TYPES AND FUNCTIONS OF REPETITIONS IN THE NARRATIONS OF TURKISH SPEAKERS OF FRENCH

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Abstract: Research in discourse analysis has revealed that there are various types and functions of repetitions. This study adds to this discussion by examining the repetitions in the discourse of 83 learners of French. Repetition helps the speakers of a language to develop and maintain a conversation or speech; and is one of the mostly employed communication strategies by both native and non-native speakers. The data discussed in this study reveal that Turkish speakers of French employ repetitions both at word and group levels with the aim of stalling and/or repairing previous utterances. The study also suggests that either for stalling or repairing, group level (GL) repetitions were observed to be employed more frequently compared to word level (WL) repetitions.

Key Words: communication strategy, repetition, self-repair, narration.

Özet: Söylem analizi araştırmaları, tekrarın çeşitli türleri ve işlevi olduğunu göstermiştir. Bu çalışma 83 Fransızca öğrencisinin söylemindeki tekrarları inceleyerek tartışmaya katkıda bulunur. Tekrar, bir dilin konuşmacısının konuşmayı veya diyaloğu geliştirmesine ve sürdürmesine yardımcı olur ve hem anadil konuşmacıları hem de anadilden olmayan konuşmacılar tarafından en çok kullanılan iletişim stratejisidir. Bu çalışmada ele alınan veriler Fransızca öğrenen Türk öğrencilerin hem sözcük hem de sözcük grubu seviyesindeki tekrarları zaman kazanmak ve/veya önceki konuşmayı düzeltmek amacıyla kullandığını göstermiştir. Aynı zamanda gerek zaman kazanma gerekse tamir amaçlı olsun sözcük grubu (GS) tekrarlar sözcük seviyesi (SS) tekrarlardan daha fazla kullanılmıştır.

Anahtar sözcükler: iletişim stratejisi, tekrar, öz tamir, anlatı.

Introduction

Research on repetition in language classroom and in the discourse of language learners has focused on a few various aspects of this topic. For instance, Lyster (1988) compared and contrasted the repetitions and the recasts made by the teacher in a language classroom and argued that recasts and repetitions fulfill identical functions. Focusing on a learner Silva and Santos (2006), examined the repetitions in the discourse of a learner of Portuguese in three different settings: the Portuguese language classroom, conversation sessions, and interviews and then argued "we have shown that an apparently trivial linguistic strategy, i.e., repetitions, is in fact tremendously important and has significant consequences for the learning process and for the interaction" (2009, p.20).

In a natural conversational discourse, repetition might be triggered by the speaker himself/herself, which functions mainly as a filler or repair, or by the listener, which is called

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as "echoing" (Zhang, 1998) or "allo-repetition" (Tannen, 1987). Zhang (1998) differentiates between "echoing" and "allo-repetition" arguing that allo-repetition can go across several turns, whereas, "echoing" as meant in Zhangs's study, is only the immediate repetition of the previous speaker's most current utterance.

Types of repetitions in Tannen's study (1987, as cited in Silva & Santos, 2006), and presented below, play a major role in establishing coherence and interpersonal involvement:

- Participatory listenership: which shows that the person is listening and accepts what was uttered;
- Ratifying listenership: which occurs when the speaker incorporates the repeated phrase into their own narrative;
- Humor: which author argues is a common function of repetition;
- Savoring: through which a speaker appreciates the humor in a situation;
- Stalling: a function that allows time to interlocutor
- Expanding: which is the reformulation of an utterance followed by on-going talk; repetition as participation, which helps develop the conversation.

Again from a different perspective, Rieger (2003) aimed to explore the question whether two closely related languages, such as English and German, manifest differences in the use of repetitions as self-repair. For this she analyzed conversational repetitions of English–German bilingual speakers because she believed that cross-linguistic studies with bilingual conversationalists highlight not only cross-linguistic features, but they also expose those features that are specific to a particular language. Furthermore, such an analysis allows the researchers to examine similarities and differences between related languages.

That repetitions interrupt the smooth flow of speech might cause some negative thoughts on parts of language learners, Sawir (2004), in this respect, holds that despite the old view which considers repetition an indication of disfluency of speaking skills, it is indeed a resource that language learners can utilize to enable them to engage in a conversation despite their language constraints.

Researchers have not always studied repetition per se; in most cases the study of repetition was conducted within broad framework of communication strategies (Genc, 2007). In empirical and theoretical studies on CSs, the role of repetition has not been neglected; researchers have not only paid due attention to repetition in their taxonomies of communication strategies but also elaborated on the functions and types of repetitions. Dörnyei and Scott (1997) accounted for frequent usage of repetition by L2 speakers: "the L2 speaker's frequent need for more time to process and plan L2 speech than would be naturally available in fluent communication associated with strategies such as the use of fillers, hesitation devices, and self-repetitions" (p.183). Stuart and Lynn (1995), taking repetition into consideration in their study on CSs, found that non-native speakers resorted to repetition strategy more frequently than native speakers.

