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An analysis of teaching materials based on New Zealand English conversation in natural settings: Implications for the development of conversation teaching materials

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1. Introduction

In the majority of English textbooks and teaching materials which focus on conversation, most of the target items or skills are presented through non-authentic dialogues that are written specifically for the purpose of teaching those items. Although non-authentic data has its own advantages over authentic data, it has been pointed out that there are considerable disparities between the two kinds of data, and that being exposed only to non-authentic data can limit or hinder the learning process (NUNAN 1999). The need for studying authentic conversation for the purpose of materials development, and incorporating the results of such research into actual materials, has increasingly been acknowledged in recent years.

In this context, "Talk That Works" ('TTW' hereafter), a communication training kit developed last year in New Zealand, deserves attention. Not only does the kit include a video consisting entirely of authentic conversations and interviews, but it is accompanied by a teacher's handbook which includes notes based upon recent research on discourse and communication.

In the present paper, we will first briefly analyze TTW as teaching material and outline what strategies and features of language it focuses on. Our purpose is not so much to evaluate TTW but rather to determine what it has that conventional textbooks with non-authentic data have not been able to offer.

Next, we would like to consider the implications of the analysis of authentic data for the development of EFL/ESL teaching materials. Since TTW is a communication training kit targeted at higher level learners, we need to examine whether the analysis of authentic data can be beneficial to the development of EFL/ESL materials in general, including those for lower level learners. For this purpose, we will use the recorded conversations in TTW as data, and analyze them focusing on form-function relationships.

2. The foci of TTW as teaching material

In this section, we will outline what skills or aspects of language are focused on as study objectives in TTW, and how they compare with the objectives in more conventional textbooks/materials. For the sake

of simplification, we refer to materials consisting mostly of specially written dialogues as "conventional textbooks/materials", although we recognize that there are many such materials whose dialogues are based on extensive research on spoken language, and therefore resemble natural interaction closely.

In the teacher's handbook, TTW lists two groups of objectives: 1. Focus on communication, and 2. Focus on discourse features, which are featured in the first half (Part I and II) and the second half (Part III) of the video respectively. The first part of the video is expected to provide learners with insights into effective communication at a macro-level and deals with such aspects of language as communication strategies and communication styles. For example, these issues are explored in Part I and II: "What is effective communication? How does the way we communicate affect workplace culture and relationships? What strategies do people use to get others to do things at work or to avoid miscommunication? How do different communication styles and processes affect the way a [factory] team work?" (STUBBE and BROWN 2002:3)

The second part of the video focuses on "language and communication at the micro-level of discourse and pragmatics." (ibid.) The corresponding section in the handbook includes notes on such aspects of language as discourse processes (e.g. turn/floor taking, topic management, the joint negotiation of meaning, the joint construction of humor), pragmatic/discourse features (e.g. fillers, feedback, hedges, discourse markers), politeness strategies (e.g. indirect language, implicatures, getting people to do things), clarification and repair strategies, as well as non-verbal features and features of spoken language such as colloquial vocabulary, repetition and incomplete sentences.

Apart from non-verbal and colloquial features whose inclusion in the objectives have been realized through the use of video recordings, we can categorize most of the study objectives in the first and second half of the video as interactive linguistic behavior. Communication strategies, for example, involve more than one participant by definition, and so do such linguistic behavior as turn/floor taking, feedback, the joint negotiation of meaning, and the joint construction of humor.

While most of the conventional textbooks tend to focus more on the production of linguistic items on the speaker's end and the skills necessary for such production, TTW emphasizes the interactive nature of conversation by directing learners' attention to such linguistic behavior. To take another example, in one of the notes on discourse features of a recorded conversation, TTW makes a reference to the use of minimal feedback given by one of the participants and explains this as a strategy to encourage the other participant to keep talking. Suggestions of this kind on "how to listen effectively" cannot be found so commonly in many conventional conversation textbooks/materials in which "listening" essentially means listening to the speaker passively to retrieve information.

Though it may be also possible for conventional textbooks to focus on the interactive aspect of conversation, this will require the designing of non-authentic dialogues that very closely resemble authentic conversations including the interactive elements. This will in turn require not only great care and effort on the part of the textbook writer, but also detailed and extensive research on natural interaction, especially research conducted for the purpose of materials development.

To conclude, by analyzing and incorporating authentic conversations, TTW has succeeded in offering an interactive view of conversation and also study objectives based on such a perspective, which are more difficult for conventional textbooks to include.

