated argument with Abed which he does not want to be video recorded. Jefferson (1984a, p. 191) notes that a 'recurrent device to move out of trouble-telling is entry into closing'. Interactants

may orient to sequence closure by producing items which do not add or invite further talk to the sequence (Curl & Walker, 2006; Holt, 2010; Holt & Drew, 2005). Laughter does not add any further talk to the sequence. Laughter, therefore, can be used as a closing-relevant element (Holt, 2010). Laughter, in the example above, contributes to progressing the sequences, in which it occupies third position, towards closure, however, it fails to bring the trouble-infused topic-talk to that end.

Excerpt (5-25) below, further highlights the sequential organisation of third-position laughter in SA polar interrogative sequences. After Ram produces an assessment of his romantic adventures as changing in tandem with the weather, Mido produces a display of ritualised disbelief in line 8. His ritualised disbelief is accompanied with laughter due the overdone nature of Ram's assessment of his romantic adventures (Holt, 2011) as one would not normally expect that the weather would have an impact on romantic adventures. Mido recycles his surprise by producing a polar question (Wilkinson & Kitzinger, 2006) which asks whether Ram's romantic adventures succeed or fail when there is rain (line 10). Ram responds with a *la?*-prefaced positive SPP which confirms one of the alternatives offered to him by Mido; that his adventures fail when there is rain. Ram's confirmation is incongruent with common sense according to which there is no direct link between the failure of romantic adventures and rainy weather, and Mido receives this confirmation of Ram's with laughter (Clift, 2016b). Ram reciprocates laughter with Mido then moves to explaining why his romantic adventures fail when it rains (lines: 14, 15 and 17). Following Ram's explanation Mido produces laughter with '*?eh*' in line 18, then an aligning assessment in line 19. Ram responds to Mido's assessment with an affirming agreeing '*?eh um*' after which Mido produces laughter and '*?eh*' in line 21, then the sequence comes to closure.

(5-25) GD11-5

1. Mido. **kīf muḡaf- muḡamarātak əlʕātifiye kīfa,**
 how advent- your adventures romantic how [are] they,
 how advent- your romantic adventures how [are] they,
2. Ram. **muḡamarāti**

əlʕātifiye m:
romantic m:
my romantic
ha ha ha ha

fašal bi fašal
 my adventures romantic m: failure [followed] by failure
 my romantic adventures are failure after failure
3. Mido.
4. Mido. **əlfama**
 blindness
5. Ram. **mən fašal ?ila ?āxar uhum**
 from one failure to another uhum
6. Mido. **uh hə mən fašal ?ila ?āxar**
 uh hə from failure to another
7. Ram **wū btəṭṭhawwal maʕ əṭṭaqes kamān ha**
 and it changes with the weather also ha
8. Mido. **waḷḷah? ha ha ha**
 really? ha ha ha
9. Ram: **ha ha**
10. Mido: → **>ɣəʕni masaln < iza kān fi maṭar masaln btənjaḥ ?əlla m:-**

btəʕšal.
it fails.
it fails.
la btəʕšal
no [it] fails

 >Prt for instance< if was there rain for instance it succeeds or m:-
 >Prt for instance< if it was raining for instance it succeeds or m:-
11. Ram: →
12. Mido: → **ha ha ha**
13. Ram: → **ha ha ha**
14. **bəzzāt bəlḥāle mətəl hōn bʔəngeltra**
 particularly in the case like here in england
 particularly in a [country] like england
15. **btəʕšal yaʕni**
 it fails Prt

16. Mido: **ʕbtəfʕal**

ʕit fails

17. Ram: **biʕīr maʕar əlʕālam bəʕīr təlbəs ʕawīl**⁶⁸ ()

it becomes rainy people will put on long

when it rains people will wear long clothes

18. Mido:

ha ha ha ʕeh

ha ha ha yes

19. Mido: **ma ʕād baʕa fī ʕī** **yiʕajjəʕ ʕəʕni**

not anymore there is something encouraging Prt

there won't be anything encouraging then

20. Ram:

ʕeh um

yes um

21. Mido: **ha ha ha ʕə:h**

ha ha ha ye:s

22. Abed: **ʕana hōn bəʕʕəf (0.5) ((chewing food)) byəxʔor bibali mawdūʕ əjjāze ktīr**

I here in summer (0.5) ((chewing food)) comes across my mind the issue of marriage too much

I think too much about marriage during summer here

The reciprocated laughter between Ram and Mido (lines: 12 and 13) has brought the polar interrogative sequence, in which it is the third, to closure, however it has not brought the topic to closure. Ram and Mido continue talking on that topic until both exchange positive-stance agreeing elements (lines: 18 to 21) after which the on-topic talk terminates. This instance bears similarity to example (5-21, lines: 7-8-9 and 11-12-13) above where laughter could bring the current polar interrogative sequence, but not the whole topic, to termination. Closing the on-topic talk is done after the exchange of the positive stance particles (lines: 18, 20 and 21), which indexes that mutual understanding and agreement have been achieved. Excerpt (5-26) below, includes another instance where laughter brings the polar interrogative sequence to closure,

⁶⁸ Ram here means that when it rains, women wear long clothes. Mido reciprocates by saying that in such case, there is nothing encouraging; he implicates that men will be more encouraged to romance when they see women wear short clothes. The whole conversation here is meant as a joke.

however it does not bring the whole topic to that end. The excerpt shows friends ordering food for their meal at a restaurant. Abdul, who previously said that he is not going to have food because he is on diet, changes his mind and orders some food. Rafi, picking up on what Abdul has done, produces a negative interrogative turn in which he puts that contradictory behaviour of Abdul in question (line 8).

(5-26) expanded from (4-32) chapter 4 section, 4.4.2

2. Kalaf: **kamān xalli ətnēn ʔarāyes wu ha**
also let it be two arāyes and ha
3. Abdul: **tlate ʃāru**
three they have become
they are now three
4. Waiter: **ʃāru talata**
they have become three
they are three
5. Kalaf: **wa wah ()**
and and ()
6. Abdul: ((shifts gaze towards Mido, one nod, eyebrow flash, then moves hand in a semi-circle))
7. Mido: **((nod)) ʔeh**
((nod)) yes
8. Rafi: → **abdul. ((forward bend)) mū ma baddak takolə**
abdul. ((forward bend)) NegPrt NegPrt want-2PS eatə
abdul. ((forward bend)) wasn't [the case] not you want to eatə
abdul. ((forward bend)) didn't you [say] that you wouldn't eatə
9. → **(1)**
10. Abdul: → **taḍmunan maʕ əššabibe waḷḷah.**
in solidarity with the guys Prt.
11. Rafi: → **[Ha Ha Ha Ha]**
12. Karam: → **[ha ha ha]**
13. Mido: **[()]**

14. Rafi: → ʕa ʔasas ma baddak tākol.

It was the case NegPrt want-2PS to eat.

I thought you don't want to eat.



Figure: 5-26 (lines 9 and 10: bursts of laughter)

After 1-second gap, which marks trouble and projects dispreference, Abdul responds to Rafi's negative interrogative turn with a non-conforming SPP of opposite-polarity to Rafi's FPP. Abdul's response neither agrees nor disagrees with Rafi's proposition, therefore it does not address the action that Rafi's FPP makes relevant next. In this respect, Abdul's SPP is dispreferred in both form and action. At the TRP of Abdul's SPP, Rafi produces laughter in third position (line 11). This laughter is reciprocated by Karam and probably by Mido (lines: 12 and 13), but not by Abdul. The sequence, at this point, comes to a closure. However, at line 14, the topic-talk is revived by Rafi who repeats the polar interrogative query from his previous turn (line 8). This example further asserts that SA interactants orient to third-position laughter as a resource which brings the trouble-marked sequence, but not the whole trouble-marked topic, to closure.

All the polar interrogative sequences in excerpts (5-24 to 5-26) above are marked with trouble. Laughter, especially when it is reciprocal, creates a 'juncture' where there is no further talk (Button, 1991, p. 252; Holt, 2010). This quality makes laughter a suitable resource which provides a break away from the trouble source without compromising the progressivity of the interaction. Hence, its use in third position within trouble-infused polar interrogative sequences

could halt the trouble-talk (Jefferson, 1979, 1984) and may eventually bring the trouble-infused polar sequence to closure. However, third-position laughter in SA, does not necessarily bring the trouble-talk topic to closure. Interactants may select to continue on-topic talk until they reach mutual understanding and agreement; an end which warrants both sequence and topic-closure (Schegloff & Sacks, 1973).

Laughter can be considered as a conflict-minimisation resource. Due to its nature as an utterance which does not compromise the progressivity of the interaction, yet capable of effecting a break from the trouble sources, laughter could halt the development of a projectable conflict, while keeping the flow of the interaction contiguously uninterrupted. Such findings, however, are limited to third-position laughter within the SA polar interrogative instances collected for the present study. Helani (2008) has found that laughter, on its own, can bring a telling sequence to immediate closure with no further continuation or renewal of the topic of the telling sequence. Telling sequences, however, may not adumbrate the same type of conflict which polar interrogative sequences, especially negative interrogatives, might. However, the example below from Helani (2008) contains third-position laughter in a trouble-infused polar interrogative sequence and it shows the same organisation of third-position laughter discussed in this subsection. Third-position laughter in the excerpt below brings the trouble-marked polar interrogative sequence to closure, but it does not bring the trouble-marked topic to that end. In this excerpt, AR is calling SI, who is learning how to drive, to ask him about his progress in learning how to drive. AR uses the dispreferred negative interrogative form to jokingly ask SI whether he smashes into lampposts while he is driving (line 193). SI responds to AR's sarcastic FPP with a repair initiator thus marking trouble in that FPP and projecting a dispreferred SPP (Drew, 1997; Schegloff, 2007). AR produces some inaudible talk accompanied with laughter in response to SI's repair initiator, after which SI produces a turn which does not answer AR's negative interrogative FPP, but accuses it of entailing ridicule, thus marking it as a trouble-

203. lesaŋ ʕam bso:ʔ *yaŋni* ew ()
 still driving *Prt* and ()

The example above asserts that SA interactants use third-position laughter for the purpose of bringing a trouble-infused polar interrogative sequence to termination, however third-position laughter does not appear to contribute to bringing the whole trouble-infused topic to that end.

5.2.5. Composites

The above sections (5.2.1 to 5.2.4) have so far investigated thirds which consist of a single component such as ‘ʔeh’, ‘aywa’, ‘ah’, repeats, assessments and laughter. SA speakers may select to use a combination of elements in the third position of a polar interrogative sequence; what Schegloff (2007, p. 127) refers to as “composites”. The following example (5-28) contains an instance of a composite third in a polar interrogative sequence. This excerpt is taken from a phone call in which Mido is trying to organise a trip with his girlfriend to London where Wess lives. Mido suggests going to a place in London called Shoreditch where there are some nightclubs.

(5-28) expanded from (3-13) chapter 3 section, 3.2.1

- 210. Mido:** **wu barki mən rūḥ ʕala šo- šor- ə:: šorditch bəlləl šu raʔyak.**
 and perhaps we go to sho- shor- ə:: Shoreditch at night what do you think.
- 211.** **(2)**
- 212. Wess:** **ʔe::h ʔə mətəl ma baddak**
 ye::s yes as what you like
 ye::s yes as you like
- 213. Mido:** **bəṯḥəbb ətrūḥ ʕa clu:b.**
 like-2PS-masc go-2PS-masc to clu:b.
 would you like to go to a clu:b.
- 214. Wess:→** **ma fiyya še ()**
 NegPrt in it thing ()
 there is nothing in it ()

215. Mido:→ ʕambətʔəlli ʔənnu fiyya[↑] nightclubs() mu hēk?
 you are telling me that in it [there are][↑] nightclubs () NegTag?
 you are telling me that there are[↑] nightclubs there () aren't you?
216. Wess:→ ʔeh bass hadōli bass yōmēn bass yōm əljəmʕa: wəssabət.
 yes but these only two days only day Friday: and saturday.
 yes but these are [open] only for two days on friday and saturday.
217. Mido:→ aha:: jəmʕa wussabət ʕahī::,
 aha:: Friday and Saturday right::,
218. → maʕnata mnəji nhar baʔa (.) tkūn ʔənte faḍi yōm jəmʕa ʔaw: əssabət
 that means we come on a day Prt (.) on which you will [are] free friday: or Saturday
219. Mido: barki hēk mnəʔʕədənnə yōmēn tləte
 perhaps as such we [could] stay two days three
 perhaps then we [could] stay two [or] three [days]
220. (1)
221. blondon mnəhʕəzənnə bʕi hostel bʕi ʕaḡle
 in london we book at some hostel or something
222. wu mənṛūḥ ʕala ʕordə- ʕorditch hay mənjarra
 and we go to shored- shoreditch that [place] we try it
223. Wess: ʔeh ʔəlle ʔemta ma bəddak mənʕabbəʔa ()
 yes tell me whenever that want-2PS-masc we'll sort it ()
 yes tell me whenever you want and we'll sort it ()

Mido produces a challenging turn (line 215) when Wess tells him that there is nothing in Shoreditch. Mido's challenging turn consists of an initially assertive part followed by a tag which mitigates its assertiveness and invites Wess to confirm it. Wess responds with a SPP which does not fully confirm Mido's FPP, however, it provides information about the opening days of those clubs (line 216). The turn-initial 'aha::', in Mido's third, orients to the informing part of Wess's SPP. The repetition in that turn points to the part in Wess's turn which refers to the days on which those club are available. The last component of Mido's third is the agreeing confirming

assessment ‘šaḥī:’ ‘right’ (Schegloff, 2007, pp. 8-9). After this composite third, the polar interrogative sequence closes and another sequence which progresses the action of organising the trip to London follows (lines: 218 to 223). A similar practice could be found in excerpt (5-29) below from Helani (2008). MH is calling RA to arrange a visit to a friend. MH obviously does not know the location of that friend’s house. He asks RA whether he knows it (line 558). RA responds with a type-conforming confirming repetitive SPP (line 559). In third position, MH receives RA’s preferred SPP with the endorsing ‘ʔeh’ coupled with the positive assessment ‘kwayes’ ‘good’ (line 560). This polar interrogative sequence is then closed and what follows is a progress of the arrangement action towards accomplishment.

