

# “And Boys Wore *Gakuran*”

## *Mot Juste* Formulations as Recalibration Repair in Bilingual Interaction

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Recent Conversation Analytic (CA) research has shown that reference recalibration repairs can be used in monolingual interaction to adjust the precision of a formulation, allowing for a clearer depiction of a potentially problematic lexical item (Lerner, Bolden, Hepburn, & Mandelbaum, 2012). The current study applies this notion to bilingual interaction, particularly with respect to intra-turn *mot juste* code-switches. The analysis focuses on how bilingual speakers in multi-party talk accomplish shared understanding by using bilingual recalibration repair practices to adjust the semantic precision of a referent through formulating it in the other language. Recalibration repair is considered in relation to the interactional preferences for minimization, recognition and circumspection in bilingual turn constructions of this type. Bilingual recalibrations can reveal interactants' assumptions about each others' identities, knowledge states and language proficiencies. Through its emic stance, this line of research contributes to our understanding of codeswitching as a means of delivering a more precise description of the role participant orientations play in maintaining intersubjectivity. The data come from unscripted bilingual Japanese/English talk in both mundane and oral proficiency test settings.

最近の第1言語会話分析(CA)研究では、表現の精度を調節するため、参照再調整的修復(reference recalibration repair)をすることで、その言語行為により潜在的に問題になる語彙などがよりはっきりすることが明らかになってきた(ラーナー、ボールデン、ヘップバーンとハルバースタム、2012)。本研究は特にターン内における適語コード・スイッチに焦点を当てながら、この概念を二カ国語インタラクションに援用することで、指示物の意味上の精度を調節するた

めに、二カ国語話者がどのように他言語の表現を取り入れ、二カ国語再調整的修復を用いて共有理解を達成するかについて、分析する。再調整的修復は、このような二カ国語ターン構造で行う「最小化」、「認知」及び「慎重さ」といった相互作用的選択において考慮される。二カ国語再調整行為により、聞き手・話し手がお互いのアイデンティティ、知識状態及び言語能力が明らかになる。会話分析のエミック手法を通し、本研究はより正確な表現を届ける手段としての codeswitching 現象及び相互理解に行う参加者姿勢の役割を紹介する。データは、2ヶ国語（日本語・英語）で行う自然会話又は口頭実力テストで、録音・録画されたものを用いている

Crichton: There is something about you, Tweeny, there is a *je ne sais quoi* about you.

Tweeny: Is there, is there? Oh, I am glad.

*The Admirable Crichton*, J. M. Barrie (1902)

The humor in the above quote from Barrie's classic play is partly achieved through the fact that Crichton resorts to using a French expression when he cannot find the right word in English, even though the phrase that he uses expresses that exact sensation ("I don't know what"). Somehow for Crichton, French captures something that English does not in this case. The analysis in this article focuses on just this sort of phenomenon in bilingual interaction—those moments when the best word to describe something is in another language. This has been identified in the literature at the societal level as *borrowing* (Myers-Scotton, 2006) and at the speech community level as episodes of codeswitching involving *le mot juste*, or the most appropriate word (e.g., Gafaranga, 2000, 2012; Myers-Scotton 1988; Myers-Scotton & Jake, 1995; Poplack, 1988). Listing examples from the domains of technology, fashion and food, Myers-Scotton defines cultural borrowing as “words that fill gaps in the recipient language’s store of words because they stand for objects or concepts new to the language’s culture” (2006, p. 212). For example, there was no need for English speakers to use the word *sushi* before the dish became popular and familiar to people from outside Japan. Presumably prior to that bilingual Japanese/English speakers knew it meant *vinegared rice*, but since that term was neither clear nor efficient, they codeswitched to Japanese by using the *mot juste*, *sushi*. Eventually, this kind of codeswitching became borrowing when even those who did not speak Japanese came to know the word.

Poplack (1988) uses *mot juste* to refer to situations in which “the switch provides

the apt expression" (p. 226), although she does not go into great detail concerning what exactly makes those words more appropriate. In his Specificity Hypothesis, Backus (2001) notes that *insertional codeswitches* like these are used to express semantic connotations that are not available in the other language, while Bhatt and Bolonyai (2011) explain the phenomenon in terms of their *Principle of Interpretive Faithfulness* — the notion that “[s]ocial actors switch to another language if it enables them to maximize informativity with respect to specificity of meaning and economy of expression” (p. 526). While the current study is in keeping with these findings, what is additionally needed is an analysis of *mot juste* formulations that is grounded more firmly in participant orientations, as demonstrated through the sequential details of the surrounding interaction.

