Conversational Features of Text-based Computer-Mediated Communication

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1. Introduction

The study concerns itself with conversationality of Computer-mediated Communication (CMC) in synchronous CMC data and illustrates their conversation features, such as sharedness, unplannedness, interactiveness, and expressiveness. According to Trappes-Lomax, the characteristics of conversation as a type of communication are the following:

1) Sharedness: Conversation takes place in a shared context.

2) Unplannedness: Conversations are unplaced and take place in real time.

3) Interactiveness: Conversations are interactive.

4) Expressiveness: Conversations are expressive

5) Visuality: Conversation is visual

6) Orality : Conversation is spoken

(Trappes-Lomax, 2000, from handout 4of his Cyber Lecture in the year 2000

obtainable at http://pc171115.pc.waseda.ac.jp/ccdl/cl_edinburgh2/4-Handout.pdf)

I compare and contrast the characteristics of conversation Trappes-Lomax defined and those of Synchronous CMC drawn from L2 Learners' interaction by focusing on how far these characteristics match. Moreover, I refer to some similarities and differences with face-to-face (henceforth, FTF) communication.

2. Subjects and data

Subjects are 14 Waseda University students and 14 Korea University students. All of them engaged in CCDL projects in 2000 and 2001. Each of them had a synchronous CMC chatting in a pair from October to December. The medium of communication was English and the equipment they used was CU-SeeMe, which conveys the captured images and enables them to see the faces of each other. Although it has a function of sending voices with a microphone, they were not allowed to use it while chatting so as not to disturb other lab members. Most of the Waseda University students had low- intermediate level of English and 13 students out of 14 are not English majors. On the other hand, Korea University students major in English and they tend to play a role of topic initiator because their proficiency of English is better than that of Waseda students.

3. Sharedness

According to Trappes-Lomax (2000), sharedness is the language that reflects and creates intimacy. Brown and Levinson (1978) point out that claiming common ground satisfies positive politeness. The subjects of our study are in common ground: They are university students and they belong to the same CCDL project. Therefore, a lot of expressions of sharedness are to be seen.

I would like to show some examples of sharedness in L2 Learners' CMC data by adopting three types of sharedness that Trappes-Lomax categorized as follows.

1. incomplete forms   (ellipses)
2. forms without precise meaning.   (pronouns and vague nouns)
3. expressions which deliberately convey vagueness.   (kind of, more or less, and stuff)

3.1.   Incomplete forms (ellipses and sentence fragments)

A lot of ellipses are shown in our data.   Since our subjects are L2 learners, we cannot be sure whether the ellipses they used are caused by their grammatical mistakes, lack of expressions or showing intimacy.

(Excerpt 1: Ellipses, sentence fragments)
Waseda Edu#3: how are you today?   you look like very good!
Korea-J #3: **fine,,,**   but today, it's very cold
Waseda Edu#3: yea **we too**!
Korea-J #3: yea,,, you are wearing a thick sweater

This is an example of sharedness.   "Fine" in the second line is ellipses of "I'm fine" for the purpose of showing intimacy.   "fine, but…." is a good strategy of avoiding disagreement. "Yea we too!" can be interpreted that we feel it's very cold in Japan too.   This utterance can be incohesive and grammatically inappropriate for the answer to "it's very cold today".   However, they make themselves understood since they are talking in the middle of winter and they know that both of them must have felt cold since Japan and Korea are geographically close and share the same climate.

3.2.   Forms without precise meaning

The pronouns are often used as a type of sharedness.   Forms without precise meaning indicate that they are in a common ground.

(Excerpt 2:   Use of pronouns)
Waseda Edu#3: when you write in English do you think in English?
Korea-J #3: yea!!!
Korea-J #3: but,,, at first I think in Korean....
Waseda Edu#3: sometimes i translate **it** in French to be sure that the construction of the phrase is correct.
Waseda Edu#3**: those** two languages is very similar.
Korea-J #3: **japanese and french?**   **[ellipsis]**
Waseda Edu#3: no**...Englilsh and Frendch. [ellipsis]**
Korea-J #3: yes...
Waseda Edu#3: **the word also.. [ellipsis]**
Korea-J #3: yes,,, two languages have same order...

