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Uncovering Iranian EFL Learners' Repair Operations' Employment in Story-Retelling

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Abstract: Although Iranian EFL learners' practices concerning the process of repair have been investigated by some researchers the state of Iranian EFL learners' use of repair operations in narratives and story-retelling is underexplored. This study aims to investigate how Iranian EFL learners manage communication during story retelling and identify the repair operations they use to overcome communication breakdowns. Based on Schegloff's theoretical framework of 10 repair operations, this study examines the preferences of forty EFL learners regarding the use of repair operations. In addition, the relationship between the gender and English proficiency level of EFL learners and repair operations in story retelling is investigated. After analyzing forty monologues totaling 183 minutes, the findings show that nonlinguistic repair operation and parenthesizing are the most and least frequently used operations respectively. Moreover, recycling, replacing, deletion and insertion are found to be the second, third, fourth and fifth most frequent repair operations while abortion, searching, reformatting and sequence jumping are considered less used by the EFL learners. Additionally, the results of crosstabulation and chi-square tests show no statistically association between proficiency levels and repair operations as well as gender and repair operations employment by EFL learners in story-retelling. The findings might be useful to researchers, language educators and syllabus designers.

Keywords: Conversation Analysis, Repair Operations, Self-Initiated Self-Completed Repair, Story-Retelling

1. Introduction

According to Watterson (2008) people from all around the world can conduct businesses, pursue their education opportunities and even have personal relationships through English when they do not share a language. Non-native speakers of English, such as EFL students, are frequently more challenged or fail when they struggle to communicate effectively and convey a message that is easily understood. According to Drew (2005, p. 94), "it is essential for participants in a conversation to construct or design their speech so as to be understood as they desire". One of the communicative strategies both native and non-native speakers use to modify, organize and maintain conversation flow and get a message across is called repair which is a subtopic of conversation analysis.

Repair, according to Liddicoat (2011), is the process by which a communicator manages the problems they encounter during interactions. Repair is not merely the study of how interlocutors rectify

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and revise utterances when errors occur in conversation. The concept of repair refers to the phenomenon as a whole that seeks to address conversational problems, particularly trouble sources (Schegloff et al. 1977). Consequently, conversational difficulties can be addressed and resolved by performing a procedure known as repair, which endeavors to correct errors in the utterances in order to achieve greater comprehensibility. Repairs occur because a speaker may believe that the recipient did not comprehend the utterance; consequently, the speaker wishes to correct and revise the problematic part to generate a comprehensible conversation.

When an individual is attempting to apply repairs, factors such as the person who should begin the repair, the one who should complete the repair, and the way through repair need be addresses, repair strategies, are considered. Therefore, according to Schegloff et al. (1977), repairs are divided into four categories: self-initiated self-completed repair, self-initiated other-completed repair, other-initiated self-completed repair, and other-initiated other-completed repair. Concerning repair operations, some scholars such as Schegloff (2013) and Zhang (2016) proposed theories. According to Schegloff's (2013) theory of repair operations, there are ten different repair strategies: replacing, inserting, deleting, searching, parenthesizing, aborting, sequence- jumping, recycling, reformatting and reordering.

There have been numerous studies on the process of repair, its types and operations, in different languages focusing on (1) native speakers' conversations (such as Birkner et al., 2012; Németh, 2012; Rheisa, 2014; Saputri, 2015; Haddadian & Mahmoodi-Bakhtiari, 2018; Moghadam kia & HeydarPour, 2011; Zhang, 2016) as well as (2) non-native speakers of English (e.g. Çokal-Karadaş, 2010) in both linguistics and TEFL/TESL fields. Although Iranian EFL learners' practices concerning the process of repair have been investigated by some researchers (e.g. Emrani & Hooshmand, 2019; Mozaffari & Allami, 2017; Chalak et al., 2015; Dastjerdi & Shahrokhi, 2015; Khodadady & Alifathabadi, 2014; Fotovatnia & Dorri, 2013), the state of Iranian EFL learners' use of repair operations in story-retelling is not well addressed and this issue, Iranian EFL learners' use of different types of repair strategies and operations in monologues, is felt to be in need of further investigation.

