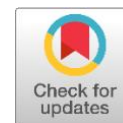


The mediative role of learning materials: Raising L2 learners' awareness of silence and conversational repair during L2 interaction

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ABSTRACT

This conceptual article explores the role of pedagogical mediation in raising Japanese English as a foreign language (EFL) learners' awareness of cross-culturally diverse roles of silence and conversational repair strategies during turn-taking in second language (L2) interaction as seen from an interactional perspective. This study delves into the nexus of scholarly and pedagogical perspectives, accommodating Japanese EFL learners' interactional needs to self-mediate own silence as an interactional resource by using repair strategies in L2 interaction. It specifically examines the pedagogical approaches reflected in English language teaching (ELT) materials designed for Japanese EFL learners, aiming to raise awareness of the multi-faceted use of silence and repair as a part of cross-culturally invisible turn-taking practices from three perspectives: (1) pedagogical approaches involving silence in L2 interaction in scholarly articles, (2) learning materials produced specifically for Japanese EFL learners and (3) Japanese EFL learners' perspectives on Conversation Analysis-informed learning resources identified in empirical studies. Drawing on this analysis, this study aims to deepen our understanding of current practices and bridge the gap between theory and practice to facilitate L2 learners' interactional repertoires through material development informed by a holistic perspective.



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1. Introduction

'I wish the student would just say something- why isn't she/he responding?' Have you ever thought about this in class? You wait and wait for the student to speak, and they just keep silent with no response at all. Eventually this silence becomes too long, so you give up and move on to the next student. Both you and the student may feel frustrated and uneasy. Why is it that this situation can happen? What can be done to avoid this? (Vaughan, 2000, pp. 8-9).

These words of an EFL teacher in Japanese EFL contexts touch on frequently heard and vital pedagogical issues that need to be explored to understand learner silence in the L2 classroom (Harumi, 2011; King, 2013). Teachers often come across challenging silences following a question that requires a response. This presages crucial decisions for teachers who must decide whether to wait, move on, or take alternative pedagogical approaches by changing group dynamics, reformulating questions while maintaining progressivity of classroom interaction involving teachers' contingency action (Tai,

2022). What teachers find difficult is the prolonged silence itself, learners' lack of clarification and non-vocal subtle interactional clues to the reasons for learners' silence (Ellwood & Nakane, 2009; Harumi, 2011).

Students may be unwilling to participate or lack the means to address their interactional needs to clearly explain their silent replies, or deeply interact with their thoughts before speaking (Bao, 2023) while retaining their "private turn" (Ohta, 2001, p. 66) to facilitate self-engagement during silent participation. Depending on the situated context, the role of silence in interaction can vary greatly. Previous studies (Bao, 2014; King, 2013; King & Harumi, 2020) have revealed that learner silence can broadly originate from a dynamic interplay of psychological, sociocultural, and interactional factors as seen from an interdisciplinary perspective. In recent years, an increasing number of studies have explored the pedagogical role of silence in a wider range of educational contexts, which includes interactionally strategic use of silence in multicultural group discussion among graduate students in the UK (Zhang, 2023). However, ways to support learners in addressing their interactional needs in L2 interaction using L2 learning materials from an interactional perspective remain under-explored, as observed by Jones (2021) and Harumi (2023).

The present study's subject is learner silence in Japanese EFL classrooms in situations where L2 oral participation is encouraged. This study aims to respond to Japanese EFL learners' voices expressed in an earlier investigation (Harumi, 2011), which examined the reasons for classroom silence from learners' perspectives. The aforementioned Harumi's (2011) study involved a questionnaire survey in which 197 Japanese EFL learners participated. The respondents addressed the difficulty of 'invisible' turn-taking practices as partial reasons for remaining silent. Specific difficulties expressed were: (1) timing of response (e.g., missed opportunities to participate; difficulty in claiming turn, own unnoticed quiet voice, teachers' move to other students) and (2) cross-culturally different expectations of turn-initiation or turn-allocation in L2 classrooms (e.g., preference for individual nomination rather than turn-initiation or psychological fear of being singled out within the same socio-cultural group). Their voices highlight the collaborative dimension of interaction and the varied interactional values of participants.

Interactional issues stemming from cross-culturally different turn-taking practices, specifically involving self-initiation, are also widely reported in overseas academic contexts and seen as a source of misunderstanding between teachers and learners or of difficulties in joining L2 academic discourse (Barraja-Rohan, 2011; Ellwood & Nakane, 2009; Nakane, 2005; Su et al., 2023; Takahashi, 2021; Turner & Hiraga, 2003). For example, Nakane (2005) and Ellwood and Nakane (2009) highlight Japanese international students' interactional negotiation towards oral participation in a range of Australian academic discourse but also suggest the importance of teaching useful conversational skills needed to participate in oral interaction. Karas and Uchihara (2021) have illustrated multiple perspectives on turn-allocation. These have involved teachers nominating individuals, with different expectations and outcomes in Canadian and Japanese educational contexts. While Takahashi's (2021) study identified American and East Asian graduates' different responding styles as answering and exploring teacher questions, her study suggests that their different "responding styles can be effective platforms to foster students' contributions and open students' minds to different perspectives" (p. 14). A study by Malabarba and Nguyen (2019) emphasised how culturally different expectations on turn-taking practices require bridges between teachers and learners or connecting learners in L2 classrooms. Further, Harumi's (2023) recent study, which explored the use of CA-informed speaking materials to facilitate learners' L2 interactional competence, argued that Japanese EFL learners lack valuable opportunities to learn cross-culturally different interactional styles in L2 interaction. Based on pedagogical intervention involving CA-informed analysis of individual learners' dyadic interaction to identify interactional needs of learners, activities such as contrastive L2 classroom observation using conversational transcripts or self-reflective observation of own L2 interaction to enhance awareness of diverse interactional styles were implemented. The study revealed the necessity to identify learner needs to improve interactional competence and to provide opportunities for them to use various interactional resources, especially repair strategies, and noted the overall effects of this type of pedagogical intervention (See investigation of learners' voices in section 3.3).

