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Exploring Teacher-Student Interaction: Teacher Repetition as an Interactional Resource

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ABSTRACT

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Teacher repetition has been disregarded as a redundant form of "teacher echo" in the language teaching field. This study reinvestigates the instructional role of repetition by closely examining how it functions in L2 teacher-student discourse. Using Conversation Analysis of adult beginner ESL classroom interaction, it explores the value of teacher repetition as interactional and pedagogical resource. The present findings show that repetition plays multiple roles in classroom discourse. First, teacher repetition scaffolds learning through active listening. It provides learners with additional processing time and opportunities to notice and internalize linguistic forms. Second, it serves as a turn-management device that structures the participation framework and maintains the pedagogical trajectory of talk. Third, it operates as a student-empowering device, extending the interactional floor and co-constructing learning through mitigated positive feedback. Fourth, the teacher's self-repetition with humor fulfills an affective function, which reduces student anxiety and encourages active student participation. Lastly, serving as implicit corrective feedback, repetition helps learners develop both fluency and accuracy while preserving the communicative flow in classroom discourse. This study demonstrates that teacher repetition is not a mechanical feature of teacher talk, but a strategic practice with pedagogical value that contributes to more interactive classroom discourse.

KEYWORDS

second language classroom discourse, teacher-student interaction, teacher repetition, scaffolding, feedback

1. Introduction

Over the past three decades, corrective feedback in teacher-student interaction has been extensively discussed and is recognized as a key aspect of input in classroom language learning (Doughty and Varela 1998, Ellis et al. 2001, Lee 2013, Lyster and Mori 2006, Lyster and Ranta 1997, Lochtman 2002, Mackey and Philip 1998, Oliver, 2003, Panova and Lyster 2002, Sheen 2004, Tsang 2004). Input refers to the language samples to which learners are exposed through listening or reading (Allwright and Bailey 1991). The counterpart to input, known as output, refers to the language that learners produce either in writing or speaking. Input can be further categorized into negative and positive. Negative input (i.e., negative evidence) highlights the presence of errors in learners' output, whereas positive input (i.e., positive evidence) encompasses all other input not considered negative (Long and Robinson 1998).

In teacher-student interaction, teachers use a specialized form of language input that is modified and pedagogically tailored to a specific group of interlocutors (i.e., learners) to enhance the comprehensibility of classroom instruction. Chaudron (1988) identifies several distinctive characteristics of such modified input, including frequent repetitions, longer pauses, more articulated pronunciation, a slower rate of speech, and simplified vocabulary and sentence structures.

It has been consistently argued that even seemingly minor features of teacher talk can significantly affect learners' access to learning opportunities (Cazdan 2001, Ernst 1994). Moreover, teacher talk plays a pivotal role in shaping the overall classroom climate and the extent to which learners are encouraged to participate in instructional discourse (Hall 1997, 2003, Markee 2004, Nystrand 1997, Walsh 2011, Waring 2008).

Despite the prominence of repetition in teacher talk, it has traditionally been associated with rote memorization and mechanical drilling, reflecting behaviorist views of language learning that emphasize habit formation through imitation (Richards and Rodgers 2001). With the pedagogical focus shifting toward the development of communicative competence in language learners, repetition has become a trivial practice in classroom teaching and has been dismissed as a mere drilling practice (Richards and Rodgers 2001).

In spite of such pedagogical skepticism, subsequent research has increasingly acknowledged the important role of repetition in classroom discourse (Chaudron 1988, Duff 2000, Hellermann 2003, Johnston 1994, Lee et al. 1999, Seedhouse 1994, Tomlin 1994), and considerable progress has been made in advancing our understanding of its functions. However, much of the existing research has tended to focus on its role within teachers' typical use of the Initiation-Response-Evaluation/Feedback (i.e., IRE/F) sequence, in which the teacher initiates a turn, a student responds, and the teacher then provides evaluation or feedback (Duff 2000, Hall 1997). Generally, the final sequence involves repeating the student's erroneous utterance with rising intonation to provide corrective feedback or evaluation (Ellis et al. 2001, Lyster 1998, Lyster and Ranta 1997, Panova and Lyster 2002, Seo 2019, Sheen 2004).

Corrective feedback is defined as "an indication to a learner that his or her use of the target language is incorrect" (Lightbown and Spada 2003, p. 172). Corrective feedback is classified as explicit or implicit depending on how learner errors are addressed. Explicit corrective feedback is characterized by a clear indication that an error has occurred, followed by the direct provision of the correct form of the error (Lyster and Ranta 1997). In contrast, implicit corrective feedback involves providing the correct model or inviting a correct utterance from the student without explicitly pinpointing the error (Lochtman 2002).

A substantial body of research on repetition in second language (L2) classrooms has primarily examined it as a form of corrective feedback, while its broader pedagogical and interactional dimensions have received less attention. Comparatively few studies have explored repetition within teacher-student interaction from a more

integrated perspective (e.g., Chang 2017, Duff 2000, Enyedy et al. 2008, Hellermann 2003, O'Connor and Michaels 1996, Park 2014, Roh and Lee 2018).

