Orientation to language code and actions in group work

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This conversation analytic study reveals how learners themselves, as speakers and listeners, demonstrate their own orientation to language code and actions on a moment by moment basis during collaborative tasks in English as a foreign language classrooms. The excerpts presented in this article were drawn from 26 hours of audio- and video-recorded small group discussions by Japanese university students. The analysis of the data revealed the following three aspects of participants' orientations: (a) speakers' orientation to both language code and actions within a single strip of talk, (b) differential orientations between speakers and listeners, and (c) the lack of a clear distinction and irrelevance (for the participants) of the boundary between participants' orientations to language code and actions. The findings of this study implicate the relationship between the level of participants' language proficiency and the occurrence of other-assistance on language code.

Cette étude d'analyse conversationnelle porte sur la façon dont les apprenants — locuteurs et interlocuteurs — s'orientent vers l'usage du code linguistique ou vers l'action indiquée dans leurs interactions lors de tâches collaboratives en classe d'anglais langue étrangère. Les extraits présentés dans cet article proviennent de 26 heures d'enregistrements audio et vidéo de discussions en petits groupes entre étudiants d'une université japonaise. L'analyse des données a révélé trois aspects des tendances des participants : a) une tendance à une orientation à la fois vers le code et vers l'action dans un même fragment de discours ; b) des tendances différentes entre locuteurs et interlocuteurs ; c) l'absence de distinction claire et la non-pertinence (pour les participants) de la distinction entre les deux types de comportements. Les résultats de cette étude corrèlent le niveau de compétence langagière des participants et la présence d'aide linguistique externe.

Introduction

Studies within the mainstream of second language acquisition (SLA) have documented ample evidence that learners need opportunities to "focus on form"

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during meaningful communication activities in order to notice and therefore acquire particular features of the L2 (see Mackey and Gass, 2006, for an overall review). However, these studies have examined the data from an etic perspective, that is from the researchers' point of view of what is important in the interaction, rather than from an emic perspective, that is from the view of the interactants themselves according to what they attend to and treat as relevant on a moment by moment basis in and through the interaction (Goodwin, 1984; ten Have, 1999; Markee and Kasper, 2004). Over the last two decades, research examining educational interaction from an emic perspective has flourished in a variety of areas, such as sociocultural theory (Frawley and Lantolf, 1985; Van Lier, 1988, 2004; Donato and Lantolf, 1990; Lantolf and Appel, 1994; Hall and Verplaetse, 2000; Ohta, 2001; Lantolf and Thorne, 2006, among others), ethnographic microanalysis (e.g., Erickson and Shultz, 1982; Erickson, 1992, 1995), constitutive ethnography (Mehan, 1979), and conversation analysis (Markee, 2000, 2004, 2005; Mori, 2002, 2004a, 2004b; He, 2004; Kasper, 2004; Mondada and Pekarek Doehler, 2004; Olsher, 2004; Hellermann, 2006, 2007). Conversation analysis (CA) takes the emic perspective in that it calls for empirical evidence as displayed through the participants' interactional conduct as part of its methodology; what the interactants themselves perceive as relevant cannot be imposed a priori, but can and must be demonstrated through the observable interactional conduct.

This study employs a conversation analytic approach and reveals how learners themselves, as speakers and listeners, demonstrate in and through the interaction their own orientation to language code and action on a moment by moment basis during collaborative tasks in English as a foreign language classrooms. This study specifically discusses speaker orientation to both linguistic code and action during single strips of talk, differential orientation between speakers and listeners, and the lack of a clear boundary between interactants' orientation to linguistic code and their orientation to actions.

Focus on form and meaning in SLA

Since the advent of Krashen's Input Hypothesis (1981, 1985, 1989), meaning has held center stage in the L2 interaction research through the theoretical position that comprehensible input is sufficient for acquisition. Roughly stated, if the linguistic input is just beyond the current level of the learner, what Krashen termed "i+1," and the learner understands the message, then language acquisition will occur. However, research in naturalistic and immersion settings provides evidence that even after years of comprehensible input, learning a language only through meaningful use may not result in accurate use of some aspects of the target language (Harley and Swain, 1984; Spada and Lightbown, 1989; Harley, 1992). This line of research led to the view that some focus on the

formal properties of language during meaningful communication is important for improving accuracy in second language acquisition, or at least can speed up the acquisition process. Working within the Interaction Hypothesis (Long, 1981, 1983, 1996), which posits that learners allocate attention to form when they must negotiate for meaning as a result of a communication breakdown, Long (1991) argued that incidental focus on form increases saliency and provides crucial negative evidence that may be missing in non-interactive input.

Although a narrow definition of focus on form relates to incidental attention to the linguistic code during meaningful communication (Long and Robinson, 1998), a focus on specific aspects of the code can also be designed into pedagogical tasks (Ellis, 2003). Ellis (2003) differentiates focus on form according to whether the focus is planned or incidental. No matter whether it is planned or incidental, focus on form is seen as a means by which learners can attend to form while maintaining a focus on using language for meaningful communication. Seedhouse (1997) refers to this simultaneous focus on form and meaning as a *dual* focus. He is skeptical, however, as to the likelihood of a dual focus actually occurring in the language learning classroom, or at least occurring to a sufficient degree that it would have a significant effect on language learning.

In sum, previous mainstream SLA studies argued that "focus on form" and "focus on meaning" during learner interaction are important constructs for L2 acquisition, although to what degree is still under examination. However, no matter whether the study is examining the effect of focus on form in language learning or the likelihood of simultaneous orientation to form and meaning in language classrooms, the findings appear to be greatly influenced by: (a) researchers' a priori categorization of "form" and "meaning," and (b) imposition of the predetermined categories to the analysis.

