Engaging in Another Person’s Telling as a Recipient in L2 Japanese: Development of Interactional Competence During One-Year Study Abroad

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Introduction

This study investigates the development of interactional competence through the analysis of conversational data collected in a longitudinal design. It examines, using conversation analysis (CA), how a learner of Japanese as a second language (L2) engages in conversation as a story recipient, and identifies changes that suggest the learner’s development. Despite recent rapid growth in the research on development of interactional competence over time (e.g., Brouwer & Wagner, 2004; Cekaite, 2007; Hellermann, 2006, 2007, 2008; Ishida, 2009; Mondada & Pekarek Doehler, 2004; Ngyuen, 2003; Pallotti, 2001; Wootton, 1997; Young & Miller, 2004), little research has been conducted on the competence of L2 learners as story recipients and their competence in using assessments (e.g., Goodwin & Goodwin, 1987) as a way to demonstrate understanding of co-participants’ talk and a particular stance toward it (exceptions include Ishida, 2006; Ohta, 2001). In this chapter, I aim to demonstrate (a) that CA enables the analyses of these heretofore unexplored aspects of L2 learners’ interactional competence, and (b) that comparison of different excerpts taken on different occasions in a span of seven months suggests the development of interactional competence as part of language socialization (Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986).
Assessment activities and story recipients' interactional competence

As Charles Goodwin (1986a) argues, responding to storytelling as a recipient is a complex task because one has to comprehend the current speaker’s talk and give appropriate responses by anticipating the trajectory of the story. When the primary speaker’s telling is still in progress, other participants present there (the audience) are free to self-select to respond to the talk-in-progress in a variety of ways. When a person in the audience self-selects to respond, the person is identifying himself or herself as an active recipient of the telling. Recipients can send back-channels (Yngve, 1970) such as yeah, uh-huh, and mm hm, to signal that they are following the telling or to acknowledge certain parts of the telling. In addition to using these minimal response tokens as continuers (Gardner, 1998; C. Goodwin, 1986b; Schegloff, 1982), recipients can show their involvement in an ongoing telling through various alternative actions: asking a question about a particular point of the telling; telling a comparable story to align with the teller; and providing assessments (Pomerantz, 1984a), which are evaluative comments that “display an analysis of the particulars of what is being talked about” (C. Goodwin, 1986b, p. 210). Participants who are in the audience thus demonstrate their competence in actively engaging in the talk-in-progress in a variety of ways, and such competence is to be regarded as an important part of one’s interactional competence (Hall, 1995; He & Young, 1998; Young, 1999).

While a teller can make a summary assessment (C. Goodwin, 1986b, p. 305) as a “prototypical story-ending device” (Jefferson, 1978, p. 244), recipients can also display their understanding of the telling by providing assessments. A recipient can make assessment actions not only through assessment segments such as that’s great and taihen desu ne [that sounds hard], but also through nonverbal actions (e.g., nods and headshakes, M. H. Goodwin, 1980) and non-segmental features of verbal actions (e.g., hee [wow], Mori, 2006). By using these resources, recipients can indicate their understanding that a telling comes to the end of a unit of telling (cf. Goodwin & Goodwin, 1987) and project withdrawal from recipientship before shifting topics (cf. C. Goodwin, 1986a; Jefferson, 1993), as well as display their interpretation of what is talked about.

The teller, in turn, may show an orientation to the recipient’s assessment by agreeing or disagreeing with their displayed understanding of a possible telling closure. An assessment activity, which consists of at least one pair of an assessment and a response orienting to it, transforms a sequence of telling into an arena in which co-participants in a conversation negotiate their understandings of the telling. In such activities, recipients are not passive listeners but become active participants who co-construct the meaning of the telling.
Studies of recipient responses in Japanese

This aspect of competence that recipients demonstrate in co-constructing the meanings of others’ tellings has not been investigated much in studies of recipient responses in Japanese. However, there is a small number of CA studies (e.g., Iwasaki, 1997; Mori, 2006; Saft, 2007) that have uncovered how speakers of Japanese use various resources to accomplish certain practices (cf. Mori, 1999) as recipients of tellings. Iwasaki (1997), for example, found that first language (L1) speakers of Japanese negotiate a closure of a telling sequence and the subsequent floor taking by exchanging a series of backchannels (e.g., un [yeah]), which constitute the loop sequence. Saft (2007) also found interactional functions of aizuchi, or backchannels. Through the study of multi-party televised discussions, he found that aizuchi are used by a moderator to self-select recipientship and, by doing so, to take a full turn as one member of a dyadic discussion and allocate turns for other members of the discussion. The use of a minimal response token as shift-implicature (cf. Jefferson, 1993) was also found in Mori’s (2006) study of the non-lexical reactive token hee.

Although these CA studies have uncovered the procedural consequences of participants’ actions, research on listeners’ responses in Japanese has predominantly investigated competences in terms of frequencies of certain types of responses. For example, Clancy, Thompson, Suzuki, and Tao (1996) identified several types of non-turn-claiming reactive tokens (e.g., un [yeah], aa [oh]) used by non-primary speakers. By counting frequencies, they compared characteristics of the use of those tokens in three languages: Japanese, Chinese, and English. They found that L1 speakers of Japanese use non-turn-taking backchanneling tokens more frequently than L1 speakers of other languages. This seems to be a robust finding, supported by other studies such as LoCastro (1987), Maynard (1986), Tanaka (1999), and Yamada (1992). L1 Japanese speakers display this tendency when conversing also in L2 English (Maynard, 1990, 1997).

Using the same research approach, previous L2 studies of listener responses have compared L1 speakers’ and L2 learners’ data to find that more advanced learners and learners who stayed in the target community for an extended period of time approximate L1 speakers in terms of how frequently they use certain types of responses (e.g., Chinen, 2000; Fujii, 2001; Horiguchi, 1990, 1997; Watanabe, 1993). In these L2 studies, development is examined based on the average number of tokens within a group and compared cross-sectionally across groups. Because the precise timing with which response tokens are used and how they function in the development of on-going talk are not examined, such a simplistic counting of forms has the danger of misinterpreting the overuse of a particular type of response (e.g., mm-hm at a possible completion of a storytelling) as a sign of development (cf. Schegloff,
1993). In addition, by averaging out all the learners in one group for the sake of looking for a trend, researchers who use cross-sectional designs dismiss different actions that each individual learner takes on different occasions of talk.

