This is a contribution from *Pragmatics and Society* 5:1

This electronic file may not be altered in any way.
The author(s) of this article is/are permitted to use this PDF file to generate printed copies to be used by way of offprints, for their personal use only.
Permission is granted by the publishers to post this file on a closed server which is accessible to members (students and staff) only of the author's/s' institute, it is not permitted to post this PDF on the open internet.
For any other use of this material prior written permission should be obtained from the publishers or through the Copyright Clearance Center (for USA: www.copyright.com).
Please contact rights@benjamins.nl or consult our website: www.benjamins.com

Tables of Contents, abstracts and guidelines are available at www.benjamins.com
L2 Learning as Social Practice: Conversation-Analytic Perspectives is a new volume of the Pragmatics and Interaction series. This volume continues to examine how participants use language to mediate interactions in situ from a microscopic and bottom-up conversation analysis (CA) perspective. Applying CA to analyze various institutional practices, this volume focuses on learning, interaction, and the development of interactional competence based on naturally occurring data. It consists of twelve articles written by researchers who have special interest in social interaction and language learning using CA. The articles are divided into four sections: (1) language learning as development of practices, (2) doing learning, (3) language choice and participation in second language talk, and (4) bridging the interactional or linguistic divide. These four sections reflect the purpose of the book in a progressive manner, from language development and learning through interactions and participation to language choice and the relationship between interactional competence and linguistic forms. Most of the research is able to document and describe the way in which second-language learners orient to a language behavior, or a social practice, and co-construct meaning with other participants. The research succeeds in reporting the observable changes and development in interactional competence in recurring social actions (e.g., learner’s response to tutor’s topic proffer) and how the same expression is extended to other social contexts over a period of time.

Adopting the same theoretical perspective, each article provides carefully coded conversations and descriptions based on the participants’ recorded or videotaped interactions. The first section concentrates on the development of interactional competence through three longitudinal case studies. Hanh thi Nguyen’s article shows the progressive development of a second-language learner’s response to her teacher’s topic proffers in social interaction, from a delayed, short, and minimal turn construction unit (TCU) in the first few meetings to an immediate, long, and expanded TCU in the fifth meeting. Similarly, Midori Ishida investigates...
the development of interactional competence of an English intermediate learner of Japanese when she lived with a host during her one-year study-abroad experience. The analysis of the learner’s reactions as a recipient to her host’s stories over a year – from distant and minimal responses to involvement, understanding, and evaluation of what is heard – demonstrates “her development as part of language socialization, rather than instantiations of newly acquired skills” (p. 77). Seung-Hee Lee, Jae-Eun Park, and Sung-Ock Sohn’s article examines the relationship between the length of responses by English-speaking Korean heritage speakers with different levels of proficiency during oral interviews. The analysis of their oral discourse shows that high-proficiency learners could produce longer replies by making good use of the Korean clause-final suffixes compared with the intermediate-proficiency learners’ minimal replies (e.g., anyo). Therefore, the researchers suggest that “the speakers’ interactional skills may be affected by their access to grammatical resources” (p. 100).

The second section concentrates on the language classroom context, illustrating how learning is mediated through student-student or student-teacher activities. The articles by Keiko Ikeda and Sungbae Ko, and by Guðrún Theodórsdóttir, discuss the implications of students’ choral practice in the class and insistence on TCU completion in interactions. In addition, both Kristian Mortensen’s and Mik-Suk Seo’s articles are related to teachers’ expansion of vocabulary explanation and the use of gestures in tutoring. An important contribution of Mik-Suk Seo’s article is the affirmation of the role of gestures in second language (L2) learning through CA’s transcription method. It reveals the power of videotape and CA’s transcription conventions, and the study “addresses the question of whether, when and how gestures are mobilized to facilitate L2 learning” (p. 128), an area which is underdeveloped in the second-language acquisition literature. In the third section, Maurice Nevile and Johannes Wagner’s and Monika Vögè’s articles move to the investigation of language choice, laughter, and identity in the classroom and in a business meeting between a senior staff member and his subordinates. To complete the trajectory of other research that exhibits the development of interactional competence in recurring social situations, both Michela Biazzì’s and Søren Eskildsen’s articles manifest how one fixed expression (e.g., What do you say?) is extended to other contexts in the last section of the book.

The book adopts CA as its framework when describing second language development in situ. Stemming from the works of Emanuel Schegloff, Harvey Sacks, and Gail Jefferson in the 1970s, CA uses detailed analysis of talk exchanges to illuminate how participants understand or orient to social order. It has little to do with language learning and acquisition. The second language researchers of this volume have successfully shown that CA is a powerful tool to reveal interactional
procedures, behaviors, and resources from the participants’ perspectives and thus, complement quantitative linguistic behavior. CA has become a burgeoning research domain evidenced in the publications of various strands in applied linguistics, including *The Interactional Architecture of the Language Classroom: A Conversation Analysis Perspective* (Paul Seedhouse 2004), *Applying Conversation Analysis* (Keith Richards and Paul Seedhouse 2005), *Conversation Analysis and Language for Specific Purposes* (Hugo Bowles and Paul Seedhouse 2007), and *Conversation Analysis and Second Language Pedagogy* (Jean Wong and Hansun Waring 2010), to name a few. The detailed analyses have provided some evidence for the power of microanalysis to demonstrate second language learning and development *in situ*, and as a social practice rather than to measure linguistic gains or competence. The quoted episodes of each research have also provided evidence of the significance of co-construction of meaning between participants in interactions, and orientation to a social practice or behavior in the recurring situation.

As its methodology stands, CA has weaknesses. It may not be able to provide a full explanation for second language development. Its emic and talk-analysis approach may not take into account the learners’ other learning experiences, cognitive processing, or psychological factors that facilitate interactions or shape the changing behavior in a particular context. However, its role in second language acquisition cannot be ruled out. The volume has demonstrated that CA is an important piece to complement the cognitive and psychological processing models and complete the second-language acquisition puzzle.

*L2 Learning as Social Practice* is a good reference for researchers and language-learning courses for postgraduates. The works cited in the literature review section are recent and updated. The book may benefit undergraduate students who are curious about how people talk or use language in natural interactions, rather than in experimental-based research. However, to better appreciate the researchers’ arguments, undergraduate or postgraduate students may need to be familiar with some of CAs ideas, emic interests, transcription conventions, and analysis procedures. Fortunately, the terms that the researchers refer to – such as “turn construction unit,” “turn transition” and “transcription conventions” – are adequately explained or illustrated in the literature review, the methodology, and even the endnotes. Thus, undergraduate students who do not have sufficient knowledge about the organization or sequence of talk in the works of Schegloff, Sacks, and Jefferson are still able to follow the articles.

To conclude, the book makes a contribution to second language learning, and the researchers’ concerted effort adds valuable knowledge to the field from a CA perspective.
References


About the reviewer

*Cynthia Lee* is Associate Professor at the Centre for Applied English Studies, The University of Hong Kong. Her research interests include interlanguage and cross-cultural pragmatics, second language education and learning with particular reference to tutor-tutee interactions in writing consultations. Her publications have appeared in various edited books, refereed conference proceedings and international refereed journals including *Multilingua, Journal of Pragmatics, Computer-Assisted Language Learning, Language, Culture and Communication*, and *Teaching in Higher Education*. She has published and co-authored several books on language learning, communication and technology.

Reviewer’s address

*Cynthia Lee*
Centre for Applied English Studies
The University of Hong Kong
Centennial Campus, Pokfulam
Hong Kong

cfkleemail@hku.hk