

論文 Article

Repairs in Japanese English learners' communication: from the perspective of clarification and multimodality

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Repairs in Japanese English learners' communication: from the perspective of clarification and multimodality

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Abstract This study investigates repairs in interactions between Japanese learners of English from the perspective of clarification and multimodality. The study analyzes characteristics of repair in conversation in which Japanese students have to communicate only in English and examines the communicative effectiveness of repair in addition to analyzing the functions of gestures as a multimodal aspect in interaction.

Key Words: conversation repairs, second language communication, multimodality

1. Introduction

This study analyzes characteristics of repair in conversation in which Japanese students have to communicate only in English. The study examines the communicative effectiveness of repair and analyzes the functions of gestures as a multimodal aspect of interaction.

The participants of the interactions consist of non-native speakers of English (NNE) whose first language (L1) is Japanese. This study analyses conversational repairs in interactions by non-native speakers of English from the perspective of clarification and multimodality.

Previous studies about "repair" began based on English daily conversation data and have analyzed the types of repair, their organization, and position in interactions. A large number of studies on repair in second language (L2) interactions including participants with unequal linguistic

competence were motivated by the suggestion of the preference for self-correction over other repairs by Schegloff, Jefferson and Sacks (1977) and have tested these propositions in L2 interactions. Recently, researchers have begun to focus on repairs in ELF (English as a lingua franca) interactions and analyzed repairs in interactions by non-native speakers with differing L1. However, most of the previous research on repair has not analyzed L2 interactions by non-native speakers (NNSs) with the same L1.

This study analyzes characteristics of repair in English only interactions of Japanese L1 students, and it examines its communicative effectiveness and analyzes the functions of gestures as a multimodal aspect of interaction.

2. Repairs

When understanding fails between conversation participants, problems with hearing, speaking and/or comprehension must be addressed. Schegloff et al. (1977) call these problems 'trouble sources' that are repairable. Accordingly, the basic structure of repair consists of three components: (1) trouble source, (2) repair initiation and (3) repair completion. There is also a sequential organization called 'repair segment' that includes some stages that begin by "repair initiation" and end by the outcome of the participants' conversational sequence.

2.1 Repairs in conversation

Who initiates repair and who repairs the trouble source are important according to Schegloff et al. (1977). They divide repair initiations into two types: self-initiation and other-initiation. In addition, they divide "who repairs" into two types: self-repair and other-repair. The combination of "who initiates the repair" and "who repairs trouble sources" are as follows:

<types of repairs>

- (1) Self-initiated self repair
- (2) Other-initiated self repair
- (3) Self-initiated other repair
- (4) Other-initiated other repair

2.2 Position of repairs

Repair can be initiated in various places in relation to the trouble source. Schegloff et al. (1977) lists four different places for the repair initiation.

- (1) Within the same turn
- (2) At a transition space
- (3) In the next turn (3-1) (delayed other initiation of repair)
- (4) After the next turn

2.3 Sequential organization of repairs: occasional failure to repair

How repair is organized in conversational interactions has been analyzed. Occasionally, there is a failure to repair the trouble sources or the repair initiation is rejected. In an interaction, a listener locates trouble sources in the

speaker's utterance. The speaker then accepts and corrects, or rejects and fails to correct.

2.4 Preference for self-repair over other-repair

Schegloff, et al. (1977) observed the preference for self-repair over other-repair. As one potential reason, opportunities for self-repair exist prior to those for other-repair, because the speaker may repair his/her utterance within his/her current turn and before the turn transition (this is the place where the current speaker changes) takes place.

2.5 Repairs in L2 interactions

A number of research projects on repair in L2 interaction were motivated by the analysis of Schegloff et al. (1977) for the preference of self-repair over other-repair. This was tested in both pedagogical settings and non-pedagogical settings. In addition, such research shows repair in L2 interaction plays an important role differing from that in L1 interaction. L2 interaction involves participants with unequal linguistic competence in which some pedagogical goals should be accomplished. These studies demonstrated various kinds of strategies of repairs special to the speakers whose role is "teacher" or that of "students."

2.6 Repairs in interactions by non-native speakers of English having the same L1

Most of the previous research on repair, however, has not analyzed the interactions of the same L1 non-native speakers (NNSs) in which communication occurs only in their L2 and without instructor supervision (i.e. no inequality in L2 competence).

2.6.1 Self-repair as a clarification strategy

Previous studies in ELF interactions have frequently reported self-repairs as one of the clarification strategies, which raise explicitness in the current speaker's utterance in interaction (Kauer 2011, Mauranen 2007).

2.6.2 Purpose of this study

This study analyzes characteristics of repair as a clarification strategy in only non-native speakers' English

interactions, and examines its communicative effectiveness and analyzes the functions of gestures as a multimodal aspect in interaction.

