



A discourse analysis of Repair in Selected English Conversations

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Abstract

The subject of the paper is a linguistic study of repair in selected English conversations. In the theoretical work, repair first, is defined in general and the types are shown. Then the connection between this process and some aspects are presented.

In the practical field, the selected conversations are analyzed and the aim of this analysis is to clarify the spontaneous and others' and others' Initiated self repair usages to show how the speaker her/him self directly repair the mistake he/she made without the interference of the listener/s and how the listener takes part to achieve this process on the other hand.

After dealing with a table to present the investigation of each type's frequency in the conversations the result is shown within a histogram to expose the percentage of each sort. The reason why this topic has been chosen is that many do not discriminate the different types of repair and the role of each type of it in using language and because repair occurs in all the fields of speaking as making mistakes is highly unconscious.

Introduction

To linguists repair is a process in which it occurs to correct what has been said. This could be done by the speaker as to say he/she indicates a problem during talking and solves it which called self repair or by the contribution of the listener, a process which called other repair in other words it might be achieved when the listener starts first to correct the mistake and the speaker complete the process to replace the mistake with what is right instead and this type is also called other initiated self repair Linguists have different ideas about the types of repair, since for most it has to types for example Verschueren(1999) and Fasold et al.(2006)

while to Liddicoat(2007) four types of repair are possible.

So, one can conclude that to define what repair is and what are its types is not an easy project unless by studying and classifying them. In order to apply and achieve the study an aspect is required to prove the value of the study and selected conversations have been chosen in this paper for that purpose.

1. Definitions of Repair

According to Schegloff et al.(1990:31-54) repair constitutes self righting mechanism that addresses recurrent problems in speaking,

hearing and understanding. The occurrence of repair in conversations in general is said to be massive as participants address the difficulties that arise in interaction in an ongoing manner. To Crystal (2003:396) repair is a term which is used in conversation and discourse analysis to mean the attempt made by participants in conversation to make a good repair. Fasold et al. (2006:179) says that repair is a situation which occurs when a speaker makes a mistake and it has two components initiation and repair each of which can be handled by the speaker who made the mistake him/herself or another participant (other). The study of repair derives from the work of Schegloff, Jefferson and Sacks (1977) who investigated the way native speakers are able to sort out potential communication problems and that they describe repair in terms of the production of the trouble source, the initiation of repair and its completion Ellis (1990:71). Repair is not just an attempt to get things right but also trying to make things clear and explicit Gramkow (2001:87). Repairs can give additional insights into the way in which humans understand each other. Since conversations do not always run mildly because people can not express everything properly or they make mistakes or the person they are speaking to makes a mistake and these breakdowns must be repaired Aitchison (2003:110). Schegloff et al (1977:361) defines repair as dealing with recurrent problems in speaking, understanding and hearing in spite of the other linguistic problems as vocabulary, syntax, pronunciation, etc. It may also relate to acceptability problems like saying something wrong in a broad sense that is incorrect, untrue or irrelevant. To Khodamy (2015:60) repair means the way speakers or listeners of a conversation correct their mistakes or misunderstandings in a conversation. It could be done by the self and by others. It has almost happened to everyone. "Suppose we are talking when suddenly you pronounce a word in a funny or embarrassing way, or we say something and we do not mean to insult others but after a while we find out our audience are really insulted. We can correct our mistakes immediately or we can apologize to the person we have insulted after the conversation is ended. It just depends on the

speaker how to compensate for their mistakes"(ibid).

2. Types of Repair

To Crystal (2003:396) there are two types of repairs, self-initiated as to say made by the speaker him/herself without the contribution of the listener like the spontaneous usage of (I mean) . Another type is other-initiated repair that means the listener participates in repairing the mistake. Fasold et al. (2006:179) states that repair can be handled by the speaker who made the mistake him/herself or another participant (other) so he also believes in two types of repairs. Repair can be either other-repairs that a speaker corrects what another speaker has said or it might be self-repair where the speaker corrects his/her mistake by him/herself Verschueren(1999:41). Aitchison (2003:111) also believes that there are two types of repair which is other-initiated and self-initiated repair where in the first a listener smoothly asks the speaker who then repairs the utterance while in the second the speaker spontaneously recognizes his/her mistake and corrects it directly. So, it seems that for most of linguists repair is a process of double types. Liddicoat (2007:173) states that repair can be initiated by the speaker of the repairable (self-initiated repair) or it may be initiated by its recipient (other-initiated repair) A repair can also be made by the speaker of the repairable item (self-repair) or it may be made by the recipient of the item (other-repair) . Liddicoat believes that there are four possible types of repairs as follows:

1-Self-initiated and self repair: in which the speaker of the repairable item indicates a problem in the talk and solves it by him/herself.