(5-29) modified from (Helani, 2008, pp. 306-307)

555. RA: Maṣna:ta el mawʕed taḡet.

So the appointment [is] final.

556. MH: Mm

557. (0.5)

558. MH: .mp BASS ENTE BTAʕREF BETO?

.mp BUT YOU KNOW HIS HOUSE?

559. RA: → ʔEh baʕrfo.

Yes I know it.

560. MH: → ʔEh kwayes laʔano:*:* fakkarna ʔna ew ʕAdul Sameeʕ ʔenno

Yes [that’s] good because:*:* we thought I and Adul Sameeʕ

Yes [that’s] good because:*:* Adul Sameeʕ and I thought

561. šlu:n bedna nro:h. ʔalli mənnaṣṣeq= ʔeltello waḷḷah

how can we go he told me [that] we arrange= I told him Prt

562. beddak tʕo:f ḡada ʕbyaʕref el be:t

you need to find someone ʕ[who] knows the house

563. tnasseq maʃo:£ .hhh
 to arrange with him£ .hhh

MH's third position 'ʔeh' endorses that both action and form preferences have been addressed in the SPP (see section 5.2.1 above). The positive assessment which follows that 'ʔeh' indexes that intersubjectivity and agreement have been achieved; this constitutes a warrant for closing the sequence and moving to next matters. The following excerpt (5-30) contains a polar interrogative sequence in which the main action is an offer.

(5-30) reproduced from (4-53) chapter 4, section 4.6.1

- 1.Salim** **→ ʔad- ə: nsawi ʃaiy?**
 ʔad- ə: 1PP-make tea?
 so ə: shall we make tea?
- 2.Wess:** **umm?**
- 3.** **(2)**
- 4.Wess:** **((nod)) maʃʔul.**
 reasonable.
- 5.Salim:** **a:hɛ**
 tagɛ
- 6.Wess:** ***ʔe:h***
 ʔe:s
- 7.Wess:** **((nod))**
- 8.Wess:** **ʔənti bəddak ʃaiy[↑]?**
 You want tea[↑] ?
- 9. Salim:** **→ umm**
- 10. Wess:** **→ ʔeh əʔməlu (.) ʃaiy ʔaxɖar,**
 yes make it (.) tea green,
 yes make it (.) green tea,

In the excerpt above, Salim offers to make tea, but Wess does not produce an immediate explicit acceptance. However, after responding with a croaky ‘ʔe:h’ Wess asks Salim whether *he* wants tea. The answer to this question is obvious as Salim is the one who is offering to make tea. Salim orients to the obviousness of Wess’s response by answering with a minimal ‘umm’ which implicates affirmation in this sequential context. The immediate acceptance of offers is a dispreferred action in Middle Eastern Arabic culture and recipients of offers usually make their acceptance of the offer contingent on the insistence of the offerer on the offer (Abu Abah, 2018). Wess orients to this preference by delaying his explicit acceptance of the offer, and later, by asking Salim whether he wants tea, thus inviting Salim’s insistence on making tea. Following Salim’s insisting response in line 9, Wess produces an endorsing ‘ʔeh’ in third position (line 10) followed by the word ‘əʔməlu’ ‘make it’ which licences the action of making tea. Then, Wess asks for green tea. The composite third in this instance also progresses the action towards accomplishment.

The SPPs in the three examples above are all preferred in terms of form. They are all type-conforming and of the same polarity of their relevant FPP. In terms of action, they all have elements which progress the main action of the sequence towards accomplishment. All the SPPs in the polar sequences above are in a contiguous relationship with their FPPs, which further highlights their preferred nature. However, two cases have been identified in the data, in which a composite third is used in a different environment from that in the cases above. In the first example, Mido is asking Wess about his latest trip to Spain. Mido uses negative interrogative, in line 22, putting in question whether Wess has visited a specific historical place while he was in Spain.

(5-17-a) reproduced from (5-17) section 5.2.3 above

22. **ma rəḥət ʕala: ↑ granāda?**

NegPrt went-2PS to ↑ granada?

haven't you visited ↑ granada?

23. **(0.5)**

24. **ʔaʕr əlḥamraʕ**

palace alhambraʕ

alhambra palaceʕ

25. Wess: → **la waʕlāh kan busy ktīr əṭṭallaʕt ʕalinternet bəddak təḥjuz ʔabl: əbʔsbūʕēn.**

no Prt was busy too much I looked on the internet you need to book before: two weeks.

no Prt it was so busy I looked on the internet you need to book two weeks in advance.

26. Mido: → **aha aywa:: təḥjuz ʔabl: əbʔsbūʕēn.**

Oh okay:: book-2PS before: two weeks.

Oh okay:: you book two weeks in advance.

27. Wess: → **yaʕlāh sidi ʔeh ma fi hal məʕkli yəʕne** ()

Prt master yes NegPrt there that problem Prt ()

It's alright master no worries Prt ()

28. Mido:

yaʕlāh əlj- əljayyat aktar mnərrayḥat.⁶⁹

Prt the com- the coming more than the missed.

it's alright the times that are coming are more than those which have passed.

29. **(.)**

30. Mido: → **=inšaʔaʕlāh (.) ʔeh mnīḥ waʕlāh kwayyes (.) hənne ʕu byəʕtəḡelə: ʔarāybak hunīk.**

=Prt (.) yes good by god great (.) they what work:-3PS your relative there.

=godwilling (.) yes that's good waʕlāh great (.) what does your relative do there.

Wess responds to Mido's negative interrogative with a disconfirming SPP of the opposite syntactic polarity. Wess's SPP however contains an account which addresses the stance displayed

⁶⁹ This is a Syrian idiomatic expression which people say when they have missed something, they express that it is not a big deal and the time will come when they will fulfil what they have missed.

in Mido's FPP. Mido's third in this example is prefaced with the information receipt token 'aha' which marks Wess's SPP as supplying unknown-before information, followed by 'aywa' which marks dispreference in the SPP. The last component in Mido's third is a repetition of the account which displays Wess's acceptance of Mido's stance. In other words, Mido's third contains a repeat of the preferred element in Wess's SPP. What comes after this third is a "postmortem" sequence (Schegloff, 2007, p.143) in which Wess challenges the stance which Mido's FPP entails by implicating that it is not a problem not to visit that place (line 27). Mido then insists on his stance by uttering a SA idiomatic expression (line 28) which prospects that there might be times in the future when Wess will visit that place. Following that idiomatic expression, Mido produces another composite turn (lines: 28 and 30) which includes three closure-relevant items: turn-initial invocation of God, 'ʔeh', and a positive assessment. After this composite turn, the sequence and the talk on the topic of visiting that palace comes to closure. Mido's composite third (line 26) highlights some dispreference in Wess's SPP by containing the particle 'aywa' (see section 5.2.1 above). Wess orients to the dispreference indexed by the third position 'aywa' by producing an expansion (line 27) in which he challenges Mido's FPP. Including 'aywa' in composites appears to indicate that intersubjectivity is yet to be achieved, therefore closure cannot be warranted. However, Mido's composite turn (lines: 28 and 30), which is marked with positive-stance elements, manages to bring the sequence to closure. Example (5-31) may further illustrate this orientation to 'aywa' in composite thirds. In the following excerpt, Wess is announcing the news to Mido that he has a job interview the coming week (line 1). Mido receives the news announcement by asking whether it was some job that he already knows about (line. 2). Mido uses polar interrogative for that purpose.

(5-31) reproduced from (4-8) chapter 4 section, 4.1

1. Wess: **ʔəsbooʃ əl jaiy ʕandi muʔabali ʔəltellak?**

week the next I have an interview I told you?

next week I have an interview have I told you?

2. Mido: → **əbnafsu hāda əššəgəl?**

at the same that job?

at that same job?

3. Wess: → **((with eyebrow flash and upward headshake)) tsk bi jewellers.**

tsk at *jewellers*.

4. Mido: →	[aywa jewellers]	(.) a:ʔa::a	[šəgle ʕazeeme hāda]
	okay jewellers	(.) a:ʔa::a	something great this [is]
	okay jewellers	(.) a:ʔa::a	that is great
5. Wess:	[((nod))]		[((two nods))]

6. (1) ((during this gap Wess turns his face away and disengages gaze with Mido))

7. Mido: **hāda kif biyʕti bəssaʕa ʔəlla bərratebɔ**

that how it pays per hour or by salaryɔ

that [shop] how does it pay per hour or by salaryɔ

Wess responds to Mido's news receipt by disconfirming the proposition it entails. Wess does that by producing what Lee (2016, p.60) terms as a "replacement response" in which the respondent disconfirms by producing an item which replaces the proposition of the FPP rather than by grammatically negating it. Mido receives Wess's replacement disconfirmation with an aywa-prefaced third which repeats Wess's SPP then provides an assessment thereof. Following Mido's third, Wess turns his face away from Mido and does not produce any elaboration on the news he has announced (Maynard, 1997). It is Mido who later solicits such elaboration by asking questions about that workplace. The composite third in this example has managed to bring the polar interrogative sequence to closure, but it has not progressed the news announcement sequence towards the relevant and preferred elaboration phase (ibid; Steensig & Heinemann,

2013, p. 215). Mido's third repeats the informing part of Wess's news and provides an upgraded positive assessment of it. However, Mido's third contains 'aywa'. Both examples (5-17-a) and (5-31) above show that respondents orient to a composite third which contains 'aywa' as dispreference indicative. Such thirds indicate that intersubjectivity is yet to be achieved, thus inviting post-sequence expansions which aim at achieving that end. Unlike freestanding particles and single TCUs, composites are extended turns. Their expansive extent constitutes a break after which interactants may select to start a new sequence rather than to expand the SPP which has preceded those composite thirds. Composites in SA polar interrogative sequence, therefore, deploy a sequential organisation related to the extent of the turn as well as the preference for contiguity to coerce the sequence into closure. When composite thirds are used in a preference-marked sequence, they bring that sequence to immediate closure. When they are used in dispreference-marked polar interrogative sequences, they may get challenged (as in example 5-17-a), or they may receive a negative reaction such as in example (5-30) where Wess withholds elaborating on the news he has announced. However, any challenge or expansion post such dispreference-indicative composites constitutes the start of a new sequence rather than an expansion of the current sequence. Finally, it is important to note that, in the data collected for this study, only the two examples above contain a composite third in a dispreference-marked polar interrogative environment.

