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SELF-REPAIR OF INDONESIAN JAPANESE LEARNERS' SPEAKING: CASE STUDY IN VOCATIONAL TRAINING INSTITUTION

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Abstract

Self-repair is correcting a sentence's structure or meaning and rewording it to provide more specific information. Exploring the use of self-repair in learners is important as a potential indicator of language attrition in second-language learning. Self-repair can solve misunderstandings and clarify the speaker's intention. It also allows students to repair their errors without the teacher's involvement. Previous studies of self-repair in Japanese mostly investigate learners in formal institutions. However, research on using Japanese learners in non-formal institutions is limited. This study investigates the types and the changes in the self-repair of Indonesian Japanese learners' speaking over a five-month training program in a Vocational Training Institution (LPK). This study used a mixed method, which combined quantitative and qualitative. Participants of this study were 10 Indonesian Japanese learners at an LPK in West Java, Indonesia. The instruments through a monologue speaking task were given at the beginning and end of the training program. The results showed that morphological change is the most frequent self-repair used by learners. However, the least used self-repair at the beginning and end of the training program was different. At the beginning of the training program, the least used self-repair was a phonological change, while at the end, there were phonological and lexical changes. This study showed a tendency for a reduced frequency of self-repair with increased proficiency. This study provided a learning strategy and contributed to developing a curriculum and teaching method that is more effective in improving learners' speaking skills, especially in preparing for work in Japan. However, this study only examines self-repair using monologue speaking tasks with familiar topics. Future studies should investigate self-repair using additional task designs to deepen insights into developmental patterns.

Keywords: Self-repair, Japanese, Learner, Speaking, Training

INTRODUCTION

Spontaneous speech production in a second language (L2) is inherently marked by disfluencies such as pauses, repetitions, and self-repairs. Self-repair is of particular interest because it reveals speakers' real-time monitoring processes and their attempts to manage linguistic accuracy and communicative clarity. Salonen and Laakso (2009) define self-repair as revisions initiated and completed by the speaker to modify an ongoing utterance, while Kosaka (in Tanizawa & Kondo, 2019) emphasizes its function in correcting structure or meaning, or in reformulating information for greater precision. From an interactional perspective, self-repair contributes to resolving breakdowns and preventing misunderstanding (Albert et al., 2018; Healey et al., 2018; Purver et al., 2018).

Self-repairs are particularly interesting as L2 speech production is generally constrained by an unreliable, developing linguistic system, which varies depending on proficiency and the speakers' limited cognitive resources (Segalowitz, 2010). Self-repair by the speaker is a skill that takes place in speaking to improve language accuracy. The speaker corrects themselves not only for the produced errors but also to express the message correctly when speaking (Schegloff et al. in Nan et al., 2015). Self-repairs have frequently been employed to investigate the linguistic and cognitive processes in L2 speech production in various languages in different L1 (English: L1 Indonesian (Haniah et al., 2020); L1 Arabic (Alharbi, 2023), L1 Chinese (Sun,

2022); Japanese: L1 France (Tanizawa & Kondo, 2019), L1 American (Kosaka, 1997); Chinese: L1 Dutch (Cao, 2024)).

Studies on self-repair have drawn substantially on foundational theoretical frameworks. Schegloff et al. (1977) proposed a widely referenced classification that distinguishes repairs based on initiation and execution source. They categorized repairs into four types, namely Self Initiated Self Repair (SISR), Other Initiated Self Repair (OISR), Self Initiated Other Repair (SIOR), and Other Initiated Other Repair). Afterward, Levelt (1983) subsequently refined the concept by differentiating overt and covert repair types. Overt self-repair is divided into three types: Different-information-repair, Appropriateness-self-repair, and Error-repair. Kormos (1998) extended Levelt's model by identifying specific information-related repair functions. Rieger (2003) further contributed by examining repairs through their causes, structural forms, and initiation devices. These frameworks demonstrate the complexity of repair behavior as both a linguistic and a cognitive phenomenon.

