Recycling and replacement repairs as same-turn self-repair strategies in Hungarian[1]

Németh Zsuzsanna

The focus of my presentation is on the appearance of two repair operations, namely, simple recycling and replacement self-repairs in spontaneous Hungarian conversations. My purpose is to reveal the most important characteristics of these two repair types in Hungarian and compare them with the languages examined in this respect so far, such as Bikol, Sochiapam Chinantec, Finnish, Indonesian, English, Japanese, Mandarin (Fox et al. 2009), Hebrew and German (Fox et al. 2010). I explore the length and syntactic class of words Hungarian speakers tend to initiate recycling and replacement repairs in, and try to describe the relationship between the two repair operations in the repair mechanism.

After the analysis of the corpora including 415 recycling and 142 replacement repairs I found that Hungarian speakers recycle back most frequently to function words and replace most frequently content words. This corroborates earlier studies suggesting that the languages with function words preceding their respective content words (mainly verb-initial and verb-medial languages) show a preference for recycling back to function words rather than content words so as to delay the next content word due (Fox et al., 2010: 2504), and replace content words more frequently because of selectional difficulties (Fox et al., 2009: 103). However, I realized that in Hungarian word length also plays an important role in replacement repairs. This means that Hungarian speakers tend to carry out a replacement repair not only because of selecting an unintended item but because of an unintended articulation as well.

My findings can be evaluated on the basis of the hypothesis that all the analysed factors and the possible connections between them can be led back to the interactional functions of repair operations. With regard to this statement I claim that recycling repairs, the function of which is to gain linguistic and/ or cognitive planning time for the speaker, can serve as a means to prevent a potential problem. However, the replacement of an unintended item, or a replacement done because of an unintended articulation always treats an already existing problem. That is, replacement repairs are somehow ”stronger” repair operations than recycling repairs. This is supported by the fact that there is a strong preference for recycling repairs in all the previously examined languages (Fox et al. 2009, Fox et al. 2010).

[1] The data for the study come from two corpora, one made in the Institute of Psychology, University of Szeged, and one made in Kempelen Farkas Speech Research Laboratory in the Research Institute for Linguistics of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Budapest. Each corpus consists of casual face-to-face conversations among friends (3 participants per interaction).

References

Fox, Barbara, Hayashi, Makoto, Jasperson, Robert, 1996. Resources and repair: a cross-linguistic study of syntax and repair. In: Ochs, E., Schegloff, E. A.,Thompson, S. (Eds.), Interaction and Grammar. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 185 – 237.

Fox, Barbara, Wouk, Fay, Hayashi, Makoto, Fincke, Steven, Tao, Liang, Sorjonen, Marja-Leena, Laakso, Minna, Hernandez, Wilfrido F., 2009. A cross linguistic investigation of the site of initiation in same-turn self-repair. In: Sidnell, J (Ed.), Conversation Analysis: Comparative Perspectives. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 60 – 103.

Fox, Barbara, Maschler, Yael, Uhmann, Susanne, 2010. A cross-linguistic study of self-repair: Evidence from English, German, and Hebrew. Journal of Pragmatics 42: 2487 – 2505.

Lerch Ágnes, 2007. Az ismétlés mint az önjavítás eszköze a magyarban. In: Gecső T., Sárdi Cs. (Eds.), Nyelvelmélet – nyelvhasználat. Tinta Könyvkiadó, Bp., 123 – 130.

Rieger, Caroline L., 2003. Repetitions as self-repair strategies in English and German conversations. Journal of Pragmatics 35: 47 – 69.