

# Language Learning in Repeated Storytellings: An Analysis of One Learner's Repair Practices

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## ABSTRACT

This paper uses conversation analysis (CA) to trace changes in one learner's repair practices during a repetitive storytelling activity in an intermediate-level ESL classroom. An analysis of the learner's phonological and grammatical repairs is guided by two questions: How are the repair sequences organized, and what changes occur in the sequences over time? By considering the impact of task repetition on a student's linguistic performance, this study highlights CA's analytical potential for examining learning processes during classroom activities on a highly detailed level. The findings contribute to the larger sociocultural reconceptualization of second language acquisition by demonstrating how learning occurs and is made visible during a student's interaction with her teacher and peers.

*Keywords:* conversation analysis, classroom discourse, repair, second language acquisition, CA-for-SLA, repetition, storytelling, language learning

## INTRODUCTION

Language learning has traditionally been characterized as an individual cognitive process, where changes in learner production are evidence that learning has taken place. Although this product-oriented view of learning continues to dominate the field of Second Language Acquisition (SLA), the past few decades have witnessed a growing interest in sociocultural perspectives. Responses to the call for a sociocultural "reconceptualization" of SLA (Firth & Wagner, 1997) are generally characterized by a focus on the local learning environment and interactional context. Among the many researchers working to provide a more holistic understanding of language learning, those from the field of conversation analysis (CA) have developed an analytical approach called CA-for-SLA (coined by Markee & Kasper, 2004).<sup>2</sup> Researchers who

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<sup>2</sup> Wong (2013) argues that CA has already gained a place at the SLA table, so the use of the term "CA-for-SLA" is unnecessary. However, I still find this term useful in distinguishing from others the CA studies that are particularly interested in examining language learning.

adopt this approach work from the understanding that learning is achieved during and as a result of interaction. They maintain that closely analyzing the sequential unfolding of talk-in-interaction can uncover evidence of learning opportunities, processes, and outcomes. From this perspective, learning is no longer just an internal cognitive process, invisible to the analytical eye of researchers. Rather, it is an interactional process that can be identified and analyzed in talk.

This paper contributes to the larger effort to reconceptualize language learning by demonstrating how learning occurs and is made visible during a student's interaction with her teacher and peers. I focus on one ESL learner's talk in the context of a common classroom phenomenon: repetition. Specifically, my objective is to illuminate learning opportunities and processes during a communicative, repetitive classroom speaking activity within a CA framework. While a number of SLA studies have shown the positive impact of task repetition on linguistic performance (i.e., Arevart & Nation, 1991; Bygate, 1996, 2001), to my knowledge, no studies have examined this from a CA perspective. A microanalytic CA approach has the potential to illuminate aspects of language learning during these activities that other SLA studies may overlook. With this goal in mind, I've adopted an analytical method that represents a unique hybrid of existing CA approaches. In the following section, before outlining the prevailing CA approaches and specifying my own, I will briefly summarize the theoretical foundations of CA to clarify its contributions to SLA research.

## **BACKGROUND**

### **The Theoretical Argument for CA-for-SLA**

Second Language Acquisition research has traditionally made a clear distinction between language acquisition and language use. Conversation analysis, which is, at its core, a social endeavor, has yet to be fully accepted as a method for examining acquisition. However, alongside a growing interest in the role of interaction in acquisition, CA has begun to emerge as a promising method to examine how interaction brings about language learning. If we understand learning as a process that occurs not only inside the mind, but also "in the micromoments of social interaction" (Firth & Wagner, 2007, p. 807), then it is worth analyzing this interaction on a highly detailed level.

With its roots in ethnomethodology (Garfinkel, 1967), CA is an emic, participant-relevant approach that examines naturally occurring talk-in-interaction. Rather than impose a priori theories on the data, researchers build interpretations based on participant understandings of talk. Through the system of turn-taking, participants display their understandings of the ongoing talk for their co-participants (Sacks, Schegloff, & Jefferson, 1974). Accepting this basic premise has consequences for how analysts approach the data. Sacks et al. (1974) explain:

[W]hile understandings of other turns' talk are displayed to co-participants, they are available as well to professional analysts, who are thereby afforded a proof criterion (and a search procedure) for the analysis of what a turn's talk is occupied with. (p. 729)

This next-turn "proof procedure" (Sacks et al., 1974, p. 728) allows analysts to understand how speakers make sense of what their co-participant has said. When shared understanding is not achieved, participants generally take steps to amend this through repair practices.