In this light, the present study reexamines teacher repetition not as a redundant form of echoing, but as a strategic and adaptive discourse practice that fulfills multiple instructional goals. Specifically, it investigates how repetition functions within the micro-organization of classroom interaction in an adult beginner English as a Second Language (ESL) setting.

Drawing on the analytic framework of Conversation Analysis (CA), this study explores how teacher repetition operates to scaffold learning, manage turn-taking, and shape the affective climate of classroom discourse. By focusing on adult beginners, a learner population that has received relatively limited empirical attention, this study aims to shed light on the multifaceted role of repetition as an interactional and pedagogical resource and offer practical insights for language educators and practitioners seeking to create supportive learning environments.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Repetition Beyond Corrective Feedback

Although repetition has often been examined as a form of corrective feedback, a growing body of research has expanded its conceptualization to encompass broader pedagogical functions. Grounded largely in CA, these studies demonstrate that repetition contributes not only to error correction but also to the organization of participation, scaffolding of learner understanding, and co-construction of shared meaning in classroom discourse.

Building on this broadened view, Duff (2000) reconceptualized the value of teacher repetition as a meaningful language teaching resource in classroom discourse. Drawing on content-based English as a Foreign Language (EFL) history classes and a German foreign language class at a U.S. university, she demonstrated that repetition functions as a socially and instructionally meaningful resource rather than rote practice. It served as a pedagogical, cognitive, and affective tool through which teachers and learners co-constructed meaning and participation. Teacher repetition guided students to pay close attention to the learning materials and helped them focus on the classroom tasks at hand. It also efficiently reformulated students' contributions in the classroom.

Extending this interactional perspective, Park (2014) examined the role of teacher repetition in the third turn of classroom discourse, focusing on what she termed as *third-turn repeats*. The findings showed that teacher repetition played a different role depending on the instructional goals of the lesson. When the pedagogical goal was to develop fluency, teacher repetition tended to prompt student elaboration without indicating the problematic areas of previous turns. However, when the pedagogical goal was to develop accuracy, it tended to confirm student utterances and maintain a pedagogical focus.

Further evidence of the multifunctional nature of repetition has been found in studies involving younger learners. Chang (2017) investigated repetition in classroom discourse in an English immersion camp for Korean elementary school students. She found that repetition scaffolded learner comprehension, provided feedback, and sustained active student participation.

Similarly, Roh and Lee (2018) examined teacher repetition in English-medium kindergartens in Korea and identified three major pedagogical tasks accomplished through repetition: eliciting choral responses, reinforcing key lexical items, and pursuing specific answers. Their findings showed how repetition structured participation and guided lesson progression, highlighting its value as a vital instructional tool in early childhood EFL contexts.

A parallel line of research has emerged in content-based instructional settings. O'Connor and Michaels (1996)

introduced the notion of *revoicing* through an analysis of science classroom discourse at an elementary school in the United States. In their terms, revoicing refers to the teacher's repetition or reformulation of students' ideas. Their findings illustrated that teachers' revoicing validated student contributions and maximized opportunities for students to engage in reasoning at a deeper level. This practice also enabled learners to share their ideas more interactively in the classroom.

Building on this framework, Enyedy et al. (2008) further examined the concept of revoicing in another content-based class (i.e., mathematics) at a high school in the United States. The study revealed that teacher repetition encouraged students to solve math problems in a more collaborative manner. It also functioned to redistribute epistemic authority among students in the classroom, contributing to a participatory and dialogic classroom environment.

Finally, Hellermann (2003) further advanced this interactional account of teacher repetition through a micro-analysis of content-based classes (i.e., physics and American history) at a high school in the United States. These findings revealed how prosodic features, including intonation, stress, pitch, and rhythm, shaped the interactional significance of teacher repetition in classroom interactions. Subtle variations in prosodic cues signaled the teachers' stances toward learner responses. They also led students to extend their turns in the instructed discourse, helping to sustain pedagogical continuity and interactional engagement in the classroom.

2.2 Research Gap in the Literature

Although several studies have sought to extend the pedagogical significance of repetition beyond error correction, important gaps remain in the literature regarding learner populations and instructional contexts. Much of the prior research has been conducted in content-based instructional settings, in which repetition primarily serves to reinforce content knowledge rather than to focus on language learning (Duff 2000, Enyedy et al. 2008, Hellermann 2003, O'Connor and Michaels 1996).

Even within language-teaching contexts, most studies have focused either on young learners in EFL contexts (Chang 2017, Roh and Lee 2018) or on adolescents and adult learners at intermediate or higher proficiency levels (Park 2014). Consequently, little is known about how repetition operates in adult beginner L2 classrooms, particularly in ESL contexts, where learners' limited linguistic resources demand greater teacher scaffolding for language learning.

