Teaching Reactive Tokens to KFL Students Using Authentic Language Data

Sang-Seok Yoon, University of Iowa
Hee-Jeong Joung, Rice University
“Communicative Competence” to “Interactional Competence”

(Canale & Swain, 1980, Bachman, 1990)
“Communicative Competence” to “Interactional Competence” (cont’d)

• Grammar teaching is still dominant.

• Emphasis on discrete functional-notional skills (e.g. ordering a meal, seeing the doctor, expressing hope, etc.) rather than actual interactional skills.

• He & Young (1998) “…individuals do not acquire a general, practice-independent competence; rather they acquire a practice-specific interactional competence by participating with more experienced others in specific interactive practices.”

• Interactional competence: a theory of the knowledge that participants bring to and realize in interaction and includes an account of how this knowledge is acquired (Young 1999)
Interactional competence

• Fundamental principles of the Interactional Competence
  • Interaction
  • Local nature of language competence
  • Co-construction—the joint creation of a form, interpretation, stance, action, activity, identity, institution, skill, ideology, emotion, or other culturally meaningful reality (Jacoby & Ochs 1995)
Tokens of active listening

• Malinowski (1923): ‘phatic communion,’
• Yngve (1970): ‘backchannels’
• Schegloff (1982): ‘continuers’ (uh huh, yeah)—exhibiting understanding that the primary speaker should continue talking by passing up an opportunity to propose a full turn at talk. ‘Assessments’ (oh, wow, gosh, really?)—co-constructing discourse, but because these tokens have the added sense of expressing the listener’s reactions to the current turn.
Tokens of active listening (cont’d)

• Iwasaki (1997): (a) non-lexical backchannels, which are vocalic sounds that have little or no referential meaning, such as ‘mhm’; (b) phrasal backchannels, which are typical expressions of acknowledgment and assessment, such as ‘really?’; and (c) substantive backchannels, which are turns with referential content such as a repetition or a clarifying question.
Tokens of active listening (cont’d)

• Maynard (1990): listener responses

• Gardner (1997, 2002) studied mono- and bi-syllabic response tokens and identified eight types: continuers (‘mm hm’), acknowledgements (‘yeah’), news markers (‘oh’), change of activity tokens (‘alright’), assessments (‘wow’), brief questions or repair, and collaborative completions.
Reactive Token

• Reactive token—a short utterance produced by an interlocutor who is playing a listener's role during the other interlocutor's speakership (Clancy, Thompson, Suzuki and Tao, 1996).

• Clancy, Thompson, Suzuki and Tao (1996) compare tokens of active listenership in English, Japanese, and Mandarin Chinese included backchannels, reactive expressions, collaborative finishes, repetitions, and resumptive openers in their study, all of which they subsumed under the heading of reactive tokens.

• The function of reactive token is to co-construct the current speaker’s ongoing turn at talk.
Reactive Token (cont’d)

• Backchannels (e.g. hm, uh huh; 아, 어, 음, 응),
• Reactive expressions (e.g. really?, sure, exactly; 그래요? 맞아요. 그렇죠)
• Collaborative completions (i.e., non-primary speaker finishes a previous speaker’s utterance)
• Repetitions
• Resumptive openers (i.e., non-lexical element which is used at turn initial points)
Korean Vs. English reactive tokens

• Korean reactive tokens are significantly longer than English tokens—Constant stretching of vowels or consonants in final syllables in Korean
• Koreans use more reactive tokens than Americans.
• Placement of reactive tokens are different between English and Korean conversations.

(Young and Lee, 2004)
Placement of reactive tokens

- English: RTs must be uttered at or near a place in the current speaker’s turn where a change of speaker is possible (transition relevance places [TRPs])

57 AA: so we had like a going-away party and
58 stuff ./>
59 → JA: yeah.
60 AA: yeah I think he’ll be okay/ but (0.7) kinda scares me/
61 cuz he’s a (0.5) he works with chemical weapons./>
62 → JA: real[ly?]  
63 AA: [so ] (0.4) I’m like (. ) [great you got] called
64 up./>
65 JA: [hhh ] (0.4)
66 → yeah.
Placement of reactive tokens (cont’d)

• Kyu-hyun Kim (1999: 427) has recognized that ‘in Korean conversations, unit boundaries are often formed while a turn is underway, that is, before a TRP is reached.’

