

Repair Strategies in Oral Discourse Case study of Algerian and Jordanian EFL Learners.

Noureddine Derki*

University of Jordan - Faculty of Arts and Foreign Languages - Department of English Language

ABSTRACT

The aim behind this study is investigate how EFL learners in Algeria and Jordan use repair strategies (namely self-initiated repair and repetition) to handle communication breakdown. The study delves in two major issues: why and how EFL learners introduce and use repair strategies in their oral discourse. As far as the sample of this study is concerned, it consisted of 20 participants divided equally between the two nationalities. The participants were university students majoring in English (EFL learners) attending Mustapha Stambouli University (Algeria) and the University of Jordan respectively. Data were collected using recording as participants were required to give a small talk about their future expectations using the English language. Using the conversation analysis (CA) framework, results revealed that both groups used repair strategies as a way to overcome their communication breakdown to keep the conversation going. While both groups used self-initiated repair and repetition, Algerian EFL learners used significantly more repair strategies than Jordanians. It is important to mention that self-initiated repair was used at higher rates by the two groups unlike repetition. Such study could be used as way to raise awareness for the importance of teaching these repair strategies for non-native's in order to help them handle the inventible communication troubles.

Keywords: *communication strategies, self-initiated repair, repetition, discourse analysis, repair strategies, EFL learners, Algerian, Jordanian.*

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Introduction:

People use language as the basic means of communication to interact with each other and exchange information. When people from different linguistic backgrounds are in contact, they resort to a *lingua franca* (English) as a form of bridge language to facilitate communication. Due to the increasing importance of the English language on the international level, millions of people worldwide are engaged in foreign language programs to enhance their levels and learn this language.

English Foreign Language (EFL) learners are challenged with the task to communicate and transmit a comprehensible message to their interlocutors (teacher or colleagues). Due to their lack of competence in the foreign language, learners often commit mistakes in their oral discourse which threatens the communication process. To this extent, they are forced to use certain repair strategies in order to maintain the conversation and to overcome miscommunication problems. In fact, certain scholars such as [1] view that using repair strategies as solution for communication breakdowns will lead to effective second language learning.

In a similar vein, Merrill Swain believes that when learners are faced with the problem of effectively transmitting the message, they are "pushed to use alternative means to get across... the messages... precisely, coherently and appropriately" [2]. This means that when the language user come across troubles, he is forced to use other forms of language to express the same idea which is known as "repair". The nature and organization of repair in naturally occurring conversation was first characterized by [3].

Repair in conversation was subject to extensive research as such topic was studied from different perspectives and across different cultures and languages. In the western context, studies on repair tackled all possible aspects ranging from syntax viz [4], to the influence of non-linguistic factors on the use of repair [5]. In the Arab context, however, repair did not receive much attention despite the fact that it is commonly used especially when non-native speaker shifts to a foreign language (eg. English).

Hence, the present contrastive study aims to investigate the repair strategies used in the oral discourse of Algerian and Jordanian EFL learners. This study will focus mainly on two types of repair: self-initiated repair and repetition since they are regularly encountered in conversation. Moreover, this study aims to examine similarities and differences between the two group's use of repair strategies. Such studies are considered to be important especially from pedagogical perspective.

Literature Review:

Schegloff (1977) defined repair as the act of handling recurrent problems in speaking, hearing, and understanding. Similarly, [6] assert that repair is a behavior which takes place immediately after the occurrence of a communication breakdown. Repair does not only deal with linguistic breakdowns (vocabulary and syntax), it is also used as a tool to handle problems of language acceptability (vagueness and inappropriateness). Based on the amount of research conducted, several repair strategies were identified namely self-initiation self-repair, other-initiation self-repair, other-initiation other-repair, self-initiation other-repair, repetition and paraphrase [7]; [8]; [3]. Since the present work is concerned only with self-initiated repair and repetition, the following section addresses some of the main works conducted while addressing the two strategies.

