Doing Repair in Native - Non - Native Talk:
A Conversation Analytic Study of Thai - English Interaction

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Abstract

Using conversation analysis (CA), the study examines the occurrences of conversational repair activity on grammatical trouble-sources and comprehension checks in interactions between three native speakers of English (NS) and three Thai non-native speakers (NNS) of English in a casual language setting outside the language classroom they were attending at York St John University. The Thai non-native speakers of English were selected among the beginning English learners at the university level and the three native speakers are also chosen based on their non-linguistic teaching background. The three pairs of NS/NNS interactions were audio-taped to explore 1) the main types of ungrammatical utterances produced by each Thai non-native speaker, 2) the dealing procedures of each native speaker with ungrammatical trouble-sources, and 3) the occurrence of repair patterns used by the native speakers for comprehension checks in NS/NSS interactions.

The analysis disclosed that the repair activity was only initiated in the case of grammatical errors that did not affect comprehension in native – non-native talk. The finding indicates that the English native users generally accept the grammatical mistakes made by the English learners only if the meaning appeared understandable in natural talk. This study raises the language awareness of how natural conversation in English-speaking society is practically used to assist non-native English teachers in focusing on how communicative language approach should be used in the language classroom.

Keywords: repair activity, NS/NNS interactions, comprehension, misunderstanding

1. Introduction

This study explored how corrective events occur in the interaction between native speakers (NSs) and non-native speakers of English (NNSs) in a real-life setting outside the formal language teaching and learning in the classroom. As conversation analysis (CA) has been utilized for various fields of the study such as sociology, psychology, anthropology, and linguistics, the study of conversational repair sequences is one of the attractive fields among CA analysts initiatively investigated by Schegloff, Jefferson, and Sack (1977) to explore in what ways repair sequences are made and how people deal with them. Such repair takes place when a verbal mistake is made in conversation and the other speaker attempts to solve the trouble-sources of the previous words.

Conversational repairs focus on linguistic errors and comprehension checks. Both features are aimed to pinpoint the conversational trouble-source once misunderstanding, misspeaking, or mishearing takes place by initiating self-repair and other-repair which compose of several patterns to check the information or to request clarification and repetition (McRoy & Hirst 1995). In this paper, I have focused on both features of conversational repair to explore how NSs who have non-linguistic background of the study respond to ungrammatical errors in relation to comprehensibility.

1.1 Conversational Repair

The investigation in this study involves the repair activities which occur in NS/NNS interaction. 'Repair' is the organization of how people deal with problems in speaking, hearing, and understanding in conversation which was initially examined by Schegloff (1977). There are two reasons why repair activities happen – to correct linguistic errors and to check comprehension. Both repair activities are aimed to request clarification or repetition of the problem.

Conversationally, repair activities are categorized into 2 types based on which party initiates the repairs: self- and other-repairs (Schegloff et al, 1992). A trouble-source which is fixed by the speaker who produces the trouble-source is called 'self-repair', whilst 'other-initiated repair' is one initiated by the other speakers. Self-repair initiation is revealed when the speaker knows he/she gives unclear statements on either linguistic or information, so he/she allows him/herself to give a small pause to search for clarification to generate the conversation in either the same turn or next turn, while other-repair is the phenomenon that occurs when the next speaker has the ability to find more information by him/herself for their conversation. Nevertheless, it is clarified by Schegloff et al (1992) that self-repair is more likely to happen in mundane conversation than other-repair since the turn-taking system seems to allow a speaker to self-repair more often which causes the occurrence of other repair to stayed limited. The main reasons why the opportunities of self-repair occur is the space for self-initiation comes before the opportunity for other-initiation. It is more likely that the speaker of the trouble source self-initiates his or her repair within the same turn as the trouble-source turn before the other speakers can initiate the repair in the next turn.

The following are four different types of repairs: self-initiated self-repaired, self-initiated other-repaired, other-initiated self-repaired, and other-initiated other-repaired, which are presented through concise instances based on Ian Hutchby and Wooffitt (2008) to briefly illustrate how repairs sequences occurs;

(1)   Self-initiated, self-repaired
         [BA data 5 T1:SA:F:F]
         1   A: er heathrow or gatwi:ck
         2→   C: oh sorry er: from ga(t)
         3   er heathrow.

The self-initiated self-repaired prevalence is carried out when the speaker realizes he/she produces a comprehending problem occurs in the interaction. The above instance indicates A has caused the trouble-source. Instead of waiting for the other speaker to make a correction, A gives a small pause to correct himself by producing 'er heathrow' at line 3.