Summary of findings in section 5.2

At third position, SA questioners display their stance towards the responsive SPP and renew or repair the stance they have assumed in their FPPs. SA has made available various resources for those purposes. A freestanding '?eh' endorses the SPP as preferred and indicates that intersubjectivity and agreement have been achieved, thus warranting the closure of the sequence. 'Aywa' marks dispreference within the SPP, thus prompting its producer to repair their stance by adding an expansion to that SPP in which they could remedy or mitigate the dispreference which

it entails. The receipt token 'ah' is neutral in that it does not mark preference nor dispreference of the SPP. It just registers the SPP as informative. However, SA interactants orient to the neutrality of this particle by expanding their SPP until they receive an endorsing third which indicates that intersubjectivity has been achieved, then closure is warranted. Positive assessments in third position are more like '?eh' in that they display a positive stance towards the SPP, therefore indicating that agreement and intersubjectivity have been achieved, hence licencing the move to closure. In contrast, negative-implicature assessments prompt expansion of the sequence until intersubjectivity and agreement are achieved. Repetition in third position in SA polar interrogative sequences is used to indicate which preferences have been addressed by the SPP and which preferences have not. Third position repeat of the SPP, or part of it, locates which part of the SPP has addressed the preferences of the FPP. Repeating the FPP, or part of it, singles out the preferences of the FPP that have not been addressed by the SPP, and renews the invitation for the respondent to address them. Laughter is used in trouble-infused polar interrogative sequences to provide a break from the trouble talk, and, consequently, to bring the trouble-sequence to closure. However, laughter does not seem to guarantee bringing the trouble-talk topic to closure as interactants may revive it after the trouble-infused sequence has been closed by laughter. Composites benefit from their expanded extension to bring the sequence to closure; their expanded extension compromises any possible contiguity between the SPP and any possible expansion of it. They do not, therefore, allow collaborative closure of the sequence. Composites may contain some elements which ostensibly display intersubjectivity in order to bring the sequence to closure. However, in dispreference-marked polar interrogative sequences and when the composite third contains an element which marks that dispreference, composites may coercively bring the polar interrogative sequence to closure. However, closing a dispreference-marked sequence coercively with a composite may have some negative consequences on a post sequence level. This may explain why composite thirds are rarely used in dispreference-marked

SA polar interrogative sequences. The argument in this section highlights that closure of the polar interrogative sequence *per se* is not as important in SA as establishing intersubjectivity by the end of the sequences. It is intersubjectivity and mutual agreement which SA interactants pursue by the end of the sequence, and to which they orient as a warrant to the closure of the sequence.

5.3. Non-relevance of third position

The data shows that not all polar interrogative sequences include thirds in SA. The first observation is that almost half of the collected samples (49.2%) lack a third. The second observation is that some of the polar interrogative sequences in which the SPP is preferred to be minimised (see Chapter 4, section 4.6) also lack thirds. The last observation is that there are polar interrogative sequences in which the SPP consists of an epistemic denying TCU, such as ‘ma baʃref’ ‘I don’t know’, or in which the SPP challenges the askability of the FPP; such sequences mostly lack thirds. This section investigates the organisational elements behind the lack of thirds in such sequences.

5.3.1. Minimisation-relevant sequences

I start this discussion by analysing examples of some polar sequences where the SPP is preferred to be minimised in SA polar interrogative sequences (see chapter 4, section 4.6). One of those is the repair insert sequence. Example (5-32) shows one of those sequences. MH is inquiring whether RA has been in contact with their friend ‘Ahmad’. MH uses a popular Syrian nickname ‘Abo ḥmēd’ to refer to that friend. This nickname can refer to the name ‘Ahmad’ as well as the name ‘Mohammed’. This is why the referent ‘Abo ḥmed’ in MH’s turn (line 577) poses a problem as it may refer to either ‘Ahmad’ or ‘Mohammed’. Following that trouble-bearing turn, RA initiates a polar repair sequence aiming at confirming that the address term ‘Abo ḥmēd’ is referring to their friend ‘Ahmad’ (line 580).

(5-32) modified from (Helani, 2008, p.309)

577. MH: Abo Hme:d ʕam teḥki maʕo:
 Abo Hme:d are you talking to him;
 578. (0.2)
 579. Belo:
 580. RA: Aḥmad?
 581. MH: → [ʔE:h?
 Ye:s?
 582. RA: → [Ḥaket ↓ maʕo yemken >ʔawwa:l nha:r el ʔEid<
 [I Spoke ↓ to him maybe >[on] the first day [of] Eid<

The SPP (line 581), in this repair sequence is kept to a minimum; it consists of a standalone ‘ʔe:h’. RA does not produce any receipt token which may register his receipt of this SPP; instead, he produces the response to MH’s inquiry, in line 577, in overlap with the minimal affirming ‘ʔe:h’. The repair sequence, in this example, consists of two turns only, with no third to follow the SPP. The same applies to the following two examples (5-33 and 5-34) below. In example (5-33) Ali is complaining that his female flatmates are shy and consider him as a big brother. While Ali is talking about those girls, Abed initiates a repair sequence in which the FPP requests Ali to confirm that those girls are living in Ali’s apartment (line 5). Ali has already mentioned that these girls are in his ‘sakan’ ‘accommodation’ (line 2), however, the word ‘sakan’ in that turn is overlapped by Abed’s question (line 3) which could have prevented Abed from hearing Ali clearly.

(5-33) expanded from (3-7) chapter 3 section, 3.2.1

1. Ali. **ʃambiʃūfūna bs- ʃambiʃū- ʃambifakrūne əl ʔaxx el ʔakbar ʔəlon**

they look at 1PP in the fl- they loo- they think I [am] the brother the elder to them
they consider me in the fl- they consid- they think I am their elder brother

2. **ʃandi belsa**

kan ()
I have in the fl at ()
there in my fl at ()

3. Abed: →

big brother ahɛ
big brother Tagɛ
big brother Tagɛ

4. Ali: **ʔeh tentən wəḥdi yūnaniye wū wəḥdi ingl- iglezəyi tərkyie.=**

Yes two girls one greek and one engl- english turkish=

5. Abed: → **=beššaqa ʃandak?**

=in the flat you have?

=at your flat?

6. Ali: → **ʔe wū mə- wū kanet maʔe mən qabəl taywaniye wū maʔe mən qabəl yābaniye wū**

yes and mə- and was-3PS-fem with me since before taiwanese and with me since before japanese and
yes and mə- and there was a taiwanese and a japanese [girl] with me before and

7. **mən jammīʃ el banāt ʔəlli qabaltən bessakan (.) kəllə byexjal mənni wū bixə:f**

out of all the the girls that I met in the flat (.) all feel shy of me and afraid
all the girls in my flat (.) all feel shy and intimidated [by me]

Ali orients to the minimisation of this repair inset sequence by producing the shortened form of the affirming particle ‘ʔeh’ (line 6). He further orients to the minimisation of this repair sequence by immediately resuming his telling sequence. By doing so, Ali does not orient to the relevance of a third in this repair sequence. The last example (5-34) further suggests that SA interactants orient to the minimisation of insert repair sequences by not producing a third in them. In the excerpt below, Mido uses negative interrogative format to ask Sam whether the noise of airplanes reaches the inside of the latter’s new house. Following Mido’s negative interrogative, Sam

initiates a repair sequence in which the FPP (line 2) requests Mido to confirm that what he has said is ‘ṭayyarat’ ‘airplanes’. Mido responds with a standalone ‘ʔeh’ (line 3), following which Sam responds to Mido’s FPP (line 1) by negating that ‘ṭayyarat’ fly over the area where he lives (line 4).

(5-34) ONIP-19

1.Mido: **halla? ma byuʃal ʃot əṭṭayyarāt ə: la juwa lbēt?**

Prt NegPrt reaches sound of airplanes ə: to inside the house?

Prt doesn’t the sound of airplanes reach inside the house?

2.Sam: → **ṭayyarāt:t?**

airpla:nes?

3.Mido: → **ʔe::h.**

ye::s.

4.Sam: **ma fi ṭayyarāt hōn**

ma

bṭīr hōn ṭayyarāt,

not there airplanes here not fly here airplanes,

there are no airplanes here airplanes do not fly [over] here,

5.Mido:

la?
no

6.Mido: **halla? kaʔəni sməʃt kaza ṭayyara ʃot ṭayyara**

Prt as if I heard few airplanes sound [of] an airplane

now I thought I heard the sound of a few airplanes or what sounded like an airplane

7.Sam: **la hāda qitār.**

no that [was] [a] train.

The inserted polar repair sequence (lines: 2-3) consists of two adjacency turns with a minimal SPP and no third. It has been argued in chapter 4 (section 4.6.1) that SA interactants orient to the minimisation of polar insert repair sequences in favour of addressing the preferences for contiguity and progressivity (Clift, 2016a; Sacks, 1987; Stivers & Robinson, 2006). Extending the insert repair sequence will compromise the contiguous relationship between the turns in the main sequence in which the repair sequence is inserted, and it will compromise the progress of

the main ongoing activity which the repair sequence has suspended. SA interactants orient to the minimisation of repair insert sequences by first producing a minimal SPP and secondly, by not producing a third. Similar orientation towards absence of a third in a polar interrogative sequence has also been observed when speakers produce interruptive, disjunctive sequences. One example of such a sequence is illustrated in excerpt (5-35) below. While Mido is informing Sam about the process of writing a PhD thesis, Wess comes in overlap with Mido's informing turn (line 4) by holding his smartphone to show Sam something in it, then inquiring whether Sam has seen that thing (line 5).



Figure: 5-35 (Wess showing Sam something on the smartphone)
(Mido is sitting opposite Sam and Wess)

(5-35) NS14-3

- | | | | |
|------------|--|---|-------------------------------------|
| 1. Mido: | btəʔʕod baʔa btəktob (.) byəʔləbu mənnak əl | [| () |
| | you sit Prt [and] write (.) they require from you the | [| () |
| | you set on writing (.) they require from you the | [| |
| 3. Sam: | | [| ((nod)) |
| 4. Mido: | masalan ʔašər talāf kəlme xamestaʕšar ʔalf | [| kəlme |
| | for example ten thousand words fifteen thousand | [| words |
| 5. Wess: → | ((holding his smart phone to show Sam)) | [| šəfta hayɿ |
| | | [| you [have] seen thisɿ ⁷⁰ |
| 6. Sam: → | ((shifts gaze to look at Wess's smart phone screen)) ʔe:h ʔeh šəfta°. ((smiles)) | | |
| | | | ye:s ʔyes I saw her°. |
| 7. Wess: | ((takes back his smart phone away from Sam's gaze)) | | |

⁷⁰ The demonstrative 'hay' 'this' here is in feminine.

8. Sam: ((shifts gaze back towards Mido))
9. Mido: **hənnə bišōfu əl outlines tabafak biʔəllūlak (yaʔlah əfʔīna ʔwwal mawḏūf)**
 they see-3PP the outlines yours they would tell you (Prt give us the first topic)
 they see your outlines they will tell you to (submit the first topic)
10. **xalʔaʔət kamān** [**yaʔlah əfʔīna mawḏūf əlli baʔdu**]
 finish-2PS-masc also Prt give us topic that after it
 You've finished that Prt give us the next topic
11. Sam: [**uhm**] **(0.8)** **ah**

With no delay, Sam responds to Wess's inquiry by turning his gaze from his interlocuter Mido towards Wess's phone so that he can see what Wess is talking about. After he sees what is on the phone, Sam produces a type-conforming confirming SPP (line 6). Following this SPP, the sequence comes to a closure with no verbal or gestural receipt token produced, in third position, by the recipient of the SPP, Wess. After the closure of this sequence, the interrupted activity, which is Mido's informing sequence is immediately resumed (line 9). Wess's polar interrogative (line 5) is about a topic which is totally different from Mido's ongoing topic talk, therefore it does not contribute to the progress of that activity, in which Sam is the second party. Wess's inserted sequence is therefore disjunctive with respect to the ongoing activity and interruptive of it. Minimising such interruptive sequence contributes to the immediate resumption of the main ongoing activity. One way of minimising such sequence is not to produce a third.

A similar instance can be found in example (5-36) below where Wess produces an off-topic interruptive polar interrogative sequence while Mido, Mina and Sam are talking about some diploma degree in translation which Mina is interested in undertaking. While this activity is ongoing, Wess, who is sitting at the table with them, directs a question to both Sam and Mina asking them whether they would like to go and see the film Spiderman (line 5).

(5-36) reproduced from (4-48) chapter 4 section, 4.5

1. Mido: **diploma in public interpretation services public public interpretation services**
2. Mina: **((two slight nods; her gaze and Sam's are directed towards Mido))**
3. Mido: **hēk yəʃni ya dee pee ʔai ʔes ya** **dee pee ʔes (0.5)**
 Such as D P I S or D P S (0.5)=
4. Mina: **((three nods))**
5. Wess: → **((looking at his smatphone))** **bətrūho nətfarraj ʃala:: (.) spiderman[↑] srī dī.**
 go-2PP 1PP-watch on:: (.) spiderman[↑] 3D.
 Would you like to go and watch spiderman[↑] 3D.
6. **((lifts his head up and directs gaze towards Sam and Mina))**
7. Sam: → **°mən rūh°.**
 °we go°.
8. Mido: **((to Mina))** **əsʔali ʃannu.**
 ask-2PS-fem about it.
 ask about it.
9. Mina: **((two nods))**

Following the completion of Wess's polar interrogative FPP, Sam produces a minimal accepting response (line 7). Following Sam's minimal SPP, Wess does not produce any talk or receipt token, and Mido immediately resumes the informing sequence leaving no space or gap for possible talk in third position. Both examples (5-35 and 5-36) above show that SA interactants orient to keeping interruptive polar interrogative sequences to their core adjacency pair size by dismissing the possibility of a third position. A third example which further demonstrates this normative orientation is in excerpt (5-37) below. While Wess is informing Sam about what exercises can be done while on a specific diet, Mina comes in overlap with Wess's turn (line 5) requesting him to confirm that he has lost six kilograms in four months (line 6). Wess responds to Mina's polar interrogative with a single en passant 'ʔeh' (line 7) and immediately resumes his informing sequence. Mina's polar interrogative turn, although somewhat related to the diet topic,

‘ʔeh’. However, it does not receive any confirming element such as repetition or turn-final ‘waḷḷah’ ‘by God’. Actually, it appears, later in this conversation, that Wess has lost ten kilograms, not six. This may explain why Wess has only affirmed, but not confirmed Mina’s proposed six kilograms weightloss. At a later stage in the conversation, Mina orients to the missing confirmation by repeating her question about weight loss as shown in (5-38: line, 343) below.