Unlike these cross-sectional quantitative studies, Ohta (2001) documented the development of four learners of Japanese individually in a first-year foreign language classroom using a longitudinal design. She examined whatever responses the focal learners produced, including “no response,” in the IRF (Initiation-Response-Follow up) sequence (e.g., a question, an answer, and an assessment). The development she found is not an approximation to native speakers in terms of frequency, but a change in the variety of responses the learners were able to produce. The learners, who did not produce any response at first, began to use short acknowledgment tokens such as hai [yes] and un [yeah], and then the acknowledgment expression aa soo desu ka [oh, I see]. In the next stage, learners were able to make not only acknowledgments but also aligning responses such as soo desu ne [that IS right indeed] and assessments such as tanoshisoo desu ne [that sounds fun]. Drawing on the theory of situated learning that emphasizes the significance of legitimate peripheral participation (Lave & Wenger, 1991), Ohta suggests that teachers socialized their students to become “good listeners” with their frequent use of acknowledging and aligning responses in the third turn of the IRF sequence. Although her study documented the incipient stage of providing listener responses, it did not provide analyses of such matters as how assessments and other kinds of responses are oriented to in a subsequent turn and how they affect the subsequent development or closure of a topical telling. This could suggest a limitation not of the study itself but of the first-year learners’ interactional competence at this level, in which they develop their conversations simply by repeating the IRF sequence and not yet by expanding on the follow-up turn to develop further topical talks.

Theoretical frameworks for investigating L2 learning

Firth and Wagner’s (1997) reconceptualization of SLA (second language acquisition), drawing on the CA view of language and interaction, aroused various reactions including heated refutation (e.g., Long, 1997) and problematization of some issues (e.g., Kasper, 1997). The fundamental problem that both Long and Kasper pointed out was the lack of theorization on how “acquisition,” not “use,” can be investigated within such a framework. Even some researchers who use CA in their L2 studies (e.g., He, 2004) argued against the possibility of using CA for acquisitional research. However, the fertility of using CA for developmental approaches such as language socialization (Schieffelin
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& Ochs, 1986) and for work based on the sociocultural theory of learning (Lantolf, 1994), has been suggested, for example, by Kasper (1997) and Mori (2007) and empirically explored by a number of researchers (e.g., Mondada & Pekarek Doehler, 2004; Nguyen, 2003). Recently, Kasper (2009) has argued that CA’s view of language and interaction can furnish a theory of learning without reliance on other learning theories, which is also the approach taken in the present chapter.

Study

The present study investigates the development of interactional competence that Sarah,¹ an L1 speaker of English and intermediate learner of Japanese, demonstrated as a recipient of topical tellings during nine months of her study-abroad period (the academic year between September, 2005 and May, 2006). The data for this study consist of five 20–minute conversations in which Sarah participated with her host mother, Honma-san,² once a month during her stay in Japan (T1, T2, T3, T5, T7). Although Sarah made a total of seven video-recordings (chronologically identified as T1 through T7) for my larger study, I exclude two of the conversations she had with her Japanese fiancé (T4, T6) from the present study.

The setting of the conversations that Sarah recorded with Honma-san was different from her usual practice, in which they talked while watching television (as Sarah reports in the post-study-abroad interview). Sarah wrote in a post-conversation report after T1, “I usually don’t talk to my host mother for 20 minutes straight,” while sitting on a couch in the living room of Honma-san’s house only for the purpose of this recording. In this regard, the conversations recorded for this study provided Sarah relatively new situations in which she had to deal with sustaining a conversation by having something to talk about for “20 minutes straight.” While I make use of these five recordings for vertical comparison (Zimmerman, 1999), that is, for the purpose of investigating development, the decision to collect comparable units of talk-in-interaction, in this case “conversations for the sake of recording,” is consistent with CA’s approach to collecting comparable sets of occasioned talk-in-interaction (e.g., telephone calls in Schegloff, 1979, 2002; pharmacy consultations in Nguyen, 2003).

The data analyzed here are a collection of instances in which Honma-san discontinued her ongoing topical telling and the main speaker changed from herself to Sarah. The collection also includes those instances in which Honma-san self-selects in the next turn after a lapse (Sacks, Schegloff, & Jefferson, 1974, p. 714).³ The term “topical telling” is used to describe a topically coherent unit of telling rather than a mere presentation of information or description that extends
over several turns (cf. *description* sequences, M. H. Goodwin, 1980; *informing* sequences, Mori, 1999). Although the term “telling” derives from a speaker’s telling of a story (C. Goodwin, 1986b), a topical telling is not necessarily a story but can be a topically coherent unit of talk provided in response to a question.

**Analyses of Sarah’s actions at telling closure**

Table 1 summarizes Sarah’s (SM, in the table and in the transcripts) actions at the closure of Honma-san’s (HM) topical tellings. The second column from the left describes Sarah’s actions that followed the end of Honma-san’s telling sequences. These actions are categorized into two main types: (a) telling-closing actions, which are minimally responded to by Honma-san and consequently lead to a topic closure, and (b) telling-continuing actions, which are still on Honma-san’s topical telling but after which Honma-san ceases to be the sole provider of the telling. Samples of these action types will now be discussed according to the order of rows in the table from top to bottom.

**Table 1. Number of Sarah’s actions taken at the closure of Honma-san’s topical telling**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SM’s action at the closing of HM’s topical telling</th>
<th>T1</th>
<th>T2</th>
<th>T3</th>
<th>T5</th>
<th>T7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Telling-closing actions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>minimal response</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Ex 1)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>minimal agreement to HM’s assessment/commentary</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Ex 2)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>assessment/commentary</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Ex 3)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telling-continuing actions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>contrastive telling</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Ex 4)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>second story</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Ex 5)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>commentary</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Ex 6)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note:* SM=Sarah; HM=Honma-san; T=Time; Ex=Excerpt; xx=Sarah did not report date

**Telling-closing actions**

In this section, I will examine three types of Sarah’s recipient actions using CA. **Minimal response token.** Through the use of minimal response tokens such as *un* [yeah] and *hee* [wow], Sarah displayed her understanding of the content of Honma-san’s telling and her understanding that a unit of the telling is possibly completed. Excerpt 1 illustrates the procedural consequences of Sarah’s use of minimal tokens (see the appendix for abbreviations used in the transcripts).
Excerpt 1, Activities of the day (T1 1'15", 10/31/05)

At the beginning of the recording, Honma-san (HM) asked Sarah (SM) to start talking, and Sarah asked her a question, “Kyoo wa nani shita no? [What did you do today?].” Honma-san began talking about a lecture on raising children which she attended in the morning.

1  HM  yarinasa:i tte iwanaidemo  (0.2)
    you do it QT even not saying

2  ii  n ja nai no? tte yuu
   good N Cop Neg FP QT that
   N

3  [ohanashi kana:, tto watashi wa omo]tta.
   talk I guess QT I Top thought
   N   N
   “I thought that the talk sort of had a message
    saying that, even if you don’t say ‘Study!’
    all the time, it’s still okay.”