Thus, in this study the researcher analyses the phenomenon of self-initiated self-completed repair operations in the story-retelling of Iranian EFL learners. The findings of this study might be useful to researchers since it is expected to enrich linguistic researches around pragmatics, conversation analysis and repair operations. In addition, this study aims to fill a gap in the literature by contributing to an understanding of EFL learners' self-initiated self-repair operations in English classrooms. The study provides language educators with new insights into how EFL learners handle understanding problems in communication, allowing them to respond adequately to the students' initiated repair practices. In addition, the findings will shed light on the roles repair strategies play in real-world communication, and they can be incorporated into the design of EFL curricula and English language teaching (ELT).

2. Literature Review

As mentioned by Hutchby and Wooffit (2008) and Liddicoat, (2011), conversation analysis is considered to be the study of interactions produced by individuals in their daily social communication which deals with daily conversation since it has a particular not random structure and is systematically organized. Conversation analysis is founded on the investigation of naturally occurring interactions and includes recording, transcribing and analysis of interactions. In other words, in contrast to scripted interactions, the recorded conversation must take place in a natural, everyday setting. The main areas of conversation analysis revolve around how participants construct a turn-taking system, organize the sequence, and interpret and respond. Communication misunderstanding such as wrong word choice, mishearing, slip of the tongue, lack of availability of a required word, and many others, may arise in

conversations and repair as a strategy for identifying and resolving these breakdowns is employed by interlocutors (Schegloff, 2013). Therefore, participants in a dialog employ repairs not only to deal with the conversational problems but also to achieve a successful conversation and deliver comprehensible input. Schegloff (1977) classify four categories of repairs according to the individual who initiates and the one who completes the repair, namely (1) self-initiated self-completed, (2) self-initiated other-completed, (3) other-initiated self-completed, and (4) other-initiated other-completed.

This investigation addresses self-initiated self-completed repair since story retelling involves one speaker. In performing repair, the participants employ certain strategies to begin and complete the repair. Among some theories of repair operations, the ones developed by Schegloff (2013) and Zhang (2016) are utilized in conversation analysis investigations more often. The current investigation uses Schegloff's (2013) "repair operations framework which proposes ten repair operations, namely replacing, inserting, deleting, searching, parenthesizing, aborting, sequence-jumping, recycling, reformatting and reordering" (pp 41-70). There have been some recent empirical studies around repair operations' employment' patterns and preferences by native or non-native speakers (e.g. Betti & Mahdi, 2020; Emrani & Hooshmand, 2019; Estaji & Rajabi, 2019; Rahmah, 2019; Rassouli & Biria, 2017; Chalak & Karimi, 2017; Dastjerdi & Shahrokhi, 2015; Saputri, 2015; Chalak et al, 2015; Khodadady & Alifathabadi, 2014; Rheisa, 2014; Rabab'ah, 2013, and Fotovatnia & Dorri, 2013).

Betti and Mahdi (2020) investigated self and other-repair strategies employed by university researchers and staff members in discussions in the Iraqi context. The results revealed the prevalence of self-repair strategies, such as recycling, deleting, reformatting replacing, inserting, aborting, sequence jumping, and reordering. It was also found that staff members produced more repair cases. Emrani and Hooshmand (2019) conducted an investigation on self-initiated self-repair structures among advanced EFL learners through classroom observations and follow-up interviews in Isfahan, Iran. The results indicated the dominance of four common repair operations, namely replacing, inserting, deleting, and aborting. Additionally, comparing this study's findings to those of native English speakers revealed that replacing is the most common self-initiated self-repair strategy employed by both native and non-native speakers of English. In a similar study focusing on 33 EFL teachers in Iran, employing sequential mixed-methods, Estaji and Rajabi (2019) investigated self-repair operations in classroom conversations taking teachers' level of reflection into consideration. The results revealed a significant difference between the reflective groups in terms of repair operation use. It was also found that the most prevalent self-repair operation among highly, moderately, and poorly reflective instructors was repetition.

Dastjerdi and Shahrokhi (2015) investigated EFL learners' self-initiated repair and repetition repair strategy in Iran. Moreover the factors that influence the preferences of learners regarding the use of repair strategies were delved into. The resulted show that Iranian English learners resort to repair strategies to mitigate for their lack of linguistic items or to gain time to remember linguistic items and, therefore, maintain conversation. In addition, the results indicated that male subjects utilized more repair strategies. Moreover, it was shown that female participants utilized self-repair less frequently than male participants.