However, vital opportunities for both teachers and learners to explore these invisible interactional rules and learning resources to understand interactional rules are extremely rare, leading to misunderstandings or long-term obstacles to L2 learning (Harumi, 2011). This study takes a small step

towards addressing this issue. It explores the synthesis of scholarly and pedagogical approaches by examining the mediative role of learning materials for Japanese EFL learners: (1) pedagogical perspectives on silence addressed through scholarly articles, (2) learning materials produced for Japanese EFL learners and (3) learners' views on CA-informed learning materials, dealing with silence and conversational repair strategies as a part of turn-taking practices. The term 'conversational repair' in this study refers to L2 learners' ability to identify their interactional difficulties in terms of the progressivity of interaction and utilise available interactional resources (e.g., non-verbal cues, reactive tokens, repetition, and the use of fillers) to maintain interaction. This study highlights key perspectives on raising awareness of cross-culturally invisible turn-taking practices in learning materials and addresses pedagogical approaches to be considered in practical contexts.

1.1. The role of silence in L2 interaction seen from an interactional perspective

The key concept of interactional competence (IC) (Hall et al., 2011; Salaberry & Kunitz, 2019) in social interaction has been specifically characterised as the ability to deploy and recognise context-specific interactional patterns (Hall et al., 2011), including the use of non-verbal cues such as silence/pause and also its potential to repair problems in interaction. In recent years, Conversation-Analysis (CA) advanced by studying the ways people collaboratively interact by using various interactional resources such as repetition, reactive tokens, topic development/initiation, repair, or turn-initiation in turn-taking practices and its methodological approach has been widely used in the analysis of L2 classroom discourse. When we consider how to develop learners' interactional repertoires in L2 spoken interaction, the most frequently associated terms for the ultimate interactional goal are 'talk', 'speaking', or 'fluency', with the word 'silence' usually located at the opposite pole. For example, Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson (1974) note that silence can be considered an indication of some interactional problems in English discourse. In particular, a silent reply exceeding one second can be considered a sign of disinterest or boredom (Harumi, 2011). However, recent studies examining the role of silence in educational contexts value the role of wait time (Süt, 2020; Walsh & Li, 2013) or silent participation, which is a desirable interactional space for L2 learners, considering cultural values attached to silent reflection specifically for Japanese EFL learners (Harumi, 2020). An additional facet is teachers' pedagogical approaches through wait-time to learner-initiated questions (Donald, 2020) in Taiwan. In Saudi Arabian EFL contexts, the preferred silent mode of learning through attentive listening (Al-Ahmadi & King, 2023) among female learners has been observed.

Taking a multi-faceted interactional view of silence in L2 contexts, this study focuses on the role of learner silence in L2 interaction as "an intertwined interactional cue which often precludes the forthcoming repair within the same turn-sequence in turn-taking practices" (Harumi, 2023, p. 1). In this sense, learner silence has a sequentially close and significant connection with repair but with a distinctive function towards learners' production of their own thoughts. In relation to this, the term 'pause' seen as a temporary stop located in mid-turn or at the transitional stage of a turn in speech is interchangeably used in this paper as it can function as a facilitative interactional resource although it usually has a negative connotation as Götz (2019) argues. Interactional repair practices within conversation strategies such as fillers, repetition, and reformulations have crucial roles in the progressivity of interaction. However, understanding of the conceptually intricate and complex relation between silence and repair revealed by research has yet to be fully reflected in pedagogical practice.

The standout examples are L2 learning objectives in relation to IC specified in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) (Council of Europe, 2001, 2020). When we turn our attention to the learning objectives of interactional competence, focussing on "qualitative aspects of spoken language use" (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 35-37), the interpretation of expected spoken language use is left to individual teachers. A good example of this is the interpretation of the term 'pause' as a part of fluency. Referring to the CEFR description (2001), Götz (2019) argues that silence as an interactional resource is still seen negatively within the narrow scope of quantitative measurement, as illustrated in key words for each proficiency level: "much pausing (A1)", "very evident (B1)", "few noticeably long pauses (B2)". Significantly, there are no additional statements on the role of silence in the updated volume (Council of Europe, 2020). Based on these, from a learners' point of view, it is difficult to see how different functions of silence, involving task requirements such as monologue, dialogue, and problem-solving tasks, or seeing it as an interactional resource, are reflected in learning objectives.

It should be, however, noted that recent developments in the assessment of interactional competence in official speaking tests such as the Cambridge English language proficiency exam, Lam, Galaczi, Nakatsuhara and May (2023) argue the challenges assessors face in treating pauses and silences from the perspective of 'low or high inference scales.' According to Fulcher (1993, p. 13), "assessment scales which relate to specific observable behaviour" are considered "low-inference scales, and those that require inferences about why the observed behaviour is occurring high-inference scales." Lam et al. (2023) note that while a low-inference scale may refer to the frequency of pauses which can lead to increased reliability among the raters, "a high inference scale may concern why test-takers paused on each occasion (e.g., looking for ideas or for language, struggling to understand co-participants' utterances or to determine appropriate next moves, or inserting hesitations to mark dispreferred responses" (p. 19). This can also emphasise the way the "rating of IC could be argued to be high inference in nature, since any given IC performance needs to be interpreted in conjunction with the specific moments of talk-in-interaction" (p.19) and warns that reliance on a low-inference scale can make the rater's judgement less context-dependent. In relation to this, Bao (2023) asserts the importance of drawing attention to "the socio-cognitive view on fluency" by referring to the concept of 'cognitive fluency' (Segalowitz, 2010) as a dynamic in social interaction. Cognitive fluency is defined as "how effectively one can mobilise individual knowledge and skills to construct output" (p. 142) and this is the ability L2 learner constantly uses in social interaction. These studies highlight current movement towards a deeper understanding of the role of silence as an interactional resource at professional and scholarly level.