4  SM  [huu :: :: :: :: :: :: n,] ((nodding))5
    ah
    “Ah.”

5  (0.5) ((SM moves her hand toward her eye))

6  SM  un.=
    yeah
    N
    “Yeah.”

7  HM  =[un.6
    N  N
Excerpt 1, Activities of the day (T1 1'15",4 10/31/05)

At the beginning of the recording, Honma-san (HM) asked Sarah (SM) to start talking, and Sarah asked her a question, “Kyoo wa nani shita no?” [What did you do today?]. Honma-san began talking about a lecture on raising children which she attended in the morning.

1   HM  yarinasa:i tte iwanaidemo  (0.2)  
2        ii   n  ja  nai no? tte yuu  
3       [ohanashi kana:, tto watashi wa omo
tta].  
5        (0.5) ((SM moves her hand toward her eye))
6   SM  un.  
7        [ ]
8   SM  un.
9        (0.5) ((HM looks away from SM))
10  SM  hee[: ((still scratching her eye))]
11 HM  [sore kara  
that from  
“After that,”

(Transcript of the following 21 seconds omitted, in which HM talks about a visitor and a violin lesson.)

12 HM  soshite sara mo kaetteki[ta. 
then  Sarah also came back

“Then, you came home too.”

13 SM  [hai. (.)
yes

14 ehh  hah  hah  [hh]

“Yes.”

15 HM  [un.]

16 (0.9) ((HM looks away from SM))
This excerpt is comprised of two parts: the first part is on a lecture that Honma-san attended in the morning and the second part (from line 11) on other things that she did during the rest of the day. Sarah uses a response token *hee* [wow] at the end of both parts (lines 10, 19), not as an immediate response upon hearing news but as a resource for projecting withdrawal from recipientship (cf. Mori, 2006). At first, Sarah claims understanding of the content of the lecture (lines 1–3) by saying *huun* [ah] and nodding throughout (line 4). This is an initial response to the immediate informing. However, when Honma-san concludes the content of the lecture by saying *tto watashi wa omotta* [that’s what I thought] in past tense (-ta),7 Sarah begins withdrawing from recipientship by preparing to scratch her eye and saying *un* [yeah] in response. Honma-san aligns herself with Sarah with a corresponding *un* [yeah] and off-gaze. Such an exchange of minimal response tokens between co-participants at a possible closure of a telling sequence constitutes a *loop sequence* (Iwasaki, 1997) in which they negotiate who will take the next turn. Sarah says *hee*; [wow] to display her understanding that a unit of telling is now completed while claiming her interest in the telling at the same time (cf. Mori, 2006).8 This understanding is shared with Honma-san who at about the same moment begins a new unit of telling in line
11. While closure of a unit of the telling is indicated already by the loop in lines 6 and 7 before Sarah’s utterance of *hee* in line 10, her utterance of *hee* in line 19 does not follow such a loop. Instead her second *hee* follows the concluding remark that Honma-san made. In this sequential position, Sarah uses *hee* as a “shift implicature” (Jefferson, 1993, p. 18), and Honma-san aligns with it by saying *un* in line 20 before asking a return question to Sarah (line 21).

As illustrated in Excerpt 1, Sarah used response tokens such as *un* and *hee* at possible completion points of Honma-san’s telling. When Honma-san acknowledged these responses, the pair of utterances constituted a loop sequence, and indicated that the next turn is open to both participants. Although there were some instances in which Sarah took the next turn after the loop, it was typical that Honma-san took the floor to continue her telling on a related topic (e.g., line 11), to change topics, or to assign Sarah the next turn (e.g., line 21).

**Minimal agreement to Honma-san’s assessment.** The second type of actions that Sarah took at the closing of Honma-san’s topical telling (the second row in Table 1) is an agreement to Honma-san’s assessment, as illustrated in Excerpt 2.

**Excerpt 2, School trips at private high schools (T2 2’34,” 11/28/05)**

On the topic of school trips, Honma-san talked about the destination of a school trip that she went on as a student at a public high school. Then, she contrasted it with that of private high schools, which had higher budgets.

1 HM motto ii tokoro ni itte ne?:
   more good place to going FP
   “Private schools took their students to better places, and”

2 (0.5)

3 HM watashitachi no jidai no, kookooseetachi we LK era LK high school students
   ((puts hands on chest))
On the topic of destinations of school trips at private high schools, Honma-san provides an assessment (sugoi [amazing], line 8) latching on to Sarah's acknowledgment token s: kka [I see] (line 7). Her use of utterance-final deshoo? [isn't it?] makes an agreement a relevant response in the next turn, and Sarah shows agreement by saying un [yeah] and by repeating the assessment segment. After an agreement is established in this way, Honma-san shifts the topic back to the comparison between private and public schools.
This excerpt suggests how accomplishing intersubjectivity on the meaning of the on-going telling becomes an important step for closing a telling unit. While this excerpt presented an example of an assessment and an agreement to it, a topical telling can also be closed after a commentary and an agreement to it. A commentary is a presentation of an opinion about a matter dealt with in a telling. For example, after Honma-san talked about Tokyo Dome as a possible place to visit for sightseeing by presenting an attractive aspect of the place, she commented on the place as _demo ne: sore dake_ [but that’s all], _hoka ni nani ga aru wake demo nai shi_ [there is nothing else to see, so] (T5, 5’36") and implied that this was the reason why she chose not to visit the place. After Sarah showed agreement by saying _un_ in response to Honma-san’s utterance of _ne:_ [isn’t that right?], the telling unit was closed and Honma-san shifted the topic to another possible sightseeing destination.

**Assessments.** While Sarah’s assessment was provided as an agreement to Honma-san’s assessment in Excerpt 2, there were instances where Sarah voluntarily provided assessments at a possible completion of Honma-san’s telling, as illustrated in Excerpt 3.

**Excerpt 3, Entrance exams for elementary schools (T2, 14’50")**

Honma-san was telling Sarah about Japanese entrance exams. She started talking about her son’s classmates from kindergarten who took entrance exams to enter elementary schools.

1  HM  gojuu-nin  no uchi (0.3) hutari  ka  
    fifty people  LK within  two people or  
    ((pointing to five fingers))

2  sannin  gurai wa (0.5) yoochien  o (0.3)  
    three people about Top  kindergarten  O  
    ((looks at SM))  ((closes hand))  
    “About two or three out of fifty people, for kindergarten,”

3  SM  hee:,  
    ah  
    “Wow.”
Honma-san was telling Sarah about Japanese entrance exams. She started talking about her son’s classmates from kindergarten who took entrance exams to enter elementary schools.