Emic view of noticing

The emic viewpoint is essential in second language acquisition as the very basis of noticing is premised on the learner's noticing of formal aspects of the linguistic code. Schmidt (1990) outlined a continuum of conscious learning and argued that conscious noticing is essential for language learning. This stance was based on earlier research in which the forms that emerged in one learner's production were those that the learner had consciously noticed as evidenced by the learner's own language learning diary (Schmidt and Frota, 1986). The learner's noticing of formal aspects of the language code is important as it explains which forms become intake and are possibly then incorporated into their language system.

However, the research interests of studies in mainstream SLA rarely lie in exploring what the learners themselves are focusing on, paying attention

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to, noticing, or orienting to within the interaction, online, as it occurs, from the participants' perspective.[1] Long's (1991) conception of focus on form as a design feature for language learning is premised on the learner's noticing of forms at their current level of interlanguage development. Although focal attention is drawn to a specific form by the teacher or other students, it remains to be demonstrated that the learner actually notices that form when their attention is drawn to it, even in cases where the communicative breakdown was a direct result of that form. Research on focus on form has often presented the form to be focused on not from the learner's orientation but from the researcher's view of the learners' needs as seen from the view of pedagogical error analysis (Doughty and Varela, 1998; Williams and Evans, 1998). This provides evidence of the researcher's orientation to form, or the teacher's orientation to form, but shows little about the learners' orientation.

On the other hand, Swain (2000) and colleagues (Kowal and Swain, 1994; Swain and Lapkin, 1998), in a move toward a reconceptualization of output as socially constructed, examined the language-related episodes (metatalk about language) learners produced in collaborative dialogues to see if the episodes could demonstrably be occasions for learning. Swain argues, from a sociocultural theory of mind perspective, that collaborative dialogue facilitates internalization of linguistic code that is focused on external production. The use of the learners' metatalk on formal aspects of language in the shape of language-related episodes highlights the need to understand and document what learners are giving their attention to during meaning focused language learning tasks. Donato (1994) illustrates this point in his analysis of interaction by L2 learners of French working on a non-structured small group task. Although focus on the language code was not a requirement of the task, the learners themselves chose to focus on particular formal aspects of the language code and solved the majority of their problems through collaboration with their fellow learners. The study shows that L2 learners are capable of assisting their peers in collaborative interactions and that such collaboration helps them develop new knowledge that goes beyond the knowledge of any single member of the interaction.

Thus, if noticing is essential for language learning, then, as the studies by Swain and Donato show, it is imperative to empirically demonstrate what the learner is noticing and attending to in the interaction. To find out what learners notice in the input, we first have to see what they orient to while participating in learning tasks. When teachers or researchers plan to have learners focus on some specific aspect of interaction, the learners' actual orientation might be on something completely different. Learners, as active participants in interaction, do not simply follow the task instructions but they vigorously co-construct the task with the teachers or other students (Donato, 2004). This disparity of plan and process was outlined by Breen (1989) in his discussion of the

differences between task-as-workplan and task-in-process. Breen's distinction is well testified to in numerous studies employing sociocultural theory as well as conversation analysis. Swain (2000) found in the collaborative dialogue studies that "Each pair (of participants) focused on different aspects of language, and did so in different ways" (p. 112). Coughlan and Duff (1994) reported that the outcomes of a picture description task varied with each learner and varied for the same learner on separate occasions. Ohta (2001) points out the various factors affecting task performance, such as learners' own interests, abilities, and understandings of tasks, and notes the individual differences in use of the first language in accomplishing peer activities. Using CA to examine learners of Japanese preparing for and participating in a *zadankai* (discussion meeting), Mori (2002) discovered that the resulting interaction during the task developed differently than either the teacher or the learners had planned. Furthermore, learners may orient to more than target language learning, and may orient to more than one aspect of interaction at a time. These studies suggest that it may not be possible, or is at least difficult, to determine a priori what learners orient to during tasks. Therefore, examination of learner interaction from a learner perspective is more likely to reveal learners' in-situ orientation during tasks.

Nexus of sociocultural studies and conversation analysis

As discussed above, both sociocultural studies and conversation analytic studies have examined what learners themselves orient to or notice during classroom interaction, especially during collaborative interaction with their peer learners. Working within a Vygotskyan frame, proponents of a sociocultural theory of language learning (e.g., Lantolf and Appel, 1994; Van Lier, 1998; Donato, 2004) take the view that knowledge and cognition are generated not in the mind of individuals but through social interaction, and that they are socially shared and distributed among interactants. Through collaborative interaction with peer students as well as teachers, language learners are constantly provided with opportunities to notice features of the L2. Moreover, based on the assertions of Activity Theory, they argue that such social interaction leads to language acquisition as learners internalize language through the creative construction of the language. Conversation analytic studies, on the other hand, are different from sociocultural studies in that they do not explore interactants' internalization of knowledge as they are more focused on capturing the interactants' moment by moment, demonstrable orientation during the unfolding interaction. However, conversation analytic research is in accord with sociocultural studies in that conversation analysis also considers knowledge and cognition to be socially distributed among participants in interaction since the main focus of CA is to demonstrate how participants in interaction establish

intersubjectivity through their talk and other conduct. In conversation analysis, analysts describe interactants' behaviours for shaping interaction based on the same evidence to which the interactants themselves orient. Thus, if it is truly the case that social interaction with others is consequential for the subsequent development of L2 learning as sociocultural studies inform us, then examining interaction among L2 learners through their eyes with the conversation analytic approach of scrutinizing the details of interaction may help uncover some aspects of L2 learners' orientation which ultimately leads to L2 development.

