Self-initiated Self-repair Attempts by Japanese High School Learners While Speaking English

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Abstract

In Japanese high school English classes, students are often left to have interactions or perform communicative activities not with a teacher but with other students due to a large class size. In the situation, students are ideally notice their own insufficient utterances in order to carry out self-initiated self-repair. This study investigated self-initiated self-repair attempts and their effects on Japanese high school learners. Thirty-two Japanese high school students with low-intermediate English ability and a native speaker of English participated in the study, with the native speaker interviewing the students. ***The students' utterances were quantitatively and qualitatively analyzed, and it was found that:*** self-initiated self-repair occurred frequently and, in general, successfully; error repair was most frequently recorded; the success rate of lexical repair was the lowest. Findings observed during the students' self-initiated self-repair attempts are discussed, followed by discussion of their p***ossible effects. Finally, suggestions are given based on the pedagogical implications from the study.***

Keywords: self-initiated self-repair, error repair, different information repair, appropriacy

1. Introduction

Errors naturally appear in spontaneous speeches and conversations. Especially in a second or foreign language, it is only natural that mistakes happen as a part of the learning process. After an inappropriate expression is detected, it can be corrected. This act of correcting can be initiated either by the speaker (non-native speaker) or the recipient. The former is termed as self-initiated, while the latter as other-initiated (Schegloff, Jefferson, & Sacks, 1977) [20]. Occasionally, non-native speakers (NNSs) correct or modify their output to make it more comprehensible after they detect an insufficient previous utterance. This phenomenon is referred to in second language acquisition (SLA) research as self-initiated self-completed repair (Kasper, 1985) [5].

In Japanese high schools, classes average around 40 students, making it practically impossible for teachers to have frequent one-on-one interactions providing students with corrective feedback. Thus, in many cases, students are left to converse with other students in the L2, being asked to perform communicative activities without direct oversight of the teacher. In this situation, students are ideally expected to provide their partners with feedback or to notice their own insufficient utterances in order to carry out self-initiated self-repair.

As previous research has not yet fully investigated self-initiated self-repair attempts by Japanese high school learners, examining the phenomena and their role is important to further substantiate the effects of output and related claims in SLA. More importantly, it will help us to create more effective output-based English lessons in the Japanese high school classroom.

The present study examines how Japanese EFL high school learners self-initiate repair on their previous utterances to repair them in order to make them correct, more comprehensible or more appropriate during face-to-face conversations with a native speaker (NS).

2. Background

In the contexts of NS/NNS and NNS/NNS interactions, L2 learners attempt to modify their erroneous or insufficient utterances in the direction of more comprehensible output: the learner him/herself realizes the trouble source (a trigger) and reacts to it by trying to repair it (Kasper, 1985) [5]. The following is ***an excerpt of a*** self-initiated, self- repair ***extracted from the prese***nt study.

I *go* *…um* *went to his house yesterday.*
(trigger) (self-initiated part) (self-repair)

The student detected that the form of the output (go) was erroneous, stopped the speech flow, and finally corrected the error. Shehadeh (2001) [21] examined and compared the effects of other-initiation and self-initiation with adult L2 learners in an interactive task (picture description, opinion exchange, and decision making) and found that learners produced more modified output after self-initiation. He concluded that self-initiations have a crucial role in promoting modified output.

Kormos (1999) [7] suggested that self-repair may serve in the same way as uptake (a move taken by the NNS in response to the feedback given to his/her previous utterance). She explained that as it is a part of a mechanism that promotes pushed output, self-repair expands the learners' linguistic repertoire. Kasper (1985) [5] investigated negotiated information between a NS and an NNS, as well as NNS/NNS exchanges, and concluded that self-initiated self-completed repair is more important than other-initiated other-completed repair for successful language learning. According to Schegloff, Jefferson, and Sacks (1977) [20], self-initiated repair may occur within the same utterance turn, immediately after the end of the turn, or in a subsequent turn. Schegloff (1979) [19] concluded that "self-initiation, same turn repair is the most common and most successful" (p. 268).