Self-initiated Repair

To begin with, self-initiated repair refers to a strategy in which the interlocutor who is responsible for the 'trouble' both initiates and completes the repair. [3] Postulated that such strategy takes place in a form of two processes. First, the speaker uses a kind of non-lexical initiators such as cutoffs and lengthening of sounds, and then he moves to expressions like *uh* and *um* known as the quasi-lexical fillers (p. 376). These techniques are used as way to gain time and to make the communication as effective as possible.

The notion of 'trouble' is a central term in the phenomena of repair because simply without a trouble i.e. mistake there would be no need for repair. Actually, [9] assumes that repair starts with an error where the speaker, first, identifies his mistake, eliminate the trouble source and then repairs his utterance. There are certain behaviors which indicate that the speaker is engaged in the process of repair namely: problems in articulation (interruptions) and the use of some expressions like *ah*, *um* or *err*.

Despite variations in the amount of initiation (due the learner's language level), many studies conducted on second language learning revealed that self-initiated repair is common e.g., [10]; [8]. In addition, research has also proven that the use of such strategies is necessary to maintain the conversation smooth and accurate. For example, in a study conducted by [11] where he investigated conversations between native and non-natives of English, the researcher concluded that self-initiated self-completed repair is more important than other-initiated other-completed repair for successful language learning.

[12] Investigated self-initiated self-repair used by one adult learner of English during his interactions in routine conversation. The aim of the researcher was to study where repair initiations took place, how they are produced as well as the contexts in which the repairs occurred. He concluded that understanding the process of repair might enable us to understand the syntactic organization of language learners. In a similar vein, [13] investigated the use of self-initiated self-repair and their effects on Japanese high school learners. The researcher interviewed thirty-two college bound students who were required to use the English language. After the analysis of their production, Sato found that self-initiated self-repair occurred frequently and, in general, successfully.

When it comes to the Arab context, [14] conducted a study on self-initiated repair structures used in Jordanian Spoken Arabic. The writer used eighteen (18) dyadic-videotaped conversations at Yarmouk University, Jordan between males and females and revealed 1595 self-initiated repair instances. Using the conversation analysis framework to analyze the data, results indicated that that Jordanian speakers utilize ten (10) self-initiated repair structures such as expansion, hesitation, replacement, repetition, abort and restart, abort and abandon, insertion, deletion, meta-repair and modify order.

Similarly, [15] studied the use of self-initiated self-repair by Indonesian English students with their instructors. The aim of the researcher was to discover the types of trouble source that trigger the students' self-initiation self-repair strategies performed by the students while interacting with their lecturer, and identify the way students produce such strategy. Results revealed that vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar were the main triggers of repair. Furthermore, the repair strategies used by the students ranged from replacement to correction and repetition.

More recently, [16] conducted a conversation analysis of self-initiated self-repair structures in advanced Iranian EFL learners. In this study, the researcher investigated classroom conversations using conversation analysis (CA). Forty proficient EFL students from three different language institutes in Iran were studied using videotaping and follow-up interviews. Results showed that Iranian EFL learners practice 4 self-initiated self-repair structures, namely, replacing, inserting, deleting and aborting. When compared to native speakers of English, he found that replacing is common in the both cultures.

Repetition

When referring back to literature about repair strategies, one may notice the limited number of works conducted on repetition. This latter is one form of self-repair and refers to the consecutive use of the same lexical item with the same linguistic element (sentence/utterance). [17] in addition to [18] found that certain linguistic elements such as function words (prepositions and articles) are more likely to be repeated than content words (nouns and verbs). Continuing with the notion of repetition, [19] studied the use of expressions like *um*, repeated words, and different forms of self-repairs in the spontaneous speech of American English. She proved that such disfluencies are common in routine conversations, and they are seen as a way to improve speech performance.

[20] Conducted a cross-linguistic study between English and Japanese speakers. They found that the speakers of the two languages differ when it comes to their use of repetition. English speakers were found to repeat articles or prepositions to gain time when searching for a noun, whereas Japanese speakers were forced to adopt different strategies as their language does not have articles and prepositions. The conclusion was that the difference between the two languages is responsible for the variation in use of repetition.