(5-38) reproduced from (4-56) chapter 4 section, 4.6.2

- 340. Wess:** əl maši (mufīd) (0.5) ʔana kəlyom bənzil maši
 the walking (useful) (0.5) I everyday I go down walking
 walking is useful (0.5) I walk everyday
- 341.** mən piccadilly sircuss la victoria
 from piccadilly circus to victoria
- 342. Mina:** mətəl ()
 like ()
- 343. Mina:** → sətt kiliyyāt? ((with eyebrows flash)) bʔarbaʃ šhūr sətt kiliyyāt.
 six kilos? ((with eyebrows flash)) in four months six kilos.
- 344.** (0.5)
- 345. Wess:** → nzəlt ʃašər kiliyyā:t
 I went down ten kilo:s
 I lost ten kilo:s
- 346. Mina:** → ɛʃašra↑ ((keeps her mouth open after uttering this TCU))
 ɛten↑
- 347. Wess:** → ʔe:h. ((with a blink of the eyes))
 ye:s.
- 348. Mina:** ((turns body, face and gaze towards Sam, with mouth still open)) () °ha ha°
- 349. Sam:** ((turns towards Mina and nods))

The question that arises in this case is why has Wess affirmed Mina’s proposed weight loss in excerpt (5-37) even though it is incorrect? The difference between Mina’s polar interrogative in

excerpt (5-37) and her polar interrogative in (5-38) above is in the position. Mina's polar interrogative in (5-37) initiates a disjunctive interruptive, therefore, a minimisation-relevant sequence. A minimal preferred type-conforming response such as the single 'eh' would bring the sequence to closure in favour of resuming the ongoing activity. In (5-38) Mina's polar interrogative FPP comes after Wess has completed his talk about exercising and after she has assumed speakership in line 342, so this FPP does not initiate an interruptive sequence and it receives a fully confirming SPP followed by a third which is the surprise token in line 346. Preferred SPPs are closure-relevant (Pomerantz & Heritage, 2013; Schegloff, 2007). Producing the preferred SPP, even if it is incorrect, progresses the sequence to closure. In all the interruptive sequences discussed above, the FPP receives a preferred SPP. Producing a preferred SPP within these interruptive sequences, even if the SPP entails incorrect affirmation, further displays the SA interactant's orientation to the minimisation and prompt closure of such sequences in order to maintain the progressivity of the interrupted activity. The organisation of the minimisation of these interruptive sequences and the non-relevance of third position talk in them is, therefore, purely of a sequential positioning nature. The position of these sequences in the midst of an ongoing activity to which they do not bear direct relevance leads to their minimisation in favour of observing the preferences for contiguity and progressivity.

Another type of polar interrogative sequence which SA interactants orient to its minimisation is the pre-telling sequence (chapter 4, section 4.6.3). An example of a pre-telling polar sequence is in the following excerpt. Mido produces a pre-telling polar interrogative at line 1, to which he receives a minimal 'eh' as a response from Wess.

(5-39) reproduced from (1-3) chapter 1 section, 1.3.1

- 1. Mido: → bəḥkīlak halʔəṣṣa:ɛ**
shall I tell you this storyɛ
- 2. Wess: → ʔeh.**
yes.
- 3. Mido: → hat lanʃuf ə:: ʔləʃna mən ərriyaɖ la jaddeh**
alright let's see ə:: we left from Riyadh to Jeddah
((continues telling a story))

In the pre-telling sequences above, there is no third position talk in which Mido may display receipt of Wess's responsive 'ʔeh'. Instead, Mido immediately starts his telling sequence after Wess's SPP, thus orienting to the non-relevance of third position talk within this sequence. The already discussed example (4-59) in chapter 4, section (4.6.3) also shows the same orientation to the non-relevance of third position in a pre-telling sequential environment. The following example further demonstrates this normative orientation and provides some explanation. In (5-40), Mido and his friends are talking about the cleanliness of each of their flats. Mido starts telling his friends about a time when his flatmates left a large amount of unwashed dishes in the kitchen (line 4). Abed comes in overlap with Mido's telling turn (line 4) to tell that such flatmates need someone like him. After Abed's overlapping turn, Mido reinitiates his telling sequence by producing a polar interrogative turn (line 7) asking whether Abed knew what a German guy did. As a response, Abed and Ram both produce continuers (lines: 8 and 9) (Schegloff, 1982), and Abed produces an assessment of Germans (line 10). Following Abed's assessment, Mido proceeds with his telling sequence and tells his friends what that German flatmate did. It is clear that Mido does not produce any third-position token which receipts Abed's assessment within this sequence.

polar interrogative as such by responding with displays of attention rather than answers. Pre-telling polar interrogatives aim at securing the interlocutors' availability to listen to the projected story rather than at receiving an answer. Therefore, a token or a response which displays the interlocutor's availability is sufficient. Third position in that case is not relevant because the initiator of the pre-telling is not expecting an answer to which she/he will display reciprocity in third position. SA interactants, then, orient to the non-relevance of third position in pre-telling sequences.

Understanding check sequences discussed in chapter 4, section (4.6.4) also involve the minimisation of their SPPs and the non-relevance of talk in third position. Excerpt (5-41) shows one of those sequences. While Wess is telling Sam and Mina about the details of a diet he is on, Sam tells him that there are girls staring at him (line 100). Then Mina leans towards Sam and tells him something (inaudible) and laughs (line 101). Upon noticing that both Sam and Mina are attentive to something other than what he has been saying, Wess directs gaze to Sam and produces an understanding check (line 102). Sam responds with an affiliative nod and a minimal affirming 'ʔeh'. Then, after 1-second gap, Wess resumes his telling sequence.

(5-41) reproduced from (4-60) in chapter 4 section, 4.6.4

99. Wess: ((gaze still directed towards Sam)) **wul concentration tabaʕak biʔəll** **šway**

and the concentration of yours becomes lower a bit

and your concentration fails a bit

100. Sam: → **əlbənāt ʕambiʔalʕu ʕlāk.**

the girls [are] staring at you.

101. Mina: **[((leans towards Sam and talks to him)) () ha ha]**

102. Wess: → **[((looks backward and then turns back to face Sam))] fħəmt ʕlaiyye?**

understand on me?

did you get me?

103. Sam: → **((nod)) ʔeh.**

((nod)) yes.

104. (1)

105. Wess: **btəje əl marḥali əttālti (0.2) btənʔəssim ʔəsmən.**

then comes the stage third (0.2) divided two parts.

then comes the third stage (0.2) it is divided into two phases.

By responding with a freestanding affirming ‘ʔeh’ with no further confirmation, Sam displays his orientation to Wess’s polar interrogative as seeking alignment rather than confirmation (see chapter 4, section 4.6.4). The action entailed in Wess’s polar interrogative FPP is to check Sam’s attentiveness and realign his attention to the informing sequence which Wess is delivering. In other words, Wess’s FPP does not invite an answer to be receipted, therefore a receipting third is not relevant within this sequential context. The 1-second gap which followed, in which Wess produces no receipt token of Sam’s SPP, asserts Wess’s orientation to the non-relevance of a third within this sequence. What follows that gap is the resumption of Wess’s informing sequence after securing his interlocutors’ attention. The following two examples provide further support to this line of argument. In excerpt (5-42), Abed is telling his friends Ram and Mido about a person who he knows and how that person is so intelligent and hardworking. While Abed is delivering his telling sequence, Mido is busy clearing the table and putting the rubbish in the rubbish bin.



Figure: 5-42 (line 18: Mido is busy while

Abed is talking)

(5-42) GD11-1

2. Abed: **walla::h hūwe əl ʃarāḥa: ʔensān fahman hūwe yəʃni::**
- prt:: he is to be honest: a man knowledgeable he is p rt
- prt:: to be honest he is a knowledgeable man p rt
3. Mido: **uhum**

((twelve lines omitted in which Abed describes that guy))

16. Ram: **=akīd ʔabʃan ə::** ()
- = sure of course ə:: ()
17. Abed: **wū byəštəḡel ʔab- byəštəḡel ʔabīb asnān hwūi ʔabīb asnān**
[and he works doc- he works [as a] dentist he [is] a dentist]

18. ((while Abed is delivering his turn above, Mido is busy collecting rubbish and putting it in the rubbish bin, however at the final TCU 'ʔabīb asnan' Mido straightens himself up and directs gaze towards Abed))

19. Mido: **aha**

20. Abed: **hon bibriṭania byəštəḡel ʔab- ʔabīb asnān[↑]** ((gaze directed towards Ram))
here in Britain he works doc- as a dentist[↑]

21. Ram: **uhu**

22. Abed: **wū ʃamma yədroš dectorāh bəllūḡawiyat.** ((directs gaze towards Mido))
And he [is] studying [for] a PhD in linguistics.

23. **yəʃni mə:**
Prt mə:

24. Mido: → ((shifts gaze downward and looks at the dishes on the table))

25. Abed: → **bʃarāḥa beṯessū mashḡul ktīr ktīr ʃreft ʃlayyi kif.**
honestly feel-2PS-masc busy so much so much know-1pS-masc on me how.
honestly you feel that he is too busy do you know what I mean.

26. Mido: → **aha** ((gaze is still downward not directed to Abed))

27. Ram: **[fi maʃrūʃ ʃando.] =**
there [is] a project he has.
he has a project. =

28. Abed: **[((directs gaze towards Ram))]**

29. = $\left[\begin{array}{l} \text{m:ašrūʃ ma heke} \quad \text{aktar ma ʔənnu} \\ \text{a project not that [simple] [it is] more than that} \end{array} \right]$
30. Abed: $\left[\begin{array}{l} \text{ʃandū mashrūʃ () ʔe bass ə: sub ʔan əllah} \\ \text{he has a project () yes but ə: pra ise be to God} \end{array} \right]$
31. ((while Abed is talking to Ram, Mido moves towards the table, with gaze still downward and start to collect bread))

After receiving the continuer ‘uhu’ from Ram (line 21), Abed turns towards Mido and continues his telling sequence. Abed is gazing at Mido while he is delivering his telling sequence (lines: 23 and 24), however, Mido is not. Abed ends his turn at line 24 with the SA understanding-check construct ‘ʃreft ʃlayyi kīf’ ‘do you know what I mean’, to which Mido responds with the minimal particle ‘aha’. By producing such a particle as a SPP, Mido displays reciprocity (Helani, 2008), however, he is still directing his gaze down. Ram produces an assessment, in line 27, which aligns with Abed’s telling sequence as it provides an opinion on the guy about whom Abed is talking. Abed then turns from Mido towards Ram and they both continue the sequence excluding Mido who is totally absorbed with clearing the table. This example shows that Mido has not oriented to Abed’s understanding check, as a question seeking the confirmation of whether Mido knew what he has been talking about or not, Mido rather orients to it as a check of his attentiveness. On the other hand, Ram’s comment (line 29) does not only mark his reciprocity, it demonstrates his uptake and commitment to the telling sequence which Abed has been delivering. It is important to emphasise that Abed’s understanding check is directed to Mido and not to Ram. This example further demonstrates that SA interactants orient to understanding check polar FPPs as not doing questioning, but as checking the attentiveness and uptake of the co-interactant(s). Since they are not doing questioning, an answer to understanding checks is not relevant and consequently a third which displays reciprocity of an answer is not relevant in such sequences.

The last example (5-43) further supports this argument. While Abed is telling his friends a story about someone who surprised him by being the boyfriend of a flatmate who he knows, Mido is not holding gaze with him and he is busy eating. Upon the completion of his story, Abed turns towards Mido and produces a polar interrogative FPP aiming at checking the latter's attentiveness and uptake (line 17). This FPP receives minimal SPPs (lines: 18 and 19) from both Mido, who has shown non-attentiveness and Ram, who has been attentive (see chapter 4 section 4.6.4 for more details). No receipting third follows any of those SPPs. Abed even does not reciprocate Ram's laughter, thus excluding any receipting third even one which may reciprocate laughter with laughter (Jefferson, 1979; Holt, 2010).

