

Repair Strategies on Spoken Discourse

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Abstract: This study aimed to analyze the repair strategies used in spoken discourse in both ordinary and institutional conversations. The study used the descriptive - qualitative method. The data were derived from the 10 recorded institutional and 10 recorded ordinary discourses through audio-recording. A four part process analytic technique: Record-View-Transcribe-Analyze (R-V-I-A) method was used. Recorded conversations were transcribed and analyzed using the frequency count and percentage. The results of the study show that most interlocutors preferred self-initiated self-repair in both institutional and ordinary discourses to resolve communication problem during their turn. Further, disfluency in communication was the most committed trouble source. This confirms that the interlocutors are knowledgeable and have good grasp as regards content; however, they have difficulty in articulating their thoughts because of the poor facility of the English language.

Keywords: trouble source, repair strategies, self-initiated-self repair, other initiated-self repair, other-initiated-other repair

Introduction

Language is the human capacity for acquiring and using complex systems of communication either in the form of written or spoken discourse. Language is the most important aspect in the life of all beings. Through language, we are able to exchange knowledge, beliefs, opinions, wishes, threats, commands, thanks, promises, and other declaration of feelings.

Moreover, language is a channel for communication and productive conversation which is very significant to transmitting knowledge and to sustaining good rapport. It is the fundamental of communication and tool for social interaction and is therefore considered as an exclusive human property.

Communication is inevitably part of our daily lives. It is a medium for speakers to discuss ideas in any topic on a certain point and context. We, social beings, communicate to interact in order to establish relationships and maintain it through constant conversation.

Conversation is an interactive and spontaneous communication in social environment to share and access information between and among interlocutors. According to Wardhaugh (2010), conversation deals with a lot of meanings and interpretations depending upon of its context.

Hence, conversation is a progression of exchanges among participants who are considered as learning system by which existing knowledge is conveyed and new knowledge is generated. However, communication problems may occur during conversation that brings barriers to the interlocutors because of some reasons. This phenomenon is inherently unavoidable in any angle of conversation. Such errors are recurrent problem to both institutional and ordinary talk which is definitely prone to difficulties of interlocutors to maintain the flow of connection in a conversation.

Conversation, according to Sacks, Jefferson and Schegloff (1977), is when a speaker is talking, he has either way to self-repair himself or other participant when committing errors. Repairs include self-initiated self-repair, self-initiated other-repair, other-initiated self-repair, other-initiated other-repair.

Repairs are strategies that speakers use in spoken discourse either in an ordinary conversation or institutional talk. It is the way speaker corrects things which someone else has said, and checks what he/she has understood.

Moreover, repairs do not just correct grammar rather as a way to better express oneself in a conversation. Normally, repair is being done when an interlocutor locates and replaces a prior information unit. Then, this shows the speakers' sensitivity on their own production of discourse covers both institutional and ordinary conversation.

Repair can be initiated by the speaker of the repairable (self-initiated repair) or may it be initiated by its recipient (other-initiated). In addition, a repair can be made by the speaker of the repairable item (other repair). In combination, these possibilities allow for four types of repair: self-initiated self-repair, self-initiated other-repair, other-initiated self-repair, other-initiated other-repair.

In this premise, the researchers would like to analyze the conversations both in institutional and ordinary discourses among students in the university. This paper considered the model of mechanism for repair conversation by Schegloff's, Sacks', and Jefferson's (1977). The theory defined the strategies for resolving miscommunication problems involving speaking, hearing and understanding.

Statement of the Problem

Generally, this study aimed to determine the repair strategies on spoken discourse at Cagayan State University, Carig Campus, Tuguegarao City for the school year 2014-2015.