On a pedagogical level, teachers and learners also need a medium and opportunities to be aware of invisible interactional rules operating in L2 which can greatly differ from those of learners' L1 in the role interactional silence and repair play in L2 interaction. Specifically, Diepenbroek and Derwing (2013, p. 2) argue that teachers also need "direction for ideas of what to teach. They may also need some help in terms of how to introduce a given concept" such as turn-taking practices. The next section explores how silence and repair are evaluated as material development to facilitate awareness of interactional repertoires.

1.2. Classroom silence and material development

The importance of introducing the interactional role of silence in L2 interaction through learning materials are previously pointed out by a handful number of studies which have identified it as a part of cross-culturally different use of conversation strategies across different languages and cultures (Barraja-Rohan, 2011; Faucette, 2001; Harumi, 2023; Jones, 2021). However, studies looking at the close relationship between 'learner silence' and the role of a task as immediate educational concerns are extremely rare. Bao's studies (2020, 2023) crucially addressed this issue and explored the importance of the depth of engagement through various tasks and notes, arguing that "silence needs to be managed with an acute awareness of why, how, when and how long students need it to support their own learning and when the verbal mode of learning should take over" (p. 33). Referring to the role of silence during learners' task engagement, Bao (2023) also asserts that "learners' mental processes do produce output that needs more understanding, recognition and nurturing" and emphasises the importance of understanding the role of "the proactive mind," along with the impact of the scarcity of empirical studies exploring ways L2 learners' silence and the nature of their specific task interact (p. 141).

When we turn our attention to practical applications to existing literature on silence in educational contexts, we find voices referring to disparities between the research findings and their application to material development (Tomlinson, 2013). Su et al. (2023) also note various roles of pedagogical silences in wider educational contexts. However, materials that incorporating diverse ways in which languages are learned, considering learners' socio-cultural backgrounds, are scarce. Gray and Leather (1999) stress that "most materials fail to bridge the cultural gap or to address specific problems that Japanese students encounter in trying to communicate spontaneously in the classroom" (p. 7). The following section aims to examine the role of silence and repair addressed through three different perspectives and explore the synthesis of pedagogical approaches informed by the CA perspective.

2. Exploring pedagogical synthesis

In this section, this study's methodological approach, pedagogical synthesis study and research procedure will be examined in an exploration of the mediative role of learning materials and the diverse roles of silence and conversational repair.

2.1. Methodological approach

This pedagogical synthesis study aims to understand current scholarly and pedagogical practices and create a dialogue (Chong, 2020) on learner silence and repair through the lens of the mediative role of learning materials. This study adopts the theoretical framework proposed by Cooper's (1998) five strategies for conducting a synthesis study: problem formulation, literature search, applicability of data evaluation, data analysis and presentation of results. The present study specifically focuses on the analysis of pedagogical approaches addressed through text-driven data, aiming to illustrate what has been understood about pedagogical approaches suggested for Japanese EFL learners in scholarly articles, learning materials and what learners have said about their perspectives.

Previous synthesis studies (Earley, 2014; Nind & Lewthwaite, 2018) have mainly focussed on scholarly approaches to pedagogical issues from researchers' perspectives. However, Curtin and Hall (2018, p. 187) assert that the recent "fundamental [scholarly] shift from invisibility to visibility has been the negotiation of the learner as agentive and intentional, of the learning context, and of the sets of relations surrounding the context as complex with affordances and constraints." In order to promote holistic and shared understanding of the mediative role of learning materials in terms of pedagogical congruence (Evans, Kandiko Howson, Forsythe & Edwards, 2021), this study adopts "person triangulation" (Evans et al., 2021, p. 538), examining text-based data illustrating the mediative role of pedagogy in the use of silence and repair from multiple perspectives. This section, therefore, looks closely at the ways learner silence and repair are explored and viewed in CA-informed materials from three viewpoints (researchers, material writers/practitioners and learners), focussing on Japanese EFL learners: 1) pedagogical approaches with interactional perspectives in scholarly articles, 2) learning resources produced specifically for Japanese EFL learners and 3) Japanese EFL learners' perspectives on CA-informed learning resources aimed at developing repair strategies. In this light, the specific research questions addressed are:

- What pedagogical approaches are recommended to support Japanese EFL learners' oral participation in relation to the use of silence and conversational repair during L2 interaction?
- What pedagogical approaches are reflected by CA-informed learning materials cognisant of silence and repair for EFL learners?
- How do learners perceive the effects of CA-informed learning materials or pedagogical approaches?

The following section, 2.2, presents the detailed analytical procedure adopted.

2.2. Procedure

The selection of key scholarly articles or learning resources is based on the following inclusion criteria and qualitatively explores the ways CA-informed pedagogical approaches correspond to Japanese EFL learners' needs in terms of the availability of opportunities to learn interactional rules and learning resources. This study refers to a methodological framework for conducting qualitative synthesis in TESOL (Chong, 2020; Chong & Plonsky, 2021) and filtering procedure (Ismailov, Chiu, Dearden, Yamamoto & Djalilova, 2021) for determining inclusion and exclusion criteria. The initial selection of scholarly articles drew on a database search between 1999-2023, including Google Scholar ($n=50$) and ERIC ($n=15$), with the key word search on 'silence', 'Japanese EFL learners', 'repair' and 'interactional competence'. As the scope of this search was Japanese EFL or international students at the tertiary level and the focus on the topic of silence and repair was highly specific, the number of articles found was limited.

The author examined each article thoroughly for its relevance following the inclusion criteria and filtering process (Fig. 1) and classified the selected texts using the following criteria in Tables. 1-3. The publication search included the first pioneering textbook (Gray & Leather, 1999) specifically produced for Japanese learners of English, raising the issue of silence and repair as a focus. All the selected materials are written in English to ensure fairness in readers' accessibility to materials. The

scholarly articles in Table 1 are all peer-reviewed journal articles, with the exception of the study by (Jones, 2021), which is a book chapter. Due to the specific scope of this study, the types of material took different forms, which include course books, teachers' resource books, in-class activities used for action research, exploratory studies, and texts from collections of classroom activity books focusing on pragmatic aspects of L2 interaction. However, all references here include the following elements as a part of their study or production of learning resources. Inclusion criteria:

A) Research context-based criteria

- Study material: Literature addressing Japanese EFL/ESL or international students' silence, repair and pedagogy when learning or using English for academic studies in higher education, both in learners' home countries or overseas' settings.
- Publication dates: Between 1999 and 2023 (last accessed in April 2023)
- Document type: Published (e.g., journal articles, book chapters that did not duplicate journal articles, textbooks)
- Language: English

B) Topic-relevance criteria

- Silence is considered an interactional resource within turn-taking practice.
- Repair is considered as a means for learners to self-mediate their own silence.
- Pedagogical perspectives or learning resources function as awareness-raising activities addressing learner needs, providing opportunities to use repair strategies as interactional resources.

