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# Managing relationships through repetition

## How repetition creates ever-shifting relationships in Japanese conversation

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This study examines cross-speaker repetition in triadic conversations in the Japanese language. For the analysis, three sets of triadic conversations between close friends taken from a TV talk show are used. The results reveal that repetition in triadic conversations performs distinctive functions that are not observed in dyadic conversations: repetition often takes place between only two participants of the triad and allows the two to team up and strengthen their bond exclusively (teaming repetition), or even playfully tease the third participant (teasing repetition). Repetition is also shared between the three participants. In such cases, it allows the participants to create an instant bond by joking or referring to shared circumstances (immediate threefold repetition), or to gradually establish rapport by connecting their utterances and co-constructing a story (repetition relay). All these types of repetition express the participants' points of view and contribute efficiently to their relationships that shift from moment to moment. The study further demonstrates cases in which one participant makes good use of various repetition types in a short period of time and efficiently allocates thoughts and feelings to the other two participants. The study concludes that repetition plays a significant role in Japanese conversation, helping speakers to converse smoothly and manage the dynamic relationships efficiently.

**Keywords:** cross-speaker repetition, triadic conversation, teaming, teasing, threefold repetition, repetition relay, co-construction of a story, the Japanese language

### 1. Introduction

Conversations between three (or even more) participants are characterized by certain special dynamic relationships. It is unlikely that three participants would

maintain a constant psychological distance from one another throughout a conversation. As the conversation unfolds and the topic shifts, either participants begin to relate to each other and a confluence of opinion emerges, or they take opposite positions and feel that there is a gap between their own ideas and feelings (cf. Goffman 1981; Schiffrin 1993).<sup>1</sup> Speakers use numerous devices in conversation to manage such relationships while they express their feelings and points of view. The present study demonstrates that in Japanese conversation the device of cross-speaker repetition dynamically changes the relationship between participants, and facilitates smooth conversation.

In conversations between three participants, repetition takes place in several ways. For example, repetition often occurs between two participants in the group. In such situations, repetition operates to bring together the two participants as a team and strengthen their bond, while leaving the third participant as an outsider (teaming repetition). In another case, repetition is employed by the two participants to tease the third participant and create a playful and friendly atmosphere during the conversation (teasing repetition). In other cases, repetition is shared by the three participants. When three participants repeat key words in quick succession, the repetition creates an instant bond between the three of them (immediate threefold repetition). Repetition also occurs after a short time interval as the three participants pass key words and connect their utterances to co-construct a story (repetition relay). This study conducts a detailed examination of these types of repetition and elucidates their influence on conversation and the relationships developed among the three participants. Moreover, the study demonstrates cases in which one participant employs various repetition types in a short period of time, even in a single turn, and efficiently allocates thoughts and feelings to the other two participants, maintaining a well-balanced closeness with them.

Based on analysis of the four types of repetition in triadic conversations, the study offers further insights into how the repetition of another's words operates dynamically in multiple ways, both expressing the participants' points of view and contributing to their constantly shifting relationships in conversation.

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1. Similarly, Goffman (1981) states that while speaking participants constantly change their "footing," which is "an alignment we take up to ourselves and the others present" (128). This concept of the dynamic relationship of participants is similar to Goffman's (1981) "participation structure (or framework)" or Schiffrin's (1993) "participant alignment".

## 2. Previous studies

An interesting aspect of linguistic repetition in conversation is the inconsistency between its evaluation and its actual function. General prevailing attitudes towards repetition are often negative. According to Tannen (1987, 53), in conversation repetition is considered undesirable by what she calls “conventional wisdom,” often synonymized with “yessing.” Johnstone (1987, 206) points out the same negative folk attitudes that considers repetition “redundant.” Repetition has also been underrated even by linguists. Ferrara (1994, 109) states that repetition has not received extensive examination because it has been considered “syntactically unchallenging” and it lacks referential novelty.<sup>2</sup> As these researchers indicate, the act of repeating one’s utterance or that of another person is more or less associated with boredom, and it tends to give the negative impression that the speaker is being mindless, inattentive, and superficial. This tendency is stronger in some English-speaking cultures, such as in the US, where people attach importance to being original and creative (Scollon and Scollon 1995; Tannen 1989). According to Johnstone (2002, 137), “we like to think of ourselves as creators rather than repeaters,” and Tannen (1989, 40) suggests that Americans assume that “sincerity is associated with novelty of expression.”<sup>3</sup> Although repetition varies depending on the culture, in theory, speakers are encouraged by a common view or what Tannen (1989) calls “conventional wisdom” to express themselves using their own words instead of repeating someone else’s words and phrases. However, in practice, repetition is ubiquitous more than we realize in spoken language. It is the case even in American English, as best described in Johnstone (1987, 206):

Despite our negative attitudes about repetition, we repeat constantly, in every conversation, in every speech or essay, with our children and with our peers. Repetition structures our discourse to an extent that the prescriptivists among us would find shameful, if they were aware of it.

Not only it occurs frequently, but also repetition plays numerous significant roles in conversation: poetic (Tannen 1987; Johnstone 1987; Bauman 2004); intertextual (Bakhtin 1986; Johnstone 2002; Bauman 2004); cohesive (Halliday and Hasan 1976), and interactive.

The interactive function of repetition, which is most relevant to this study, has been observed by Tannen (1987, 1989), Johnstone (1987, 2002), Norrick (1987),

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2. Ferrara (1994) explains that because the focus of linguistics has long been on the referential function of grammar, repetition that offers little referential novelty has been paid little attention.

3. This statement is made in contrast to some other cultures and languages, such as Greek, in which highly fixed expressions are valued.

Brown (1999), Ferrara (1994), Ishikawa (1991), Coates (2007), Bublitz (1988), Strauss and Kawanishi (1996), Fujii (2012) and Machi (2007, 2012, 2014). The functions reported by these studies include the following: to participate in a conversation and show listenership (or what Tannen (1989, 59–62) terms “participatory listenership”), to aid in the production of conversation, to create a humorous and playful frame, to savor a joke or expression, to link participants and their ideas, to ask and answer questions, to confirm the previous utterance, to display agreement or sympathy, and so forth. Importantly, these studies all show that by performing the above-mentioned functions, the repetition of the utterances of conversation partners is highly conducive to strengthening the rapport between the participants in a conversation.<sup>4</sup>

The culturally specific aspects of repetition have been examined previously by Machi (2007, 2012), Fujii (2012), Strauss and Kawanishi (1996), and Ishikawa (1991). In her comparative study of cross-speaker repetition in dyadic conversations in Japanese and American English, the present author shows the contrasting mechanisms of repetition in the two languages in terms of its frequency, object (what kinds of utterances are repeated), and function. According to Machi (2012),<sup>5</sup> repetition occurs more frequently – about 2.9 times more – in a Japanese corpus compared to a similar American English corpus. More importantly, analysis of the object of repetition reveals that Japanese speakers most frequently repeat other participants’ expressions of feelings and assessments – subjective information such as “how they feel and think” – while in English it is facts and names of people, places, and times – propositional information such as “who-does-what-to-whom where-and-when” – that are frequently repeated. A profound difference is also shown in the analysis of repetition function. In Japanese, repetition mainly performs sympathizing and agreeing functions in order to create rapport and a sense of unity between the participants. In English, in contrast, repetition functions as questioning, answering, and confirmation so that the participants can clarify the details of each other’s story and information.