2-Self-initiated other-repair: when the speaker of the repairable item indicates a problem in the talk, but the recipient solves it.

3-Other-initiated self-repair: the recipient of the repairable item indicates a problem in the talk and the speaker resolves it.

4-Other initiated other-repair: the recipient of the repairable item both indicates and resolves the problem in the talk (ibid).

3. Organization of Repair

The organization of a repair activity consists of two parts, of which the first one is most importantly a repair initiation, and the second is a repair outcome. The initiation marks possible disjunctions with the immediately preceding talk, and the outcome includes solutions or getting rid of the problem. Repair structures are characterized by (1) who (self or other) initiates the repair (2) who (self or other) accomplishes the repair work Schegloff et al. (1977:381).

4. General Examples of Repair's Types:

1- Self-initiated and self repair situations used in:

A-Correcting yourself

Example: I'm heading off to Sue's --- I mean Mary's house tonight.

B-you can't find the right word and you find it yourself after a small pause.

Example: I need to renew my whaaat! Whaaat! - -- My prescription today.

2-Other-initiated and self repair Situation used in:

A-Couldn't hear the speaker clearly

Example: Speaker A: I'm heading off to vacation next week.

Speaker B: what?

Speaker A: I said I'm going on vacation next week.

B-Misunderstanding

Students: we want to (unintelligible speech) the books today! Example:

Teacher: you want to count the books?

Students: no, we want to color the books.

3. Self-initiated and other-repaired Situations used in:

A- You can't find the right word, and someone else fills it in for you

Example: Speaker A: I need more storage space on my computer, so I need to get a newumm....

B: A hard drive? Speaker

Speaker A: Yeah, that's right, a hard drive.

4. Other-initiated and other-repaired

Situations used in:

A- You have your facts incorrect and someone else corrected you

Example 1: Speaker A: With the 6% sales tax, that would add quite a bit to the price.

Speaker B: The sales tax is actually 7%.

Example 2: Speaker A: Aren't you glad that today is payday?

Speaker B: Payday is actually tomorrow.

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5. Repair and Politeness

Aitchison (2003:111) announces that there is a connection between repair and being polite because humans do not usually confront each other directly thus other-initiated self repair is a common type in conversations. To her the speaker repairs the original utterance after being aquired mildly by the listener. For example:

Speaker A: Adam had participated in language learning course.

Speaker B: Adam? Had he really?

Speaker A: Sorry, I don't mean Adam, I mean Allan.

So, one can note that the suggestion of this example is that human tend to be polite to one another and politeness can radically affect the structure of conversations.

6. Repair and age

Anderson (2013:2) states that young children develop repair strategies as they experience communication breakdowns and it is a completion part of the language acquisition process. Repair strategies are early developing mechanism. It starts early without teaching. Relatively un sophisticated language learners are sensitive to feedback that their messages are not understood and they can adjust. So, they are able to customize themselves to be understood during conversation.

7. Repair and Error

Schegloff et al. (1977:363) distinguish the use of the term "correction" from that of "repair". "Correction" is said to refer to "the replacement of an error or mistake by what is correct." However, "repairs" are not limited to errors or simple replacement. For example, repairs are often used by a speaker to address the appropriateness of an utterance rather than an error. To them, the term "repair" refers to this more general domain of occurrences.

8. Repair and Understanding

The speaker and the recipient may not agree with what the speaker has said. Repair is executed within the interaction and in real-time; it takes place in the same circumstances as the actual interaction. It helps to keep up the understanding between the participants and works as a meta-device for the actual ongoing talk. Thus, speaker and recipient have to make an effort to distinguish actual conversation from the repair in talk-in-interaction. Surprisingly, most of the time this works out quite well Kohler (2007:3).