1. HM gojuu-nin no uchi hutari ka
   fifty people within two people or
   (pointing to five fingers)

2. sannin gurai wa yoochien o
   three people about Top kindergarten O
   ((looks at SM)) ((closes hand))

“About two or three out of fifty people, for kindergarten,”

3. SM hee:, ah

4. (0.2)

5. HM a shoogakkoo o:. (. ) nyuugaku shi-
   oh elementary school O enter school do-
   ((moves hand)) ((hands back together))

6. (0.2) juken-[shiteta.
   taking exam-Past
   N
   “Oh, I mean for elementary school, they enter-
   took entrance exams.”

7. SM (((nods))

8. (0.3)

9. SM "n°
   mm
   N
   “Mm.”

10. (0.5)

11. HM "un°
    N N

12. (1.0) ((HM looks away from SM))

13. SM "u:n [taihen°
    yeah hard
    ((tilts head))
    “Ah, that’s a hard task for them.”
"Yeah. It IS hard. That’s right."

"Even there, Japan and America are totally different, aren’t they?"

When Sarah provides the response token *hee*: [ah], expressing some amazement with a rising intonation (line 3), Honma-san does not orient to it and instead continues her telling in line 5. Still within the turn-construction unit (TCU), the token *hee* consequently worked as a repair initiator (Mori, 2006). However, Sarah’s nods and her utterance of *n* [mm] produced after the completion of the TCU (*juken-shiteta* [were taking exams], line 6) are acknowledged by Honma-san (line 11). It is after this loop sequence that Sarah provides the assessment *taihen* [hard] (line 13). Honma-san, who has begun withdrawing from speakership after the loop (line 12), looks at Sarah as soon as Sarah provides the assessment and expresses agreement in line 14. Then, after some turns of exchanging nods, Honma-san makes a comparative commentary in lines 20 and 21, which reflexively indicates that her telling about Japanese entrance exams at an early age and an activity of making assessments about it are over.
In this extract, Sarah demonstrated her competence in providing an assessment voluntarily (line 13) and getting it taken up as a legitimate assessment. However, she did not contribute to further development of the assessment activity after Honma-san displayed her orientation to mutual agreement (line 14). Thus, Sarah’s assessment works as a “resource[s] for closing topics” (Goodwin & Goodwin, 1987, p. 38). Such a closure-implicating function of Sarah’s assessment was also observed in some instances where Honma-san directed her turns to a closure of her telling after hearing Sarah’s assessment (e.g., T2, 13’07”), instead of expressing agreement or disagreement.

As has been shown so far, Sarah indicated her understanding of both the content and the trajectory of Honma-san’s tellings by using minimal response tokens, agreeing to Honma-san’s assessments, and providing assessments. Although there were instances in which Honma-san counteracted Sarah’s telling-closure implicative actions by not orienting to Sarah’s response tokens or assessments (e.g., Excerpt 3, line 3), on other occasions Honma-san aligned with Sarah’s actions and closed the unit of the telling that she was delivering.

**Topic-continuing actions**

While the previous section dealt with Sarah’s recipient actions that consequently led to topic closure, this section shows analyses of her actions that are in direct response to Honma-san’s telling but at the same time initiate a new sequence departing from Honma-san’s telling sequence. Some of these actions follow some actions that we have seen above, namely, minimal response tokens and assessments.

**Contrastive telling.** Excerpt 4 presents a case that contrasts with Excerpt 1, in which Sarah displayed her orientation to the informative aspect of Honma-san’s telling instead of treating Honma-san’s reporting of her past thoughts as something to comment on.

**Excerpt 4, Abominable katakana (T1 12’29,” 10/31/05)**

When asked by Honma-san what she thinks about the Japanese katakana, Sarah did not start answering the question for more than 2 seconds. Then, Honma-san explained what katakana is and talked about her personal experience with regard to the use of katakana in her English classes at school. She said that she cannot identify English words in native speakers’ speech because she has learned English by reading katakana-represented English words.
When asked by Honma-san what she thinks about the Japanese katakana, Sarah did not start answering the question for more than 2 seconds. Then, Honma-san explained what katakana is and talked about her personal experience with regard to the use of katakana in her English classes at school. She said that she cannot identify English words in native speakers' speech because she has learned English by reading katakana-represented English words.

“So katakana is quite a nuisance, I thought.”

"Because of such a set of characters,"

“So, Japanese has...”
((Transcript of the following 10 seconds omitted, in which HM mentions three sets of Japanese characters including katakana, and uses a connective kedo [but] to continue saying “katakana:: (1.7)”))

9 HM jama da na:, (.) to omo(h)otta.
   nuisance Cop FP QT thought
   ((looks at SM, then smiles))
   “it’s a nuisance, I thought.”

10 (0.7) ((SM leans head leftward))

11 SM “aa so[0.°] (head back a little))
   oh so
   “Oh, I see.”

12 HM [u [: n [:
   N ((still smiling))

13 SM [(0.5)dakedo ne[:.
   but FP
   ((head back in a normal position))
   “But, you know”

14 HM [u:n::
   N ((still smiling))

15 (0.6)

16 SM nanka:: (0.7) nihongo wa
   like Japanese Top
   “Like, Japanese is”
Receiving no answer to her question from Sarah for 2 seconds, Honma-san begins talking about her own experience as a “fishing device” (Pomerantz, 1980). When she begins her commentary with the causal connective dakara [therefore] (line 1), several features of the utterance make it clear that this is a concluding remark: It includes an assessment segment (jama [nuisance]), ends with a sentence-final form of the verb omou [I think] in the past tense (omotta) and the final particle no, delivered in a decreasing volume, and is accompanied with a discontinuation of hand gestures.

In reference to earlier analyses of the consequentiality of the loop sequence, the telling sequence might be closed after the exchange of un [yeah] between Sarah and Honma-san (lines 4, 5), and Sarah’s presenting her opinion about katakana in response to Honma-san’s question. However, the loop does not close the telling unit and Honma-san repeats the telling through paraphrases and elaborations. Jefferson’s (1978) analysis of a storytelling is relevant to understand Honma-san’s action. When recipients do not display interest or agreement to the teller’s assessments, the teller continues telling in “search[ing] for recipient talk by reference to the story” (p. 232). Jefferson argues that, on such an occasion, recipients are not in alignment with the teller as story recipients although they are in alignment as recipients of informing. In line 4 of Excerpt 4, Sarah is not aligning herself as a story recipient. However, after Honma-san’s pursuit of a more substantial response (cf. Pomerantz, 1984b), Sarah aligns herself as a story recipient. Sarah first acknowledges Honma-san’s commentary (line 11) and then displays her perspective on katakana, which differs from Honma-san’s. Such a response is similar to the structure of a disagreeing turn that consists of a provisionary agreement, a display of disagreement through a contrastive connective (e.g., demo [but]), and an account for the disagreement marked with a causal connective kara [because of that] (Mori, 1999). That is, Sarah treats Honma-san’s telling as presenting a view contrastive of her own and thus uses Honma-san’s telling as a point of reference for answering the question about katakana (line 13).