Higher frequency and greater importance of repetition in Japanese than in English has been reported in other comparative studies: it has been suggested

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4. It is important to note that functions of repetition are context-dependent and they do not necessarily work in a rapport-creating way. Repetition is also employed by speakers in oppositional interactions such as disputes (Goodwin 1990) and it even displays disagreement (Pomerantz 1984).

5. In Machi (2012), conversations of 13 Japanese pairs and 11 American pairs are analyzed. Each pair was given approximately five minutes to talk freely about a pre-selected topic “What surprised you?”

that repetition in Japanese is “much more frequent” (Fujii 2012)<sup>6</sup> and “exceptionally rich” (Strauss and Kawanishi 1996). Added to this, Fujii (2015, 653), in her comparative analysis of problem-solving conversations in Japanese and American English, describes in detail a case where Japanese speakers agree and synchronize with each other through frequent repetition of each other’s ideas, remarking that, “in Japanese conversation, repetition is regarded as practical and necessary,” and “it functions as an important device to facilitate conversation.” Similarly, Strauss and Kawanishi (1996),<sup>7</sup> who examine dyadic conversations in Japanese, Korean, and American English, report that rich Japanese repetition emphasizes the degree of mutual awareness of the participants. This statement is in congruence with Ishikawa (1991),<sup>8</sup> who shows that repetition in Japanese conversation represents the identification of the participants’ idea, stance, perception, and participant role.

What we can say from these previous studies on the interactive functions of repetition is that, despite the prevailing negative images – especially among English speakers, repetition often functions to create and enhance rapport between participants in both English and Japanese. However, this tendency is especially prominent in Japanese, where repetition (1) occurs more frequently, (2) is received relatively positively, and (3) affects the relationships between participants in a more straightforward manner by concerning their subjective aspects (e.g. feelings, assessments, ideas, perception, etc.).

Building upon the extant research on this topic, this study examines repetition in triadic conversations in the Japanese language. By explicating distinctive functions of repetition that are not observed in dyadic conversations, the study aims to contribute to our understanding of how Japanese cross-speaker repetition operates in the moment-by-moment flow of conversation and how it affects the participants’ relationships.

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6. In Fujii (2012), the subject – 12 Japanese pairs and 11 American pairs, all female university students – were given 15 picture cards and instructed to make a coherent story by arranging the cards.

7. The database for Strauss and Kawanishi (1996) consists of conversations between three Japanese pairs, three American pairs, and two Korean pairs. The subjects were asked to talk about their experiences during the earthquake that occurred near Los Angeles in January, 1994.

8. Ishikawa (1991) analyzed a 30-minute conversation between four Japanese speakers.

### 3. Data

The data for this study were obtained from a Japanese TV show called “*Bokura no Jidai*” [“Our Generation”].<sup>9</sup> This is a weekly talk show that is shown on Sunday mornings. Three guests are invited to talk freely about what is on their minds without a set format. No host or interviewer is present to control the conversation. The three guests talk freely in a relaxed setting, sipping a cup of coffee and sometimes alcohol. For this study, three episodes were selected for analysis. The conversation in the first episode is between three young male actors, ranging in age from 28 to 30 years. The second conversation is between three middle-aged actresses/singers, ranging in age from 43 to 47 years. The third is between three middle-aged men – two of whom are comedians and one a script writer – aged from 40 to 42 years. In all three episodes, the three participants acknowledge each other as close friends. All conversations are carried out in a very friendly atmosphere. Episode 1, 2, and 3 were approximately 22 minutes, 22 minutes, and 19 minutes in length, respectively. The conversations were transcribed by myself.

The focus of this study is on cross-speaker repetition, that is, the repetition of others’ utterances in a triadic conversation. The study concerns cases in which lexical words and phrases are repeated.<sup>10</sup> Therefore, function words, such as backchannels (*un* ‘yeah,’ *soo* ‘right,’ etc.), fillers (*nanka* ‘like’ etc.), sentence-final particles (*ne*, *yo*, *sa*, etc.), discourse markers (*demo* ‘but,’ etc.), and pronouns do not count as repetitions unless they are repeated with special meanings, tones, or emphases. For convenience, I use the terms “the initiator” to refer to a participant who gives the original utterance and “the repeater” to refer to the participant who repeats these utterances.

### 4. Analysis

One of the biggest differences between dyadic and triadic conversations is assumed to be that the latter comprises more patterns. Repetition in dyadic con-

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9. The first episode was aired on September 5th, 2010 and featured Osamu Mukai, Ryuta Sato, and Kenta Kiritani. The second episode was aired on January 22nd, 2012, featuring Naoko Iijima, Kyoko Koizumi, and YOU (In order to avoid confusion with the second person pronoun, in this paper, her name is spelled Yū). The third was aired on March 20th, 2016, featuring Kazuhiro Ozawa, Yoshimi Tokui, and Soshi Masumoto. The show is produced by Fuji TV.

10. While repetition of sounds (phonological repetition) is also an interesting phenomenon, it mainly contributes to the musical or poetic effect of the discourse (Tannen 1989; Bauman 2004) rather than interactive, and often occurs within a single speaker’s utterances. Therefore, it is excluded from the study object in this paper.

versations is simple: there is one initiator and one repeater. In triadic conversations, however, repetition takes place in two ways: between two participants of the three and between three participants. Because the patterns vary, repetition in triadic conversations performs distinctive functions that are not observed in dyadic conversations, and they operate differently in the participants' relationships. The following sections will examine the details of the various functions and operations that repetition performs in triadic conversations in Japanese.

#### 4.1 Repetition between two participants in a triadic conversation<sup>11</sup>

In conversations between three people, in many cases repetition takes place between only two participants, and the third participant refrains from joining this repetition cycle. As a result, the triad effectively splits into two sides. In such a situation, the repetition in the dialog between the two participants side works by two devices. One is (a) teaming, that is, to bring together the two participants – the initiator and the repeater – as a team and strengthen the bond between them while the third participant is temporarily left out as an outsider. The second is (b) teasing, in which the two teamed participants jokingly and playfully make fun of the third participant.

##### 4.1.1 *Repetition as a device for teaming*<sup>12</sup>

In her study of dyadic conversations, Machi (2012) demonstrates that in Japanese, speakers frequently employ cross-speaker repetition to display sympathy and agreement with their conversation partner. Although the same phenomenon occurs in triadic conversations, when repetition occurs between only two participants of three, it performs the additional function of bringing together the two participants as a team; consequently, the third participant is left out as an outsider.