The Conversation Analysis (CA) approach to bilingual interaction offers such an emic perspective through its commitment to publicly demonstrated intersubjectivity within a given sequential context. Conversation analysts base their interpretations of a particular codeswitch on the way the interactants themselves treat it in that time and place. One of CA’s key analytic tools, the next turn proof procedure, involves the practices of repair (Schegloff, Jefferson, & Sacks, 1977); if Speaker B treats a prior turn in a way that demonstrates to Speaker A that the prior turn was somehow misunderstood, Speaker A can work to rectify the misunderstanding in next turn via the organization of repair. On the other hand, if the first speaker does not treat the next speaker’s interpretation (as demonstrated in next turn) as a source of trouble, then we can assume that the next speaker understood it in the way that the first speaker intended it to be heard. In this way the speakers’ intentions become demonstrably available to analysts to the same extent as they did to the interactants themselves in real time in the original talk.

While a strong body of CA work on repair in bilingual interaction now exists (e.g., Alfonzetti, 1998; Auer, 1984; Greer, 2008, 2013; Gafaranga, 2000, 2012; Gafaranga, & Torras, 2002 among others), one area that remains under-explored is repair to *mot juste* references in intra-turn episodes of codeswitching. These words do not just exist in isolation: their meaning is established within the sequential development of any given instance of interaction. The CA approach seeks to account for language use within its temporal context, but to the author’s knowledge, the CA literature on code-switching is yet to examine *mot juste* references. The current study addresses this gap by examining how shared reference is accomplished in a corpus of Japanese/English bilingual interaction. The analysis aims to show how interactants use bilingual recalibration repair practices to adjust a referent’s precision by formulating it in the other language. In addition, the investigation applies CA research on reference

and recipient design (Levinson, 2007; Sacks & Schegloff, 1979) to take into consideration the preferences for minimization, recognition and circumspection in bilingual turn constructions of this type.

### Reference Recalibration Repair

One of the most basic yet essential tasks in any interaction is establishing shared reference — ensuring that recipients understand who, what or where is being topicalized at any given point in a conversation. This task is first accomplished through word choice, with the way a speaker constructs his or her turn for a particular audience, revealing what he or she knows about that person, or what that person can be normatively expected to know (Sacks & Schegloff, 1979). Where a reference proves to be unclear to a recipient, the practices of repair can be used to reformulate it, and this can provide insight into how speakers choose an alternative formulation for that particular recipient.

Basing their analysis more firmly in the CA tradition, Lerner, Bolden, Hepburn, and Mandelbaum (2012) have recently examined the way *reference recalibration repairs* can be used to adjust the precision of a formulation, allowing for a clearer depiction of a potentially problematic lexical item. Lerner and his colleagues define recalibration as a repair operation if it reformulates a reference in a way that adjusts it or recalibrates it rather than abandoning the original referent all together (2012). By way of contrast, they offer Fragment 1 as a straightforward case of self-initiated self-repair.

#### Fragment 1. NB (*Lerner et al., 2012, p. 192*)

- 1 A And **Bill**-an' **Bud** got do:wn.  
2 B .hhh Yes.

In this instance the name Bill gets replaced with Bud, and the recipient can normatively understand that reference to Bill has been abandoned and Bud is therefore a completely different person. Recalibration repairs, on the other hand, appear more like the example in Fragment 2. Here the interviewer first formulates the word “men” in line 3, but then treats that as problematic and initiates self-repair to refine the referent to “detainees.”

#### Fragment 2. BBC World Service "Outlook" (*Lerner et al., 2012, p. 193*)

- 1 IR Didju not fee::l (0.4) sorry for the **men**.  
2 (0.5)  
3 IR For the **detainee:s**.

4 (0.5)

5 IR Being forced to do such humiliating things.

Here the referent *detainees* does not refer to a different group of people than *men* does. Rather it provides a more refined and specific categorization of those same people in a way that has consequences for the ongoing talk. In short, the recalibration adjusts the description by making it more precise.

The current study extends the notion of recalibration repair to formulations in bilingual interaction. A bilingual recalibration repair is one in which the recalibration involves a word selected from the other language. The focus of this study is therefore on how Japanese/English bilingual speakers use codeswitching to accomplish intersubjectivity by calling on a more precise description in the other language. The corpus consists of unscripted bilingual Japanese/English talk video-recorded in a range of situations, including oral proficiency tests and mundane bilingual interaction. The recalibration of an English referent with a precision-adjusted Japanese equivalent is an interactionally efficient means of dealing with trouble in bilingual talk.

As is the case in the vast majority of CA and MCA (membership categorization analysis) work on reference, Lerner et al. were primarily interested in person reference, although their findings are equally relevant to other kinds of formulations, and indeed CA research has also looked at related issues regarding such references as places (Schegloff, 1972), colors (Goodwin, 1997), activities (Greer & Leyland, 2018) and objects (Egbert, Gollato, & Robinson, 2009; Kim, 2012). As such, the examples of bilingual recalibration to be examined in the current study are not limited only to person reference, but will also include expressions used to formulate any particular object, place or person. In bilingual interaction, repair can happen via language alternation when a word or phrase in the other language makes the description more easily understood, particularly for concepts that do not exist in the current language. While the recalibration repairs that Lerner et al. analyzed were all self-initiated, the current analysis will look at recalibrations that are other-initiated self-repairs, in that someone other than the speaker of the trouble source first notices the problematic element and treats it as repairable. In each of the excerpts we will examine, the current-language formulation is treated as problematic in terms of its semantic scope, and repair is initiated on it. The repair solution involves a switch to the other language where the referent is then formulated in a way that makes it culturally and linguistically clearer, and therefore adjusts the precision of the description. In this paper this process will be called bilingual recalibration repair.