Not only in speaking but also in writing has research been conducted to study repetition, which has often been associated with cohesion; for besides transitional words or phrases, pronoun references, demonstrative references and ellipses, repetition is also considered as one of the cohesive devices (Thanh, Abeysinghe and Huyck, 2009). Reynolds (2000) went beyond this and suggested that repetitions in non native speakers' writings are also related to the writing topic, cultural background and development of writing ability.

In our study, we will concentrate on repetitions found in the oral narratives of Turkish speakers of French based on the premise that mechanism and rules governing repetitions can only be understood through studying the natural discourse in a given language.

Besides filler type repetitions, in this study we will concentrate on repetitions "which can be a resource for self-initiated same-turn self-repair" (Rieger, 2003, p.48) The major characteristics of this type of self-repair is that it comprises a particular set of repair strategies in which repairable and repairing segments occur in the same turn and the repair is performed by the initiator of the repairable. Every feature used by a speaker that interrupts the smooth flow of his or her speech could be classified as self-repair (Rieger, 2003).

Regarding repair types Teich and Fankhauser (2005) offer four different types of repairs: a) Different information repair, b) Appropriacy repairs, c) Repairs of accidental lapses and d) Rephrasing repair:

a) Different information repair: This type of repair is employed when speakers decide to encode different information than what they are currently formulating,
b) Appropriacy repairs: Appropriacy repairs are resorted to when the speaker decides to encode the originally intended information in a modified way,
c) Repairs of accidental lapses: These involve speakers' repairing an accidental lapses which can occur at every phase of speech processing, that is, while accessing words, grammatical and phonological encoding, and articulating,
d) Rephrasing repairs: Rephrasing repairs are different from error repairs in that error repairs merely involve the correction of accidental lapses and, consequently, the issuing of the same preverbal plan in an unmodified form, whereas rephrasing repairs are signs of a lack of L2 competence

In our study, we will specifically focus on types of repetitions such as whether they were produced as fillers or repairs, whether they were at WL or GL, and whether they emergence has varied depending on word class, and if so, at what frequency.

Data Collection

The data for this study was collected with the participation of French as a Foreign Language (FFL) students from the French Language Department of Çukurova University, Turkey. Two films were shown to the participants on two subsequent days, and all participants were interviewed about the films on two separate days focusing on any single point of the films, which could be the setting, plot, characters or messages intended. The interviews were conducted in the researchers' offices with the help of an audio recorder, and were later transferred to a computer platform for ease in the analysis of data. Totally, 166 gathering sessions (83 for each movie) were held with participants. Interviews' word counts were recorded as 190-475, and duration as 4-6 minutes.

Participants:

Eighty-three participants (64 female, 19 male), of 19-21 ages, took part in this study. The participants were in their first (G1), second (G2), third (G3) and fourth (G4) years of education at the French Language Department, and were being trained to be prospective French teachers. Table 1 below presents information about the participants.

Table 1: The distribution of participants according to year and gender

	G1	G2	G3	G4
Male	7	1	7	4
Female	29	16	17	2
Total	36	17	24	6

Instruments

Two animated films, *Mickey's Christmas Carol*, and *Lion King* (both Disney productions), were shown to the participants dubbed into French. The films were chosen for their clear and comprehensible language, as well as for being, instructive and including highly meaningful messages.

Data Analysis

The data collected for this study was analyzed in three stages. Initially, we looked at the total repetitions made in the recordings of participants. At the second stage, repetitions were divided into two groups as WL (ex: … il … il) and GL (ex: il fait … it fait …). WL repetitions were categorized regarding their syntactic classes, and syntactic categorization of GL repetitions was made considering words initiating the groups. At the third stage, we studied the potential reasons of repetitions. Here, we particularly concentrated on two main significant reasons leading to repetitions: planning for a new utterance (filler) and modification of the utterance in the repeated form (self-repair). For all three stages, a nonparametric chi-square analysis was carried out to observe differences in frequencies of occurrence of repetitions. Analyzed numerical data is presented in tabular form, and all repetitions of sentence elements cited in this study are bold- underlined form for illustrative purposes.

In the first place, we looked into classification of repetitions of WL and GL. The elements and related percentages of occurrences are presented below in Table 2. As there were four different participant groups, we displayed the results of each group separately.