9. Categories of Repair

Davies (2015:121) says that there are two categories of repair. First, retraced false starts which occur when all or part of the original utterances repeated. Where repetition is total, the repair is repetition. When the speaker partly repeats what has been said and making some change(s) of grammar or vocabulary

insertion or reformulation occurs. The second one is un retraced false starts occurs when the speaker completely abandons an utterance that is incomplete and uses a new one which is lexically and syntactically distinct.

-Retraced false starts example: Those clean / those dirty cups.

Un retraced false starts example: These/those dirty cups

10. Liddicoat's (2007) Model

To this linguist there are four types of repair as illustrated in diagram (1):

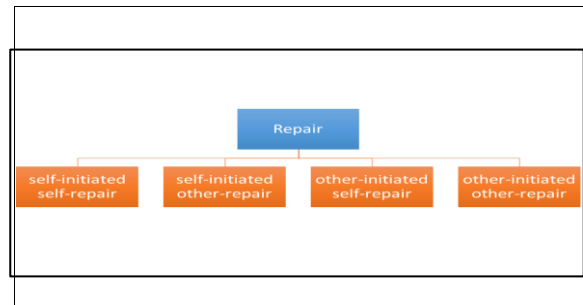


Diagram (1) Liddicoat's (2007) model of Repair

11. The Sample of the Research

The sample consists of (30) conversations as the table (1)

12. Analysis of Repair in the Selected English Conversations

as the table (2)

13. Results of the Analysis

The number of the occurrences and percentage of each type of repairs in the selected conversations are shown in the table (3):

Table (2) the number of the occurrences and percentage of types of repairs in the selected conversations.

The table above shows that the total occurrence of the types of repair is 30 times. The highest

frequent is other initiated-self repair which has been used 12 times and it constitutes 40%. Self initiated-self repair comes in the second degree and it has come 10 times that means 33%. Other initiated-other repair has occurred 6 times. So, it constitutes 20%. Finally

the least occurrence is for self initiated- other repair which has come just 2 times thus its percentage is 7%.

The following figure is shown to show the percentage of each type of repair in the selected conversations.

14. Conclusion

Repair means how speakers or participants of a conversation correct their mistakes or misunderstandings in it. Repair could be done by the self and by others. It has nearly happened to everyone and as a particularly effective international device is used by the participants to put the interaction back on the right track.

The basic interest of this research is a field of study under the scope of conversation analysis called, repair. Repair is a phenomenon that is interesting to be analyzed and described due to its necessity and role in the continuation of conversations. Repair is one that is still investigated by many linguists due to its importance and its types differ from a linguist to another.

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Table (1) the sample of the research

no	conversations	source	page	author
1-	a: i am not sure whether he will come tomorrow. b: who is that you are talking about? a: john i mean	the pragmatics of discourse anaphora in english: evidence from conversational repair	2	geluykens, ronald(1994)
2-	he said, he would come, john i mean	the pragmatics of discourse anaphora in english: evidence from conversational repair	4	geluykens, ronald(1994)
3-	a: she was giving me all the people that were gone this year b: what? this year? a: this quarter i mean	the pragmatics of discourse anaphora in english: evidence from conversational repair	18	geluykens, ronald(1994)
4-	a: she was giving me all the people that were gone this year. b: this year? this quarter you mean. a: yeah right	the pragmatics of discourse anaphora in english: evidence from conversational repair.	18	geluykens, ronald(1994)
5-	1-he, john i mean, came to visit me yesterday. 2- he came to visit me yesterday. john i mean	the pragmatics of discourse anaphora in english: evidence from conversational repair.	22	geluykens, ronald(1994)
6-	lori: but you know single beds are awfully thin to sleep on. sam: what? lori: single beds./they are. ellen: you mean narrow? lori: they are awfully narrow //yeah	focus on the language classroom: an introduction to classroom research for language teachers.	89	allwright and baily (1991)
7-	a: so, i was trying to pick up this chick when.... b: excuse me, i didn't hear that right?	pragmatics: an introduction.	227	mey, j.l. (1994)