3. Analysis of the authentic data in TTW

3.1 Purpose

As we saw in the previous section, TTW offers a kind of objectives which is difficult to include in more conventional textbooks/materials and therefore it is likely to be a valuable tool for learners who wish to improve their conversation skills in English. According to the handbook, however, TTW is intended to be used with "people who already speak English well" (STUBBE and BROWN 2002:2), or intermediate to advanced level ESL/EFL students. We need to examine whether the analysis of authentic data can be beneficial to the development of conversation textbooks/materials in general, including those for lower level learners. In the following sections, we will limit our discussions to the analysis of authentic data, rather than the actual incorporation of it in teaching materials, although the latter will likely be a logical step if the former proves to be feasible.

As a sample of ESL/EFL conversation materials targeted at elementary to pre-intermediate level learners, we will take up the English D-Module in the TUFS Language Module ('the D-Module' hereafter), which is currently under development at Tokyo University of Foreign Studies as part of the 21st Century COE Project on Usage-Based Linguistic Informatics. The D-Module is web-based learning materials with an emphasis on conversation, targeted at young-age elementary-level learners. It is based on a notional functional syllabus (NFS), which is widely used in conversation textbooks/materials, including more recent versions adapted to include "communicative" elements. In the D-Module, a typical unit includes the target function (e.g. "Asking about time"), a non-authentic dialogue, and comprehension exercises. The dialogue and exercises feature the forms learners need to master in order to perform the target function.

Using the notional functional syllabus of the D-Module as a point of reference, we will now look at the conversations recorded in the video clips of TTW. In this and the following sections, the recorded conversations in TTW will be treated purely as data for our analysis, rather than part of a teaching material they are meant to be.

Using the TTW data, we will focus on form-function relationships of the target functions, which are a crucial element for materials based on NFS. Our purpose is to investigate the form-function relationships in the TTW authentic data and consider the implications of the results for the development of conversation textbooks/materials. In the course of our analysis, we will occasionally refer to the D-Module for comparison, but our intention is not to evaluate the D-Module as teaching material, but to find how the analysis of authentic data can contribute to the development of teaching materials.

3.2 Data

Our data consists of 21 conversations included in TTW video clips, totaling 11 minutes and 25 seconds of talk. The data was then transcribed using the BTSE transcription system (See below for discussion). The number of participants and the topics in each conversation were not controlled. The participants are all members of factory teams in New Zealand and they include team members (factory workers) and team managers. Most but not all of the topics of the conversations are directly related to their work. TTW also includes interviews with team managers but we excluded them from our data since the purpose of our study is to analyze "natural interaction" and consider its implications for materials development;

interviews seem to be a rather peculiar form of interaction in most people's daily lives. In the TTW video, some conversations are repeated in different sections, but we only used one of the segments for analysis.

Although the TTW handbook contains scripts of all the video clips, the transcription system used there is not suitable for our analytical needs. We decided to re-transcribe the data using the Basic Transcription System for English (BTSE) (USAMI 2003b), which is still in its trial stage, but has the following advantages: 1. BTSE is based on sentences rather than other units such as phrasal or intonation units. This facilitates comparisons between data in the BTSE format and other sentence-based data, such as dialogues in textbooks. 2. BTSE makes use of spreadsheet software (e.g. Microsoft Excel) and therefore it is suitable for both qualitative and quantitative analysis. 3. BTSE is an adapted version of the Basic Transcription System for Japanese (BTSJ) (USAMI 1997, 2003a), which will enable cross-linguistic studies in the future (not covered in this paper). Using BTSE, we re-transcribed all the conversations in TTW, referring to the transcripts in the handbook for unfamiliar proper names etc.

In transcribing authentic conversations using BTSE, one issue that needs particular attention is how to secure reliability of transcription, especially that of the segmentation of aural data into sentences. We recognize that the segmentation of spoken language into sentences is a more complicated task compared with that of written language. In order to secure reliability of our data transcription, we took the following steps.

1. Operationalization of the definition of a sentence.
2. Transcription of a portion of the data by two coders, one of whom is a native speaker of English.
3. Comparison of sentence segmentation coding by the coders, using Cohen's kappa as an index.

Following these steps, we obtained a kappa of 0.890. When Cohen's kappa is used to evaluate the inter-coder reliability, generally a value of over 0.850 is considered satisfactory when the coding process is of a rather mechanical nature, which is the case with sentence segmentation (BAKEMAN and GOTTMAN 1986).