## Background to the Data

As mentioned above, all of the data are taken from video-recordings of naturally occurring Japanese/English bilingual interaction.<sup>1</sup> The complete corpus involves over 25 hours of unscripted interaction from a range of different contexts, including hairdresser-client conversation, homestay contexts, group discussion tests, and team teacher planning talk. From this, 55 sequences of the focal phenomenon were identified and analyzed according to the CA approach. Since space limitations preclude extended commentary on each of those examples, the analysis here will focus instead on five representative excerpts to illustrate the interactional practice. Excerpts 1 to 3 were recorded in a series of group English oral proficiency tests at a Japanese university and excerpts 4 and 5 are taken from mundane talk at an international high school. Although some of the participants were undoubtedly more bilingual than others, the focus of this study is not on the speakers and their linguistic proficiency, but rather on the interaction itself. In other words, the analysis adopts an agnostic approach to the participants beyond these recordings, endeavoring instead to examine how the participants treat the availability of a second language as a resource for refining and revising the interaction in that time and place. To that end, the fact that one setting involves second language learners in a test setting and the other involves relatively bilingual speakers in a mundane setting is largely irrelevant to the goal of the study.

The data have been transcribed according to the conventions devised by Gail Jefferson (as outlined in Schegloff, 2007 and Markee & Kasper, 2004). Japanese talk has been assigned a literal gloss on the second tier and a vernacular translation on a third tier where appropriate. A detailed list of these translation conventions can be found in the appendix

## Analysis

This section will provide an analysis of several sequences of bilingual interaction from the dataset. Each has been selected as illustrative of key features of recalibration repair in bilingual interaction and in order to demonstrate the ways that *not juste* codeswitching can adjust the semantic precision of a formulation originally produced in the other language.

### Recalibrating to Make a Reference More Precise

We will begin the analysis with a fairly straightforward example taken from the English proficiency test setting in which the students have been discussing their

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<sup>1</sup> The CA approach does not generally provide ethnographic background on the participants (such as age, nationality etc.), except where they are particularly relevant to a specific segment of interaction.



In lines 4 and 5 then, Taka and Yuka collaboratively initiate repair on this term, after which there is a noticeable silence, an interactional slot in which Masa could have (and normatively should have) provided a solution to the repair. When he does not do so, in line 7, Yuka provides the other-language recalibration, delivering it with upwards intonation, which allows Masa to confirm it is indeed the word he was aiming at with *private school*. Note that the other participants receipt this with laughter in the pursuant talk, perhaps drawing attention to the unexpected use of Japanese in the original formulation. *Juku* is the best word for *juku*. The word holds a host of cultural and semantic nuances that are not covered by the formulation “private school,” so recalibrating it to *juku* makes it clearer and more precise. In initiating repair, the other participants are also arguably orienting to Masa’s perceived identity as a university student, since it is unlikely that a freshman could teach at a private school, a full-time job done in the daytime.

### Recalibrating to Make a Reference Less Precise

While a bilingual recalibration can adjust the semantic precision of a referent to make it clearer in the way it did in Excerpt 1, occasionally an other-language adjustment can also work to broaden the description by adjusting it in the opposite direction. In bilingual interaction, one reason a speaker might need to use recalibration is to clarify the meaning of borrowed words, which can have different connotations in each of the languages, as is the case with the word *slope* in Excerpt 2. In Japanese, *slope* (in its loanword form, スロープ or *surobpu*) is usually limited in meaning to “a ramp,” such as those at the entrance to a building for wheelchair users. However, here Aya is using it with another English definition to mean hill, as she explains that her hometown of Otaru has many slopes.