3. Conversation Data

The data in this study consists of conversational interactions videotaped and transcribed in which pairs discuss given topics freely. English conversation data in which L1 Japanese speakers communicate only in English is analyzed. This study focuses on the moments in which grammatical difficulty requires management to communicate in English.

3.1 Participants in conversation

Twelve native speakers of Japanese were involved in this study. Six pairs of five-minute to seven-minute interactions were recorded. A pair with the same L2 English competence talked about two given topics in each session. The ages of the participants ranged from twenty to thirty years. Before each session, questions were asked pertaining to personality, age, length of stay living in English-speaking countries, and length of their second language (English) study. Below is a brief summary of the participants' information.

Table 1 Conversation Data

Basic level speakers of English

Speaker	Nationality	Age	Length of stay in English speaking countries
S1	Japanese	22	less than 1 month
S2	Japanese	22	less than 1 month
S3	Japanese	20	less than 1 month
S4	Japanese	21	less than 1 month

Intermediate level speakers of English

Speaker	Nationality	Age	Length of stay in English speaking countries
S5	Japanese	22	less than 1 month

S6	Japanese	22	2 months
S7	Japanese	22	less than 1 month
S8	Japanese	22	less than 1 month

Advanced level speakers of English

Speaker	Nationality	Age	Length of stay in English speaking countries
S9	Japanese	21	1 years
S10	Japanese	22	3 month
S11	Japanese	20	3 years
S12	Japanese	21	7 years

3.2 Data collection procedures

All data utilized in this study were collected in the United States and Japan from 2006 to 2010. English conversation data were collected at Boston College in Massachusetts in the United States and Waseda University in Japan. English conversation data of L1 Japanese speakers communicating only in English were collected for analysis. In total, twelve conversation sessions by six pairs were recorded. The session consisting of pairs with equivalent L2 competency (basic/intermediate/advanced level) discussing two given topics for five to seven minutes were recorded by a digital video recorder.

Provided conversation topics were easy and familiar, and pertained to daily life, e.g. hobbies, traveling and daily news broadcasts.

Data transcription

Conversation data recorded on DV tapes were digitalized into computer files and transcribed in accordance with transcription conventions of conversation analysis. Transcription notation utilized in this study is included in Appendix A.

3.3 Three levels in English conversation data by non-native speakers

This study uses the TOEIC scores, English language learning experiences, and periods of stay in English-speaking countries as criteria for English proficiency. Conversational interactions by six pairs were collected and

divided by proficiency levels of English into advanced, intermediate, and basic levels.

- (i) Basic level: speakers with TOEIC scores under 600 with zero or under one year's experience living in English-speaking countries, or speakers having difficulty communicating in English
- (ii) Intermediate level: speakers with TOEIC scores of 600 -850 with one month to several years' experience living in English-speaking countries who can communicate only in English but sometimes have slight difficulty
- (iii) Advanced level: speakers with TOEIC scores over 850 with several years' experience living in English-speaking countries who do not have difficulty communicating only in English

4. Analyses

This study analyses the features of conversation repairs as a clarification strategy in non-native speakers' interaction in which participants have to communicate only in English and examines its communicative effectiveness and analyses the functions of gestures as a multimodal aspect in interaction.

4.1 Basic level learner interactions

4.1.1 Self-repair

Basic-level English learners often self-repair grammatical errors for corrections.

Example 1 (self-correction of grammatical errors)

S2: When...when did you go to Hawaii?

S1: 3 years ago.

S2: 3 years ago. Wow.

S1: And September, my friend with.

→S2: Summer vacation, in summer vacation?

S1: Yes. Five days trip.

In Example 1, S2 fails to use the preposition "in". His utterance is unclear as to whether he uses it as the subject or locative phrase. He then self-repairs his grammatical error by adding "in" to his utterance with rising intonation.

Many such self-repairs are often observed in basic-level learner interactions. They often correct their grammatical errors and clarify the grammar and the content of their intended meaning.

Example 2 (self-repair as a strategy of searching for correct phrases or words)

→S2: Do...do you want...will you want to go...no. What country will you want to go?

S1: I...wedding trips...I...

S2: Wedding trips.

S1: I want to go...I want to go Australia.

In Example 2, S2 self-corrects his utterance searching for a correct expression and clarifying his intended meaning. His utterance is still incorrect, but it seems that he was able to make himself understood.

Example 3

(self-repair as a strategy for correction of tense)

→S2: Last year, OK,OK. Did you...did you... have you ever been to Okinawa?

S1: No.

S2: No?

S1: No.

S2: Oh, really?

S1: I have never seen.

Basic-level learners of English often make errors in verb tense and correct these in their interactions. In example 3, S2 corrects the tense while searching for the correct one.