##### (1) “We’ve entered our thirties”

- 01 Ken: Moo sanjuudai, totsunyuu shimashita kara ne, bokura mo ne.  
'We've already entered our thirties, you know.'
- =>02 Ryu: Soo, bokura totsunyuu shimashita.  
'Yeah, we've entered (our thirties).'
- 03 Osa: Soo [desu ne].  
'Right.'
- 04 Ryu: [Yappa sanjuudai ni natte kuru to besuto ni natte kuru kanji wa [arunda kedo.  
'After all, after entering my thirties, it feels that I'm becoming the best of myself.'

11. The exploratory analysis discussed in Section 4.1. was first reported in “Repetition as a device for teaming and teasing in triadic conversation in Japanese” in *Eibeï Bungaku Kenkyū* ‘*Studies in English and American Literature*’ vol. 49, 2014.

12. I use the term “teaming” to describe the act of creating a unit of members who share things in common. I imply that, just like sports teams, the formation of a team is often selective in a sense that only qualified participants – people with specific features or knowledge – can participate.



- 05 Ken: [Soo soo.  
'Right, right.'
- 06 Osa: Zenzen gyakkoo shiteru janai desu ka, [kami ga. {laugh}  
'(But your) hair is going in the wrong direction. {laugh}.'
- 07 Ryu: [laugh]
- =>08 Ken: Kami wa gyakkoo shiteru kedo, kyoo wa yappari futari de besuto de ikoo.  
'(His) hair is going in the wrong direction, but let two of us be our best today.'

In (1), the three participants talk about their age – both Kenta and Ryuta are in their thirties and Osamu is still in his twenties. In this excerpt, I focus on the two repetitions: Ryuta's "we've entered (our thirties)" in o2 and Kenta's "best" in o8. In the first case, when Kenta mentions that both he and Ryuta have entered their thirties in o1, Ryuta repeats the utterance in the subsequent turn, in addition to the agreement token *soo* 'yeah.' Such tokens alone are used to indicate agreement in a simple and brief manner. However, in o2, Ryuta continues his turn by repeating Kenta's previous statement. This repetition plays a significant role because it influences the participants' relationship. The form of repetition, that is, using the same or almost the same expression as the initiator, enables the repeater to display sympathy and complete agreement (Machi 2012) or, as Ferrara (1994) terms it, emphatic agreement. It also emphasizes familiarity and even the like-mindedness of the participants (Machi 2012; Tannen 1989; Ishikawa 1991). The occurrence of repetition rather than simpler alternatives (e.g. *soo dane* 'right' and *un* 'yeah') indicates that a choice has been made and some social meaning is being conveyed (Ferrara 1994). As pointed out in these previous studies, Ryuta's repetition in o2 not only agrees with the content of Kenta's utterance but also emphasizes their similar age. In other words, through this repetition, Ryuta sends a meta-message that says, "You and I are indeed on the same team of being in our thirties," which consequently strengthens the bond between them.

Another noteworthy repetition appears in o8, where Kenta repeats Ryuta's expression, "best." While Kenta's "entering our thirties" in o1 is a factual statement with which Ryuta readily agrees, Ryuta's comment, "feeling my best," is a subjective statement, that is, it expresses something that Ryuta feels personally. Nevertheless, Kenta adopts the word "best" and approves of Ryuta's assessment of his condition. This kind of repetition happens often in Japanese conversation, where speakers frequently characterize other speaker's inner states of mind (Strauss and Kawanishi 1996). By showing agreement with subjective feelings and assessments in the form of repetition, Japanese speakers develop familiarity and create the sense of unity during a conversation (Machi 2012; Maynard 1997) as in (1). Note that in o8, Kenta adds the phrase *futari de* 'two of us' before the repetition of "best." This added phrase indicates that Kenta has a fellow feeling about Ryuta, and it brings Ryuta and Kenta together as a team while temporarily leaving out Osamu. In this manner, the repetition in o8 again acts to reinforce the team bond between Kenta and Ryuta.

The frequent occurrence of teaming repetition raises the following question: How does repetition bring together two participants and leave out a third participant? The data demonstrated two elements. The first is a common feature that is shared only by two participants of three. We might think that when we want to create a bond with others, the easiest and most effective way to achieve it is to refer to common features. If it is done using repetition, namely using the same wording as others, a sense of unity and relatedness can be achieved even more effectively (Machi 2012; Tannen 1989). This kind of repetition also works to draw a boundary towards other participants who do not share the feature or who do not join in the repetition. In excerpt (1), Kenta and Ryuta team up and bond through the two sets of repetitions because they have both entered their thirties and feel good about it. However, Osamu is temporarily left out because he is in his twenties. By stressing their commonality and their difference from Osamu through repetition, Kenta and Ryuta temporarily draw a boundary between Osamu and themselves, and they strengthen their team bond of “being in their thirties.”

Another element that produces teaming repetition in conversation is the third participant’s limited access to the story. When two participants relate a story that is not shared by the third participant, they create a bond as they repeat each other’s words and collaborate in relating a story.

## (2) “Like a shellfish”

- 01 Kyo: ...soremade suggoi shabetteta no ni, totan ni, [karitekita neko mitaini,  
‘She keeps bubbling until then, but all of a sudden she turns into a cat outside her own home,’
- 02 Nao: [laughter]
- 03 Yū: Kai, [kai da yo ne.  
‘A clam, a clam, right?’
- 04 Nao: [Ah.  
‘Aha.’
- =>05 Kyo: Kai mitaini,  
‘(She becomes) like a clam,’
- 06 Yū: Patan tte, [me toka awase nai, moo shirimasen mitaini,  
‘(I) Shut (my mouth), turn my eyes away, like “I don’t know (you)...”’
- =>07 Kyo: [Patan tte tojite, nannka moo...  
‘(She) shut (her mouth), like she’s...’

In (2), the three actresses – Yū, Kyoko, and Naoko – talk about Yū’s shy disposition. When Kyoko mentions that Yū often becomes shy and silent at the sight of strangers, Yū describes herself as *kai* ‘a clam’ because she “shuts (her mouth)” and becomes silent. Naoko, who does not know much about Yū’s shyness, has limited access to the ongoing story; therefore she remains a listener and does not say much during this excerpt. Yū and Kyoko, the two conversant participants, on the other hand, talk about Yū’s shy behavior using two sets of repetitions. In 05 and 07, Kyoko repeats Yū’s preceding utterance to display agreement. In addition, Kyoko’s repetitions, in which Naoko does not participate, indicate that Kyoko and Yū share the knowledge exclusively. Characterized by their knowledge of Yū’s shyness with strangers, Kyoko and Yū are brought together as teammates and collaborate in

unfolding the conversation. The bond between Yū and Kyoko is strengthened by the two teaming repetitions.