If we apply this procedure to the study of second language learning, then we can conceptualize these participant understandings as learners' "cognitive states" (Seedhouse & Walsh, 2010). Since learners tend to make their cognitive states known to their interlocutors during interaction, they are also making their cognitive states known to the analysts. As learners work toward intersubjectivity, or alignment, in interaction, they display what they know and what they don't know. It is through this work to achieve shared understanding, or "socially shared cognition" (Schegloff, 1991), that learning processes and outcomes are made visible to analysts in their local sequential environments. Therefore, a turn-by-turn analysis of talk-in-interaction can illuminate both the process and product of learning, both of which CA views as objects of analytical inquiry.

## **Tracing Language Learning: Two CA Approaches**

To move beyond merely identifying and describing learning opportunities in interaction and make a case for acquisition, studies must demonstrate that some type of change has occurred. CA studies generally do this by following the development of a learning item in interaction over time. Even though most CA-for-SLA studies follow developmental sequences and operate from the same basic understanding of the relationship between interaction and learning, their analytical foci and methodology are notably varied. There are two general approaches to examining language learning through CA: longitudinal studies that trace the development of interactional competence over time and short-term analyses that follow the evolution of a linguistic item through a single interaction. These two approaches operate on somewhat different definitions of "learning," which has consequences for how data are collected and analyzed.

Longitudinal studies that trace the development of some aspect of a learner's interactional competence are mainly informed by theories of situated learning (Lave & Wenger, 1991) and language socialization (Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986). From this theoretical perspective, learning is understood as a gradual move toward fuller participation within a community of practice. To accomplish and coordinate social actions within a community, a learner must develop and deploy certain interactional practices, which together make up the learner's interactional competence. These CA studies, therefore, trace the development of specific interactional practices by collecting data from one learner across multiple interactional contexts over an extended period of time. Researchers have examined a myriad of context-specific interactional practices, such as story openings (Pekarek Doehler & Berger, 2018), turn-taking (Young, 2003), and repairs (Hellerman, 2009), among others.

While the aforementioned researchers adopt a priori theories of learning to inform their analyses, others view this as a possible threat to the ethnomethodological foundations of CA. Markee and Kunitz (2015) characterize these differing perspectives as the difference between "developmental" and "purist" CA approaches. From the "developmental" perspective, CA is not equipped to address learning entirely on its own, which necessitates the adoption of other theories of learning. Studies from the "purist" perspective, on the other hand, are strictly emic and not informed by external theories. Instead, they are primarily concerned with how participants accomplish socially-distributed cognition within a single interaction. Rather than examine the development of interactional competence, this approach to documenting learning—sometimes termed "microgenetic" based on Vygotskian developmental psychology (Vygotsky,

1978)—is to focus on one interactional episode and closely follow the participants' repeated engagement with a specific linguistic learning item—usually lexicogrammatical or phonological. Van Compernelle (2010), for instance, showed how a student and teacher collaboratively constructed opportunities for learning a grammatical form over the course of a single oral proficiency interview. Seedhouse and Walsh (2010) showed how a student learned the pronunciation of the word “company” through classroom interaction. They found that the learner demonstrated uptake when other-repair was provided by the teacher but not when it was provided by another peer.

It is clear that even within the field of CA, how researchers define and subsequently measure language learning varies. Regardless of the approach, however, they all face a similar challenge: locating practices in the data that can be deemed “similar enough” to trace sequential changes and, with that, make claims about possible development. Some activities in the language classroom, however, are actually designed to lead learners to produce “similar enough” utterances. Repetition—purposeful and incidental—is commonplace in the language classroom. While drills that require students to focus on and repeat linguistic forms do not produce the naturally-occurring language that is at the core of CA, communicative activities that require students to engage in repeated meaningful interactions with different co-participants present an interesting direction for research.