Table 2: Types and Numbers of Repetitions of French Learners

Repetitions	G1		G2		G3		G4	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Word	181	45.5	51	45.9	79	44.4	15	44.1
Group	217	54.5	60	54.1	99	55.6	19	55.9
Total	398	100	111	100	178	100	34	100
Asymp. Sig.	0,071		0,393		0,134		0,493	

As can be observed from Table 2, although the participants were from four different years, in terms of repetition, their discourse displayed similar qualities: in the discourse of all groups,

WL repetitions have >44%, whereas group repetitions were actualized with >54 percentage of distribution.

At the second stage of our analysis, we looked into classification of repetitions of WL and GL. In the collected data, we observed the occurrence of 326 elements of WL repetitions. The elements and related percentages of occurrence are presented in Table 3 below.

Table 3: WL repetitions of French Learners

	G1		G2		G3		G4	
Word Class	**n**	**%**	**n**	**%**	**n**	**%**	**n**	**%**
Adjective	12	6.6	2	3.9	4	5.1	1	6.7
Adverb	9	5.0	1	2.0	4	5.1		
Conjunction	7	3.9	0	0	3	3.8		
Determiner	38	21.0	16	31.4	16	20.3	5	33.3
Noun	14	7.7	8	15.7	12	15.2	1	6.7
Preposition	15	8.3	1	2.0	3	3.8		
Pronoun	51	28.2	12	23.5	18	22.8	3	20.0
Verb	35	19.3	11	21.6	19	24.1	5	33.3
Total	181	100	51	100	79	100	15	100
Asymp. Sig.	0,000		0,000		0,000		0,255	

Having a look at Table 3, we could see that most prominent repetitions in this category were made with *pronouns*, *determiners*, *nouns* and *verbs*. Repetitions with other elements do not seem to be so significant. The least repeated items are *adjectives*, *adverbs*, *conjunctions*, and *prepositions*. While G1 repeated mostly *pronouns*, G2, *determiners*; G3, verbs and G4 produced *verb* and *determiner* repetitions. Rieger (2003) informs that the participants in her study repeated more pronoun–verb combinations, more personal pronouns, and more prepositions in English than they did in German, and they recycled more demonstrative pronouns in German than in English; and she argues that participants organized their repetitions as self-repairs according to the structure of the language concerned. Regarding verb-pronoun repetition similarities in English cited in both Rieger (2003) and Bada (2010), the results we obtained in our study can thus be attributed to similarity between French and English morhpo-syntactic characteristics. Below we present excerpts from verbatim of participants regarding WL repetitions.

WL Repetitions

1. je ..**je** m'influençais de ..derrière (dernier) film
2. il y avait ..une ..**une** (un) homme en colère
3. faire ..aimer le ..**le** jour de ..Noël.
4. il déciderait (de) ..partager **partager** ..avec eux
5. son rêve est ..**est** sur ..la vie de Mickey

GL repetitions, as was stated in Table, were actualized with no statistically difference when compared to WL repetitions. In Table 4, we present GL repetitions in terms of word-class initiators:

Table 4: GL repetitions of French Learners

	G1		**G2**		**G3**		**G4**	
Initiator	**n**	**%**	**n**	**%**	**n**	**%**	**n**	**%**
Adjective	5	2.3	1	1.7	0	0	0	0
Adverb	6	2.8	0	0	3	3	0	0
Conjunction	11	5.1	0	0	2	2.0	0	0
Determiner	63	29.0	24	40.0	35	35.4	8	42.1
Noun	5	2.3	1	1.7	1	1.0	0	0
Preposition	29	13.4	7	11.7	19	19.2	4	21.1
Pronoun	78	35.9	22	36.7	26	26.3	4	21.1
Verb	20	9.2	5	8.3	13	13.1	3	15.8
Total	217	100	60	100	99	100	19	100
Asymp. Sig.	0,000		0,000		0,000		0,376	

As seen in from Table 4, initiation of GL repetitions in French was actualized mainly with *pronouns*, *determiners*, *verbs* and *prepositions*. While G1 repeated pronoun initiated phrases most (35.9%), for G2, G3 and G4 the tendency was in favor of *determiners* with percentages 40.0%, 35.4% and 42.1%, respectively. Besides these categories, in the narratives of all four groups, preposition and verb initiated group repetitions emerged with relatively high percentages.

From the corpus of data, we present the following examples for GL repetitions:

1. le Noël est pour tout le monde ..**tout le monde**
2. C'est important .. **C'est important** que les personnes ...**les personnes** pensent (à) d'autres personnes
3. il n'est pas ......**il n'est pas** un bon ..roi
4. ....il a un enfant ..**un enfant**
5. Ce lion ..est le prochain roi .. **le prochain roi**

Similar to results obtained by Bada (2010) in a study conducted with Turkish speakers of English and French, participants in this present study did also repeat *pronouns*, *determiners* and *verbs*, both at WL and GL, mostly with *pronouns*, *determiners* and *verbs*.