This excerpt illustrates how Sarah, who acknowledged Honma-san’s telling merely with a minimal response token at first, later aligned herself to Honma-san by presenting her own view on katakana in a way that contrasts with Honma-san’s view. The analysis of Excerpt 4 suggests the relevance of the context of
the telling for the appropriateness of recipient actions. Honma-san’s telling of her view on katakana began as a fishing device when Sarah did not present her view in response to her question. Having the telling contextualized in this way, an expected response was the presentation of Sarah’s view in reference to Honma-san’s, rather than an acknowledgment. This contrasts with Excerpt 1, in which Honma-san’s telling of her activities of the day was provided in response to Sarah’s request for information. In that sequential context, Sarah’s acknowledgment indicating the informativeness of the telling was an appropriate response.

Second story. Sarah displayed her understanding of the content of Honma-san’s telling and her orientation to it as a point of reference for her own turns by using comparative tellings as well as contrastive tellings, as in Excerpt 5.

**Excerpt 5, Boring school trips (T2 1’14," 11/28/05)**

At 1’01” Honma-san started talking about school trips to Kyoto at junior high schools in Japan. After she mentioned a recent trend of going to Universal Studios in Osaka, she said, “Watashi no toki wa otera bakkari datta [At that time, we did nothing but visit temples].” Sarah said, “hee::, [ah]” in response.

1. HM atsui toki datta kara ne:
   
   hot time was so FP

2. (0.7) boikotto “shita no.”
   
   boycott did FP

   ((looks at SM seriously))

   “Because it was during the hot season, some boycotted.”

3. SM [hh ((starts smiling))]

4. HM [“orinee.” ((acting out))

   get off-Neg

   “'We’re not getting off the bus.’”

5. (0.3)((HM starts smiling))
At 1'01" Honma-san started talking about school trips to Kyoto at junior high schools in Japan. After she mentioned a recent trend of going to Universal Studios in Osaka, she said, "Watashi no toki wa otera bakkari datta." Sarah said, "hee::, ah" in response. "Because it was during the hot season, some boycotted." (0.7) ((HM looks away from SM))

"Some people said that they wouldn’t get off, and"

"We’re not getting off the bus."

"Some people already get off-Neg QT saying ((looks at SM))

"Some people said that they wouldn’t get off, and"

((Transcript of the following 6 seconds omitted, in which HM refers to students who were on a school trip in a cooler season, which HM and SM saw during their trip to Kyoto. She said, “Ii toki ni itta ne [We went in a good season, didn’t we],” and Sarah replied un [yeah].))
Engaging in Another Person’s Telling as a Recipient in L2 Japanese

16 HM watashitachi atsui toki ni itta mon (0.2)
   we       hot season in went FP
   ((looking downward))   ((tilts her head))
17 sugoku.
   very
   “We went during the hot season. It was really hot.”

18 SM [((lowers eyes))]

19 HM [motto kugatsu gurai ni "ittara" atsuk~atta."
   more September about in went-if hot-Past
   ((looks at SM))
   “More... When we went around September, it was so hot.”

20 (0.7) ((SM glances at HM one moment))

21 SM [un:..]
   N   N

22 HM [   ](0.8)
   N   N ((looks downward))

23 SM “watashi:)” (0.6) un. (.) firadelfia
   I       yeah Philadelphia
   ((looks at HM))
24 itta koto aru
   went matter exist
   “I... yeah...went to Philadelphia.”

25 (0.3)

26 HM [un.]
Hearing Honma-san’s telling of students boycotting temple visits on a school trip, Sarah shows her understanding of its content and aligns herself with Honma-san through a smile already from lines 3 through 11. However, before Sarah provides some kind of a verbal response in line 14, Honma-san begins elaborating on the season of her school trip (line 15). It is after Honma-san withdraws from this post-climax telling which elaborates on the season (lines 16–19) that Sarah starts talking about her boring school trip in line 23. Although this story at first appears to be only minimally related to Honma-san’s telling on the point that they both went on a trip, it is constructed as a second story through an “achieved similarity” (Sacks, 1992, p. 253). Sarah first identifies the trip as a compulsory excursion from school that she participated in when she was a junior high school student (chuugakusee, line 27). In addition, her negative assessment of the trip (omoshirokunai [boring], line 33) is in alignment with
Engaging in Another Person’s Telling as a Recipient in L2 Japanese

Honma-san’s telling that implicitly presents her negative evaluation of her school trip: They did nothing but visit temples (*ota* *ra bakkari*) so that some students even boycotted joining the visits. Sarah’s second story reflexively constructs Honma-san’s post-climax elaboration of the weather as a mere appendix. While not orienting to the post-climax telling as a relevant reference for her second story, Sarah nevertheless acknowledges it in line 21 and starts her second story only after Honma-san completes the loop sequence in line 22.

As illustrated in Excerpt 5, Sarah sometimes told second stories as a way to demonstrate her understanding of the point of Honma-san’s telling and show alignment to it.

**Commentary.** Another type of response that Sarah provided at the end of Honma-san’s telling sequence is a commentary, which provides some “talking on the topic” (Jefferson, 1993, p. 18), as in Excerpt 6.

**Excerpt 6, No point in getting angry (T3 14’02,” 1/16/06)**

Sarah talked about the difficulty of dating in a long-distance relationship with her boyfriend who has only three days off in a month. Honma-san provided an assessment, “Kekkoo taihen da ne: [It seems quite tough],” and then began talking about her past experience. She talked about an episode of waiting for her husband-to-be for three hours at a station.

1   HM  *tai*ºhen dat*[ta      yo*,]*  
    hard was FP  
    ((looks at SM)) N ((looks away))

   “*It was tough.*”

2   SM  
    [nn : : ][: : , heh heh hh  
    ((smiling, leaning forward))

3   HM  
    *[ºmoºo:  kaeroo  
    already return-shall  
    ((vertical headshake facing left))

(0.7) ((SM still smiling, gaze on HM))

4   HM  *u*::n:. ((still smiling))  
5   N   N ((looks away from SM))

6   (1.2)((SM back to normal posture))

7   HM  *sonna* datta kara ne:  
   such so FP
Sarah talked about the difficulty of dating in a long-distance relationship with her boyfriend who has only three days off in a month. Honma-san provided an assessment, "Kekko taihen da ne:.

"It seems quite tough," and then began talking about her past experience. She talked about an episode of waiting for her husband-to-be for three hours at a station.

"It was tough."

"I was thinking, 'I'm leaving soon. I'm gonna leave NOW.'"

"I would probably,"
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69

14 (0.6) ((HM looks away from SM))

15 SM aa [shoo ga nai kara(h)[:. o- ]

ah way S nothing because

((facing down leftward))

"'Ah, it couldn’t be helped, so’"

16 HM [“u:n.” [soo soo.] (0.2)
yeah so so

17 o[koritai yo, get angry-want FP

((crossing her arms))((looks at SM))

"Yeah. Right. Sure, I want to get angry.”