3.3 Methods

3.3.1 Selection of functions for analysis

The purpose of our research here is to analyze the authentic data in TTW from the perspective of the notional functional syllabus, and consider its implications for materials development.

For this purpose, we focused on the following two points.

1. What kinds of forms are used to realize functions in the authentic data? Do the forms that mark certain functions in TTW match those featured in the D-Module?
2. Are functions always realized with distinctive marker forms, or are they sometimes realized through other means?

In order to include a qualitative element in our study, we decided to select several functions for our

analysis from the list of 40 functions featured in the D-Module. The 40 functions in the D-Module were chosen through a series of studies on syllabus and functions by Kentaro Yuki, Koji Matsumoto, and Naoyuki Naganuma, and is discussed in detail in MATSUMOTO (2003).

Through preliminary analysis, we initially selected seven functions that appeared the most frequently (in more than 5 lines out of 306 lines in the sample data) in TTW. Later in our analysis, we excluded one of them which did not appear so frequently after the operationalization of the functions, (discussed below), and added one function to the list, which now includes the following 7 functions: "Asking for information (attributes)", "Stating an opinion", "Making a comparison", "Giving a reason", "Giving a direction", "Giving an example", and "Giving advice".

3.3.2 Coding of functions and its reliability

Initially, we tried to identify the seven functions in the data depending on the general meaning of each function, i.e. "Stating an opinion", or "Giving a reason", because the functions are not defined explicitly in the D-Module. After a trial coding, however, the result of an inter-coder reliability test using Cohen's kappa was not satisfactory ($k=0.604$). With this kind of coding which involves subjective judgment by the coders, a kappa of over 0.7 is generally considered satisfactory (NISHIGORI 2002). In order to secure reliability of our coding of functions, we needed to operationalize each function with clear definitions and examples. Here are our definitions of each function. (The definitions refer to "utterances which perform that function.")

"Asking for information (attributes)"

- An utterance in which the speaker asks about attributes of a person or an object. An attribute is defined as a quality which can be found usually, normally, or for a long period of time, and it does not include a temporary state or appearance.

"Stating an opinion"

- An utterance in which the speaker makes an assertion, judgment, projection, or evaluation. Statements which do not involve the speaker's judgment at all, such as a plain fact (i.e. the speaker believes that the truthfulness of the statement is obvious to the hearer), or a report of hearsay, and a pure expression of feelings/emotions are not included in this category. Directions from a person in a higher position are not included, but advice and suggestions are.

"Making a comparison"

- An utterance in which the speaker discusses the differences/similarities or merits/demerits of two or more objects, persons, or situations etc.

"Giving a reason"

- An utterance in which the speaker states a reason for something which the participants of the conversation already know, or talked about. If the content of a preceding utterance is the reason for the content of the utterance that follows, this will be coded only if both the utterances are in the same sentence.

"Giving a direction"

- An utterance in which a person in a higher position tells a person in a lower position to do something.

and has the expectation that this will be done. If the speaker does not have this expectation (i.e. a rejection from the hearer will not be considered non-normative), the utterance will be categorized as advice, a suggestion, a request etc., and will not be coded as having this function.

"Giving an example"

An utterance in which the speaker talks about an item/items or a person/persons which belong(s) to a group or a type. The item/person is typical of or represents the group or type which the speaker is making an assertion or a judgement about, or describing.

"Giving advice"

An utterance in which the speaker gives the hearer information that (the speaker believes) the hearer does not have, or recommends doing something, believing that such information or action will be for the hearer's benefit. In case a person in a higher position is forcing a person in a lower position to take a certain action, it will not be coded as a direction, and not as advice.

After operationalizing the seven functions as above, two coders coded the functions in the TTW data, and compared the results. Using 41.3% of the data as a sample, we measured the inter-coder reliability, and obtained a Cohen's kappa of 0.761. This is above the standard ($k=0.7$) generally considered satisfactory for this kind of coding.

3.3.3 Coding of form-function relationships

This sub-section describes how we coded form-function relationships in our data.

In many conversation textbooks/materials that focus on functions, functions are always presented with forms that distinctively mark the function. This approach is based on an assumption that a function is always realized through a linguistic form. To test the validity of this assumption and gain insights for future materials development, we first extracted all the utterances in our TTW data in which one or more of the seven functions we selected in 3.3.1 are realized, and then coded the form-function relationships in the following two ways.