2.2.1. Filtering process (flow diagram of selection and screening process)

The screening process was modelled on the diagram below (Fig. 1) and targeted suitability for qualitative synthesis analysis. The following section will present themes that emerged through qualitative analysis and detailed discussion.

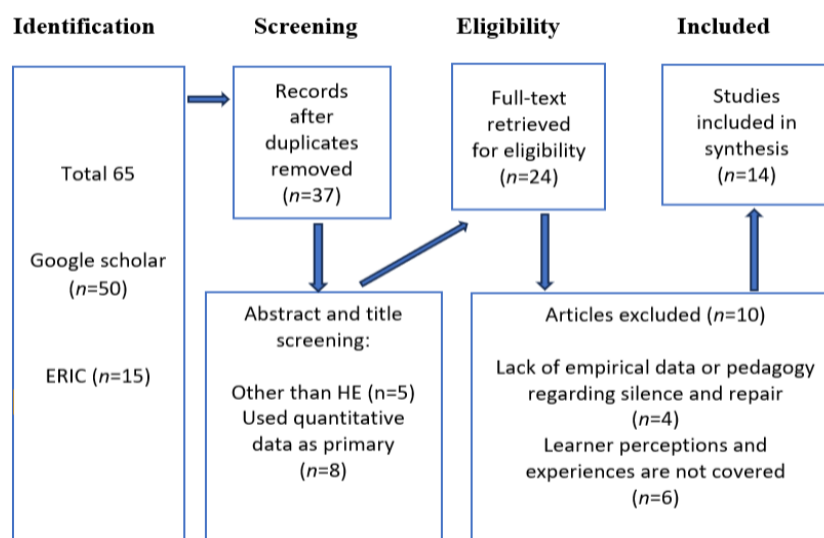


Fig. 1. Filtering process

3. Findings

Based on the pedagogical synthesis study, the following key themes emerged from each category and Tables 1-3 summarise the results. A detailed discussion of these findings follows in sections 3.1 to 3.3.

Table 1. Multiple perspectives on silence and repair for pedagogical mediation

| Scholarly articles (with pedagogical recommendations for Japanese learners) | | |
|--|--|---|
| Emerged themes | Pedagogical approaches | Study |
| Timing of participation | Timed activities including games or a timer | (Carroll, 2000) (Rose, 1999) (Fukada & Pashby, 2011) (Littleton, 2022) |
| Explicit instruction | Direct instruction on conversational phrases | (Talandis & Stout, 2015) (Jones, 2021) |
| Awareness-raising on cross-culturally different interactional practices | Analysis of natural L2 interaction (e.g., use of audio/video recording, conversational transcription, discussion on the role of silence across languages & cultures, regular self-assessment or oral assessment) | (Fukada & Pashby, 2011) (Talandis & Stout, 2015) (Stone, 2015; Stone & Kershaw, 2019; Stone & Kershaw, 2021) (Jones, 2021) (Harumi, 2023) |

Table 2. Learning materials designed for Japanese learners and teachers

| Themes and pedagogical approaches | Resources |
|---|--|
| Rational for a cross-culturally different pedagogical approach Three different levels in terms of task demands for silent, interactional, highly interactional tasks | Safety & Challenge (Gray & Leather, 1999) |
| Localised context settings referring to teachers' difficulty in dealing with learner silence in L2 classroom (2 nd edition) The three Golden rules to avoid silence, give longer answers and talk about yourself (2 nd and 3 rd). Useful conversational strategies in peer talk, Guided questioning techniques to maintain talk | Conversation in Class (2 nd and 3 rd edition) (Richmond & Vannieu, 2009) (Talandis et al., 2015) |
| Use of rubrics for learners to self-assess interactional repertoires in group discussion | (In class activity) (Stone & Kershaw, 2019; Stone & Kershaw, 2021) |
| Use of simplified of research findings as cross-culturally different conversational rules, project-based approach to analyse the use of repair in interview and presentation | Pragmatics undercover (McLean & Talandis, 2020) |
| Use of contrastive conversation transcription, discussion on culturally different participatory classroom discourse, self-analysis of natural conversation | (In-class activity) (Harumi, 2023) |

Table 3. Learners' views on the effects of CA-informed learning material

| Emerged benefits | Study |
|---|--------------------------|
| Learners' perceived improvement on the use of conversational strategies and language proficiency | (Talandis & Stout, 2015) |
| Reduced anxiety, use of more natural interaction, Higher awareness on the use of interactional resources to buy time, maintain interaction | (Jones, 2021) |
| Confidence building, Higher awareness on various types of interactional resource (silence, repair, topic-development, use of questions) and its function to maintain interaction and own progress | (Harumi, 2023) |

3.1. CA-informed pedagogical perspectives proposed in scholarly papers

Filled pauses, timing of response and awareness-raising activities. For more than a few decades, many scholars have stressed the need to teach conversational skills (Goh & Burns, 2012), interactional skills (Sayer, 2005; van Lier, 1984) or communication strategies (Dörnyei, 1995). Although pedagogical terms referring to interaction vary, its importance is strongly emphasized. Specifically, while the importance of teaching various interactional repair practices such as listenership, topic development and reactive tokens are addressed by ELT teachers (Curry & Geraldine, 2021), the literature review indicates that the most frequently referenced and directly associated repair practice for Japanese EFL learners' silence, as seen from an interactional perspective, pedagogical approaches.