(2)   self-initiated other-repaired
         [BC:Green:88]
         1B: He had dis uh Mistuh W-m whatever K- I can't think of his first name, Watts
         2   the one that wrote that piece
         3A: Dan Watts

The above instance is indicated when the speaker (B) seems to fail in looking for the right words for mentioning the name. Then, A who actually knows the accurate word,

repairs by correcting with 'Dan Watts' shown at line 3 to fulfill the missing information. However, this kind of repair normally seems to be common in mundane conversation since people involved in the interaction often collaborate with each other to achieve an orderly meaningful conversation.

> (3)　　other-initiated self-repaired
> [GTS:5:3]
> 1.　　　KEN:　Is Al here today?
> 2.　　　DAN:　Yeah.
> 3.　　　　　　　(0.20)
> 4.→　　Roger:　he is? hh eh heh
> 5.　　　Dan:　　Well he was

The mentioned instance takes place when the recipient does not understand full or partial utterances of the prior turn of the speakers. The patterns of this type are aimed to request repetition that offers the trouble-source producer to clarify his/her previous utterance as indicated in line 4, so that self-repair is made to fix the trouble source. It is said that the occurrence of this repair type shows the avoidance of embarrassment to the trouble-source producer since the opportunity of self-repair is offered to the speaker by the recipient.

> (4)　　other-initiated other-repaired
> [GJ:FN]
> 1　　　Milly:　and then they said something about Kruschev has leukemia so I thought
> 2　　　it's all a big put on.
> 3→　　Jean:　　Breshnev.
> 4　　　Milly:　Breshnev has leukemia. So I don't know what to think.

The last instance seen above shows the domination of other repair type produced by the recipient. The phenomenon of other-initiated other-repaired occurred when the recipient discovered the speaker provided an inaccurate statement. The recipient pointed out the mistake directly for the speaker before he/she could self-correct. It seems that the parties who have equal power try to avoid this type of repair because it can cause embarrassment for their party.

1.2 Repair in NS/NNS Interaction

Since the repair study has been initially examined by Schegloff in 1992, there are increasing numbers of research papers which have been conducted to register the interest in repair studies in NS/NSS interactions. In the specification of applied linguistics, the research which has been conducted is linked to the organization of repair patterns between a language instructor as an expert and a language learner as novice occurring in second language classroom talk to identify how the linguistic-based and content-based problems are dealt within the classrooms. As all words have their own meaning and grammar is the mode of interaction (Have, 2007), the frequency of linguistic-based problems is much more focused than the content-based discussions in the classrooms. In other words, the repair activities are mainly aimed at the development in the learners' ability to understand the language structure in which correctness of their language use is obviously highlighted in general ESL/EFL classrooms.

There are some previous studies that explore repairs in classroom setting. For example, Kasper (1985) supports the repair activities in foreign language teaching. She focuses on what type of repair patterns are produced to examine whether a trouble-source is produced by the teacher or the leaners. She discovers that, in most ESL/EFL classroom interactions, the instructor tends to use correction on ungrammatical utterances of the learners. In this study, she found that there are two focuses by which repair activities are initiated in the classroom interaction: language centered and content centered. In the language-center phase, it is found that the trouble sources occur in leaners' utterances identified and confirmed by their teacher. On the other hand, repair in the content centered phases is found different from the language-based one. It is found that self-initiated and self-completed repair is preferred by both learners and teacher where linguistic trouble-sources are also repaired through specific types. However, she also argues that repair activities should focus on comprehensibility rather than the corrections of linguistic utterances of the learners.

In addition, even though there are a number of studies in which CA is used in English language learning, only a few of such studies are related to repair studies in NS/NSS talk which are done in informal conversations (Wong, 2000; Yuri, 2000). The study on other-repair in Japanese conversation between non-native and native speakers by Yuri (2000) studied compared repairs in NS/NNS and NS/NS interactions. The researcher found that the nature of repair occurred during 3 conversations; 2 NS/NNS conversations and one NS/NS in Japanese. The study observed face-to-face interaction and found that repairs could be made by the native speakers as non-native speakers are less proficient in the language. Among native speakers, self-initiated repairs were found. The native speakers made corrections when misunderstanding/ mishearing/misspeaking occurred as teachers do with students in educational settings. Besides, Wong (2000) is the well-known researcher among CA analysts who conducted their research on NS/NNS interaction. She studied a form of other-initiated repair which delayed with the next turn position produced by Chinese NNSs. She discovered that the efforts of NTRIs (next turn repair initiations) are done later when the trouble-source was produced in NS/NNS interaction. She provided some examples to show that the delayed repairs cause the conversational problems between NS/NNS interaction.