#### Excerpt 2. *Slope 4ninST 3a*

01 Aya =um:: a:nd umm (0.7) in otaru they er  
 02 there are many (0.4) slope  
 03 (0.4)  
 04 Eri slope?  
 05 (0.8)  
 06 Eri what slope?  
 07 (0.7)  
 08 Aya → °°sa- s::aka. saka.°°=  
                                   *hill hill*  
 09 Eri =A:::h, [ ah. ah. ]=



10 Chie [s(h)l(h) [ope. ]  
 11 Aya [u(h)n].  
 12 Eri =okay. slo- slope  
 13 Aya so ah: umm (0.8) I (0.5) every (.) every  
 14 day hard (0.5) to walk

When Aya first uses the word *slope* in line 2, there are details of the turn that might suggest she was having trouble formulating it, including the turn-initial hesitation marker "um," the vowel lengthenings and the intra-turn pauses. It is possible then that she was searching for another word, such as *mountain* or *hill*. In lines 4 and 6 Eri treats *slope* as a trouble source, initiating repair on it. Normatively within Japanese the loanword "slope" is limited in its semantic range, being something that is man-made and attached to a building. However, in lines 1 and 2, Aya has used it in relation to a town (Otaru), and therefore when Eri initiates repair, she is publicly displaying that she does not understand its usage in this context. In line 8 Aya reformulates it in Japanese as *saka* ("hill"), and Eri immediately provides uptake in line 9 with multiple utterances of the change-of-state token "ah," displaying that her epistemic state has gone from not-knowing to now-knowing (Schegloff, 2007). This is more than just a translation: Aya's switch to Japanese has recalibrated the semantic scope of this loanword by broadening it to include another connotation in English.

A similar practice can be seen in Excerpt 3, in which another group within the same series of English proficiency tests uses the word *gakuran*. A *gakuran* is a kind of military style uniform that many high school boys wear in Japan. It is usually black with brass buttons and has a curved, standing collar. At the point in the conversation where *gakuran* occurs, the group is talking about the sort of uniforms they wore at high school. Kai has just mentioned that he wore a blazer and the necktie was rather tight. He then redirects the question to Gen, who says that he wore a *gakuran*, and Emi attempts to (re)formulate this in English as *black uniform*.

**Excerpt 3.** *Gakuran 4ninST 7a: 1:24*

01 Kai =>how about you<?  
 02 Gen→ oh. ah::nto. (0.8) [ gaku- ]gakura(h)n?  
                   HM                   *military-style uniform*  
                   um, black uniform  
 03 ? [ ((cough) ) ]  
 04 Yoh un.=

05 Sho =a:[::h.]  
 06 Emi [gaku]ra:n. ahah ha ha.  
 07 Sho oh.=  
 08 Emi → =black uniform?  
 09 Gen black [uniform.=  
 10 Emi [(I think) [(so)]  
 11 Yoh [=mm.]  
 12 Gen °yeah°  
 13 Emi .hh a:::::h, my school was, a::h  
 14 (1.0) girls? >girls wear,<  
 15 ah:: (0.9) u::m sailor,  
 16 → sailor uniformsu?=  
 17 Yoh → =>°seirafu[ku°< m.  
           *sailor uniform*  
 18 Kai [ah:[:  
 19 Emi [ANd, (.) a:nd, boys::  
 20 → wore weared ah:: >gakuran.<  
 21 Yoh °black [ uniform.° ]  
 22 Kai → [ah black uni[form.]  
 23 Emi [.hhh ha ha heh [heh.  
 24 Kai [ha:h

In line 1 Kai initiates a sequence with the first pair part “How about you?” which retrospectively indexes a previously asked question and redirects it to another participant. In other words, within the greater sequential context, Gen’s answer of *gakuran* in line 2 is hearable as a response to the question, “What was your uniform like in high school?”, which was posed in earlier talk (not shown). Gen delivers his response with some reluctance, delaying its production with silence and the hesitation marker *ahnto*, which may orient to his understanding of the preference for a same-language response. Although the group provides immediate uptake, which demonstrates they understand the referent, Emi then goes on to proffer an English version of this word, *black uniform*. Emi’s suggestion of *black uniform* is certainly hearable as a translation. However, to be clear, it is the codeswitched word *gakuran* here that is the *mot juste* (the most appropriate word for the type of uniform Gen is discussing), and Emi’s bid to keep the talk in English in effect decreases the understanding of this referent by broadening its calibration. A *gakuran* is a black uniform, but a black uniform does not completely describe a *gakuran*. The fact that Gen chose to switch to *gakuran* in the first

place (line 2) suggests that this is the best word to describe this culturally specific item of clothing.

Note that Emi's initial attempt at translation, in line 8, is produced with try-marked intonation (Sacks & Schegloff, 1979) and then later mitigated in line 10 with "I think so," indicating that she herself views the English referent as potentially inapposite. However, Gen does accept this less precise version by receipting it in line 9 through repetition. Another aspect of recalibration is therefore revealed through this example; a recalibration can be adjusted in such a way as to make the repair less precise, broadening its scope, and naturally this has implications for the ongoing interaction as well. Unlike the previous example where "private school" was not understood until it was recalibrated to *juku*, this time an understood other-language referent is recalibrated to a less precise referent, orienting to the preference for an English-medium conversation in this proficiency test environment.

As the fourth and final participant in the round, Emi then self-selects to indicate a second telling about her high school uniform. In line 16, she uses the formulation *sailor uniformsu*, marking her turn with hesitation devices in the same way that Gen did with *gakuran*. Yoh receipts this by repeating it in Japanese and then Emi goes on to use the *mot juste* "gakuran" to explain what the boys wore at her school, and then Yoh and Kai receipt this as black uniform, the broadly recalibrated English equivalent that Emi proposed in earlier talk.