With regard to story retelling, Chalak et al. (2015) examined replacement operation in self-initiated repair practices in the oral reproduction of short stories by sophomores and juniors Iranian students. This study also addressed whether academic level influences the prevalence of repairs. The results indicated that both groups engaged in explicit repair more frequently. In addition, sophomore students performed more replacement repair operations. Rabab'ah (2013) investigated self-initiated repair and repetition operation in story retelling of Jordanian and German EFL learners to determine learners'

preferences for using repair strategies. The results indicated that the Jordanian participants who speak Arabic employed repair strategies more frequently attributed to the fact that they produced more narrative events. Additionally, both groups of participants employed repetition more frequently than self-initiated repair.

Khodadady and Alifathabadi (2014) reported the ways in which Iranian intermediate and advanced EFL learners correct their speech while interacting with their instructors, as well as the distinctions between these two groups. The analysis of the data revealed that both groups utilized a variety of strategies to initiate repair in five distinct positions. The majority of differences between these two groups centered on the frequency with which they employed these strategies. Moreover, it was found the advanced learners' significantly higher incidence of self-repair. Similarly, Fotovatnia and Dorri (2013) investigated the repair operations used by Iranian intermediate EFL learners. In details, this study aimed to determine if learners' gender, class teachers' gender and single gender or mixed gender class type affect the prevalence of repair strategies used by learners. The researchers designated learners to a mixed-gender class and then to a single-gender class. Three significant findings were drawn. The incidence of repair strategies in the single-sex class outnumbered those in the mixed-gender class. Learners' use of repair strategies was not affected by the teacher gender. There was no difference in the application of repair operations by learners with regard to the gender of the instructor. There was no difference in the use of repair strategies based on the gender of the students.

Regarding the analysis of repair types and operations in talk shows, Saputri's (2015) and Rheisa's (2014) researches can be considered. Saputri's investigation (2015) centered on the 11th season of The Ellen DeGeneres Show to analyze various categories of repairs and repair procedures. This study could detect all types of repair while self-initiated self-completed repair had the highest occurrence rate. In contrast, other-initiated other-completed repair was the least common type of repair. Concerning repair strategies, replacement was the most common while the program never featured sequence-jumping, repeat, rephrasing, or rejection. Similarly, Rheisa (2014) investigated repairs types and strategies in a special episode of The Oprah Winfrey Show featuring Michael Jackson. The finding revealed the prevalence of all repair types. Self-initiated self-completed repairs was the most observed type and self-initiated other completed repair ranked lowest. In addition, while reorganization elaboration, abandonment, exemplification and replacement were the most frequent repair strategies. Moreover, repair operations including modification, rephrasing and repetition ranked lowest.

This study seeks to investigate how EFL learners in Iran, a non-English-speaking community, manage communication in story-retelling and to identify the repair strategies learners employ to overcome breakdowns in communication. The study also examines the preferences of Iranian EFL students regarding the use of repair strategies. In addition, the secondary objective of this study is to explore if gender and English proficiency differences of EFL learners have an impact on the employment of repair operations.

2.1. Research Questions

Accordingly, the following four research questions are investigated:

1. What repair operations do Iranian EFL learners employ in story-retelling?

2. What are the most and least frequent repair operations Iranian EFL learners employ in story-retelling?

3. Is there a significant difference between male and female Iranian EFL learners concerning repair operations' employment?

4. Is there a significant difference between advanced and intermediate Iranian EFL learners concerning repair operations' employment?

3. Methodology

3.1. Design and Context of the Study

Conversation Analysis which entails recording, transcribing, and examining interactions, is a diverse and inductive method for analyzing real-world conversations. Data collection for conversation analysis is more objective than for the majority of qualitative research. Instead of conducting interviews, researchers observe real-life conversations or examine audio or video recordings of them. Nonetheless, CA retains its qualitative roots, as subjective interpretations of natural conversational data are expected despite the fact that the data collection procedure is independent of the study. Using a qualitative conversation analysis methodology, this study sought to investigate the occurrence frequency of repair operations employed by Iranian EFL learners in story retelling. In addition, the study investigated whether there is a significant difference between male and female EFL learners regarding the use of repair operations and whether intermediate learners are more likely than advanced learners to employ specific repair operations. The research was conducted in the EFL context of Kerman, Iran.