Using the framework of conversation analysis, this study investigates learners' orientations during collaborative interaction with their peers. Repeated examination of the data revealed the following three aspects of participants' orientations: (a) speakers' orientation to both language code and actions (along with other interactional aspects) within a single strip of talk, (b) differential orientations between speakers and listeners, and (c) the lack of a clear boundary between learners' orientations to language code and actions.

Data

The excerpts presented here are drawn from a data corpus consisting of approximately 23 hours of audio- or video-taped small group discussions by freshman and sophomore Japanese students in English language classes at three universities in the Tokyo area in 1996 and in 2006. The participants had formally studied English for more than 6 years, and were at an upper-intermediate level of proficiency; the TOEIC (Test of English for International Communication) scores of the participants ranged from 500 to 850, well above the Japanese national average of just over 400 for first-year university students. Students were put into small groups in each of the 5 intact classes. Groups consisted of 3 to 5 students, most groups with 4 students, for a total of 28 groups and 109 participants. The data were collected during normal class sessions and toward the end of the year-long courses. Data collection was ecologically valid as small group discussions were held in almost every class session.

In this data set the students carried out one of two tasks: choosing a person for a heart transplant or a teacher for an elementary school position. Each student received a handout describing background information on five candidates. The teacher instructed the students to discuss and rank the candidates. No further instructions concerning task procedures were given (see Aline, 1999, for task details).

Methodology

This section briefly introduces the conversation analysis method employed in this study and discusses the analytical procedures applied.

In reaction to the approach used by mainstream American sociologists using a priori theorization in the 1960s, researchers using CA methodology strongly argued against premature theorization and ad hoc analytical categorization of social interaction. A basic belief of CA methodology is that no matter how strong one's ability to theorize might be, a priori theorization places significant constraints on observation of that which actually occurs in interaction. In opposition to a priori theorization, CA methodology uses "unmotivated" examination as the basis for analyzing data in order to gain greater understanding of the details of the actual occurrences of social interaction. Regarding this point, Sacks (1984) said:

> When we start out with a piece of data, the question of what we are going to end up with, what kind of findings it will give, should not be a consideration. We sit down with a piece of data, make a bunch of observations, and see where they will go ... . Recurrently, what stands as a solution to some problem emerges from unmotivated examination of some piece of data, where, had we started out with a specific interest in the problem, it would not have been supposed in the first instance that this piece of data was a resource with which to consider, and come up with a solution for, that particular problem. (p. 27)

Through repeated examination of audio and video recordings and transcripts of naturally occurring conversation, the methodology focuses on revealing participants' orientation to making sense of interaction and shared understanding, an orientation that is embodied in the detail of their talk and other conduct.

Prior to the analysis of the data for the present study, all verbal production was transcribed using the transcription conventions of CA (Jefferson, 1984) (see Appendix for conventions used in this article). We then framed a number of general observations about the interaction from our initial analyses of the transcripts and recorded data, and we identified phenomena for further analysis while re-analyzing the audio and video recordings with the transcripts. An excerpt of a single episode of an instance of a phenomenon of significant interest was checked for transcription detail and a preliminary description of the phenomenon was prepared. Next, the entire data set of audio, video and transcripts from all discussion groups was re-examined and a collection was made of all instances of the phenomenon found in the data set. In the process, we made sure that the description was inclusive of all instances of the phenomenon. The whole process of analysis was repeated for each phenomenon discussed in this article (see ten Have, 1990, for a discussion of methodological issues in CA).

The main phenomenon reported in this study, learners' orientation to language code and action in interaction, emerged from the repeated observation and analysis of the data set. In launching this project, we carried out

unmotivated observations of the data. During the observations, we initially noticed the speakers' strong orientations to self-solving or self-repairing grammatical problems. We then examined more examples with the same phenomenon in detail. Therefore, the ideas of speakers' orientation of language code or action came out of the data, rather than from any a priori hypotheses.

For the purposes of this article, "orientation to language code" refers to the participants' orientation to the formal aspects of the language, while "orientation to action" refers to participants' orientation to the main sequential action, such as persuading, arguing, agreeing and disagreeing, and their orientation to moving the main sequence of interaction forward through the actions.[2]

Data analysis

Speaker orientation to language code and actions

Numerous studies have demonstrated how speakers in ordinary L2 interaction display their orientation to linguistic aspects of their utterances as well as to actions (Kurhila, 2001, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006; Hauser, 2003; Kasper, 2004; Hosoda, 2006).[3] In the present data set from group work discussion tasks in a language learning classroom, the speakers also oriented to both language code and actions.

As can be seen in both Extracts (1) and (2), the speakers' orientation to grammatical accuracy is publicly displayed through repair of formal aspects of the linguistic code. In Extract (1), Akira argues in favour of one of the candidates for the teaching position.

(1) [W1, G8, T2, p. 2][4] (A = Akira, T = Tetsu)
    01 A: <u>bhut</u>uh:: he: teach-.hhh but he: he has teach<u>e:</u>d, he
    02   (i-/hi-) he has taught?
    03   (.)
    04 A: u:::n (6.0) >it i<u>s</u>< ten years
    05 T: ten years¿
    06 A: in elementary school, so uh:: u::n (0.5) he↓::: he
    07   likes children. (.) I think.