The preceding excerpts show the ways in which cross-speaker repetition operates in a triadic conversation as a device for teaming two participants and temporarily leaving out the third participant. Furthermore, two elements are highlighted: the common feature that is shared only by the two participants in the triad, and the third participant has limited access to the ongoing story, both of which promote the repetition and cause a temporal shift in the participants' relationship.

#### 4.1.2 *Repetition as a device for teasing*

In addition to teaming, repetition also operates as a device for teasing in a triadic conversation. Researchers have noted that repetition can be used to mock another speaker (Norrick 1987; Goodwin 1990; Schegloff 1996; Johnstone 2002). In the present study, the data show cases in which two participants teamed up and playfully teased the third participant by employing repetition.

#### (3) “That’s just like him”

- 01 Ken: Kono, reiboo ga monosugoi, gachi atari[, suru n de,  
'I've been exposed to air conditioning, so,'
- 02 Ryu: [A, naruhodo, naruhodo ne.  
'Oh, I see, I see.'
- 03 Ken: Chotto kazamuki o kaete itadakeru to[, chotto,  
'It would be nice if (anyone) can slightly adjust the air flow.'
- 04 Osa: [A, ikinari kureemu kara hairu wake.  
'Oh, you start out by complaining.'
- 05 Ken: {laugh}
- 06 Ryu: Soo desu.  
'That's right.'
- 07 Ken: {laugh} me ga sugoi...  
'My eyes are really...'
- 08 Ryu: Sooiu tokoro arimasu yo ne.  
'That's just like him, isn't it?'
- =>09 Osa: Sooiu toko aru, sooiu toko aru. {laugh}  
'(That's) Just like him, just like him.' {laugh}

At the beginning of this excerpt, Kenta, who has been sitting under an air conditioning unit, mentions that he has been exposed to air conditioning and he wants the air flow to change. Focusing on Kenta's request in o3, Osamu teasingly mentions “Oh, you start out by complaining” in o4, which leads to Ryuta's further teasing, “That's just like him, isn't it?” in o8. Hearing this, Osamu repeats Ryuta's comment twice, accompanying it with laughter. By repeating Ryuta's teasing comment, Osamu displays agreement with it as well as joining Ryuta in teasing Kenta.

It is well known that teasing is delicate and even risky because it could be interpreted both as face threatening (antagonism, aggression, or provocation) and face saving (bonding, friendliness, rapport, or solidarity) (Haugh 2010;

Geyer 2010; Ervin-Tripp and Lampert 2009). However, the laughter<sup>13</sup> in 05, 07, and 09 in excerpt (3) indicates that Ryuta, Osamu, and even Kenta are in a playful mood and enjoy the jocular atmosphere during the talk. According to Ervin-Tripp and Lampert (2009, 23), “In teasing between friends, the mood of the interaction is typically already witty, and there is an expectation that participants will make funny criticisms of each other.” Similarly, Ryuta and Osamu’s comment, “That’s just like him” is apparently interpreted as a funny criticism or a friendly remark rather than as an insult about Kenta’s behavior. Thus, while Osamu’s repetition in 09 works to tease Kenta along with Ryuta, and consequently bring them – Ryuta and Osamu – closer, it also signals that the three men are indeed in a close relationship to the degree that teasing each other takes place easily.

Similarly, in some cases, the initiator and the repeater both use repetition not only to tease a third participant but also to praise or encourage him or her by adding positive assessments and supportive comments.

#### (4) “A tough girl”

- 01 Yū: ...suekko jikara toka nano kana.  
‘...maybe (you have) the strength of the youngest child.’
- 02 Kyo: Nee, ue ni ane ga futari ite, itsumo utareteta kara, sakimawari shite, joozu ni yaru mitai no wa aru no kana.  
‘Yeah, since I have two older sisters and they were always stronger than me, I’ve learned to act fast and outsmart them.’
- omission-----
- 05 Nao: Nanka, dooji nai janai desu ka.  
‘Like, (you/she) never get(s) shaken, right?’
- =>06 Yū: Dooji nai [nee.  
‘(She) never get(s) shaken, yeah.’
- 07 Nao: [Nannimo dooji nai ki ga shite.  
‘It seems (you/she) never get(s) shaken at all.’
- =>08 Yū: Dooji nai nee.  
‘(She) never get(s) shaken, yeah.’

In this excerpt, the three actresses talk about how tough Kyoko is. In 02, Kyoko attributes her toughness to her having two older sisters, who were always stronger than her. On hearing this, Naoko characterizes Kyoko’s disposition as *dooji nai* ‘never get(s) shaken,’ which is agreed upon by Yū in the form of repetition. This repetition process takes place again in 07 and 08, where the content is similar. Through the two repetitions in 06 and 08, Naoko and Yū are temporarily teamed up, and they tease Kyoko. Although Naoko and Yū tease Kyoko because of her toughness, it is clear that they also admire her. This is partly because prior to this excerpt, the three participants talked about how shy both Yū and Naoko could be (part of the talk is extracted in excerpt (2)), and Yū and Naoko mentioned that

13. It has been claimed that there are numerous ways for teasing to be interpreted in a non-serious, jocular frame, such as laughter, prosodic cues, facial or gestural cues, formulaic or idiomatic expression, lexical exaggeration, unrealistic content of the tease, and the use of an informal register (Drew 1987; Haugh 2010; Geyer 2010).

they admire Kyoko because she is sociable and reliable. Moreover, having a tough nature is usually an advantage rather than a fault.

Both excerpts (3) and (4) show that the use of repetition to display agreement not only brings the two participants together as a team, but also operates to tease the third participant. The act of teasing by means of repetition creates a friendly and lively atmosphere not only because the participants accept each other's wording and its echoing rhythm, which, as Bauman (2004) states, enhances fluency, but also because such repetition is often accompanied by laughter as in excerpt (3). Equally noteworthy is the content of such teasing. When we look at the teasing comments in the two excerpts – “That’s just like him” and “(you/she) never get(s) shaken” – they both concern the nature of the tease targets. Commenting on another person’s nature requires the speaker to have some knowledge of the person, and teasing him or her about it presupposes some level of familiarity between the participants. Therefore, these teasing repetitions signal a close personal relationship between the teasers and the target. While the two teasers establish a rapport by repeating and emphasizing their mutual assessment of the target (Strauss and Kawanishi 1996; Ishikawa 1991), the teasing repetitions in (3) and (4) convey a meta-message that says, “We know you – the target – so well and we’re close enough to make fun of each other.” Thus, this teasing is friendly and enjoyable rather than critical and insulting.

#### 4.1.3 *The difference between teaming and teasing repetitions*

As discussed in the previous sections, teaming repetition and teasing repetition in triadic conversations operate similarly because they both bring two of the three participants together. However, there is a fundamental difference between them. The two kinds of repetition are distinguished by the following: (1) to whom the repetition in question is oriented; (2) where it places the third participant in relation to the other two participants.