3.2. Participants

Participants In the beginning of this study, 50 intermediate and advanced EFL learners studying in seven English language institutes of Kerman, Iran were appointed through cluster random sampling. Those from the initial sample who expressed interest in participating in the study were invited, 40 learners. The participants included 20 males and 20 females ranging from age 20 to 35 (M = 28) who were non-native English speakers and EFL learners. Moreover, since a part of this study seeks to determine if there is a difference between advanced and intermediate EFL learners to employ repair operations in story retelling, the participants were divided into 2 categories utilizing The Oxford Placement Test.

3.3. Instrument(s)

The instruments employed in this study include (1) The Oxford Placement Test, (2) monologs, and (3) a researcher-made data sheet. The Oxford Placement Test (Allen, 2004) was utilized to determine participates' language proficiency level as well as dividing the subjects into advanced and intermediate EFL learners. There are 200 multiple-choice questions on this examination. This test has separate listening, structure, and vocabulary sections and is limited to 100 minutes. This test's reliability and validity have been thoroughly tested. (Allan, 2004). Scores within the ranges of 120-149 and 150-200 determine intermediate and advanced proficiency levels. The researchers used Cronbach's alpha to verify the reliability of the instrument. The results indicated the reliability index of 0.79 for the whole test and reliability indices of 0.81 to 0.83 for the subsections.

In this study, the researcher is the primary instrument for collecting data, and the samples were monologues, story retellings. Moreover, this study utilized a researcher-made data sheet classified into two parts of lexical and non-lexical repair operations. The lexical section includes 10 repair strategies developed by Schegloff (2013). Schegloff (2013) proposed ten repair operations which are (1) replacing , (2) inserting , (3) deleting , (4) searching , (5) parenthesizing , (6) aborting , (7) sequence-jumping , (8) recycling , (9) reformatting and (10) reordering . The second section consists of non-

lexical repair operations such as cutoffs and lengthening of sounds, and quasi-lexical fillers such as uh and um. These techniques are employed to save time and make communication efficient.

3.4. Data Collection Procedure

In the early stages of conducting data collection, 50 intermediate and advanced EFL learners in seven language institutes of Kerman, Iran were selected. Those participants who were interested to take part in the study were invited, 40 learners. Due to the fact that learners' proficiency level was taken into consideration as a variable in this study, The Oxford Placement Test, was conducted to verify the participants' actual proficiency levels. Afterwards, the participants were instructed how they were expected to do the task. In details, the EFL learners in the current study were given a ten- minute thinking time before they began describing or retelling a favorite movie or story they had watched or read. The participants were informed that each story retelling task would take approximately 10 minutes. The English learners were audio-recorded while retelling the stories. On the whole, the database included forty monologues totaling 183 minutes on average. Unlike similar studies in which participants are given a print copy or a list of the stories to read before the performance session, to illicit more spontaneous and natural data and as well as avoiding memorization or recitation, the participants in the current study were given a ten-minute thinking time before they describe or retell a favorite movie or story they have watched or read. During audio recording, gestures such as nodding was used by the researcher, to indicate that he was paying attention and was intrigued, as well as to encourage participants to keep going with their retelling. In addition, the researcher occasionally attempted to interrupt the learners by using terms and phrases to make the interactions more natural.

After almost 1 month, the audio recording for all learners were collected and the transcription phase of the study began. In other words, the researcher meticulously listened to and transcribed the audio-recorded files, taking into account all pauses and fillers etc. Afterwards, The audio-recorded files were listened to once more to ensure that no transcription errors had occurred. Few minor errors were discovered and corrected. Consequently, repair operations in the transcripts of the learners' spoken discourse were identified and the utterances containing repair operations were transferred to the data sheet which is classified into two parts of lexical and non-lexical repair operations. To maximize the reliability of the ten repair operations detected, the data were passed to two raters who were experienced faculty members in interactional data in Kerman Universities. To facilitate the raters' task, the operations were highlighted and categorized contextually. The raters were asked to confirm whether the researcher's classification of each operation was accurate based on its definition. If they disagreed with the researcher's classification, they would be requested to provide their own. Their feedback was considered when determining the final categories and frequencies.

3.5. Data Analysis Procedure

The Oxford Placement Test was used to determine EFL learners' levels of language proficiency and divide them into intermediate and advanced groups. Although the validity and reliability of the test have been established well (Allan, 2004), the researchers used Cronbach's alpha to verify its reliability. The results indicated the reliability index of 0.79 for the whole test and reliability indices of 0.81 to 0.83 for the subsections. To analyze the data, the frequency and percentage of occurrence of each repair operation were calculated. Furthermore, cross tabulation and chi-square tests were used to determine if male and female as well as intermediate and advanced EFL learners are different in terms of repair operations' employment in story re-telling.