Among these frameworks, Kosaka's (1997) model has particular relevance to Japanese language research, as it includes a repair subtype particle change that is unique to the grammatical features of Japanese. Kosaka categorized self-repair into six types: phonological change, morphological change, lexical change, particle change, insertion, and false start. Findings indicated proficiency-related differences, with intermediate learners relying more heavily on phonological and morphological repairs, while advanced learners employed more structural reformulation. Subsequent studies using Kosaka's model, such as Tanizawa and Kondo (2019), confirmed variation in repair patterns depending on linguistic background and task type.

Despite these contributions, existing studies predominantly examine learners in formal academic environments, particularly university settings. Studies investigating self-repair in non-formal learning contexts where goals, instructional conditions, and communicative demands differ considerably are notably limited. This gap is important in the Indonesian context, where demand for Japanese language competence has increased significantly, driven by labor mobility and trainee programs connecting Indonesia and Japan (Gapur, 2017; Gapur & Mulyadi, 2018).

In this era of globalization, LPK provides skills training for the domestic sector and skills to compete with a wider and globalized world of work. One of them is to prepare prospective workers for Japan through Japanese language courses and trainee programs to Japan (Nariyah & Shomedran, 2022). The trainee program was established to achieve the quality of human resource skills and an effective and efficient way for the government to prepare the workforce to be competitive in the business world (Azizah & Anshari, 2024).

Vocational Training Institutions (LPK) represent a major space for non-formal Japanese education, providing intensive language and workplace preparation programs. Japanese learning at LPK aims to equip learners with the necessary communication skills to adapt to the work environment in Japan. Yusuf et al. (2023) state that LPK to Japan provides training that covers various aspects, including the Japanese language, work skills, Japanese culture, and preparation for life in Japan. With this comprehensive training, trainees can overcome challenges and succeed in their experience in Japan (Astina et al., 2019; Noviyanthi et al., 2020; Sari et al., 2021).

Learners in LPK training programs frequently face challenges with grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation, prompting them to employ various self-repair strategies to maintain fluency and communicative clarity. Such repairs may take the form of repetition, reformulation, or the direct correction of errors once they become aware of them. Examining self-repair is important because it provides insight into how learners manage communication difficulties and strive for greater precision in speaking. A deeper understanding of these repair patterns can help

educators design more effective instructional approaches to support learners in reducing errors, improving fluency, and building confidence in oral Japanese communication.

Based on this background, this study investigates how Indonesian learners of Japanese in the LPK training program use self-repair in speaking. The analysis focuses on the types of self-repair observed at the beginning and end of the program to identify developmental shifts in learners' monitoring processes and their efforts to refine clarity and accuracy in speaking. By applying Kosaka's (1997) framework and drawing on insights from earlier models, this study offers a comprehensive perspective on how self-repair operates within a longitudinal, non-formal learning context that prepares learners for real-world workplace communication.

This study contributes meaningfully to ongoing discussions in second language speech research. Conceptually, extending Kosaka's framework to an underexplored LPK environment enriches theoretical understandings of self-repair as both a cognitive and interactional process that reflects learners' real-time decision-making during speech production. The study contributes to current knowledge by showing how repair behavior shifts beyond university settings, which have dominated previous work. Practically, the findings offer valuable implications for Japanese language pedagogy in vocational training programs. By identifying distinctive repair patterns that signal learner progress or persistent difficulties, the study provides evidence to guide the design of targeted speaking tasks, feedback practices, and curricular interventions to support communicative competence. These insights can be used to develop more effective training models to prepare learners to communicate confidently and accurately in authentic professional environments in Japan.

METHOD

This study used a mixed method, which combines quantitative and qualitative data for a single study or series of studies (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The qualitative measure categorizes and describes the types of self-repair used by Indonesian JFL learners. In contrast, the quantitative measure is used to count the frequency of self-repairs and determine differences in learners' self-repairs at the beginning and the end of the language training program.

Respondents

Respondents in this study were 10 Indonesian Japanese learners at an LPK in a district in West Java, Indonesia. They are about 19-30 years old, 5 females and 5 males. Before participating in the training program, none of the learners had ever studied Japanese. Therefore, their Japanese level is beginner.