	a: awfully sorry, i mean, woman... b: pick up?			
	a: awfully sorry, i mean meet....			
8-	a: the first time they stopped me from selling cigarettes was this morning b: from <i>selling</i> cigarettes? a: from buying cigarettes.	pragmatics	341	levinson (1983)
9-	a : he had this uh mistuh w- whatever k- <i>i can't think of his name,</i> <i>watts on, the one that wrote [that]</i> piece, b : [dan watts]	an introduction to conversation analysis	180	liddicoat (2007)
10-	joy: kerry is no good. she is having a fight with sally. harry: <i>you mean sarah, don't you?</i> those two are always fighting.	an introduction to conversation analysis	190	liddicoat (2007)
11-	debby: have you been to cuomo yet? dan: you mean como...	understanding pragmatics	41	verschueren,jef (1999)
12-	debby: have you been to cuomo yet? i mean como... i always confuse it with that guy in new york	understanding pragmatics	41	verschueren,jef (1999)
13-	hanna: and he is going to make his own painting. bea: mm hm. hanna: and-or i mean his own frame. bea: yeah	the preference for self – correction in the organization of repair in conversation.	366	schegloff et al. (1977)
14-	a: i read an interesting story today. b :uhm, what is that? a: well not today may be tomorrow.	the preference for self – correction in the organization of repair in conversation.	366	schegloff et al. (1977)
15-	annie: which ones of them are closed and which ones are open? zebrach: most of them, this, this ,this (pointing) annie: oh i don't mean on shelters i mean on roads.	the preference for self – correction in the organization of repair in conversation.	366	schegloff et al. (1977)
16-	nan: she was giving me all the people that were gone this year i mean this quarter you know. jan: yeah	an introduction to language and linguistics	179	fasold,w. ralp et al. (2006)
17-	a: uh, helena, helena, if i go to taiwan, which place can i visit taiwan helena? helena: i beg your pardon me, i didn't catch you ... a: i go to taiwan, uh, uh what place can i visit? helena oh, you mean, sightseeing?	conversations and negotiated interaction in text and voice chat rooms	89	jepson, kevin(2005)

	a: uh, what landmarks what landmarks ... can i visit in taiwan?			
18-	moo-soon i'm sorry, you are what? you are /wik/? junko not /wik/, but weak.	conversations and negotiated interaction in text and voice chat rooms	90	jepson, kevin(2005)
19-	a: e likes that waider over there. b: waiter? a: waitress, sorry.	conversation analysis	61	hutchby and wooffitt (2008)
20-	a: when do you want this book back? b: tuesday night - i mean wednesday night at the meeting.	a conversation analysis of theatrical discourse	125	iwata,sayaka(2011)
21-	a: look, i know people like that. b: like what? a: people who don't trust anyone, who don't care about anything, they just go after money. b: oh.	a conversation analysis of theatrical discourse	125	iwata,sayaka (2011)
22-	i talked to mr. weinap - what's his name? b: weinapple.	a conversation analysis of theatrical discourse	125	iwata,sayaka (2011)
23-	a: you and i must make a pack, we must bring starvation b: starva: tion c: starva: tion, boy it's sal/ /vation. a: salvation.	a conversation analysis of theatrical discourse	125	iwata,sayaka (2011)
24-	she: it seems like later. i guess it's because it starts getting dark so early. he: it does, at that. the nights are getting to be pretty long from now on. i mean. i mean-well, it starts getting dark early.	a conversation analysis of theatrical discourse	146	iwata,sayaka (2011)
25-	a: i am home by one ten. b: one ten?	second language interaction	23	kurhila, salla (2006)

	a: two o'clock, my class ends one ten			
26-	a: i need now some er card. b: credit book? a: yes.	second language interaction	25	kurhila, salla (2006)
27-	b: baker job is that good or no? a: baker job? b: yeah a: yeah bake bread, is that what you mean? b: mh: baker in: it's at hasle.	trying the easiest solution first in other- initiation of repair	18	svenning,jan (2008)
28-	joe: have the papers arrived yet? mary: uh- no nothing's come down from admin so far. joe: oh no i- uh not- have the papers arrived yet? mary: oh you mean the newspapers? joe: yeah.	an introduction to conversation analysis	201	liddicoat,a.j (2007)
29-	his major was it, i mean information technology	conversation analysis of online chat	5	zaferanieh, elaheh (2012)
30-	a: he s psychiatrist and expert in language b: mean in both fields of psychology and language? a: exactly “ b: should say psycholinguist.	conversation analysis of online chat	6	zaferanieh, elaheh (2012)