Adult beginners represent a unique learner population whose cognitive maturity and life experience coexist with limited linguistic competence in the L2. Despite their capacity for abstract thinking and reflection, they often experience increased anxiety and reluctance to speak because of their limited linguistic ability. In such learning contexts, repetition may serve as a crucial scaffolding mechanism that helps learners process input, confirm their understanding, and participate with greater confidence. Repetition may play an even more critical role in helping students at lower levels learn an L2. Despite its potential importance, relatively few studies have examined teacher repetition in adult beginner ESL classrooms. This underexplored area warrants closer examination, as repetition may play a critical role in facilitating comprehension and fostering interaction among learners with limited L2 proficiency.

To address this gap, the present study investigates how teacher repetition functions as a multifaceted discourse resource in an adult beginner ESL classroom. Using CA, it examines how repetition operates in naturally-occurring classroom interaction to scaffold learning, manage participation, and build teacher-student rapport. By focusing on a learner group that has not received full attention and examining repetition as a pedagogically strategic practice, this study aims to make both theoretical and practical contributions to the field of language teaching. Theoretically,

this study extends the current understanding of repetition by reinvestigating its role in teacher talk. Pedagogically, it offers insights into how teachers can utilize repetition as an instructional tool in a classroom setting. The present study seeks to deepen our understanding of repetition as a central feature of teacher talk and to contribute to ongoing discussions of how interactional practices facilitate language learning in the classroom.

3. Method

3.1 Contexts and Participants

The present findings are based on naturally-occurring classroom interactions in a beginning-level class at a university in North America. The goal of the beginning-level course was to enhance learners' English communication skills with a balanced focus on fluency and accuracy. According to the placement test of the program, students were assigned to this beginning class. The class consisted of fewer than 15 students from diverse cultural backgrounds, which allowed the teacher to provide individualized attention and facilitated more interactive participation among students and between students and the teacher. Most of the students were males who were in their twenties. The instructor was a female, whose native language is English. She had extensive teaching experience, including more than 15 years of teaching English to adult learners at the tertiary level in ESL contexts.

3.2 Data Analysis

This study employed non-participant observation (Slavin 1992), in which the researcher maintained minimal involvement to avoid influencing the natural flow of classroom interaction. Video-recording was used as the primary method of data collection because it provides a comprehensive and objective record of both verbal and nonverbal behavior (Erickson and Wilson 1982). Data were collected during a regular 60-minute class session to ensure minimal disruption and maintain the authenticity of classroom discourse.

The present data were video-recorded and carefully transcribed in accordance with CA. The interactional framework of CA was adopted to conduct a micro-analysis of the role of teacher repetition in L2 teacher-student interaction. The video-recording was largely transcribed based on the CA conventions used in the study by Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson (1974). In the excerpt, the teacher repetition is indicated in bold-faced text and arrows (→) demonstrate the focus of the analysis.

In the present analysis, *repetition* is used as the primary cover term for instances in which the teacher reproduces all or part of a learner's utterance, either verbatim or near-verbatim. *Reformulation* is reserved for recast-like cases in which repetition involves lexical or syntactic modification of the learner's prior turn.

4. Results and Discussion

The present findings show that teacher repetition functions across multiple dimensions in L2 instructional discourse. The analysis identifies five recurrent types of interactional work accomplished by this practice, distinguished on the basis of close analysis of how repetition functions across different interactional contexts, and the Results and Discussion section is organized accordingly. Specifically, repetition is shown to scaffold learning through active listening, manage turn-taking and participation rights, empower learner participation, provide

affective support through humor, and operate as implicit corrective feedback while preserving interactional flow.

4.1 Repetition as a Scaffolding Device

By repeating students' utterances, the teacher provides contingent support that guides learners toward greater understanding and participation; this scaffolding function is exemplified in Excerpt (1).

Excerpt (1)

1 T: Christine, you have a favorite flavor, a favorite flavor of ice cream?
2 L5: Um, I like chocolate, chocolate.
→3 **T: <u>Cho</u>colate=**
4 L5: =And strawberry=
→5 **T: =<u>Cho</u>colate and <u>straw</u>berry.**
Because these are such popular flavors, let's look at this word ((turning back and writing down 'Chocolate' on the blackboard)). Everybody, look at the board ((looking at the whole class)). Look at this word. Which sound is not pronounced? Which sound is silent? **<u>Cho</u>colate, <u>Cho</u>colate, <u>Cho</u>colate.**
6 LL: *O*
7 T: Yeah, that's an *o*.