In the case of teaming repetition, the repeated utterances are self-oriented, that is, they are concerned with the initiator and/or the repeater. Regarding the teaming repetitions in (1) and (2), “We’ve entered (our thirties)” and “best” in (1) are both oriented toward Kenta and Ryuta, the two teamed-up participants. “A clam” and “shut (my/her mouth)” in (2) are concerned with Yū, who is the initiator of the repetitions and a member of the team. In orienting to the initiator and/or the repeater, teaming repetition creates a strong, exclusive bond between them, excluding the third participant. In other words, teaming repetition mainly operates to strengthen the bond between the initiator and the repeater, and it temporarily excludes the third participant as an outsider.

In contrast, teasing repetition is oriented toward the target. Both repetitions in (3) and (4) – “That’s just like him” and “(you/she) never get(s) shaken” – refer to

the teasing targets. Such repetition promotes unity between the initiator and the repeater by indicating their mutual assessment of the target. However, because it refers to the third participant as a teasing target and signals their – the teasers and the target – close relationship by the act of teasing, teasing repetition often places the third participant inside the unity. While teaming repetition is exclusive of the third participant, teasing repetition can be inclusive of them and create a humorous and playful atmosphere in the triad. Thus, regardless of their shared function, the two types of repetition can be differentiated in terms of how they affect the triad's interpersonal relationships.

## 4.2 Repetition between three participants

Although they are comparatively fewer than the kinds of repetition discussed in Section 4.1., in some cases, repetition is shared by the three participants. In theory, it is not ideal when three people speak concurrently during a conversation. When they use repetition, however, the utterances do not interfere with one another, but instead, bring together the participants by emphasizing their familiarity and like-mindedness.

Repetition by three participants sounds simple enough, yet in the present study, the data showed two forms: (1) immediate threefold repetition in which the three participants said the same thing in succession or almost in chorus; and (2) repetition relay in which the participants used key words in the form of repetition to co-construct and share a story.

### 4.2.1 *Immediate threefold repetition*

One of the prominent features of immediate threefold repetition is that, as the term suggests, three participants say the key word(s) at a quick pace with no time interval between each repetition. Because of this immediacy, the repeated sequences tend to be short and simple.

#### (5) “As long as I have a table”

- 01 Mas: Ichiban hajime ni Yokkyun ga, heya ni mochikonda mono tte, chissai teeburu datta no, moo honto hijikake mitaina teeburu o,  
'The first thing Yokkyun<sup>14</sup> brought to his room was a small table. It's something like an armrest,'  
-----omission-----
- 04 Mas: De, kore dooshitano, ttara, iya, neta kaku tame da. Ore mo sonotoki ni, o, koitsu madamada yaruyona tte.  
'So (I) asked him what was with the table and (Tokui said) it was for writing materials. I too thought "Oh, this guy is still on it."'
- 05 Oza: Ne.  
'Yeah.'
- 06 Mas: Ore wa neta kaku yoo no teeburu sae areba, tte yutteta no ga, =  
'He was like "as long as I have a table for writing materials,"'

## 14. Tokui's nickname.

- =>07 Tok: nai kara. {laugh} Yamero ya, {laugh} = Sae areba, toka yutte  
 'I didn't say "as long as I have." {laugh} Come on.' {laugh}
- =>08 Oza: Ato pen to, kore ga areba.  
 "(As long as) I have that and a pen, and this."
- 09 Tok: {laugh} Tokoton yutte hen wa, son-na koto.  
 {laugh} 'I didn't say such thing at all.'

In (5), the three close male friends – Masumoto, Tokui, and Ozawa – who are also roommates, recall the first time they moved in together. Masumoto reveals that the first thing Tokui, a popular comedian, brought to his room was his tiny table for writing comedy materials and praises his earnest disposition. Then in 06, he exaggeratedly and jokingly quotes Tokui, saying, “as long as I have a table for writing materials,” which probably is not the exact wording Tokui used. Feeling that Masumoto’s wording sounds too pretentious, Tokui immediately repeats the inaccurately quoted part *sae areba* ‘as long as’ to claim that he did not use the phrase. On hearing Tokui’s claim, in 08, Ozawa further teases by using Masumoto and Tokui’s phrase, *Ato pen to, kore ga areba* ‘(as long as) I have that and a pen, and this.’ While saying the word *kore* ‘this,’ he points at his head and teasingly pretends an even more pretentious version of Tokui, saying “As long as I have a table, a pen, and my brain for writing materials, I don’t need anything.”

As the dialog in (5) indicates, in the case of immediate threefold repetition, the key word is uttered by the three participants in quick succession without pauses or a time interval. The repeated utterance is short and uncomplicated, which allows the three participants to easily access and repeat it at a quick pace. Another important factor concerns the circumstances in which such immediate threefold repetition occurs in conversation. In the present study, the data revealed two cases. The first one occurred when the participants were joking and/or teasing each other as in (5). When the joke is repeated by the triad, the participants share the jocular atmosphere, which allows them to feel connected. The second case of immediate threefold repetition occurred when the participants referred to what they have in common as shown in (6).

### (6) “What a coincidence”

- 01 Osa: Nanka, kyoodai toka mo, ne, sakki, tamatama,  
 'Like, we were casually talking about our siblings earlier.'
- 02 Ryu: Soo.  
 'Right.'
- 03 Osa: Suekko, suekko desu ka?  
 'Youngest child, are you the youngest?'
- =>04 Ryu: Suekko suekko.  
 '(I'm) the youngest, the youngest.'
- =>05 Osa: Suekko desu ka?  
 'Are you the youngest?'
- =>06 Ken: Suekko.  
 '(I'm) the youngest.'
- =>07 Osa: Suekko desu.  
 '(I'm also) the youngest.'
- 08 Ken: Sugoi kyootsuuten.  
 'What a coincidence!'
- omission-----
- 11 Osa: Futari kyoodai desu ka?  
 'Two boys in the family?'

- =>12 Ryu: Aniki, futari kyoodai.  
'(I have one) older brother, two boys.'
- =>13 Ken: Futari kyoodai.  
'Two boys.'
- =>14 Osa: Futari kyoodai.  
'Two boys.'
- 15 Ken: De, nigatsu umare?  
'And born in February?'
- =>16 Osa: [Nigatsu umare.  
'(I was) born in February.'
- =>17 Ryu: [Nigatsu umare, [a soo nano, sugoi na kore.  
'(I was) born in February, oh is that so, this is amazing.'
- =>18 Ken: [Zen-in nigatsu umare.  
'All of us were born in February.'

This excerpt shows three sets of immediate threefold repetitions. As soon as the three actors – Osamu, Ryuta, and Kenta – begin to talk about their family structure, they find out that they have several things in common: they are the youngest child out of two boys, and their birthdays are in February. Note that in o4 and o6, where Ryuta and Kenta respond to Osamu's question – “Are you the youngest?” – they do so in the form of repetition instead of simple agreement tokens such as *un* ‘yeah’ and *soo* ‘right’. While such tokens and Ryuta and Kenta's repetitions are interchangeable, they choose to respond using repetition. As discussed in Section 4.1., by choosing the form of repetition, the participants intentionally or unintentionally emphasize their sameness and familiarity, which facilitates the creation of bond between the three participants. At the end of this excerpt, the three men seem to feel related to each other following the three sets of immediate threefold repetitions that have emphasized their similar circumstances.