### **Recognition, Minimization, and Circumspection**

It is also worth considering Excerpt 3 in relation to some of the early work by Sacks and Schegloff on the issue of what to call people. Sacks and Schegloff (1979) identified two preferences for the organization of person reference. The first was the preference for *minimization*, which states that on occasions when reference is being done, it should preferably be done with a single reference form. The second preference was for *recipient design* and addressed the issue of designing the referent in a way that the recipient would be most likely to understand. In other words, if possible, use a *recognitional*, a reference that the recipient will recognize. A formulation like "the tall Australian guy in the blue sweater" would be likely to be used when either the speaker or the recipient does not know the person's name. However, once they have established who they are talking about, they will most likely start using a name. The name is the minimal amount of work a speaker needs to do to formulate a suitable reference. If the recipient does not recognize that reference, the speaker can try other more detailed descriptions, but interactants are unlikely to continue using such descriptions once they

have access to a name.<sup>2</sup> In other words, the preference for recognitionals is stronger than that for minimization and the minimization preference is momentarily eased only to the extent that it allows the establishment of the minimal referent (Sacks & Schegloff, 1979).

To these two preferences, Levinson (2007) adds a third, the preference for *circumspection*. This can be thought of in terms of avoidance or taboo, and Levinson provides some examples such as "They have had to make staff cuts" and "We need a cloth—someone has spilt wine on the carpet." Here the person reference is not clearly recognizable since it is hidden behind a pro-term like "they" or "someone". Levinson argues that this is because the action that the turn formulates is potentially critical or negative, so the preference for circumspection takes priority over the preference for a recognitional in this case, leaving the identity of the subject unspecified. Similarly, this avoidance can be extended to language selection in circumstances like the English test data in the present study, where the participants treat the use of Japanese as taboo, replacing it with a more ambiguous English term.

Therefore, in deciding whether to formulate the referent as either *gakuran* or *black uniform*, there are three preferences at work. *Gakuran* works best because it is the most recognizable and the simplest way to explain the cultural item, but it fails in terms of circumspection since Japanese should be avoided in this English test situation. On the other hand, *black uniform* may not be instantly recognizable as the best explanation of the uniform (it leaves out important features like the shape of the collar, the brass buttons and the sort of person who wears it) and it is certainly not the most concise way to explain it. What it does do is avoid the use of Japanese, allowing it to conform to the preference for circumspection and therefore work to steer the conversation back to English.

Issues of recognition and circumspection are likewise at work in Excerpt 4. In this data set, the participants are more balanced bilinguals, and (apart from Ryan) they speak both English and Japanese fluently. They are high-schoolers in an English-medium international school in Japan who are doing their homework after school at a desk outside a classroom, a setting in which there are few restrictions made on which language they use. In Excerpt 4, Ryan, an L1 English speaker, calls for Mick's attention in order to initiate a story-telling sequence about something that happened earlier in the day. The story involves Ryan's explanation of how to use a Japanese-style toilet. There are many features of such a toilet that are different to the cultural script a monolingual English speaker would normally hold, including its shape and the way that

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<sup>2</sup> Unless, as Stivers (2007) points out, they are doing so to accomplish some sort of other pragmatic action.



and are both in the same Japanese class — a class that does not include any of the co-present recipients. The pre-story set-up includes a trouble source, when Ryan formulates the report as one on *unchi* (“poop”) in line 4. Ryan quickly self-initiates repair on this in the next part of the turn, replacing *unchi* with *crapper*. In other words, this is a case of simple repair, not a recalibration, in which the speaker abandons talk of one thing and replaces it with another (as was the case in Fragment 1). Even so, a report on *unchi* is still surprising enough for Nina and Yumi to treat it as newsworthy in the on-going talk, repeating it with upward intonation. In line 8 then, Ryan repeats his self-repair, again changing *unchi* to *crapper*, but, in overlap with this, Nina initiates a second newsmarking of his earlier mistake, this time going further on record about the clarifying action it is meant to accomplish — “You did a report on *unchi*?” To this, Ryan switches to Japanese briefly in line 11 to again enact self-repair, abandoning the word *unchi* with *janakute* (“not that”).