4. Results

4.1. Repair Operations Employment by EFL Learners in Story Re-Telling with Regard to the Most and Least Frequent Repair Operations

This study's primary objective was to identify the repair operations used by EFL learners when retelling a story. All ten categories of repair operations were used by EFL learners when retelling a story, according to the findings of this investigation. The second research question sought to identify the most and least frequent story repair operations. The frequency and percentage of occurrence of repair operations are displayed in Table 1 from the most to the least frequent occurrence. Nonlinguistic repair operations such as silence, fillers, etc. had the highest frequency of occurrence, 233 occurrences out of a total of 1378, 16.90%. Recycling was the second most common repair operation, occurring 203 out of 1378 times, 14.74%. Following recycling, replacing was the third most observed repair operation, occurring 195 times, 14.15%. The fourth and fifth most common repair operations were deletion (11.98%) and reordering (10.60%). In other words, deletion and reordering repair operations occurred 165 and 146 times respectively.

Table 1. Frequency and Percentage of Repair Operations from the Most to Least Occurred Ones

No.	Repair Operations	Occurrence	Percentage
1.	Nonlinguistic	233	16.90%
2.	Recycling	203	14.74%
3.	Replacing	195	14.15%
4.	Deletion	165	11.98%
5.	Reordering	146	10.60%
6.	Insertion	138	10.02%
7.	Abortion	95	6.90%
8.	Searching	79	5.73%
9.	Reformatting	50	3.62%
10.	Sequence Jumping	43	3.12%
11.	Parenthesizing	31	2.24%
	Total	1378	100%

The sixth and seventh most common repair operations were insertion and abortion, respectively. On a total of 1378 occurrences, these operations occurred 138 and 95 times, 10.02% and 6.90%, respectively. The eighth most common operation was searching. This investigation could find 79 instances of searching, 5.73 %. After searching, the ninth and tenth most common repair operations used by EFL learners in story retelling were reformatting and sequence jumping, with 50 and 43 occurrences, 3.62% and 3.12%, respectively. Lastly, the repair strategy with the lowest occurrence rate was parenthesizing. The results indicated that this operation was detected 31 times, or 2.24% of the time.

5.2. Male and Female EFL Learners' Differences Concerning Repair Operations Use in Story Re-Telling

The third research question investigated the effect of gender on EFL learners' use of repair operations when retelling stories. Table 2 presents the frequency and percentage of each repair operation

employed by male and female EFL learners. As shown in Table 2, 771 (56%) and 607 (44%) of the 1378 repair occurrences observed in this study were generated by female and male learners, respectively. Therefore, it is concluded that female EFL learners used more repairs than male ones in all 11 operation categories, 56.0% and 44.0% respectively. Moreover, concerning each repair operation, it is clear that female learners produced more repair operation than their males.