4.1.2 Other-initiated self-repair

Non-native speaker self-repairs by other initiation.

Example 4

(clarification: self-repair by other-initiation)

- S1: When have you been? (S1 mistakenly use “when” not “where”) (trouble sources)
 →S2: Oh, I...I...I have...I...I have been, country or in Japan? (other-initiation)
 →S1: Country. (self-repair)
 S2: Country, oh. Only America.
 S1: Oh, America and Canada.
 S2: Yes, Yes, Yes, Yes.
 S1: I went Canada, America and Hawaii.
 S2: Hawaii.
 S1: Hawaii.

In Example 4, S1 means “where have you been?” but mistakenly uses the expression “when” instead of “where.” S2 seems to understand what S1 wants to say but thinks it is unclear, so he confirms the intention of “where have you been?” by using the expression “country or in Japan” (foreign countries or towns in Japan). S1 then self-repairs by using “country,” which means “foreign countries.” S2 is able to confirm S1’s question and answers it. These kinds of self-repair by other-initiation as clarification are often observed in interactions of basic-level speakers.

Example 5

(clarification: self-repair by other-initiation)

- S4: When when did you go?
 S3: eee ...Eiffel tower ah...
 →S4: ↑oh No no no when
when? your school day, your high school days?
 S3: ↑Ah ↑Ah I see I see
 →S3: eeh,... two years ago. (self-repair)

In Example 5, S3 fails to understand S4’s question, so S4

clarifies his question, and then S3 self-corrects by giving the correct answer later in the conversation.

Example 6

(repetition of clarification and confirmation)

- S2: Oh. How much?
 S1: Five days and five...fifty hundred.
 S2: Fifty hundred? (other-initiation, ask clarification)
 S1: (laughing) Change.
 S2: O.K., change.
 S1: Five, zero, zero, zero, zero. (self-repair)
 S2: Fifty thousand? (ask clarification)
 S1: Thousand?
 S2: Thousand...
 S1: Thousand. Fifty thousand. (self-correct)
 S2: Thousand.
 S1: Fifty thousand. Fifty thousand. Yes. (self-repair)
 S2: Thousand. Yes, fifty thousand, oh. (confirmation)

In Example 6, S1 fails to answer the correct price. S2 asks for clarification in Line 3. S2 does not seem to understand her error in Lines 4 and 8. S2 asks for clarification again. He continues to ask for clarification and confirms the correct answer until S1 finally understands the correct expression in Line 12. Finally, S2 confirms S1’s understanding.

These kinds of self-repair by other-initiation as clarification are often observed in basic level learners’ interactions.

4.1.3 Other-repair (correction)

Previous studies in ELF interaction reported self-repairs as one of the clarification strategies that raise explicitness in the current speaker’s utterance (Kauer 2011, Mauranen 2007). However, this study indicated not only self-repair but also self-repair by other-initiation can be a clarification strategy. Next, this study indicates that “other-repair” operates as a clarification strategy.

Example 7 (other-repair by provisioning of words)

- S4: I will go...I will went... I will go Kankoku.
 S3: Kankoku...Kankoku... (Other-initiation)
 (laughing)
 →S3: Korea. (Other repair)
 S4: Korea. Yes. (Confirmation)
 S3: In graduation trips.
 S4: Oh,yeah.

In Example 7, S4 fails to use the English proper noun “South Korea” and says the Japanese “Kankoku.” S3 then says “Kankoku” twice, laughing. She then gives the correct English proper noun in Line 3. This is an other-repair by a provisioning word.

Basic-level learners sometimes complete the other participant’s utterance cooperatively.

Example 8 (other repair as cooperative completion)

- S4: When...where where are you living in?
 S3: a--now?
 S4: yeah
 S3: I'm live in eeh..... Takadanobaba.
 S3: ah---
 S4: unn
 S3: near...
 S4: ↑Wakejuku? (the name of the station)
 S3: No noneareeh.....near
 →S4: ↑near near station
 (other-repair as a cooperative completion)
 S3: Yeah!
 S3: I'm tokorozawasi shuuden so- year

S3 is unable to find his continuous expression immediately. He is searching for the word he wants to say in Line 7 and Line 9. S4 initiates repair in Line 8 by providing a possible word. However, S3 is unable to find

the word he wants in Line 9. S4 then other-repairs S3’s utterance by cooperative completion by completing S3’s utterance cooperatively in Line 10.

This paper now considers the interactions of learners of intermediate and advanced levels. In both of these levels, there are fewer grammatical errors than those of the basic-level speakers, so self-repair as grammatical corrections are not observed in their interactions. This study indicates their repairs as clarification strategies.

4.2 Intermediate level learners’ interactions

This paper now considers the conversation interactions by intermediate-level speakers of English.