After opening with the counter argument marker "<u>bhut</u>uh::", Akira suddenly cuts off completion of the verb "teach," takes a breath, and recycles the beginning with the connective "but" and the pronoun "he:". Akira produces "he" again, but this time without the sound stretch, and then continues the utterance. In continuing, he adds the auxiliary for the present perfect form but uses the past tense inflection for regular verbs with the main verb. Although the initial cutoff appears to be an orientation to language code, the choice of tense in terms of framing the time of the discussion task as direct speech (i.e., present tense) or reported speech (i.e., past tense) was problematic for many of the other participants as well, and thus constitutes a problem to be worked

out among the participants. In the extract above, Akira could have said "he teaches," stating the experience of one of the candidates in direct speech. His problem was choosing an appropriate grammatical form in this position to get the action-in-progress (i.e., stating the candidate's experience to support his argument) done. Therefore, by carrying out this repair, Akira appears to be orienting to both language code and actions.

Akira recycles the pronoun yet again and cuts off another word (possibly the verb "has" since among these participants "is" and "has" have a very similar pronunciation). His subsequent utterance displays his clear orientation to a formal linguistic aspect of his utterance: he begins again with the third-person pronoun "he" plus the auxiliary verb "has," and finally produces the irregular form of the past participle with "taught?" under a rising intonation contour. Akira's turn is still pragmatically incomplete in that in order to make an argument in the discussion task, after the statement "he has taught," some other element such as information on the number of years the candidate has taught or the place the candidate has taught should follow. However, Akira halted his turn-in-progress after "taught?". Hosoda (2006) reported that the L2 speakers in her L1–L2 conversational data frequently stopped their turn-in-progress in order to check the correctness of the form they had just produced, and in such cases, the L2 speakers located the linguistic items that were problematic by marking the items with rising intonation, often followed by sound stretches and nonlexical perturbations (e.g., "uh"). In this way, the L2 speakers in Hosoda's study overtly requested help from the L1 speakers on the form they were producing. Although the present data is from discussion tasks among L2 speakers, Akira's utterance in line 2 seems to perform a similar action as in Hosoda's data. By producing "taught?" with rising intonation and stopping the turn-in-progress, Akira checks the correctness of the form he just produced with his peers. In spite of Akira's request, however, during the pause following "taught?", the other speakers remain silent (line 3). Akira then produces "u::::n" in line 4, which places a hold on the next item due. After a 6-second pause, Akira continues his argument by noting the candidate's ten years of experience and thus moves the action forward.

In line 5, Tetsu acknowledges that Akira has just stated one important fact for his argument by repeating the key element of Akira's utterance. Moreover, by producing the utterance in this position rather than at the point Akira signified a request for confirmation of his solution to the problem of language code, Tetsu demonstrates his orientation to the action of Akira's utterance.

As Tetsu's utterance "ten years¿" is said with half-rising intonation, it may come across as sounding like repair initiation. Yet, the following turn by Akira evidences that Tetsu's utterance in line 5 actually functions as a "continuer" (Schegloff, 1982). Schegloff notes that a continuer displays understanding that extended talk by another is going on in that the listener does not take the

opportunity to produce a full turn in that position. Akira's continuation of his argument in line 6 indicates that Akira understood Tetsu's partial repetition as a continuer.

Within one turn, Akira displayed his orientation to both language code and actions. It should be noted, however, that although there was one clear case of orientation to language code (i.e., repair from "teached" to "taught"), in most of his utterances there was no clear cut boundary between orientation to action and orientation to language code.

Extract (2) further illustrates these phenomena. In the extract, Yuko first agrees with the other participants who earlier claimed that Sammy was the best candidate for the heart transplant, but she then gives an account of why she thinks Leon is a better choice. At one moment during her argument, Yuko displays a clear orientation to grammatical accuracy (lines 5–6). However, as in the previous extract, most instances of self-repair in her utterances demonstrate an orientation to both language code and actions.

> (2) [S, G7, T1, p. 3] (Y = Yuko, T = Taka)
> 01   Y: you said Sammy didn't- Sammy doesn't have a chi:ld,
> 02   (2.5) he will, uhm uh::: he have <u>the</u> shining (0.3)
> 03   future? hhuh hhuh hhuh >I thin(h)k so too but< (2.5)
> 04   Sammy (1.0) Sammy doesn't doesn't have? (3.2) he- he
> 05   doesn't (0.4) <have> his child, but Leon have child. (1.0)
> 06   Leon ha<u>s</u> child, (0.4) <u>chil</u>dren. three children. and
> 07   they're <u>you</u>ng. (.) If he died, they can't l<u>i</u>ve.
> 08   (1.0)
> 09   T: °oh,°
> 10   Y: °with theirselves.°

In line 1 Yuko cuts off after the production of "didn't" and changes the form to the present tense "doesn't," which again might be a problem regarding choice of appropriate grammatical form for getting the action-in-progress done. Therefore, this self-repair appears to display her orientation to both language code and actions.

However, a clear orientation to language code does occur in lines 5 and 6 when Yuko corrects her speech for errors in subject verb agreement and plurality. In line 5 Yuko first produces an utterance with incorrect subject verb agreement, "Leon have child.", and after a 1-second pause self-repairs the form to "has," with stress on the repaired ending of the verb emphasizing more appropriate grammatical form and further indicating orientation to grammatical accuracy. However, the series of self-repairs that follow display no clear boundary between orientation to language code and to actions: it appears that she orients to both language code and actions. After a short pause, Yuko corrects the plurality of "child" by adding the irregular plural suffix and changing the pronunciation of the initial vowel. The change of pronunciation in the first

syllable of "children" serves to call attention to the correction of language form through comparison with the previously uttered singular form. Although the change from "child" to "children" is a correction of language form, this correction may alternatively be showing the speaker's orientation to action in that she realizes at this point in the interaction that she needs to include the fact that Leon has more than one child. Yuko then proceeds by adding information on the exact number of children and the fact that they are young. Through the series of self-repairs, Yuko actually strengthens her position by gradually adjusting the accuracy of the number of Leon's children, from one to many. As is the case of self-repair in L1 conversation, each repair Yuko makes shows "progressivity" (Schegloff, 1979) toward a solution of the trouble being addressed.[5]

    Extract (3) below further demonstrates the speaker's orientation to both language code and actions. Moreover, the speaker in the extract momentarily orients to some interactional phenomenon other than language code or actions during her talk. In this extract, Maki is looking down at the discussion task handout and announcing her first choice for the elementary school teaching position.

