

日本の小学校英語における授業内会話 -会話分析の観点から-

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Classroom Conversation in Japanese Elementary School English
Lessons: A Conversation Analytic Perspective

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1 Research goal

This study aims at examining how classroom conversation in Japanese elementary school English lessons is organized and suggesting pedagogical implications as to how the quality of elementary school English education can be improved. While elementary school English education in Japan has been expanding, it is also necessary to examine the status quo of the classroom lessons.

In particular, how English is learned in classrooms should be examined to consider effective teaching environment. Since elementary school English education aims at fostering pupils' communicative abilities, lessons usually include communicative activities. Therefore, to understand how English is learned in classrooms, it is important to look into how teachers and pupils communicate. Based on this understanding, this study focuses on classroom interaction between pupils and teachers in elementary school English lessons.

To investigate classroom interaction from participants' points of view, this study adopts conversation analysis as research methodology. Conversation analytic studies aim at examining human interaction as conversational events in terms of how participants behave toward specific interactional goals. Thus, standing on participants' viewpoints enables researchers to understand why speakers produce particular utterances at particular timings in relation to what they want to achieve through their interaction.

When analyzing classroom conversation, this study seeks to describe how lessons and classroom activities are organized. In addition, the viewpoints from the field of second language pedagogy are included. Based on the analyses, this study also aims at suggesting pedagogical implications as to how elementary school English lessons can be improved in quality in terms of classroom conversation.

By looking into elementary school pupils' and teachers' perspectives, it is expected that new insights about the ways to plan and implement the lessons can be obtained. Thus, the focus and the methodology of this study have a considerable importance in the field of second language pedagogy for young learners especially in Japanese contexts.

2 Summary of the chapters

This dissertation consists of nine chapters. From an introductory section to a literature review section, some background information which is necessary to understand what this study focuses on is described. The following methodology section explains how the data is collected and analyzed in order to achieve the research goals. The analysis and discussion sections deal with what is found from the data analysis and some implications regarding Japanese elementary school English education and its research, followed by the conclusion. Summaries of each chapter are as follows.

Chapter one is the introduction of this study. It discusses the current conditions of Japanese elementary school English education and the issues about it including political and pedagogical aspects. The chapter argues that understanding the current conditions of how pupils and teachers participate in classroom conversation is the first and essential step toward the consideration of the ways to improve the quality of communicative activities in elementary school English lessons.

Chapter two is a section for literature review. Starting with the overviewing the history and the present situations of Japanese elementary school English education, it reviews second language acquisition (SLA) research, SLA studies in Japanese contexts, SLA studies on young learners, and SLA studies on Japanese young learners are investigated. In the latter half of the chapter, conversation analysis (CA), which is adopted as a research method for this study, is described. This chapter examines its history from CA for daily conversation to CA for institutional conversation and the analytical viewpoints of CA are also reviewed.

Based on the discussion above, Chapter three describes the purposes and methodology for this study. This chapter also presents some research questions to achieve those purposes. Regarding the methodology, the chapter explains the research processes of data collection and data analysis. Lastly, the analytical viewpoints of this study are briefly summarized.

From Chapter four to Chapter seven, the analysis of the classroom conversation data is presented. Chapter four deals with overall structural organization. Overall structural organization is one of the characteristic architecture of conversation in institutional settings.

This study examines the overall structural organization of elementary school English lessons by dividing classroom activities depending on their actions and topics in it.

Chapter five focuses on turn-taking organization. Turn-taking organization refers to how turns are taken by conversation participants. This dissertation analyzes such points on each activity based on the classification discussed in chapter four.

Chapter six examines sequence organization. Turns in conversation construct sequence of turns. Among those sequences, sequence organization in CA is about what kind of actions are embodied through turns of utterances among participants. This chapter focuses on sequences consisting of prompts by teachers and reactions by pupils and describes how they are organized.

Chapter seven is about repair organization. The analysis of repair organization focuses on trouble sources in conversation and aims at describing the trajectory of how repair is done. This chapter examines what kind of trouble sources are observed and how those trouble sources are dealt with by conversation participants.

Chapter eight is a discussion part. In the first place, the results of the analysis in Chapters four, five, six, and seven are summarized. Subsequently, the chapter discusses pedagogical implications based on the advantages and disadvantages of conversational features of elementary school English lessons in relation to second language pedagogy. This chapter also discusses the limitations of this study and the directions of further studies.

Chapter nine concludes the dissertation. It summarizes the analysis and discussion of this study. Overviewing the contents of the dissertation, this chapter discusses the significance of this study in the field of second language acquisition research as well as conversation analytic research.