Specifically, it sought to answer the followings:

1. To what extent do the following trouble sources are observed in institutional conversation and ordinary conversation?
 - a. Dysfluency in communication
 - b. Unpreparedness
 - c. Lack of communication Skills
 - d. Physical Noise
 - e. Vagueness
 - d. Poor Comprehension
2. How frequent do the following repairs occur in institutional conversation and ordinary conversation?
 - a. Self-initiated self-repair
 - b. Other- initiated self- repair
 - c. Self- initiated other- repair
 - d. Other- initiated other- repair
3. How frequent do the following repair strategies are used in the different trouble sources?
 - a. Self-initiated self-repair

- b. Other- initiated self- repair
- c. Self- initiated other- repair
- d. Other- initiated other- repair

Methodology

Research Design

This study used the descriptive-qualitative method. This study was predominantly qualitative method in terms of the type of analysis. That is to say, to describe how the language is being used in the ordinary and institutional discourses by using the detailed transcription of obtained data from the audio recording. This method concerned with developing explanations of social phenomenon. It studied behavior in natural settings or used people's accounts as data, focused on description and interpretation and might lead to development of new concepts or theory, or to an evaluation of an organizational process (Hancock, Windridge K., and Ockleford.: 2007).

To objectively analyze the data, the researchers used a four part process analytic technique: Record-View-Transcribe-Analyze (R-V-I-A) method.

Participants

This study recorded both discourses inside and outside classrooms at Cagayan State University, Carig Campus for the school year 2014-2015. There were 10 ordinary and 10 institutional discourse analyzed based on the 140 utterances transcribed.

Research Instrument

This study made use of audio-tape recording to capture the conversation of the interlocutors. Further, the researcher interviewed and took down notes to validate and supplement the data gathered.

Procedures

All data were collected during the first semester of the school year 2014-2015. For the ordinary conversation, the researchers recorded conversation from the different places or areas of the campus which include: in the canteen, under the shade of the tress, and inside the library. For the institutional discourse, audio-recording occurred after permission was granted. These include: classroom discussions, meetings, and other formal gatherings.

Data Analysis

In order to investigate the study, the repair strategies used by the interlocutors and the trouble sources committed by the interlocutors were analyzed using the frequency count and percentage.

For the frequency, the researchers adapted Mariana’s formula:

$$(\%) = \frac{\text{Frequency of the repairs}}{\text{Total source of Data}} \times 100 \%$$

Results and Discussion

Frequency of Repair Strategies occurred in Institutional Conversation

Table 1 presents the frequency and percentage distribution of repair strategies in institutional conversation. The table shows that the most repair strategy used was the self-initiated self –repair with a frequency of 47 or 68.11%, followed by self-initiated-other repair and other initiated self-repair with a frequency of 16 and 4 or 23.18 % and 5.79 % respectively. Further, the least repair strategy used was other-initiated repair with a frequency of 2 or 2.59 %.

This shows that the speakers tried to correct what they thought to be a mistake. This displays that self-initiated repair is a well-organized, orderly, and rule-governed phenomenon and not a chaotic aspect of spoken discourse (Schegloff et al.; Rieger, 2000).

The result of the study is in contrast with the study conducted by McHoul who found that there is more tendency on other-initiation (mostly by teacher), self-completed repair (by students). McHoul concluded that “other-correction can occur without difficulty, but self-correction is a much more routine and observable phenomenon, and it is frequently by students following initiation by teachers” (1990,p. 353).

Table1. Frequency of Repair Strategies occurred in Institutional Conversation.

Repair Strategies	Frequency	Percentage
Self- initiated Self- repair	47	68.11%
Self- initiated - Other repair	16	23.18%
Other -initiated Self- repair	4	5.79%
Other - initiated other- repair	2	2.89%
Total	69	100%

Extract 1: (Self-initiated Self-repair)

T: Correct. Ariel (2.0) what kind (3.0) what do you mean about the message of-ah of the last

question ?

(3.0)

S: the-e ahh (2.0) the message is (3.0) is=is all abou:t= that as long as (3.0) as: we dream we still ha:ve the-the courage to live(6.0) and to(3.0) and to -to strive hard to keep=attain our goals in life.

T: Okay. Very good.