    (3) [K2, G6, T2, p. 3] (M = Maki, Y = Yuko)
        01 M: I- (0.8) I thi:nk uh:m (1.0) the best
        02   (.) most tea- best teach?er is:u (.)
        03   Ja- John (.) Jefferson.
        04 Y: °John Jefferson°

In line 1, in self-selecting to speak (Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson, 1974), Maki cuts off the first person pronoun and pauses (0.8 seconds). Within the span of the pause, Kenichi's gaze moves from the handout to look up at Maki, and Yuko's gaze moves off the page to attend to Maki (Goodwin, 1979, Carroll, 2004).[6] Thus, this initial self-repair by Maki is an instance of the speaker having to deal with an interactional problem (i.e., non-gazing recipients). After attracting the attention of Kenichi and Yuko, Maki deploys a restart with "I" and the verb "think", which had earlier been used in the discussion. The sound stretches in the verb "thi:nk" and in the delay marker "uh:m", along with the appreciable 1-second pause, denote some palpable trouble. So far, it is not apparent what the trouble source of her problem is. However, it is made evident in her ensuing production. Following the pause, Maki produces a superlative, "the best", pauses slightly, and switches the superlative to "most". She then produces a cutoff of "teacher" with "tea-", recycles "best", and completes the noun phrase with "teach?er". Thus Maki demonstrates an orientation to language code ("the most teacher" vs. "the best teacher") in carrying out the repair. Upon completion of "teach?er", with the downward intonation on the stressed second syllable indicating the end of the search for the language form she wanted, Maki returns her orientation to actions with the verb "is:u", then

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pauses before giving the key information of the name of the candidate she is proposing as best for the job.

In this extract, within the course of producing one turn-constructional unit, Maki has demonstrably oriented to the language code momentarily in the course of performing the action of arguing for one of the candidates. This extract also demonstrates that the speaker is not always orienting to just language code and actions. Maki's initial self-repair was a result of an interactional constraint rather than the result of a grammatical problem. While Maki was self-repairing her utterance, the other group members waited silently. Only after she produced the key information did Yuko produce her utterance in the form of quiet repetition of that key information. This repetition demonstrates Yuko's orientation to the action of Maki's production. Even if Yuko or the other listeners had been thinking about the appropriate form of Maki's production at some time during Maki's turn, it was not consequential or relevant to the interaction at hand.

In the analyses of the extracts discussed above, it was demonstrated that although the speakers in the discussion tasks momentarily displayed clear orientation to language code, most of the time they appeared to be oriented to both language code and actions in constructing their talk. The analysis furthermore showed that the speakers' orientation could not always be clearly assigned to orientation to language code or actions. In some instances, as will be discussed further in the final section of this article, it was unclear whether the speaker was orienting to language code or to actions, while in other instances it was likely that the speaker was oriented to some other aspect of the interaction than language code or actions.[7]

Differential orientation between speakers and listeners

In Extracts (1), (2) and (3) above, the speakers momentarily orient to language code in the course of performing actions in their turns. However, the listener, while maintaining an orientation to actions, manifests no observable orientation to the language code of the speaker's utterance.[8] Returning to Extract (1), Tetsu, one of the listeners in the group, makes no attempt to assist, comment on, or correct the language of Akira's production. There is no response from the listeners after Akira has requested for confirmation of the correctness of the form of his utterance by producing "he has taught?" with rising intonation. Tetsu waits to produce his utterance until pragmatically key information is produced by Akira. This evinces that Tetsu is orienting to the action of Akira's utterance rather than to language code. Similarly, in Extracts (2) and (3), the listeners do not display observable orientation to the language code the speakers produce, but acknowledge or receive the actions of the speaker talk.

As seen in findings in L1 conversations (Schegloff, Jefferson and Sacks, 1977) as well as in L2 conversations (Foster and Ohta, 2005), in the present

data from discussion tasks in language classrooms, most repair, especially repair of linguistic code, was initiated and carried out by the speakers. Furthermore, the speaker's attention to the grammatical correctness of their own speech at times appears to be so strong that even when the listener's response may have some other functions other than correction of linguistic code, it may be taken by the speaker of the trouble source as a grammatical correction of their speech. As an example of this, consider the interaction in Extract (4) below. In this extract, one group of students is just beginning the discussion task.