Instruments

Self-repair data were elicited through a monologue speaking task. The topic of the speaking task is "What I like about Japan and Japanese". This topic is simple but important because it is usually used during job interviews with Japan companies.

Procedures

Respondents were given a one-minute planning period and one minute to do the monologue speaking task. Their speaking task was recorded by SONY ICD-PX240 and transcribed by Praat (Boersma & Weenink, 2021). The data collected was analyzed using a content analysis sheet. The tasks were given to participants twice over five months, at the beginning and end of the language training program.

Data Analysis

This study used content analysis. This analysis was used to describe and categorize self-repairs found in the monologue speaking task of learners. After transcribing the data used Praat, sound boundaries with self-repair were annotated with { } and filled pause with ( ). The identified self-repair of each participant was counted and classified into six types of self-repair based on Kosaka's (1997) theory, which consists of phonological change, morphological change, lexical change, particle change, insertion, and false start. After that, the data analysis compared the differences in learners' self-repair at the beginning and end of the training program.

FINDINGS

The finding of this study showed that Indonesian Japanese learners in LPK used six types of self-repairs based on Kosaka's theory (1997), such as phonological change, morphological change, lexical change, particle change, insertion, and false start. Details are in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Overall frequencies and percentage of self-repair in two times

Self-repair Type	Time 1 (T1)		Time 2 (T2)	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Phonological Change	5	11,11	1	6,25
Morphological Change	10	22,22	6	37,50
Lexical Change	8	17,78	1	6,25
Particle Change	9	20,00	4	25,00
Insertion	6	13,33	2	12,50
False Start	7	15,56	2	12,50
Total	45	100	16	100

Based on Table 1, we can see that in T1 and T2, the most frequent self-repair used in learners is morphological change (22,22% and 37,50%). However, the least used self-repair in T1 and T2 is different. In T1, the fewest used self-repair is phonological change (11.11%), while in T2 is phonological and lexical change (6,25%).

Types of self-repair are used by Indonesian JFL learners in language training program

Phonological Change

Phonological repair was counted as the fewest self-repair used in T1 and T2 (5 and 1). Details are below.

(1) *Nihon no naka de {animi} (eh) anime ga suki desu.*
Anime is what I like about Japan.

In the utterance above, the speaker was willing to utter the word '*anime*', but the learner produced '*animi*'. Realizing that, the speaker replaces the vowels /i/ with /e/. Replacing the vowel /i/with /e/ was considered a phonological repair in the manner of replacement. Another example of replacing phonemes is done in the utterance below.

(2) *Suppai tabemono ga {kirei} (eh) kirai desu.*
I dislike sour food.

In the utterance above, the speaker was willing to utter the word '*kirai*', but the learner produced '*kirei*'. Then, the speaker replaces the vowels /e/ with /a/. The replacement of vowels in these words makes two different meanings. '*Kirei*' means beautiful or clean, while '*kirai*' means dislike.

(3) *Watashi no {kajoku} (eh) kazoku wa yonin imasu.*
I have four people in my family.

In the utterance above, the speaker was willing to utter the word '*kazoku*', but the learner produced '*kajoku*'. Then, the speaker replaces the consonant /j/ with /z/. The replacement of consonant /z/ to /j/ is due to the learners' mother tongue.

Morphological Change

Self-repair in morphology consists of two types, which are adjectives and verbs change. Details are below.

(1) *Nihon wa {kirei} (mm) kirekute, nigiyaka desu.*
Japan is beautiful and crowded.

(2) *Nihon wa {kireikute} (eh) kirei de, yuumei na kuni desu.*
Japan is a beautiful and famous country.
There are two types of adjectives in Japanese: *i*-adjective and *na*-adjective. There is a difference in conjugation forms with these adjectives. *I*-adjective use *-kute*, while *na*-adjective use *-de*. In the utterance above, the speaker tries to make a conjugation with the *na*-adjective 'kirei'. The speaker did morphological self-repair to make correct utterances by using adjective conjugations. However, utterance (1) has a misused conjugation form. '*Kirei*' is *na*-adjective, but learners use the conjugation form for *i*-adjective.