(5-43) reproduced from (4-62) chapter 4 section, 4.6.4

13. Abed: qəltəllu mīn ʕandakʕ (.) qalli haiy əlli kānet maʕi bəlməṭbax məšway el həndiye.

I said to him who [do] you haveʕ (.) he said that [one] who was with me in the kitchen a while ago the indian. [girl]

14.

[	ṭələʕ	ezzalame	mʕabbaṭ	ḥalu	wū	kaza:	wū	yəʕni	]	ḥakāha	ʔənni	bikell	seqa=
	It appeared that the guy	was doing well	and	so:	and	Prt				he said that	with all confidence		
15. Ram:

[ha	ha	ha	ha]
---	----	----	----	----	---
16. Ali

[ha	ha]
---	----	----	---

17. Abed: → =((gaze directed towards Mido)) =fhemt ʕlaiyi

[	kīf?]
	=understand-2PS on me	how?
	=you understand what	I mean?
18. Mido: → ((with gaze down towards his plate while eating))

[um]
---	----	---
19. Ram: → ((with gaze directed towards Abed))

[	ʔe:. ha ha]
	ye:s. ha ha	

20. Ali: ((lifts his head up to gaze at Abed, at the same time, moves his right hand to point at Ram))

- sʔal ʕan:- sʔal hazzalame (.) ʔe ma xalla kətəf ma nām ʕleh

[	wu u-]	=
	ask about:- ask this guy (.) yes NegPrt left-3PS a shoulder NegPrt sleeping on	and an-	=
	ask about- ask this guy (.) he never left [a woman] without laying his head upon her shoulder	and an-	=
21. Mido:

[ha ha ha]
---	----------	---

What is in common between the three examples (5-41 to 5-43) above, is that all the FPPs in the understanding check sequences are positively framed. The grammatical structure of a positively framed polar interrogative promotes alignment (Raymond, 2013). The polar interrogative FPPs in these examples are not doing questioning, they are just checking for attentiveness and seeking to realign the inattentive interlocutor(s) to the telling sequence. Because this type of polar interrogative FPPs does not do questioning, they make relevant a response which displays alignment, but do not make relevant an answer to be receipted in third position. SA interactants, therefore, orient to the non-relevance of a receipting third within such sequences.

5.3.2. Non-acknowledgeable SPPs

The data collected for this study shows that some types of SPPs in the SA polar interrogative sequence do not prefer a third, or at least an acknowledging third, to follow them. For the purpose of this study, I refer to such SPPs as ‘non-acknowledgeable’. In this section, I investigate those SPPs and provide evidence and explanation of why they do not prefer an acknowledging third. I also explain why I have selected to describe such SPPs as non-acknowledgeable. The first type of such SPPs is what Keevallik (2011, p. 186) terms as “no knowledge responses”. These are SPPs which claim that the answerer does not have epistemic access to the issue in question. An example is the English ‘I don’t know’. I refer to such constructs as “epistemic disclaimers” following Schegloff (2007, p. 65) and Lindström & Karlsson (2016, p. 129). One example of such SPPs in SA is illustrated in excerpt (5-44) below. In this excerpt, Mido is recommending a diploma course in interpretation for Mina. Sam, her husband, asks Mido whether this diploma is done at universities (line 23). After a delay of 0.2-second and a turn-initial particle ‘waḷlah’, which projects dispreference, Mido responds with the SA epistemic disclaimer ‘ma baʃref’ ‘I don’t know’ (line 25).

(5-44) NS14-4

14. Mido: ʔəsmu diploma in public (.) ə:: in public services dee pee ess ayi

= its name is diploma in public (.) ə:: in public services D P S I

15. aha °dee pee ess ayi° [public service interpretation]

16. Mido: [public service interpretation]

17. Midio: public service interpretation

18. (1)

19. Sam: () hay əššəgəl ()

() this work ()

20. Mina: ʔeh ʔehʔeh

Yes yes yes

21. Mido: [public service interpretation]

22. Mina: ()

23. Sam: → wēn byəʔəmluwwa bəljamaʔāt yəʔni.

where [do] they do it at universities Prt.

24. (0.2)

25. Mido: → walʔah ma baʔref baʔa bənnəsbe la wēn byəʔmlū.

Prt NegPrt 1PS-know Prt with regard to where they do it.

Prt I [do] not know where they do it.

26. → ((Mina looks at Mido while he is delivering the response, at the TRP she turns her face away from him and looks at Sam's smart phone without showing any visual receipt token))

27. → (2.5)

28. Mido: → yəmkən maʔāhed ()

perhaps institutions ()

29. (1)

30. Sam: mnīh ʔəltənnə ʔlēyha.

it's good [that] you told us about it.

A 2.5-second gap follows Mido's epistemic disclaimer SPP in which neither of his interlocutors produce a receipting or acknowledging third. Following this gap, Mido produces an evidentially

hedged non-assertive answer which stipulates that the diploma might be done at institutes (line 28). A 1-second gap ensues, then Sam produces an assessment which brings the sequence to a closure. It is notable that Sam's assessment is provided after Mido ostensibly produces some information, but not after Mido's display of no knowledge. Another example of a 'no knowledge' SPP is in excerpt (5-45) in which Wess and Salim are discussing whether Wess should go to Edgware in London to buy something. Salim asks Wess first if he wants to leave that 'thing' (line 13). After a turn-initial 'waḷlah', Wess produces the epistemic disclaimer 'ma baṣrif' (line 14). A 0.2-second gap follows the epistemic disclaimer in which Salim, the questioner, does not produce any talk or receipt token. Wess then starts a new sequence by initiating a polar interrogative which requests Salim's advice on whether he should take those things (line 16).

(5-45) ND-16

- 1.Wess:** **wu əttaṣal- əttaṣalt bi hamāda**
 and I call- I called to hamada
 and I call- I called hamada
- 2.Salim:** **um**
- 3.** **(2.5)**
- 4.Wess:** **halla?**
 now
- 5.** **(1.2)**
- 6.Wess:** **ʔalle ʔiza fāḍe**
 he told me if I [am] free
- 7.** **(0.2)**
- 8.Salim:** **ʔəṭlaʃ** $\left[\begin{array}{c} \text{ʔala ʔəjwar} \end{array} \right]$ **mənšan təštəteri əl hāda,**
 you go to Edgware to buy the thing,
- 9.Wess:** $\left[\begin{array}{c} (\quad) \end{array} \right]$

10.Wess: *ʔe:h* () xalaş.

ye:s () that's it.

11.Salim: ummı

12. (0.8)

13.Salim: → bəddak tətərkoɰ

want-2PS-masc leave itɰ

[do] you want to leave itɰ

14.Wess: → wallah ma baʕrif,

Prt NegPrt 1PS-know,

Prt I [do] not know,

15. → (0.2)

16.Wess: → >baxdonɰ<

>[shall] I take themɰ<

17.Salim: hallaʔ huwwe kəllə ʕaʕra pound hadulik.

Prt it is all of it ten pound those [things].

Prt it is ten pounds for all of those things.

18. ʔrbʕa ʔaw xamse ʔaw ʕaʕra pound btəʕtəri ətnən fiyon ši.

four or five or ten pound you buy a pair at these [prices] [is] it.

19.Wess: ʕəʕrīn ʕe ʕəʕrīn,

twenty approximately twenty,

20.Salim: ʔe:h əʕtəri,

ye:s buy,

Epistemic disclaimers do not confirm the proposition of the FPP (Keevallik, 2011), and neither do they provide any information to be receipted in third position. Excerpt (5-46) below further supports this argument. Mido, in a phone call, is inviting Wess to stay overnight in his town.

Mido produces a negative interrogative questioning Wess's ability to leave the next day in the morning (line 131). After a lengthy delay of 1.2-second, Wess responds by providing an account which implies that he cannot leave the next morning (line 133). However, Wess follows that accounting TCU with the epistemic disclaimer 'ma baʕrif'. Mido receives this SPP with the non-committal 'uhm::' (Enfield *et al.* 2009).

(5-46) expanded from (3-42) chapter 3 section, 3.2.5

126. Mido: **uhm (.) wu ʔēmat ərrajʕa iza bəddak tərja:ʕ,**

Uhm (.) and when [is] the coming back if you want to come back,

127. **(1.2)**

128. Wess: **yəʕne (taʔrīban) əssaʕa sətti sabʕa.**

Prt (nearly) the hour six seven.

Prt (nearly) six seven o'clock.

129. Mido: **ʕassəte sabʕa: (0.2) btəbʔa šway kamā:nɿ**

Six seven (0.2) you stay a little bit also:ɿ

130. **(1)**

131. Mido: **ma btəʔder tərjaʕ tāni yōm əşşəbəh:ɿ**

NegPrt 2PS-can go back next day morning:ɿ

can't you go back next day in the morning:ɿ

132. **(1.2)**

133. Wess: → əla: ʕande šəgəl (.) ma baʕrif baʔa šlōn.

ə=no: I have work (.) NegPrt 1PS-know Prt how.

ə=no: I have work (.) I don't know then how.

134. Mido: → uhm::

135. **→ (1.5)**

136. Wess: **ə:: bikūn ʕande šəgəl tāne yōm (lašūf) tāne yōm šagğal məssabʕa wu rəbəʕ.**

ə:: there be have-1PS work the next day (let me see) the next day working-1PS from seven and quarter.

ə:: I have work the next day (let me see) the next day I have work from quarter past seven.

Mido's third position 'uhm::', in line 134, is not an acknowledgement token, it is a continuer which prompts the co-interactant Wess to expand his SPP (Schegloff, 1982). Wess actually expands his SPP by continuing the talk about his inability to leave the next morning. However, before this expansion, there is a 1.5-second gap in which Mido, the recipient of the first part of Wess's SPP, does not produce any endorsing talk which may acknowledge Wess's response (line 133) and bring the sequence to closure. Acknowledging or endorsing an epistemic disclaimer asserts the not-knowing status of the respondent. A question usually presupposes a knowledgeable respondent; a respondent who has epistemic access to the issue in question (Heritage, 2012; Levinson, 2012). When the respondent answers with an epistemic disclaimer, she/he is challenging the presupposition of the question (Raymond, 2000, p. 339), in other words, the respondent in this case is challenging the askability of that question. If questioners acknowledge epistemic disclaimer SPPs in third position, they would be acknowledging that their questioning FPPs are challengeable; they would be endorsing a SPP which indicates a problem in their own question. In acknowledging epistemic disclaimers, the interactants would also be asserting the not-knowing status of the respondent. Both actions are dispreferred and face-threatening (Goffman, 1955, 1961; Levinson, 2011) to both questioner and respondent. Therefore, I would argue that such SPPs are non-acknowledgeable in SA, and, in the case of their production within the polar interrogative sequence, they make an acknowledging third non-relevant next.

The other type of SPP which SA interactants orient to as non-acknowledgeable is the challenging 'tabʃan' 'of course' (Stivers, 2011) or any of its equivalents when they are used as a response to polar interrogative FPPs. The first example to illustrate this phenomenon is in excerpt (5-47) below. In this excerpt, Sam, Mina, Wess and Mido are discussing how one of their friends has brought his wife into the UK. After Mina asks them how he managed to bring her into the UK (line 26), both Sam and Wess produce epistemic disclaimers (lines: 28 and 29). Mido then starts

answering Mina's question by telling her what that friend told him about how he managed to get his wife into the UK (lines: 30 and 31); he brought her as a student dependent⁷¹. At this point, Sam asks Mido whether that friend has married his wife and brought her to the UK as a wife. Sam's question is a tag-marked polar interrogative (line 36).



Figure: 5-47a (lines 26 and 27)



Figure: 5-47b (line 30)

(5-47) NS14-1

26. Mina: **ṭab martu šlon ʔədret təṭlaʃ.** ((shifts gaze from Sam towards Wess as she utters the last word))

Prt his wife how managed-3PS-fem to come out.

Prt how did his wife manage to come [to the UK].

27. **(0.5)**

28. Mina: **((shifts daze towards Sam))**

29. Sam: **°ma baʃref°. ((two lateral head shakes))**

NegPrt know-1PS

°I don't know°.

30. Wess: **((hand gesture: see figures 5-47a and 5-47b))**

31. **(2.5)**

32. Mido: **hwue ʔa- ʔasab ma ʔakāli ʔal jāba student ə:: šu hāda:ʔ** **[(0.4)=**

It is acc- according to what he told me he said he brought her as a student ə:: what's thatʔ **(0.4)=**

according to what he told me he has brought her as a student ə:: what's thatʔ **(0.4)=**

33. Wess:

mən morocco
from morocco

⁷¹ The United Kingdom gives the right to immediate family members, such as wife, husband and children, of an adult student who is studying in the UK to obtain a student dependent visa which enables those family members to come to the UK.