These encourage: 1) filled pauses, 2) timing of responses in relation to turn-initiation or turn-allocation promoting participation in collaborative interaction and 3) culturally different views of silence in L2 contexts. This section reviews the ways previous empirical studies suggest pedagogical approaches to teaching filled pauses, timing of responses and cross-culturally different values on silence as seen from an interactional perspective.

Earlier CA-informed studies on learner silence mainly focus on the importance of teaching fillers such as ‘well’ or ‘let me see’ used as ‘stalling or time-gaining strategies’ (Jones, 2021, p. 23) helping learners to gain time to think or reduce their anxiety level. On the other hand, Dörnyei (1995, p. 50), drawing on empirical studies in Hungarian contexts, sees learner silences positively as “avoidance or reduction strategies” from a learners’ perspective (e.g., topic avoidance or message abandonment), as a means to prioritise the progressivity of interaction by withdrawing their contribution to talk. However, Götz (2019, p. 161) argues that “Filled pauses can fulfil a variety of discursive functions, such as holding or yielding the floor, or emphasising the following word.” While various roles of fillers are addressed through empirical studies, Dörnyei (1995) emphasises the close correlation between the use of fillers, the pace of talk and the importance of explicitly didactic approach (Talandis & Stout, 2015) to teaching different types of interactional resources, such as fillers to facilitate L2 learners’ repertoires for progressing interaction.

However, it should be borne in mind that the role of verbal filled-pauses needs further scrutinisation, as the concept of ‘filled pauses’ can impose the view that silence needs to be filled with sound, in accordance with the perspective on discourse in English. Kogure’s (2007) study, for example, suggests that “silence is not interactionally vacuous in the context of Japanese”, as Japanese conversation can involve the frequent use of non-verbal interactional resources such as smiles or nodding (back-channelling) with the emphasis on the listener role. Further, a student participant in Harumi’s (2011, p. 267) study on classroom silence listed the use of teachers’ back-channelling responses as desirable and psychologically supportive interactional resources, saying: “I need back-channelling responses when a teacher understands what I want to say.”

These findings suggest that the role of interactional silence or non-verbal cues such as back-channelling involves cross-culturally different expectations and both Western and non-Western views on the absence of certain interactional resources need a bridge and a deeper shared understanding of fundamental value on specific interactional resources based on perspectives from both sides. Cook’s (1989) view on the role of discourse suggests important pedagogical approaches for teachers to consider. This role involves the need “to facilitate a degree of socialization which will enable learners to send and receive text as discourse” and “guarding their [learners’] right to be different and to enrich others through that difference, bringing to the language they are learning the wealth of their own individuality and culture” (Cook, 1989, p. 125). In terms of this ‘cultural appropriateness’, as Cook (1989) asserts, the cultural identity of all the participants (including learners entering into new cultures through the use of the target language and L1 speakers of the target language communicating with L2 learners) relies on awareness of others’ cultural and interactional entities to enrich collaborative interaction with a deeper understanding of the nature of cross-cultural communication.

Another pedagogical approach related to enhancing Japanese EFL learners’ spoken interaction focuses on the timing of response in L2 interaction. For example, Carroll’s (2000) study examined turn-taking practices among novice-level Japanese speakers of English in casual L2 peer talk and found that novice learners can participate in interaction through the effective use of reactive tokens, such as ‘yeah’ or self-repetition. The study paid specific attention to the role of ‘precision timing’ when learners join interaction, which can be nurtured through interactional practices. Similarly, Rose (2011) observed the ‘timing of response’ and developed a classroom activity in that learners responded to questions under time restrictions to help them to understand the role of timing when joining conversations. This involved competitive game-based activities in L2 interaction. Similarly, (Littleton, 2022) recommends using a timer for timed speaking activities, setting a given time to focus on production to build confidence while recognising the more dynamic turn-taking practices in natural interaction.

The third pedagogical approach is the use of awareness-raising activities, using the transcription, audio/visual resources or the use of spoken IC rubrics, adopting heuristic approaches involving self-analysis or others’ natural interaction leading to self-discovery activities. These activities raised learners’ awareness of 1) turn-taking practices to maintain interaction and control the pace of talk and

2) culturally different values. For example, Fukada and Pashby's (2011) proposed tasks adopted in multilingual settings for Japanese graduate students in the United States, including guided questions encouraging learners to self-analyse their own video-recorded interaction and the use of silence in academic discourse. Video/audio resources to raise learners' awareness of their own interactional practice were also used by Stone (2015) and Harumi (2023). This approach mirrors the idea developed by van Lier (1984), who saw an opportunity to nurture learners' monitoring abilities to develop natural interactional skills through critical observation.

Another CA-informed approach to raising awareness in turn-taking practices to control the pace of talk is the study by Stephenson and Hall (2021), which examined EFL learners' interaction in speaking tests. This study suggests that the analysis of conversational transcripts can reveal the invisible interactional rules. Specifically, previous studies (Stephenson & Hall, 2021; Stone & Kershaw, 2021) revealed advanced learners' way of controlling the pace of talk as a valuable model. These varied interactional resources were considered effective interactional strategies, which could also function as useful learning resources for less-proficient learners. The usefulness of teaching conversational strategies was also highlighted by action research conducted by Talandis and Stout (2015) who studied Japanese EFL learners. In their study, greater use of conversational strategies was observed, particularly in the case of learners at B1 level.

Further, it should be noted that recent empirical studies have advanced the application of CA-informed pedagogy in learning resources and curricula (Barraja-Rohan, 2011; Kunitz & Yeh, 2019; Waring, 2019), indicating a firm direction for the types of interactional resources needed to promote spoken interaction. These require clearly presented learning objectives and self-discovery activities, "a helpful heuristic for thinking about what they need to do with English" (Hourdequin, 2017, p. 1), highlighting cross-culturally different rules of interaction. The use of rubrics to self-assess interactional repertoires has also been developed in L2 Spanish class (van Compernelle & Ballesteros-Soria, 2020). Overall, at the scholarly level mediative practices to include 'interactional repertoires' as a part of spoken interaction have emerged in recent years.