This paper adds to the growing body of CA research on language acquisition by adopting an approach that falls somewhere in between longitudinal and microgenetic. Its purpose is to analyze a designedly repetitive activity in the language classroom. I will follow one learner over the course of a single activity as she interacts with four different co-participants. This study resembles a microgenetic approach due to its short-term nature and its focus on tracing phonological and grammatical learning items; however, it does not follow a learning item as it develops through one interaction, but rather, three to four consecutive interactions. This analysis will contain two parts, each focused on changing repair practices around a different linguistic item. In the first part, I will trace changes in the learner's pronunciation repair sequences around a single word. In the second part, I will follow a more complex repair sequence with both a grammatical and phonological aspect. Because speakers engage in repair to address problems in interaction, repairs during interaction with L2 speakers often mark the site of language learning, making them a suitable window through which to view my data. Specifically, each analysis will be guided by two central questions: How is the repair sequence organized, and what changes occur in this sequence over time?

## **DATA AND METHOD**

The data come from 15 hours of video recordings of an intermediate-level ESL classroom over one semester. An hour-long speaking activity was chosen to be the focus of this analysis. The extracts analyzed here follow the interaction of one student, Maria, during and just before the speaking activity. The students were asked to think of a memorable story of when they were engaged in a hobby—a topic based loosely on the theme of the textbook chapter. The language focus was on using the simple past and past continuous tenses to tell stories. On the previous day, they had read and discussed a teacher-generated example and had been asked to think of their own example for homework. The speaking activity required students to share their stories three times, with three different classmates. Maria's interactions during the planning stage and

the main speaking activity were transcribed and analyzed within a conversation analytic framework. After repeatedly reading the transcripts and viewing the recordings, I identified two recurrent sequences which would become my two analytical foci.

For the first analysis, I identified multiple instances of a specific word that seemed to cause some trouble for Maria. Maria used the word “steep” several times over the course of her interactions with different co-participants, and it often appeared as the trouble source in a repair sequence. Extracts of these repair sequences will be the central focus of this analysis. For the second analysis, I identified a more complex sentence that Maria repeated three times, once to each of her classmates. Each time, her employment of repair practices is markedly different. The sequences surrounding the variations of this sentence, including both phonological and grammatical repairs, will be the focus of the second analysis. Together, these two analyses provide quite different examples of how we can use conversation analysis to understand language learning processes and opportunities.

## ANALYSIS

### Analysis 1: “Steep incline”

This analysis is divided chronologically into four sub-sections: the planning stage where Maria interacts briefly with the teacher and then each of the subsequent rounds of storytelling where she interacts with her peers. During each of these interactions, the learning item, “steep,” is not the main focus of the talk, although it sometimes becomes the focus during the repair sequence. The analysis of each extract will be guided by two central questions: How is the repair sequence organized? And how does this sequence compare to preceding sequences?

#### *The Planning Stage*

Before the main speaking activity, the students spent approximately 15 minutes planning their own stories. They were encouraged to organize their story and take notes. During this time, the teacher circulated, answering specific student questions. Maria’s story is of a bike riding incident where she was riding too quickly down a steep hill, pulled her break too suddenly, and flipped over her bike. Just prior to the segment below, Maria met the teacher’s gaze, and the teacher approached her. The ensuing conversation is in the following extract, where Maria asks a question related to either verb choice or tense.

(1)

- |    |    |  |
|----|----|--|
| 01 | M: | How do I sa::y I- my bi:cycle (0.2)                    |
| 02 |    | (( <i>gestures fast movement</i> ))->go very fast.<    |
| 03 | T: | (0.2) (( <i>nods</i> ))-My bicycle [went?]             |
| 04 | M: | [was? ]  |
| 05 | T: | Well yeah (( <i>leans down over paper</i> ))-so what’s |
| 06 |    | your sentence?   |
| 07 | M: | → (( <i>reading from paper</i> ))-We took a step- step |
| 08 |    | incline?=<br>=Mhm:,                                    |
| 09 | T: |  |