34. Mido: =dependent. (0.2) mu hwue lessa student
 =dependent. (0.2) that he [is] still a student
 =dependent. (0.2) he still is a student
35. Sam: ((slight nod))
36. (1)
37. Sam: → bass tzawwaja yəfni jāba ka zawje mu?
 but he married her Prt he brought her as a wife NegTag?
 but he married her Prt he brought her as a wife didn't he?
38. Mido: → ((nod)) ʔəh ʔabʕan.
 ((nod)) yes of course.
39. hwue student bihəʔʔəllu bəlqānūn student.
 he is a student he is entitled by the law [as] a student.
40. → (0.5)
41. Mido: → ʔālama hwue iqāmtu student (ʔənnu) yjeeb zojtu wu ʔawlādu.
 as long as his residence [permit] [is] a student [permit] (Prt) to bring his wife and his children.
42. Sam: ((two slight nods))

Sam's question is asking about something too obvious both sequentially and contextually. Mido responds to Sam's polar interrogative with a type-confirming ʔabʕan-marked SPP. A 0.5-second gap follows the completion of Mido's response, in which Sam, the questioner, does not register the receipt of Mido's response, nor acknowledge it as such. It is Mido who takes the floor next to elaborate on his response (line 40). Another example of a ʔabʕan-marked SPP can be found in excerpt (5-48) below. Wess is asking his brother Hamid, who lives in a different country, whether he has internet and 'everything' in his accommodation (line 1). Hamid responds with 'ʔabʕan' (line 3). A 0.4-second gap follows in which no uptake from the questioner Wess is produced. Hamid then elaborates that there is everything in his accommodation, then, a 0.2-second gap follows in which no receipt or uptake token is produced by the questioner Wess. Finally, Hamid states that, at the time of the call, there is no internet. After Hamid completes the whole of his ʔabʕan-prefaced SPP, there is still no receipt or acknowledgement token from Wess. Instead,

Wess moves to another topic about whether Hamid's accommodation is vulnerable to water leaks when it rains.

(5-48) NDCALL16

1.Wess: → **wu fiħ řandkon internet wu kəl ře,**
 and there [is] have-2PP internet and every thing
 and there you have internet and everything,

2. (0.2)

3.Hamid: → **řabřan,**
 of course,

4. → (0.4)

5. () kəl ře ře:h.
 () everything yes.

6. (0.2)

7. halla? ma fi internet ma fī,
 now there is no internet there isn't,

8.Wess: **řaiyib barke nəzlit mařar,**
 Prt in case fell rain,
 Prt what about if rain falls,

9.Hamid: **()**

‘Řabřan’ ‘of course’ is a marked form of confirmation which challenges the need for the question to be asked (Englert, 2010; Stivers, 2011). By responding with ‘řabřan’ the respondent is asserting her/his epistemic access to the questioned matter as well as asserting that the questioner her/himself has that access and does not need to ask the question (Heritage & Raymond, 2012, p. 181; Stivers, 2011). Acknowledging a řabřan-marked SPP in third position would assert that the question does not need to be asked, i.e. the question is inapposite. SA interactants, therefore, do not orient to acknowledging such SPPs. The following example further supports this

argument. While Wess is listing foods he is having while on diet, Sam asks him whether he eats salad while on diet (line 195). Sam's question is a negative polar interrogative.

(5-49) expanded from (4-30) chapter 4 section, 4.4.1

195. Wess: ʕande beef dice () chicken məšwiyyi () laḥəm ʕandak fish

I have beef dice () chicken grilled () meat and there is fish

196. Sam: → **ma btakol ʕalaṭa?**

NegPrt eat-2PS salad?

don't you eat salad?

197. Wess: → **məšwiyyi ʕalaṭa ṭabʕan,**

grilled⁷² salad of course,

198. → **(2)**

199. Sam: ((shifts gaze to Mido))

200. Mido: ()

201. Sam: ((two nods))

202. (0.5)

203. Sam: ((nod))

Wess responds to Sam's negative interrogative FPP by a repetition followed by 'ṭabʕan' indicating that the FPP is asking about something too obvious to be questioned (Stivers, 2011). A 2-second gap follows in which Sam does not produce any receipt, uptake or acknowledging token. By repeating the word 'ʕalaṭa' Wess, in his SPP, has addressed the preference of confirming the proposition entailed in Sam's FPP. However, Sam does not produce an endorsing third to mark that such preference has been addressed (see section 5.2.1 above). The 'ṭabʕan' in Wess's SPP challenges the askability of Sam's question. If Sam acknowledged such SPP, he

⁷² 'grilled' is part of the prior TCU in which Wess said meat and fish; he meant that meat and fish, not salad, should be grilled. Therefore, the response 'salad of course' is actually delayed by the word 'grilled' as it comes between the response and the FPP, thus compromising their contiguity.

would be acknowledging that his question is inapposite. Therefore, a third which acknowledges or endorses the *ṭabʕan*-marked SPP is not relevant within such sequential context. The same applies to constructs which are equivalent to ‘*ṭabʕan*’ such as ‘*lakan*’ and the Damascan ‘*əmbala*’ as examples (5-50 and 5-51) illustrate. In (5-50), Mido asks Layla whether she had to pay annual fees for her residence permit while she was in the UAE (lines: 1 and 2). Layla responds with ‘*əmbala*’ ‘of course’. A 1-second gap follows in which no receipt or acknowledgment token is produced by the questioner Mido. The sequence closes at this point and, following that 1-second gap, Layla initiates a new sequence (line 5). Layla knows that Mido spent a few years in Saudi Arabia (a Gulf country neighbouring the UAE) and that he has been to the UAE a couple of times. The residence system in both Saudi Arabia and the UAE is similar, so Layla has oriented to Mido’s FPP as asking for something too obvious and should already be within his epistemic domain of experience.

(5-50) reproduced from (1-1) chapter I section, 1.3.1

- 1.Mido:** → *əlʕama .hh ʔuw:ə ma kəntu tədfaʕu rusūm: kə- sanawiyye*
 blindness .hh and:ə not were-2PP paying-2PP fees: kə- annual
 blindness .hh and ə: weren’t you paying annual fees
- 2.** → *ʔaw ši* [*lalʔiqame ʔəlla kif.*
 or thing for the residence or how.
 or anything for the residence [permit] or how.
- 3.Layla:** →] *.hh əmbala, ((two nods while responding))*
[*.hh of course, ((two nods))*
- 4.** → **(1)**
- 5.Layla:** *ʔəntu bələsʕūdiyye btədfaʕūʔ*
 you in saudi arabia [do] you payʔ

The following example is taken from Al-Khalil (2005). According to Al-Khalil, before the start of the extract below, Bs has already told the present interactants about a relative who has bought

a house for his sister. In a display of surprise, Ri questions the fact that the house belongs to that relative's sister. Ri uses a candidate-answer question format for that purpose (line 1).

(5-51) modified from (Al-Khalil, 2005, p. 265)

- 1.Bs: → °Lēš° iddār la ʔuxtu:?
°why° the house [belongs] to his sister
2. → (1)
- 3.Ri: → lakan
of course
4. → (.)
- 5.Ri: → mā ʕaṭaha=
that he gave her=
6. Fa =mā ʕaṭaha la ʔuxtu ḥaʔʔ iddār, noṣṣ ḥaʔʔ iddār, midrē šʔadd
= that he gave to his sister the price of the house , half the price of the house, I don't know how much
7. Bs noṣṣ[↑] ḥaʔʔa?
half[↑] its price
8. Fa ʔeh [...] ((continues talking about the house issue))
yes

By responding with 'lakan' 'of course' (line 3), Ri orients to Bs's question as asking for something obvious and already in his domain of knowledge. The 'lakan' itself is delayed by 1-second, which is a harbinger of dispreference. A mini-pause follows the 'lakan' SPP in which the questioner Bs does not produce any receipt or acknowledgment token. After this mini-pause Ri starts to a new sequence which provides more details on how that relative bought the house for his sister. The excerpt above further demonstrates that SA interactants orient to 'of course' type SPPs as non-acknowledgeable.

Both ‘ma baʔref’ ‘I don’t know’ and ‘tabʕan’ ‘of course’ work on the epistemic level of preference. However, they represent two extreme ends on that level. ‘Tabʕan’ asserts the epistemic access to the matter in question for both the respondent and the questioner. Since the questioner has epistemic access to the issue in question, she/he does not need to ask the question. A question is a stance which indexes the downgraded epistemic status of the questioner and the upgraded epistemic status of the respondent (Levinson, 2012). A question which asks about something that the questioner already knows, and, of which the respondent knows that the questioner already knows, embodies epistemic incongruence (Heritage, 2012a; Stivers *et al.* 2011; Heinemann *et al.* 2011). SA respondents orient to such incongruence by responding with tabʕan-like constructs which challenge the askability of the question. Questioners display their understanding of the challenge which a tabʕan-marked SPP incorporates by orienting to it as a challenging SPP, which cannot be acknowledged, rather than an answer to be receipted and acknowledged. At the other extreme, a question presupposes the upgraded epistemic status of the respondent with regard to the issue in question. Responding with the epistemic disclaimer ‘ma baʔref’ indexes incongruence between the upgraded epistemic status that the question assumes and the downgraded epistemic stance which the response displays (Heinemann *et al.* 2011). A ‘ma baʔref’ SPP does not provide an answer to the question (Clayman, 2001; Stivers & Robinson, 2006); it rather indexes a problem in the askability of the question. Therefore, like tabʕan-marked SPPs, SA interactants do not orient to ‘ma baʔref’-marked SPPs as answers to be receipted or acknowledged. Acknowledging ‘ma baʔref’-marked SPPs would assert the incongruence of the presupposition of the question with regard to the epistemic status of the respondent. Acknowledging ‘ma baʔref’-marked SPPs will also assert the downgraded epistemic stance of the respondent. Therefore, SA interactants orient to such SPPs as non-acknowledgeable. By not acknowledging ‘ma baʔref’ and ‘tabʕan’ as answering SPPs to polar interrogative FPPs, recipients display their understanding of the challenging action which such SPPs entail. Such

understanding signals that intersubjectivity has been established and progresses the sequence towards closure with no need for a third.

Summary of findings in section 5.3

The argument within this section claims that the absence of talk in third position within the SA polar interrogative sequence is organised by a specific set of preferences. Some of those preferences are related to the position, type and size of the sequence, while others are related to epistemic access and epistemic congruence. In repair inserts and interruptive-disjunctive sequences, it is the position of those sequences within the interaction which makes SA interactants orient to their minimisation by not producing talk in third position. Minimising such sequences is in the service of the preference for progressivity. extending such sequences by adding a third, may compromise the progress of the activity which they have halted. In pre-telling sequences, it is the action within those sequences which prefers the non-production of a third. Polar interrogative FPPs in pre-telling sequences aim at mobilising reciprocity and attentiveness rather than requesting information to be receipted. Therefore, such sequences do not involve a receipting third. They also work on the level of position. Their position prior to the telling sequence prefers a quick move into the telling sequence, therefore, expanding such sequences by adding a third is dispreferred. Understanding-check sequences aim at aligning the interactants attentiveness to what is being told rather than at getting information. Once a display of such alignment is produced, the ongoing telling activity can be resumed. A third within such sequential environment is not relevant because the action of the FPP is not a request for information to be receipted. When such sequences are initiated while a main activity sequence is being progressed, their minimisation becomes even more relevant because their expansion may hinder or slow down the progressivity of the main sequence. Finally, there are SPPs to which SA interactants orient as non-acknowledgeable. Such SPPs mark the FPP as incorporating incongruency between its presupposition and the epistemic status of either the questioner or the respondent. SA

respondents therefore challenge the epistemic incongruent structure of such SPPs by either producing an epistemic disclaimer which denies the presupposed epistemic status of the respondent, or by producing a *tabʕan*-marked SPP which asserts that the questioner has epistemic access to the issue in question, therefore, her/his question is inapposite and does not need to be asked. Those types of challenging SPPs mark as salient the inappositeness or the problematic nature of the question. By acknowledging such SPPs in third position, questioners would assert that their questions are either inapposite or ill-designed. Acknowledging epistemic disclaimers can also assert the downgraded epistemic stance of the respondent and the incongruency between such stance and the presupposed knowing status of the respondent. Therefore, SA interactants orient to such types of SPP by either not producing a third at all or, at least, by not producing a receipting acknowledging third. Finally, it is noticeable in examples (5-44) to (5-51) that polar interrogative sequences with SPPs that cannot be acknowledged come to immediate closure after the production of those SPPs, even though those SPPs are in a dispreferred relationship with their FPPs. Dispreference, then, is not always expansion-relevant. It is not dispreference *per se* which effects the expansion or the closure of a sequence as much as intersubjectivity. Lack of intersubjectivity leads to the expansion of the sequence until intersubjectivity is established. When intersubjectivity is established, it warrants the closure of the sequence. The non-production of an acknowledging third within the above-mentioned sequences displays the interactants' understanding that the SPPs within those sequences are non-acknowledgeable. Such display of understanding indexes that intersubjectivity has been accomplished, and this is what warrants the closure of the sequence.