In Excerpt (1), in line 1, the teacher invites L5 to share a personal preference, framing the exchange in a meaning-focused context. In line 2, L5 responds "I like chocolate, chocolate," repeating the flavor name with emphasis. In line 3, the teacher echoes the learner's utterance ("chocolate"), acknowledging it while keeping the turn open. In line 4, the learner builds on this cue and expands her response ("And strawberry"), indicating that the teacher's repetition functions not as an evaluative closure but as a prompt for continuation. Through this move, the teacher displays attentiveness and facilitates expansion. In line 5, the teacher incorporates the learner's contribution into a fuller utterance ("Chocolate and strawberry"). She further recontextualizes it for instructional purposes by commenting, "Because these are such popular flavors, let's look at this word," turning the learner's contribution into a resource for language-focused instruction. In the same turn, the teacher recruits collective attention to the written form of "chocolate" by turning to the blackboard and writing down the word, "chocolate." She then repeats it several times ("<u>Cho</u>colate, <u>Cho</u>colate, <u>Cho</u>colate"). By repeating the target word ("chocolate") several times, the teacher naturally emphasizes that the second "*o*" of the word "chocolate" is not pronounced when directing students' attention to its phonological structure. Then, the learners produce a choral response ("*O*") in line 6. In line 7, the teacher confirms the response ("Yeah, that's an *o*"). Repetition by the teacher serves several scaffolding functions: (a) confirming and building on the learner's utterance; (b) shifting the interaction toward linguistic form; and (c) providing multiple exposures to the target word. The teacher's repetition of the learner's utterances (i.e., "chocolate" and "chocolate and strawberry") both validates the learner's contribution and secures sufficient opportunities for students to comprehend the linguistic items. This practice is especially important when learners need to develop an accurate perception of the correct pronunciation of target words.

A teacher's repetition of a student's utterances represents a form of active listening, in which the listener repeats prior talk to signal attentiveness and confirm understanding (Rost 2011, Rost and Wilson 2013). The teacher's repetition of student utterances indicates that the teacher values their contributions in co-constructing classroom discourse, which leads students to participate more actively in class. Students do not perceive themselves as mere

recipients of new knowledge from the teacher, but they feel the ownership of their own learning.

Beyond the form of active listening, teacher repetition plays a pivotal role as a scaffolding strategy in classroom discourse. Wood, Bruner, and Ross (1976) first introduced the term, *scaffolding.* Scaffolding is defined as the teacher's contingent support for learners to complete tasks beyond their independent abilities. In L2 classrooms, scaffolding is realized through teacher-student interaction, as emphasized in earlier studies (Hellerman 2003, Johnston 1994, Seedhouse 1994, 2004, Tomlin 1994, van Lier 1996). Ohta (2001), for instance, showed how teacher repetition can scaffold learners by validating their responses and modeling target forms, thereby providing the guidance necessary for internalizing accurate language use. Similarly, Duff (2000) illustrated that reiteration in foreign language classrooms functions as an instructional resource, enabling learners to align with classroom practices and to produce extended turns. Such practices serve as crucial mediational tools that scaffold learners' language development (Lantolf and Thorne 2006). Through repetition, teachers create meaningful social interactions that support learners' progress from their current abilities toward their potential within their Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) (Lantolf and Thorne, 2006, Vygotsky 1978, Wood et al. 1976).

Building on this sociocultural foundation, the present analysis reveals that teacher repetition functions as an effective form of interactional scaffolding in classroom discourse. By selectively repeating learners' utterances, teachers are able to highlight relevant linguistic forms, display understanding, and support the ongoing flow of interaction. This interactional use of repetition aligns with sociocultural and interactionist perspectives that conceptualize learning as locally accomplished through contingent, responsive teacher talk rather than through decontextualized explanation (Hall 1997, van Lier 2004, Walsh 2011). In adult beginner classrooms, where learners may experience cognitive overload or anxiety, repetition supports comprehension and uptake by providing interactional scaffolding that mediates learners' engagement with input and enables continued participation in the classroom (van Lier 2004, Wood et al. 1976).

While teacher repetition serves as a form of scaffolding through active listening, active listening is equally vital from the learner's perspective in L2 acquisition. Effective language learning requires learners to attend closely to spoken input to comprehend meaning, context, pronunciation, and grammatical structures. Numerous listening difficulties arise from limitations in working memory and processing speed (Goh 2000). Repetition addresses these constraints by recycling input and providing learners with further opportunities to confirm their understanding and consolidate their lexical knowledge (Goh 2000, Tomlin 1994).

Teacher repetition facilitates the listening comprehension process by providing multiple opportunities for learners to perceive and process lexical, grammatical, and phonological features, which is especially beneficial for those with lower L2 proficiency and limited comprehension skills. Given that the ultimate goal of L2 instruction is to develop communicative competence, listening comprehension is integral to this process. As Krashen (1982, p. 27) states, "speaking ability emerges on its own after enough competence has been developed by listening and understanding." Similarly, Gass (1997) emphasizes that input only becomes intake when understood, highlighting comprehension as the necessary foundation for productive ability. The vital role of receptive skills in language acquisition is well documented not only in L2 learning but also in first language development (Clark and Hecht 1983, Fraser et al. 1963, Winitz et al. 1981).

4.2 Repetition as a Turn-management Device

Teacher repetition also functions as a turn-management device that structures participation frameworks and regulates floor exchanges. By repeating students' prior utterances, the teacher opens the floor to the entire class and invites further interaction, as demonstrated in Excerpt (2).

Excerpt (2)

1 T: What about a popular, popular dessert in your country? A popular dessert?
2 L9: What means dessert?
→3 T: **What does dessert mean? What does dessert mean?** ((shifting her gaze from L9 to the entire class))
4 L10: American food.