Waseda student (henceforth, W) and Korea University student (henceforth, K) are talking about the way of thinking in English; therefore, in the fourth line of the excerpt 2, the pronoun "it" can be identified as "English".   We might argue that W presupposed that K would find what "it"

indicates.   In the sixth line, W says that she transfers what she connects in French to English in order to make sure whether her English is structurally right or not, because those two languages (English and French) are similar.   K has already known through CMC activities that W has a good command of French because W is a returnee from France.   Therefore, W presupposed K's knowledge about W, and W assumed that they would understand that "those two languages" indicate French and English; however, K misunderstood.   K uses elipses, saying "Japanese and French?" instead of "Are those two languages Japanese and French"?   And as for the second last sentence by W,   "the word also" is also an instance of ellipsis and it can be interpreted that some words of the two languages are also similar.

(Excerpt 3: use of vague nouns)
Korea-J #2: I guess we can meet next week.
Waseda Edu#2: OK, email you later and think about theme next time.
Korea-J #2: thank you
Korea-J #2: Bye nice talking to you.
Waseda Edu#2: Yeah!   See you later.
Korea-J #2: Let's make an appointment on room number in advance.
Waseda Edu#2: Well, I'll ask my **TA** and email you OK
Korea-J #2: Yes

W uses the word "TA" which stands for teaching assistant, because W presupposed that K understood what TA means.   K is a university student who participates in CCDL project, and CCDL participants probably know TA is taking care of management of the chatting sessions.   However, those who have not participated in the project might take TA for the abbreviation of "Thanks Again" or "Terminal Adapter".   This use of shared nouns also indicates a certain amount of sharedness between the two participants.

3.3.   Expressions which deliberately convey vagueness

According to Trappes-Lomax(2000), expressions such as "sort of", "more or less", "and stuff" deliberately convey vagueness.

(Excerpt 4:   vagueness)
Waseda Edu#2: what's up?
Waseda Edu#2: * **something trouble**?
Korea-E#5: I guess we have some problems about timetable...the assistant told me you are not my partner...
Waseda Edu#2: I see

In the second line in Excerpt 4, W may intend to say "(Is there) something wrong"?   By using something and being ambiguous, W emphasizes that the agent that troubles their conversation is not K.   This kind of caring attitude relates to sharedness.

(Excerpt 5: other use of something)
Waseda Edu#2: My majouring is geography.
Korea-E#5: geography?
Waseda Edu#2: yes.

Korea-E#5: what is it about?
Korea-E#5: studying earth...**something like that?**
Waseda Edu#2: yes.
Waseda Edu#2: especially about rivers.

"Something like that?" in the fifth line can be a kind of sharedness marker because W intensifies the interest to K by showing of his contributions to the conversation.

(Excerpt 6:   Use of Vagueness: kind of)
Waseda Edu#5: well, we met in cartoon club
Korea-E#8: cartoon club means animation club?
Waseda Edu#5: oh, yes. **kind of** that.
Waseda Edu#5: draw cartoons

It appears that W does not want to deny what K says.   Therefore, by using "kind of", she vaguely indicates that cartoons and animations are slightly different.

4.   Unplannedness
Since synchronous CMC is done in real time and both of our participants are EFL learners, unplanned speech can be seen in the process of having a chat in English. The characteristics of unplannedness are:
1)   Pauses, hesitators, repetitions, and reformulations,
2)   Utterances left grammatically incomplete or grammatically muddled,
3)   "Effort reducing" features such as elision and assimilation,
4)   Helpful beginning and endings, such as prefaces and tags

4.1.   Pauses, hesitators, repetitions, and reformulations
Pauses are not regarded as linguistic features.   However, our subjects also try to express non-linguistic aspects in CMC.