Therefore, it can be summarized that in naturally occurring conversation, for the incompetent learners, it may be the issue of overt grammatical correction which is occasionally sidestepped in the service of communication and meaning: one way of doing so is for experts or native speakers to do repair and not correction in response to NNS's trouble-source utterance. Correction would highlight NNS's grammatical or phonological error while repair or embedded correction does not necessarily do so (Wong, 2007). In this case, NS seemingly takes responsibility for NNS's trouble source. But in the language classroom, it may be precisely the highlighting of NNS's error that is the issue when a teacher makes a correction and expects that NNSs are able to detect and take responsibility for his/her linguistic or grammatical error and learn from it.

Unlike the previous studies on repair in NS/NNS interactions, the present study deals with the repair activity initiated by native speakers on both ungrammatical trouble-sources and comprehension errors of non-native speakers outside the classroom since the trouble-sources produced by non-native speakers include both linguistic and comprehension errors, while NS/NS and NNS/NNS interactions normally initiate repair sequences when the meaning is missing. Hence, the primary objectives are:

1) to investigate the frequency of the ungrammatical types which are mostly produced by Thai non-native speakers during NS/NNS interaction,

2) to explore whether or not ungrammatical utterances of language learners become the trouble-sources for native speakers to understand,

3) to explore the repair patterns produced by NSs for comprehension checks during NS/NNS interaction.

This present study is also linked to the recent condition of teaching practice in Thailand as well as some other EFL countries which is ineffective since language is mainly taught for communication not for tests and evaluation. The naturally occurring conversations in this study may indicate that the language pedagogy in the EFL classrooms may not clearly respond to the real-use communication outside the classroom as ordinary conversation is conducted to exchange messages to each other on a real-time basis.

2. Findings

In fact, the usage of certain rules in English is complex to master. The linguistic difficulties in NNSs stimulate researchers to conduct research on the grammatical error analyses. It explained that the error analysis has been conducted to identify strategies, which the learners use in the language learning, to track the causes of learners' errors, and to obtain information on common difficulties in language learning (Ramirez, 1973). For the three Thai-NNSs who had studied the general English course at York St John University and attended in this studied together with the three NSs who have never had any teaching background before, English grammar was mainly found problematic for those NNSs when they were interacting with the three NSs. The present study is similar to what the previous research has found. The subject and verb agreement, tenses and articles, for example, were reported in the large number of previous studies (e.g., Ghadessy, 1980; Politzer, & Ramirez, 1973). The data is shown in the following tables.

Table 1: Categories of ungrammatical types found in the three NNSs' language production

Number	Types of Grammatical Errors
1	Subject and Verb Agreement
2	Tense
3	Article
4	Preposition
5	Verb omission

Table 2: Frequency and Percentage of ungrammatical types found in each Thai NNS in NS/NNS interactions

Ungrammatical Type	NNS1		NNS2		NNS3	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
1. Subject and Verb Agreement	13	29.55%	18	33.97%	15	33.33%
2. Tense	11	25%	16	30.19%	10	22.22%
3. Article	7	15.91%	9	16.98%	10	22.22%
4. Preposition	7	15.91%	5	9.43%	7	15.56%
5. Verb omission	6	13.63%	5	9.43%	3	6.67%
Total	44	100	53	100	45	100

Both tables shown above reveal that the subject and verb agreement is the most frequent type of grammatical errors in three Thai NNSs of this study. At the total of 29.55%, 33.97%, and 33.33%, NNSs produced the ungrammatical utterances on the subject and verb agreement which NNS2 produced the highest percentage of this grammatical type. Secondly, English tenses are considered the second ungrammatical prevalence at the total of 25%, 30.19, and 22.22%. NNS2 is also ranked the participant who had the highest mistake on tenses. For some linguists and grammarians, English tenses become the most confusing learning of English language since English does not develop one single structure which can be applied to different times: past, present, and future tenses. The main problems of using tenses are related to the transformation of verbs. Thirdly, the use of articles is ranked the third position with the total of 15.91%, 9.43%, and 15.56%. NNS3 is considered the participant who has produced the highest number of this type. However, even though grammatical errors were clearly found, a few of the evidence disclosed that the Thai-NNSs had difficulties in expressing their meaning. Generally, the NS/NNS interactions were mutually understandable.

It can be summarized that the frequency of ungrammatical types found in NS/NSS interactions of this study is parallel to those previous studies. Therefore, the difference between the native and foreign language structures is the main impact for NNSs to produce inaccurate grammar. Some of the excerpts from the data are presented and analyzed in the analysis and discussion part.

