

# An Analysis of Discourse in the EFL Classroom

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## Summary

This paper analyses spoken discourse between the teacher and the student in the English as a foreign language (EFL) classroom. The 45-minute conversation in the classroom was entirely recorded and analyzed in terms of discourse marker *ok*, interactional sequences, and speech act. The analyses revealed that the language used in the classroom contained various functions of interactional sequences and speech acts that are observed in authentic, natural communication, although it lacked the naturalness in terms of syntax, lexis, and fluency because of the student's low proficiency of English. It was also found that the teacher used a variety of meanings of discourse marker *ok*. Furthermore, the analyses suggested that there existed power in the relationship between the teacher and the student. The teacher controlled and manipulated the topic to follow and many interactional sequences explicitly and implicitly.

These results suggest that communication is an intertwined activity socially, cognitively, and linguistically even in a non-naturalistic setting of a classroom as Hatch (1992) claimed, and discourse analysis is a beneficial tool to evaluate approaches to language classrooms and explore new application in language teaching (Jaworski & Coupland, 1999; Schiffrin, 1999).

Keywords: Discourse analysis, Discourse marker, Interactional sequences, Speech act

## I Introduction

Discourse analysis is the study of the relationship between language and the contexts where it is used (McCarthy, 1991). It examines how sentences in spoken and written language form larger meaningful units in various social contexts ranging from conversation to highly institutionalized forms of talk. Thus, the data resulting from discourse analysis illustrates that the language use for human communication is intertwined socially, cognitively, and linguistically (Hatch, 1992).

Recently, discourse analysis has been carried out in the classroom so that we can evaluate output of the teacher and the students, the procedures in classrooms, and the types of teacher-student relationships. The classroom language has been primarily analyzed on linguistic descriptions of syntax, phonology, and semantics; however, discourse analysis which takes into account the contexts and cultural influences beyond the description of language above the sentence is now forming a backdrop to studies in applied linguistics and second language learning. For example, even in the traditional classroom where rigid roles between the teacher and the students exist, the teachers usually ask questions and the students answer and the discourse structure is expected to be very limited, we can raise our awareness of the use of language for human communication by examining discourse analysis. Furthermore, in more recent trends in the classroom where pair and group works are employed in addition to the traditional roles

between the teacher and the students, other patterns of forms and talks between the student and the student, or the students and the teacher can be revealed. These findings are expected to contribute to judging approaches to language classrooms and offer new applications in language teaching regardless of classroom contexts.

This paper, then, analyzes a classroom discourse recorded at a private English conversation school in Japan. According to Schegloff (1999), it is imperative to be familiar with social structures that surrounded conversational structures since it enables us to notice new findings about discourse. Thus, the paper will firstly describe the class profile and move on to the analyses of the classroom discourse. The foci of the analyses to be discussed here are as follows:

1. Discourse marker *ok*
2. Interactional sequences
3. Speech act

## II A discussion of the class

The recorded class was a private lesson in which there was a single Japanese female student in a beginner level. The 45-minute class was recorded and the recorded data was entirely transcribed by the researcher<sup>1)</sup>. The classroom was partitioned in a large office and it had a small space with one rectangular dining table and six chairs. The class was carried out in a face-to-face style, and the tape recorder was set on the center of the table.

The school had unique characteristics compared with other institutions such as colleges and high schools whose primary goals are to pursue academic learning. First, it had no pre-determined syllabus. Instead every learning material and procedure was determined based on students' needs. Nothing was more prioritized than the students' intentions and desires for the class. Second, the school had various students ranging from college students to homemakers, consequently, it had to meet various their needs and demands. The primary purpose of the students who joined the school was to learn English; however, there was a great discrepancy between what they desired and what they actually wanted to do in the class. Those students' motivations for learning English were not necessarily solid. They hoped to speak English fluently, but did not intend to work hard for it. To many of them, it seemed that learning English was considered one of fashionable and decent hobbies.