However, empirical research shows that learners do not correct every mistake they have made and that they correct not only linguistic (phonological, lexical, syntactic) errors but also pragmatically inappropriate utterances and inadequate information [10]. In a study of NS/NS interaction, Schegloff et al. (1977) [20] observed that repairs focused more on content and pragmatic errors than on linguistic errors. Kasper (1985) [5] found that in an NS/advanced NNS interaction, the majority of repairs focused on content and pragmatic repairs rather than linguistic repairs.

As for the effects of learners' English proficiency on the occurrence and the success of self-initiated self-repair, Lyster and Ranta (1997) [11] noted that only when learners have acquired an adequate level of English proficiency is self-initiated self-repair feasible. In a descriptive study with Japanese high school students whose English proficiency was low, Sato (2008) [17] revealed that successful self-initiated self-repair did not occur frequently. In his study, it was observed that when students attempted to self-repair their insufficient previous utterances, they were often unsuccessful, making another error; repeating the same error; or giving up repair in the course of the act. Sato (2008) [17] concluded that "without knowing or internalizing some grammatical structures or expressions, learners cannot notice their own mistakes and so cannot correct them"(p.232).

The timing of self-correction according to the types of triggers has been researched (e.g., Kormos, 2000 [8]; Van Hest, 1996 [24]): the occurrences of self-initiated repair according to the different task conditions learner are engaged in are researched, for example, in Shehadeh (2001) [21]. In terms of uptake or success rate, studies on recasts are conducted (e.g., Sato, 2009 [18]; Kim & Han, 2007 [6]; Trofimovich, Ammar, & Gatbonton, 2007 [23]; Philp, 2003 [16]). However, the effects of types of triggers on the occurrences or uptake of self-repair is rarely researched especially in the Japanese EFL environment, indicating the need for further study in the EFL situation in Japan.

2.The purpose of the study

Sato (2008) [17] examined self-initiated self-repair on low-level Japanese learners of English without high motivation toward learning English. He revealed that while the students were performing communicative tasks with a partner (another student), self-initiated self-repair frequently did not occur successfully. As previous research indicates that self-initiated self-repair can be utilized more effectively by high and intermediate learners than by low-level learners, it is necessary to investigate the act of self-repair not only by low-level Japanese learners but also by intermediate Japanese ones.

The present study examined self-initiated self-repair by low-intermediate high school learners, most of whom are college bound. Learners are engaged in an interaction not with another student with a native speaker of English. Well-formed repair after self-initiation was counted as successful. Types of triggers were classified as: errors; different information; appropriacy. Errors were subcategorized into four groups: grammatical; lexical; phonological; the first language use. These definitions will be explained in more detail later. The following research questions (RQs) were formulated.

Q1.Is the success rate of self-initiated self-repair high?
Q2.Is there any difference in the occurrence of self-initiated self-repair according to the types of triggers?
Q3.Is there any difference in the success rate according to the types of triggers?
Q4.Is there any difference in the occurrence and success rate among the diffrent types of error repair?

4. Method

4.1 Context

In Japan, English has long been taught as a knowledge-based subject and, for many students, passing of knowledge-based exams is the primary objective. Japanese students seem to have dual orientations for learning English: a practical, realistic goal related to examinations and grades, and a vague idealistic goal related to using English for international or intercultural communication (Yashima, 2000 [27]). It seems that most students have the former type of motivation (related to tests) more than the latter(related to communication) in the Japanese EFL situation.

4.2 Participants

Thirty-two second-grade, college bound Japanese high school students (15 males and 17 females, aged 16 or 17) participated in the study. All of the students had passed the entrance exams for the academically higher level high school with relatively high scores in English. A native English teacher from Australia who had been teaching English as an assistant language teacher (ALT) for five and a half years in Japan, taught the students in a communication-oriented English class once every two weeks. In a questionnaire conducted just before the study, 28 out of 32 students (88%) answered that they liked the communicative English classes taught by the ALT. Thus, in this study we regarded them as low-intermediate students with relatively high motivation toward learning English and English conversation.[1]

4.3 Procedure

Students and the ALT, David (this name is fictitious pseudonym), had conversation for the study. In free conversation in the form of an interview, David asked questions and the student talked about his/her daily life covering topics such as hobbies, study, family, future dreams and so on. As this was a natural communication-based task, target structures were not set for the study. David had told students that he would evaluate their English performances. He knew that their interactions would be recorded but did not know the purpose of the study. David had not been given any instruction on which types of feedback should be given to students after their self-initiated self-repairs. All recordings were transcribed and re-checked by the researcher to ensure their accuracy. Additionally, in a limited number of cases where there were still unsolved transcription difficulties, the original participants were invited to interpret the results. The database includes 32 interviews totaling 362 minutes. The average length of the interview per student was about 11 minutes; the longest one was 15and a half minutes, and the shortest lasted about 9 minutes.