2.1 Analysis of Sidestepping Grammar

Another track which is found interesting is the phenomenon of NSs avoiding correctness on linguistic disorders of the Thai-NNSs. This study has supported some previous observations on the ungrammatical avoidance in NS/NNS talks (Kurhila, 2001; Wong, 2000). The NSs also seem not to offer an opportunity for NNSs to self-correct and are likely to consider the ungrammatical errors of NNSs unproblematic. The words 'Yeah', 'Um' are most found to express the acceptance of the linguistic inaccuracies. Moreover, as native language speakers can judge how competent non-native speakers, the three NSs continued the conversation with the previous utterances of three NNSs coherently despite the prevalence of grammatical imprecision's. This shows only native speakers are proficient in the right of deserving what should not or should use without linguistic explanation. The interesting point of the study showed that most native speakers actually know what the NNSs said is incorrect, but they have decided not to correct the overt ungrammatical words as the comprehension remained. In other words, NSs normally focus on meaning, not a language problem. Thus, several ungrammatical utterances are instanced in the analysis and discussion part and three top frequently grammatical types are analyzed in this study. The red words represent the ungrammaticality of each extract. Besides, it is noted the numbers of the lines presented below may be different from the raw data due to the more detailed transcription.

2.2 Subject-Verb Agreement

The primary ungrammatical issue is the use of subject and verb agreement of English language which is also sidestepped by the NSs. Basically, the subject and verb agreement is an English rule which indicates that a noun agrees with a verb in a sentence or clause. In other words, a singular noun takes a singular verb, while a plural noun takes a plural verb. This concept of rules is straightforward on a subject of sentences or clauses; however, a common error in interactions can be found in NNSs who are not aware of using English. Frequently, verbs are used in inaccurate forms for their subject and vice

versa. The extracts below are presented to indicate the inappropriate use of this type and the avoidance of linguistic mistakes by the NSs.

Extract 1 [Conversation1]
175 NNS1: M<u>a</u>:y be::: dog (0.7) dog (0.2) hate (0.2) hate a ca<u>:</u>t as yo:u (.)
176 NS1:   AAhh hah ah! ah! ah! ah! ah!
177 NNS1: YEA:::::H
178 NS1:   Yea:h yeah yeah yeah yeah
179 NNS1:   Ahhh hah-uh hah hah-uh huh

        In this extract, NNS1 produces the incorrect form for its subject (line 175) by omitting the 's' for the verb 'hate' to refer that the subject is singular. In Thai language, the use of subject and verb agreement is understandable from numbers and demonstrative determiners which clarify how many things/people are. It is discussed that Thai people say, 'this cat hate that cat or these cat hat those cat' are correct (Forman, 2005). Nevertheless, the acquisition of subject and verb agreement in English is more challenging for this NNS1. It could be that this NNS1 does not realize this rule cannot be applied to her native language or she might need some time to think about how to use the rule. After NNS1 produces, 'Maybe the dog hate the cat…', there is a delay before the NS produces 'Yeah' (line 178) to accept the message. However, this rule may not affect the meaning of the utterance since NS1 knows the ungrammatical problem of NNS1 but correctness is not found in this data. Here is another example which NS2 focuses on the content of the message, not the misused rule of English.

Extract 2 [Conversation2]
59 NNS2:   Ah ha ha ha You know the (.) the (0.7) the team that we are (cheer <u>u</u>p::)
60 NS2:   Yea:h
61 NNS2:   May be em:: Ba<u>:</u>ngkok United (.) or something li<u>:</u>ke th<u>a</u>:t (.) or (Ar:my)
                United hhhh.
62 NNS2:   It de:pend.
63 NS2:   <u>O</u>ka:y (0.3) I have never heard any of them so:: AAHa hah-uh hah-uh hah
64 NNS2:   Ah ha-ha-ha (Unintelligible).

        In this example, it is seen that NS2 accepts or does not hear the ungrammatical source at line 62. NNS2 produces, 'it depend' which the singular subject does not go along with its verb. NNS2 should have said that, '…Amy United it depends'. However, NS2 seems to focus on the Thai football associations, not the language structure in this data. The next extracts below are similar to the above to indicate the phenomena of this ungrammatical form.

Extract 3 [Conversation 3]
199 NNS3:   Yea:h you know em: one stude:nt in my cla<u>:</u>ss (.) he's from <u>Chin</u>e:se (.)
200 NNS3   He cannot spea:k (0.5) but he lea:rn goo::d in (0.5) writi:ng.
201 NS3:   Yea:h
202 NNS3:   Yea:h Aha-huh
203 NS3:   It's very diffe:re:nt (.) you can write but very ha:rd to s<u>p</u>ea:k it sometimes.