As in excerpts (5) and (6), when three participants share a word or a phrase in the form of repetition at a quick pace, the repeated utterance tends to be short, and the repetition sequences are also short and uncomplicated. Nevertheless, the immediate threefold repetition has a significant effect on the participants' relationship. Because such repetition often concerns jokes and similar personal circumstances among the participants, which signal the close personal relationship of the participants, it promotes the creation of a rapport and the sense of unity. Furthermore, because of the immediate nature of threefold repetition, a sense of unity is created instantly. Both the examples discussed in this section show that immediate threefold repetition immediately connects the participants, who are already close friends, even more closely. Although many other linguistic devices can be used to establish a rapport among participants, immediate threefold repetition is one of the simplest and quickest ways to achieve that state in a fast-paced conversation.

#### 4.2.2 Repetition relay

Another type of repetition used in a triadic conversation is repetition relay. Imagine a relay race where several runners take turns in completing a race by passing a baton from one to another. Japanese speakers often converse in the



manner of a relay (Fujii 2012;<sup>15</sup> Hayashi and Mori 1998),<sup>16</sup> so to speak. Although there is no baton, some key words and phrases are passed or repeated, from one participant to another, which link their utterances and experiences. According to Tannen (1989, 51), “repetition not only ties parts of discourse to other parts, but it bonds participants to the discourse and to each other, linking individual speakers in a conversation and in relationships.” In the present study, the data showed that repetition relay served to connect the participants’ utterances. Consequently, the participants co-constructed a single story as if they had shared the same experience.

### (7) “Working part-time”

- 01 Ryu: Ima demo nanka baito yaritaina to omou[xxx.  
'Even now I feel like working part-time.'
- =>02 Osa: [Omou [masu, sore wa.  
'I feel like it too.'
- 03 Ken: [Aa.  
'Ah.'
- =>04 Ryu: Omou yo ne, [da, antoki,  
'(We) feel like it, right? That time,'
- 05 Osa: [Un.xxx  
'Yeah.'
- =>06 Ken: [Yattete yokatta tte omou yo [ne.  
'(We) feel it was great for us working part-time, right?'
- =>07 Ryu: [Suggoi omou, honto ni.  
'(I) really feel so, indeed.'
- 08 Osa: Un.  
'Yeah.'
- 09 Ken: Honma ni.  
'Indeed.'
- omission-----
- 19 Ken: ...Ano nanka okane harau toki ni[, a kore kinoo no, [sanbun no,  
'Like, when you pay money, you think it is yesterday's three...'
- 20 Ryu: [Un.  
'Yeah.'
- 21 Osa: [Sanjikan bun toka.  
'Like, "(it's) the same as three hours of workload."'
- =>22 Ryu: Soo, nan jikan bun tte yuu kangae kata suru yo ne. {laugh}  
'Right, we tend to think it's the same as how many hours of workload, right?' {laugh}
- 23 Osa: [Soo. {laugh}  
'Right.' {laugh}
- 24 Ken: [Soo soo soo, shindokatta mon, da[ttte.  
'Right right right, because it was tough.'
- 25 Ryu: [Nn.  
'Yeah.'
- =>26 Osa: Kinoo wa toku ni, konda, mise ga, mitaina.  
'Like, "the store was especially busy yesterday."'
- 27 Ryu: [{laugh}
- 28 Ken: [{laugh}
- =>29 Osa: Kinoo no ichiman yen wa[, soo,  
'Like "10,000 yen (I earned) yesterday is," right,'

15. Fujii (2012) shows that, in problem-solving conversation in Japanese, multi-clausal co-construction (i.e., one speaker starts explaining the storyline and the other speaker continues it) and the relay of storyline are often observed. According to Fujii, this relaying phenomenon is found more in Japanese than in English.

16. Hayashi and Mori (1998) examine co-construction of sentences in Japanese. They define co-construction as a practice by which participants complete a sentence-in-progress started by another participant. While their focus is not on repetition, it occurs in some of their examples of co-construction in a similar way to the examples in this study and allows the participants to tell a single story collaboratively.

=>30 Ken: [Shindokatta, kinoo no ichiman yen ni wa kachi ga aru  
mitaina.  
'Like "that 10,000 yen (I earned) yesterday is precious because it was tough."'

In (7), Ryuta, Osamu, and Kenta discuss the importance of experiencing working part-time. From 01 to 09, the three participants sympathetically mention how they appreciate the experience of part-time jobs, passing the emotive verb *omou* 'feel'. In this example of repetition relay, it is significant that not only is the single word *omou* repeated but also the participants' ideas and feelings regarding their experience are repeated. According to Strauss and Kawanishi (1996), Japanese speakers frequently characterize other speakers' feelings and inner states, which results in empathy.<sup>17</sup> Machi (2012) also demonstrates that in Japanese, the repetition of other's ideas and feelings allows subjective experiences to be openly discussed and shared by the participants. Such sharing thoughts and feelings consequently allows the participants to create a rapport and a strong sense of unity. The repetition of *omou* 'feel' in the first half of (7) displays the participants' great sympathy and rapport for each other, as if to say, "We totally agree on this topic." It is notable that in 07 and 09, Kenta repeats Ryuta's affirmative expression *honto ni* 'indeed' (Kenta is from the Kansai region and he actually says *homma ni*, which is in the Kansai dialect), which reinforces their like-mindedness.

The second half of this excerpt further demonstrates the process of creating the participants' rapport and sense of unity. Here, the participants discuss how their part-time job experiences have made them realize the value of money. The three men take turns in leading the conversation, a single story unfolds. The several key phrases, or 'batons,' that are passed are *kinoo no* 'yesterday's,' *sanjikan bun* 'three hours of (workload)' (Ryuta changes it slightly to *nanjikan bun* 'how many hours of (workload)'), and *kinoo no ichiman yen* 'that 10,000 yen (I earned) yesterday.' Unlike the repetition relay shown in the first half of (7), here each phrase is not uttered three times exactly. However, the phrases are repeated at least once by one of the participants and intertwined in the sequence, which results in connecting their utterances and themselves. By passing these key phrases, Kenta, Osamu, and Ryuta together relate the story that when they worked part-time, they would convert money into their workloads and realize its value, and therefore really appreciated the experience. Even though their experiences were individual, several sets of repetition relays lead the participants to

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17. This statement is based on their comparative study of assessment strategies in Japanese, Korean, and American English. According to them, characterizing the state of mind of a conversation partner to create empathy is observed only in Japanese. Maynard (1997) also remarks that compared to American English, Japanese is richer in language-explicit means for expressing the emotional aspects of communication, and the rich emotional expressions offer easier access to encapsulate, express, and share feelings and attitudes.

relate deeply to each other, which allows them to unfold the conversation as if they co-owned the experience.