At first it seems that he is about to repeat the word *crapper*, but instead he repairs this with a more standard word, “toilet.” This leads Nina to propose a more specific formulation of “toilet” and it is here that we see the bilingual recalibration repair come into play. In line 13, Ryan refines *crapper/toilet* to *washiki toire*, a Japanese toilet, and then Ryan ratifies this with a somewhat less standard formulation that holds approximately the same meaning — *nibonfuu toire*. One interesting thing here is the question of how Nina knew at this point that the story would involve a Japanese-style toilet. It seems that the word *unchi* from line 4 has already set the scene through Ryan’s inadvertent codeswitch. Although he has not said so directly, switching to Japanese at that point gives the audience a potential clue to the setting of the story—that it was in Japanese class rather than, say, in Biology or Health, and that the report must therefore have been delivered in Japanese. The word *unchi*, therefore, in some way prompts Nina to offer a Japanese formulation rather than an English one, *washiki toire*, and the participants ratify this as the most appropriate word in this instance. Here, it is not that “poop” or even “Japanese-style toilets” are culturally specific, but that the word being reported was earlier presented in Japanese, and therefore in this context, *washiki toire* is more appropriate or exact (*le mot juste*) than *Japanese-style toilet*.

### **Recalibrating Represented Talk/Text**

Finally, we will consider the notion of bilingual recalibration in relation to represented talk and text (Prior, 2015). Marking reported speech has long been known to be one of the functions of codeswitching (e.g., Alfonzetti, 1998; Auer, 1984), and it does so not only by presenting a precise representation of what was said, but also by changing the footing to make a distinction between the speaker as narrator and the

speaker in the role of the person who originally spoke the words. In this section we will examine a sequence that includes represented text rather than represented talk, in that the participants are talking about a message that was written on a notice. We will see that having the exact wording of the original notice presented in Japanese in a sense acts as a *mot juste*, and this initially leads to a same-language reformulation that is later recalibrated to a less precise English version.

In Excerpt 5 Nina has just proposed that her group of co-present friends go out to eat before a school event the next day. Hiroko has suggested a particular restaurant, but Nina tells her that it is not there any more. She and Anja have seen a sign on the door that *shibaraku kyugyo itashimasu* ("temporarily closed for business") and this phrase becomes the focus of a recalibration repair sequence between Nina and Ryan.

**Excerpt 5.** *Kyugyoh*

- 06 Anja ((nods)) yep [I'll be here
- 07 Nina [doko ga [ii kana.  
*where S good IP*  
 Where should we go?
- 08 Yoko [ah  
*oh*
- 09 s'shitara 'konomiyaki.  
*that do-COND a pancake-pizza dish*  
 Oh, in that case let's have okonomiyaki.
- 10 (0.2)
- 11 Nina >okonomiyaki place ne<=  
*savoury pancake IP*  
 The okonomiyaki place is...
- 12 Anja ='ya=  
*no*
- 13 Nina =it's it's=
- 14 Anja =it's not there
- 15 Nina it's not there anymore
- 16 Yoko Hu::h heha [ha (soh nan da)  
*that VN COP*  
 Really?
- 17 Nina [>no no< it's it's there nan da kedo  
*VN COP but*
- 18 |me and Anja went there and it's like

- |gestures a rectangle
- 19 → shibaraku kyugyoh itashimasu toka itte  
*a while shutdown do-POL or say-CONT*  
 ...it said something like “Temporarily Closed”.
- 20 Kate? [eh: kieta no?  
*huh disappear-PST VN*  
 What? It’s gone?
- 21 Yoko [eh:: what happen(ed) (.) to the(m)?
- 22 Anja un  
*yeah*
- 23 Nina we don't have anywhere to eat
- 24 Ryan (kyugyoh) [it's shinda?  
*closed die-PST*  
 Closed? It's dead?
- 25 Yoko [(uso da::)  
*lie COP*  
 I don't believe it.
- 26 Nina shinda. (.) [iya mada shinde wa  
*die-PST no not yet die-CONT TOP*
- 27 inai n da kedo  
*NEG VN COP but*  
 Dead. No not dead yet but...
- 28 Anja [no I think there's gonna be some
- 29 Nina nanka shini soh hh:  
*HM die- similar*  
 ...like, it looks like it'll die.
- 30 Anja un  
*yeah*
- 31 Ryan °oh [man°
- 32 Yoko [e:::[:↑
- 33 Nina → [it's like temporarily unavailable
- 34 Yoko that's so[bad
- 35 Nina [and you know what that means if you
- 36 go on the internet and it says it's
- 37 temporarily unavailable
- 38 Ryan that's-
- 39 Nina it's never available [again]



40 Anja [eha h]eh[ha ha  
 41 Ryan [heh ha  
 42 ? te heh

The initial formulation about the closing of the restaurant comes in English in line 15 — “it's not there anymore.” Nina then immediately works to refine this formulation, noting that the restaurant is there but there is a sign on the door that says *shibaraku kyugyo itashimasu*. A switch to Japanese at this point is interactionally economical in that it accurately depicts the exact wording of the sign. However, as Nina later goes on to explain, the meaning of this phrase is somewhat vague even in Japanese; essentially it means that the restaurant will be closed for an undetermined period of time, but whether this is because the owner is on vacation or because the restaurant is going out of business remains unclear. Note that even the other fluent speakers treat it as ambiguous in next turn, with Kate asking if it has disappeared and Yoko asking, "What happened to them?"