In the present study, self-repair attempts issuing from self-initiation after a trigger is termed as self-initiated self-repair. The following is an example of a self-initiated self- repair from the present study.

Example 1
David: When did you start playing the piano?
Student 1: My twelve, in twelfth grade.

Student 1 detected her error (trigger) and successfully repaired it by herself.

As for classification of self-repairs, mainly referring to Levelt (1983) [10] and Kormos (2000) [8], self-initiated self-repairs were classified into three groups for the present study: different information, appropriacy, and error. A different information repair is defined as speakers' encoding of different information from a previous formulation. An appropriacy repair is defined as speakers' encoding of information that needed to be "more precise, more coherent, pragmatically more appropriate, or less ambiguous" (Kormos, 2000 [8], p.150). An error repair refers to the act of speakers' attempts to repair their previous erroneous utterances. As the fourth type of repair, a rephrasing repair was given in Kormos (2000) [8], and defined as a repetition of a slightly modified version of a previous utterance resulting from uncertainty about its correctness. However, it was assumed that it would be difficult to draw a clear line between a rephrasing repair and an error repair (or appropriacy repair), without a retrospective interview with speakers for confirmation. Thus, it was decided not to include the category of a rephrasing repair in the present study. The following are examples of a different information repair and an appropriacy repair from the study.

Example 2 Different information repair
S2: I, my family had a dog. (Successful)

Example 3 Appropriacy repair
D: Are you in any clubs?
S3: Yes. I belong to the club, the soccer club and… (Successful)

Student 2 uttered "I" but decided to encode different information by repairing it to "my family". In example 3, student 3 decided to make his previous utterance more precise and pragmatically more appropriate and it was successfully conveyed.

Error repairs were subcategorized into four groups according to the type of triggers: grammatical, lexical, phonological, and the first language, Japanese, (L1) use. This grouping was based on Lyster and Ranta (1997) [11]: (1) Grammatical errors are errors in the use or lack of determiners, particles, verb forms, word order; (2) Lexical errors include inappropriate, imprecise or inaccurate choices of lexical items; (3) Phonological errors address inappropriate, imprecise or inaccurate pronunciation; (4) Unsolicited use of Japanese is an instance where a student speaks Japanese instead of English. The following are some examples.

Example 4 Grammatical
D: What junior high school did you go to?
S4: I was gone to, I went to Matoba Junior high school. (Successful)

Example 5 Grammatical
D: Why do you want to be a nurse?
S5: I'm take, I like take care of people. (Failed)

Example 6 Lexical
S6: Last night I see, I saw a dream. (Failed)
D: Oh, you had a dream last night.

Example 7 Phonological
D: What was the last thing that you bought?
S7: Hmm… I bought a bak, bag. (Successful)

Example 8 L1 use
D: After school when you are at home, what do you do?
S8: I *neru* (sleep in Japanese), sleep at home. (Successful)

In example 4, the student successfully self-repaired the grammatical error, while student 5 failed to repair her error in expressing her desire or will. In repairing her error, student 6 made a wrong word choice. In example 7, mispronunciation of bag resulting from Japanese pronunciation was successfully repaired. On many occasions, students first used L1 and then changed it into English. In the activity, they were required to speak only in English, and as it is crucial for them to communicate without using Japanese, L1 use was coded as an error in the study.

Classification and sub-categorization of self-initiated repairs was conducted by the researcher. A week after the first classification, it was conducted again by the same researcher. This method of classification follows Alderson, Clapham and Wall (1995) [2], who wrote that multiple rating sessions increase the reliability of the rating. Where there were discrepancies between the two ratings (3 cases), a second rater, a high school English teacher with more than 15 years of teaching experience, was invited to rate them after discussion, disagreement was resolved.