The student (Haru: pseudonym) who attended this class was also one of those students. Although she enjoyed learning English at school and desired to speak fluent English, she preferred incidental learning without intensive or extensive efforts. Her learning had been very slowly progressing: As of the recording date, she had been learning English for 17 months, however, she frequently could not identify the differences between copula and verb and she was not familiar with 2000 high frequency words. This is partly because of her age (she was in the 50's.) and partly because of her lack of determination to make intensive efforts to learn English. As discussing the elements that impeded her progress is beyond the scope of this paper, I do not mention the details here.

Notwithstanding, it was true that her learning was frequently discouraged by her snail pace

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1) For the transcription notation used in this study, see Atkinson and Heritage (1999).

of learning progress. She easily fell into a vicious circle where she lost her confidence owing to her slow progress, which resulted in hindering further progress. To avoid this, the teacher needed to pay minute attentions not to lose her motivation and encourage her performance so as to keep her affective filter up, which is an important factor in language learning (Krashen, 1985). These features made the classroom discourse in this study distant from others.

The class was conducted immediately after the student came back from one-week trip to Hawaii. Therefore, the class spent a great amount of time in student's answering the questions on the trip asked by the teacher. As a result, a great many wh-questions were observed. Moreover, given the vocabulary and grammatical knowledge of the student, *teacher talk*<sup>2)</sup> was employed throughout the class.

### III Discourse marker *ok*

*Ok* literally means an approval, agreement, or endorsements (Webster, 1994), however, in this class, *ok* was frequently used as a discourse marker which was beyond the scope of its literal meanings and intended to manage information. This is clearly supported by the fact that every *ok* in this classroom discourse was uttered by the teacher who was in a position to manage information linguistically and emotionally in the class. In this section, the role of *ok* as a discourse marker will be analyzed in terms of (1) repairs, (2) question/acknowledgement sequences, (3) the status of information, and (4) shifts in subjective orientation.

#### 1 *Ok* in repairs

Schiffrin (1999) defined repair as a speech activity in which speakers adjust a prior information unit before they respond to it. He categorized it into two: self-initiation and self-completion. The following example shows *ok* as self-initiated repairs.

- (1) Teacher: So, you arrived at Honolulu,
- (2)               So where did you go on the first day?
- (3) Student: (1.3) saishowa (0.8) Hawai (1.5) Hawai (2.4)  
                  *At first Hawaii, Hawaii*
- (4) Teacher: **Ok.** Let me change my question. =
- (5)               =Where did you stay in Honolulu?
- (6) Student: Yes, Yes.

In (4), the teacher noticed that the student had difficulties in answering the question and she replaced her question as (5). Schiffrin (1999) suggested that repair shows speaker's sensitivity to their own production of discourse, but at the same time, replacing question also showed the teacher's intention to avoid the student's silence that might create her anxiety over speaking English in this case.

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2) In trying to communicate with learners, teachers often simplify their speech (Richards, Platt, & Platt, 1992). This style of speech is called *teacher talk*.

## 2 *Ok* in question/acknowledgement sequences

The sequence of question, answer, or acknowledgement is another important element of speech activity that exchange information (Schiffrin, 1999). A discourse marker *ok* was employed to help accomplish these different information management tasks.

### (1) *Ok* with questions

The question in (11) was obviously connected to a prior utterance by the student (10), and *ok* prefaced the requests for clarification. In (10), the student could not find appropriate English words to express her ideas, so she code-switched from English to Japanese. However, as her Japanese did not supply enough information to understand, the teacher confirmed the meaning of what the student expressed.

- (7) Student: Husband, (0.5) diamond head mountain walking,  
 (8) And (3.5) trolley bus?  
 (9) Teacher: By bus?  
 (10) Student: Yes, by bus, (4.6) so, betsubetsu koudou.

*Different activities*

- (11) Teacher: **Ok.** So, did he=  
 (12) ((laugh))  
 (13) =did he go by himself? Go alone?  
 (14) Student: Alone.

Interestingly, *ok* with answers was not observed in the entire discourse either in the student's or in the teacher's. This may be because the recorded discourse employed a number of question-answer forms that might hinder natural flow of communication.

### (2) *Ok* with acknowledgement of answers

In (17), the teacher responded to the answer of the student which was elicited by the question. This acknowledgement of answers that is commonly observed in speech activity poses different meanings depending on the context. In (17), for example, the teacher expressed understanding of the reason why the student failed to see the sunset.