(4) [S, G1, T1, p. 1] (R = Riku, N = Nana)
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01   R:   who gets the heart. (0.4) uh:::::=
02   N:   =m[n
03   R:        [we discuss, we discuss, uh:::=
04   N:   =about,
05   R:   °about desu ka? .hh sore chigau° we discuss uh who
          "Is it 'about'? That's wrong."
06        gets the heart.
07   N:   oka:y,
08   R:   uh:::: ((continues his talk))
```

In line 1, Riku publicly announces that he is initiating the task by reading out the discussion task title for the group. However, after reading the title, Riku pauses and then produces "uh:::::". In line 2, Nana sees that Riku is continuing to talk and produces the continuer "mn". Riku proceeds in line 3, producing "we discuss," twice, and utters "uh:::" again. Then in line 4, Nana responds with "about,". This collaborative piece of talk by Nana could be understood as a suggestion for continuation of Riku's utterance. As prior research has demonstrated, what may be taken as assistance or repair on linguistic form, may perform many other interactional actions (Kurhila, 2001, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006; Foster and Ohta, 2005; Hauser, 2005). Equally, this utterance by Nana could be construed as a "collaborative completion attempt" or an "alignment" that facilitates or encourages the speaker to move the conversation forward. However, Riku takes Nana's utterance in line 4 as an other-repair that attempts to provide a corrective form for his own talk. In line 5, Riku makes a meta-linguistic comment in the group's L1 on Nana's production of the word "about." He questions the grammatical appropriateness of "about," saying "about desu ka? (Is it 'about'?)" and then explicitly rejects the word with, "sore chigau (That's wrong)." He then produces an utterance without incorporating the word Nana provided, "we discuss uh who gets the heart." Nana, on the other hand, simply acknowledges Riku's turn by saying "oka:y," with almost exactly the same intonation as she had used to produce "about,". Following Nana's production of "oka:y,", Riku continues his talk in line 8.

In conversations between L1 and L2 speakers, it has been found that it is usually the L2 speakers who orient to grammatical correctness of their own

talk through self-initiation of repair, while the L1 listeners maintain their orientation to meaning even in the face of L2 speakers' apparent difficulty in constructing their talk and give assistance only after L2 speakers' repeated appeals for help (Hosoda, 2000; Kurhila, 2001, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006; Kasper, 2004; Park, 2007). In this data set, it is demonstrated that even in interaction between L2 learners in a language learning setting, it is usually the speakers, not the listeners, who orient to the grammatical accuracy of their own talk.

Furthermore, in L1–L2 conversations, it has been reported that L2 speakers occasionally request for linguistic assistance from L1 speakers, thus treating themselves as "novices" and treating their interlocutors as "experts" of the language, while L1 speakers treat themselves as "experts" of the language through provision of linguistic assistance to L2 speakers, often only after repeated requests for assistance by the L2 speakers (Kasper, 2004; Kurhila, 2004; Hosoda, 2006). In the case of interaction among L2 learners in small group work in this data set, even when the speakers displayed observable trouble in constructing their sentences and were possibly requesting for assistance from their interlocutors in the same way that L2 speakers request for help from L1 speakers, in general, the listeners refrained from overtly correcting or repairing the speakers' grammar. This may be because the L2 listeners may not be knowledgeable about the grammatical problems. However, it may also be attributed to the listeners' avoidance of presenting themselves as more proficient speakers of the language than the speaker of the trouble source. When the listener indeed performed an action that the speaker of the trouble source viewed as "grammatical repair," as shown in Excerpt (4), the speaker did not automatically accept the repair, and, by rejecting the repair, the speaker did not orient to the other interactant as an expert of the language, and thus oriented instead to a symmetrical relationship among the participants in the interaction.

Irrelevance of distinction between orientation to language code and orientation to action

As discussed in the previous section, most of the grammatical problems were self-initiated and self-repaired by the speakers. The dispreference for other-repair and other-correction in this data set is demonstrated further in the way listeners provided assistance. When listeners did provide assistance to the speaker, it was never in the form of explicit other-correction of language code, but was delivered in a way that it performed many other functions as well, as shown in Extract (4).

In the next example, the students' co-construction of a sentence, or scaffolding (Donato, 1994), can be observed. However, whether the listener is oriented to language code or to actions in providing assistance remains unclear. In the interaction presented here, Saki is announcing her choice for the heart transplant and giving the reason for that choice.

(5) [W1, G1, T1, p. 2] (S = Saki, Y = Yuki)
    01 S: I chose Martha (.) Rosales (.) too. because she:
    02   (0.5) has four children, (1.0) <u>an</u>d (1.4) if she:
    03   (2.0) she: (3.2) she is not- (4.5) she is
    04   (1.5)
    05 Y: if she di:es?
    06 S: uh, yes. (1.5) her children
    07   (.)
    08 Y: mh<u>:</u>m,
    09 S: is very
    10   (1.0)
    11 Y: very (.) sa:d?
    12 S: yes.
    13 Y: aa

In line 1, Saki announces that she has chosen the same candidate as one of the other participants in the group and begins an account of her choice. In line 2, after giving one reason for her choice under a continuing intonation contour, "because she: (0.5) has four children,", Saki pauses for 1 second and then produces a stressed "and". By producing "and" with stress on the beginning of the connective, Saki emphasizes that she is not finished with her turn and that she will be continuing. She then makes a longer pause, initiates a conditional with "if she:", and pauses again for even longer. After the pause, she recycles "she:" but pauses once again for an even longer. Next, Saki recycles "she" again but this time "she" is followed by "is not-". She cuts off the sound of "not-", and when she utters "she is" again, after an even longer pause, "not" is deleted from her production. Saki's observable difficulty in constructing her utterance is responded to in the next turn, line 5, by Yuki, who offers assistance. After a 1.5-second pause in line 4, Yuki utters "if she di:es?", thus continuing with Saki's earlier try "if she:" in line 2. Yuki's assistance offers a candidate lexical item, but produces the word with rising intonation which marks it as being uncertain. Moreover, although Yuki assists Saki by providing a lexical item, this assistance displays Yuki's close attention to and understanding of what action Saki tried to accomplish in the prior turn and functions to move Saki's action forward. Therefore, from the participant's perspective, whether this assistance shows Yuki's orientation to language code or actions is irrelevant. Here, what is relevant for the participants is that Yuki's offer helps Saki to accomplish her action in the interaction. As soon as Yuki offers a candidate solution, Saki accepts the offer with "uh, yes." in line 6, pauses again, and then continues her action with "her children". Following a micropause, Yuki utters a continuer in line 8, "mh:m,", which displays her understanding that Saki is proceeding with her turn. Proceeding in line 9, Saki utters "is very", but she uses the singular form of the copula "is" which does not agree in number with the plural noun "children" she used in line 6. After a pause, Yuki collaboratively completes