1. One or more of the seven functions are realized in the utterance and are marked with an explicit grammatical/lexical marker form.
2. One or more of the seven functions are realized in the utterance but are not marked by any explicit forms.

We defined an "explicit marker form" as a form featured in the D-Module to represent that function, a form that frequently accompanies that function in the TTW data, or a form which is considered to have that function from its lexical meaning or conventional usage. After defining marker forms as above, we also coded utterances which fit the following description.

3. One of the marker forms for the seven functions is present in the utterance, but does not mark the function it is expected to mark.

To sum up our coding process, we first extracted all the instances of functions realized in the TTW data, and then coded them either 1. Function realized with a marker form, or 2. Function realized without a marker form. Finally we extracted instances of marker forms which do not realize the function they are expected to mark.

3.4 Results

Table 1- A comparison of forms used to realize the seven functions in the D-Module and TTW

The forms in bold are used in both the dialogue and the exercises in the D-Module. The phrases in italics that follow grammatical/lexical forms are examples used in the D-Module and in the TTW data. The numbers after each form in TTW indicate the number of times each form appears in the data.

<Asking for information (about attributes)>

D-Module

Interrogative Sentences (with <i>be</i>)	<i>Are you -?</i>
Interrogative Sentences (with verbs other than <i>be</i>)	<i>Do you-?</i>
Tag questions (with <i>be</i>)	<i>You're-, aren't you?</i>

TTW

Interrogative Sentences (with <i>be</i>)	<i>Is this-?</i>	4
Interjections	<i>eh</i>	1
No explicit marker		6

<Stating an opinion>

D-Module

<i>think + Modal (should)</i>	<i>I think you should -</i>
Adjectives/Adverbs	<i>too expensive</i>

TTW

Adjectives/Adverbs	<i>good, excellent, properly, quite a few</i>	46
Modals	<i>can/could, have (got) to, shall/should, be going to</i>	13
<i>think/hope etc.</i>	<i>think, hope, betcha</i>	4
Backchannels	<i>yes, yeah, why not?</i>	3
Imperatives	<i>let them know</i>	2
No explicit marker		5

<Making a comparison>

D-Module

Comparatives	<i>stronger; smaller</i>
Superlatives	<i>the coolest, the best</i>

TTW

Comparatives	<i>better; lower</i>	3
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No explicit marker

<Giving a reason>

D-Module

Conjunctions

because

TTW

Conjunctions

because, cos, so that

Prepositions

thanks to

Infinitives

to soften up

No explicit marker

< Giving a direction>

D-Module

Imperatives

Tell me-, Jump into -

TTW

Imperatives

Keep going, Make sure

Modals

have (got) to, be supposed to

No explicit marker

< Giving an example>

D-Module

Adverbial phrases

for example

Prepositions

like -

TTW

Prepositions

like -

No explicit marker

< Giving advice>

D-Module

Modals

should, had better

TTW

Imperatives

ask, smile

No explicit marker

3.4.1 Functions realized with marker forms

Among the 126 examples where the seven functions are realized in our TTW data, 101 are accompanied by marker forms. As we can see in Table-1, most of the forms used in the D-Module are also used in TTW. On the whole, wider ranges of forms are used for each function in TTW than in the D-Module.

3.4.2 Functions realized without marker forms

Among the 126 cases where the seven functions are realized in TTW, 25 are not accompanied by any marker forms. Among those 25 examples, we found several that fit each of the following descriptions.

a. The function is realized through prosody.

<Example 1> W: Team member, G: Team coordinator or manager

1 * W Some of it is congo?. [↑]

2 * G Congo.

('Congo' is a color name)

<Example 2> L: Team manager, C: Team member

1 * L That a trial line?. [↑]

2 * C Yeah a trial line.

We can see that the utterances in line 1 in example 1 and 2 have the function of "asking for information (attributes)" from the way the other parties respond to them in the next line. Neither of the utterances in line 1 have grammatical or lexical features to indicate that they are questions asking for information, but they are both produced with a rising intonation. All 6 examples of the function "asking for information (attributes)" realized without a marker form are produced with a rising intonation in our TTW data.

b. The function is realized through context.

<Example 3> L: Team manager, S: Team member

1 * L And what's with the gloves?.

2 * S Don't want to get my hands dirty. [Smiling]

3 * L Don't want to ruin your manicure.