- (15) Teacher: Did you see the sunset in Waikiki?  
 (16) Student: Himaga (2.4) ((laugh))

*No time*

- (17) Teacher: **Ok.** I know how busy you were!  
 (18) Maybe many Japanese people don't have time to see the sunset.

## 3 *Ok* and the status of information

The role of *ok* in speech activities is not confined to managing information: The discourse marker can be used in displaying that the speaker recognizes familiar information (recognition display) and receives new information (information receipt) (Schiffrin, 1999).

(1) *Ok* as recognition display

In (21), the teacher suddenly recalled what the student was concerned about the trip before she visited Hawaii: The student had mentioned that traveling with her husband could annoy her. *Ok* marked here by the teacher expressed that she was recalling her memory: The student previously said that the student's husband's constant presence could annoy her.

(19) Student: (2.5) Kuttsuite kurukara shaberi nikukatta desu.

*There were a lot of pressure on me in speaking English as my husband was always with me.*

(20) Teacher: It's a personal problem. ((laugh))

(21) **Ok.** That reminds me of your problem. Before the trip, you said, "This trip will be with my husband".

(22) So how was your trip with your husband?

(23) Was it fun? Interesting? Tired?

(2) *Ok* as information receipt

*Ok* was also employed when the teacher received new information. Both in (29) and (32), the teacher did not expect that the student neither went sightseeing nor went to the Waikiki Beach during one-week trip in Hawaii until the student said so. *Ok* in (29) and (32) showed that she had unexpected information.

## Extract 1

(24) Teacher: So did you see something in the city of Waikiki?

(25) There are many spots in Waikiki.

(26) Student: No!

(27) Teacher: Not at all ↑

(28) Student: Not at all.

(29) Teacher: **Ok.** How about your husband? Your husband did some sightseeing by bus.

## Extract 2

(30) Teacher: Did you go to the Waikiki beach?

(31) Student: No!

(32) Teacher: **Ok.** Did you see the Waikiki beach?

(33) Student: Beautiful, yes.

4 *Ok* and shifts in subjective orientation

*Ok* also marks shifts in subjective orientation, that is, the evaluation of information. In (36), the teacher responded to the silence maintained by the student, guessing what the silence actually meant. In (37), *ok* was followed by the teacher's comment. The teacher repeatedly used *ok* to suggest she understood what the student intended to tell.

(34) Teacher: Did you have a good time with your husband? Did you have a good time?  
Tanoshikattadesuka?

*Did you have a good time?*

(35) Student: ((pause))

- (36) Teacher: **Ok.** Your eyes tell something.  
 (37) **Ok.** Don't worry.  
 (38) I will never tell your husband.

#### IV Interactional Sequences

This part will analyze interactional sequences, focusing on channel open/close signals, backchannel signals, and turn-taking signals. These are parts of system constraints that are considered universal in all human communication (Goffman, 1976).

##### (1) Channel open/close signals

The opening of this class began by a "how-are-you" sequence, followed by the default responses of "Fine, thank you" in (39) and (40). This opening may be related to the classroom context: The student had already met the teacher when they came to the school, as the school had only one large room that was divided into small learning spaces by partitions. Before the class began, the student had exchanged greetings and enjoyed small talk with the teacher in Japanese. Besides, there were no chimes or bells to tell the time. The student voluntarily came to the learning space around the time when the class started. Under these circumstances, in (39), (40), and (41), the teacher employed the routine greetings to shift the student's attention from the outside to the inside of the classroom and stated the beginning of the lesson (42).

- (39) Teacher: How are you, Haru-san?  
 (40) Student: Fine, thank you, and you?  
 (41) Teacher: I'm fine, too, thank you.  
 (42) **Ok.** Let's start today's lesson.

The closing was marked by *ok* (43), which was regarded as a preclosing signal that suggested that the teacher was ready to close the communication channel (Hatch, 1992). Then, the teacher concluded the class by praise for the student's overall performance.

- (43) Teacher: **Ok::** Thank you very much.  
 (44) I was very impressed.

In this class, both opening and closing were entirely initiated by the teacher: Her discourse started and closed the class. That both opening and closing signals are initiated by the teacher is one of the most important features of the classroom (Hatch, 1992).