(3) *{nihon ni ikimasu} (mm) nihon ni ittara, {hataraku} hatarakitai desu.*
If I go to Japan, I want to work there.
In the utterance (3) above, there are two morphological self-repairs. The first is replacing the verb form '*ikimasu*' (to go) with '*ittara*' (if to go). Then, the second is the verb '*hataraku*' (work) changes to '*hatarakitai*' (want to work).

Lexical Change

Self-repair on lexical consists of three types, which are the changes of nouns, verbs, and adjectives. Details are below.

(1) *Nihon wa {nigiyakana **machi**} (eh) nigiyakana **kuni** desu.*
Japan is a crowded country.
In utterance (1) above, there is a lexical change in the noun '*machi*' (city) to '*kuni*' (country). Japan is a country. Realizing that, in the middle of the utterance, the speaker changes '*nigiyakana machi*' (crowded town) to '*nigiyakana kuni*' (crowded country).

(2) *Nihon ni ittara, haha ni {nandemo **yarimasu**} (eh) nandemo **kaimasu**.*
If I go to Japan, I will buy anything for my mother.
In utterance (2) above, there is a lexical change in the verb '*yarimasu*' (to do) to '*kaimasu*' (to buy). In the middle of the utterance, the speaker changes '*nandemo yarimasu*' (do anything) to '*nandemo kaimasu*' (buy anything).

(3) *Nihongo wa {**muzukashii**} (eh) **omoshiroi** desu. Demo, muzukashii desu.*
Japanese is interesting. But it is difficult.
In utterance (3) above, there is a lexical change in the adjective '*muzukashii*' (difficult) to '*omoshiroi*' (interesting). In the middle of the utterance, the speaker changes '*muzukashii*' to '*omoshiroi*', then '*muzukashii*' is moved to the following sentence using the conjugation *demo* (but).

Particle Change

Self-repair in particles consists of the use of the particles *o*, *de*, and *ga*. Details are below.

(1) *Nihon de {eiga de} (mm) {eiga ni} (eh) eiga o mitai desu.*
I want to see the movie in Japan.
In utterance (1) above, the speaker changes the particle '*de*' with '*ni*', then with '*o*'. The particle '*o*' functions as an object marker in Japanese sentences. In this utterance, the particle '*o*' as an object marker noun '*eiga*' (film) is used with the transitive verb '*mitai*' (want to see).

(2) *{nihon ni} (eu) Nihon de Tokyo Dizunirando e ikitai desu.*
I want to visit Tokyo Disneyland in Japan.

In utterance (2) above, the speaker changes the particle '*ni*' with '*de*'. The particles '*de*' and '*ni*' indicate a place's existence. However, the particle '*ni*' indicates an object or person's point of existence or location, while the particle '*de*' indicates the place of activity. In the utterance above, '*tokyo dizunirando e ikitai*' is an activity, so it uses the particle '*de*'.

(3) *Nihongo no benkyou de* ***{kotoba o}*** *(eu)* ***kotoba ga*** *suki desu.*

In Japanese lessons, I like vocabulary.

In utterance (3) above, the speaker changes the particle '*o*' with '*ga*'. The particles '*o*' and '*ga*' are both used to show objects. However, the particle '*ga*' is used to describe the adjective of an object or noun. So, the adjective '*suki*' (like) can indicate an object using the particle '*ga*' in this utterance.

Insertion

In insertion self-repair, the speaker stops their speech at a point where it cannot be completed (usually in the middle of a word) to go back and add something else before resuming their original speech. Details are below.

(1) *{nihon wa kuni} nihon wa yuumeina kuni desu.*

Japan is a famous country.

In utterance (1) above, the speaker stops the talk partway through the word '*kuni*' to insert the word '*yuumeina*'. The repaired formulation is '*yuumeina kuni*'.

(2) *{anime ga} nihon no anime ga suki desu.*

I like Japanese anime.

In utterance (2) above, the speaker stops the talk partway through the word '*anime ga*' to insert the word '*nihon no*'. The repaired formulation is '*nihon no anime ga*'.