<Example 4> L: Team manager, S: Team member

1 * L You know when you check these (##) right, you're supposed to look at the carton [↑], to make sure it's not leaking [↑].

2 * L Not like this [↑].

3 * S Oh that's that's good checking.

In example 3, the utterance in line 2 does not have any explicit markers such as "because" to indicate that it is a reason, but it functions as one because it is produced in response to a question asking for a reason. In example 4, the utterance in line 2 functions as a direction, not because it has a marker form, but because it is produced as a continuation of another direction (which is equipped with a marker form *be supposed to*). In these examples, the function is realized not with a marker form, but through context, more specifically, the preceding utterances.

c. The function is realized by the use of indirect expressions.

<Example 5> S: Team member, L: Team manager

- 1 * S Oh that's that's good checking.
 2 * L You<'re not going to see anything if you're like this>{<}.
 3 * S <That's all right that's all>{>} right that's all right.

The utterance in line 2 of example 5 is produced by a team manager who is criticizing the way S (a team member) is checking the products. Even though line 2 does not have any formal markers, it is clear that L is actually giving S a direction, telling S not to perform the task "like this". L does this indirectly by suggesting a negative outcome which would be caused by S's action if he didn't change his way of checking. In this way, line 2, which does not have any explicit markers, has achieved the function of "giving a direction" through L's use of indirect expressions.

3.4.3 Marker forms not representing the seven functions

Most of the utterances in our TTW data include one or more of the forms we designated as marker forms for the seven functions, but many of these forms do not mark any of the seven functions. We found the following two prominent cases among them.

a. The form marks another function.

<Example 6> L: Team manager, D: Team member

- 1 * L ###, we we went out for dinner on Friday night [↑].
 2 * D Yeah.
 3 * L With Barry [↑].
 4 * L And he was pretending to be the king of Tonga [↑]. (<laugh>)

Many examples of marker forms in our data do not mark the functions they are expected to mark because they mark other functions that are not among the seven we selected. To take one example, we designated "yes" and other backchannels as forms that mark the function of "stating an opinion". "Yeah" in line 2 of example 6, however, cannot be interpreted as having that function since the previous utterance by the other speaker does not have any element of "opinion". If we look at the way L continues her talk in line 3-4, it is clear that "yeah" in line 2 functions as a "continuer". In this way, some of the examples of marker forms we found in our TTW data do not mark any of the seven functions because they perform other functions.

b. The function of the form shifts because of context.

<Example 7> L: Team manager (chairing a meeting), A: Team member

- 1 * L Does anybody uh want to bring anything up ###?
 (Omission three lines)
 5 * L Come on <anybody>{<}.
 6 * A <Just let>{>} them know that we've got two styles that running out.

In example 7, the imperative form, which we designated as a marker form for "giving a direction" and "giving advice", is used in line 6. However, since speaker A works under L, and the content of the

utterance is directly related to their work, which is under L's authority, the function of A's utterance cannot be interpreted as "giving a direction". Neither can it be "advice" since the utterance is not produced for L's benefit. Therefore, it has to be coded as "giving an opinion" since A is making an assertion based on her judgment. In this case, the function of the marker form shifted to one which it does not usually mark because of the context, namely the speaker-hearer relationship.

3.4.4 Marker forms with multiple functions

Of a total of 126 examples of the seven functions realized in our TTW data, 13 had more than one of the seven functions we analyzed. Among those we found the following two cases.

a. Functions coexisting independently.

<Example 8> W: Team member (responding to a question)

- 1 * W =Hey it's going a lot better than what it was before eh.

In example 8, the utterance in line 1 has two functions: "comparing" and "stating an opinion". Since these two functions do not interfere with each other, they can coexist in one utterance independently from each other.

b. Functions in hierarchical relationships

<Example 9> G: Team manager (talking to a team member about his English lessons)

- 1 * G ###, I hope you um...you know ask ask the teacher how ...
 2 * G You know if you get confused ask the question.

G, the team manager is talking to one of his team members but not about work. He is discussing the worker's English lessons, which he has no authority or control over. Therefore G's utterances here are not coded as "Giving a direction" since G does not have the expectation that the worker will certainly do what G says. Since G is talking to the worker for his sake, both line 1 and 2 are coded as "Giving advice" according to our definitions of the functions.

