

Category: Functional/Conversation Analysis

Title: A claim-of-reanalysis token 'e?/e-' within the sequence structure of other repair in Japanese conversation

Under the framework of Conversation Analysis (cf. Sacks et al., 1974), this paper analyzes a repair initiator, 'e?/e-', in Japanese conversation. Specifically, focusing on its occurrences in other-initiated (OI) repair sequences, I demonstrate that 'e?/e-OI repair' is remarkably unique in its sequential structure.

It has been generally understood that OI repair is designed to specify a trouble source in the immediately prior turn by the other conversational participant, i.e. next turn repair initiation (NTRI) (Schegloff et al., 1977). However, among 52 cases of 'e?/e-OI repair' in my conversational data, there were only 6 cases of NTRI (see Table 1). This is because 'e?/e-' and its trouble source (TS) is often separated by a gap or its producer's acknowledgment tokens toward the prior turn. Thus, 'e?/e-OI repair' is typically "delayed within (or past) the next turn position relative to the TS" (cf. Schegloff, 2000). Case 1 shows a typical case of such delayed OI repair of free-standing 'e?/e-' prefaced by a gap.

The free-standing 'e?/e-' as in case 1 is considered an 'open class repair initiator' (Drew, 1997) because it does not specify a TS. However, unlike the English cases (e.g. *pardon?*) analyzed by Drew (1997), free-standing 'e?/e-OI repair' is rather rare regardless of NTRI/delayed OI (see Table 1). That is, 'e?/e-' in OI repair sequence is frequently followed by additional turn-constructive unit(s) (TCU(s)) (Sacks et al., 1974). This additional TCU tends to specify a TS or to provide the speaker's candidate understanding. Case 2 shows B first provides minimum acknowledgment tokens in line 3. Then, in line 4, she initiates a repair with 'e?/e-' followed by an additional TCU, which provides her candidate understanding of A's utterances in lines 1 and 2. Considering these cases, the sequential organization of 'e?/e-OI repair' is uniquely structured as illustrated below:

Turn(s)1	TS→	Speaker A: [Repairable utterance(s)]
Turn2		[gap] or Speaker B: [acknowledgment tokens] (+ [pause])
Turn3	OI→	Speaker B: e?/e- + additional TCU(s) ((Repair Initiation))
Turn4		Speaker A: [Repair]

This figure indicates that B, within Turn 2, is temporarily withholding a response to (or providing minimum acknowledgement tokens toward) what A said in Turn(s) 1. And, in Turn 3, B initiates 'e?/e-OI repair.' That is, by placing 'e?/e-' after a gap or his/her acknowledgment, B claims his/her reanalysis of A's problematic utterance in Turn(s) 1. Thereby, the "claim-of-reanalysis" token e?/e- serves as a turn-constructive device to project B's repair initiation.

In addition, I argue that 'e?/e-' is employed to claim B's reanalysis, not only of "a single word/phrase that he/she had trouble hearing or understanding," but also of "a sequentially problematic connection" between what A said in Turn(s) 1 and the turns prior to it (cf. Drew, 1997). Furthermore, I propose that, by employing the sequentially unique structure of 'e?/e-OI repair' as illustrated above, speakers accomplish various kinds of actions other than "repair" itself (cf. Schegloff, 1997). Case 3 is one such case, in which B employs the structure of 'e?/e-OI repair' to project his action of disagreeing with A. (497 words)

	NTRI	Delayed OI	Total
Free-standing <i>e?/e-</i>	3	4	7
<i>e?/e-</i> + additional TCU	3	42	45
Total	6	46	52

Table 1. The occurrences of *e?/e-*: NTRI vs. Delayed OI

Case 1.

1. C: =*osoku te*[*mo-*
'At latest'
2. TS → A: [*hayaku temo nijuu go.*
At earliest twenty five.
3. gap → (0.8)
4. OI B: *e?*
5. gap → (1.0)
6. OI C: *e?*
7. B: [*osoku temo*
'At latest'
8. Repair A: [*osoku temo yonjuu made desho?*
'(This means) at latest, by forty, right?'

Case 2.

1. TS → A: ↑*demo nanka (.) ke- kekkon shitai tte yuu jan*
2. TS → =*hitori gurashi no [otoko no hito tte yoku*
'But um I hear that ((unexpressed subject)) want to get married.'
'(I mean) the men who are living by themselves ' (I hear so) often'
3. minimum → B: [^o*un un*^o ((nodding three times)) (.)=
acknowledgment 'uh huh'
4. OI A: =*e-(.)sore wa kaji o yat[te morau tame*
that topic housekeeping direct-object do receive-a-favor for
'*e-* that's because they receive a favor of (women's) doing housekeeping'
5. Repair B: [*yatte hoshii kara de[shoo?*
do want because tag
'(They) want (women) to do housekeeping, right?'
6. A: [*U::n.*
'I see.'

Case 3.

1. A: *eigo demo on'naji koto an no kane.*
'I wonder if there is the same things (= particles) in English'
2. (1.2)
3. Turn1 B: *demo eigo tte 'ne' toka nai jan.*
'But English doesn't have an expression like *ne*, does it.'
4. Turn2 (0.8)
5. Turn3 → B: *e- aru n ja nai no? °nanka°*
'*e-* 'I guess it does. um'
6. Turn4 A: =*nai yo. zettai.*
'No, it doesn't.' 'Definitely.'

Selected References

- Drew, P. 1997. 'Open' class repair initiators in response to sequential sources of troubles in conversation. *Journal of Pragmatics* 28, 69-101.
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