18 SM [okora(h)na(h)i hoo ga i(h)i(h) hh hh (.) .h
get angry-Neg way S good

((face further down leftward)) ((head up))

“It’s better not to get angry.”

((Transcript of the following 12 seconds omitted, in which HM says that getting angry would not help, and SM repeats HM’s words. After SM agrees with HM’s reasoning that the delay was not due to oversleeping, HM again says that she cannot get angry because it would not help.))

19 SM ok(h)ori(h)ta kedo(h) ((shaking head))

good

good

good

get angry-want but

“You want to get angry but”
"You want to get angry but"

"you can’t."

"you just can’t. Right. That’s right."

"And, well, for example,“
Although Sarah shows orientation to Honma-san’s summary assessment *taihen* (hard) in line 2, she does not give any verbal response to Honma-san’s telling until Honma-san shows signs of withdrawal from her telling in line 6, where she looks away from Sarah, and in line 9, where she makes a concluding remark reflecting on the reported event as one instance. Sarah does not even acknowledge Honma-san’s conclusion with a minimal response token or a nod before she starts talking about her probable emotional reaction to the situation having been told (line 11). The absence of an acknowledgment seems to suggest Sarah’s avoidance of a loop sequence, which could lead to a collaborative closure of Honma-san’s telling sequence, for the sake of providing her commentary while the telling is not closed. In contrast to Sarah’s assessment found in Excerpt 3 (line 13), which led to a telling-closure soon after Honma-san’s agreeing utterances, Sarah’s commentary found in this excerpt (lines 11–18) initiates an extended sequence of mutual agreement. The sequence contains many *extended overlaps*, repetitions of words and phrases (Goodwin & Goodwin, 1987), and explicit markings of agreement with *soo* [right] by both parties, which all contribute to making this sequence part of an *assessment activity* (Goodwin & Goodwin). Throughout the sequence, Honma-san treats Sarah’s commentary as being in alignment with her own emotional reaction to the described past instance, by the use of *soo* [right] (lines 16, 20, 23) and a final particle *yo* [I’m telling you] (lines 17, 22, 23) and another final particle *no* [it is true that] (lines 22, 23), which all assign herself epistemic authority (Heritage & Raymond, 2005). Although Sarah does not nod or say *un* [yeah] to align herself with Honma-san’s concluding statement (lines 20–23) or her telling-closing *un* (line 25), thus not contributing to the construction of a loop sequence, Honma-san self-selects a turn after a lapse to initiate a new unit of telling that is thematically related to the content of the assessment activity.

In this excerpt, we observed a case in which “the prior speaker-on-topic now comes into alignment as a recipient” (Jefferson, 1993, p. 22) after Sarah’s elaborated commentary. Although the assessment activity that was initiated with the commentary is still on the topic of Honma-san’s telling, the co-participants depart from the sequence in which Honma-san is the main carrier of the topic as a teller, to a new sequence in which Sarah contributes to co-constructing the meaning of the telling.

So far, six types of recipient actions that Sarah took at the end of Honma-san’s telling sequence have been described. Because these excerpts are all taken from Sarah’s earlier conversations (T1–T3: October, 2005–January, 2006), one excerpt from her later conversation (T7: May, 2006) may help discuss a developmental issue. Excerpt 7 presents a case in which Sarah told a second story as a recipient of Honma-san’s telling.
Excerpt 7, Foreigners speaking regional dialects (T7 3’44,” 5/xx/06)

In response to Honma-san’s question about her research paper for her linguistics class, Sarah was talking about her questionnaire study on Japanese people’s view of dialect use. Sarah told Honma-san about the finding that Japanese people like foreigners’ use of their own dialect while they have negative reactions to dialect use by Japanese people from other regions. Then, Honma-san started talking about her reaction to foreigners speaking regional dialects that are less popular.

1  HM  kawaisoo, tte omou.
   pitiable  QT  think
   ((looks at SM))
   “I feel like, ‘Poor thing!’”

2  (.)

3  HM  moshi sochira no hoo de:.
   if    that way LK way in

4  gaikoku no hito ga kichatte:.
   foreign  LK person S  come-and
   “If a foreigner was sent to the area,”

5  (0.2)

6  SM  “hh [hh° ((facing down and smiling))}
Excerpt 7,
Foreigners speaking regional dialects (T7 3'44", 5/xx/06)

In response to Honma-san's question about her research paper for her linguistics class, Sarah was talking about her questionnaire study on Japanese people's view of dialect use. Sarah told Honma-san about the finding that Japanese people like foreigners' use of their own dialect while they have negative reactions to dialect use by Japanese people from other regions. Then, Honma-san started talking about her reaction to foreigners speaking regional dialects that are less popular.

1   HM  kawaisoo, tte omou.
       QT think ((looks at SM))
   "I feel like, "Poor thing!"

2        (.)

3   HM  moshi sochira no hoo de:.
       if LK way in
4        gaikoku no hito  ga kichatte:.
       foreign LK person S come-and
   "If a foreigner was sent to the area,

5        (0.2)

6   SM  ºhh [hhº ((facing down and smiling))
7   HM       [nihongo  o benkyoo shichatta n [da na::,
       Japanese O study did N Cop FP
       N
   "'Ah, he ended up studying that Japanese.'"

8   SM                                        [u::n uh hh hh hh
       ((looks up at HM))

9   (0.5)

10 HM  kawa[isoo ni:, tte [omotchatta.
      pitiable -ly QT think-Past
      N         N
   "Poor thing!" I couldn't help thinking that way."

11 SM       [(uo)            [un:.
      N  N

12   (0.2)

13 SM  sore mo  atta:.  to: gaikokujin ga:.
      that also existed well foreigner S

14   hoogen  shabettetara:.=
      dialect speak-if
   "I found that too. If a foreigner speaks a dialect,"

