

Can phrases like 'isn't it?' or 'right?' compromise classroom learning? New study answers

May 31 2023



While teachers use the third-turn repeat strategy to encourage student inclusion, it might silence curiosity. Credit: Mika Ishino

Classroom education, in an ideal sense, must engage all students in a constructive discussion with the teacher, making it the latter's

responsibility to utilize different inclusive strategies. To bring the attention of distracted students back to the classroom discussion, teachers often have to use different methods to remind them that they are an equal and important part of this shared activity. This task can be tricky since most teachers attend to multiple students in a classroom. What strategies do teachers use to draw the attention of all the students to the common thread of a classroom discussion?

In a study that was recently published in *Classroom Discourse*, Dr. Mika Ishino of Doshisha University explored this question by analyzing the video recordings of [classroom](#) interactions between teachers and [students](#) in Japan. Dr. Ishino specifically examined how teachers employed the epistemic stance marker "ne" during the classroom discussions, to make the interaction more inclusive with all the students. An epistemic stance marker is a word that modifies the tone of a sentence, to increase the interpersonal interaction between the speaker and the listener. "'Ne' is roughly equivalent to English interrogative tags 'you know,' 'isn't it,' and 'right?'" It mainly marks the sharedness of the referent information between the speaker and the hearer," explains Professor Ishino.

The study found that the epistemic stance marker "ne" is commonly used in the third turn during [teacher](#)-student interactions. In the first turn, the teacher asks a question to the class as a whole. In the second turn, one student usually answers the question. For the third turn, the teacher then repeats the answer and adds "ne" to open the interaction and include the rest of the students in this exchange.

"When the teachers produced their third-turn repeat in response to an individual student's reply, they marked the repeated item with the Japanese epistemic stance marker, 'ne' or 'na,' and shifted their gaze from the respondent individual to other students or '[public space](#)' such as the blackboard," Dr. Ishino observes. She further adds, "In doing so, the teachers treated the rest of the students as the party who also had access

to the questioning item in the same manner as the respondent student."

By using the third-turn repeat "ne," teachers modify the nature of the interaction such that all students in the class, including the distracted, are given equal status in the discussion. Once this happens, the teacher moves on to the next question. However, Dr. Ishino found that this practice can have a negative impact on student involvement and learning.

When the teachers use the third-turn repeat as a consistent strategy without checking if all the students are in sync, they potentially curtail the chance of any follow-up questions that the students can ask. "If there is a possibility that some students were not on the same page with the respondent student or did not know the answer to the questioning items, the inclusive third-turn repeat is designed to limit the students' responses to a silent agreement," Dr. Ishino concludes.

The study reveals that in an interaction with multiple students, it is crucial for teachers to ensure that no student is more privileged than others. Furthermore, the use of third-term repeats like "ne" may be a helpful way to encourage inclusive learnings during classroom discussions. However, it can have serious negative consequences on student involvement and learning in the long term.

More information: Mika Ishino, Inclusive third-turn repeats: managing or constraining students' epistemic status?, *Classroom Discourse* (2023). [DOI: 10.1080/19463014.2023.2190033](https://doi.org/10.1080/19463014.2023.2190033)

Provided by Doshisha University

Citation: Can phrases like 'isn't it?' or 'right?' compromise classroom learning? New study answers (2023, May 31) retrieved 14 May 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2023-05-phrases-isnt->

[compromise-classroom.html](#)

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.