Although the register of the phrase is rather formal, in line 24 Ryan gives a rather blunt interpretation of what the sign on the restaurant might mean. He says, “It's *shinda*,” (It's dead) and Nina initially accepts this interpretation by receipting it with falling intonation in next turn. However, she then immediately recalibrates this by changing it from dead (*shinda*) to close to death (*shinisob*). Note that this first attempt is in the same language, that is, in Japanese. She then goes on to proffer a second recalibration in English that is hearable as a more thorough linguistic explanation for Ryan. Since Japanese often elides the subject, it is unclear (even to Nina) just who or what Ryan's imprecise version (*shinda*/dead) referred to; he may have been speaking metaphorically in saying that *the restaurant is dead* (and therefore closed or gone) or he may have intended it more literally to mean "The owner is dead," perhaps as an account for the temporary closure.

However, the codeswitched formulation that Nina proposes in the ongoing talk is more precise in conveying the vagaries of the original. In line 33 she says “It's like temporarily unavailable” and this bilingual recalibration satisfactorily conveys both the formality and the ambiguity of the original phrase “*shibaraku kyugyo itashimasu*.” It is certainly far more precise than Ryan's initial attempt, *shinda* (dead). As a consequence, the bilingual recalibration has enabled the participants to convey the nuances of this inexplicit wording, allowing Nina to rework it into a joke by relating it to the sort of message one might see on an abandoned website.

### Concluding Discussion

Contributing to the CA literature on codeswitching, the present study has focused on the notion of *mot juste* by analyzing sequences of bilingual recalibration repair taken from Japanese-English interaction. There are several lessons to be learned from this investigation. First, while the notion of bilingual recalibration repair is not intended to explain every instance of codeswitching, it can go part of the way to providing insight into those situations where people use a formulation from the other language because it seems to be the best expression to describe that thing. Words like *genkan*, *kanji* or *waribashi*<sup>3</sup> are culturally specific to Japan, or at least do not have regularly used equivalents in English, so it is expedient for bilingual speakers to use these Japanese terms even when they are primarily speaking English. There is a second class of Japanese words that do have English equivalents (such as *gomi*, *genki* and *gaijin*),<sup>4</sup> but nonetheless often seem to be used in Japanese-English interaction in a similar way to the *mot juste* switches we have examined. This could be because they are semantically broader than their English equivalents or that they refer to a particularly Japan-related version of that word. Secondly, the bilingual recalibration can adjust the precision of the referent by calling to mind a number of cultural features that are associated with the other-language version. Saying *gakuran* is more interactionally efficient than saying *black uniform* because the latter does not have any specific cultural meaning in English. In fact black uniform leaves out a number of features that *gakuran* has, such as the brass buttons, the collar and the fact that it is worn by high schoolers rather than, say, police or chefs or anyone else who wears a uniform. In other words, the cultural associations that *gakuran* holds make it a more effective formulation. A recalibration repair in the other language can be seen as economical in terms of the preferences for minimization, recognition and circumspection. If someone understands both Japanese and English, it is usually faster and clearer to say *soba* than buckwheat noodles, but if it becomes apparent that the recipient does not understand, then the interactional practices of repair are available to help the speaker get the recipient back on track.

The notion of circumspection is one that is particularly relevant to the oral proficiency test data. Here, the use of Japanese is institutionally constrained and therefore goes beyond simply a preference for same language/medium talk, as the interactants are being monitored and graded on their language use. It is not that same-language interaction is interactionally expedient, but that use of other-language has been deemed taboo in this setting. Even with this constraint, the other-language *mot*

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<sup>3</sup> A *genkan* is the entrance way to a Japanese-style house, *kanji* is the word for Chinese-style pictographs used to write Japanese and *waribashi* are disposable chopsticks that come joined together and must be split apart in order to be used.

<sup>4</sup> *Gomi* means rubbish, *genki* means energetic or healthy, and *gaijin* means non-Japanese.

*juste* proves to be the clearest means of formulating certain concepts, as witnessed in Excerpts 1 to 3. However, it is worth noting again that the current analysis is concerned primarily with bilingual interaction rather than bilingual speakers, and therefore does not attempt to account for recalibration repair in terms of the fluency or proficiency of the interactants. As an interactional practice, bilingual recalibration repairs were used in comparatively similar ways in both the test talk between novice speakers and the mundane interaction between highly competent Japanese/English speakers.

Another issue that arises from the current analysis is that of translation. Intuitively we know that translation means reformulating a word (or words) from language A into language B, but what we see in the current analysis goes beyond that. In proffering an other-language formulation, participants are often broadening or limiting the precision of the original version, frequently in ways that are shaped by their association to an item or interpretation within the other culture. The notion of recalibration, therefore, offers a more nuanced, context-sensitive view of translation within bilingual interaction.

