CANCELLED: L2 teaching in the wild: A closer look at correction and explanation practices in everyday L2 interaction.

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It is commonly agreed that corrections of L2 speakers rarely happen outside of educational contexts (Wagner & Gardner, 2004) and that if they do, they are formatted so as to intervene minimally in the ongoing interaction (Kurhila, 2001; Brouwer, Rasmussen & Wagner, 2004) or emerge as co-constructed practices in which the correctable item, in casu a problematic pronunciation, is isolated and repaired in a side sequence (Brouwer, 2004). Building and expanding on this previous body of work, this paper builds a longitudinal collection of correction and explanation practices in everyday L2 interaction to investigate 1) what occasions them, i.e., how they unfold sequentially; 2) who initiates and maintains them; and 3) if they change over time. The findings have consequences for issues of L2 learners’ changing identities and L2 pedagogical practices of providing feedback.

The data are transcripts of everyday life conversations in L2 Icelandic, recorded weekly by a Canadian learner, Anna, over a period of one year. The recordings are both personal conversations and service encounters. These data have been used in previous research to map out practices for L2 learning in the wild, i.e. in everyday interactions out-of-class, through the lens of conversation analysis (Theodórsdóttir, 2011a, 2011b; Theodórsdóttir & Eskildsen, 2011, forthc.; Eskildsen & Theodórsdóttir, 2015).

Preliminary analyses of examples of correction and explanation practices reveal that, although guided by the expertise of the L2 learner’s co-participants, they rely on the collaboration of the L2 learner herself as displayed by her ongoing actions through which she orients to corrections and explanations. CA methods enable me to analyze those instances in detail for a better understanding of how these teaching-activities are organized and lead to a rethinking in social terms of explicit correction and meta-linguistic feedback (Ellis, Loewen & Erlam, 2006) as well as noticing (Schmidt, 2001): corrections and explanations only work when oriented and agreed to as such by the L2 learner through her responses which in turn function as socially visible displays of noticing. This implies that L2 teaching practitioners might benefit from more awareness of the circumstances that occasion and sustain correction and explanation practices.

Short summary:

This paper discusses everyday interaction as a rich resource for L2 learning. It shows how an Icelandic L2 speaker, through repair practices, asks for help, and how the co-participant provides such help. The main focus is on what happens next; i.e., how the participants turn the situations into moments of L2 teaching in the wild. The results lead to a reconceptualization in social terms of the traditionally cognitivist concepts of correcting, explaining, and noticing.

Keywords: repair, Conversation Analysis, CA-SLA, L2 learning in the wild.