5. Results

The first research question asked about the success rate. Eighty-six self-initiated self-repair attempts were conducted successfully and 25 failed. To examine whether there was a statistical difference between the number of successful self-initiated self-repairs (86) and failed ones (25), a chi-square statistic was calculated, finding a statistically significant difference between them ($\chi 2$ = 33.52, df = 1, p = .00).

Table 1. Success rate of self-initiated self repair attempt

	Total	Success	Failed	Success rate
Self-repair attempt	111	86	25	77%

The second research question asked about the occurrence of self-initiated self-repair according to the types of triggers. In total, 111 self-initiated self-repairs were reported. Among them, error repairs occurred 86 times (78%); different information repairs occurred 9 times (8%); and appropriacy repairs occurred 16 times (14%). A chi-square statistic test revealed there was a statistically significant difference in the occurrence by the types ($\chi 2$ = 98.0, df = 2, p < .05). It also revealed that the difference in the occurrence of error repairs (86) and that of different information repairs plus appropriacy repairs (16+9) was statistically significant ($\chi 2$ = 98.0, df = 1, p = .00). There was no statistically significant difference between different information repairs and appropriacy repairs.

Table 2. The occurrence of self-initiated self-repair according to the types of triggers

Types	Frequency	Proportion
Error repair	86	78%
Appropriacy repair	16	14%
Different information repair	9	8%
Total	111	100%

The third research question concerned the success rates according to the types of triggers. It was reported that error repairs had a 77% success rate, different information repairs had 89% and appropriacy repairs was 75% successful. A chi-square statistic test with Yates' continuity correction revealed that there was not a statistically significant difference in the success rates according to the types.

Table 3. The success rates according to the types of triggers

Type	Frequency	Success	Failed	Success rate
Error Repair	86	66	20	77%
Appropriacy repair	16	12	4	75%
Different Information repair	9	8	1	89%
Total	111	86	25	77%

The fourth research question concerned the occurrence and success rate of error repair according to the types. The category of error repair was further sub-classified. The success rate of each was: L1 use repairs had an 83% success rate, grammatical repairs 79%, phonological repairs with 75%, and lexical repairs had a 50%, success rate. To examine whether there was a statistically significant difference in the success rates by the four types, a chi-square statistic test with Yates' continuity correction was conducted and we found that there was no difference.

Table 4. The occurrence and success rate of error repair according to the types

Type	Frequency	Success	Failed	Success rate
L1 use	36	30	6	83%
Grammatical	34	26	8	79%
Phonological	8	6	2	75%
Lexical	8	4	4	50%
Total	86	66	20	77%

Table 5 summarizes the results (RQ2, 3 and 4).

Table 5. The occurrence and success rates

Types		Frequency Total	Success	Failed	Success rate
Error repair	Phonological	8	6	2	75%
	Lexical	8	4	4	50%
	Grammatical	34	26	8	79%
	L1 use	36	30	6	83%
		86(78%)	66	20	77%
Different Appropriacy	Information repair	9(8%)	8	1	89%
	repair	16(14%)	12	4	75%
	Total	111	86	25	77%

6. Discussion

6.1 The success rate of self-initiated self-repair

Results of this study implied that learners are more likely to be successful in self-initiated self-repairs than to fail at them: a greater number of well-formed L2 self-repairs were recorded as compared to ill-formed ones. This result is compatible with earlier study findings (Kasper, 1985 [5]; Schegloff et al., 1977 [20]; Shehadeh, 2001 [21]; Van Hest, 1996 [24]). At the moment of detecting errors and mistakes, or triggers, in their original utterances, students noticed a gap between utterances and the target language. This led them to produce a modified output (Swain & Lapkin, 1995 [22]). It was recorded that David provided students with adequate time for them to produce an output. This presented them with sufficient time to attend to form while planning speech acts, and the opportunity to self-repair their erroneous original utterances. This situation created favorable conditions for self-initiated self-repair as defined in previous studies (Shehadeh, 2001 [21]; Yuan &

Ellis, 2003 [29]). It can be argued that in some cases learners found that they had made a mistake in the sense that Ellis (1997) uses that word: an accidental slip of the tongue resulting from tiredness or some kind of pressure to communicate (Ellis, 1997) [4]).