(3) *Nihon wa {kuni} kirei de, nigiyakana kuni desu.*

Japan is beautiful and crowded country.

In utterance (3) above, the speaker stops the talk partway through the word '*kuni*' (country) to insert the word '*kirei de, nigiyaka*' (beautiful and crowded). The repaired formulation is '*kirei de, nigiyakana kuni*' (beautiful and crowded country).

False Start

As self-repair, false starts refer to when speakers begin to utter something, abandon it, and start again after no apparent error or continue in a different direction. Details are below.

(1) *{Sukina kotoba} Nihongo no benkyou de, kotoba ga suki desu.*

In Japanese studies, I like vocabulary.

In utterance (1) above, the speaker begins to utter '*sukina kotoba*', then abandons it. After that, the speaker starts again uttering '*nihongo no benkyou de, kotoba ga suki desu*' with no apparent error.

(2) {*nihongo no benkyou} Sukina jugyou wa choukai to bunpou desu.*

My favourite lessons are listening and grammar.

In utterance (2) above, the speaker begins to utter '*nihongo no benkyou*', then abandons it. After that, the speaker starts again uttering '*sukina jugyou wa choukai to bunpou desu*' with no apparent error.

(3) *{nihon de} Watashi wa nihon e ittara, sakura o mitai desu.*

When I go to Japan, I want to see cherry blossoms.

In utterance (2) above, the speaker begins to utter '*nihon de*', then abandons it. After that, the speaker starts again uttering '*watashi wa nihon e ittara, sakura o mitai desu*' with no apparent error.

Differences in self-repair used by Indonesian Japanese learners at the beginning and the end of the language training program

Table 2 below shows the difference in self-repair used by Indonesian Japanese learners at the beginning and the end of the language training program.

Table 2. Differences in learners' self-repair used in T1 and T2

Self-repair Type	Time 1 (T1)	Time 2 (T2)	Difference (%)
Phonological Change	5	1	80%
Morphological Change	10	6	40%
Lexical Change	8	1	87,5%
Particle Change	9	4	55,56%
Insertion	6	2	66,67%
False Start	7	2	71,43%
Total	45	16	

Based on Table 2, learners made self-repair in all types in T1. Then, in T2, learners show improvement in proficiency, which can be seen in the decrease in their self-repair. Lexical change (87,5%) and phonological change (80%) have the most decrease, while morphological change (40%) and particle change (55,56%) have the least. The finding indicates that all self-repair types have decreased from T1 to T2. Therefore, the language training program can help decrease self-repair and make speaking performance learners more fluent.

DISCUSSION

Types of self-repair are used by Indonesian JFL learners in language training program

Repair is a strategic mechanism for resolving problems that emerge during speech production and maintaining communicative coherence (Hemmati & Gheisari, 2024). Learners used replacement when recognizing that what they had said before was not the right word. According to Saputri (2015), replacement occurs when the speaker does not regard what is said as appropriate or when a mistake is made in word choice. The most frequent pattern in this study is that learners incorrectly conjugated verbs or adjectives after a filled pause and made morphological self-repairs that moved their utterances toward the target-language form. However, this situation is interesting because learners sometimes produce a correct form initially but then modify it to an incorrect one due to excessive monitoring or uncertainty during real-time speech processing. This aligns with Beshir and Yigzaw's (2022) finding that some learners tend to replace correct forms with inaccurate ones, suggesting that cognitive pressure can interfere with successful self-repair.

Beyond replacement, several learners used insertion and false-start repairs rather than revising the initial utterance. The presence of such repairs suggests variation in strategic choices shaped by processing constraints and individual differences in speech planning. This pattern resonates with Rieger's (2003) observations that L2 speakers alternate among multiple repair mechanisms depending on situational demands and available cognitive resources. More recent work reinforces these findings, such as Alharbi (2023), who found that ESL learners frequently rely on false starts and filled pauses as compensatory strategies when lexical access becomes challenging, while Mesch (2023) identified comparable repair patterns in spontaneous signed L2 discourse, indicating that modality does not eliminate repair but restructures its form. Additionally, a study by Agustin et al. (2025) found that insertion and deletion repairs play a critical role in facilitating meaning negotiation among ESL learners, highlighting the functional dimension of repair as a resource for interactional clarity.