In Excerpt (2), in line 1, the teacher asks, "What about a popular, popular dessert in your country?" In line 2, L9 initiates a repair sequence ("What means dessert?"), indicating a problem in lexical comprehension. In line 3, the teacher immediately reformulates the learner's question as "What does dessert mean? What does dessert mean?," while shifting her gaze from L9 to the entire class. By repeating the corrected form and shifting her gaze to the whole class, the teacher reallocates the turn from an individual learner to all students, transforming a dyadic repair sequence into a class-oriented learning opportunity. In line 4, L10 provides a response ("American food"), indicating that the teacher's move (i.e., teacher repetition with a gaze shift toward the whole class) reopened the interactional floor in a collective manner. The teacher's such practice turns the listening comprehension problem into a student's opportunity to learn collectively in class with the teacher's control of the instructional floor intact.

Unlike turn-taking patterns in everyday conversation, classroom interaction exhibits unique organizational features, most notably the Initiation-Response-Evaluation/Feedback (IRE/F) sequence (Lemke 1990, McHoul 1990, Mehan 1985, Seedhouse 2004, Sinclair and Coulthard 1975, Wells 1999). As Barnes (1992) argues, the prevalence of the IRE/F pattern restricts opportunities for natural, co-constructed exchanges between teachers and students. Within this participation framework, the teacher holds the primary rights to allocate turns, regulate turn length, and assess student responses, resulting in an asymmetrical distribution of interactional rights and responsibilities.

The present data similarly reveal that the teacher orchestrates classroom discourse by initiating talk and assuming an evaluative role, and controlling the overall flow of interaction. The frequent teacher repetitions naturally elongate her turns, reinforcing her interactional authority and the asymmetrical organization of participation. Although such an IRE/F sequence cannot be easily found in mundane conversations (usually involving both competent speakers), it can be observed in child-parent interactions, as illustrated in Example (1) (Harris and Coltheart, 1986, as cited in Seedhouse, 1996, p. 20). When there is an imbalance between interlocutors in terms of language competence and content knowledge, an IRE/F exchange system tends to operate.

Example (1) ((Mother and Kevin look at pictures))

M: And what are those? (mother initiation)
K: Shells. (child response)
M: Shells, yes. You've got some shells, haven't you? What's that? (mother evaluation) (mother initiation)
K: Milk.

In discussing the unique features of turn-taking patterns in L2 classroom discourse, the recipient design from the teacher's perspective warrants attention. Recipient design was first introduced as "a multitude of respects in which the talk by a party in a conversation is constructed or designed in ways which display an orientation and sensitivity to the particular other(s) who are the co-participants" (Sacks et al. 1974, p. 727). In short, recipient design involves adapting one's communication to the other party's needs (Garfinkel 1967). Similarly, mutual

understanding among co-participants, known as intersubjectivity, forms the foundation of social interaction (Schegloff 1991).

The classroom learning context is unique in that it represents an institutional discourse community characterized by its own operating norms and shared understandings (Drew and Heritage 1992). Long (1983, as cited in Seedhouse 1994, p. 9) notes that "second language classrooms differ from most others in that language is both the vehicle and object of instruction." Within this institutional framework, teachers establish pedagogical goals that shape how both teachers and students participate in achieving these aims. Co-participants (i.e., teachers and students) orient themselves to their respective roles and relationships, maintaining a collective awareness of the instructional purpose that organizes classroom interaction. In other words, the classroom reflects intersubjectivity, as participants display a mutual understanding of their roles and a shared orientation to the goals of teaching and learning.

The teacher's familiarity with the lesson content and her native-speaker proficiency in the target language, as key resources for student learning, make her turns highly sensitive to the recipient design. The asymmetry in knowledge between the teacher and students also leads to her turns being longer than those of the learners. The teacher's sensitivity to students' comprehension is evident in her use of paraphrasing and repetition, both of which serve to expand her turns. Notably, the teacher often paraphrases without an explicit learner prompt, as illustrated in Excerpt (3), in which she elaborates on the meaning of the word "host."

Excerpt (3)

T: OK. So, err, Carl is gonna be the **host. Host…the person who's answering the phone… this is the man who works at the restaurant…and he takes the reservations on the phone**… uh, alright… Look at, uh.

Recipient design also shapes the turn-taking patterns observed among students. Because the teacher's talk is finely tuned to learners' linguistic proficiency and instructional needs, her turns often extend beyond a single transition-relevance place (TRP), projecting further talk in which she provides explanations, models language, and maintains control of the floor. Students, understanding this mechanism, typically withhold their turns until the teacher reaches a recognizable completion point or explicitly allocates the turn. As a result, subsequent turns are not immediately self-selected by students, even when several TRPs occur before the teacher explicitly allocates the turn. Through this practice, the teacher regulates participation, reinforcing the institutional turn-taking system characteristic of classroom discourse (Seedhouse 2004).