##### (2) Backchannel signals

Backchannel signals refer to signals to express that the recipient is attending to a message. Hatch (1992) included head nodding, smiling, and body alignment in backchannel signals; however, in this paper, the focus will be placed on verbal signals. In (47) and (49), the teacher gave the student signals that the message was receiving, and implicitly suggested that the student should continue to keep her turn.

- (45) Teacher: Where did you go?

- (46) Student: I went to:: (2.8),  
 (47) Teacher: **Uh-huh**,  
 (48) Student: I went to Hawaii:  
 (49) Teacher: **Uh-huh**, Hawaii.

Silence occasionally serves the function of backchannel signals. When the student kept silence, the teacher tried to diagnose what problems the student was facing, and threw back the question. In (51), the student responded “yes”, with a falling intonation and then stopped speaking. The teacher diagnosed that the student failed to understand the question, and asked again by switching a word from “swim” to “dive” (52).

- (50) Teacher: Ok. So, where did you swim?  
 (51) Student: **Yes** ↓ (2.1)  
 (52) Teacher: Where did you dive?  
 (53) Student: =dive (2.7)  
 (54)           Where? Honolulu no sukoshi hanarete::  
                   *A little apart from Honolulu*  
 (55) Teacher: Hanauma Bay ↑  
 (56) Student: (3.4)  
 (57) Teacher: I don’t know the diving spots.  
 (58)           Was it beautiful?  
 (59) Student: Yes. Toasa te nante iu n desuka?  
                   *How do you say ‘toasa’ in English?*

Hatch (1992) suggested that backchannel signals differ across the contexts depending on where the speakers are located and what the roles of speakers are. This means that the type or placement of the feedback may be influenced by cultures. In (61), (63), (65), and (67), the student returned her backchannel signals of “*hai*” to show that she was listening to what the teacher was explaining. The word “*hai*” (yes) is considered most formal backchannel response in the Japanese context, which is frequently observed in a formal situation when one responds to superiors. Although the class had friendly atmosphere and was conducted on a first name basis, the data showed that the student had formal learning responses when she responded to the teacher.

- (60) Teacher: *kakonokotowo arawasunoni kakokeitoiunowo madaamarikitchiri kono*  
                   *To express the past, we use past tense, which we haven’t learned it so much*  
                   *yet*  
 (61) Student: **hai hai**  
                   *yes yes*  
 (62) Teacher: *kurasudewa yattenainodesukeredomo, hokanokurasutokade chotto*  
                   *yattakotoga arutoomoundesukedo kakokeinonakaniwa, kono etto,*  
                   *tatoebadesune, “ed” wo, nihongowa zenbu naninanishita to*  
                   *iunodesukeredomo,*  
                   *Maybe you have learned it in another class. To express the past, you only*

*add “shita” at the end of the sentence in Japanese, right? But in some English verbs, you have to add “ed”.*

(63) Student: **hai hai**

*yes yes*

(64) Teacher: kakokeino nakaniwa “ed” wotsukete kakokeitosurumono

*Some verbs need “ed” to express the past*

(65) Student: **hai**

*yes*

(66) Teacher: play, played, de

*And*

(67) Student: **hai**

*yes*

Interestingly, her “*hai*” (yes) backchannel signal was rarely observed in the informal settings, for example, outside the classroom where she chatted in Japanese before or after the class even though she spoke to the same teacher. This suggests that the student’s “*hai*” (yes) backchannel signal may reflect her notion of a good student in the classroom, as White (1987) indicated that showing sincerity in learning is considered one of important skills as good students since they are required to invest their energies in one place in the Japanese classroom. Along with her educational background in which the teachers’ authority was highly evaluated, she may have wanted to express that she was listening to the teacher with sincerity, therefore, she implicitly used polite, formal backchannel signal of “*hai*” (yes). Outside the classroom where she regarded as an informal context, she used more informal backchannel signals such as “*ee*” (ya) or “*sounandesu*” (oh, ya). These examples represent that backchannel signals are highly susceptible to the context and the role of speakers defined in the context.