        This extract also shows that NNS3 neglects the 's' ending for the verb 'learn' to cooperate with the pronoun 'he' at line 200. Obviously, NS3 agrees to accept what NNS3 has used ungrammatically in the next turn producing 'Yeah' and also adds some more

related utterances at line 203 to indicate that NS3 has understood the previous utterance and grammatical correction is sidestepped in this example.

2.3 Tenses

The indication of ungrammatical problems which is secondly discovered in the NNSs' language production is the use of English tenses. English tenses are, normally, grammatical categories which locate a situation time to indicate where the situation takes place. It is possible that the Thai-NNSs are confused with the use of English tenses because, in the Thai language, verbs are not transformed themselves to express time of a situation. The sequence of tenses in Thai language is simple to utilize. The sentences 'I eat rice today, I eat rice yesterday, and I have eat rice already' are considered the precise grammar in Thai, while it needs to be converted in the English language. However, the ungrammatical use of English tenses could be understood and accepted by the NSs. Even though there are a large numbers of grammatical errors found in this study, some interesting instances are presented to examine the phenomenon of this ungrammatical matter.

Extract 4 [conversation 1]

58 NNS1:   May be (0.9) yo::::::::u em: you have a cha::nce (0.5) may be you go to
                    Phuket.
59 NS1:   Uhm::
60 NNS1:   Yeah
61 NS1:   We:ll I am go:ing I'm go::ing (0.6) not tomorro:w (0.5) the next da::y (I
                    think) Tuesda::y () Yea:h .hhhh to BA:CK f' a mo:nth becuz my da:d lives
                    there .hhhh So we're going f' holiday (I hope so) (strange sound)
64 NNS1:   Yea:h
65 NNS1:   May be (0.6) ni:ce
66 NS1:   May be NI:CE yeah so .hh long flight though, not looking for it to the (it's
                    like)
67 NS1:   Yeah
68 NNS1:   Yea:h I come from Bangkok to (1.5) em:: here Manchester it's (1.2)
                    em::::::: 16 hour
69 NS1:   Uhm:
70 NS1:   16 HO:URS Ah ha-ha-ha-ha
71 NNS1:   Yea:::::h it's a lo::ng ti:me
72 NS1:   OH my GOODness. I was to:ld that it was 12 ho:urs, so it's 16.

For this instance, NNS1 produces the ungrammatical utterance to express the past-time story before she firstly arrived in England. At line 68, NNS1 displays having difficulty to use the correct structure of the past verb tense. The verb 'come' is used instead of 'came' to express the time she flew from Bangkok to Manchester. This is quite common among Thai NNSs to produce ungrammatical mistakes between the present and the past actions since there is no exception found in Thai language. It is discovered that Thai people express the present and past actions through the same verbs of the actions. For instance, they normally produce 'I come here yesterday' or 'I come here today' regardless of verb transformation as the adverb 'yesterday' represent the action of the past. However, it shows incorrect grammar in English. Therefore, the correct sentence should be 'I came from Bangkok to here Manchester. It was 16 hours'. However, NS1 seemed to accept the ungrammatical mistake and expresses the partial repetition to indicate she has understood what NNS1 said in the previous turn by responding '16 hours' at line 70. It could be that NS1 understood the whole story of the previous turn that

NNS1 talked. Moreover, the next instance below also indicates the same confusion of using the past verb tense by another NNS in the NS/NSS interaction.

Extract 5 [conversation 2]
68 NS2:   Wha:t do you study at (0.8) the universi:ty?
69 NNS2:   Em::::::::: I am study (0.9) about (1..1) Marketing but em:: I didn't sta:rt
                   ye:t.
70 NS2:   Alright (.) Okay
71 NNS2:   I just come here for em::: (0.6) 2 week ago:: .hhhh
72 NS2:   Yea:h
73 NNS2:   Something li::ke tha:t Huh-ha huh-ha
74 NS2:   OkayI see: you'r go:nna sta:rt in Septe:mber?
75 NNS2:   Yea:h (.) of co:urse (1.8) I (am) come here to prepare my Engli:sh.

At the ungrammatical sentence showing the incorrect grammar of using past tense by using 'ago' at line 71, NS2 accepted the wrong grammar to express the past time of an action by producing 'okay' in the next turn. Ago is an adverb which expresses something back in the past or back in time from the present. In this instance, NNS2 uses 'come' to express the past tense 'two weeks ago'. The correct sentence could be 'I just came here 2 weeks ago'. However, it could be that NNS2 might know the adverb 'ago' is used to express the past action and the realisation of the verb transformation may not be made by NNS2 after the utterance was produced. In response to the NNS2's expression, it could be also possible NS2 may accept and understand NNS2 talked about the past form the adverb 'ago' since that expresses the meaning of what one did something in the past. That could be NS2 avoids correcting due to the meaning still remaining. To be clarifying more about the phenomenon, the other extract below is another example produced by the same NS mentioned above.