4.3 Repetition as a Student-empowering Device

Teacher repetition also serves as a student-empowering device in the data. This point is illustrated in Excerpt (4).

Excerpt (4)

1 L3: Thank you. Goodbye.
2 L4: Goodbye.
3 L3: Thank you.
→ 4 **T: Okay, that's fine, that's fine** ((shifting her gaze from L3 and L4 to the whole class)). Is there anything you heard and would like to comment on? Anything you would like to change or add to their conversation?

In Excerpt (4), in lines 1-3, L3 and L4 exchange closing moves ("Thank you. Goodbye."), signaling the completion of their pair work and returning the floor to the teacher. In line 4, noticing that the student interaction has not proceeded entirely smoothly, the teacher provides a mitigated positive assessment, "Okay, that's fine, that's fine." The initial "Okay" acknowledges the task completion, while the self-repetition of "that's fine" softens the evaluation and signals acceptance, minimizing the potential face threat to the performing pair. The teacher then immediately shifts her gaze from the performing pair to the entire class and redirects the floor by asking "Is there anything you heard and would like to comment on? Anything you would like to change or add to their conversation?" Through this invitation, the teacher transforms a potentially terminal assessment into a collaborative reflection, shifting the classroom footing from evaluation to co-constructed learning. The accompanying gaze shift reinforces the redistribution of participation rights, indicating that all learners are invited to contribute.

While teachers' affirmative comments are commonly regarded as supportive resources that facilitate learning and encourage student motivation (Burnett 2002, Burnett and Mandel 2010, Hara 2025, Harks et al. 2014), research indicates that teachers' assessments, typically produced in the third position, often function to terminate rather than extend interaction, prematurely closing student participation and further engagement with learning (Antaki et al. 2000, Ishino 2024, Waring 2008, Wong and Waring 2010). Waring (2008, p. 581) maintains that "in classroom discourse, assessment in and of itself does not automatically engender sequence-closing. Rather, it is a particular kind of assessment that achieves sequence-closing." In particular, Waring (2008) shows that explicit positive feedback (e.g., "excellent, "very good," "perfect") often curtails learning opportunities unless accompanied by follow-up moves. Similarly, Ishino (2024) asserts that a teacher's assessment can validate learner contributions and encourage elaboration only when properly designed.

In the present study, the teacher's mitigated positive feedback, "Okay, that's fine, that's fine," does not function as a sequence-closing move, but as a reopening move that expands participation rights. The teacher transforms the failure of the previous student activity into a chance for cooperative learning. She does this by repeating the mitigated positive feedback, along with her shifting gaze and inviting move. She fosters an interactionally positive atmosphere in which students feel empowered to speak in the classroom. The affective role of repetition observed in this study aligns with earlier research demonstrating that self-repetition serves as a socially meaningful discourse strategy for sustaining involvement and mutual understanding (Duff 2000, Johnstone 1994, Knox 1994).

Another noticeable feature of the teacher's positive feedback is that it is not overly explicit or exaggerated but rather mitigated (e.g., "okay," "that's fine"). This can be interpreted as reflecting the teacher's orientation toward treating students as adults, showing respect for their intelligence and life experience. Excessive use of explicit positive feedback, such as "fantastic," "perfect," or "excellent" after every correct response can be perceived as condescending or child-directed. For adult learners, who generally expect feedback that is respectful and proportionate to their age and experience, mitigated positive feedback functions as a more socially attuned and pedagogically appropriate response.

Although positive feedback in an explicit manner may indicate a strong validation of student contributions, it may also risk sounding exaggerated or even patronizing when provided to adult learners. However, positive feedback in a moderate form can affirm learners' contributions in a respectful manner. This balance empowers adult learners by validating their efforts and supporting their autonomy while preserving the pedagogical value of positive feedback (Deci et al. 1999, Waring 2008, Wong and Waring 2010).

4.4 Repetition as a Humorous Device

Another notable feature of the teacher's repetition is its use as a humorous device that facilitates a relaxed atmosphere and encourages student participation. Excerpt (5) illustrates this point.

Excerpt (5)

1 T: Have you ever been a waiter before?
2 L8: No.
3 T: No? No experience, uh, being a waiter? Or a host?
4 L8: Never.
→5 T: Never? Well, **today is your day, today is your day.**
6 LL: ((laughs))

In Excerpt (5), in line 1, the teacher initiates her turn with a question linking the classroom activity to L8's personal experience ("Have you ever been a waiter before?"). L8 responds in line 2 with a minimal "No," which is adequate but leaves little room for expansion. The teacher's turn in line 3 begins with a repetition of the learner's utterance, "No" with rising intonation ("No?"), displaying attentiveness and slight surprise. The teacher then reformulates the question to include an alternative role (i.e., host), extending the interaction and inviting elaboration. L8 responds categorically with "Never" (line 4). The teacher echoes the learner's utterance ("Never") with rising intonation ("Never?") and reframes the situation humorously in line 5 ("Well, today is your day, today is your day."). This playful repetition elicits student laughter (line 6). The teacher's repetition, delivered with playful intonation, marks the utterance as humorous and transforms a potentially evaluative exchange into a jointly constructed humorous moment. Through their collective laughter (line 6), the students display alignment with the teacher's playful framing of the turn.