- 10 M: ((gazes at T))-And my bicycle (0.2) run?  
 11 T: Was going,  
 12 M: Was going, ((gazes to paper, starts writing))  
 13 T: Was going very fast.  
 14 M: ((writing))-Thank you.  
 15 T: → So we took a steep incline.=Were  
 16 ((gesturing downhill))-you going do:wn  
 17 → [a steep incline? ]  
 18 M: [((gazes to T))-Yeah.]  
 19 T: Yeah >so you could say< we: (0.2)  
 20 ((leans over paper))-u:m you could actually use  
 21 the: (.) past continuous there too. >Like<  
 22 ((gestures downhill))-we were going ↑do:wn a  
 23 → steep incline and my bicycle was going very  
 24 fast. (syl syl) Cuz it's sort of in progress  
 25 right?  
 26 M: ((writing))-°so we were going°  
 27 ((M continues writing in silence, and T walks  
 28 away))

In lines 01 and 02, Maria solicits the teacher's help. In line 03, the teacher seems to orient to the ungrammaticality of "my bicycle go very fast" and provides the conjugated form of the verb in the simple past tense ("went"). In line 04, Maria appears to be providing part of a possible answer to her original question, but the rising intonation signifies that she wants the teacher's confirmation. The incongruence between the teacher's suggestion in line 03 and Maria's own proposal in line 04 leads the teacher to inquire about the specific sentence.

In lines 07 through 10, Maria reads the sentence in question. In line 07, Maria treats her utterance of "step" as troublesome and initiates a repair with a cutoff. The following extracts confirm that her utterance of "step" is a mispronunciation of the adjective "steep." This is the first of eight instances where Maria utters this word, correctly or incorrectly. In this case, after signaling trouble, she repeats the word with the same non-target-like pronunciation and completes her turn in line 08 with rising intonation. This intonation could signal a self-initiated other-repair (SIOR); however, the teacher does not address the pronunciation error. Instead, the teacher displays alignment in line 09, encouraging Maria to continue. As is clear in lines 11 and 13, the teacher focuses on the grammaticality of Maria's second TCU ("And my bicycle run?"), providing an alternative verb and tense. Maria's "thank you" in line 14 indicates that the teacher has provided a satisfactory solution to her original request for help. Maria begins writing, appearing to treat this as a conversation closing. The teacher, however, does not treat the solution as satisfactory and continues.

From lines 15 to 25, while providing more detailed feedback on verb tense, the teacher introduces an alternate (target-like) pronunciation of "steep." The progress of the ongoing course of talk continues, and verb tense remains the primary "interactional business" during this sequence of repeated embedded corrections (Jefferson, 1987, p. 95). As Jefferson (1987) explains, during embedded correction, "correction occurs, but it is not what is being done interactionally" (p. 95). In this case, in the midst of giving grammatical feedback, the teacher appears to be providing the outcome of the pronunciation repair initiated by Maria in lines 07

and 08. It could mark the completion of a self-initiated other-repair sequence. Although Maria indicates trouble with the word in line 07, she does not adopt the alternate pronunciation once the teacher does embedded correction. Instead, Maria repeats the first few words quietly and then writes in silence (lines 26-27). It is not clear here whether she notices the correction or not. As we will see, this repair sequence contrasts with those around the same word during the main speaking activity, where the pronunciation of the word often becomes the main focus of the talk.

### *Storytelling 1*

As opposed to the short repair sequence and embedded correction that occurred during the planning stage, Maria engages more explicitly with her pronunciation troubles during the course of her repeated storytellings in the main speaking activity. She maneuvers out of and back into her story to address this pronunciation concern in recurring “side sequences” that Brouwer (2004) calls “doing pronunciation.” During the first round, Maria tells her story to Riichi, a native Japanese speaker. Following a similar organization for all three storytellings, Maria uses the word “steep” on two separate occasions: first, to describe the hill for the first time, leading into the main event (the fall); and second, as part of her conclusion, where she explains her current fear of this happening again. In the following segment, Maria describes what leads up to her fall.