Extract 6 [conversation 3]
      The NS and NSS are talking about which dungeon they have been to. Both of them are exchanging the idea about the place and the use of the present perfect tense in the story.

158 NNS3:   No I don't (1.5) I don't ha:ve bee:n York Dunge:on. I (1.2) go to the
                   London Dungeon.
159 NS3:   Uhm Oh (0.8) Oh (0.5) oh yea:h yeah yeah I ha:ve been there. It is sca:ry
                   (unintelligible) Ah-ha ah ha!
161 NNS3:   Yea::h Huh-ha

NNS3 produces the mistaken grammar of the present perfect tense in the negative sentence. The present perfect tense is a compound tense to express a past action which continues to the present consequences. The structure of the present perfect includes *subject + helping verb + past participle* to describe 'what has happened before', for example. However, it shows the evident that this NNS in the data above displays the confusion with the use of present tense and present perfect tense. The NNS orients to her role as a non-fluent speaker by displaying her effort in formulating an utterance correctly. The utterance ' I don't have been York Dungeon' at line 158 is identified as the inaccurate structure since the NNS wanted to explain an action that happened at the unspecified time. It is true that the present perfect tense is found in Thai language with the same structure as the simple sentence. This problematic issue is also quite common among Thai people as the English present perfect structure needs the transformation of

verbs (I have eaten or I have arrived), while Thai language does provide the transformed verb (I eat or I arrive). The identification in Thai is the ending adverbs *'yet, before, and already'*. This means that Thai people say *'I eat rice already or I don't arrive yet'* to show the present perfect tense. This causes the confusion to the Thai NNSs. Therefore, the correct sentence of this should be *'I have never been to the York Dungeon before, but I have been to the London Dungeon'*. Nevertheless, the response to the inaccurate use of the present perfect seems not to be problematic for NS3. At line 159, it is shown that the NS's utterance 'Oh yeah I have been there. It is scary' is the expression of NS3 comprehending the meaning of the previous utterance of the NSs since the word 'scary' seems to be related to the previous utterance of NNS3. Moreover, this extract also gives a considerable point of avoiding the correction on the grammatical mistake as well. NS3 does not follow the non-sensible type of the present perfect. Instead, NS3 uses 'I have been there' to response the previous turn 'I go to the London Dungeon. These interesting phenomena supporting the study can be explained that NSs who have never studied in the linguistic field are likely to use the correct grammar in the context regardless of the attention of language correction. NS3 may not attempt to correct the grammatical utterance of NNS3, but she puts into consideration that what she produces is more practical in the English language.

2.4 Articles

The last type presented is the English articles. In this study, the use of articles bring the confusion to the NNSs during the interaction with the NSs. Linguistically, articles, namely *A, An, The,* are words which are combined with a noun to indicate the type of reference being made by the noun in English. The Articles 'A' with consonants and 'An' with vows are indefinite articles to describe an unspecific object, while the article 'the' is a definite article used with an exact thing. In spite of some exceptions (e.g., places, countries, or things in general), articles are widely used in English language. However, the use of articles is unfound in Thai. The extracts below are the indication of the NNSs making mistakes on article in English.

Extract 7 [Conversation1]
43 NS1:   It is very good (2.1) very exci:ting (0.6) Do you li:ke Engla:ːnd or:ːːːː
44 NNS1:   Yea:h (0.8)I like (0.8) yeah (1.2) It is nice city here
45 NS1:   It is nice (1.2) sunny toda::y Ah-ha ha-ha-ha
46 NNS1:   Yea:h

Extract 8 [Conversation 2]
182 NNS2:   Yea:h we we em: don't understa:nd what they sa:y (0.9) em: but when
            em: we see em: talk face to fa:ce we understa:nd
184 NS2:   Yea:h
185 NNS2:   So (.) em: we try to (1.2) use: the (text) me:ssage Ah-ha-ha-ha-ha-ha-ha
186 NS2:   Yea:h   Yea:h
187 NNS2:   It's (weird) Right?