Saki's phrase with "very (.) sa:d?" in line 11, incorporating only the intensifier "very" of Saki's utterance before making the completion with the addition of "sa:d?". Yuki does not extend the borrowing of Saki's utterance back as far as the incorrect grammatical form "is," but maintains an orientation to action in assisting only with the completion of Saki's idea. Thus, in collaborating to construct utterances with the speaker (Saki), the listener (Yuki) appears to have oriented more to moving the action forward rather than to formal aspects of language. In line 12, Saki simply agrees with Yuki's word offer with "yes", which completes her action of accounting for her choice. Therefore, again, whether Yuki's assistance was a result of Yuki's orientation to language code or actions was not relevant to the participants. What was consequential for this interaction was that Saki was able to make use of Yuki's offer to get her action done.

As demonstrated in the previous extracts, most of the grammatical problems were self-repaired by the speakers. The dispreference for other-repair and other-correction in this data set was demonstrated not only in its rare occurrence but also in the manner the listener provided assistance. When listeners provided assistance to the speaker, whether the listener was oriented to language code or actions in providing assistance was unclear. Furthermore, as shown in Extract (5), the lack of a clear boundary between an orientation to language code and an orientation to actions was usually irrelevant to the interactants themselves as the two are blended together in accomplishing the talk-in-interaction.

Proficiency level and other assistance

While the findings presented here may at first sight seem to run counter to the findings of previous studies such as Foster and Ohta (2005) and Donato (1994), in which the authors found that learners in peer activities provide and receive assistance from each other through co-constructions and scaffolding, the claim made in this article does not contradict those studies but draws on their results to broaden our understanding of learner interaction. Although other-repair and other-corrections were rare, the data did reveal some instances of co-constructions, as shown in Extract (5). As was the case with the Foster and Ohta data, co-constructions in the present data functioned to express interest or give encouragement to the other interlocutors. Moreover, the rare occurrence of clear cases of other-correction oriented to linguistic code in the present data may have more to do with the learners' proficiency level. The learners in the Foster and Ohta (2005) and Donato (1994) studies appear from the transcripts to be at a beginning level of language learning. On the other hand, the learners in this data are at an upper-intermediate level L2 and are capable of locally managing the interactional work of carrying out discussion tasks in the L2 for nearly an hour while oriented mainly to the interactional actions of the

tasks and without intervention or assistance from the teacher.[9] The position that advanced learners collaborate less on language code is further supported by the findings of Morrison and Low (1983). The authors report that the participants in their study, who were adult learners of English with more than 14 years of formal English language instruction, did not always cooperate with each other in providing assistance on form. Moreover, Firth (1996) demonstrated in an analysis of lingua franca English conversations that advanced L2 speakers rarely correct each other on formal aspects of the language. In the business telephone conversations he analyzed, Firth found that listeners overwhelmingly eschew other-repair and other-completion even when such actions appear to be warranted, and when confronted with others' ungrammatical or unidiomatic usage, interactants chose to "let it pass" rather than provide a candidate solution. Therefore, it is apparent from these findings that as the level of participants' proficiency increases, the resulting interaction approximates to ordinary L1 conversation, where the occurrence of other-repair and other-corrections is uncommon.

Conclusion

This article examined 23 hours of Japanese L2 learners' orientations during learner-centered, task-based, classroom peer activities in English from the participants' perspective through a conversation analytic approach. The analysis revealed that although the speakers in the discussion tasks momentarily displayed a clear orientation to language code, most of the time they appeared to be oriented to both language code and actions in constructing their talk. Moreover, in most cases, there was no clear boundary between orientation to language code and actions. The analysis furthermore showed that in some instances it was likely that the speaker was oriented to some other aspect of the interaction than language code or actions, such as securing the recipients' attention. The repeated detailed inspection of this data set, approached with no a priori concept of the phenomenon to be analyzed, ensured that each clear case of speaker orientation to language code was an orientation from the learner's perspective as opposed to the researcher's or teacher's perspective. The microanalysis of learner interaction reveals what the learners themselves decide to pay attention to during the course of the unfolding interaction, and it consequently helps reveal what aspects of the L2 the learners are potentially developing through the interaction.

In the group work peer discussion tasks analyzed here, while the speakers momentarily oriented to the linguistic aspects of their own speech through self-initiation of repair, the listeners mainly oriented to the actions of the speakers' utterances. Conversely, listeners did not manifest any hearable orientation to language code, even in the face of speakers' apparent communicative

impediments or requests for assistance on language code. This is similar to interaction in L1–L2 conversation in which the L1 listeners for the most part refrain from other-initiated repair and other-repair of the L2 speakers' production. Although it could be said that the L2 listeners in this study did not possess a level of competence in the L2 adequate enough to provide the other interactants with feedback on language code, previous studies with learners at lower proficiency levels found that listeners did actively collaborate with speakers on formal aspects of the language (Donato, 1994; Foster and Ohta, 2005), as discussed below.