### (3) Turn-taking signals

There are various signals that lead to a smooth exchange of turns in communication: slowing tempo, vowel elongation, falling intonation, and syntactic completion (Hatch, 1992). Nonverbal signals such as a change in gaze direction from the listener (Goodwin, 1981), and a pause may also serve the same function. In extract 1, the teacher used rising intonation to confirm the student’s ambiguous utterance and urged the student to confirm her speech (70).

#### Extract 1

(68) Student: The third day, the third day, Third day (2.4)

(69) I went play golf my husband, with my husband, car.

(70) Teacher: **By car ↑**

(71) Student: By car, about four, teen minutes.

(72) Teacher: 14 ↑ or 40 ↓

(73) Student: 40 minutes.

In (80), the teacher wanted to confirm the student’s answer and she used rising intonation in order to facilitate the student’s response.



## Extract 2

(74) Teacher: How did you go to Ala Moana shopping center?

(75) Student: Um. Onepiece ↑

*Dress*

(76) Teacher: How ↓

(77) Student: How ↑

(78) Teacher: How, how (1.3) douyatte?

*How?*

(79) Student: Ummm. By bus.

(80) Teacher: **By bus? Did you take the shuttle bus or ↑**

(81) Student: Shuttle bus.

In the following extract 3, the teacher also used rising intonation to facilitate the student's turn (86, 88). Both examples successfully functioned as turn-taking signals; however, in (87), the student's response was different from what the teacher expected. The teacher uttered "Golf balls ↑" to correct the preceding sentence by the student: She did not mention plural "s." Unfortunately, the student interpreted differently the teacher's utterance: She thought that she had to continue to list the souvenirs. On the other hand, the student responded properly in (89) that cigarettes were not purchased for her husband, but whisky was for him.

## Extract 3

(82) Teacher: What did you buy?

(83) Student: Calendar, candle, and chocolate, and T shatsu. =

*T-shirt*

(84) Teacher: =**T-shirts.**

(85) Student: Golf ball

(86) Teacher: **Golf balls ↑**

(87) Student: Cigarette

(88) Teacher: **for your husband ↑**

(89) Student: No, (1.6) whisky.

Silence frequently showed the signals for turn-taking from the student to the teacher. In extract 4, the student caused confusion about responding to the teacher's initial question, "Where did you go?" (90). The teacher used a set of moves known as scaffolding in which she tried to help the student produce an appropriate answer to the question, but only to fail. The student kept silence (102), and implicitly urged the teacher to take the floor. The teacher took the floor as she immediately understood what silence implied and withdrew her question (103).

## Extract 4

(90) Teacher: Where did you go?

(91) Student: I went to:: (2.8),

(92) Teacher: Uh-huh,

(93) Student: I went to Hawaii:

(94) Teacher: Uh-huh, Hawaii.

- (95) Student: Hawaii, *etto*, Hawaii with my husband. Hawaii, Kansai Airport, shuppatsuga departure:: (1.2) at 15, 22, 22 o'clock, 30 minutes.  
*Departure*
- (96) Teacher: Ok. 22:30.
- (97) Student: 22:30 dakede iidesuka?  
*Is only 22:30 right?*
- (98) Teacher: aruiwa 10:30.  
*Or 10:30.*
- (99) Student: 10:30
- (100) Teacher: 10:30 in the evening=
- (101) Student: =10:30 in the evening
- (102) ((**pause**))
- (103) Teacher: **So, you arrived at Honolulu.**

In addition to absolute silence, a turn-taking is promoted by unconfident, faint voice. The student prolonged the last word of her speech in a faint voice when she felt insecure and implicitly asked the teacher to take the turn (106). The teacher supplied the word to help the student (107).

#### Extract 5

- (104) Teacher: What did you do, then?
- (105) Student: (3.0) We are We are went to:: We are went to (3.0) shopping,
- (106) saw, look, **shitamiwo::** ((**in a faint voice**))  
*took a look before shopping*
- (107) Teacher: **Window-shopping?**
- (108) Student: Window-shopping

### V Speech act

Speech act refers to an utterance as a functional unit in communication. The utterances in communication can be divided into two in speech act theory: locutionary meaning and illocutionary meaning. The former conveys the literal meaning of the utterance, whereas the latter conveys the effect of the utterance on the reader or the listener. Searle's (1969, 1976) studies classified speech acts into five parts: declarative, directive, representative, commissive, and expressive.