Example 9
D: What did you do after school yesterday?
S9: I go, went to a convenience and buy, bought? bought a magazine.

Example 10
D: Why do you want to be a teacher?
S10: Because, because I like child, children very much.

In these examples, students made a mistake and corrected it immediately after detecting its deviance from the correct form. It is interpreted that it was not so difficult for students to correct mistakes by using explicit knowledge, which is knowledge about language with awareness and learners can verbalize it.

6.2 The occurrence of self-initiated self-repair according to the types of triggers

The occurrences of self-initiated self-repairs according to the types of triggers were reported as: Error 86 times (78%)＞Appropriacy 16 times (14%)＞Different information 9 times (8%). The majority of students' repair was on errors. The results were incompatible with Van Hest (1996) [24], which reported appropriacy repairs accounted for 39.7%, followed by error repairs (22.4%) and different information repairs (10.1%). In the study of NS/NS discourse (Schegloff et al., 1977 [20]) and NS/ advanced NNS discourse (Kasper, 1985 [5]), it has been reported that the vast majority of repairs consisted of content or pragmatic repairs rather than linguistic ones. The results of the present study did not support these findings either.

Kormos (2006) [9], after evaluating previous studies, concluded that as L2 proficiency increases, the nature of repair changes from simple error repairs to more complex discourse level repairs. As a rationale for this argument, Kormos (2006) [9] explained that compared to less-proficient learners advanced learners acquire greater declarative knowledge, which is factual knowledge that is expressed explicitly. Those advanced learners are able to automatize that knowledge to a greater extent, leading them to attend to their own utterances at the level of discourse and content. This may be because students in the present study did not have enough attention available for monitoring at the level of discourse or content.

Levelt (1983) [10] supposed that the act of self-repair would be intended to prevent potential communication breakdown. However, in this study, even when communication breakdown did not seem to occur, students frequently self-initiated to repair their errors.

Example 11
S11: Last night I watch, watched the movie on TV.

In this example, student 11 did not have to repair "watch" just to avoid a communication breakdown as "last night" had made the context clear. The followings are examples in which students self-repaired their errors even when communication breakdown did not seem to occur.

Example 12
S12: I read many book, books this summer.

Example 13
S13: My father drink, drinks beer every night.

Example 14
S14: When I was a junior high school student, I play, played soccer after school.

Errors of the third person-S, the plural –S and regular past tense in a sentence with an adverbial phrase or clause would not usually cause communication breakdowns. However, students

self-repaired errors of the third person-S 3 times, the plural –S, 4 times and errors of regular past tense 6 times. Kormos (2006) [9] goes on to state that the demand of accuracy in the situation influences speakers' decisions on the implementation of the repair. She mentions that formally instructed foreign language speakers who are taught explicit grammar pay more attention to the linguistic form than the information or content.

As this was an interview test in which their English proficiency would be measured, it is likely that students put priority on linguistic form or accuracy. In the formally instructed, accuracy-oriented Japanese EFL environment which is language-centered rather than content-centered, students in general would assume that using accurate English has primacy, leading them to repair errors frequently.

To account for the relatively low frequency of different information repairs, we can point out our observation that students tended not to initiate repair even when the wrong message would be conveyed.

Example 15
S15: I didn't study English at all in junior high school.
D: Oh, your junior high school didn't have English class.

Example16
S16: We Japanese usually eat sushi, tempura, and sukiyaki…
D: Oh, you are very rich.

In these examples, students sent simplified potentially innacurate messages. Neustupny (1982) [15] reported that in speaking English to native speakers, Japanese people tended to convey simplified exaggerated messages. They avoided using more difficult complicated language structures and did not revise their utterances due to their perceived insufficient English proficiency, even though they knew their messages were not correct. In some cases, students in the current study also must have realized the need for repair to convey what they really meant during or just after the production, but did not repair incorrect messages. This may be because students chose to leave incorrect messages untouched due to the difficulty of revising them to be correct in English, as reported earlier (Neustupny (1982) [15]).