(Excerpt 7: Pauses)
Korea-E#6: but, actually, I dont like to be in China, even to travel around there
Waseda Edu#3: Why?
Korea-E#6: **I heard ... [pause marker]** the country is not that clean
Korea-E#6: rather dirty. **u know.. [pause marker] [sharedness: vagueness]**

Subjects frequently try to express "Pause" in CMC by using dots.   The pause can be interpreted in two ways: 1) K takes some time to focus on the grammatical forms. or 2) K tries to minimize the negative opinion about China by showing some hesitation.   Sequences of dots tend to be used frequently while they are talking about negative things.

We will move on to hesitators.   We can assume that "erm" is an instance of hesitators. However, "erm" is not used frequently among our subjects.   They tend to use "hmm" instead, maybe because Japanese has the similar expression to "hmm" when they are faltering or thinking about something.

(Excerpt 8:   Hesitators)
Korea-E#6: what did you say you want to be after graduation?
Waseda Edu#3: How about you?
Korea-E#6: **Well,** what i want to be in the future is**...   [pause]**
Korea-E#6: eternal traveler
Waseda Edu#3: That's nice!

       Our subjects overuse "Well" when they show hesitation or pause in an either positive or negative situation.   "Well" in the third line is a good example of unplanned hesitators.   Although K asked a question to W about what she wants to be, K was asked back abruptly.   Then, K was surprised by the unplanned flow of conversation and uttered "well".   The pause at the end of the third line can be also caused by this unplanned speech.

       When they want to ask back or intensify certain words, they tend to use repetitions. We shall look at the examples below.

(Excerpt 9:   Repetitions)
Waseda Edu#5: We belong to same band, and we play **saxophone**.
Korea-E#8: Wow...**saxophone**??
Korea-E#8: That sounds great!!!

       As shown in Excerpt 9, K repeats "saxophone".   Then K completes the utterance in the next line.   We can assume that K's strategy helps to show how K feels interested.
       Reformulation in CMC has at least two kinds: The one is to reformulate grammar;

(Excerpt 10: Reformulation of grammar)
Korea-E#6: yes!! I think you are a reporter in Hollywood!!
Waseda Edu#3: just for Brad...
Korea-E#6: any other new?
Korea-E#6: **news**?
Waseda Edu#3: um.....Meg Ryan divorced....
Korea-E#6: yes   I know...

The other is to reformulate typos.   One of the examples is to be seen in Excerpt 11.

(Excerpt 11: Reformulation of typos)
Korea-E#6: and do u like soeesr?
Korea-E#6: soccer, sorry..

       Although reformulation of pronunciation is common in FTF interaction, in a written mode of CMC the reformulation of typo is more common. It is peculiar to CMC, not to FTF communication; therefore, it is one of the differences between CMC and FTF.

4.2.   Utterances left grammatically incomplete or grammatically muddled

(Excerpt 12: Grammatically incomplete and muddled)
Korea-J #3: you're right....   anyway…   **with your friend...   the dinner was good?**
Waseda Edu#3: yes very good!   we eat Italian.

Korea-J #3: Italian?   Wow..   I like that...
Korea-J #3: spaggetti, pasta,,

The first line is grammatically incomplete instead of saying "how was the dinner with your friend?"   In our data, it can be difficult to differentiate Interlanguage and unplannedness. However, we can assume that sometimes our subjects are insensitive to grammar because they presuppose mutual understanding.

4.3. "Effort reducing" features such as elision and assimilation

Neither elision nor assimilation can be found in our data.   However, some effort-reducing features are expressed by our subjects.   As Werry (1996:57) points out, in CMC environment, "colloquial verbalizations and non-standard spellings appear to be self-consciously selected in preference to "standard" linguistic expressions" as in excerpt 13.

(Excerpt 13: Effort-reducing of pronunciation)
Korea-E#6: yeah. pretty short.
Korea-E#6: but have to say good bye for now**.**
              [sharedmess and unplannedness: sentence fragment: omitting subject]
Waseda Edu#3: Ok see **ya**!   [effort-reducing of pronunciation]

This is a closing situation.   "See ya" is an instance of efforet-reducing features categorized as unplannedness.   This is regarded as both effort-reducing of their typing and use of in-group identity markers that commonly used in CMC.