Conclusion of chapter 5

Chapter 5 has demonstrated that the non-relevance of third position in SA polar interrogative sequences is as orderly as its relevance. Sacks *et al.* (1974, p. 726) note that the turn-taking system involves that “any party’s contribution to turn-order determination is contingent on, and oriented to the contribution of other parties”. This statement could be generalised to include the case of third position in the SA polar interrogative sequence. Both the presence and the absence of a third are the result of the negotiation of a set of preferences which the producer of a FPP invites its recipient to address. The production or the non-production of a third-position turn within the SA polar interrogative is, therefore, a party-administered feat and is contingent on the contribution of the co-interactants. This chapter has demonstrated that the form and actions of the SPP makes relevant or non-relevant a third next. This nextness aspect of the organisation of third position in SA polar interrogative sequences suggests that the production as well as the non-production of talk in third position is managed locally on a turn-by-turn basis (*ibid.*). Section (5.2) has demonstrated that when a third is produced, it is designed to display the stance of the questioner towards the response. Recipients of third position talk, then, orient to that stance by either progressing the sequence towards closure and moving to next action, or by expanding the SPP in the aim of addressing some preferences which the third marks as yet to be addressed. Therefore, third position in SA polar interrogative sequences is recipient-designed (*ibid.*). Even orientation towards the non-production of a third is recipient designed. It has been argued in section (5.3) that by not producing talk, or at least acknowledging talk, in third position in some types of sequences, SA interactants display to their recipients that they have understood that the SPP in such sequence is not acknowledgeable. When interactants withhold the production of a third in minimisation-relevant sequences, they display their understanding that such sequences are minimisation-relevant and do not prefer to be further extended by a third. The organisation of third position in SA polar interrogative sequences, then, is part of the locally managed, party

administered, recipient-designed and interactionally managed turn-taking system described by Sacks *et al.* (1974).

Finally, it has been noted in section (5-1) that closure of the sequence *per se* is not the main aim of third-position talk in SA polar interrogative sequences. The main action which a third, or its absence, entails is indexing whether intersubjectivity has been established or not. It is agreement and intersubjectivity which warrants the closure of the sequence and not vice-versa. SA interactants orient to intersubjectivity as a warrant for sequences closure even in positions where they do not produce a third. As discussed in section (5.3) above, the non-production of thirds in positions where thirds are non-relevant displays the interactants understanding of the type of the current sequence and the SPP it includes; such understanding indexes that intersubjectivity has been established and sequence closure is licenced.

Chapter 6: Concluding discussion

6.1. Summary of findings

In the absence of morphosyntactic marking, interactants use various resources across languages to mark and orient to a turn-at-talk as either asserting or questioning a state of affairs. In Italian, one of the main resources used to mark a turn as a polar interrogative is prosody (Rossano, 2010). Sentence final particles are used in other languages such as Lao and Tzeltal (Brown, 2010; Enfield, 2010; Enfield *et al.* 2012). The current study illustrates that epistemic asymmetry, implied by other means than interrogative morphosyntax or prosody, is the main resource which SA interactants use to determine whether a turn-at-talk is doing assertion or polar questioning. A question usually indexes lack of epistemic access to a state of affairs. The less epistemic access, the more SA interactants will orient to the turn as doing questioning. Therefore, SA interactants may implement evidential markers such as the particle ‘yǝŋni’ (chapter 3, section 3.2.2), which downgrades a speaker’s epistemic stance towards the issue in question, to mark their FPPs as polar interrogative turns. Another resource which downgrades a speaker’s epistemic stance is turn final tags. Question tags incorporate the only form of syntactic marking of polar interrogative in SA (chapter 3, section 3.2.1). SA interactants orient to polar interrogative FPPs which contain epistemic downgrading elements as genuine questions. The data shows that the majority of such FPPs receive type-conforming SPPs (67% of tag-marked FPPs and 63% of yǝŋni-marked FPPs). However, not all polar interrogatives in SA are marked with tags or epistemic downgrade particles (only 19.6% of the FPPs in the data are marked as such). SA interactants orient to the other types explored in this study (B-event, candidate-answer questions, polar alternatives, negative interrogatives and rhetorical questions) as rather more assertive than questioning. This orientation is manifested in the lack of type-conformity in the SPPs which respond to those FPP types. One of the significant findings, therefore, is that, in SA polar interrogative sequences, the more assertive the FPP, the less type-conforming, independent, dispreferred and challenging the

SPP to a degree where SA interactants would orient to one very assertive polar interrogative type (rhetorical questions) as not doing questioning at all (chapter 3, section 3.2.6). In that case, interactants would either withhold producing a SPP altogether, or just respond with an aligning token.

SA interactants also orient to sequential position to determine that a turn-at-talk is a polar question. A question comes usually in sequence initial position. The current research has illustrated that SA interactants do not orient to tags or *yəʃni*-marked turns which are not in such position as doing questioning. The following quote by Sacks (1992a, p. 49) can be applied to polar questions in SA:

while there are particular grammatical structures that are prototypically associated with questions... there are no structures for answers. The most powerful resource for an utterance to be heard as an answer is its sequential location, i.e. after a question. It should be noted, however, that not every utterance produced after a question counts as an ‘answer’ to that question.

In SA, where there is mostly no grammatical structure to mark a polar interrogative question, sequential location is one of the resources which interactants orient to in marking and analysing a turn-at-talk as such. However, not every utterance produced in sequence initial position is a polar question.

The current research has also demonstrated that there are SA language-specific preferences, such as the form-related preferences for same-polarity and for positive format, which contribute to the general structure of the FPP as well as the SPP in the polar interrogative sequence (chapter 4, sections: 4.4.1 and 4.4.3). Those two preferences contribute to the predominance of positively formatted SPPs even when such SPPs are disagreeing with their FPPs or disconfirming their propositions. These findings are significant in accounting for the overwhelming tendency of SA interactants to produce positively framed FPPs and SPPs, and to avoid, where possible,

negatively framed SPPs even when expressing disagreement. These findings, therefore, explain why 81% of the FPPs and 83.17% of the SPPs, in the data, are positively formatted.

In addition to the form-related preferences for same-polarity and for positive format, mentioned above, there are other preferences which are negotiated within the SA polar interrogative sequence and which play significant role in determining the extension [size], form and action(s) of the sequence. These are:

- The preferences for epistemic congruency
- The sequential preferences for contiguity and progressivity
- The action preferences for agreement, acceptance and confirmation

The preference for epistemic congruency is one of the main preferences which contribute to the production of repetitive responses in SA. The declarative form of the majority of SA polar interrogative FPPs is inherently assertive. Implementing declarative format results in incongruence between the status of the questioner, which implies subordinate epistemic access (Bolinger, 1957; Heritage & Raymond, 2012), and the stance indexed in the form of the polar interrogative, which implies assertive – almost equal – epistemic access to that of the answerer (Heritage & Raymond, 2012). SA interactants predominantly respond to such FPPs with SPPs which contain repetition. Repetition asserts the respondent's epistemic primacy as well as the subordinate epistemic status of the questioner with regard to the issue in question. Therefore, repetition, and modified repetition in particular, repairs the epistemic incongruence which declarative polar interrogatives entail (chapter 4, section 4.5). The view of repetitive SPPs as doing the action of repairing the epistemic incongruence entailed in declaredly formed polar interrogatives is a novel view in CA, and it adds further insight into the mechanism of repair in interaction. However, I leave such novel view of repetitive SPPs to CA critiques to either agree or disagree with. The current study has also found that the preference for epistemic congruence

plays a significant role in determining the size of the SA polar interrogative sequence and the extent of its components; in particular the SPP. When the questioner and the respondent have equal access to the issue in question and when the respondent knows that the questioner has such access, she/he will orient to the question as entailing incongruence between the knowing status of the questioner and the not-knowing stance which the question indexes, such as in rhetorical polar interrogatives, or when the questioner is asking about something too obvious to be questioned. In the case of rhetoricals the respondent will either withhold the production of a SPP altogether, or she/he may respond with a minimal aligning token. It is similar with questions which ask for something too obvious where recipients will either withhold response altogether or respond with minimal aligning or affiliating token (chapter 4, section 4.6.5). In some cases where the question is asking for something too obvious, SA interactants may challenge the askability of the question by responding with ‘*tabʕan*’ ‘of course’ or any of its equivalents (Stivers, 2011).

The sequential preferences for contiguity and progressivity also play an important role in determining the size of the sequence and the extent of its components. The study reveals that SA interactants orient to the minimisation of some sequence types which may compromise the progressivity of an ongoing activity or the contiguous relationship between a FPP and its relevant SPP. This orientation is manifested in responding with a SPP of a minimal extent in addition to withholding talk in third position (chapter 4, section 4.6 and chapter 5, section 5.3.1).

The action preferences for confirmation, acceptance and agreement intersect with the form-related preferences of the SA polar interrogative FPPs. The SA form-related preference for positive polarity in both question and response (as it has been discussed in chapter 4, sections 4.4.3), together with the preference for same-polarity (see chapter 4 section 4.4.1) make the polar interrogative system in SA biased towards agreement to the extent that it coerces agreement; at least in form. The form-related preference for same polarity comes under the umbrella of the

preference for agreement, as it involves agreement in form between the SPP and its relevant FPP (Heinemann, 2005). These findings untangle the puzzle of the ‘?eh la?’-prefacing phenomenon in Syrian Arabic SPPs; a phenomenon which, among other phenomena, have inspired the current investigation of polar interrogatives rather than any other types of questions in SA. According to the findings of the current study, ‘?eh la?’ prefaced SPPs that entail disagreement with some types of positively framed FPPs. The initial ‘?eh’ addresses the form-related bias towards agreement, at least in terms of polarity, while the ‘la?’, which immediately follows, addresses the action of disagreement or disconfirmation. By doing so, SA interactants delay the dispreferred disagreeing, disconfirming action by a formally positive, ostensibly agreeing, element (chapter 4, section 4.2).

To conclude, there are three main types of preferences which are negotiated within the SA polar interrogative sequences: the first type is form-related, and consists of the preferences for **type-conformity**, **positive polarity** and **same polarity**. The preferences for **contiguity** and **progressivity** are related to the sequential organisation of talk-in-interaction. SA interactants maintain the consistency of each other’s epistemic rights by orienting to the preference for **epistemic congruency**. Finally, the general preference for agreement, acceptance and confirmation is related to the **action(s)** which polar interrogatives initiate. The study illustrates that those preferences have an intersecting relationship, and although, in some positions, some of those preferences might be given priority over others, in other positions they might be prioritized. Therefore, the current study cannot specify whether there is a certain hierarchy which organizes those preferences in the SA polar interrogative sequences. What we are able to demonstrate, however, is that SA interactants negotiate those preferences – some of which may conflict with each other – from the very start until the end of the sequence. The aim of such negotiation is achieving intersubjectivity by the end of the sequence. SA interactants orient to achieving intersubjectivity as a warrant for closing the sequence; without such warrant they may extend the sequence until intersubjectivity is achieved. SA interactants use third position to index

that intersubjectivity and agreement has been reached or has yet to be reached. They use different resources for such purposes (chapter 5, section 5.2). However, in some cases SA interactants orient to third position as non-relevant. Where the sequences are preferred to be minimal in extent and where the FPP is not oriented to as doing questioning, SA interactants will not produce talk in third position (chapter 5, section 5.3.1). Some SPPs cannot be acknowledged in third position in SA. These are epistemic disclaimers and SPPs which challenge the askability of the FPP. Acknowledging such SPPs in third position will imply asserting the not-knowing status of the respondent and/or acknowledging that the FPP is ill-designed and challengeable. Therefore, SA interactants do not produce any acknowledging token in third position after receiving such SPPs. By doing so, SA interactants display their understanding of the SPP as ‘non-acknowledgeable’. Such understanding signals that intersubjectivity has been reached and warrants the closure of the sequence even though the SPP it contains is dispreferred in terms of action (see chapter 5, section 5.3.2).

6.2. Implications and contributions

6.2.1. Contribution to CA research in general and to CA research on polar interrogative sequences in particular

The current research reasserts findings by Sacks, *et al.* (1974) according to which the turn taking system in talk-in-interaction is the locus for managing, addressing and negotiating preferences in interaction. The turn taking system which allocates the next turn to a next speaker is the locus for negotiating the preferences which the first turn makes relevant in the next one. Nextness involves adjacency, and adjacency involves contiguity (Sacks, 1987; Schegloff, 1968, 2007). Any element which comprises the contiguous relationship between the adjacency pair components will be heard as qualifying the progressivity of the talk (Sacks, 1987; Schegloff, 2007, p. 15). The current

research demonstrates that those principles of the turn-taking system, which Sacks, *et al.* (1974) and Schegloff (1968) have depicted in English and from which CA approach has been developed, also apply to Syrian Arabic.