4.2.1 Other-initiated self-repair**Example 9 (repetition as a clarification)**

- S5: Have you ever been to any foreign countries?
 S6: Ah, I’ve been, just for sightseeing, but...
 S5: Sight...? (other-initiation)
 →S6: Sightseeing (self-repair as a clarification: repetition of the phrase or words)
 →S5: Ah, sightseeing! (confirmation)
 S6: Over ten country. My family loves to other country.

Example 9 is an interaction by intermediate level speakers. In this example, S5 initiates repair that asks clarification of S6’s utterance. S6 repeats the word “sightseeing” and self-repairs. Then, S5 understands and indicates confirmation by repetition of the word.

Example 10 (self-repair by other initiation: clarification)

- S7: Ah, I like Japanese movie better than all movies.
 I like “*Ima Aini Yukimasu*”.
 S8: Ah, really? I love the writer, the same writer.
 →S7: Takushi...? (other-initiation)
 S8: Yeah, Ichikawa Takushi. (self-repair as a clarification)

In Example 10, S8 clarifies her utterance by saying both the first and last name of Mr. Ichikawa.

4.3 Advanced level learners' interactions

Advanced level learners also make fewer grammatical errors. This study now indicates self-repair in advanced-level learner interactions.

4.3.1 Self-repairs

Example 11

- S9: What kind of job?
 S10: Eeehhh, it's very hard to explain. But have you ever heard of Tokyo girls collection?
 S9: No.
 S10: It's a very big fashion show in the Tokyo.
 And....people see the shows and,,, the things the models wearing, you can buy in a PC or a cell phone.
 S9: So....you worked as a model?
 S10: No, no, no. I worked as,,,
I was working as,,, I was helping the web-site.
 →S9: Ahha.
 →S10: The web site of the show.
 S9: The show yes.
 →S10: So I helped the editing of the web site or
checking about those

In this example, S10 self-corrects her utterance in Line 6 as a correction of tense. This is the same type of repair as seen in interactions of basic-level learners. However, we can see the different types of repair in Lines 8 and 10. S10 self-corrects her utterance by restating it and using clearer phrases to be understood.

4.4 Multimodal features as clarification

This study also shows hand gestures and head nodding as clarification strategies for effective communication.

English learners, especially at basic levels, often use hand gestures and head nodding as clarification strategies

for their utterances; they self-repair together with such multimodal features for clarification.

Consider Example 6 again.

Example 12

(repetition of clarification and confirmation)

- S2: Oh. How much?
 S1: Five days and five... fifty hundred.
 S2: Fifty hundred?
(other-initiation, ask clarification)
 S1: (laughing) Change.
 S2: O.K., change.
 S1: Five,0000. (self-repair)
 → (with hand gesture that shows the number of zero)
 S2: Fifty thousand? (ask clarification)
 S1: Thousand?
 S2: Thousand...
 S1: Thousand. Fifty thousand. (self-correct)
 S2: Thousand.
 S1: Fifty thousand. Fifty thousand. Yes.
 →(self-repair) (head nodding)
 S2: Thousand. Yes, fifty thousand, oh.
 →(confirmation) (head nodding)

Basic-level speakers of English often use these kinds of strategies to clarify their utterances and make themselves understood when they have difficulty in speaking the correct grammatical phrases.

5. Conclusion

This study revealed the following repairs as clarification strategies:

- (i) self-repair as correction of grammatical errors
- (ii) self-repair searching for words and phrases
- (iii) self-repair as correction of tense
- (iv) self-repair by other-initiation
- (v) other-repair
 (provision of words/cooperative completion)
- (vi) repetition of words (with addition)
- (vii) rephrased utterances for clarification

- (viii) multimodal features such as hand gesture and head nodding together with repairs works as clarification strategies for their utterances

Basic-level learners of English often use self-repair to correct grammatical errors. They often correct their grammatical errors and clarify the grammar and the contents. In addition, they self-correct their utterances searching for a correct expression and clarify what they want to say. They often correct the tense in their interactions.

Non-native speakers often use self-repair by other-initiations. Non-native speakers self-repair when asked to clarify their utterance by other-initiation. They also use repeated self-repairs and other-initiation as clarification. Furthermore, there are other-repairs as clarification: provisioning of words and cooperative completion.

Advanced and intermediate level learners use other types of self-repair to clarify their utterance.

Furthermore, multimodal features such as hand gestures and head nodding work as clarification.

This study revealed that Japanese learners of English use both self and other-repairs together with hand gesture and head nodding as clarification strategies for effective communication.

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Appendix A

Transcription Notations

- [] overlapping utterances
- ... pause
- = latching: when there is no interval between adjacent utterances
- () translation into L1
- Underline trouble sources that can be repaired
- Initiation repair-initiation
- Repair repairs