These studies highlight the role of CA-informed pedagogical approaches and the teaching of interactional skills such as turn-taking practices through 1) explicit instruction on specific interactional strategies that can be useful in L2 interaction, 2) interactional practice involving timing of response and 3) observation of natural conversational interaction. These approaches serve as useful learning resources involving conversational transcripts, audio/video resources and rubrics for regular self-assessment through awareness-raising and self-discovery activities. That is, as Dörnyei and Thurrell (1994, p. 40) argue, direct approaches aimed at sensitising learners to "raise awareness of conversational rules, strategies to use and pitfalls to avoid as well as increasing their sensitivity to the underlying process" through critical observation are highly recommended as a principle. The next section reviews how conversation strategies serve as learning resources specifically produced for Japanese EFL learners.

3.2. Learning materials accommodating cultural and interactional differences in silence within L2 interaction

When we turn our attention to the learning materials students use, there is limited the regular inclusion of conversation strategies within general ELT books, except in the case of a limited number of textbook series such as Touchstone (McCarthy, McCarten & Sandiford, 2014) which applies a Corpus-based approach and incorporates dedicated sections of conversational strategies in each unit, starting at the elementary level. For example, the use of fillers is introduced in unit 4 of Book 1 with a short model conversation dialogue, however, applications are mainly through discourse completion tasks or free talk in a pair-work. In that sense, strategies for introducing fillers as part of natural conversation, facilitating their use and nurturing learners' observation skills depend on individual teachers' pedagogical approaches. There are no awareness-raising tasks that highlight different interactional values individual learners may bring into the classroom.

Further, one example of silence introduced in a textbook called Functions of American English (Jones & von Baeyer, 1983) introduces the value of silence in American English thus: "Silence is not a good way to hesitate. Silence causes embarrassment and confusion. Silence lets other people take over the conversation" (p. 27) and various hesitation devices are introduced for practical use in interaction. Although textbooks are produced for students from socio-cultural backgrounds with

various perspectives on filled pauses and silence in general, they put this to one side and focus on applications in the target language rather than the learners. However, awareness-raising activities or opportunities that draw learners' attention to socio-culturally diverse interactional values and share learners' perspectives can be facilitated further for inclusive and diverse learning opportunities.

When we turn our attention to the textbooks or learning resources specifically produced for Japanese EFL learners, there are limited but valuable contributions with insightful approaches in the form of teaching or learning resources that consider Japanese EFL learners' silence in classroom practice from an interactional perspective.

Safety and Challenge for Japanese learners of English (Gray & Leather, 1999). Although this teacher's resource book was produced many years ago, it is highly useful as it clearly explains its purpose by saying, "Japanese learners have specific needs which go largely unaddressed by the prevailing methodology" (p. 7), including the issue of silence and suggested activities are graded into six categories in terms of learners' readiness and task demands for interaction to promote engagement in each task. It includes silence-oriented and more verbally oriented activities, balancing learners' psychological safety and interactional challenges. Clear rationale for each task is also provided, with helpful guidance, to assist teachers in choosing activities suited to learner needs and readiness.

Conversations in Class 2nd and 3rd edition (Richmond & Vannieu, 2009; Talandis et al, 2015). These textbooks include specific sections covering three 'golden rules,' which aim to raise awareness of the meanings of silence in conversation while helping them to formulate long answers and talk about themselves. The 2nd edition includes four pages each in Units 1 and 2 on the theme of 'silence and conversation,' which studies teachers' difficulties when encountering learner silence and introduces pragmatic strategies for overcoming communication breakdown in L2 contexts.

The 3rd edition adopts the same 'golden rules' but includes further practice focussed on the role of turn-taking in peer interaction. The discussion of contexts that draw attention to teachers' difficulty and peer interaction could potentially draw learners' attention to their immediate learning context. These sections include learners' self-evaluation of their interactional skills. Hourdequin (2017, p. 1), who used this textbook in his class, considers the strength of this material and the way it serves to develop pragmatic awareness in L2 interaction, potentially facilitating "the nuance of a cross-cultural reading of Japanese versus English speaking pragmatics". This was echoed by a teacher's views on imparting conversation strategies discussed in Jones's (2021) study, vide "the point of managing your turn" could have been made more explicit" (p. 73) or "I think more explicit work needs to be done in English learning contexts on the interactive nature of having a conversation." (p. 80).

Another work by McLean and Talandis (2020) includes a simplified summary of findings in research on silence and adopts project-based activity, enabling learners to collect repair strategies through interviews, followed by students' presentation of their findings. What is unique about this learning resource is the integration of research findings as a background resource and learner-centred pedagogical approach, including observation of natural conversation through interviews outside classes and the taking of opportunities to present learners' findings, which can function as awareness-raising activities through shared reflection.

Stone and Kershaw (2019) have used rubrics for learners to self-assess their interactional repertoires in group discussions as part of their syllabus for longitudinal exploratory study in Japanese EFL contexts and emphasise the importance of task repetition. In an earlier study by Stone (2015), in which he uses video in action research and acts as teacher-researcher, the author's awareness of differences in his focus on the 'process' of interaction and that of learners on the 'product' of interaction testifies to the value of cross-cultural approaches promoting interaction and facilitating enhanced teacher awareness.

These materials, specifically produced for Japanese EFL learners, are insightful and extremely valuable for the way the authors and teacher-researchers consider learners' silence from the perspective of experts who are deeply familiar with local contexts. They are carefully prepared through critical observation of learner behaviour according to pedagogical needs. Insights we can gain from these teaching and learning resources play a vital role in considering: 1) specific learner needs in the selection of integrated task types and their contextual relevance; 2) learners' psychological readiness to engage in specific language tasks and step-by-step guidance; 3) integration of research

findings as learning resources; 4) integration of learner-centred project-based activities and 5) the raising teachers' awareness of different interactional styles between teachers and learners.