No	Conversations	Type of repair			
		Self initiated-self repair	Self initiated-other repair	Other initiated-self repair	Other initiated-other repair
1-	A: i am not sure whether he will come tomorrow. B: who is that you are talking about? A: john i mean			√	
2-	He said, he would come, john i mean	√			
3-	A: she was giving me all the people that were gone this year B: what? This year? A: this quarter i mean			√	
4-	a: she was giving me all the people that were gone this year. B: this year? This quarter you mean. A: yeah right				√
5-	1-he, john i mean, came to visit me yesterday. 2- he came to visit me yesterday. John i mean	√			

- 6- Lori: but you know single beds
are awfully thin to sleep on.
Sam: what?
Lori: single beds./they are.
Ellen: you mean narrow?
Lori: they are awfully narrow
//yeah
- 7- A: so, i was trying to pick up
this chick when....
B: excuse me, i didn't hear that
right?
A: awfully sorry, i mean,
woman...
B: pick up?
A: awfully sorry, i mean
meet....

No	Conversations	Type of repair			
		Self initiated-self repair	Self initiated-other repair	Other initiated-self repair	Other initiated-other repair
8-	A: the first time they stopped me from selling cigarettes was this morning B: from <i>selling</i> cigarettes? A: from buying cigarettes.			√	
9-	A : he had this uh mistuh w-		√		

	<p>whatever k- <i>i can' t think of his name,</i> <i>Watts on, the one that wrote [that] piece,</i> B : [dan watts]</p>	
10-	<p>Joy: kerry is no good. She is having a fight with sally. Harry: <i>you mean sarah, don't you?</i> Those two are always fighting.</p>	√
11-	<p>debby: have you been to cuomo yet? Dan: you mean como...</p>	√
12-	<p>Debby: have you been to cuomo yet? I mean como... i always confuse it with that guy in new york</p>	√
13-	<p>hanna: and he is going to make his own painting. Bea: mm hm. Hanna: and-or i mean his own frame. Bea: yeah</p>	√
14-	<p>A: i read an interesting story today. B :uhm, what is that? A: well not today may be tomorrow.</p>	√

No	Conversations	Type of repair
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		Self	Self	Other	Other
		initiated-	initiated-	initiated-self	initiated-
		self	other	repair	other repair
		repair	repair		
15-	<p>Annie: which ones of them are closed and which ones are open?</p> <p>Zebrach: Most of them, this, this ,this (pointing)</p> <p>Annie: oh I don't mean on shelters I mean on roads.</p>	√			
16-	<p>Nan: she was giving me all the people that were gone this year I mean this quarter you know.</p> <p>Jan: yeah</p>	√			
17-	<p>A: uh, Helena, Helena, if I go to Taiwan, which place can I visit Taiwan Helena?</p> <p>Helena: I beg your pardon me, I didn't catch you ...</p> <p>A: I go to Taiwan, uh, uh what place can I visit?</p> <p>Helena: Oh, you mean, sightseeing?</p> <p>A: Uh, what landmarks what landmarks ... can I visit in Taiwan.</p>			√	
18-	<p>Moo-soon I'm sorry, you are what? You are /wik/</p> <p>Junko: Not /wik/, but weak.</p>				√
19-	<p>A: E likes that waider over there.</p> <p>B: waiter?</p>			√	

<p>20-</p> <p>21-</p>	<p>A: waitress, sorry.</p> <p>A: When do you want this book back? ✓</p> <p>B: Tuesday night - I mean Wednesday night at the meeting.</p> <p>A: look, i know people like that. ✓</p> <p>B: like what?</p> <p>A: people who don't trust anyone, who don't care about anything, they just go after money.</p> <p>B: oh.</p>	
No	Conversations	Type of repair
<p>22-</p> <p>23-</p> <p>24-</p>	<p>I talked to mr. Weinap - what's his name?</p> <p>B: weinapple.</p> <p>A: you and i must make a pack, we must bring starvation</p> <p>B: starva: tion</p> <p>C: starva: tion, boy it's sal/ /vation.</p> <p>A: salvation.</p> <p>She: it seems like later. I guess it's because it starts</p>	<p>Self initiated-self repair</p> <p>Self initiated-other repair</p> <p>Other initiated-self repair</p> <p>Other initiated-other repair</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p>

getting dark so early.

