

Registering the receipt of information with a modulated stance: A study of *ne*-marked other-repetitions in Japanese talk-in-interaction



Daisuke Yokomori^{a,*}, Eiko Yasui^b, Are Hajikano^c

^a Faculty of Languages and Cultures, Kyushu University, 744 Motoooka, Nishi-ku, Fukuoka 819-0395, Japan

^b Graduate School of Humanities, Nagoya University, Furo-cho, Chikusa-ku, Nagoya 464-8603, Japan

^c International Education & Exchange Center, Nagoya University, Furo-cho, Chikusa-ku, Nagoya 464-8603, Japan

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Abstract

One thing people typically do in a responsive utterance is to display receipt of information given in a prior utterance, and among the various formats for displaying receipt is repetition of (part of) a prior utterance, which is called *other-repetition*. In this paper, we focus on one linguistic resource in Japanese for modulating the stance displayed through other-repetition. That is, addition of the pragmatic particle *ne*, a marker of shared information between the speaker and the hearer, at the end of a repeated item. Using the framework of Interactional Linguistics, we investigate the interactional characteristics of *ne*-marked other-repetitions in Japanese conversation through comparison with other-repetitions that have no particle. Based on an examination of naturally occurring conversation, we argue that while other-repetition with no particle indicates that the speaker has received something he or she did not recognize, other-repetition with *ne* indexes that the speaker already has some knowledge regarding the repeated item. Thus, when used as a third-position response following an adjacency pair (Schegloff, 2007), other-repetition with *ne* can indicate that the information provided in the prior turn is nothing new or unexpected. In addition, when used as a second-position response, *ne*-added other-repetition can express that the repeated item is something that he or she already knows and that he or she has a shared understanding with the prior speaker.

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1. Introduction

One thing people typically do in response to what others say in a prior utterance is to display receipt of information just given, which can be done through not only sentential/clausal units (e.g., *I know what you mean.*) but also various types of linguistic units smaller than a sentence/clause, such as adjectives (e.g., *Good*) and interjections (e.g., *Oh*). As Thompson et al. (2015) suggest, a responsive turn position is a rich habitat for linguistic units smaller than a sentence/clause, and thus detailed exploration of the forms and functions of those units in any language would reveal intricate aspects of human language. Among the turn formats smaller than a sentence/clause used for displaying receipt is repeating a word or phrase uttered in a prior turn (Clancy et al., 1996). For example, in line 4 of an excerpt from Schegloff (1997:527–528) shown below, Bee repeats the word *Wednesday*, which was produced in Ava's prior turn, and, by doing so, she makes it public that she has successfully received, or registered, Ava's prior turn, which is the answer to Bee's question in line 2.

* Corresponding author.

E-mail addresses: yokomori.d@gmail.com (D. Yokomori), eyasui@lit.nagoya-u.ac.jp (E. Yasui), hajikano@iee.nagoya-u.ac.jp (A. Hajikano).

- 1 Ava: ... I have one class in the e:vening.
 2 Bee: On Mondays?
 3 Ava: -> Y-uh:: Wednesdays.=
 4 Bee: ->> =Uh- Wednesday,=
 5 Ava: =En it's like a Mickey Mouse course. .hh It's a joke,

Our focus in the present study is this kind of display of receipt: repetition of an adjacent prior turn that appears in Japanese conversations. Following some previous studies (Greer et al., 2009; Huang, 2010, 2011; Piirainen-Marsh and Tainio, 2009; Svennevig, 2004), we refer to the practice of repeating other participants' word(s) as "other-repetition" in order to distinguish it from the practice of repetitions by the speaker him- or herself, which could be called a "self-repetition."

In Japanese, speakers can add pragmatic particles (such as *ne*, *na*, *ka*) to the end of a repeated item.¹ In the example below, responding to the particular name of a hotel mentioned by Kensuke during an explanation of his hotel search, Yoko repeats part of Kensuke's immediately preceding turn (*Furawaain* 'Flower Inn') with the particle *ne*.

(1) ['Flower Inn']

- 01 KEN: <yasui hoteru> (0.6) de:,
 cheap hotel and
 02 (1.0)
 03 KEN: de:, (.) hyooban no ii hoteru tte yuu no de, sagashitara,
 and evaluation GEN good hotel QUO say NML COP.CONJ search.PST.COND
I searched for inexpensive hotels with good reviews, and then,
 04 (2.0)
 05 KEN: ↓un. (.) soko
 yes there
yeah, that one,
 06 (0.3)
 07 KEN: Pu[rɪ-n̄sesu mear]ji hoteru ↑ka, >moshikuwa< furawaain.
 Princess Mary hotel or or Flower.Inn
Princess Mary Hotel or Flower Inn...
 08 NOR: [°a:°]
Oh:.
 09 (0.2)
 10 YOK: tch a[: [; >Furawaa in < ne:]
 a Flower.Inn ne
A::, Flower Inn ne.
 11 KEN: [°(deta[ndesu yone)°]
 appear COP PRT
...(appeared in the search results.)
 12 NOR: [a : :] [::::]
Oh::.
 13 EMI: [n :] [::::]
Yeah:::

While other-repetition may be a universal phenomenon among languages and cultures, the practice of adding pragmatic particles such as *ne*, *na*, or *ka* is dependent on Japanese grammar and thus constitutes an important aspect of specifically Japanese discourse. In this paper, we focus on *ne*-marked other-repetitions in Japanese and investigate their interactional characteristics through comparison with other-repetitions with no particles. Through our investigation,

¹ Rough descriptions of the functions of these three pragmatic particles are as follows. *Ne* is said to mark information as shared between the speaker and the recipient, as we discuss in section 2.2. *Na* is said to mark basically the same meaning as *ne*, that is, the mutual accessibility of the information, but it differs from *ne* in terms of register and frequency. *Na* sounds more masculine or blunt and is far less frequent in actual usage. *Ka*, when attached to a repeated item, marks that that item is very informative to the speaker.

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