As shown in excerpt (7), the distinctive features of repetition relay are that the sequence is long, continuous, and often intertwined. This is different from immediate threefold repetition that has a simple structure in which repetition occurs immediately. In the case of repetition relay, some repetition occurs after a short time interval. In (7), Kenta first mentions “yesterday” in 19, and in 26 and 29, Osamu repeats the word and Kenta’s state of mind, that is, the money they earned made them recall their hard work on the previous day. This excerpt demonstrates that unlike immediate threefold repetition, which creates an instant bond, when participants employ repetition relay, they gradually become connected and mutually sympathetic in the process of co-constructing a story.

The following example shows that repetition relay takes place even when the three participants are not exactly in agreement. In (8), the three actresses talk about their drinking habits. While they all love drinking alcohol, they have different opinions about drinking alone at home.

### (8) “Drinking habits-1”

- 01 Yū: Watashi nanka moo kuraku nattara, kyoochaku kan-nen mitai ni  
[, nomanakya tte naru.  
'When it gets dark (outside), I get kind of obsessed, like “I should be drinking.”'
- 02 Kyo: [Nomanakya tte naru.  
'You get like “I should be drinking.”'
- =>03 Yū: Da, fuyu toka hayaku kuraku naruf, kara, ie de hima de[, ie ni itemo, de goji goro,  
wa, kurai, nomanakya tte omou n dakedo, are mada goji da mitai ni nacchatte,  
dooshiyoo toka omotte, de shichiji made gaman shite,  
'So in winter it gets dark earlier. And when I'm at home doing nothing at around five  
o'clock, I'm like “wow it's dark, I should be drinking.” But then I notice it's still five,  
so I hold back until seven.'
- 04 Nao: [Hai.  
'Yes.'
- 05 Kyo: [Hitori de nomu no?  
'You drink alone?'
- =>06 Nao: Watashi mo yoji ka goji kurai ni nomanakya tte omotte,=  
'I also feel I should be drinking at four or five,'
- 07 Yū: = Soo desho?  
'(You feel) so, right?'
- omission----
- 10 Kyo: Wake ga wakan-nai no, gyaku ni.  
'I just don't understand.'
- =>11 Nao: Sugoi tanoshii desu yo, nanka, hitori de nomu-no-=  
'It's so much fun, like, drinking alone.'
- =>12 Kyo: = Datte hitori de yopparacchattara,  
'But if you get drunk alone,'
- =>13 Yū: Furaffura nano, hitori de, ie de, ne?  
'You get dead drunk alone, at home, right?'
- 14 Kyo: [Desho? Kitto.  
'I guess so. Perhaps.'
- 15 Nao: [Un.  
'Yeah.'
- =>16 Kyo: Watashi mo yatta koto wa arunda yo, demo nanka hitori de yopparacchatte,  
ikiba ga nai kibun=  
'I've done that myself too, but I got drunk alone and I felt like I had nowhere to go.'
- =>17 Yū: = Ikidaore mitai ni naru no.  
'It turns out that (you) go collapse and die.'
- 18 Nao: {laugh}
- =>19 Kyo: Naru yo ne.  
'That's how it turns out, yeah.'

In 01 and 03, Yū confesses how much she enjoys drinking alone at home. While Yū talks about her drinking habit, in 02 Kyoko interrupts saying, “You get like ‘I should be drinking,’”<sup>18</sup> in chorus with Yū, which indicates that Kyoko knows Yū well. Yū repeats the phrase again in 03 to emphasize how much she gets obsessed about drinking and to approve of Kyoko’s statement about Yū. Hearing this, Naoko comments that she is just like Yū, repeating two phrases from Yū’s statement – “five o’clock” and “I feel I should be drinking” – which then brings Yū and Naoko together as a team. Although Kyoko, who is not fond of drinking alone at home, is excluded from this team, she is not a complete outsider. Her question in 05 – *Hitori de nomuno?* ‘You drink alone?’ – although not answered immediately, is incorporated in Naoko’s statement in 11. The phrase *hitori de* ‘alone,’ is repeated by Yū and Kyoko several times. This not only maintains cohesiveness between utterances but also functions to connect the participants by showing the acceptance of each other’s utterances (Tannen 1989; Ferrara 1994). A similar effect is demonstrated in the last exchange between Kyoko and Yū from 16 to 19. When Kyoko mentions *ikiba ga nai* ‘(she) had nowhere to go’ when she got drunk alone, Yū wittily and humorously responds *ikidaore mitai ni naru* ‘It turns out that (you) go collapse and die,’ repeating and incorporating Kyoko’s wording *iki* ‘go’ into her utterance. In 19, Kyoko repeats Yū’s *naru* ‘(it) turns out’ to display her agreement.

This excerpt is interesting because the three actresses assume different positions. Yū and Naoko are fond of drinking alone at home whereas Kyoko is not. Nevertheless, repetition relay takes place and connects the utterances and the participants. By passing several phrases to each other, the three women develop a story about drinking alone at home. Even though they still feel differently about it and are not exactly in agreement at the end of the excerpt, they seem to have enjoyed the conversation because of the repetition relay and the co-constructing process.

The analysis of the last two excerpts has shown that in the case of repetition relay participants gradually established a rapport and collaborated in unfolding a story. Because the three participants linked their utterances by shared key phrases that were sometimes repeated and intertwined, the sequence was long and complicated. Key phrases are not always repeated immediately. In many cases, repetition occurs some time after the original utterance. The act of incorporating each other’s words in developing a single story led the participants to bond and connect with each other. Even if the participants had different points

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18. It is uttered with a downward intonation.

of view, they still established a rapport and stayed connected by accepting and linking each other's utterances.<sup>19</sup>

#### 4.3 The co-occurrence of various types of repetition and how the participants manage their relationships

The previous sections demonstrated that cross-speaker repetition in triadic conversations performs various functions in several forms, causing shifts in the participants' relationships. One of the most interesting aspects of conversation, especially those involving multiple participants, is the dynamic and constantly shifting relationships among the participants. In fact, there is almost always a subtle shift in the participants' points of view and levels of relatedness as the conversation unfolds and the topic changes. Repetition plays a significant role in facilitating the shifts in a fast-paced conversation. Previous sections have demonstrated that Japanese speakers employ various types of repetition as they carry out a conversation. It is noteworthy, furthermore, that the repetitions sometimes co-occur in a short period of time and contribute to the creation of the constantly shifting relationship among the participants. The following example is (1).