In his study, [21] focused on investigating the use of repetition as self-repair strategy by English–German bilinguals. He found that the two groups used repetition differently based on the language they speak. While English speakers showed more repetition of pronoun-verb combinations, personal pronouns, and prepositions, Germans recycled more demonstrative pronouns. Such differences were accounted to the difference in the structures of the two languages which makes repetition an orderly phenomenon. In addition [22] conduct a study to identify the functions of language formulae in the development of speech fluency in the narrative retelling in English as a second language. Wood revealed that the most common characteristics of story-telling in English are the use of fillers and repetitions.

[23] Investigated the use of repetition among Japanese people in relation to speakers' social characteristics in conversation. The results in this article showed that speakers' social characteristics namely age strongly effects the way repetition is used. In another inquiry, [24] studied the types and functions of repetitions in the narrations of Turkish speakers of French. They found that pronouns, determiners and verbs were the commonest repeated elements and that the main function of repetitions was to delay the production of the next lexical item and to repair.

In a similar vein, [25] conducted a study on repair strategies namely self-repairs and repetitions used in oral discourse of Jordanian and German EFL learners. The study showed that both German and Jordanian non-native speakers of English resorted to strategies of repair in order to gain additional time for retrieving a particular linguistic unit and to maintain conversation. Furthermore, repetitions were used more frequently than self-repairs. He concluded that both strategies are part of natural everyday communication and that repetitions have a wide range of function including gaining time to elaborate the message.

More recently, [26] examined repetitions in the English (L2) of technical studies students. The aim was to investigate whether repetition was a form of disfluency or a kind of communication strategy. Participants were 101 first-year undergraduate students of technical studies who had 9 years of instruction in English. Data was collected using various speech tasks including retelling a story after watching cartoons, describing pictures and story narration where students were asked to talk as naturally as possible. Results revealed that the speakers tend to repeat shorter speech fragments as an L2 communicative strategy in order to give the speaker the opportunity to hold the floor, and prevent breakdowns in communication.

While repair strategies have been studied widely in intercultural and intercultural communication, Arab learners of English are under-represented in repair strategy research. In fact, most of the studies conducted seem to cover only the region of the Middle East. Based on the researcher knowledge, very few inquiry has been conducted to investigate strategies of repair used by Arab EFL English in the Maghreb region.

In Algeria, no attention has been paid to the use of strategies of repair of Algerian EFL learners as the French is more dominant as a foreign language. Therefore, the present contrastive study aims to investigate how EFL learners in non-English speaking communities (Algeria and Jordan) handle communication failure using the repair strategies. Furthermore, the study investigates the factors governing the EFL learners' preferences for employing such strategies and whether there is any significant difference between the two groups. To this extent, the following questions will be tackled in this work:

1. Which is the most frequent repair strategy used by both groups (Algerians vs. Jordanians) in an oral discourse: Self-initiated repair or repetition?
2. Are there any significant differences in the use of repair strategies between the Algerians and Jordanians?

Methodology:

Participants

The sample of this study consisted of Algerian and Jordanian EFL learners attending national universities namely that of Mustapha Stambouli Mascara University (Algeria) and the University of Jordan (Jordan). Participants who took part in this study were 20 male and female distributed equally (10 participants from each group). It is important to mention that participants differed when it comes to their exposure of the language i.e. years of formal instruction in the English language. Such variation can be traced back to differences in the educational systems in each country; while, French language is more dominant Algerian, English is more dominant in Jordan.

Data Collection and Analysis

Using free talk in the form of interview, participants were asked to give an oral discourse about their future plans. Participants of the two groups (Algerians and Jordanians) were instructed to use the English language to describe and talk about their future plans and expectations. The length of the production was not tied to a particular duration as they were given freedom to say whatever they wanted. Their production was supervised by the researcher and recorded using the program Audacity. Gestures such as nodding were used by the researcher to show that he was following and to encourage the participants to continue speaking.

The production of the participants was carefully transcribed taking into consideration all the pauses and sound lengthening. To ease the task for the analysis of the data, dots were used to refer to the length of pauses where three dots indicate a second's pause. Repair strategies were detected based on [27] repair markers which distinguished between verbal (I mean ...) and nonverbal (pauses, silences and cut-offs). It is important to mention that the present study adhered to the framework of repair strategies proposed by [3].