In the given extract, it shows that the student repaired his own statement. Here, the student used self –initiated self-repair strategy to correct trouble sources present in the turn. This shows that the student prefers to clarify and be clearly understood in his own turn by repairing his statement without the teacher giving any chance to correct him. In the study of Evelyn Hatch entitled “Discourse and Language Education”, Deborah Schiffrin cited that self-initiated self-repair shows speakers’ sensitivity to their own production of discourse by replacing, locating an item from an outgoing utterance, speakers display their productive efforts. Furthermore, according to Heritage and Greatbatch, institutional conversation often withholds participation by the speaker. Thus, repair does not rely from any participant but from the speaker himself due to “speakership rights” (Heritage and Greatbatch, 1991).

Frequency of Repair strategies occurred in Ordinary Conversation

Table 2 presents the frequency and percentage distribution of repair strategies occurred in ordinary conversation. The table shows that the most repair strategy used was self-initiated self-repair with a frequency of 57 or 80.28%, followed by other-initiated self-repair and self-initiated-other repair with a frequency of 8 or 11.26 % and 7.07 percent respectively. Moreover, the least repair strategy occurred was other-initiated other-repair with a frequency of 1 or 1.40%.

This implies that self-initiated self- repair exhibits a strong tendency to be used more for one function in conversations between friends and for another in conversations between strangers. More so, one possible factor for the high frequency of self- initiated self -repair is the elaborative function–bearing repair between strangers.

Table 2: Frequency of Repair strategies occurred in Ordinary

Repair Strategies	Frequency	Percentage
Self- initiated Self- repair	57	80.28%
Self- initiated - Other repair	5	7.04%
Other -initiated Self- repair	8	11.26%
Other - initiated other- repair	1	1.40%
Total	71	100%

Extract 2: (Self-initiated self-repair)

Mary: Where is the regist=registrar-office?

Mae: I thi::nk it-it is in the side (2.0) I mean inside the Admin building (4.0) then::: right side – oh no(3.0)YES= right(1.0) On the right:: part then (2.0) go left an:::d then- registrar(1.0) If you don't understand me ask the g-guard for confirmation.

In this extract, the interlocutor did not anticipate the question coming from a friend in which Mary is not used of giving instructions. Thus, it made her answer unclear to Mae. However, Mary tried to make her instructions more comprehensive by using self-initiated self-repair though her utterances are still ill-formed.

In this case, self-initiated self-repair in ordinary conversation is heavily marked by unplanned discourse. Unplanned discourse is often delivered clause by clause or phrase by phrase. Further, self-initiated was used when the speaker encountered problems in retrieving the target language item which seemed to be a mistake.

Analysis on Trouble Sources Committed in Institutional and Ordinary Conversations

Table 3 presents the frequency and percentage distribution of the analysis on trouble sources committed in the institutional conversation. As gleaned from the table, the most committed trouble source was dysfluency having the frequency of 32 or 46.47%; unpreparedness with a frequency of 18 or 26.08%; vagueness and lack of communication skills, 6 with 8.69%; poor communication, 5 with 7.24%; physical noise, 2 with 2.89%.

Further, the table presents ordinary conversation in which interlocutors made use of 6 self-initiated self-repair and 1 in self-initiated other-repair in resolving the lack of communication skills. Also, there were 25 self-initiated self-repair, 1 self-initiated other-repair and 4 other initiated self-repair in treating dysfluency in communication. Moreover, in unpreparedness, there were 23 self-initiated self-repair, 2 self-initiated other-repair, and 2 other initiated self-repair addressed to the problem. Furthermore, there was only 1 other-initiated self-repair used in physical noise and vagueness. Additionally, 3 self-initiated self-repair, 1 -initiated other-repair and 1 other initiated other-repair used in poor comprehension.

The table shows that self-initiated self-repair is the most recurrent strategy being used by interlocutors in treating trouble sources.

The result clearly demonstrates that dysfluency in communication is the most prominent trouble source in both institutional and ordinary conversation. According to Waterson (2008), second language learners struggle to transmit messages to their interlocutors fluently using the English Language as a medium of communication. It is an inevitable problem in communication to non-native speakers. The idea of an interlocutor is complete; however, problem arises from the speaker who does not have the command of the language in presenting his thoughts.

Markee (2000) also believed that there is a strong preference for self-repair over other repair in first language conversations and there is a strong possibility of it in second language conversation. The preference of self-initiated self-repair within a context is highly favored because English is learned as a foreign language. Thus, being second language learners, dysfluency in communication is a natural phenomenon.