15 HM  =un:

16   (0.8) ((HM looks down))
In line 1, Honma-san negatively assesses foreigners’ use of less popular regional dialects by using the adjective kawa/soo [pitiable], which expresses her
pity for those foreigners. Receiving no immediate verbal or nonverbal response to this assessment from Sarah, Honma-san elaborates on the telling and uses the assessment word also in line 10. Although she packages her assessment with a modal expression both in lines 1 and 10, the packaging (Pomerantz & Fehr, 1997) slightly differs. While she indicates her assessment as a stable view toward foreigners speaking regional dialects by using the present tense of *omou* [I think that] in line 1, in line 10 she utilizes the modal expression *chau*, which indicates one’s feeling of regret or disappointment over an event or a state of matters, and selects the past-tense form of *tte omou* (i.e., -*ta*). The latter way of packaging weakens the assessment (*kawai*oo) by appending a sense of regrettable feeling that occurred to her and by limiting it to a one time perception rather than an unchanging view. By mitigating her assessment after elaboration, Honma-san seems to be expecting from Sarah an agreement with, or an empathic understanding of, her assessment. However, Sarah does not orient to Honma-san’s assessment actions, either in line 1 or line 10. Despite her apparent indication of agreement through nods and the utterance of *un* in line 11, Sarah’s subsequent telling from line 13 reflexively makes it clear that in line 11 she is not showing affiliation to Honma-san’s assessment *kawai*oo. Rather than showing agreement or disagreement directly toward Honma-san’s negative assessment, Sarah refers to some responses of Japanese people to her survey study by saying *sore mo atta* [I found that too]. This utterance reflexively indicates that her earlier nods and utterance of *un* were expressions of acknowledging Honma-san’s idea of the dialect-speaking foreigner’s language learning background as consistent with the survey result. In contrast to Honma-san’s use of the modal expression *chau* (lines 4, 7), Sarah does not use it in her report of this survey response. Instead of affiliating herself with Honma-san’s negative view on dialect-speaking foreigners, Sarah achieves similarity by presenting a second story.

This excerpt illustrates sophisticated ways in which Sarah and Honma-san negotiated agreement. Sarah’s second story shows alignment rather than agreement, and Honma-san oriented to it as aligning to her own telling while still seeking Sarah’s agreement of empathic understanding of her view.

Through the analysis of seven excerpts, we have observed various ways in which Sarah engaged in Honma-san’s tellings as a recipient at the end of telling sequences. In these CA analyses, no interpretation was given of the development of interactional competence, which is the subject of the next pages.

**Discussion of learning and development**

In this section, issues of learning and development will be addressed by reexamining the excerpts from the point of view of language socialization.
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(Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986), Vygotsky’s theory of psychological development (Vygotsky, 1978; Wertsch, 1979), and the view of language and interaction taken in CA.

First of all, Sarah’s ways of engaging in Honma-san’s telling as a recipient will be reviewed chronologically. As seen in Excerpt 1, after 2 months of her stay in Honma-san’s house (at T1), Sarah showed alignment to Honma-san’s telling as a recipient of informing, by acknowledging the telling with the minimal response tokens un [yeah] and hee [wow] at possible telling completion places, but not as a story recipient. Even when Sarah aligned herself as a story recipient (Excerpt 4), it was only after Honma-san’s recurrent attempts to make her display her view on the matter at hand. However, in these excerpts, Sarah exhibited her interactional competence for appropriately providing minimal response tokens to show her understanding of the trajectory of Honma-san’s telling. In Excerpt 1, she differentially used hee to project the end of Honma-san’s telling as satisfactorily informative, and in Excerpt 4, she acknowledged Honma-san’s view by saying aa soo [ah, I see] before presenting a contrastive view of her own.

What she did not exhibit in her T1 conversation is her competence in aligning herself as a story recipient by making assessments and commentaries and in telling second stories. In her T2 conversation, Sarah began telling second stories to display her understanding of the gist of Honma-san’s telling (Excerpt 5) and also started providing assessments voluntarily (Excerpt 3) as well as agreeing to Honma-san’s summary assessments (Excerpt 2). However, these assessments functioned as telling-closure implicative, without Sarah’s further actions elaborating on the assessment or agreement. This is in contrast with Sarah’s engagement in an assessment activity that was initiated with her recipient commentary (T3, Excerpt 6).

By orienting to Honma-san’s agreement to the commentary, Sarah prevented the commentary from serving as telling-closure implicative and showed her involvement as a story recipient in co-constructing the meaning of Honma-san’s telling. In her T5 and T7 conversations, Sarah continued using these six types of recipient actions.11 What differed at T7 (Excerpt 7) was Sarah’s ability to tightly relate her second story to Honma-san’s telling, by marking the similarity (sore mo atta [I found that too], line 13) immediately, without inserting a loop sequence. Furthermore, in the ninth month of her stay at Honma-san’s house (T7), we observed that Sarah used a second story as a useful resource for aligning herself with Honma-san without making a disagreeing response to Honma-san’s assessment (Excerpt 7).

The question is whether these changes can be regarded as indications of development. Sarah’s non-use of recipient assessments in her T1 conversation and her use of them in the subsequent conversation seemingly appear to indicate development, similar to the first-year learners of Japanese in Ohta’s (1999, 2001) study who first used acknowledgments and then assessments in
the third turn of the IRF sequence. However, the data available to us are limited to these five conversations, and it is possible that Sarah had already been using assessments, commentaries, and second stories along with acknowledgments even before T1. Moreover, the absence of observed assessments may not be a direct indication of incompetence in using assessments. For example, in Excerpt 1, Sarah’s orientation through the use of *hee* [wow] to Honma-san’s telling as containing new information matches her information-seeking question, and in Excerpt 4 her presentation of an opinion in comparison with Honma-san’s is in alignment with Honma-san, who provided her telling as a fishing device. Therefore, the apparent emergence of assessments in Sarah’s recipient actions should not be automatically interpreted as an indication of development.

Nevertheless, within this particular set of interactional practices that Sarah participated in with Honma-san, we were able to observe Sarah’s growing engagement as a recipient in co-constructing the meaning of Honma-san’s telling. My contention is that this is the manifestation of her development as part of language socialization, rather than instantiations of newly acquired skills. In the theory of language socialization, Schieffelin and Ochs (1986) propose that language learning is part of being socialized as a member of a social group, that is, a process of learning ways of interacting with one another, including ways of using language as resources which are particular to a community of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991), while developing interpersonal relationships with other members of the community.

In social interactions, members of a social group are not only learning ways of interacting, but also “socializing each other into their particular world views as they negotiate situated meaning” (Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986, p. 165). In the context of this study, at first Sarah simply accepted Honma-san’s worldviews without contesting them (Excerpt 1, T1; Excerpt 2, T2; except Excerpt 4, T1). In subsequent sessions, she began voluntarily presenting her own views, to which Honma-san agreed (Excerpt 3, T2), and Sarah responded to Honma-san with another agreement (Excerpt 6, T3). At T7, Sarah also dealt with different views on a matter at hand by orienting to commonalities through a second story (Excerpt 7). In Lave and Wenger’s (1991) terms, Sarah was at first on the periphery of the activity of co-constructing the meaning of Honma-san’s tellings, but she became more involved in such an activity by becoming a more central member of this dyadic community of practice.