Table 2. Operation - Gender Cross Tabulation

		Gender		
Operations		**Female**	**Male**	**Total**
Abortion	Count	50	45	95
	Expected Count	53.2	41.8	95.0
	% within strategy	52.6%	47.4%	100.0%
	% within gender	6.5%	7.4%	6.9%
	% of Total	3.6%	3.3%	6.9%
Deletion	Count	85	80	165
	Expected Count	92.3	72.7	165.0
	% within strategy	51.5%	48.5%	100.0%
	% within gender	11.0%	13.2%	12.0%
	% of Total	6.2%	5.8%	12.0%
Insertion	Count	80	58	138
	Expected Count	77.2	60.8	138.0
	% within strategy	58.0%	42.0%	100.0%
	% within gender	10.4%	9.6%	10.0%
	% of Total	5.8%	4.2%	10.0%
Nonlinguistic	Count	124	109	233
	Expected Count	130.4	102.6	233.0
	% within strategy	53.2%	46.8%	100.0%
	% within gender	16.1%	18.0%	16.9%
	% of Total	9.0%	7.9%	16.9%
Parenthesizing	Count	23	8	31
	Expected Count	17.3	13.7	31.0
	% within strategy	74.2%	25.8%	100.0%
	% within gender	3.0%	1.3%	2.2%
	% of Total	1.7%	0.6%	2.2%
Recycling	Count	116	87	203
	Expected Count	113.6	89.4	203.0
	% within strategy	57.1%	42.9%	100.0%
	% within gender	15.0%	14.3%	14.7%
	% of Total	8.4%	6.3%	14.7%
Reformatting	Count	32	18	50
	Expected Count	28.0	22.0	50.0
	% within strategy	64.0%	36.0%	100.0%
	% within gender	4.2%	3.0%	3.6%
	% of Total	2.3%	1.3%	3.6%
Reordering	Count	85	61	146
	Expected Count	81.7	64.3	146.0
	% within strategy	58.2%	41.8%	100.0%
	% within gender	11.0%	10.0%	10.6%
	% of Total	6.2%	4.4%	10.6%
Replacing	Count	110	85	195
	Expected Count	109.1	85.9	195.0
	% within strategy	56.4%	43.6%	100.0%
	% within gender	14.3%	14.0%	14.2%
	% of Total	8.0%	6.2%	14.2%
Searching	Count	44	35	79
	Expected Count	44.2	34.8	79.0
	% within strategy	55.7%	44.3%	100.0%
	% within gender	5.7%	5.8%	5.7%
	% of Total	3.2%	2.5%	5.7%
Sequence Jumping	Count	22	21	43
	Expected Count	24.1	18.9	43.0
	% within strategy	51.2%	48.8%	100.0%
	% within gender	2.9%	3.5%	3.1%
	% of Total	1.6%	1.5%	3.1%
Total	Count	771	607	1378
	Expected Count	1378.0	771.0	607.0
	% within strategy	56.0%	44.0%	100.0%
	% within gender	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

% of Total	100.0%	56.0%	44.0%

Tables 3 and 4 display the results of chi-square tests and effect size. The results of 1378 repairs performed in 11 categories by male and female Iranian EFL students were tallied and enumerated. Chi-Square Test was conducted to determine whether the frequency of repairs varied between male and female participants. As shown in Table 3, there was no significant difference between the groups in their employment of repair operations P<0.05), (X 2 (10) = 9.017, p = 0.530. Therefore, it can be concluded that no statistically significant association was found between gender and the employment of repair operations by EFL learners, meaning that women are not more likely than males to employ specific operations. Notably, the descriptive data disclose that female EFL learners performed more repairs across all eleven repair operation types examined in this study. The effect size or strength of association between the variables is presented in Table 4, Cramer's V/phi =.081.

Table 3. Chi-Square Tests on Gender and Repair Operations

	Value	**df**	**Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)**
Pearson Chi-Square	9.017[a]	10	.530
Likelihood Ratio	9.269	10	.507
N of Valid Cases	1378		

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 13.66.

Table 4. Symmetric Measures / Gender and Repair Operations

		Value	**Approximate Significance**
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	.081	.530
	Cramer's V	.081	.530
N of Valid Cases		1378	

5.3. Advanced and Intermediate EFL Learners' Differences Concerning Repair Operations Use in Story Re-Telling

The final research question of the present study sought to determine whether there is a significant difference between the intermediate and advanced participants regarding their repair operations employment in story retelling and summarizing. To this end, the outcomes of 1378 repairs employment among advanced and intermediate Iranian EFL learners in 11 categories of operations were tallied and listed. As shown in Table 5, 1378 repair occurrences were observed in this investigation among which 37.7% of repairs were generated by advanced EFL learners and 62.3% by intermediate EFL learners.

Table 5. Operation - Levels Cross Tabulation

		Levels		
Operations		Advanced	Intermediate	Total
Abortion	Count	37	58	95
	Expected Count	35.8	59.2	95.0
	% within strategy	38.9%	61.1%	100.0%
	% within level	7.1%	6.8%	6.9%
	% of Total	2.7%	4.2%	6.9%
Deletion	Count	58	107	165
	Expected Count	62.1	102.9	165.0
	% within strategy	35.2%	64.8%	100.0%
	% within level	11.2%	12.5%	12.0%
	% of Total	4.2%	7.8%	12.0%
Insertion	Count	50	88	138
	Expected Count	52.0	86.0	138.0