However, access to these resources remains limited and these pedagogical approaches warrant increased and wider attention. As the aforementioned studies note, learning more about the contribution of these resources to the enhancement of interactional skills applicable to silence and repair as part of turn-taking practices needs further exploration. In particular, it is highly desirable to explore the extent to which different tasks or pedagogical approaches contribute to learners' awareness of invisible conversational rules. Further, integrating this critical observation of immediate educational needs through analytical lenses, informed by scholarly contributions, for example, CA-informed findings, can generate a more nuanced understanding of the nature of culturally different interactional styles and how learners can apply this knowledge.

3.3. Learners' perspectives on CA-informed speaking learning materials

As discussed above, a reason for learner silence is often attributed to different turn-taking practice expectations, particularly involving turn-initiation, turn-allocation, and topic-initiation/development. The following extract shows the interaction between a Japanese student who is a violinist and a British tutor in a tutorial session at a British university.

British Tutor: What sort of twenties-century music do you like best?
Japanese student: Berg.
British Tutor: Why do you like it?
Japanese student: (pause)
British Tutor: Do you think he uses the violin well?

(Turner & Hiraga, 2003, p. 159)

Through this interaction, the tutor initially judges the student's lack of elaboration on her preference for the composer and attempts to elicit further information. Later, the tutor learns that the student's minimum verbal contribution and silence stem from her expectation that the teacher's role involves initiating interaction (Turner & Hiraga, 2003). Paradoxical views on turn-taking practices involving turn-nomination, are reported in other studies (Ellwood & Nakane, 2009; Karas & Uchihara, 2021) and even by learners. For example, in Harumi's study (2011), the majority of students expect that turn-allocation to be initiated by the teacher, largely because it is the widely used educational practices in Japanese contexts, although some students preferred not to be singled out from others, avoiding possible invisible social sanction and evaluation for being too good or different from others, as explained by Uchihara in his duoethnography study (Karas & Uchihara, 2021). Karas also articulated his hesitation to create this type of situation.

Karas and Uchihara's (2021) study suggested a pedagogical approach to creating learning environments to facilitate turn-taking practices that are less pressurised and culturally sensitive for learners, and do not encourage 'social evaluation.' To support this, recent CA-informed studies have illustrated the teachers' contingency action including the uses of embodied resources such as hand gestures (Tai, 2022) in Hong Kong, reformulated use of questions or wait-time used as pedagogical support by utilising culturally sensitive interactional management skills to interact with learner silence. Other studies (Harumi, 2020; Ishino, 2022) suggest the importance of observing non-verbal cues, such as the presence or lack of mutual gaze, as signs of unwillingness to communicate before making individual nomination.

While teachers' pedagogical approaches are addressed, as discussed above, how do learners perceive the benefits of learning interactional strategies through explicit teaching? Although the number of empirical studies which explore Japanese EFL learners' perspectives on the benefits of explicit teaching of interactional strategies remain limited, useful insights can be found in Jones's (2021) intervention study involving twelve intermediate Japanese EFL learners. After six hours which involved learning interactional listenership strategies (e.g., Yeah, uh-huh), topic-closing, reformulation, and vague language use (e.g., it depends), learners said the benefits of attending the training sessions included: 1) reduction of anxiety, 2) more success in expressing ideas and 3) speaking more naturally. Some responses specifically remarked that 'It can avoid silence' (p. 151). Jones

(2021), who ran the sessions, reported that the explicit pedagogical approach teaching conversational strategies gave students ‘tools’ for communicating in L2 conversation.

Talandis and Stout’s (2015) study also reported generally positive results in learners’ conversational strategies, supported by self-assessment and regular assessment. Harumi’s (2023) study, which used a contrastive classroom observation task with conversational transcripts of EFL and ESL classrooms awareness-raising activities, also received positive effects of a heuristic pedagogical approach involving explanatory tasks (Bao, 2023). By engaging in contrastive observation tasks (Harumi, 2023), learners noticed different L2 classroom dynamics in EFL and ESL classes where, in the ESL session, students used various interactional resources to join the conversations. Learners noticed that interactional peer-support for a student in difficulty in the ESL class included the collaborative construction of answers and various strategies such as self-repetition, fillers, and L2-equivalent L1 expression. However, while wishing to be in a supportive learning environment, one participant in Harumi’s (2023) study specifically mentioned that it would be difficult to do this in Japanese EFL contexts: 1) when it is not one’s allocated turn and 2) standing out in class through the initiation of help may be socially evaluated. This mirrors Uchihara’s account of culturally expected turn-taking practice in Japanese contexts.

The objective of creating the optimal environment within a certain cultural group needs to be addressed by shaping the classroom environment or through the way tasks are organized in L2 learning. Creating environments where there is a need for Japanese learners to interact for genuine interactional purposes by inviting those from other cultural backgrounds may assist with this exercise, as Harumi’s (2023) study has indicated, highlighting the interactional awareness raised through such practical sessions. For example, Aubrey’s (2017) study also observed a higher sense of accomplishment when EFL learners engaged in inter-cultural task-based interaction rather than intra-cultural interaction.

This type of tension can also be eased by including silent observation tasks or silent discussion in written form (Gray & Leather, 1999) as preparation for collaborative interaction. The participants in the author’s study also highlighted the benefits of learning different kinds of turn-taking practices and ways silence in L2 classrooms can be interpreted differently in Japanese and English discourse. Overall, learners highlighted the effects of integrating awareness-raising activities with classroom discourse and solitary self-reflection activities on their own discourse helped them to notice; 1) various interactional resources available for maintaining conversation, which they find difficult to identify by themselves, 2) the positive use of fillers or further questions to gain time for creating own space for thinking, 3) reflection on their progress involving the use of interactional resources and 4) confidence-building focussed on their own progress and the familiarity of the nature of tasks through task repetition.