He: it does, at that. The nights are getting to be pretty long from now on. I mean. I mean-well, it starts getting dark early.

25- A: i am home by one ten. ✓

B: one ten?

A: two o'clock, my class ends one ten

26- A: i need now some er card. ✓

B: credit book?

A: yes.

27- B: baker job is that good or no? ✓

A: baker job?

B: yeah

A: yeah bake bread, is that what you mean?

B: mh: baker in: it's at hasle.

28- Joe: have the papers arrived yet? ✓

Mary: uh- no nothing's come down from admin so far.

Joe: oh no have the papers arrived yet?

Mary: oh you mean the newspapers?

Joe: yeah.

NO	types of repair	Occurrences	Percentage
1-	Self Initiated- Self Repair	10	33%
2-	Self Initiated-Other Repair	2	7%
3-	Other Initiated-Self Repair	12	40%

No	Conversations	Type of repair			
		Self initiated- self repair	Self initiated- other repair	Other initiated- self repair	Other initiated- other repair
29-	His major was IT, I mean Information Technology	√			
30-	A: he is psychiatrist and expert in language B: mean in both fields of psychology and language? a: exactly B: should say psycholinguist.				√

4-	Other Initiated-Other Repair	6	20%
Total	4	30	100%

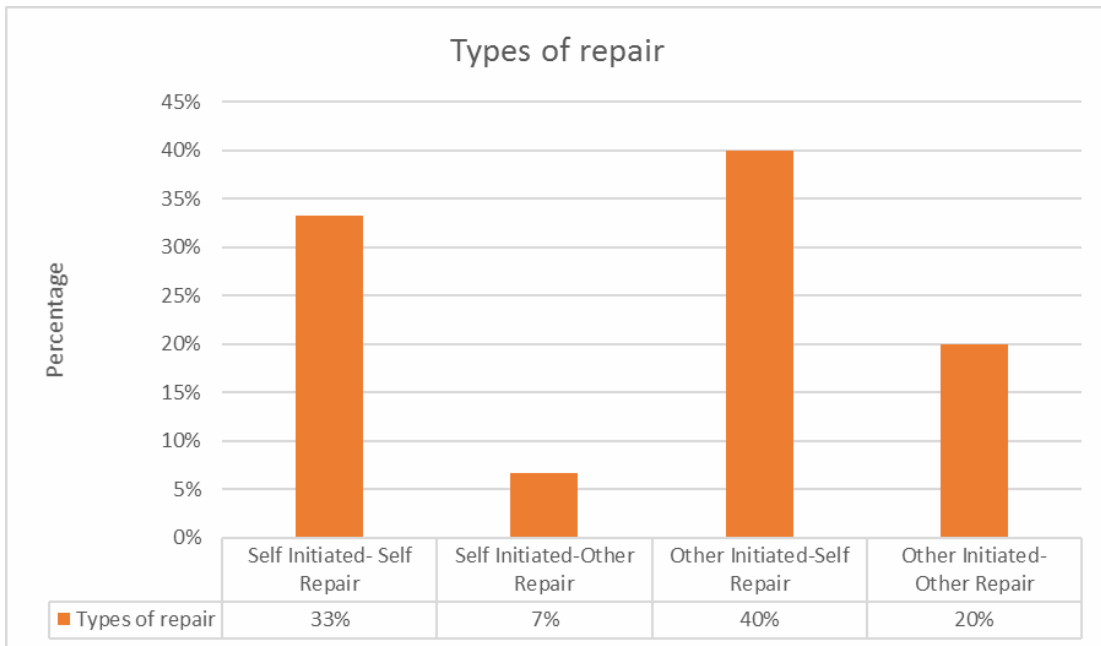


Figure (1) The Percentage of Each Type of Repair in the Selected Conversations.