4.4. Helpful beginnings and endings, such as prefaces and tags

In our data, topicalizing words tend to be fronted in a sentence.   Hedges or tags are at the end of sentences.

(excerpt 14:   Prefaces)
Waseda Edu#3: yes very good!   we eat Italien
Korea-J #3: **Italian?**   Wow..   **I like that...**
Korea-J #3: spaggetti, pasta...

In the second line, the object of the sentence "Italian" is fronted and emphasized, in an attempt to showing envy and attend to the conversation.

(Excerpt 15 : hedges)
Korea-E#7: i want to speak English lively!
Korea-E#7: in korea.... our English education is dead....
Waseda Ed#4: in Japan too.
Korea-E#7: grammar, reading is not important**...I think [Tag]**
Waseda Ed#4: i think so
Waseda Ed#4: we can read english ,but we cant speak it

(Excerpt 16: Question Tag: eh?)
Waseda Edu#3: i saw you in your face that you didn't understand...
Korea-J #3: Oh, no I understand ...sweet milk… sweet liquor…. you like sweet thing very much,

uh?

(Excerpt 17: Question Tag : right ?)
Waseda Edu#6: What's exam so difficult?
Korea-E#8: english phonology..
Korea-E#8: + phonetics
Waseda Edu#6: Oh my god! I don't like it.
Waseda Edu#6: I see. These are so difficult, **right?**

The end with "I think" in the fourth line of the excerpt 14 has an effect to indicate that is not a general view but K's own view, in order to avoid commitment.   The bottom line of the excerpt 15 can be interpreted as a question tag.   Our subjects like to put "Mhh?", "Uh?" , "right?" at the end of sentences instead of formulating interrogatives or a tag question.

5.   Interactiveness
Since synchronous CMC is based on interaction on the Internet, we can find a lot of examples of interactiveness in our subjects' data.   The characteristics of interactiveness are:
1)   Adjacency pairs,
2)   High frequency questions and imperatives,
3)   Short response forms,
4)   High frequency of adverbials,
5)   Typically conversational linking adverbials,
6)   Vocatives,
7)   High frequency of negation, and
8)   High frequency of but (contradiction).

5.1.   Adjacency pairs
Levinson (1983) argues that while adjacency pairs occur in our conversation, pre-sequences and insertion sequences are also used.   We can find the examples of pre-sequences and insertion sequences in CMC data drawn from L2 learners.

(Excerpt 18:   Normal sequences)
Pair⎰ Waseda Edu#1: see you next week this time^^
     ⎱ Korea-E#4: yes,,,   see you here next week...
Pair⎰Waseda Edu#1: Bye
     ⎱ Korea-E#4: Bye

We will see an instance of insertion sequences shown by Merrit (1976).

Pair⎰   A: May I have a bottle of Mich?
    ⎰ Pair ⎰ B: Are you twenty one?
    ⎱   ⎱   A: No
    ⎱ B: No

(Merrit, 1976:333)

We can see that "one question –answer pair is embedded within another" (Levinson, 1983: 304).

This insertion can be seen in our data.   Our subjects also use insertion sequences as in excerpt 19.

(Excerpt 19 :   Insertion sequences)

Pair ⎧ Korea-E#5: you have nothing to praise me? ok...
Pair ⎨ Pair ⎧ Waseda Edu#4: sorry, my typing is so slow.
⎩ ⎩ Korea-E#7: it is ok
Waseda Edu#4: you are so kind

Levinson claims that pre-sequences also occur in our daily conversation. Pre-sequences are defined that "one summons prefigures a turn which contains a reason for the summons" (Levinson, 1983: 345).   The following example is a pre-request.   We can find that C presignifies an upcoming request in the first line.

       C: **Do you have hot chocolate?**
       M: Mmhmm
       C: Can I have hot chocolate with whipped cream?
       M: Sure

                                 (Meritt, 1976:337)

We shall see our data in excerpt 20.

(Excerpt 20 :   Pre-sequences: pre-requests)
      Waseda Edu#3: **Do you have time now??**
      Waseda Edu#3**: if you don't mind...could you help me?**
      Korea-E#6: how can i help you...
      Waseda Edu#3: could you chat with our student for a while??