Interestingly, all illocutionary speech acts observed in this classroom discourse were in the teacher's utterances. This may be related to the student's proficiency level: Since she had very limited linguistic knowledge, it was difficult for her to make her utterances function as illocutionary speech acts. However, it is worth noticing that she was able to comprehend the different functions of speech acts used by the teacher.

#### (1) Declaratives

Declaratives are speech acts that change the state of affairs and bring about a new state of being. Hatch (1992) maintained that special roles are required with declaratives and the

person who utters a declarative must have the power. In the following extract, the teacher wrapped up pre-teaching and was about to move on to the topic of the lesson, that is, the student's trip. In example (115), the new state was declared by the teacher who had the power in communication: The teacher expressed her intention to start the topic by showing her a guidebook related to her trip.

- (109) Teacher: ano mazu ano nihongode ierubunto eigode ierubunwa sagaarunode  
*First of all, there is a gap between what you want to say and what you can say in English.*
- (110) ma ano eigode jibunde shitteiru kagiri iouto omottara anmarine.  
*It may be hard for you to talk everything in English that you are thinking in Japanese.*
- (111) Tangomo doukana to omoundesukeredomo. ((The teacher showed a list of verbs.))  
*These are basic words necessary to explain your trip.*
- (112) Konnamondeshoukane.  
*I suppose we have reviewed almost important ones.*
- (113) Mata sonotabini doushitemo toiunoga areba yattemitaito omoimasu.  
*Let's review the words you will need when you need them.*
- (114) Student: hai hai  
 yes yes
- (115) Teacher: **So I have a guide book for you.** ((laugh)) ((The teacher showed the student a guide book of Hawaii))
- (116) Student: ((laugh))
- (117) Teacher: Ok. in general, mazu saishoni ryokou itte kaettekita ichiban saishoni yoku kikareru kuesuchonga How was your trip? How was your trip?  
*The most frequently asked question after the trip is: How was your trip? How was your trip?*

## (2) Directives

A speech act that has the function of a request, a suggestion, or a command is directive. In (121), *ok* with rising intonation showed that the teacher confirmed her request in the preceding imperative (120). Then, the student responded not with words but with nodding to express her agreement. Hatch (1992) claimed that when the risk of refusal is greatly expected, the speaker is likely to use more indirect forms. On the contrary, when the risk is small, the form of request can increase its directness, as it is observed in (121) in which a very direct form of request confirmation was used because the request was unlikely to be refused.

### Extract 1

- (118) Teacher: Do you have the picture now?
- (119) Student: No.
- (120) Teacher: Ok. Please show me it next time.
- (121) **Ok ↑**

(122) Student: ((nod))

Throughout the class, the teacher used a number of indirect directives to provide feedback to the student in order to make her notice that what she said had some errors and foster incidental corrections. The indirect correction was always accompanied by a rising intonation (125, 131).

#### Extract 2

- (123) Teacher: OK. Was the lunch good?  
 (124) Student: (ummm) We are hamburger (1.5)  
 (125) Teacher: **We** ↑  
 (126) Student: We was::  
 (127) Teacher: Ima dou iu koto wo iwou to shitemasuka?  
                   *What do you want to say in English now?*  
 (128)           We are hamburger nara watashitachiga hanbaga ni natte shimaimasuyo.  
                   *If you say "we are hamburger", it means we literally are hamburgers.*  
 (129) Student: Hambaga wa oishikatta.  
                   *Hamburgers were good.*  
 (130)           We are hamburgers. Dewa okashiidesuyone.  
                   *It must sound strange.*  
 (131) Teacher: **Hamburgers were** ↑  
 (132) Student: Hamburgers were good.

#### (3) Representatives

Representative is a speech act in which the speaker expresses an assertion, a claim, or a report. Hatch (1992) claims that representatives are judgments on truth value regardless of how hedged the assertion would be. In (134), the teacher responded the student's misuse of the word, "come", and explained the tense rule for "come". This is apparently the function of representatives; however, it also has the function of directive in which the teacher suggested that the student should correct her utterance. In (135), the student successfully responded to the teacher's intention. This case illustrates that five functions of speech acts are occasionally overlapped.