Extract 9 [Conversation 3]
197 NNS3:   Yea:::h It depends em:: what you like (.) like if you go to (0.8) the
            cheapest Place:: (0.5) in Tha:iland (.) (depart) em:: depa:rtment sto:re (1.1)
            fo::r (1.2) only clothes (1.5) it's ve:ry ve:ry che::ap but you have to buy
            for dozen.
200 NS3:   (Uhm)
201 NNS3:   12(.)12 piece of (them)   Aha-ha-ha
202 NS3:   Aha-ha

From extract 7-9, it is found that the NNSs misuse the accurate articles in their utterances at line 44, 185, 197,). The NNS1 fails to put the article 'the' for a specific noun phrase 'nice city' while NNS2 and NNS3 place 'the' for unspecific noun phases 'text message' and cheapest place'. The occurrence of the ungrammatical facts is explained that the three participants are not completely aware of the usage of article in their context since their native language, Thai, shows unavailability of using articles in Thai context. However, the linguistic faults are not corrected by their NSs as seen above as well. NS1 and NS2's responses are 'yeah' at line 46 and 186 accordingly, while the NS3's reply is 'uhm' in the next turn, all of which can be the signs of accepting the blunders of this grammatical category.

2.5 The occurrence of repair activity for comprehension checks

The final line which is found interesting in the study is the occurrence of repair activity for comprehension checks by the NSs. Even though ungrammatical utterances are more obviously produced, the three NSs began repair activity when NNSs provide unclear information from their previous utterances. All the interactions run smoothly with a few understanding checks occurred. This study is similar to other studies which focus on the problems in understanding, speaking, and hearing with some types of repairs are used (Wong, 2000; Schegloff, 1992). The most frequent type of repair is 'other initiated, self-repaired'. The NSs perform to offer the opportunity for NNSs to do self-repair by initiating questions and repeating partial information of the previous turn, for example. The extracts below display the prevalence of repair activity in NS/NSS interactions.

Extract 10 [Conversation 3]

41	NS3:		Whe:re whe:re in Singapo:re ?
42	NNS3:		Em:: Just only (0.8) for language school
43	NS3:		Okay
44	NNS3: **TS**		<u>EF</u>
45	NS3:	→	What's it ca:lled <u>So</u>:rry?
46	NNS3: **TS**		<u>EF</u>
47	NS3:	→	(<u>EA</u>)
48	NNS3:		Yea:h <u>EF</u>

The first type of NTRIs discovered is the use of 'Wh – word', such as who, what, where, when, why, how. In this study, the wh – word 'what' is mentioned. In fact, these words are used to ask some unclear information in the previous turn with either rising or falling intonation. In this extract, the NS3 produces, 'what's it called sorry?' at line 45 with the rising intonation, indicating that he has a mishearing problem about the word 'EF' as a trouble source at line 44. It is assumed that the word 'EF' is a place which NS3 might not have heard before. Secondly, the response to the repair initiation is a token by NNS3. However, the second attempt of repair is made (line 47), showing a full repeat of the previous turn for checking the received information. The second reply by NNS3 (line 48) is a self-repair to confirm the place called 'EF'.

Extract 11 [Conversation 3]

242	NS3:		So: (0.9) <u>Wha</u>:t are you doing in Engla:nd no:w?
243	NNS3: **TS**		Em::::::: <u>Actua</u>:lly (0.7) At this time em::: I (0.8) atte<u>:</u>nd (0.5) to (0.5) pre- <u>se</u>:ssional.
245	NS3:	→	To wha:t <u>s</u>orry::
246	NNS3: **TS**		Pre-se:ssional (0.7) em: course::
247	NS3:	→	Pre-<u>se</u>:::ssiona:l (1.5) (what)

248   NNS3:   Pre-<u>se</u>:ssion<u>a</u>:l before I ente<u>:</u>r to (0.8) the Master Degree:
249   NS3:   <u>Oh</u>::: Oka:y
250   NNS3:   Yeah::::

Another occurrence of repair activity in this study is a partial repeat of the previous turn. In fact, these forms are varied depending on what possible utterance is received and then produced by the other speaker. In extract 25, NS3 initiates a partial repeat, to what sorry?', with the rising intonation at line 245 to ask the clearer information from the previous turn. NNS3 does the self-repair after the repair initiation with a full noun phrase 'pre-sessional course' at line 246. However, the non-understanding is causes the second effort to ask more information at line 247. Next, NNS3 generates the detailed explanation about the trouble-source 'pre-sessional' at line 248.

Extract 12 [Conversation3]
159   NNS3:   I (can) I can't re:member the em:: (1.1): night cl<u>u</u>:b in Singapore
                    like em::
160   NNS3:   Metro<u>::</u>
161   NS3:   Metr<u>o</u>::
162   NNS3:   Like em::: music (3.2) the the Techno::
163   NS3:   <u>Oh</u> Techno: <u>O</u>kay
164   NNS3: **TS**   Yeah I (can't) remember the na:me (.) Yeah:::
165   NS3:   Ahh-ha ah-ha ah-ha
166   NNS3: **TS**   For like tha:t so (unintelligible sound) Yeah::
167   NS3:   Uhm::
168   NNS3: **TS**   Li:ke a Techno<u>::</u>
169   NS3:   →   (Wha) what do you mean (.) the name of the clu<u>:</u>b or:::
170   NNS3:   Yeah::
171   NS3:   There are a <u>lo</u>:t of techno clubs in Singapore:
172   NNS3:   I think that has a lot.