We can assume that utterances "do you have time now?" "if you don't mind?" hint at the possibility of requesting.

As we know, sequences, pre-sequences, and insertion sequences are found in our data. However, "discursive" sequences can frequently occur in CMC data for its technical reason, we can assume that our subjects have to consider the discursive type of sequences, too.

5.2.   High frequency questions and imperatives.

As stated before, since our subjects talk on a Q and A basis, we can frequently observe question sentences, as shown in Excerpt 21.

(Excepts 21: Questions when opening)
Korea-E#8: **How did you spend your week?**
Waseda Edu#5: I traveled for Nagasaki in Japan. **do you know Nagasaki?**
Korea-E#8: I heard about that place, but I do not really know about it...
Korea-E#8: **Did you have a good time?**
Waseda Edu#5: Nagasaki is in Kyuushuu, where is island in Japan. yes. I have a good time.
Korea-E#8**: Did you go with your friends?   How long did you travel?**

Imperative forms are also used.

(Excepts 22: Imperatives when closing)
Korea-E#8: ok...sorry about that arrangement...
Waseda Edu#5: Yes**, don't mind**^^.
Korea-E#8: **Have a nice week** and hope to talk to you next week...
Waseda Edu#5: me ,too.
Korea-E#8: **Have a good lunch** now...Bye...^^

In opening and closing of their conversation, our subjects tend to talk about personal matters.   On those occasions they appear to use interrogative and imperative forms interactively.

5.3.   Short response forms (okay, sure, alright, and yes)

In Tsutsui's analysis (2001), the values of Mean Length of Utterance among Waseda University and Korea University students were 6.94 and 7.62, respectively.   Please look at Table 1 below:

Table :   MLU analysis   (Meunier, 1998:28, Tsutsui 2001)

		MLU
E2F1 intermediate	first year university students, EFL learners, L1 French	17.25
E2F1 advanced	third and fourth year university students, EFL learners, L1 French	19.08
E2D1 advanced	third and fourth year university students, EFL learners, L1 Dutch	17.59
E1 American	university students, L1 American English	18.26
E1 British	university students, L1 British English	22.36
our Japanese students	university students, EFL learners, L1 Japanese	**6.94**
our Korean students	university students, EFL learners, L1 Korean	**7.62**

As we compare MLU in Meunier's (1998) data and that in our subjects' CMC data, we can find how brief our subjects produce their utterances in CMC.   We can assume that there are two reasons for this.   First, our subjects' proficiency is not high enough to utter longer utterances.   Second, our subjects are willing to make their responses as possible.

(Excepts 23:   Short response forms: yup and yes)
Waseda Edu#6: Are you alright??
Korea-E #9: **yup!**
Korea-E #9:   I major in English Linguistics. What is your major?
Waseda Edu#6: I major in English and English literature.
Waseda Edu#6: We are in the same major, right??
Korea-E #9: the same to me!!
Korea-E #9: **yes!**

(Excepts 24: Short response forms: so-so, yes)
Waseda Edu#6: Do you enjoy you classes?
Waseda Edu#6: your classes, I mean...
Korea-E #9:   **so-so.**
Korea-E #9:   have you learned phonetics, phonology, and morphology?   It's today's test.
Waseda Edu#6: **Yes**, **Sure**!

Waseda Edu#6: Do you like these?
Korea-E #9: sorry...   It's hard to me.

(Excerpt 25: Yes, yea)
Korea-E#6: anyway today is last day!!
Waseda Edu#3: **yes......**
Waseda Edu#3: i can't believe....
Korea-E#6: always I enjoy chatting with you!
Korea-E#6: It was so fun
Waseda Edu#3: it was very good to meet you...me too
Korea-E#6: **Me too...**
Waseda Edu#3: **yea...**

Short responses tend to be effective for our subjects to communicate with each other more smoothly and lively, as shown in excerpts 23 and 24..   On the other hand, in except 25, deliverately making utterances short seems to implicate undescribable sadness of saying good-bye.