	% within strategy	36.2%	63.8%	100.0%
	% within level	9.6%	10.2%	10.0%
	% of Total	3.6%	6.4%	10.0%
Nonlinguistic	Count	91	142	233
	Expected Count	87.8	145.2	233.0
	% within strategy	39.1%	60.9%	100.0%
	% within level	17.5%	16.5%	16.9%
	% of Total	6.6%	10.3%	16.9%
Parenthesizing	Count	12	19	31
	Expected Count	11.7	19.3	31.0
	% within strategy	38.7%	61.3%	100.0%
	% within level	2.3%	2.2%	2.2%
	% of Total	0.9%	1.4%	2.2%
Recycling	Count	84	119	203
	Expected Count	76.5	126.5	203.0
	% within strategy	41.4%	58.6%	100.0%
	% within level	16.2%	13.9%	14.7%
	% of Total	6.1%	8.6%	14.7%
Reformatting	Count	19	31	50
	Expected Count	18.8	31.2	50.0
	% within strategy	38.0%	62.0%	100.0%
	% within level	3.7%	3.6%	3.6%
	% of Total	1.4%	2.2%	3.6%
Reordering	Count	46	100	146
	Expected Count	55.0	91.0	146.0
	% within strategy	31.5%	68.5%	100.0%
	% within level	8.9%	11.6%	10.6%
	% of Total	3.3%	7.3%	10.6%
Replacing	Count	86	109	195
	Expected Count	73.4	121.6	195.0
	% within strategy	44.1%	55.9%	100.0%
	% within level	16.6%	12.7%	14.2%
	% of Total	6.2%	7.9%	14.2%
Searching	Count	22	57	79
	Expected Count	29.8	49.2	79.0
	% within strategy	27.8%	72.2%	100.0%
	% within level	4.2%	6.6%	5.7%
	% of Total	1.6%	4.1%	5.7%
Sequence Jumping	Count	14	29	43
	Expected Count	16.2	26.8	43.0
	% within strategy	32.6%	67.4%	100.0%
	% within level	2.7%	3.4%	3.1%
	% of Total	1.0%	2.1%	3.1%
Total	Count	519	859	1378
	Expected Count	519.0	859.0	1378.0
	% within strategy	37.7%	62.3%	100.0%
	% within level	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	% of Total	37.7%	62.3%	100.0%

Table 6 shows the results of the chi-square test to determine whether the frequency of repair operations varied between advanced and intermediate learners P0.05), (X 2 (10) = 11.554, p = 0.316. Therefore, it can be concluded that there was no statistically significant association between this study's proficiency levels, advanced and intermediate, and the employment of repair operations by EFL learners, meaning that intermediate learners are not more likely than advanced learners to employ specific operations. It is worth mentioning that, the descriptive data reveal that intermediate EFL learners performed more repairs across all eleven repair operation categories examined in this study. Table 7 presents the strength of association between variables Cramer's V/phi =.092.

Table 6. Chi-Square Tests on Levels and Repair Operations

	Value	**df**	**Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)**
Pearson Chi-Square	11.554[a]	10	.316
Likelihood Ratio	11.690	10	.306
N of Valid Cases	1378		

0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 11.68.

Table 7. Symmetric Measures / Levels and Repair Operations

		Value	Approximate Significance
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	.092	.316
	Cramer's V	.092	.316
N of Valid Cases		1378	

5. Discussion

Concerning the first and second research questions which aimed to investigate repair operations' employment by EFL learners in story re-telling with regard to the most and least frequent repair operations, it was found that that non-linguistic repair operations were the most frequently used operation. This finding is supported by Moghadam kia & HeydarPour's (2011) research which indicates that non-linguistic repair operations are the most occurring among other operations. The second most occurring repair operation was recycling, 203 out of 1378, 14.74%. This finding is in line with those of Dastjerdi and Shahrokhi (2015) that show recycling (also known as repetition) is a common strategy whose role in communication could be one of the most effective for promoting comprehension that a speaker can use. Replacement is the third most common repair operation, following recycling, with 195 occurrences (14.15%). These results are consistent with Schegloff's (2013) framework, in which replacement is one of the most prevalent operations. In addition, the results are consistent with previous research on recycling and replacement self-repairs in languages, namely English, Hebrew, and German conducted by Fox et al. (2009, 2010), which concluded that languages which have the same typological characteristics employ the same self-repair practices.