148 EK: 한국-에 있을 때::,=
149→ SK: =음
150 EK: 투니버스-에서 h 가끔씩 들어봤 -는[데, -hh]
151→ SK: [아: ]
Korean Vs. English reactive tokens

“Reactive tokens in English ... are resources by which the listener overtly declines to take the opportunity for a full turn. The same role is played by some reactive tokens in Korean, but in many cases their role in Korean appears to be broader than in English. A Korean listener’s act of placing a token at an intra-turn unit boundary is not simply to decline to take a turn at talk, it is rather to provide overt support for the current speaker’s turn, an obligation that has been recognized as an interactional burden on the listener.” (Young and Lee, 2004).
Teaching Korean Reactive Tokens

• Participants: Intermediate Korean class students at Rice University (18 English native speakers)
• Goal: Enhancing students’ interactional competence by using appropriate responsive turns.
• Procedure:
  • Lecture on the concepts of reactive tokens
  • Watch authentic video materials in L1 (English)
  • Recognize and analyze functions of RTs with script
  • Watch authentic video materials in L2 (Korean)
  • Recognize and analyze functions of RTs with script.
  • Discussion on comparing English RTs and Korean RTs
English Conversation Example

H — So, tell me about something, um, what are you majoring in?
G — I’m majoring in Sports Medicine!
H — Sports Medicine... ok are you an athlete?
G — Uhhh not really?
    So, I’m not a varsity athlete, but I am on the rowing team.
H — Ohh the rowing team! Ok, that’s cool. Do you row on buffalo bayou?
G — Yes
H — Is it big enough, deep enough to row on?
G — Usually. Depending on the time of the year actually, yes.
H — Okay.
    Um...so how many people that is it a skull or a shell?
G — Uhh... well I sweep.
Jin 제인은 이번에 몇 학점?
Jane 저 십구학점 들어요.
Jin 아이고..
Jane 지금까지 쭉 십칠에서 십구학점 들었는데
Jin 아, 정말?
Jane 제가 그..Dual degree하는 바람에...
Jin 아~
Jane 총 백오십학점 필요하거든요.
Jin 맘소사.
Jin 아, 뭐랑 뭐랑 듀얼인데?
Jane 불어랑 화학이랑.
Jin 아 진짜로?
Jane 네
Jin 어...아 그냥 pure Chemistry?
Jane Pure Chemistry.
Jin 근데 또 작년에 프랑스 한학기
Jane 아, 교환학생?
Jin 교환 갔다와서.
Jin 아 진짜로?
Jane 거기서 또 크레딧 많이 못 받아서.
Jin 아. 그치 그치 그치
E: 어! 잠깐만.
어~~ 지혜야. 어서와.
F: 은경아 안녕
E: 어.
F: 반가워 잘 지냈어?
E: 어. 잘 지냈어?
F: 어. 오랜만이다.

E: 그러니까. 이게 얼마나만이야.
E: 야. 추운데 너 신발 신어.
F: 어, 고마워
E: 어, 발 시려워.
여기까지 오는데 오래 걸렸지?
F: 아니 금방 왔어.
E: 어~
In-classroom activity

• Discuss students’ findings about English RTs.
• Watch Korean video followed by a discussion
  • [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yHfJXxfK5ko](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yHfJXxfK5ko) (1:38~)
• Mark RTs in the transcript
• Compare English RTs and Korean RTs and discuss equivalent RTs each other.
• Act out the conversation students made up
Students’ findings

• Korean 정말? or 진짜? are not always equivalent to English “Really”, “Is it true?”
• Korean “어” has variety of meanings depending on how it is said.
• Koreans often double/triple reactive tokens (e.g. 그래 그래. 진짜 진짜.)
Development of using RTs

• First Year Korean 1
가: 이번 여름 방학에 어디에 갈 거예요?
나: 저는 휴스턴에 갈 거예요.

• First Year Korean 2
가: 이번 여름 방학에 어디에 갈 거예요?
나: 저는 휴스턴에 갈 거예요.
가: 아, 그래요?
Development of using RTs (cont’d)

• Second Year Korean (before instruction)
가: 이번 여름 방학에 어디에 갈 거예요?
나: 저는 휴스턴에 갈 거예요.
가: 아, 그래요?
나: OO씨는 여름 방학에 뭐 할 거예요.
가: 저는 오스틴에 갈 거예요.
나: 재미있겠네요.
Development of using RTs (cont’d)

• Second Year Korean (after the instruction)

가: 이번 여름 방학에 어디에 갈 거예요?
나: 저는 휴스턴에 갈 거예요. OO 씨는요?
가: 아, 그래요? 저는 오스틴에 갈 거예요.
나: 오스틴이요? 진짜요?
가: 네, 오스틴이요.
나: 와, 재미있겠네요.
가: 네, 그러면 좋겠어요.
Tentative Conclusion

• Explicit teaching of RTs helps enhancing students’ interactional competence.

• Teaching RTs helps students to be able to engage in conversations more actively.

• By using more RTs, students can extend conversations more dynamically.

• It is necessary to use authentic conversation materials to enhance students’ interactional competence.
References


References


References