Both qualitative and quantitative approach were used in this study. Results were analysed quantitatively using percentages and frequencies in order to highlight which group used more repair strategies while producing utterances. Moreover, the qualitative approach was used to discuss the findings via providing examples on how repair was used. It is important to mention that a t-test, calculated via SPSS statistics program, was used in order to find out whether there were any significant differences between the strategies of repair employed by the Algerian and Jordanian EFL learners.

Results and Discussion:

Overall Frequencies and Percentages

Algerian participants recorded the use of 34 instances of repair divided between self-initiated repair and repetition

Figure 1. Frequencies and Percentages of Repair Strategy Use among the Algerian Sample

Strategy Type	Frequency	Percentage
Self-initiated repair	19	55.88
Repetition	15	44.12
Total	34	100%

On the other hand, the Jordanian sample used fewer repair strategies than the Algerian one. Such low frequency of repair can be traced back to two major reasons. First and foremost, Jordanians have more experience with the English language than their Algerian counterpart. In fact, English is commonly used in Jordan unlike in Algeria where French is more dominant. This familiarization with the language influence the rates and frequency of repair strategies used.

Furthermore, Jordanians were not as cooperative which was reflected in their production rate. They produced less utterances which definitely influenced the use and frequency of repair strategies. Results indicates that all Jordanian participants used repair strategies scoring a total of 23 instances; between 10 cases of self-initiated repairs and 7 instances of repetitions as highlighted in table 2 below.

Figure 2. Frequencies and Percentages of Repair Strategy Use among the Jordanian Sample

Strategy Type	Frequency	Percentage
Self-initiated repair	10	58.82
Repetition	7	41.18
Total	17	100%

Data Analysis Via T Test

In the previous section, we highlighted the frequency rate of repair strategies used by the two samples (Algerians vs. Jordanians) using percentages. In order to investigate whether there are any significant differences between the two groups, the SPSS program was used to statistically process the data of the two samples via a *t test* as depicted in table 3. Before we proceed to the analysis of the findings, it is advisable to explain certain features of the *t test* such as mean, standard deviation, *t* value and significant level.

While mean represent the average of the instances per group, the standard deviation is used to measure of how much numbers are spread. This will help in determining whether the data are close to the average or not. The *t*-value, on the other hand, represents how many standard units the means of the two groups are apart. This would help in assuming with certain confidence that the obtained difference between the means of the sample groups is too great to be a chance. The significance level (Sig.) is a value for which a *P-value* less than or equal to α is considered statistically significant. Usually, the typical values for α is 0.05 which corresponds to a confidence level of 95% [28].

Figure 3. T-test Analysis Results

Strategy Type	Group	Number	Mean	Std. Deviation	T	Sig.
Self-initiated Repair	Algerians	10	1.90	.568	2.40	0.00
	Jordanians	10	1.00	.816		
Repetition	Algerians	10	1.50	.850	1.34	0.01
	Jordanians	10	.70	.483		
Total	Algerians	10	3.40	1.418	2.79	0.01
	Jordanians	10	1.70	1.299		

Table 3 above highlights the results of a *t test* conducted to investigate whether there were significant differences between the two samples. While the mean score of Algerian participants was 3.40, the Jordanian participants' mean score was 1.70. This indicates that Algerians used more repair strategies than Jordanians. Furthermore, the results indicate that there are indeed significant differences between the Algerian and Jordanian participants use of repair strategies at $\alpha = .5$. The difference between the two-tailed *P* value equals 0.01 which is considered to be statistically significant. The lack of experience of Algerian participants with the English language as well as the occasional interference of French created communicative problems which forced them to use excessive repair strategies.