For all four groups, two main categories seem to have emerged as prime reasons leading to repetitions: (1) an attempt to plan for a new utterance (a type of vocalized filler) and (2) an attempt to modify the utterance (monitoring). Similar cause identification was also observed by Bada (in press). These two categories were identified through meticulous study of the data collected. As a result of such identification, percentages of occurrence of these two categories are presented in Table 5:

Table 5: Potential Production Reasons for Repetitions

	G1		G2		G3		G4	
Reasons	**n**	**%**	**n**	**%**	**n**	**%**	**n**	**%**
Filler	202	50.8	58	52.3	114	64.0	17	50.0
Monitor	196	49.2	53	47.7	64	36.0	17	50.0
Total	398	100	111	100	178	100	34	100
Asymp. Sig.	0,764		0,635		0,000		1,000	

As can be observed from Table 5, except form G3, all groups of learners produced repetitions with a purpose to work on new utterances, i.e. they resorted to repetitions as a kind of "filled pause" as well as for monitoring purposes with remarkably similar percentages. On the other hand, while G3 employed repetitions for filler purposes with 64.0%, monitoring for this group actualized with 36.0%.

Extracts from the data illustrate the two categories:

Filler Type Repetitions

1. il a ..**il a** un petit lion
2. Le père ..**le père** ..de Simbat ...est morté (est tué) ..par ..**par** l'oncle de Simbat
3. le roi est mort ..**est mort**
4. Il se passe ..il ..**il se passe** ..dans le (la) forêt
5. Son **son** fil (fils) ..réussit (à) ..prendre la royalité

Self-Repairs

1. il effort ..**il fait des efforts**
2. Le lion ..avait ..une ..**un** fille (fils)
3. les enfants ..voyaient non **voient** animés dessins (des dessins animés)
4. Là, ...son oncle ..batte (bat) son ..**sa** mère
5. Dans la forêt, il y a l ...la paix ..**de la paix**

These findings have significant implications for the interlanguage development of Turkish speakers of French. First put forward by Selinker (1972), interlanguage is a psychological structure latent in the brain, and this system can be observed when studying the utterances of learners who attempt to produce a target language norm. Therefore, in terms of types and functions of repetitions, all the participants, albeit some differences reveal similar discourse characteristics, are at a similar level of interlanguage development. To speak in Brown's[1] (1994) words, we could argue that the participants are somewhere between the second and fourth stage of interlingual development. Since this strategy occurs among bilinguals (Rieger, 2003) and native speakers (Clark and Wasow, 1998); Perrin, Deshaies and Paradis, 2003), it seems to a universal existence, thus, not restricted to language learners.

What is remarkable is that the *determiner* plays a significant role in the distribution of repetitions both at WL and GL. This might be attributed to the fact that In French, articles and determiners are required with almost every common noun, and they are inflected to agree in gender (masculine or feminine) and number (singular or plural) with the noun they determine.

Regarding the frequent use of *pronouns* in group repetitions in French, the peculiar characteristic is that all contractions in this language are mandatory, and they facilitate the nature of flow in speech. For instance, one would never say (or write) *ce est* or *que elle*, but rather *c'est* and *qu'elle*. This characteristic may have played an important part in rendering emergence of pronouns as prominently repeated elements at group level.

Conclusion

The qualitative analysis reveals that the main functions of repetitions as in the narratives of French learners are both to delay the production of the next lexical item and to repair. As Rieger (2003) suggests this period gives the speaker the opportunity to hold the floor and it gives him/her time to engage in linguistic and/or cognitive planning so that the interlocutor can search for a particular word or construction or think about the content of his/her utterance.

In all the narratives analyzed, GL repetitions were employed with some 10% more frequency than WL repetitions. For both levels, *pronouns*, *determiners* and *verbs* were the commonest elements to be repeated. That these three elements occupy around 70-80% of usage in repetitions, reveals their significance in spontaneous speech of non-native speakers. Whatever the proficiency level of learners of French may be, these three word classes serve as most readily available resources for non-native speakers.

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[1] Brown (1994) offers a four-stage systematicity to account for the interlanguage development, which, again he himself suggests, has its own drawbacks. Referring to those stages, one cannot assert that a learner in the final stage has competence in all of the linguistics subsystems of language. The stages as offered by Brown are: 1) Random Errors Stage, 2) Second (or Emergent) Stage, 3) Systematic Stage, and 4) Stabilization Stage.