

Mr. O Corpus Workshop
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Repeating for unity of mind:

Introducing the correlative link
between Japanese repetition
and grammar

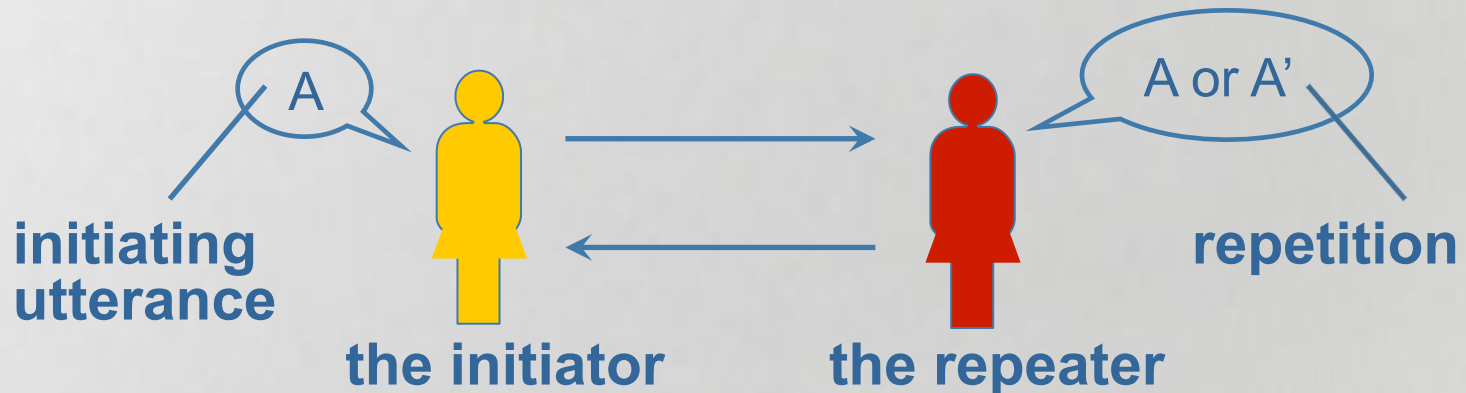
Saeko Machi

(saeko-machi@gb3.so-net.ne.jp)



In this study...

- Repetition is limited to **cross-speaker repetition** (a.k.a. allo-repetition, repetition of other's words)
- Terms below are used



- Data - Part of Mr O Corpus
 - 13 female Japanese conversation pairs (74 min)
 - 11 female English conversation pairs (60 min)
 - 5 minutes talk time per pair
 - Pre-selected topic: "What surprised you?"



Introduction

- Repetition is abundant in Japanese conversation.
J > E (x 2.9)
 - Japanese repetition often...
 - 1) consists of the initiator's **subjective expressions** such as “how she feels” and “how she thinks.”
 - 2) performs functions of **agreement** and **sympathy**.
- ⇒ Speakers reach **like-mindedness** and create **a sense of unity and togetherness**

(Machi 2012)



Examples of typical Japanese repetition

(1) An admirer (agreement)

01 A: (彼は)Bの[ファンなんじゃないの
“Isn't he your admirer or something?”

02 B: [なんかね、うん、だからちょっと危ないんだけど
“Yeah, that's why (It's) a little dangerous.”

=>03 A: うん、危ないね
“Yeah, (It's) dangerous.”

(2) A carrot for lunch (sympathy)

01 A: そしたらさ、にんじん一本ぼんと出てきたの
初めて見たときはほんとびっくりした
“(My host mother) gave me only a carrot
for lunch. When I first saw it, (I) was
really surprised.”

=>02 B: そりゃびっくりするよね
“By that, (no-SUB) be surprised.”



- English repetition is not so much employed to establish like-mindedness.
- => The nature of **dealing with the initiator's state of mind as the repeating object and creating unity of mind through repetition** is prominent only in Japanese.

Q. What enables the Japanese repeaters to access and share the initiator's states of mind??

- => Two grammatical features
1. Sentence-final particle "*ne*"
 2. The non-occurrence of the sentential subjects



1. Sentence-final particle “*ne*”

- There are numerous sentence-final particles in Japanese discourse (*yo*, *sa*, *na*, *no*, and *ne*)
- *Ne* appears most frequently in conversation. (Maynard 1997)
- These are **non-referential indexes** (Silverstein 1976, 1977) and provide contextual information such as **speaker’s attitude towards the utterance, situation, and the listener.**
- The particle *ne* actually encourages the occurrence of repetition types of sympathy and agreement.
- The particle *ne* frequently occurs near the two repetition types, both **with the initiating utterance** and **with repetition.**



<Initiating utterance + *ne*>

(3) Haunted house (agreement)

01 A: (イスが)ガタンと下がって超びっくりして、へえと思って
“Then (the chair) fell down and I was really surprised.”

=>02 B: **不意打ちだね**

“(That was) a surprise attack, huh (+*ne*)?”