Self-initiated Repair

In this study both groups used self-initiated repair in their oral discourse. Starting with the Algerian participants who outscored the Jordanians with 19 instances. The main observation that could be noticed is that all participants used such strategy when they detected that they made some kind of mistake. Generally speaking, the Algerian sample had difficulty with grammar namely tenses of the verbs and agreement between parts of speech. In many occasions, the participant delivered an utterance where he used an inappropriate tense marker and then he repaired his mistake. The below excerpts (1-6) highlight how Algerians used self-initiated repair. Italics were used to depict both the repairing and the repaired segments:

1. I want to, ..., er, get a new, ..., I wanna get a new car

In example (1), the participant initially used the verb (*want*) and then he changed to (*wanna*) instead. Even though it is the same verb but pronounced differently, the level of formality related to the verbs varies. Whereas the former is formal, the latter is less formal and it is used in casual situations. The formality level was not taken into consideration as participants were given the freedom to speak the way it suits them most. The participant's hesitation is reflected in the use of non-linguistic initiators such as the two seconds pause and the use of the filter "er".

2. My parents always *pushes*, ... er er, *they're pushing* me to become a *good*, ..., er *better* person.

In this example (2), the participant wanted to show appreciation for her parents' efforts and that she is planning to pay them back. Initially, she used the verb with the third singular present marker "pushes" (repairing segment) which is incorrect since the subject is in the plural form. When she realized this "trouble", she shifted to the present continuous and added a pronoun as a form of assertion "they're pushing" (repaired segment). In the clause that followed, there was another form of substitution (adjective). Instead of maintaining the adjective "good", she chose its comparative version "better". This is mainly to indicate that she is in constant development due to her parents' support and guidance.

3. Personally I would love to, ... er,um er *to voyager* to, um ..., to ..., *to see* other countries, um ...,

Example (3) depicts the notion of “interference” and indicates that the participant is a novice EFL learner. The participant faced difficulty in providing a suitable verb for his statement since he took a 5 seconds pause; then he used the French verb “voyager” which means “travel” in English. When he could not retrieve the appropriate verb in English, he relied on his French experience to fill this gap. Even though, this word exists in the English languages but it refers to the person and not the action itself. Since he failed to retrieve the verb “travel”, he used the verb “see” instead. It is important to mention that Algerian participants were freshmen university students (1st year). This means that their repertoire is somehow limited and they rely on their background in French to cope with the occasional breakdowns namely finding accurate words in English.

4. As soon as I finish my studying, ... er my studies, I want to look for job and *get a marriage*, er ..., ..., ..., and *get married*

Excerpt (4) highlights another situation where participants lack of experience motivates the use of repair strategies. First of all, the instance of repetition signals his distorted ideas and it is used to give him room to organize them. When he wanted to express his plans to get married, the participant used the inappropriate formulae to express his idea. After that, the speaker was searching for a repairing segments and took him about 4 seconds to give a more proper structure. He maintained the same verb and changed the noun into a past participle “get married”.

5. 5. I *try* my best, er ..., I *will try* to make my *daddy* proud of me. I want to go with my father and visit Mecca *god willing* ..., Um I mean *inshallah*

Continuing with the Algerian use of self-initiated repair, example (5) the participant first provided a verb in the present simple and later on substituted it with a continuous form. In the last part of the sentence, we can notice the western cultural influence. In order to highlight that the event he is planning for will take place in the future, the speaker used “god willing”. This latter is actually a western expression which may have connotative meanings. To this extent, the speaker returned and repaired such use by providing more marked expression “inshallah” as a form of expressing his identity (Muslim).

6. I strive to get a scholarship; *they* help me getting over many problemsum I mean *the benefits* are just huge

Example (6) reflects what is known as fronting. In this statement, the speaker wanted to show the importance of getting a scholarship. When he started to mention some of the advantages, he directly used the pronoun “they” which no reference. Therefore, the speaker latter used the repairing segment “the benefits” to indicate which subject is responsible of the action. To sum up, the Algerians used self-initiated repair extensively to overcome mainly grammatical mistakes. This is mainly due to their lack of experience with the language unlike the Jordanian participants.

As far as the Jordanians’ use of self-initiated repair is concerned, less frequency was depicted with only 10 instances. This can be traced back to their experience with the English language. All Jordanian participants used self-initiated repair to variant degree and the following examples (7-11) highlight how:

7. I want to change the world and, ... er ... *leave* every day to the fullest ..., ... um I mean *live* because we are not here to survive, er...