6.3 The success rate according to the types of triggers

As for the success rates according to the types of triggers, different information repairs was the highest (89%) followed by error repairs (77%) and appropriacy repairs (75%). Success rates were relatively high and there was no statistically significant difference according to types.

In the different information repair, students decided to use information different from the original source; information in which they did not have to experience linguistic problems. In situations where linguistic problems were found to be beyond their English proficiency, it may be assumed that they did not even attempt to repair them. In the following example, student 17 easily succeeded in providing different information.

Example 17
D: Tell me about your father.
S 17: My father plays, likes watching golf on TV.
This interpretation can be applied to appropriacy repair.

Example 18
D: Why do you want to go to Korea?
S18: I want to study, learn Korean.

It is interpreted that the student tried successfully to repair the previous word "study" to make it more precise and pragmatically appropriate as this act was not beyond her English proficiency. High success rate of error repair resulted from high success rates of L1, grammatical

and phonological repair. This will be discussed in the next section. Only in one case out of nine was a failed different information repair was reported.

Example 19
D: Why do you study English hard?
S 19: It is important for me, we, because English is international…

In the example, it can be assumed from the context that the student wanted to say learning English is important. In changing the meaning of "me" (English is important for her) to "us" (for other people, too), the student attempted to add information that English is an international language. This dual task possibly made the repair cognitively demanding, and led to an error. In the eight other cases, students successfully changed the information.

6.4 The occurrence and success rate of error repairs according to the types

In the category of error repairs, 36 of 86 instances were L1 use (42%), 34 were grammatical (40%), and only 8 instances each (9%) were phonological and lexical. Success rates of each were: L1, 83%: grammatical, 79%; phonological, 75%; lexical, 50%. It was frequently recorded that students, at first, used Japanese, and then restated it into English.

Example 20
D: Are you fast in the half marathon?
S 20: *Amari hayakunai,* I'm not so fast.

Example 21
D: Do you like to play the piano?
S 21: *Hai,* Yes.

Example 22
D: What are your good points?
S22: *Akaruikana~,* cheerful.

As these instances show, students answered in Japanese followed by the English counterpart. In most of the cases, correct English was produced immediately after the use of the L1 (Japanese). From this observation, it is thought that even though students did not have linguistic problems, they still chose to use Japanese first and then restate the utterance in English. This category having the highest success rate (83%) suggests this interpretation is correct. The mechanism of this common behavior observed in the study should be further examined.

As a reason for the high frequency rate of grammatical repairs, McDonough (2005) [13] stated that as EFL students are learning the target language in formal educational settings with explicit grammar teaching, they find grammatical error particularly noticeable. In this study, by using their explicit knowledge, students monitored their utterances and self-repaired them when triggers were detected. In this situation, learners were able to repair an utterance only when they had explicit knowledge of the grammar rule of the trigger. If not, they were less likely to try to correct their own grammatical errors. This could have contributed to the relatively high success rate of grammatical repair (79%). One common phenomenon, which possibly contributed to the high frequency of use as well as the high success rate, is the students' use of the be-copula before the correct use of verbs.

Example 23
D: Do you belong to a club?
S23: Yes. I am, I belong to the cooking club.

Example 24
D: What did he do that was clever?
S24: He was, listened to ten people.

This phenomenon is interpreted as a transfer from their L1. In the Japanese language, *wa* assumes some of the functions of the be-copula and is used before verbs as well. Due to such transfer, students often put be-copula first and then immediately after the detection of the error they repaired to the appropriate verb. This phenomenon was reported often, with nine occurrences in the study.

The reported frequency rates of phonological and lexical repairs were both low (9%). It is generally accepted that Japanese learners often cannot pronounce English correctly especially when they pronounce certain phonemes which do not exist in the Japanese language (MacKain, Best & Strange, 1981 [12]). Additionally, students are not well trained to listen to or pronounce subtle variations in phonemes. Nakamori (2009) [14] pointed out that once Japanese learners of English acquire the manner of perceiving and expressing English sounds based on Japanese sounds (phonemes, syllables, intonations) it is extremely difficult to overcome the problem. In this study, students possibly could not detect their mispronunciations and if so, they could not try to correct them, leading to a low frequency rate.