Viewed more broadly, this excerpt shows how the teacher's self-repetition with humorous intent can turn routine utterances into playful moments that enrich the learning environment. Humorous teacher self-repetition creates a supportive classroom environment, in which learners feel less anxious about making errors and feel more motivated to participate in class. Through the strategic incorporation of humor, teachers can reduce the potentially face-threatening nature of corrective feedback and sustain higher levels of learner engagement (Çopur et al. 2021, Reddington and Waring 2015). Consistent with Krashen's (1982) affective filter hypothesis, the use of humor lowers learners' affective barriers, encouraging them to take risks and increasing their motivation to participate actively in classroom interactions.

Similarly, humorous repetition facilitates teacher-student alignment by shaping the teacher's identity as approachable rather than purely evaluative. This reframing helps mitigate power imbalances and reduce teacher-student asymmetry, building rapport and solidarity within classroom interactions (Bell 2009, 2011, Bergen 1992, Cekaite and Aronsson 2004, Powell and Andresen 1985, Reddington 2015, Schmitz 2002, Waring 2013).

Moreover, research indicates that teachers' use of humor is positively correlated with students' abilities to memorize and recall learning materials, as information learned within humorous contexts tends to be more easily retrieved (Gorham and Christophel 1990, Martin 2007, Powell and Andresen 1985, Schmitz 2002, Ziv 1988). Humorous repetition enables teachers to achieve pedagogical goals while making learning process enjoyable and meaningful.

4.5 Repetition as a Corrective Feeback Device

Teacher repetition also serves as a vehicle for corrective feedback, most notably through recasts. A recast can be defined as "a reformulation of all or part of a learner's utterance, minus the error" (Lyster and Ranta 1997, p. 46). By repeating a learner's utterance with slight modification, the teacher models correct linguistic forms while maintaining the learner's intended meaning. Consequently, repetition functions as an implicit corrective move that directs attention to the error without disrupting communicative flow. Excerpt (6) illustrates this point.

Excerpt (6)

1 T: Any special requests?
2 L7: Yes, no smoke?
→3 T: **Non**-smoking.

In Excerpt (6), in line 1, the teacher asks L7 whether he has any special requests ("Any special requests?"). In line 2, L7 responds with "No smoke?" produced with rising intonation, which displays uncertainty. The utterance conveys the intended meaning (i.e., a preference for a non-smoking section) but is non-target-like and marked by hesitancy. Then, the teacher provides the corrected form of the learner's utterance, "Non-smoking" (line 3). In other words, the teacher provides a recast for the learner's erroneous utterance while preserving the natural flow of classroom discourse.

A recast is used not only in response to students' lexical errors but also to their syntactic errors, as demonstrated in Excerpt (7).

Excerpt (7)

1 L6: All turkeys dead.
→2 T: All **the** turkeys **will die**.

In Excerpt (7), in line 1, L6 produces the utterance, "All turkeys dead," a grammatically incorrect utterance that nevertheless conveys a clear idea. In line 2, the teacher responds by repeating the learner's contribution through a recast ("All the turkeys will die"). In this reformulation, the teacher repeats the learner's key lexical items ("all" and "turkeys"), while modifying the utterance in three important ways: (a) inserting the definite article "the"; (b) adding the auxiliary verb "will" to mark future tense; and (c) replacing the adjective "dead" with the verb "die." These changes function as recasts, through which the teacher corrects the learner's form without overtly signaling it as an error.

As illustrated in Excerpts (6) and (7), recasts serve several functions: they validate students' contributions, provide grammatically correct input for the class, and indirectly indicate errors in a non-face-threatening manner. These recasts, shown in both excerpts, affirm the students' utterances while supplying the correct forms without explicitly indicating the error. Recasts are considered particularly effective because they provide implicit correction within a communicative context, enabling learners to focus on form without discouraging participation (Doughty and Varela 1998, Mackey 1999, 2000, Mackey and Philip 1998, Oliver 2003, Oliver and Grote 2010).

One noteworthy phenomenon is the different nature of modification features between native speaker (NS)-native speaker (NS) conversations and teacher-student interactions. Long and Sato (1983) note that in NS-NS

conversations, modifications tend to be interactional in nature rather than focusing on linguistic input *per se*. In this light, the teacher's repetition in instructional discourse differs from that in NS-NS interaction, as her modifications serve primarily instructional purposes (i.e., providing correct linguistic input) rather than interactional ones (i.e., socializing). Moreover, teacher repetition plays a crucial role in instructional contexts because it enables learners to notice the discrepancy between their own production and the target linguistic form (Schmidt and Frota 1986).