Further, one learner specifically mentions the use of the automated transcription application ‘Otter’ (Transcribe Voice Notes) to enhance awareness of own spoken discourse, being conscious about own spoken language. Learners’ views suggest diverse ways to raise awareness of the role of silence and repair. There are certain common findings among the students who participated in Jones’s (2021) study. For intermediate learners, there are difficulties in coordinating on-time planning to express own ideas fully at a natural pace. However, learners’ positive responses in these studies are insightful in that learners were consciously able to learn about both the facilitative and inhibitive role of silence in social interaction through close observation and self-reflection based on their own interaction. While some learners attempt to avoid silence in order to maintain interaction, learners also acknowledge the positive role of silence as thinking time and utilised repair strategies to retain such moments. Learners’ feedback on outlined pedagogical approaches can provide a direction to follow, helping individual learners in L2 interaction and considering the nature of collaborative interaction from a wider perspective.

4. Nexus of multiple perspectives on silence and repair and pedagogical implications

To summarise, pedagogical approaches have been addressed from three different perspectives: 1) scholarly articles, 2) learning/teaching materials and 3) learners’ perspectives on the support of Japanese EFL learners. Building on this, three facilitative pedagogical approaches can be identified; 1) explicit instruction on teaching silence and repair for its interactional skills and strategies, 2) crucial

awareness-raising activities with a clear rationale for both teachers and learners and 3) creating regular opportunities for learners to observe own or others' interactional skills and the way these are used in specific contexts in non-threatening but stimulating learning environments, and attendant interactional values through self-reflection. The pedagogical focus has shifted from what to teach to how to teach in an accessible way while respecting learners' culturally different interactional values on silence and repair.

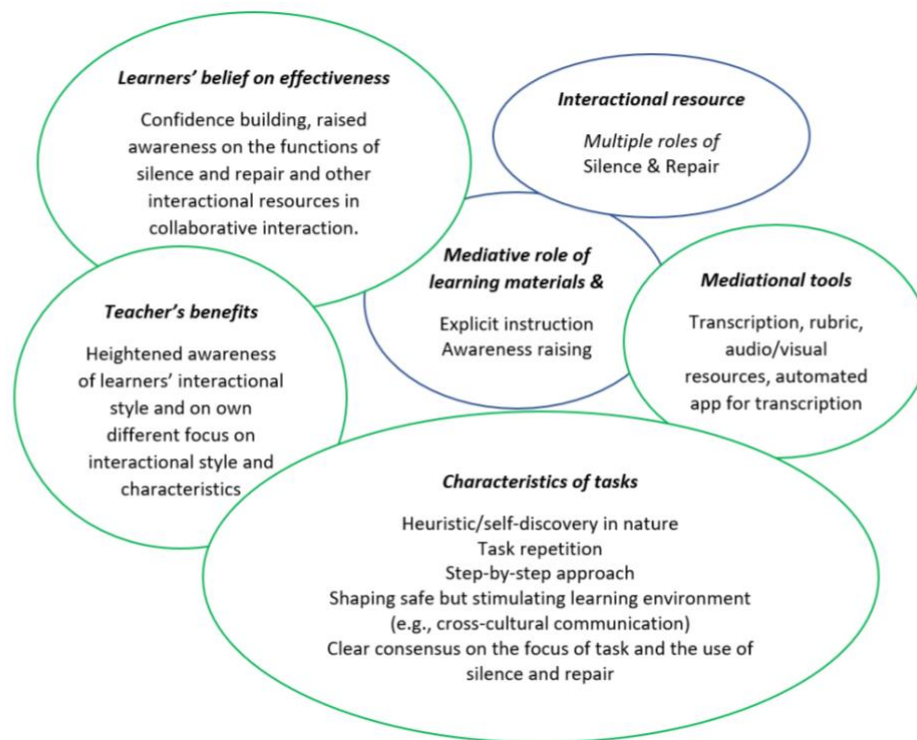


Fig. 2. Silence and Repair: Mediative role of learning material

While the above synthesis highlighted in Fig. 2 illustrates important steps to follow, teaching/learning resources specifically produced for Japanese EFL learners provided insightful perspectives on the essential task of developing rationales for each speaking task and using relevant L2 contexts, such as classrooms, as learning resources. In relation to this, learners' voices (Harumi, 2023) express crucial views on the usefulness of knowing interactional rules before engaging in specific tasks. For example, these make it clear whether learners should be encouraged to respond in a complete sentence or prioritise oral or silent participation in interaction so as to complete specific tasks or rules or consider options for turn-initiation/allocation and peer-support. In this way, consensus understanding between teachers and learners or among learners, on how learners can attempt to engage in various types of interactional styles can be explored. However, it should be noted that the current synthesis study highlighted a lack of instructional materials regarding the use of silence or repair or learners' voices for such materials based on their learning experiences.

This modest contribution to exploring the nexus of research and practice has found that understanding of the role of silence in collaborative interaction has been gradually increasing at professional and scholarly levels and that the principle pedagogical approach to raising learners' awareness of the interactional role of silence and repair has been reflected in certain locally designed materials. However, analysis of the pedagogical approach to enhance learners' interactional repertoires has also revealed the gap between suggested learning objectives highlighted by the publicly and widely available resources such as CEFR and learners' interactional needs for understanding along with the use of cross-culturally diverse roles of silence and repair in collaborative interaction. Learners' and teachers' access to pedagogical ideas concentrated in a handful of learning resources and learners' voices expressed in empirical studies is still limited, considering the growing change in the use of English among peers from multilingual and multicultural backgrounds.

Although the dialogue between research and practice is steered by individual practices and decisions (Sato & Loewen, 2022), insights gained from dialogue and reflection from various perspectives, such as scholarly findings, learning materials and teacher and learner perceptions, in particular, contributing to the improvement of pedagogical approaches, can serve to provide fresh perspectives on the refinement of pedagogical approaches in practice. Learning materials can be the primary resource, especially for EFL learners communicating in L2 classes. Together with the ideas expressed through the three different perspectives outlined, continued and consolidated efforts to promote how learning materials can promote the necessity for diverse roles of silence or repair as essential interactional skills through awareness-raising activities or self-discovery activities in various socio-cultural and pedagogical contexts need to be redoubled.

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