03 A: {laugh} **不意打ちだった**

“(That was) a surprise attack.”

<Repetition + *ne*>

(1) An admirer (agreement)

01 A: (彼は)Bの[ファンなんじゃないの
“Isn't he your admirer or something?”

02 B: [なんかね、うん、だからちょっと**危ない**んだけど
“Yeah, that's why (It's) a little **dangerous**.”

=>03 A: うん、**危ない**ね

“Yeah, (It's) **dangerous** (+*ne*).”



What makes the particle *ne* occur frequently near repetition types of sympathy and agreement?

=> Two functions of the particle *ne*

<Initiating utterance + *ne*>

Ne's function of elicitation of agreement and emotional support

- Speaker, using *ne*, invites the conversational partner to become an active and emotionally supportive co-conversationalist. (Cook1992)
- *Ne* marks the utterance accessible to other participants, and promotes potential sympathizing and agreeing repetition afterwards.



<Repetition + *ne*>

Interactional or affective function of *ne*

-*Ne* (...) indicates agreement about knowledge, intention, and judgment between the speaker and the listener.

(Masuoka 1991)

- *Ne* is an index of shared feelings... (Cook 1992)

• Both *ne* and the two repetition types are conducive to the sharing of participants' states of mind, allowing them to create a sense of unity between themselves.

• *Ne* and the two repetition types have the same goal in conversation, and their concurrence ensures its accomplishment.



2. The non-occurrence of the sentential subject

- In Japanese, personal pronouns “I” and “you” as subjects are frequently omitted, whereas they are explicitly marked in English.

(4) Japanese

Fox: *Ittai nani sagashiteru no kai?*

(No SUB) on earth what looking for NR Q

Prince: *Ningen sagashiteru n da yo.*

(No SUB) human looking for NR COP FP

(5) English

Fox: What are **you** looking for?

Prince: **I**'m looking for people.

(Translation of the French novel *The Little Prince*)



- The non-occurrence of subjects is observable in our data of sympathizing repetition.
- Among 34 sympathizing repetition which are supposed to contain the subject “I” or “you,” 31 of them (91.2%) have no subject.



(6) Mistakes regarding time (sympathy)

01 A: (時間の間違いに)気付いたときにすごいびっくり

02 B: うん

03 A: とあせって[しまったとかなんですよ

⇒04 B: [うん, あ, でも時間ってすごいあせるよね

B: [私もそう面接とか今やってるから

05 A: [{笑い}ほんとに, はい

06 B: そうすると, なんか時計が, けっこう, 10分遅れてたとか

⇒07 A: [あせります

<English translation>

01 A: When I found out (that I'd mistaken time), (I) was so surprised

02 B: Yeah

03 A: And (I) was **freaked out**.

⇒ 04 B: Yeah, well, but (No SUB) **freak out** about time, right?

[I also have (job) interviews lately,

05 A: [True, yes.

06 B: And, somehow (my) watch was, somewhat,

10 minutes slow.

⇒ 07 A: (No SUB) **freak out**.



- Having no “I” or “you,” we cannot tell whether the repeater is talking about her own feelings or the initiator’s.
- This ambiguity makes the sentence lack information.
- At the same time, this ambiguity strongly facilitates the two participants’ unity of mind.
- Speakers **do not have to draw a clear boundary** between “my feelings” or “your feelings,” but can make it “our feelings.”
- Unspecified subjects in Japanese make **participants’ feelings accessible and sharable**, and thus it is easy for sympathizing repetition to occur.



- English grammar requires the subject of an utterance to be made explicit. (Ide 2002, Halliday & Hasan 1976)
 - The nature of English grammar in fact discourages sympathizing repetition because...
 - Experiencers of the feelings are clearly marked
ex. “I was so mad...”
“It was a big surprise to me”
“So his story surprised you?”
 - Clear marking of “whose” feelings are dealt with **makes the boundary between the experiencer and the listener clear.**
- ⇒ Sympathizing repetition, which blurs the boundary between the participants, is unsuitable.



Conclusion and the next step...

- Japanese repetition is distinctive due to its nature of dealing with the initiator's state of mind as the repeating object and create unity of mind through repetition.
- The two grammatical features contribute to the characteristic of Japanese repetition by making participants' feelings accessible and sharable.
- There is a correlative link between Japanese repetition and grammar. They work inter-influentially to pursue the same goal in conversation.
- The next step... Ontological elements
 - The concept of self
 - *Ba*



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