

COMPLETION REPORT

A Study of Japanese and Indonesian Backchannel Behavior (contrastive analysis on listener role in interaction)

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Many studies on backchannel mainly focus only on verbal backchannel; in other words, a verbalized backchannel. However, since human communication is generally face-to-face, people use not only verbal but also nonverbal communication. These expressions are essential sources of information. Therefore, it is necessary to consider not only verbal backchannel but also non-verbal backchannel used as listener responses.

In this study, we set up an interview setting and had a first-time meeting conversation also formed by a group of Japanese native speakers and Indonesian native speakers. This study's focus is to clarify the role of listener response, specifically verbal backchannel and non-verbal backchannel. We compare the frequency of occurrence, position, and timing in the conversation in both languages. To summarize, the results are as follows:

Regarding the type of backchannel, the verbal of backchannel in both languages, from the data we summarized in order that the most frequent use of the backchannel is "aizuchi-shi," "repetition," "paraphrasing" and the least use of backchannel type is "presumption". The non-verbal backchannel results revealed that both the Japanese and Indonesian languages use frequent nodding as listener responses. Meanwhile, the Japanese also have more types of "aizuchi-shi" than the Indonesian language. In the frequency of backchannel usage per minute, We conclude that Indonesian people often use backchannel every minute, almost as often as Japanese people. However, the frequency of the use of backchannel behavior revealed that backchannels are most commonly used in Japanese conversation. Besides, the results showed that Japanese people more likely to use verbal backchannel rather than nonverbal backchannel. In contrast, Indonesian people used more nonverbal nodding as a sign of the listener's response.

Moreover, in the results of the function of the backchannel, it becomes clear that verbal backchannel and nonverbal backchannel of head movement in both languages have the same function. However, although laughter and smile are categorized as nonverbal behavior, both languages seem to have different functions.

Concerning the timing of the occurrences of Backchannel in the conversation, it was found that, in Japanese conversation and Indonesian conversation, both placing Backchannel mostly at the end of the utterance sentence. However, it also found that there are differences in the frequency of gender placement in Japanese. However, in the interviewer and the interviewee's perspective, the interviewer uses more Backchannel at the end of the utterance. Meanwhile, in both Japanese and Indonesian conversations, the interviewee's role seemed to use Backchannel in the middle of the utterances.

As a result, both Japanese and Indonesian have similar backchannel functions, the same form of the Backchannel, and the Backchannel placement in a conversation. However, regarding the Backchannel frequency, the Japanese have a higher number of Backchannel than the Indonesian language.

In contrast to the Indonesian language, Japanese Backchannel varied in its backchannel expression type, and the frequency high. Therefore, it is clear that both Japanese and Indonesian considered active listeners. In communication, they (listeners) actively send backchannels to show that they are listening and participating in a conversation.

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