Another type of NTRIs which is noticed in this study is 'You mean plus a candidate understanding. This type normally requires a sufficient understanding to clarify or rephrase. The current speaker produces the candidate understanding to be confirmed by the previous speaker. In this extract, NS3 is confused with the word 'Techno' in the previous turns whether NNS3 means the name of the club or techno clubs in Singapore to which she has been. The first TS begins at line 163 since NNS3 say, ' I can't remember the name' which implies the meaning that she has been to one techno club in Singapore but cannot remember the name. At line 169, NS3 initiates the repair with the discourse marker 'you mean' and a possible understanding of the club's name. Finally, NN3 responds with affirmative token at line 170.

Overall, the extracts 11-13 presented the incidence of repair activity in NS/NSS interactions. The only conversation 3 is described since the patterns of repair are obviously identified. However, the mutual understanding is made in all interactions, most of which are about requesting more information, repairing the previous utterances of the NNSs.

3. Conclusion
The present study has demonstrated a piece of the case-study research employing the CA method to study the repair activity on both linguistic and comprehend errors. The analysis has presented some significant points between the NS/NSS interactions outside

the classroom. The interesting points include the most frequency of ungrammatical types produced by the Thai-NNSs which subject and verb agreement, English tenses, and articles are the commonest mistakes found in this study. Secondly, the prevalence of incorrect grammar in use becomes evidently sidestepped by the NSs who have not studied in linguistics. The NSs are likely to accept the ungrammatical phenomenon which correctness on their language deficiency is not found. Finally, the NSs orientate themselves towards checking understanding. Some types of repairs, such as 'You mean plus a candidate understanding', a partial repeat of the previous turn, 'Wh – word', and a full repeat of the previous turn, are discovered when the meaning of the previous utterance is ambiguous. The reason shows that among the claims of these Thai-NNSs categorized as incompetent leaners for language teachers in the classroom, it seems to be proposed that they are considered proficient enough in interacting with the NSs authentically since the message-exchange infrastructure between them are shown as smoothly as the normal talks in mundane conversations. In other words, the focus on meaning is the more essential matter for the social interaction.

In addition, the significance of CA in SLA research should be mentioned. The atmosphere of this study is actually similar to the language classroom since there is an expert (NS) and learners (NNSs) who involve in the discussion; however the result of this study appears totally different from the classroom. In the language classrooms, an expert (NS) normally insists students in how to be good at English. The language structure is mainly focused since it is believed the language rules are the most important thing which helps students to acquire the foreign language. Teachers give priority to linguistic mistakes produced by language learners. Expecting that the language problems are noticed before/after the correctness is made in the classroom. As a result, as making mistakes become the death sentence, the language learners expose themselves to lack of linguistic uncertainty, encouragement, and support. On the other hand, the experts (NSs) in this study have seen the linguistic errors unproblematic for the interactions. The language learners (NNSs) who have the limited linguistic resources accomplished various interactional practices in real situations. Even though it is considered their English is not fluent, the experts insisted them in creating real contexts which showed the meaning was focused. As the result, the leaners have gained confidence, motivation, and authentic learning experience. Therefore, it is analyzed that the teachers in classrooms focus on the deficiency of the learners while the teachers outside the classroom see the learners proficient enough to use the language. In terms of language deficiency, the language center phase is highlighted. Students are strictly corrected to become good English. However, in terms of language proficiency, the content-center phase is focused. Linguistic errors are sidestepped if they do not cause any problems in accomplishing participants' mutual understanding. Therefore, the present study indicates the attitude towards the teaching atmosphere outside and inside the language classrooms should be well-matched. This study is not opposed that the correction activity in the classroom should be ignored, but it is proposed that   but it is suggested that various understanding problems in real-use interactions outside the classroom should be proposed in the classroom as well. As a result, ESL/EFL learners will be confident in both linguistic and comprehension issues.

In conclusion, this study suggests a limitation and future research as well. Since this study is small-scaled with only 3 pairs of NS/NSS participants, the result cannot be claimed that NSs always disregard for the grammatical problems of the NNSs in the casual conversations. This study has just presented the possibility with some evidence shown in the data that conversational repairs are normally found in understanding

problems, not linguistic problems. Repeatedly, grammatical inaccuracies may not the trouble sources of interactions. However, future research on repair activity in NS/NSS interactions is required to support this primary observation.

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