This excerpt (7) depicts an instance where the change in pronunciation, changes the meaning of the segment. The speaker used the repairable segment “leave” with the intention of showing his desire to enjoy his days as in “live”. The problem is that the two words are somehow similar in pronunciation, where the difference is in the length of the vowel [i]. To this extent, the speaker ultimately realized the mistake and then he substituted it with the repaired segment “live”.

8. [...] expectations *is* what give us hope....,.... when I graduate this year I hope to rejoin my uncle in the U.Kum as I said expectations *are* the reason why we wake up everyday

The speaker in this example (8) seems to have a good level in English based on her style while delivering her ideas. In this situation, the participant almost camouflaged her repair process. Notice that in the start of the sentence there is a problem with agreement between the subject and the verb. While she was supposed to say “are”, the speaker mistakenly used the singular “is”. However, she continued his idea and then he returned to repair his utterance. She did so without drawing the attention of the listener. This entails that the speaker has a certain level in English which aided her to handle trouble in affective way without making it obvious by hesitating and taking long pauses.

9. [...] I have a boy, er ... a **little** boy and I want to be good parent to him

The participant in this example (9) repaired the segment through adding information. In the beginning, he gave a noun “boy” without any adjective to describe it. Immediately after that, the speaker initiated repair where a repairing segment is added “little” in order to give the listen a clearer picture about the referent. To sum up, unlike their Algerian counterparts, the Jordanian participants showed more accuracy while delivering their message. Furthermore, self-initiated repair was used by Jordanians as a way to highlight ideas, rephrase sentences or add information to their statements. Now we move to the other strategy which is that of repetition.

Repetition

Repetition is detected when the same fragment is used again by the speaker within the same proposition. This strategy is used to help the speaker gain time to make his communication as effective as possible. Both Algerians and Jordanians exhibited the use of such strategy to a variant degree. Results indicate that certain linguistic elements were subject to repetition more than others namely personal pronouns, nouns, articles (definite and indefinite), prepositions and conjunctions.

It is important to mention that in such strategy, both the repairing segment and the repaired segment are same. As far as the use of repetition is concerned, the Algerian participants once again scored higher than their Jordanian counterparts with 15 occurrences. In order to understand how such strategy was employed, we will discuss the (10-14) excerpts extracted from the Algerian sample.

10. [...] life *is about*, er..., ..., *is about* finding *happiness*, er..., ... *happiness* whether in materials or in people to spend your rest of life with them

In this example (10), the speaker found it difficult to express himself. As a way to give himself some time to think and elaborate his idea, he repeated the verbal phrase “is about” and then the noun “happiness”. Notice how when repetition is about to take place, certain filters ‘er’ and pauses immediately precede the repairing segments.

11. I would love to gather money and *travel*, er..., ..., *travel* to meet new people *and..* er..., *and...*, ..., ..., gain new experiences

In this excerpt (11) we have an example of noun and preposition repetition. The speaker in this situation intentionally repeated the noun “travel” and later on the preposition “and” namely because he was not able to retrieve the words as fast as possible.

12. For me I would like to join the army to secure my future *but* my mom ... er ... um *but* my mom is not cool with that

The example (12) is another instance of repetition but this time at the level of conjunctions. The speaker in this situation was hesitant to express his mother’s disagreement. The speaker repeated the conjunction “but” along with the filters “er” and “um”.

13. Having a family is something important, er..., in the future I want *to have* a lot of babies ... um... *to have* a beautiful houseand *to have* a nice car.

14. I would love....um... *to* ... um *to* ... visit east Europe

The examples (13) and (14) highlight another instance of repetition. In (13), we have an example of repetition at the level of the verb where the speaker repeated the modal “to have” while enumerating his expectations. In (14), it is on the level of preposition where speaker repeated the preposition “to” as he was thinking about the appropriate verb to use.

Similarly, the Jordanian participants exhibited the use of repetition but with less frequency with only 7 instances. Basically, it was also used as a means to delay the message in order to modify it and make sure it is as informative as possible. To this extent, the following excerpts (15-19) portray the use of repetition by the Jordanian participants.

15. *I* ..., ... *I* want to start a companyum ... kind of investment... ..er *I* am planning on investing by starting my own brand.

