ABSTRACT
Among possible pragmatic feedback that an interlocutor can use to acknowledge the degree of understanding of an utterance, clarification requests (CRs) are to be considered. The functional role of CRs can furthermore be expressed via silent pauses - or failed turn-giving moves - which express an understanding problem and are solved through a clarify speech act. Therefore, in this work we investigated silent pauses that, in specific conditions, may also have an interactional role which is interpreted by the speaker as a clarification need.

INTRODUCTION
In conversations, interlocutors constantly need to signal or check the understanding of the latest utterance. Clarification Requests:
anaphoric feedback initiated when the processing of a preceding utterance occurs[1] in order to acknowledge the degree of understanding of the input [2];
polar questions, wh-questions, alternative questions…
expressing specific communicative problems, i.e. acoustic, lexical, syntactic, logical, and inferential problems [3].

⇒ CRs’ perlocutive effect is the clarify speech act [4]: additional information to one’s own or other speaker’s previous utterance

Communicative values of long silences in conversation (> 1 s duration):
between-speakers long silences (gaps)
within-speaker long silences (pauses)

discourse structuring, speakers’ hesitation due to troubles in information processing [5,6]

METHOD AND MATERIAL
Corpus:
- 8 Italian task-oriented dialogues (CLIPS Corpus) [9]
- 16 speakers (Naples/Rome)
- 1h 30’ speech (about 12’ per dialogue)

Annotation levels:
- Clarification Requests (CRs)[3]
- Gaps and pauses [10]
- Pauses’ functions [11]
- Structuring (STR)→ syntactic and intonation levels
- Interactional(INT)→ speech processing in interaction
- Contextual dialogue moves (PrATID) [4]

RESULTS
- In 1h 30’ speech 168 CRs were found - 135 explicit, 33 implicit.
- Std. dev. values reveal high inter-dialogue (= inter-speaker) variability

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>dialogue</th>
<th>duration (min)</th>
<th>turns/min</th>
<th>n. CRs</th>
<th>turns/CRs</th>
<th>Explicit CRs</th>
<th>Implicit CRs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>mean</td>
<td>11.53</td>
<td>20.3</td>
<td>21.6</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>std.dev.</td>
<td>04.30</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Implicit CRs are longer and mostly preceded by an explanation and followed by a clarification. Here, a not clear enough explanation caused the hearer not to take the given turn and the speaker continued with a clarification.
- Other STR-INT pauses are mostly followed by detailed explanations or other kinds of speech acts, such as align (i.e., Did you get it?), questions (i.e., Can you tell me what you see?), check (i.e., Do you have this woman in the small display?).

CONCLUSION
The work has shown that the presence of troubles in conversation due to understanding problems could be signaled explicitly, through requests (explicit CRs), or implicitly, through structuring and interactional silent pauses (implicit CRs). Implicit CRs express the interlocutor’s information processing difficulties which are not yet verbalized and are solved by the speaker before being explicitly expressed. They covered a smaller, though consistent, amount of CRs.

The analysis of silences duration confirmed the tendency previously described (3) as STR-INT pauses resulting from failed inter-turn silences – expressing some kind of troubles – are longer than intra-turn silences (pauses) and successful inter-turn silences (gaps).

REFERENCES