5.4.   High frequency of adverbials

According to Trapps-Lomax (2000), such adverbials as "frankly", "to be honest with you" and "all the same" are used frequently in conversations.   However, those kinds of expressions are not commonly shown in our data, probably owing to lack of vocabulary and strategic knowledge. In addition, in chapter 5, we showed the evidence that our subjects communicate by the use of basic-level words.   However, we shall look at some examples.

(Excerpt 26: To tell the truth)
Waseda Edu#6: How did you go in your exam?
Waseda Edu#6: I hope everything is fine.
Korea-E #9: not very well.... oh, it's terrible, **to tell the truth**.

(Excerpt 27: All the same)
Waseda Edu#6: I like older guys
Korea-E #9: i see.
Waseda Edu#6: because they are reliable
Waseda Edu#6: Don't you think so?
Korea-E #9: can you see me laugh?
Waseda Edu#6: Yes!
Korea-E #9: i think guys are childish **all the same,** regardless of their age.
Korea-E #9: in mental aspect.

Some students use all the same, to tell the truth, when they want to express their own feelings or opinions.   For the reason that our subjects do not actively use a wide variety of vocabulary, we might need to teach them some useful formulaic expressions, and how to use them in conversation.

5.5.   Typically conversational linking adverbials

Our students commonly use "anyway" and "so" that are regarded as typically conversational linking adverbials.

(Excerpt 28:   So, Anyway)
Waseda Edu#3: i saw you in your face that you didn't understand...
Korea-J #3: Oh, no I understand   ...sweet milk,, sweet liquor....you like sweet thing very much. Uh?
Waseda Edu#3: yes! you know me!
Waseda Edu#3: **so....**
Korea-J #3: ok I see.   **anyway**   you like sweet things very much but you are so slim!!

Among our subjects, "however" or "therefore" is rarely used.   Instead "anyway" or "so" is frequently used.   "So" and "anyway" in the except 28 plays a role of hesitation markers, and connect the sentences loosely.   For example, "anyway" in the bottom line is adjunct to bridge sentences in order to change a topic.

5.6.   Vocatives
To make collaboration more interactive, vocatives are used.   However, the use frequency of this strategy varies with the individual.   Some Japanese students tend to avoid calling by first name.   This might be because calling by first name can threaten politeness.

(Excerpt 29: Vocatives,1)
Korea-E#8: **Akiko..**
Korea-E#8: do you have boy friend?
Waseda Edu#5: Yes, but just friend!
Korea-E#8: Just??
Korea-E#8: when do you want to marry?
Waseda Edu#5: oh,,,
Waseda Edu#5: I don't want to marry now.
Korea-E#8: Ah..

Before asking a personal question, vocatives tend to be used as shown in excerpt 29.   We can assume that showing K's intimacy may mitigate a danger to interfere W.

5.7.   High frequency of negation
Negations play a crucial role in their conversation.   We will look at the first example of negation, tag questions.   We can assume that they are used in order to request agreement, as shown in Excerpt 30-1

(Excerpt 30-1 :   Negation, tag questions)
Waseda Edu#6: I'm first grade and major in law.
Waseda Edu#6: what do you study?
Korea-E #9: I major
Korea-E #9: sorry. I miss the typing. I major English Language and Literliture.
Korea-E #9: And I'm sophomore.
Waseda Edu#6: what is sophomore?
Korea-E #9: it means second grade**. isn't it?**
Waseda Edu#6: Ok. so you are good at english **aren't you** ?
Korea-E #9: As you see on the screen, I'm not good at English. I often miss the spell and the article(a/the).
Waseda Edu#6: I don't think so. I think your english is good.

"Isn't it" in the seventh line is grammatically inappropriate and has to be "doesn't it".   This kind of grammatical mistakes occurs in unplanned speech.   Tag questions can be also used to make their conversation interactive, i.e., seeking agreement.   We will go on to other instances as in Excerpt 30-2.