16. I want to build *a* house *a* safe house I mean like *a* sanctuary.

17. I am a fan of Real Madrid and I want go there and visit *the* *the* Santiago *the* Santiago Bernabeu

The three situations above highlight the repetition of different linguistic elements namely personal pronouns as in (15) where the speaker repeats the first singular pronoun “I” to show his commitment to the proposition. In excerpt (16), the speaker repeats the indefinite article “a” while describing his view about the perfect house. In situation (17), the speaker had difficulty recalling the name of the famous stadium which forced him to repeat the definite article “the” as way to gain time and successfully retrieve the linguistic item.

18. This summer I am planning to sell my car and with money... .. um....*instead of*... *instead of* getting another one, I will get married.

19. It been on mind to visit Italy and the place *where* the warriors *where* ancient romans used to battle umm you know the colosseum.

In examples (18) and (19), the Jordanian speakers repeated the conjunction “instead” and “where” respectively. Eventhough frequency was different, both groups showed a tendency to repeat the same linguistic elements.

To sum up and regardless of the type of repair strategy being used, all the situations mentioned above have something in common especially when it comes to the instances preceding the repairing elements. All participants exhibited certain hesitation embodied in pauses and filters. Pauses are a kind of behavior which is described by Levelt (1983) as covert or potential error and a signal indicating that repair process is going to take place. Filters such as “er” and “em” were extensively used as highlighted in the examples above before self-repair. These segments indicate that speaker noticed the mistake and he is taking time to rethink a correct form and engage in the process of repair.

Limitations of the Study:

The limitations of this study can be summarized in two main points: the length of the recordings and naturalness of the data. Participants were not required to talk for a specific period of time yet their production was relatively short. The free talk caused an issue for most participants and it was considered to be vague since they did not understand what points/topics to cover. To this extent, it would be advisable for coming researchers to take into consideration narrowing down the topics in order to guide the participant and make sure that they produce as much data as possible. When participants are told that their production is recorded, they usually monitor their speech and try to provide accurate speech. This means that if they were recorded secretly, their production may differ which makes it more natural. Hence, it would be more suitable to focus on naturally occurring data e.g. daily conversations where participants are spontaneous, instead of instructed/directed situations.

Conclusion:

To sum up the above mentioned, the present study revealed that both Algerian and Jordanian EFL learners used two types of repair strategies namely self-initiated and repetition. These findings confirm the findings of other studies on strategies of repair [21]; [25]. It is important to mention that the frequency of use differed between the two groups as highlighted in tables (1-3) where the analysis of data revealed that Algerian EFL learners used more self-initiated repair and repetition in their oral discourse than Jordanians. One of the main reasons is that Algerian participants faced many troubles to transmit their message which forced them used such repair strategies to remedy the trouble and maintain communication.

Self-initiated repair occurred when the participant first committed a mistake in his discourse and then, he engaged in the process of repairing it. While the two groups recorded the use of this strategy, the Algerian sample showed higher frequencies due to their lack of experience with the English language. Unlike in Jordan where English is commonly used, Algerians are mostly accustomed with French. Both groups, however, similarly used self-initiated repair to overcome problems related mainly to: grammar (wrong tense of verbs), phonology (wrong pronunciation), semantic overlapping (words used in wrong context) and formality level. These findings confirm the view that self-initiated repair is a well-organized, orderly, and rule-governed phenomenon of spoken discourse [3].

When participants faced the trouble of remembering certain linguistic expressions, they resorted to repetition. This latter is a strategy used by speakers as a way to plan for a new utterance or to gain time to recall the next lexical item. The study found that there are certain linguistic elements which were repeated more than others namely personal pronouns, nouns, articles (definite and indefinite), prepositions and conjunctions. As the tables (1-3) above highlighted, the Algerian sample again outscored Jordanians since they used repetition in multiple instances. To this extent, teachers are advised to take into consideration exposing their EFL learners to such repairing strategies. In fact, repetition and self-initiated repair should be reinforced for student-student or student-teacher classroom interaction as mastering such strategies could help learners overcome communication troubles and allow them to maintain their conversations.

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