Table 3. Analysis on trouble sources committed in Institutional and Ordinary Conversations

	Institutional	Ordinary

Trouble Sources	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Lack of Communication Skills	6	8.69%	7	9.85%
Dysfluency in Communication	32	46.37%	30	42.25%
Unpreparedness	18	26.08%	27	38.02%
Physical Noise	2	2.89%	1	1.04%
Vagueness	6	8.6%	1	1.04%
Poor Comprehension	5	7.24%	5	7.02%
Total	69	100%	71	100%

Extract 3: (Disfluency in Communication)

T: Correct. Jerv (2)what kind(3)what do you mean about the message of-ah of the last question (3.0)?

S: the-e ahh (2) the message is (3) is=is all about=t= that as long as (3) as: we dream we still

ha:ve the-the courage to live(6) and to(3) and to -to strive hard to keep=attain our goals in life.

In this extract, the student has an idea only that, he prolongs and repeats his words. This shows that dysfluency is the problem why he could perfectly express himself. Thus, facility of the second language is necessary.

Table 4. Frequency of repair strategies used in the different trouble sources under Institutional Conversation

Table 4 presents the frequency and percentage distribution of repair strategies in the different trouble sources on institutional conversation. The table shows that disfluency in communication was committed most in both self-initiated self-repair and self-initiated other-repair with a frequency of 23 (48.93%) and 8 (50%) respectively, followed by unpreparedness with a frequency of 15(31.91%) on self-initiated self- repair while lack of communication with a frequency of 4(25%) on self-initiated other-repair.

This indicates that self-initiated self- repair was the dominant repair strategy used in repairing dysfluency, which is the dominant trouble source which triggers repairing.

Table 4. Frequency of repair strategies used in the different trouble sources under Institutional Conversation.

Trouble Sources	Self-Initiated Self –Repair		Self- Initiated Other-Repair		Other- Initiated Self- Repair		Other-Initiated Other Repair	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Lack of Communication	1	2.12%	4	25%			1	50%
Dysfluency in Communication	23	48.93%	8	50%	1	25%		
Unpreparedness	15	31.91%	1	6.25%	1	25%	1	50%
Physical Noise	1	2.12%			1	25%		
Vagueness	3	6.38%	2	12.5%	1	25%		
Poor Comprehension	4	8.51%	1	6.25%				
Total	47		16		4		2	

Table 5. Frequency of repair strategies used in the different trouble sources under Ordinary Conversation

Table 5 presents the frequency and percentage distribution of repair strategies used in ordinary conversation. The table shows that disfluency in communication was committed most with a frequency of 25(43.85%) on self-initiated self-repair and 4 (50%) on other-initiates self-repair, followed by unpreparedness with a frequency of 23(40.35%) for self-initiated self-repair, 2(40%) for self-initiated other-repair, and 2(25%) other initiated self-repair.

This reveals that self-initiated self-repair is the most recurrent strategy being used by interlocutors in treating trouble sources under ordinary conversation.

Table 5. Frequency of repair strategies used in the different trouble sources under Ordinary Conversation.

Troubles Source	Self-Initiated Self –Repair		Self- Initiated Other-Repair		Other- Initiated Self- Repair		Other-Initiated Other Repair	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Lack of Communication	6	10.25%	1	20%				
Dysfluency in Communication	25	43.85%	1	20%	4	50%		
Unpreparedness	23	40.35%	2	40%	2	25%		

Physical Noise					1	12.5		
Vagueness					1	12.5%		
Poor Comprehension	3	5.26%	1	20%			1	100%
Total	57		5		8		1	

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it is concluded that that self-initiated self- repair is the most frequently used repair strategy in addressing dysfluency in communication as a trouble source, the most committed trouble source, in spoken discourse whether institutional or ordinary. This also confirms that the interlocutors are knowledgeable and have good grasp as regards content; however, they have difficulty in articulating their thoughts because of the poor facility of the English language.

With this, language teachers should encourage students to be risk-takers, and use this strategy, which was classified as one of the communication strategies.

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