- (133) Student: I went to, I went to Maui Ireland. One-day Higaeri, higaeri, Mauitou=  
   *one-day trip, one-day trip, Maui Ireland,*  
   =come back come back Honolulu.  
 (134) Teacher: **"Come" is also an irregular verb.**  
 (135) Student: **Ahhh came?**  
                   *Oh, came?*  
 (136) Teacher: Yes.

#### (4) Commisives

The speech act in which the speaker performs to promise or to refuse is commisives. The choice of commissive forms is susceptible to social relationships as seen in the choice of

directive forms (Hatch, 1992); consequently, commissives vary in strength with or without hedging. In the following extract, the teacher used very strong direct commissive to the student (140, 141). This may be because the teacher had higher status in the communication; however, at the same time, the fact that the class was conducted in a very friendly atmosphere where no hedging was not necessary cannot be ignored.

- (137) Teacher: Did you have a good time with your husband? Did you have a good time?  
                   Tanoshikattadesuka?  
                   *Did you have a good time?*
- (138) Student: ((pause))
- (139) Teacher: Ok. Your eyes tell something.
- (140)           Ok. **Don't worry.**
- (141)           **I will never tell your husband.**

#### (5) Expressives

The last function of speech act is expressives where the speaker expresses feelings and attitudes. The example (145) reflected the teacher's surprise to know that the student ate edamame, a typical Japanese snack with beer in Hawaii. Her surprise was so great that she unconsciously switched her language from L2 (English) to L1 (Japanese).

- (142) Student: Beer, and pi-su (0.7) edamame  
   *Boiled beans*
- (143) Teacher: Edamame ↑ In Hawaii ↑ Boiled beans.  
                                   *Boiled beans =*
- (144) Student: =Boiled beans
- (145) Teacher: **hawai de desuka** ↑  
                           *In Hawaii*

## VI Conclusion

This paper has analyzed a discourse recorded in the classroom. First, the analyses highlighted one discourse marker *ok*. It revealed that the same marker *ok* played many different roles in a single classroom: repairs, questions, acknowledgement, the status of information, information receipt, and subjective orientation. Next, interactional sequences between the teacher and the student were analyzed on channel open/close signals, backchannel signals, and turn-taking signals. Lastly, the classroom discourse was examined in terms of five functions of speech act: declaratives, directives, representatives, commissives, and expressives.

The class for the analyses was not specially designed for the analyses: It was one of the classes where the teacher had been teaching the same student for more than 17 months. However, analyzing discourse between the teacher and the student offered a great amount of information that might have been overlooked without discourse analysis. For example, the teacher believed that the conversation in the class was not regarded as natural since the student's proficiency level was low and the teacher had to use teacher talk throughout the class. However, the results of the analyses suggest that this was not necessarily true. Although the language used in the classroom lacked the naturalness in terms of syntax, lexis, and fluency, it

contained various functions of interactional sequences and speech acts that are observed in authentic, natural communication. Furthermore, these analyses helped the teacher notice her own discourse in the classroom. The teacher did not realize a variety of meanings of discourse marker *ok* that she frequently used in the classroom until her discourse was analyzed. Lastly, discourse analysis revealed the relationship between the teacher and the student in the classroom: The class was believed to be conducted in a very informal way that was full of friendly atmosphere. However, the analyses suggested that there existed power in the relationship between them: The teacher controlled and manipulated the topic to follow and many interactional sequences explicitly and implicitly.

These results suggest that communication is an intertwined activity socially, cognitively, and linguistically even in a non-naturalistic setting of a classroom (Hatch, 1992), and discourse analysis is a beneficial tool to evaluate approaches to language classrooms and explore new application in language teaching (Jaworski & Coupland, 1999; Schiffrin, 1999).

This study analyzed one-English class conducted at a private English school, which has a different context from the formal higher education setting in Japan. It is hoped that discourse analyses will be carried out in the formal language classroom in order to examine the effectiveness of teaching methods and the types of the relationships between the teacher and the students.

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