Using the same definitions, however, they are also coded as "opinions" since the advice is presented as G's judgment, not as a fact. We found 4 examples of "giving advice" in our data, 3 of which are also "opinions". According to our definitions of the functions, "giving advice" is almost completely included in the concept of "stating an opinion", placing these two functions in a hierarchical order.

3.5 Analysis - Implications for the development of ESL/EFL conversation textbooks/materials

3.5.1 Form-function relationships in TTW

In many conversation textbooks/materials, especially those based on a notional functional syllabus such as the D-Module, the focus of instruction tends to be on the mapping of forms to functions, i.e. what form to use in order to express a particular notion, or perform a function. This approach is based on the assumption that a notion or function is always best expressed by one or more distinctive forms.

As we saw in the previous sections, however, this assumption does not seem to be consistent with what

our authentic data suggests. In our TTW data, about one in five (25/126) examples of the functions realized did not have any explicit markers (3.4.2). For three of the seven functions in particular ("Asking for information about attributes", "Giving a reason", "Giving advice"), the number of examples without a marker form is not much smaller than that of the examples with a marker form. Our findings that the absence of a marker form is often compensated by such factors as prosody, context, and the use of indirect expressions, suggest that we should pay close attention to these factors in the development of conversation textbooks/materials, rather than concentrate completely on form-function mappings.

3.5.2 The importance of context

Throughout our analysis we saw that context, such as preceding utterances and listener-hearer relationships, can affect the function of an utterance. It can attach a function to an utterance without a marker form (3.4.2 b), or shift the function of a marker form (3.4.3 b). The fact that the function of an utterance can be affected by another participant's utterance or the relationship of participants suggests that in dealing with functions, we have to take an interactive view of conversation rather than treat functions per se, taking them "out of context" literally. If we are to develop conversation textbooks/materials focusing on functions, we should also make an effort to present the functions in context.

3.5.3 Relationships among functions

Some of the functions featured in many conversation textbooks/materials do not have parallel relationships to each other and therefore have to be treated with care. As we saw in 3.4.4 (b), the functions "stating an opinion" and "giving advice" have an almost hierarchical relationship, with "giving advice" being a subcategory of "stating an opinion". If we are to present these functions in a textbook/teaching material, we should present them in a way that will help learners see where the concepts of these functions overlap and where they don't. If the distinction between the two is not clear in their presentations, this may result in confusing the learners and/or forcing them to study the same concept more than once.

4. Conclusions

The need to study natural interaction for the development of conversation textbooks/teaching materials has been acknowledged by many in recent years. In this study, we first analyzed TTW as teaching materials and showed that the interactive view of conversation on which TTW is based allows it to feature what is difficult to include in conventional textbooks. We then analyzed the recorded conversations in TTW and found that the form-function relationships in authentic data may not be as strong as NFS based textbooks suggest. Also by observing the importance of context, and exploring the relationships among functions, we demonstrated how the analysis of natural interaction can contribute to materials development.

Although many existing teaching materials already make use of the latest theories in discourse, pragmatics or communication, what we hope to have demonstrated is that the analysis of authentic data provides us with empirical evidence related to the issues discussed in such theories. Also, we showed that such theoretical issues as how to identify functions in discourse, or whether to attribute a function to a

form, context or other factors, can be dealt with on a practical basis by using authentic data and conducting reliability tests.

A possible extension of this research would be to expand the range of functions to be analyzed and to include a kind of authentic data whose context is closer to that of the dialogues in conversation textbooks/materials under discussion or development. This will allow us to apply the findings of the analysis of natural interaction more directly to materials development.

Appendix / Key to Transcription Symbols

Among the symbols used in BTSE, only those relevant for this paper are listed here.

.	(period)	The end of a sentence. Periods are added also after question marks.
,		Commas are used where they are conventionally placed to facilitate reading.
...		Hesitant tone.
?		A question mark is used at the end of a question. Even if the form of the sentence is not syntactically a question, a question mark is used if the function of it is judged to be a question from its intonation etc.
[↑]		Rising intonation.
< >{<		Section of speech which is overlapped by another speaker's speech.
< >{>		Section of speech which overlaps another speaker's speech.
()		A short backchannel without a particular meaning is placed with the other speaker's utterance in brackets.
<laugh>		Laugh.
<laugh>)		Laugh overlapping another speaker's speech. (Placed with the other speaker's utterance)
[]		Paralinguistic or non-verbal features.
###		Untranscribable or incomprehensible speech. The number of # indicates the relative length of that section of speech.
=		No or shorter-than-average pause between sentences.

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