Once we interpret the observed changes as Sarah’s a centripetal movement from legitimate peripheral to full participation in specific practical activities and in mutually socializing particular world views, we are faced with the problem of what learning mechanisms are involved in the process. A relevant learning theory in this regard is Vygotsky’s theory of psychological development, especially the concepts of zone of proximal development (ZPD).
and scaffolding (e.g., Donato, 1994). The ZPD is “the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers” (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86, italics original). Applying the concept of ZPD to the present data, Sarah’s “actual developmental level” at T1 was to accept Honma-san’s world view by acknowledging her telling at possible completion points with the use of response tokens (un [yeah], hai [yeah]) and news receipts (hee [wow], Excerpt 1; sokka [I see], Excerpt 2; aa soo [oh, really], Excerpt 4). The “level of potential development” in this session is found in her presentation of her views (her view on katakana, Excerpt 4) as scaffolded with Honma-san’s pursuit of her opinion presentation. At T2, the scaffolded assessment (sugoi [amazing], Excerpt 2) “blaze[d] the trail for development to follow” (Dunn & Lantolf, 1998, p. 419), with Sarah later providing assessments voluntarily (taihen [hard], Excerpt 3). In sum, using Vygotsky’s concepts, Sarah’s development, or her centripetal movement, can be considered to have resulted from Honma-san’s provision of scaffolding within Sarah’s ZPD.

Although such interpretation points to the role of a more competent partner’s scaffolding, such scaffolding is just one of the factors contributing to the development of a learner’s competence. From CA’s point of view, scaffolding is a prevalent feature of discursive practices in which co-participants publicly display their understanding of what is going on at the moment of talk-in-interaction. As Cicourel (1974/1999, p. 95) notes, “The interpretive procedures and their reflexive features provide continuous instructions to participants such that members can be said to be programming each other’s actions as the scene unfolds.” Such “interpretive procedures” are the premise of “[t]he acquisition of language rules” (p. 90). In the present data, for example, Sarah’s competence in providing acknowledgments (e.g., hee [wow], Excerpt 1) at a possible completion of a telling is co-constructed and scaffolded by Honma-san’s indication of withdrawal from her telling with a particular formulation of her informing and nodding (lines 3, 17) along with the withdrawal of her eye gaze (lines 9, 16). In another instance, Honma-san’s re-issuing of a possible completion point after elaboration (Excerpt 4) gave Sarah an additional opportunity to present her opinion. In addition to co-constructing Sarah’s competence in making particular actions in these ways, Honma-san’s actions served to inform Sarah of the sequential appropriateness of the action she took. For example, we can interpret Honma-san’s agreement with Sarah’s assessment found in Excerpt 3 (line 14) as confirming to Sarah that she provided the assessment at the right moment. Earlier in the conversation (T2, 13′44,” 13′47”), Sarah had provided assessments (chotto taihen [a little hard]) using the same assessment word (taihen) twice while Honma-san was still in the middle of a TCU, and Honma-san continued her telling without orienting to them. These actions by Honma-san
allowed Sarah to develop her interactional competence in providing assessment at the right moment. These observations suggest the possibility of extending the notion of scaffolding from active pursuits of responses to other features of talk-in-interaction which are not particular to interactions involving L2 learners but also applicable to interactions between native speakers.

Conclusion

In this chapter, CA has been used to investigate an intermediate Japanese learner’s development of interactional competence, particularly focusing on ways of acting as a recipient. In Ohta’s study (1999, 2001), which documented beginning learners’ incipient use of assessments, assessments were confined to the third turn of the IRF sequence, and learners and their interlocutors did not engage in extended assessment activities in which their views on the assessed object could be negotiated. On the other hand, Sarah, who at T1 only oriented to the information status of Honma-san’s tellings, gradually got more actively involved in co-constructing the meaning of Honma-san’s tellings. While I refrain from characterizing the apparent emergence of recipient assessments as an indication of development, I still consider Sarah’s centripetal movement in participating in the activity of negotiating world views as part of her language socialization. While the concept of scaffolding was applied to Honma-san’s pursuit of particular actions, which enabled Sarah to take a more active role as a telling recipient, the concept can be extended to all the discursive practices that make participants’ understanding of what is going on at the moment of interaction publicly visible.

The present study demonstrated “the developmental significance of social interaction” that is highlighted by “[i]ntegrating a CA perspective on interaction with a sociocultural perspective on learning” (Hall, 2004, p. 611). I would argue, in alignment with Kasper (2009), that CA provides us not only the tools for understanding the learner’s language use, but also a perspective on social interaction that is relevant for language learning theories. As a response to Firth and Wagner’s (1997) proposal of a different paradigm of SLA, Kasper (1997) wrote, “if the excellent microanalytic tools of CA were incorporated into a language socialization approach to SLA, we might be able to reconstruct links between L2 discourse and the acquisition of different aspects of communicative competence that have been largely obscure thus far” (p. 311). Since then, CA has matured as a fruitful approach to SLA, and the present study may illustrate how CA can be used to investigate second language learners’ development of interactional competence and the process of learning through talk-in-interaction.
Notes
1 All names presented in this chapter are pseudonyms.
2 When Sarah talked to me, she referred to her host mother using the last name (Honma) and the address suffix (san [Ms.]).
3 Sacks et al. (1974) note that “[d]iscontinuities occur when, at some transition-relevance place, a current speaker has stopped, no speaker starts (or continues), and the ensuring space of non-talk constitutes itself as more than a gap—not a gap, but a lapse” (p. 714).
4 When the precise timing of nods is indicated in the third line of the transcript, “N” is used for one nod.
5 In general, nonverbal actions are noted in the first line along with the Japanese utterance in the transcripts. However, if the space is insufficient or the timing of the nonverbal action is relevant, it is noted in the third line of transcript after the gloss.
6 Henceforth, when the lexical item un [yeah] or its repetition occupies one turn, I will dispense with glosses and the English translation.
7 Japanese is a SOV (subject object verb) language in which the modifying elements are presented before the head of a phrase and in which the conjugated verb form comes in sentence final position.
8 According to Mori (2006), the utterance of “hee by itself appears to express its producer's stance or assessment towards the prior informing, including surprise, disbelief, appreciation and so on, whether such a stance is genuine or not. However, the exact kind of reaction signaled by the producer of this non-lexical token remains ambiguous when compared to other responses” (pp. 1188–1189).
9 Punctuation in the original Japanese transcripts are solely based on prosody and do not suggest any correlation with the meaning-based punctuation used in the corresponding English translation.
10 Katakana is a set of 46 Japanese characters that represent sounds (e.g., アメリカ for A-me-ri-ca).
11 Although Sarah used recipient assessments in T5 and T7, they were followed by Honma-san's continued telling and did not function as telling-closing implicative. Therefore I did not list them in Table 1.

References


Appendix: Abbreviations in gloss translations

Cop  copula
FP   final particle
LK   linking particle
N    nominalizer
Neg  negative morpheme
O    object marker
QT   quotation marker
S    subject marker
Top  topic marker