As for the low frequency (9%) and success rates (50%) of lexical repairs[2] it was perhaps difficult for students to attend both to grammaticality and appropriacy of word choice.

Example 25 Lexical
S25: This morning I drink, drank medicine. (Failed)
D: Oh, you took medicine.

In the example, the student succeeded only in grammatical correctness but not in an appropriate choice of a lexical item. The sentence is grammatically correct, but as it is lexically incorrect it was counted as failed. Widdowson (1989) [25] found that when learners are learning grammar through a rule-based approach, they often produce output that is grammatically correct but linguistically incorrect. As EFL Japanese students are learning English in formal educational settings with explicit grammar teaching which emphasizes accuracy or rules, it is felt that they were not instructed with attention to appropriate word choice but instead to grammatical correctness.

7. Conclusion

This study has shown the relatively high success rate of self-initiated self-repair (77%): It has also shown that the occurrence and success rates of self-initiated self-repair vary according to the types of triggers. Analyses of the findings and observation offer several pedagogical implications.

Teachers can be encouraged to give learners an explicit direction that they should try to repair their utterances when they detect their own errors or mistakes. It was thought, from the observation, that learners would not often repair their messages, even when the message was not what they meant to say. Teachers may have to encourage learners to repair their wrong message, as the move to produce a correct message would develop students' interlanguage.

As it was observed that learners are less likely to self-initiate to self-repair their phonological and lexical errors, teachers, while interacting with a learner, should give students some feedback. By giving them prompts such as a clarification request and repetition of the error, teachers can push learners to modify their non-target output. They can also provide learners with models through recasts, confirmation checks or explicit correction, when learners cannot detect their non-target output.

A shared common behavior of L1 use followed by a restatement in English should be considered as a negative move by the learner. Unnecessary L1 use hinders target language development, causing possible communication breakdown with non-Japanese speakers. In this study, the results implied that students attend to linguistic errors more than to discourse or content level in monitoring. Keeping this tendency in mind, teachers can encourage students to monitor their utterances, attending to not only the linguistic aspect but also to discourse- or content-related aspects of speech.

Self-initiated self-repair involves a higher level of cognitive activity, positively accompanied by noticing the gap, as opposed to merely noticing an L2 example provided by feedback such as recasts (Egi, 2010) [3]. Shehadeh (2001) [21] has stated that self-initiated self-repair is a normal learning/teaching strategy because of its high occurrence, prevalence and constancy. This study reported a relatively high success rate of self-initiated self-repair, supporting the argument that self-initiated self-repair is an effective learning /teaching strategy. It should therefore be utilized more in Japanese high school classrooms.

This small-scale study examined self-initiated self-repair attempts, and reported their effect on Japanese learners. However, the results should be cosidered cautiously, as there are some limitations to its findings. In this study, interviews as stimulated recall measurements were not conducted. To confirm the interpretations of the observed phenomena, retrospective interviews should have systematically been done with all of the students and the interlocutor, David. In the activity, even though David and the students had spontaneous interactions, the setting was an interview test. The results could have been different, if it had not been an interview test. Since the findings are within the context of the learners and the NS investigated in this study, conclusions should be taken as tentative without generalizing the results to other contexts.

To validate the findings and interpretations of the observed phenomena in the study, a focused empirical study in different settings with introspective data is required. If further studies support the findings and interpretations of the phenomena found in the present study, the importance of self-initiated self-repair for Japanese students' learning English should be more widely acknowledged.

Notes

1. Although they had obtained high scores in the entrance exams in English, they cannot be regarded as intermediate learners if we refer to, for example, the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) proficiency guidelines (ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines–Speaking, 1999) [1]. As the scores of English proficiency tests such as Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC) or Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) were not available, we decided to regard them as low-intermediate learners.

2. There was no statistically significant difference in the success rates according to error types. An adjusted residual of lexical errors computed through the residual analysis revealed ±1.9, which was not a statistically significant difference (±1.96), but this can be attributed to the low frequency of lexical repairs.

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