Whatever the setting, *not juste* switches and bilingual recalibration repairs are both intricately linked to epistemics, a topic that has received increasing interest in CA literature in recent years (e.g. Heritage 2012a, 2012b; Heritage & Raymond, 2012; Stivers, Mondada, & Steensig, 2011). Within CA, the issue of what someone knows (or does not know) is available to the analyst, as it is to the other interactants themselves, through the details of the talk. When a speaker chooses to use one formulation over another, she does so because she is designing it for a particular recipient, and this therefore makes publicly available details concerning how they see each others' identities, knowledge states and relative language expertise. When Nina formulates her original account of the sign in Japanese (Excerpt 5, line 19), she is doing so primarily for those in the group who are bilingual, namely Yoko and Kate. It is only when Ryan makes it clear that he does not understand that Nina translates it into English and therefore reworks the participant constellation to include him (Greer, 2013). Viewing the repair as a recalibration also points to the gradated nature of the initial trouble source as well. When he initiates his clarification with *shinda* (dead), Ryan clearly understands at least part of the meaning of the original Japanese. Nina orients to this as such and adjusts it both in terms of register and nuance. Recalibration is a form of repair that does not entirely reject the trouble source, and bilingual recalibrations do so by calling on an other-language formulation that includes semantic or cultural elements not available in the other language.

Finally, it is worth stressing that it is not just that a bilingual recalibration repair makes a formulation more comprehensible, but also that it does so within the larger

interactional project of accomplishing some sort of socio-pragmatic action, whether as a telling (Excerpts 1, 2 and 3), or a story preface (Excerpt 4) or as part of a joke (Excerpt 5). Further research is needed in order to examine how such actions are accomplished through bilingual recalibration repair in other language pairs and in other interactional settings.

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## Appendix

### Transcription Conventions

#### Simultaneous Utterances

huh [ oh ] I see    Left square brackets mark the start of overlapping talk  
                   [what]            Right square brackets mark the end of an overlap

#### Contiguous Utterances

=                    Equal signs indicate that:  
                   a) Turn continues at the next identical symbol on the next line, or  
                   b) Talk is latched; that is, there is no interval between the end of  
                       prior turn and the start of next turn

#### Intervals Within and Between Utterances

(0.4)              Numerals in parentheses mark silence, in tenths of a second  
 (.)                 A period in parentheses indicates a micropause (0.1 sec or less)

#### Characteristics of Speech Delivery

hhh hee hah        indicate laughter or breathiness  
 no wa(h)y         laughter within a token is indicated in parentheses  
 .hh                 indicates audible inhalation  
 hh                 indicates audible exhalation  
don't             Underlining indicates marked stress  
 yes?               A question mark indicates rising intonation  
 yes.                A period indicates falling intonation  
 so,                 A comma indicates low-rising intonation, suggesting continuation  
 HUh                Capitals indicate increased loudness  
 °thanks°         Degree signs indicate decreased volume  
 \$no way\$         Dollar signs indicate utterance is delivered in a "smiley voice"  
 >not me<         Inward-facing indents embed talk which is faster than the  
                       surrounding speech  
 <then who>        Outward-facing indents embed talk that is slower than the  
                       surrounding speech  
 go:::d             One or more colons indicate lengthening of the preceding sound.  
                       Each additional colon represents a lengthening of one beat  
 no bu-             A single hyphen indicates an abrupt cut-off, with level pitch

### Commentary in the Transcript

((off camera))	Double parentheses indicate transcriber's comments
the (park)	Single parentheses indicate an uncertain transcription
waves	The onset of embodied action is indicated in gray with a vertical bar

### Other Transcription Symbols

→	An arrow in the transcript margin draws attention to a particular phenomenon the analyst wishes to discuss
---	--

### Translation

ore ja nai	Italics indicates talk is in a language other than English
me COP NEG	Second tier gives a literal English morphemic gloss
It's not me.	Third tier gives a vernacular English translation in a Times New Roman

### Abbreviations Used in Literal Gloss

Based on Tanaka (1999)

IP	Interactional particle (e.g. <i>ne, sa, no, yo, na</i> )
S	Subject marker ( <i>-ga</i> )
O	Object marker ( <i>-o</i> )
GEN	Genitive ( <i>-no</i> )
TOP	Topic Marker ( <i>-na</i> )
Q	Question marker ( <i>ka</i> and its variants)
POL	Politeness marker
NR	Nominalizer (e.g. <i>no, n</i> )
LOC	Locative ( <i>de, ni</i> )
VN	Verb nominaliser ( <i>nan, no, n</i> )
HM	Hesitation marker ( <i>eto, ano, etc</i> )
IT	Various forms of interactional tokens (such as <i>moh, ano, eto</i> )

### Verbs and adjectival forms.

COP	Copulative verb, variations of the verb <i>to be</i>
NEG	Negative morpheme
PST	Past tense morpheme
CONT	Continuing (non-final) form
POT	Potential form
POL	Polite form