Corrections as multiparty accomplishment in L2 classroom conversations

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ABSTRACT

Much research on classroom talk has had a dyadic teacher-student bias. This study documents *multiparty* aspects of repair work through analyses of talk in a classroom community. Drawing on 40 h of video-recordings from Swedish L2 lessons in a language immersion classroom, participant contributions were analyzed as those of a *party* (Schegloff, 1995), rather than merely as individual contributions. The detailed analyses of correction trajectories reveal that both the teacher and the students produced *exposed* corrections (Jefferson, 1987) as well as *embedded* corrections (corrective recasts). The analyses illuminate the teacher's sustained efforts in tailoring classroom talk to the classroom community's displayed understanding and varying skills, something that involved a continuous balancing act between form-accuracy and conversational progressivity. Moreover, the analyses document student agency (e.g. vicarious responses, chorus responses and peer corrections). In moving away from a dyadic bias, this study of repair work contributes to situated analyses of classroom corrections.

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Introduction

This paper concerns correction sequences, studied as a type of interactional accomplishment (Hauser, 2005; Jefferson, 1974; Koole & Elbers, 2014). It covers both teachers' *and* students' L2 corrections in the teaching-learning activities in a Swedish L2 classroom for refugee and migrant students. The focus is on correction *trajectories* and on the multiparty nature of classroom repair work.

Research on teachers' corrections in L2 classrooms

Traditionally, work on teachers' embedded corrections – so called *recasts* – in L2 classroom contexts has been a research area, primarily inhabited by scholars within the field of second language acquisition (SLA). Various studies, oriented to sociocultural or SLA-theorizing, have documented corrective practices and how they can be seen as important devices in the teaching and learning of a new language – or at least ways in which recasts are linked to language acquisition affordances (Ellis & Sheen, 2006; Hall, 2007; Rolin-Ianziti, 2010). Some of that work has also dealt with the effectiveness of various types of corrections (Ellis, Loewen, & Erlam, 2006; Lee, 2013; Sheen, 2006).

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During the last ten years, research on L2 classroom talk has broadened to include perspectives from conversation analysis (CA) focusing on ways in which other-corrections can be seen as interactional events. Several such studies have documented classroom corrections in great sequential detail (e.g. Hauser, 2005; Hosoda, 2006; Kasper, 2004; Mondada & Pekarek Doehler, 2004). This means that emic or participant-oriented perspectives (Kasper, 2004; Markee & Kasper, 2004) have been analyzed, rather than "effects" or experimental outcomes. Within CA-oriented work, recasts have been re-specified as *corrective recasts* (Hauser, 2005) or corrective feedback (Lee, 2013), and the findings have documented and validated the *interactional* nature of corrections and other repair work in various institutional L2-contexts, such as language immersion programs.

As shown in the work of Hauser (2005), there is ample evidence that there are methodological and theoretical problems, related to coding schemes and quantifications of classroom corrections, where corrections and responses to corrections are analyzed in isolation, outside of their sequential location. A fundamental methodological issue that makes coding problematic in naturalistic classroom talk is the inherent ambiguity of much repair work. Speakers may avoid corrections in order not to jeopardize the progression of conversations (Bolden, 2011; Jefferson, 1987; Svennevig, 2004), and much repair work is ambiguous in that it might be oriented to form or meaning or both (Hauser, 2005).

Sequential focus in conversation analysis

In work, inspired by conversation analysis, correction sequences are studied as a type of interactional accomplishment (Hauser, 2005; Jefferson, 1974; Koole & Elbers, 2014). Within a prototypical repair- or correction trajectory, a prototypical correction of the target "error" (*trouble source*; Jefferson, 1974), recurrently assumes a three-part-format (error–correction–acceptance/non-acceptance). In a later paper, Gail Jefferson (1987) extended her discussion on repair work, illuminating various ways in which speakers may highlight trouble in prior talk. Explicit corrections, such as 'you said' or 'but you mean x, don't you', that is, *exposed corrections* are contrasted with constructions that involve *embedded* or more implicit corrections (Jefferson, 1987).

As discussed in a seminal paper on repair work, other-corrections tend to be dispreferred activities in everyday conversations (Schegloff, Jefferson, & Sacks, 1977). There would be reason to expect a greater relative frequency of corrections in L2 classroom conversations, as corrections could be seen as one of the institutional tasks of the school and more precisely of the L2 teacher. However, exposed other-corrections are relatively rare even in classroom contexts (Lee, 2013; Llinares & Lyster, 2014; Rolin-Ianziti, 2010).

Dyadic bias in work on classroom corrections

Although, there is now a growing body of research on corrective practices, detailed sequential analyses are still relatively sparse, particularly in the field of *multiparty* corrections. Work on correction sequences has relevance for theorizing on learning. In a recent paper by Koole and Elbers (2014), it has been shown how teachers' responses to student displays of non-understanding can be seen as exquisite tools for analyzing teachers' *scaffoldings of* the participants' responses through for instance, prompts or follow-up questions. Scaffolding, as discussed by Wood, Bruner, & Ross (1976), refers to activities that direct someone's attention to specific aspects of a task or that simplify a task for someone in a way that is tailored to his or her skills. Drawing on their analyses of teachers' displayed understanding of students' hearing/non-hearing and understanding/non-understanding, Koole and Elbers (2014) have therefore advocated a move from analyses of dyadic to multiparty interactions in classroom talk.

But in research on classroom conversations, the focus on second language (L2) repair work has often been on teacher–student dyads (Ellis & Sheen, 2006; Rolin-Ianziti, 2010) rather than on peer-interaction. As a consequence of such a dyadic bias, students' participation in classroom corrections has at large been neglected. Moreover, experimental designs in work on second language acquisition tend to build more or less exclusively on analyses of individual students, rather than on the complexity of real life classroom talk where teaching tends to take place in multiparty contexts.

Yet, work on Spanish L2 students' collaborative task work, DiCamilla and Anton (1997) has documented the role of peer scaffolding in classroom interaction, and Dorner and Layton (2014) have analyzed scaffolding of language in a multilingual classroom contexts. As has been shown among primary school students (Cekaite & Aronsson, 2004; Rydland & Aukrust, 2005), the students' pedagogical initiatives may constitute important aspects of routine L2 teaching/learning practices. Moreover, there are documentations of young migrant students' other-corrections in the form of teasing in schoolyard play contexts (Evaldsson & Cekaite, 2010).

But as yet, there has not appeared much research concerning what is here called *peer corrections*, that is, students' corrections of their peers during L2 classroom conversations and not much work that combines fine-grained sequential analyses with analyses of the multiparty design of classroom conversations.

Research question

The primary overall aim of this study is to document and analyze other-corrections, extending work on the sequential nature of corrections through detailed analyses of both teacher and students' contributions. More specifically, the analyses