

From noticing to initiating correction: Students' epistemic displays in instructional interaction



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Abstract

By drawing on conversation analysis and the analysis of embodiment-in-interaction, this article describes students' locally situated, interactional practices of demonstrating knowledge in teacher-led instructional interaction in the English lessons of a Content-and-Language-Integrated-Learning (CLIL) class. It focuses on students' correction initiations that are preceded by embodied noticings – interactional events that are performed through different kinds of visibly intensified embodied and material practices. The analysis demonstrates how the embodied noticings serve as a preamble to the ensuing correction initiation and help project participant's stance toward the noticed feature. The article also analyzes the temporal and sequential position where the correction initiations are incorporated into the sequential unfolding of the ongoing classroom activity as well as the design and function of the initiations. The analysis highlights that the ways in which participants negotiate their epistemic positions in the asymmetrical hierarchy of classroom interaction are result of a conglomeration of divergent interactional phenomena. For these reasons, the article provides both novel ways of examining the role of embodiment in doing noticings and adds to the emerging body of research on participants' displays of knowledge in classroom interaction, with a focus on the kind of correction work students can perform in teacher-led instructional interaction.

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1. Introduction

In classroom interaction it is generally the teacher who has the institutionally inscribed *epistemic status* and *rights* (Heritage, 2012a; Stivers et al., 2011) toward content knowledge in the subject taught. In this role, it is also primarily the teacher's task to point out errors in students' answers and set out to correct them (Macbeth, 2004:722–723), as well as in their own work if such occasions arise. It is a rare event when students publically contest or question teachers' epistemic authority by displaying their own *epistemic stance* (Heritage, 2012a). But when they do display it, their actions take forms that attend to both teachers' and peers' access and primary rights to a piece of information, while the speaker's epistemic position is still made distinct.

This article focuses on such instances of student displays of epistemic positioning during teacher-led instructional interaction in a Content-and-Language-Integrated-Learning (CLIL) English language classroom. The analysis centers on student initiated corrections, which are preceded by “embodied noticings” – particular types of interactional events that are performed through different kinds of visibly intensified embodied and material practices. It will show that the embodied

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noticings serve as a kind of preamble to the ensuing correction initiation (henceforth CI), thereby carrying interactional meaning potential. The trouble sources in the CIs are related to different aspects in a teacher's written inscriptions on exercise sheets projected onto a screen. Consequently, the inscriptions are visible for all participants and can become the topic of talk only post scriptum, i.e., can be reconfigured as relevant and crucial items for further talk. The way students initiate corrections on the inscriptions presents an interesting window for seeing how they display their orientation to the participants' institutionally inscribed asymmetrical epistemic rights and statuses, and how they negotiate their interactional positions toward that asymmetry there-and-then.

By drawing on conversation analysis (CA) and the analysis of embodiment-in-interaction, this article provides novel insights into students' practices of initiating and doing repair and correction in classroom interaction and how these relate to issues of knowledge and understanding; a highly under-represented area within classroom research on repair and correction that has mainly focused on teachers' practices (e.g., [McHoul, 1990](#); [Jung, 1999](#); [Macbeth, 2004](#); [Seedhouse, 2004](#)). It does this by describing the interactional practices students perform in displaying their epistemic positions. It, first of all, depicts how sudden gaze shifts between the screen and the students' learning materials, and vice versa, followed by an intense gaze to screen are deployed in performing the embodied noticings. Particular types of facial expressions (e.g., frowning and lip biting) are also shown to be used in ways that serve to project participant's stance toward the noticed feature and its trouble relevance. Secondly, it maps the temporal and sequential position in which the embodied noticing followed by the CI is incorporated into the sequential unfolding of the ongoing classroom activity. By doing this, the analysis demonstrates students' orientation to a preference for teachers' self-correction, as the CIs are performed in such a sequential position that leaves space for the teacher to self-correct potential errors. On the other hand, it brings forth their orientation to another *temporal constraint* ([Haddington, 2010](#)) in performing the CIs: students initiate correction before the trouble source has disappeared from the screen and the activity has proceeded too far. Alongside this, the turn design and function of the CIs are discussed in relation to how participants skillfully both uphold and contest the institutionally inscribed asymmetrical epistemic hierarchy by negotiating their epistemic positions. The article will thus highlight how the displaying of participants' epistemic positions is a result of a conglomeration of interactional phenomena: the design and function of the CI as well as the temporal and sequential position of its production.

The findings will shed light on the role of embodiment in 'doing noticings', in general, and on the forms and discourse functions of student initiated corrections in foreign language (FL) classroom interaction, in particular. The contribution of the article is thus two-fold. First, it pays close attention to students' embodied and material actions that signal that they have noticed something in the *domain of scrutiny* ([Goodwin, 2000](#)), thereby describing a social action – noticings – which, until recently, has received little explicit attention in CA studies (although see [Goodwin and Goodwin, 2012](#); [Keisanen, 2012](#)). In doing this, it provides novel ways of tracing and describing how embodied and material resources serve to preface emergent social actions (see e.g., [Kidwell, 2009](#); [Kääntä, 2010](#)) and the kinds of stances participants may construct toward those actions (e.g., [Haddington, 2006](#); [Kulomaa et al., 2013](#)). The article will thus contribute to our understanding of how participants' embodied conduct that involves the manifestation of cognitive events affects how interaction is sequentially organized ([Heritage, 2005](#); cf. [Drew, 2005](#)). The study thus both draws on as well as adds to previous research on embodiment-in-interaction (e.g., [Streeck et al., 2011](#); [Stivers and Sidnell, 2005](#); [Kääntä, 2010](#)). Second, as the analysis centers on student initiated corrections in instructional interaction, the article depicts how students display what they know and how this knowing is made visible/hearable in and through interaction in front of the whole class. By demonstrating their knowledge, students not only make their learning vulnerable for the evaluation of others, particularly that of the teacher, but they also display their interactional practices in doing so in ways that portray their orientation to both teachers' and peers' rights and access to knowledge. In this respect, the article both builds on and adds to the growing body of research on social epistemics in CA with specific interest in students' displays of knowledge and understanding in classroom interaction (e.g., [Heritage, 2012a, 2012b](#); [Stivers et al., 2011](#); [Koole, 2010, 2012](#); [Macbeth, 2004, 2011](#); [Sert, 2011](#); [Jakonen and Morton, 2013](#)).

2. Noticings and the role of embodiment in their realization

Noticing is a form of social action that is characteristically occasioned by the contingencies of situated, everyday interaction. In 'doing a noticing', interactants bring into attention a particular aspect of the interactional, physical environment by way of which they flag it as relevant, for a reason or another, for the ongoing interaction ([Schegloff, 2007:219](#)). More importantly, a noticing "works by mobilizing attention on the features which it formulates or registers, but it treats *them* as its source, while projecting the relevance of some further action in response to the act of noticing" ([Schegloff, 2007:219](#), emphasis in original). In this light, it can be seen to promote a particular kind of "source/outcome relationship" that can, but do not have to, "invoke trouble-relevance" ([Schegloff, 2007:219](#)). Whichever the case is, noticings are performed in ways that make explicit the feature to which co-participants' attention is to be directed, for instance, by using deictic expressions and descriptions of the noticed feature ([Goodwin and Goodwin, 2012](#)). This is done

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