The CA argument about the organisation of preferences in talk-in-interaction (Pomerantz, 1984a; Heritage, 1984a; Pomerantz & Heritage, 2013) finds further support in this study on SA. The study illustrates that SA interactants orient to the dispreference of a turn-at-talk by delaying its production, mitigating its dispreferredness, producing an elaboration, producing an account for its dispreference, or by responding with a pro-forma agreement token which delays the disagreeing dispreferred response (Schegloff, 2007, pp.69-70). Producing a pro-forma agreement token is a practice which ‘?eh la?’-prefacing in SA clearly illustrates (chapter 4, section 4.2). With regard to preference-marked turns in SA, they are produced without delay, mitigation, pro-forma or accounts for dispreference, exactly like English.

The current research reasserts Schegloff’s (1996a) findings about the positional sensitivity of grammar. It has been discussed in chapter 3 section (3.2.1) that SA interactants orient to a tag-marked turn differently when it is placed in second position within the sequence than when it is placed in sequence-initial position. In sequence initial position, tag-marked turns are oriented to as polar questions which make an answer relevant next, whereas in second position they are oriented to as assertive turns to which no answer is relevant. The findings about the SA particle ‘yəʕni’ are in line with findings by Clift (2001) about the positional sensitivity of meaning through action. Although the SA particle bears different meaning and function to the English adverb ‘actually’ studied by Clift, the SA particle behaves similarly with regard to its positional sensitivity. Section (3.2.2) in chapter 3, demonstrates that this particle does interrogative when placed in a sequence-initial turn which implies downgraded epistemic access to a state of affairs. However, this particle does not do the same action when it is in a secondary sequential position where the negotiation of epistemic access is not involved.

The current study continues the line of research on epistemics in interaction pioneered by Pomerantz (1980) and further developed by Heritage (1984b; 2002; 2011; 2012a; 2012b), Heritage & Raymond (2005), Heritage & Raymond (2012) and Schegloff, (1996b). Findings in SA provide further evidence that epistemic access could be indexed in the position as well as in the form of a turn-at-talk (Heritage & Raymond, 2005). The study reasserts that interactants use repetition to assert their primary epistemic access as well as their independent agency to the issue in question (Heritage, 2012a; Heritage & Raymond, 2012; Raymond, 2003; Schegloff, 1996b). Sections (3.2.1 and 4.4.2), in Chapters 3 and 4 respectively, demonstrate that negative interrogative is generally oriented to as assertive in SA; such findings in SA fully conform with findings on the same topic in English by Heritage (2002) and findings by (Heinemann, 2008) on Danish.

The current research provides further support and understanding with regard to the preference for type-conformity in polar interrogative sequences (Raymond, 2000, 2003). The preference for type-conformity is observed in SA, however, unlike in English, it is not a primary preference within the SA polar interrogative sequence. The way interactants orient to type-conformity in English follows some language-specific preferences, such as morphosyntactic marking. This cannot be fully applied to SA in which morphosyntactic marking is absent in most of its polar interrogative FPPs. The study demonstrates that addressing the preference for type-conformity is cross-linguistically variable.

The current research has demonstrated that, similar to Danish (Heinemann, 2003; 2005), the SA polar question prefers a SPP of matching polarity, and interactants orient to this preference by implementing positive format for FPPs which invite for agreement, confirmation and acceptance. By doing so, SA interactants promote the production of a positively framed SPP which agrees with its relevant FPP at least in terms of polarity.

Finally, this thesis emphasises the importance of third position in SA polar interrogative sequences and highlights some organisational elements which contribute to the production or absence of thirds. The link between third position and intersubjectivity has been further investigated in this thesis providing additional evidence that third position is the ‘last structurally provided’ position for the ‘defense of intersubjectivity in conversation’ (Schegloff, 1992, p.1295). The investigation in chapter 5 reveals that the production of talk in third position is as orderly as its absence. The current study introduces a novel line of investigation in CA which explores that absence of third position in polar interrogative sequences (Chapter 3 section 5.3). Section (5.3) includes a dedicated research which investigates the organisation of the non-relevance of third position in SA polar interrogative sequences. Such analysis of the absence of third is the first of its kind in CA.

6.2.2. Contribution to CA study of Arabic in general, and Syrian Arabic in particular.

By conducting this research, I have continued the endeavour of Syrian Conversation Analysts Al-Khalil, (2005) and Helani (2008) to lay the groundwork for Syrian Arabic dedicated CA studies. Some important features of SA talk-in-interaction have been investigated throughout this thesis, such as the polarity system, the negation system, the relationship between form and epistemic rights, and the relationship between form and action. Quite a few findings on those systems and the organisational elements in SA talk-in-interaction have been made available through the current research. Those findings provide an account for various phenomena in the language, such as the predominance of positively formatted FPPs and SPPs, ‘?eh la?’-prefacing, and the use of repetition in responding to polar interrogatives within certain sequential contexts. No past research has focused on investigating such phenomena within a CA framework; therefore, the current study provides groundwork for future CA research on SA talk-in-interaction in general and the pre-mentioned phenomena in particular. Future research may benefit from the findings of the current study; as well as from critiquing such findings.

Since this study is the first work in Arabic which has contributed empirical observation on the negotiation of epistemic rights in SA interaction, CA researchers who aim at investigating this topic in Arabic, will benefit from its findings. Future research on wh-questions, assessments, informing turns and receipt of information, in addition to any other topic which involves the negotiation of epistemic rights in Arabic, can benefit from the findings of the current study.

Syrian Arabic is a variety of a vast linguistic terrain, Arabic. There are similarities between Syrian Arabic and Eastern Gulf Arabic variety – spoken in Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, and some parts of the UAE and the Eastern Province in Saudi Arabia– in terms of constructing both negative and interrogative (Al-Bahri, 2014; Al-Sahrif, 2014; Brustad, 2000; Holes, 1990). Both Syrian Arabic and Eastern Gulf varieties use ‘ma’ and mu’ and their variants for negation and for constructing negative interrogative. Like Syrian Arabic, Eastern Gulf Arabic does not implement morphosyntactic marking for polar interrogative (Al-Bahri, 2014; Holes, 1990). Therefore, researchers of polar interrogative in Eastern Gulf Arabic will find this research and its findings helpful and beneficial for their studies. Researchers on other Arabic varieties may as well benefit from findings of this research.

6.2.3. Contribution to cross-linguistic studies in CA

The current study adds to the understanding of the different polar interrogative systems across languages. It adds to the line of research which has been started by Stivers *et al.* (2010) and is recently carried by Enfield, *et al.* (2018) on cross-linguistic study of the polar question/response system. It provides further evidence which supports the recent argument by Enfield *et al.* (2018) according to which the polar response system across languages is variant in accordance with the variability in language-specific and culture-specific features across languages. One of the findings in the current study refers to a predominant preference for agreement, at least in form, within the SA polar interrogative sequence. Some of the factors which lead to the predominance of this preference are shown to be of a language-related nature, such as the preferences for

positive format and same polarity. However, it has been noted in chapter 4, section (4.2) that the predominance of that preference is grounded in the Syrian culture. Syrian society is based on an authoritarian hierarchy in which rebellious behaviour, which may be expressed in blatant disagreement, is sanctioned. Such findings confirm the argument by Enfield *et al.* (2018) that the polar response system is bound to both language-specific and culture-specific factors, and it varies according to the variability of such factors.

6.3. Limitations and future research recommendation

One of the limitations of this study is that it has not focused on prosody in SA polar interrogative sequences. The study has found that there is no one-to-one mapping between prosody and polar interrogativity in SA. Rising terminal intonation has been found to be used for particular actions but not for constructing polar interrogativity *per se*. Such finding is in line with Couper-Kuhlen's argument (2012) according to which there is no on-to-one relationship between prosody and interrogative in English and Dutch. Prosody in those languages is mainly implemented to construct specific actions in which questions are used, such as topic proffering, topic pursuit, and other-initiated repair. Therefore, investigating prosody is recommended for future research on polar interrogatives in SA with focus on the action-relevance of prosody in such sequences.

The data and its analysis in this study are limited in size, time and place. This study could not be conducted in Syria itself because of current war conditions. I recommend researching the language in its geographical setting with focus on video recording a diversity of social activities such as buying and selling in shops and markets. Also missing in the current study is the analysis of talk in institutional settings. Polar interrogatives are predominantly used in some institutional settings such as court hearings, news interviews, doctor-patient interactions, and classroom

environment. It is worthy to build on findings of the current research to explore the use of polar interrogatives in such settings in SA.

The main focus in the current research has been on form, in particular grammar. The study bears reference to actions but within the scope of their relationship to the grammatical forms discussed within this study. It is recommended that future research focuses more on the types of actions which polar interrogatives do in SA.

It has been noted that the use of ‘?eh la?’-prefacing in SA is not exclusive to polar responses. ‘?eh la?’-prefacing is found to be used in other types of sequences such as assessments, suggestions and telling sequences. It is worthy to investigate the organisation and action-relevance of such construct in those types of sequences. This will further explain why, where and for what purpose SA interactants use such construct.

Finally, the current study has demonstrated that orientation to the preference for type-conformity (Raymond, 2003) in polar interrogative sequences is variant in SA from American English. It has also demonstrated that a polar SPP is not necessarily a yes/no SPP, neither a polar question, in SA, exclusively prefers a yes/no-marked SPP. Abu Abah (2018) has found that, unlike American English, in Saudi Arabic interaction, a contiguous and non-delayed acceptance of an offer is dispreferred. I, therefore, repeat what (Clift, 2016a) and Heinemann (2003) has recommended with regard to the importance of looking at other languages than American English, and not to rely solely on findings in American English for researching and understanding social interaction.

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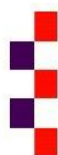
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Appendix i

Participants' ethical consent form template



University of Essex

Department of Language and Linguistics

Participant information sheet

Title of project / investigation:

Name of the Researcher:

Brief outline of project, including an outline of the procedures to be used:

Thank you, dear participant, for supporting my project.

The project aim is to explore [brief description of the aims, objectives and focus of the research project].
Achieving this aim is intended through:

- 1- Video/audio recording of mundane and institutional talk.
- 2- Cameras shall be fixed and focused on the participants face and upper body parts in order to show the gestures and facial expressions that accompany their talk during interaction.
- 3- A small pocket audio recorder device shall be placed in a suitable location near to the speakers so that the conversation can be recorded clearly in order to support the video data.

Thank you for participation. Participation is voluntary and you can withdraw at any time without giving reason. All personal information that you provide will be kept confidential. All the collected written data shall be kept in a locked drawer, and all software data shall be saved in a password-protected PC. Only the researcher and his/her supervisor at the University of Essex shall have access to the data. All identities shall be kept anonymous and all participants will be given pseudonyms. You can withdraw your consent to take part in this project at any time. Third party might have access to the data for the sake of Linguistic or sociolinguistic research only, provided that they sign a consent to adhere to the same anonymity and confidentiality terms of the current project. You have the right to withdraw from the project at any time in which case data obtained by you shall be deleted or destroyed immediately. For further inquiries, you can contact the researcher or his/her supervisor using the contact details provided in the consent form.

Researcher's contact details:

.....

.....



Consent Form for participation in the research project under the title: [Title of project]

	Yes	No
Please tick the appropriate boxes		
Taking Part		
- I have read and understood the project information sheet dated DD/MM/YYYY.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about the project.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- I agree to take part in the project. Taking part in the project will include being audio and/or video recorded.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- I understand that my taking part is voluntary; I can withdraw from the study at any time and I do not have to give any reasons for why I no longer want to take part.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Use of the information I provide for this project only		
- I understand my personal details such as phone number and address will not be revealed to people outside the project.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- I understand that my words may be quoted in publications, reports, web pages, and other research outputs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- Please choose one of the following two options: I would like my real name used in the above I would not like my real name to be used in the above.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	
Use of the information I provide beyond this project		
- I agree for the data I provide to be archived at the UK Data Archive.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- I understand that other genuine researchers will have access to this data only if they agree to preserve the confidentiality of the information as requested in this form.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- I understand that other genuine researchers may use my words in publications, reports, web pages, and other research outputs, only if they agree to preserve the confidentiality of the information as requested in this form.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
So we can use the information you provide legally		
- I agree to assign the copyright I hold in any materials related to this project to [name of researcher].	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Name of participant [printed] _____	Signature _____	Date _____
Name of researcher [printed] _____	Signature _____	Date _____
Project contact details for further information:	Supervisor and institute contact details:	