5. Conclusion

This study aimed to investigate how teacher repetition operates in L2 classroom discourse. While consistent with prior CA research showing that repetition plays a central role in classroom interaction (Chang 2017, Duff 2000, Enyedy et al. 2008, Hellermann 2003, O'Connor and Michaels 1996, Park 2014, Roh and Lee 2018), the present analysis extends this body of work by offering a more fine-grained account of the diverse interactional functions accomplished through teacher repetition within a single instructional context. Rather than treating repetition primarily as a corrective or evaluative device, the findings demonstrate that it operates as a multifunctional interactional resource embedded in the moment-to-moment organization of classroom discourse, supporting learning, participation, and affective engagement in complementary ways.

The present findings demonstrate that teacher repetition serves as a form of scaffolding through active listening. By reiterating student utterances, the teacher provides additional processing time and multiple opportunities for learners to notice and internalize key linguistic forms. This scaffolding function is particularly valuable for learners who are developing their comprehension skills.

Repetition by the teacher further functions as an organizational and turn-management device that encourages cooperative learning in teacher-student interactions. It enables the teacher to regulate participation rights, reopen the floor for collective engagement, and sustain the pedagogical trajectory of the talk. Additionally, repetition serves as a student-empowering device. Teacher repetition in the form of mitigated positive feedback validates and encourages student contributions, resulting in a positive classroom atmosphere.

Moreover, the humorous repetition of the teacher functions as a rapport-building resource. It mitigates the evaluative nature of corrective feedback while promoting student motivation. This is valuable because in a supportive classroom environment, students are more willing to take risks in language learning. Furthermore, repetition serves as implicit corrective feedback, which is vital for developing accuracy in oral communication skills. By guiding learners with correct language forms, linguistic accuracy can be developed in a communicative language learning context.

The present findings suggest several pedagogical implications for language teaching, particularly with respect to teacher talk and classroom interaction, and highlight the central role of teachers' interactional choices in shaping learning opportunities within classroom discourse. In this light, it is essential to help teachers recognize repetition as an interactional practice with diverse pedagogical functions, rather than as a redundant feature of teacher talk. Because learning opportunities emerge through teachers' moment-by-moment interactional decisions, greater attention should be paid to how repetition is used to scaffold understanding, manage turns, encourage participation, and provide feedback. Such awareness can help teachers make more informed pedagogical choices that enhance learning and engagement in the classroom.

More specifically, the findings indicate that teacher repetition can function as a form of implicit corrective feedback. Used in this way, repetition provides teachers with a minimally face-threatening corrective strategy that

supports learners' accuracy while maintaining communicative flow, thereby mitigating some of the interactional costs associated with explicit correction. Teachers can strategically draw on repetition in everyday classroom interaction to balance fluency and accuracy, particularly in learning environments characterized by limited linguistic proficiency and heightened affective sensitivity.

Beyond its corrective function, repetition also plays a critical role in shaping the affective climate of the classroom. Brown (2023) identifies an appropriate sense of humor as one of the key characteristics of effective language teachers, emphasizing its importance in fostering a positive learning atmosphere. The present findings extend this view by showing that humorous teacher repetition functions interactionally as an affective pedagogical resource that can reduce learner anxiety and encourage participation. In this regard, humor is not simply a personal trait of effective teachers but an interactional practice that can be developed through moment-by-moment choices in teacher talk, suggesting that attention to how interactional resources such as repetition and humor are deployed may help create more supportive learning environments.

Although teacher talk plays a central role in L2 classrooms, it is crucial to maintain a balance between teacher talk and student talk. Research indicates that in many L2 settings, teachers account for roughly 80% of classroom talk, leaving only about 20% for students (Chaudron 1988, Long and Porter 1985, Trosborg 1984). This asymmetry in classroom talk constrains learners' opportunities to practice the target language and participate actively in class.

One effective strategy for increasing student talk is the use of wait time, defined as "the time teachers allow students to answer questions, before, for example, asking another student, rephrasing the question, or even answering their own question themselves" (Thornbury 1996, p. 282). Research shows that when teachers are trained to extend wait time, students not only respond more frequently but also produce more accurate answers (Nunan 1991). In addition to wait time, the manner in which teachers provide corrective feedback also plays a crucial role in shaping student talk. While feedback is essential for scaffolding learning, an excessive focus on error correction, especially when given immediately, can negatively affect students' motivation. Such feedback may reduce learners' willingness to participate and discourage risk-taking, which hinders their oral development and classroom engagement.

Although the present study seeks to contribute to the field of language teaching by reexamining teacher repetition as an interactional resource beyond its corrective function, it is not without limitations. Due to the small scale of the study, it is limited in terms of generalizability. Future research should examine how teacher repetition plays a role in a classroom with different learner backgrounds, including different L2 proficiency levels, age groups, and instructional contexts. One should also investigate how learners respond to the diverse aspects of teacher repetition and how these aspects affect their learning progress. Similarly, as blended and online learning becomes more prevalent, it is necessary to further examine how teacher repetition operates in a digitally instructed environment. Furthermore, attention to student repetition, alongside teacher repetition, may offer further insights into the interactional organization of classroom discourse.

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Examples in: English
Applicable Languages: English
Applicable Level: Tertiary