(Excerpt 30-2 :   Negation)
Korea-E#5: **aren't you** afriad of living alone?
Waseda Edu#2: yes,
Korea-E#5: how can you get over it?
Waseda Edu#2: my part time job is finishedat night.
Waseda Edu#2: and i come home ,i am very tired.
Waseda Edu#2: i have **no time** to feel lonely.

We can assume that "Aren't you afraid of living alone?" is more indirect and polite than "Are you afraid of living alone?".   The negation in the last sentence, "I have no time to feel lonely" can be overstatement.   That is because W "says more than is necessary" (Brown and Levinson 1978:219).   W implicates that there is hardly any time to feel lonely because she is busy.

5.8.   High frequency of but (contradiction)

According to politeness theory, use of contradiction is one of the useful strategies.   (See also Brown and Levinson, 1978)

 (Excerpt:31   Contradictions, yes but)
Korea-E#6: whoops, Time's up
Korea-E#6: I have to go to study for next exam
Waseda Edu#3: Oh It was very short
Korea-E#6: you know we're on Mid term Exam period..
Waseda Edu#3: Yes, bye!
Korea-E#6: **yeah**. pretty short.
Korea-E#6: **but** have to say good bye for now
Waseda Edu#3: Ok see ya!

(Excerpt 32:   Contradictions, no but)
Korea-J #3: dancing?   you do well?
Waseda Edu#3: **no** very well **but i LIKE it very much**!! but i don't have the occasion to dance in Japan
Korea-J #3:   I like dancing too, but my dancing is poor.

Our subjects frequently use the contradictory strategy of " Yes but…" or "No but…"in their interaction. That is because subjects are trying to seek agreement and avoid disagreement.

6. Expressiveness

Another characteristic feature of conversation TrappesLomax suggested is expressiveness. The examples are use of 1) Vocatives, 2) Polite opening, 3) Let's, 4) Endearments and familiarisers, 5) interjections, 6） exclamtaives , 7)   postivie evaluating ajectives and 8) expletives.   We shall those examples in our subjects' data.

6.1. Vocatives 2

As stated before, vocatives are used in order to show intimacy. Sometimes they can express different feelings by the use of vocatives, as shown in Excerpt 33.

（**Excerpt 33: vocatives 2**）
Korea-E #9: Oh...you visited my school site.
Waseda Edu#6: yes
Korea-E #9: You are really good student **Shinji....**
Waseda Edu#6: your University is very beautiful
Waseda Edu#6: yes, i am good student
Waseda Edu#6: I have one quetion to you
Korea-E #9: yes...especially, Graduate School building was indicated a World Culture Constructure by UNESCO.
Korea-E #9: Yes.. go ahead, **Shinji.**

Vocatives in the third and the last line show K's caring attitude. In the third line, K indicates that the utterance is a joke. And in the last line, K indicates that W should not hesitate in asking a question.

6.2. Polite opening

While they use imperative forms in their interaction, they also use polite expressions for request.

（**Excerpt 34 : Polite opening**）
Korea-E#6: Nao! **could you see** it Hiroshi is in there? His partner is coming now.
Waseda Edu#3: no, he is not coming...
Korea-E#6: thank you!

When asking something, our advanced subjects use polite markers "could you" or "Would you". However, inexperienced subjects tend to use "please do something" to show their politeness.

6.3. Let's

Our subjects use "let's" in order to intensify cooperation by pluralizing "you" and "I".

(Excerpt 35: Let's)
Korea-E #9: hello?
Waseda Edu#6: Maybe there was something wrong with the computer.
Korea-E #9: yeah, maybe..
Waseda Edu#6: So we have not so much time.
Waseda Edu#6: **Let's** start talking
Korea-E #9: ok.

6.4. Endearments and familiarisers

Endearments and familiarisers are not shown in our subjects, since they are just friends. However, honey was used as substitution for a world girlfriend or boyfriend.

(Excerpt 36: Familiariser)

Korea-E#8: This Christmas will be warm for you. Because you will spend the time with your **honey**.
Korea-E#8: I envy you.
Waseda Edu#5: Not warm. Christmas is the same to dairy.