Moreover, the finding concerning replacement is almost in line with Saputri's (2015), and Emrani and Hooshmand's (2019) investigations who assert that replacing is the most common repair operation among more than ten operations while in the current study this operation was shown to be the second most frequently used lexical operation. Deletion and reordering were the fourth and fifth most frequent repair operations, 11.98% and 10.60% respectively. The sixth and seventh most occurring repair operations were insertion and abortion. The eighth most appearing operation was searching in this investigation. The ninth and tenth most frequently used repair operations by the EFL learners in story retelling were reformatting and sequence jumping. Lastly, the operation with the lowest occurrence frequency was parenthesizing. The findings concerning sequence-jumping in the study are consistent with that of Saputri (2015) which indicated that sequence-jumping is one of the least frequently used operation specially in monologues. However, some findings of this study are not consistent with those of Rahmah's (2019) who found that aborting, recycling, parenthesizing and insertion are repair operations which are employed more than the other ones, while this investigation revealed that aborting, and parenthesizing were not frequently used and were categorized among the least employed ones.

The findings regarding the third research question which attempted to address male and female EFL learners' differences concerning repair operations' use in story re-telling showed no meaningful difference between male and female learners. Therefore, it can be stated that male learners are not more likely than female learners to employ specific repair operations. These findings are consistent with that of Fotovatnia and Dorri (2013) who claim that there is no difference in repair strategies' employment with regard to the gender of the learners. However, the findings concerning whether male or female

learners deploy more repair operations are contrary to studies conducted by Fotovatnia and Dorri (2013) and Dastjerdi and Shahrokhi (2015) who found that, females employ fewer repair operations.

The fourth research question attempted to assess advanced and intermediate EFL learners' differences concerning repair operations use in story re-telling. The results suggested no statistical association which means intermediate learners are not more likely than advanced ones to employ specific operations. The researcher could not find enough relevant literate showing if learners' proficiency levels affect their repair operations employment frequency. However, the findings concerning the frequency of repair operations comparing intermediate and advanced learners are not in line with the investigation by Khodadady and Alifathabadi (2014) who reported that the frequency of self-repair use is more observable among EFL advanced learners.

6. Conclusion

As a general fact, conversation is considered one of the most basic and integral aspects of human beings' daily lives. Inevitably conversation breakdowns might occur during native speakers' interaction which need to be addressed, and resolved to make the conversation go smoothly. EFL learners are no exception in this regard as they make mistakes as a kind of conversation problem in spontaneous conversations, when they learning a second or foreign language. Therefore, classroom discourse and learners' conversations are analyzed to determine the patterns of repairs and repair operations EFL learners employ. Therefore, it can be noted that EFL learners' conversation analysis as well as detection of repairs and repair operations which EFL leaners use are helpful for both EFL teachers and learners. Moreover, CA-based materials and exercises can be utilized by curriculum developer and teachers to enable learners to speak more fluently and naturally. Furthermore, analysis of learners' conversation problems, repairs they employ as well as learner's repair operations can reveal some information about how learners generally understand and conceptualize the target language they are learning, as well as about their areas of difficulty, language acquisition methods, and attitudes.

There are a number of recommendations which need to be made for future research based on the findings and limitations of the current study. Firstly, the current study can be replicated in other contexts in order to see if similar conclusions would be drowned. The main eight demographic characteristics are age, gender, race, ethnicity, geographic area, income level, employment, and level of education among which gender was taken into consideration. Thus investigating the effect of factors such as employment, age, level of education on repair operations might provide more insight. This study addressed intermediate and advanced EFL learners. Similar studies addressing elementary learners might be insightful.

Generally, there are sixteen repair operations developed by Schegloff (2013), 10 repair operations, and Zhang (2016), 6 repair operations. Since Zhang's repair operations to some extent overlap Schegloff's and the use of Schegloff's (2013) theory makes the process of data collection more simplified, this study investigated EFL learners' repair operations in story re-telling using Schegloff's 10 repair operations. Therefore, similar investigations employing other theoretical frameworks are suggested.

The findings of this study enrich linguistic research around pragmatics, conversation analysis, and repair operations as well as TEFL research. Moreover, this study fills a gap in the literature and contributes to a greater understanding of Iranian EFL students' use of repair operations in language classrooms. Furthermore, teachers of the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) are provided with information on how intermediate and advanced Iranian EFL students handle communication problems

so that they can respond adequately to the repair practices. The findings of this and similar studies might help integrate materials into the EFL syllabus design and English language teaching.

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