##### (1) "We've entered our thirties"

- 01 Ken: Moo sanjuudai totsunyuu shimashita kara ne, bokura mo ne.  
'We've already entered our thirties, you know.'
- =>02 Ryu: Soo, bokura totsunyuu shimashita.  
'Yeah, we've entered (our thirties).'
- 03 Osa: Soo [desu ne.  
'Right.'
- 04 Ryu: [Yappa sanjuudai ni natte kuru to besuto ni natte kuru kanji wa [arunda kedo.  
'After all, after entering my thirties, it feels that I'm becoming the best of myself.'
- 05 Ken: [Soo soo.  
'Right, right.'
- 06 Osa: Zenzen gyakkoo shiteru janai desu ka, [kami ga. {laugh}  
'(But your) hair is going in the wrong direction. {laugh}'
- 07 Ryu: [laugh
- =>08 Ken: Kami wa gyakkoo shiteru kedo, kyoo wa yappari futari de besuto de ikoo.  
'(His) hair is going in the wrong direction, but let two of us be our best today.'

In addition to the repetition of Ryuta's assessment "best" in the latter half of his turn, in o8, Kenta also repeats Osamu's teasing comment about Ryuta's blonde hair: "(His) hair is going in the wrong direction,"<sup>20</sup> in the first half of his turn. Hence, in a single turn, Kenta first employs repetition to tease Ryuta with Osamu and then immediately switches to affiliate with Ryuta, which produces a teaming repetition that strengthens his bond with the latter. Kenta's point of view also

19. Tannen (1989,78) also shows a similar case, where the practice of repetition serves to create rapport and ratify the other speaker's contribution even if the repeater does not actually agree with the content of his or her utterance.

20. Osamu makes this statement because Ryuta's hair, which was originally black, has been dyed blonde. Because these men are actors, it is likely that they dye their hair for their roles.

switches. Kenta's first repetition of Osamu's teasing shows that, at this moment, Kenta's mind is the same as Osamu's in terms of making fun of Ryuta's hair. However, because teasing repetition is based on the participants' close relationship, Kenta also shows a level of intimacy with Ryuta. The subsequent teaming repetition brings Kenta and Ryuta together as teammates. At this point, Kenta identifies with Ryuta by emphasizing their similarities in age and condition.

This excerpt demonstrates that in conversation, repetition works dynamically to express the participants' points of view and relationships with each other, which shift from moment to moment. By employing two similar yet different types of repetitions, Kenta manages to allocate his thoughts and feelings to Osamu and Ryuta efficiently. The following excerpt is a similar example.

### (9) "Drinking habits-2"

- 01 Kyo: Datte watashi sa, (...) ma, nomu hi wa sugoi nomu n dakedo daitai tsuki ni ikkai kurai shika osake nomanai kara ne.  
'You see, when I drink, I drink a lot, but usually I drink alcohol about once a month.'
- 02 Nao: Sore ga sugoi desu yo nee.  
'That's unbelievable, isn't it?'
- 03 Kyo: Ie de issai nomanai desho.  
'I never drink at home, you know.'
- =>04 Yū: Soo, ato ie, ie de nomanai?  
'Right, and home, don't you drink at home?'
- 05 Nao: Gangan nomi masu.  
'I drink heavily.'
- =>06 Yū: Soo desho, watashi mo ie de gangan nomu no[. Ie de nomanai n da yoo[. Wake wakan-naku nai?  
'Right? I too drink heavily at home. (She) never drinks at home. Isn't that hard to understand?'
- 07 Nao: [Hai.  
'Yes.'
- [Sugoi desu yo ne.  
'That's unbelievable, right?'

This excerpt about drinking habits precedes excerpt (8), in which the three actresses split into two opinions about drinking at home. In 01 and 03, Kyoko mentions that although she drinks alcohol heavily with friends on occasion, she hardly ever drinks at home. It is noteworthy that after hearing Kyoko's utterance, *ie de issai nomanai* 'I never drink at home' in 03, Yū employs repetition in 04 and 06. First Yū repeats Kyoko's term *ie* 'home' to take over the topic and then continues repeating *ie de nomanai* 'don't you drink at home?' to question Naoko. Hence, Yū has adopted the concept of drinking at home, or received a 'baton,' from Kyoko and made the topic open to Naoko and herself. When asked by Yū, in 05, Naoko answers "I drink heavily (at home)." In response, Yū first repeats Naoko's utterance, saying, "I too drink heavily at home" to team with Naoko. While Yū seems to be fully teamed with Naoko in terms of having the same drinking habit, her next utterance repeats Kyoko's utterance, "(She) never drinks at home," which brings Kyoko back to the topic. The reason that this repetition of Kyoko's utterance is remarkable is that it displays Yū's closeness with Kyoko as if to say, "In fact, she never drinks at home, and I know it very well." It therefore can be regarded as a teaming repetition as well as a reference to Kyoko in order to bring her back to

the topic. As the previous excerpt (1), (10) also demonstrates that the participant employed different kinds of repetitions in a short period of time and managed to display a subtle shift in her point of view and relationship with the other two conversation partners.

This chapter has demonstrated that when cross-speaker repetition is employed in a triadic conversation, it performs multiple functions that affect the participants' relationship in several ways. The analysis of the data also showed that repetition was used to express the repeater's ever-shifting point of view, which contributed greatly to the creation of the constantly shifting relationship between the participants. Conversations between close friends can often become fast-paced and dynamic. In such circumstances, repetition performs various significant roles in an efficient manner.

## 5. Conclusion

Building on the previously reported functions of repetition in dyadic conversations, this study has demonstrated four previously not studied types of repetition in Japanese triadic conversations. It could be shown that when repetition took place between two participants in a triad, repetition often operated to bring together the two as a team and strengthen the bond between them, temporarily leaving out the third participant (teaming repetition). Two elements were discussed – the common features shared by only two participants, and the third participant's limited access to the story – as the reason that teaming repetition occurred. Moreover, it was also observed that repetition was employed by two teamed participants to tease the third participant and create a playful and friendly atmosphere (teasing repetition).

The study also showed that repetition occurred between three participants in two ways. When three participants repeated key words in quick succession or almost in chorus while they were joking or talking about their commonality, the repetition created an instant bond between the participants (immediate threefold repetition). Repetition also occurred after a short interval when three participants passed key words and connected their utterances in order to co-construct a story (repetition relay). In such cases, the participants gradually established a rapport as they incorporated each other's words and collaborated in unfolding a single story.

Moreover, the results of the study indicate that Japanese speakers employ various types of repetition in a short period of time to express the subtle shift in their points of view and relationships with others. Due to the co-occurrence of various repetitions, the participants are able to allocate their thoughts and feelings

to both conversation partners efficiently, consequently maintaining well-balanced intimacy and unity with them.

The close observation of four types of repetition demonstrated that, despite being simple in form, the practice of cross-speaker repetition involves much more than copying the words of others. Instead, under certain circumstances such as between close friends, it becomes a functional device that allows Japanese speakers to maintain well-balanced relationships with each other in an effective, time-efficient manner while developing a conversation. In conversations, the participants' relationships constantly and quickly shift from one state to another, which may be one of the things that people find entertaining about talking with others. This study revealed that repetition plays a key role in allowing Japanese speakers to participate in and carry out dynamic conversations, and contributing to the successful management of both conversations and relationships.

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