6.5. Interjections

Either novice or advanced subjects use interjections. We can suppose that because interjections are easy for subjects to express their own feelings, even when they cannot find appropriate words.

(Excerpt 37: ah, aha, hmm)
Korea-E #1: but the city is cleaner than any other cities...?
Waseda Edu#3: **ah**, yes…   i think Aomori has cleaner air because that's near the sea
Korea-E #1: **aha...**
Korea-E #1: because of the location...
Waseda Edu#3: air pollutions must be ate by the sea, i think
Korea-E #1: **hmm....**

(Excerpt 38:   oh)
Korea-E#6: Yes. I took 2 exams before and I'll 3 next tuesday.
Waseda Edu#3: **oh!** good luck..

(Excerpt 39: wow)
Waseda Edu#3: Bounjorno Princessa!   very good story!
Waseda Edu#3: did you see it in the original version?
Korea-E#6: **wow**.   You remember the line!

6.6. Exclamtaives

The exclamtaive "what a" is one instance of expressiveness, expressing and exaggerating their own feelings how K attends to conversation. Levinson (1983) argues that the strategy of exaggeration satisfies positive politeness.

(Excerpt 40: what a)
Korea-E#6: how are you?
Waseda Edu#3: you came now?   Fine!
Korea-E#6: yes!!!
Waseda Edu#3: me too!   just in the same time!!
Waseda Edu#3: and yu ? how are you today?
Korea-E#6: wow!! **what a** coincidence!!!
Waseda Edu#3: yea!

6.7. Postivie evaluating ajectices

Our subjects are trying to satisfy their partners' wishes by giving fine words or compliments.   Therefore, many positive evaluating adjectives are found in our data.

(Excerpt 41: Nice)
Korea-E#4: I have a news.... The new subway (line 6) will open tomorrow, passing korea univ. So I can go to school directly by the new subway.....^.^   hihihi.
Waseda Edu#1: oh, it must be **nice** ^^

(Excerpt 42: Great)
Korea-E#4: maybe it means "gather the stars in me or my house"
Waseda Edu#1: oh... **great**...^^

(Excerpt 43: Cool)
Korea-E #9: in mental aspect.
Korea-E #9: men are all childish, hoho.
Waseda Edu#6: Yes!
Korea-E #9: you agree with me, that's **cool**.

We found that even inexperienced students frequently used "nice", "good", "great" and "cool".   That may be because positive-evaluating words are safe to say

6.8.   Expletives

Expletives infrequently appear in our data.   However, we can see only one instance among more advanced students.

(Excerpt 44 : shit)
Waseda Edu#2: Oh you know Hata!!?
Korea-E#5: no, but she had an appointment with him.
Korea-E#5: is he not there now?
Waseda Edu#2: No, he isn't.
Korea-E#5: oh, i see..
Waseda Edu#2: And he is my good friend. But something happen about him?
Korea-E#5: i don't think so, but he broke the appointment, maybe..i heard that the sports festival was held in your university
Korea-E#5: maybe last Tuesday?
Waseda Edu#2: Oh, **shit**!! He broke an appointment!?   Ok I'll scold him later!!
Korea-E#5: oh, i see…
Korea-E#5: maybe he forgot...

Excerpt 44 shows an example of expletive expressions.   "Shit" can be a harsh expression. However, such a joke after saying the word makes conversation somehow milder.

7.   Findings

So far, we showed a lot of examples of similarities between CMC and FTF interaction in terms of sharedness, unplannedness, interactiveness, expressiveness.   Although our subjects experienced CMC in a relatively short time, we found that they used a lot of conversational strategies in text-based CMC.   There were also some differences since subjects can focus on typing mistakes and they cannot help using some graphic features in order to clarify their true intentions. Therefore, we shall conclude that synchronous CMC has features of both conversation and writing.

Although the development of communicative competence among our subjects is beyond the scope, we found that many students communicate with their partners by using limited vocabulary and formulaic expressions.   Therefore, we need to give them some instruction in order to enrich their active vocabulary and facilitate communication in English although all of our subjects can make themselves understood throughout CMC activities.

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