

## Repair, Affiliation, and Account: How a Guest and Co-Hosts Handled a Delicate Topic in a Caribbean Spanish Radio Talk Show

Brittany Victoria Roa\*  
Hawaii Pacific University

### Abstract

This paper analyzes the introduction and management of a delicate topic in a radio talk show in Caribbean Spanish. It focuses on the interactional practices that occur when participants address a delicate topic. These interactional practices are "delays," "repairs," "affiliation," and "accounts." In managing delicate topics, participants draw on shared cultural references and humor. An understanding of how delicate topics are managed in conversations can assist language learning and teaching.

### Introduction

To have interactional competence is to have the ability to participate in social actions through various interactional methods (Goffman & Leach, 1966). Interactional competence is needed for participation in discursive practices\* recurring instances of interaction in context or episodes of socio-cultural significance to a community of speakers (Taguchi, 2003). An important part of interactional competence is the ability to navigate delicate topics that may appear in conversation. A delicate topic may conceivably cause "cracks" in the speaker's mental image. Participants in conversations manage delicate topics by using interactional methods such as delaying the mentioning of a delicate issue (Silverman & Per5kyl5, 1996) &

that display" Cardi initiates a physical altercation with another artist and begins taunting another cast member" #sia" about a past relationship ! will show that by using repair" affiliation" and account" the hosts and the guest of El Vacilón de la Mañana manage this controversial topic tactfully

#### Topic initiation: Repair and Co-Hosts! Collaboration

The show opens with a pre, topical sequence where the hosts ask Cardi how she feels and what her favorite foods are !n a comical voice" she lists traditional Dominican dishes ! \$%Un lwhat

01 Juan: 234 que(h!5 as6 es que \$la ente quiere es7u7har aqu6(



- 2# Juan: ((laughs))
- 2) Cardi: hh (?! ehh [?hh" es:.rate, que mi :a:\* me est\* &t\*&  
 ehh wait that my dad me be- rdPERS  
 wait be\$ause my dad is listening to me
- 2- Juan: [36?"  
 yes  
 yes
- 20 [((Juan, Jose, and nena lau hin !!"
- 21 Cardi: oyend:o/ [ que (?!" es:.rate que la mamilia est\*  
 listening that wait that the family be- rdPERSS!  
 wait be\$ause my family is
- 2< oyendo GN2D:O  
 listening okay  
 listening okay+,

Rather than talking about the specific controversial incident" Cardi mentions her personality trait \$/! am very funny"0 line -.)" local identity \$/! am from The : ron+"0 lines -. &' ()" and ethnicity \$/! am Nominican" ! am from Trinidad"0 line ' () as accounts for the foundation of her mannerisms and core being \$/strong"0 line ' -) : y doing this" she is invoking the cultural stereotypes associated with these traits and identities as a subliminal factor that can not be helped #t the same time" by highlighting her local and ethnic identities as assertions of who she is" Cardi is also giving ratification of these identities in the broader sense : y not addressing the topic directly" the guest participates in the same interactional practice as the hosts

The hosts appear to affiliate with Cardi by inserting a *loke* !n the Nominican dialect of Spanish" the word *la \*ña* takes on various meanings !n the conte+t of this dialogue" the word means =big mouth@" which also has a se+ual reference in this case !n line ' ' " H+cerpt ' " >ose adds a stronger assessment to Cardi's initial accounts but with a se+ual innuendo making it both affiliative and humorous because it leads to laughter in lines ' K through ' L Cardi orients to the se+ual innuendo" making it relevant to the conversation She does this by frst delaying and following with saying her family is listening and implying to behave accordingly This triggers louder and longer laughter by the hosts

#fter responding to the *loke* by the hosts" Cardi provides a second account \$H+cerpt K)

#### H+cerpt K

- 2= Cardi: °yo s. lo que yo estoy ha7iend° (?!  
 # know that whi\$h # am-1stPERS do-1stPERS(-)  
 # know what #'m doing"
- #0 yo5yo estudio lo que yo ha\_o?  
 # # study-1stPERS that whi\$h i do-1stPERS-  
 # study what #'m doing-

Here" she elaborates further upon the topic proffer response by focusing on her agency

rather than her given personality and identities. Using cognitive verbs with the first person subject /! know and /! study she highlights her understanding and choice in what she did.

Finally, Cardi gives a third account for her actions (H+cerpt 8) namely the support of her family. Here again the host shows clear affiliation with her.

### H+cerpt 8

- #1 Cardi: DO? ten o \$:arientes( que, siem:re Aest\*n,  
 # have-1stPERS family members that always be- ndPERS  
 # have family members that always are
- #2 Juan: A:endiente de ti  
 thinking of you  
 thinking of you
- ## Cardi: ,:endiente de Am6  
 thinking of me  
 thinking of me  
 ((pun\$hing her palm))
- #) :ero \$m6 :a:\*( siem:re me di7e like(?! tu est\*s &ta& Amuy  
 but my dad always me tell like you be-2ndPERS very  
 but my dad always tells me like you are very
- #- Mam:osa/ (Fn;:ierte di:nero/\$ \$>FJ+ CG>8J2J'+ CN  
 famous invest-you money look buy-you a  
 famous- #nvest your money- .ook" you should buy an
- #0 282J'2>+N'G +N 32N'G HG>FNPG((?1! eso, lo que me di7e?  
 apartment in Santo \*omingo this that whi\$h me tell  
 apartment in Santo \*omingo- 'his is what he tells me-

In line K- Cardi makes a statement but pauses in what seems to be an attempt to catch her breath. Juan jumps in and finishes her TCU with pendiente de ti, =thinking of you@ in line K'. Cardi then accepts and incorporates his completion into her TCU. In lines K8 through K3 she begins to shift topics by invoking a semantic relationship between her family's support and guidance.

### Discussion

This conversation on El Vacilón de La Mañana is an example of interactional methods typically used when tactfully addressing a delicate topic. The hosts found a way to proffer the topic through a positive assessment as a preface, self-repair, and collaborative complimenting. The guest gave a preferred reply with response tokens that encourage continuation and expansions in her multiple accounts, which the hosts affiliate with through humor and collaborative turn completion. In this way, the hosts and the guest jointly achieve the guest's voice and view on the controversy.

In second language teaching, it is important to expose students to this type of interaction. This is important because it allows them to see how native speakers use language to manage delicate topics.

the topic management by noting

Appendix