In addition, analysis of the data revealed that because of the differential orientation between speakers and listeners, listeners' assistance, which could serve multiple functions, may be viewed by the speaker as repair of language code. In L1–L2 conversation, when L1 speakers provide other-repair of language code, L2 speakers automatically accept the repair (Hosoda, 2000; Kurhila, 2003; Park, 2007). On the other hand, in this peer interaction data among L2 speakers, the speaker who responded to the previous speaker's utterance as being other-repair of language code did not automatically accept the repair but, in fact, rejected the repair. As discussed above, unlike L1–L2 conversation, the L2 speaker's rejection of the other-repair displays an orientation to the other interactants as equally (or perhaps less) proficient in the L2 and not as experts of the language of the interaction.

The dispreference for other-repair and other-correction in the present data was discussed not only in the rare occurrence but also in the manner the listener provided assistance. When listeners provided assistance to the speaker, whether the listener is oriented to language code or actions in providing assistance was unclear. Yet, the lack of clear distinction between orientation to language code and orientation to actions was usually irrelevant to the interactants themselves. Regardless of whether the listener's assistance was action-oriented or language-code-oriented, the speaker utilized the listener's assistance to move their actions forward.

The relationship between the occurrence of other-repair and other-correction of language code among participants and the participants' proficiency level in the L2 was another finding which emerged from the detailed scrutiny of this set of data. While learners at a lower proficiency level actively assist each other with formal aspects of the L2 (Donato, 1994; Foster and Ohta, 2005), as explicated in the extracts presented here, learners at a higher level of proficiency rarely collaborate with each other in suggesting or repairing formal aspects of the language. The higher proficiency level learners in these L2-L2 discussion tasks did collaborate with each other, but the collaboration was more action-oriented, and the attempts at collaboration demonstrated the learners' effort to achieve intersubjectivity and shared understanding. There-

fore, the collaboration among the learners was similar to the equivalent found in mundane conversation among L1 speakers.

On the basis of the empirical examination of the present data and the studies reviewed, it would appear reasonable to argue that L2 learners, at some point in their interlanguage development, move from form-focused structural co-construction of utterances to a discursive interactional practice in which listeners do not immediately assist with repair or correction of language code but orient to sustaining talk-in-interaction and accomplishing their social and practical goals.

Notes

[1] Stimulated recall (Gass and Mackey, 2000) has been used as one research methodology for exploring what learners' notice in interaction. However, one tenant of CA methodology is that any analysis should be publicly observable and demonstrable in the talk in interaction. With any kind of recall methodology, interactants may not be able to fully recall what was happening in the interaction on a moment-by-moment basis. Moreover, participants may colour their recall according to their perception of the researcher's agenda or paint their actions in a more favourable light.

[2] The term "action" in CA is used to refer to what interactants do by producing verbal or nonverbal behaviour. In CA, the study of the interactional order of social actions, "words used in talk are not studied as semantic units, but as products or objects which are designed and used in terms of the activities being negotiated in the talk" (Hutchby and Wooffitt, 1998, p. 14).

[3] The authors cited here examined conversations between L1 speakers and L2 speakers and found that although the conversations were mainly action-oriented, the L2 speakers occasionally oriented to their linguistically "novice" status by shifting their orientation to formal linguistic aspects of their talk.

[4] The information in brackets next to each excerpt number is for reference to the transcript from which the excerpt was taken. The codes indicate the university and class in which the data were collected, the group number, the task (heart transplant or elementary school teacher), and the transcript page number. For example, [W1, G8, T2, p. 2] indicates that the extract is from the transcript of W university, Class 1, Group 8, Task 2 (elementary school teacher), on page 2.

[5] Examining self-initiated self-repair in L1 conversations in English, Schegloff (1979) found that successive tries are systematically ordered in the way that each repair makes progress toward solution. Moreover, each try goes back less farther from the repairable than the prior try. In Extract (2), the mechanism of self-initiated self-repair is similar between L1 conversation and L2 conversation. Each try Yuko makes shows progress toward a solution of the problem, and each next try backs up less farther than before. In line 5, she first goes back to "Leon" without "but," then she produces "children" without "Leon."

[6] Previous studies, both in L1 conversation (Goodwin, 1979) and L2 conversation (Carroll, 2004), have demonstrated that when a speaker notices that the addressee is

not gazing at the speaker, the speaker may attempt to secure the gaze of the recipient through phrasal breaks and pauses.

7 In some cases, the speakers' phrasal breaks and pauses were the result of their orientation to interactional constraints such as noise or movement of objects in the environment. Orientation to multimodal activities among group work participants is discussed in another article (Hosoda and Aline, to appear).

8 As one reviewer noted, listeners can decode the message through top-down processing of lexis and contextual information, whereas speakers must deploy their grammatical knowledge. While we agree with this psycholinguistic perspective, the emic approach taken in this article requires visible demonstration of participants' orientations through their talk in interaction.

9 One might consider that the cultural background of the learners could explain some of their reticence to provide assistance on language code. The question of the effects of cultural background on the interaction is in need of further research to explicate how it is that through the interaction the participants themselves demonstrate an orientation to their cultural backgrounds as being significant for them within that interaction. Work in this direction has been furthered by Mori (2003).

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Appendix:
Transcription conventions

[ ]	overlapping talk
=	latched utterance
(0.0)	timed pause (in seconds)
(.)	a short pause
co:lon	extension of the sound or syllable
co::lon	a more prolonged stretch
.	fall in intonation (final)
,	continuing intonation (non-final)
?	rising intonation (final)
¿	a rise stronger than a comma but weaker than a question mark
underline	emphasis
↑	sharp rise
↓	sharp fall
° °	quiet talk
< >	slow talk
> <	fast talk
hh	audible aspirations
.hh	audible inhalation
(hh)	laughter within a word
(( ))	comment by the transcriber
( )	problematic hearing for the transcriber