Taken together, these converging findings suggest a developmental progression in which novice learners initially rely on basic lexical revisions but gradually shift toward more structurally complex adjustment strategies. Such variation underscores the dynamic interplay

between linguistic knowledge, processing load, and interactional context in shaping self-repair behaviour in L2 speech.

Differences in self-repair used by Indonesian Japanese learners at the beginning and the end of the language training program

One of the significant outcomes of this study is the reduced frequency of self-repair from the beginning to the end of the program. This result support Zuniga and Simard's (2019) finding that repair frequency tends to decline with increasing proficiency due to improved automaticity and reduced reliance on conscious monitoring. In the present study, reductions in morphological and particle-related repairs suggest strengthening control over core Japanese grammatical structures.

Task design also influenced repair production. This study used monologic speaking tasks, which required learners to self-regulate without interactional negotiation. Takamori (2012) emphasizes that self-repair in monologic contexts tends to be more internally organized and systematic compared to dialogic contexts. Self-repair strategies in monolingual speech are highly organized but may vary from language to language (Fox et al., 2010). In contrast, Kormos (2000), using role-play and retrospective interviews, found that task complexity increases repair frequency, particularly for lower proficiency groups who must manage additional interactional pressure. Additionally, Nan et al. (2015) indicated that topic familiarity promotes more active use of repair strategies, supporting the learner confidence dynamics observed here.

The findings of this study are also in line with previous Japanese L2 research. Tanizawa and Kondo (2019) demonstrated that advanced Japanese learners use insertion and sentence restructuring more frequently than basic replacement forms, suggesting a shift toward more flexible resource management. Furthermore, recent studies such as Alharbi (2023) and Sun (2022) argue that self-repair serves as an indicator of language attrition and retention and offers insight into cognitive control in bilingual language processing. The findings of this study reinforce the need to analyze self-repair longitudinally.

Exploring the use of self-repair in learners is important as a potential indicator of language attrition in second-language learning. It aspires to improve our understanding of L2 learners and how they lose or maintain their vocabulary (Ezzaouya, 2022). The findings of this study extend current understanding of self-repair by demonstrating how linguistic monitoring operates in non-formal institutional settings (LPK), a context underrepresented in prior work that has predominantly focused on university programs. This contributes to expanding the conceptual landscape of repair behavior beyond traditional academic environments. The study identifies shifting repair patterns over time, with valuable implications for Japanese L2 teaching and curriculum development. Self-repair types can serve as diagnostic indicators of learner difficulty or progress. Based on these insights, instructors may develop better-targeted speaking tasks, feedback strategies, and intervention materials to support communicative competence in real workplace settings. Such implication is crucial in vocational training programs preparing learners for employment in Japan, where fluent and accurate communication is essential. This study offers empirically grounded evidence for strengthening Japanese language training models in LPK contexts and enhancing learners' readiness for real-world communication demands.

CONCLUSION

This study investigates the types and the changes in the self-repair of Indonesian Japanese learners speaking over five months in a Vocational Training Institution. Based on Kosakas's

theory, The result showed that morphological change is the most frequent self-repair used in learners. However, the least used self-repair at the training program's beginning and end was different. At the beginning of the training program, the least used self-repair was a phonological change, while in the end, there were phonological and lexical changes. This study showed a tendency toward a reduction in repair frequency with increased proficiency. This can be seen from the decrease in using self-repair at the beginning and the end of the training program. Self-repair allows students to repair their errors themselves without the teacher's involvement. Self-repair is one of the language learning strategies of second language learners, and they are distinctly different from each other. This study provided a learning strategy for improving learners' speaking skills. It can also contribute to developing curriculum and teaching methods more appropriate for Japanese learners in Vocational Training Institutions (LPK) in preparing for work in Japan. Despite its contribution, this study has limitations. This study only examines self-repair using monologue speaking tasks with familiar topics. Future studies should investigate self-repair using additional task designs to deepen insights into developmental patterns.

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