(2)

01	M:	((gazes at paper))-So we were ((gazes at R, lifts up
02		hand))-going ((downhill gesture))-down?= 
03	R:	((nods))=mhm,
04		(0.5)
05	M:	((gazes at paper))-u::hm (0.5) ((leans back, lifts
06	→	up hand to demonstrate)) in a- a step- ((gazes at
07	→	teacher, gestures))->step incline?<
08	T:	→ Steep. ((nods))
09	M:	→ ((nods))-a steep incline? [It's-it's ]= 
10	R:	→ [°steep.°]
11	M:	=like a ((downhill gesture))-hill?
12		(0.8)-((M and R hold gaze))
13	R:	((nods))-mhm okay,
14	M:	>you understand me?<
15	R:	((nods))-okay.
16	M:	((hand gesture))->okay.< ((gazes at paper)) .h
17		↑a::nd my bic- bicycle ((lifts up hand to
18		demonstrate, gaze lifts to R))-was going (.)
19		((demonstrates speed with hand gesture))- <u>very</u> fast.
20	R:	((nods))-hh \$ok(h)ay,\$

As Maria describes the hill to her co-participant, she signals trouble with a gap in line 04 and a non-lexical perturbation (“uhm”) in line 05. After two cutoffs in line 31, she gazes at the teacher, makes a “downhill” gesture, and completes her turn, saying “step incline” with rising intonation and quickened pace. The completion of her turn does not signal a repair outcome, however.

Instead, by bringing the teacher into the participation framework and using rising intonation, she solicits the teacher's help—she invites other-repair. In line 08, the teacher provides the solicited repair. In line 09, Maria repeats the phrase “a steep incline” with the correct pronunciation, signaling that she accepts the correction. Maria's co-participant, Riichi, also repeats the word quietly in line 10.

These moves are in line with Brouwer's (2004) description of “doing pronunciation” in that the trouble source is identified by the (non-native) speaker, placed at the end of a turn, and isolated through speech perturbations and rising intonation. Maria, the speaker of the trouble source, proposes this pronunciation side sequence, and the teacher accepts the proposal by providing the correct pronunciation. In this case, all three participants are engaged in “doing pronunciation,” including Riichi, who was momentarily excluded from the participation framework when Maria looked to the teacher.

What follows this pronunciation side sequence—namely, Maria's explanation in line 09 and 11—is also noteworthy because almost all of the subsequent occurrences of “steep” co-occur with a similar explanation. Maria defines the phrase “steep incline” for her co-participant by saying, “It's like a hill,” accompanied by a hand gesture. Maria appears to be orienting to the preference for recipient design (Sacks & Schegloff, 1979). Rather than moving back into her story immediately after the completion of the pronunciation repair sequence, Maria adds a definition, perhaps recognizing that this term may not only be new to her but also to her non-native co-participant. Riichi's withholding of a response token in line 12 does suggest that this may be a new term for him as well. Once Maria can establish co-participant understanding, she returns to her main story in line 16 with “okay.”

That Maria succeeds in making the pronunciation of “steep” the topic of the talk in Extract 2 marks a clear change from the planning stage. In Extract 1, she signals trouble while talking to the teacher, but it is unclear whether she engages in self-initiated self-repair (SISR) or initiates other-repair by proposing a pronunciation side sequence, which the teacher does not immediately accept. The teacher only later provides embedded corrections without shifting the focus away from verb tense. Both the teacher's and Maria's explicit engagement with the troublesome word are minimal. In Extract 2, however, Maria succeeds in shifting the focus of the talk to explicitly address this pronunciation trouble. Sequentially, what comes between Maria's repair initiation in Extract 1 and the SIOR sequence in Extract 2 are the teacher's embedded corrections. Although it is unclear in the first extract whether Maria, in fact, notices the correction, her return to this word in the second extract suggests that she might have.

Toward the end of Maria's story, she returns to the troublesome word to express her newfound fear of steep hills.

(3)

- |    |    |  |
|----|----|--|
| 01 | M: | And <u>now</u> I- I feel (.) I feel s- scared?       |
| 02 | R: | ((nods))-mhm,  |
| 03 | M: | when I ((gestures))-go do:wn a step hi- <u>steep</u> |
| 04 |    | hill.  |
| 05 | R: | mmm:: ((nods)) \$hehehe\$ ((gazes up))-hh            |

In this instance, Maria opts for the phrase “steep hill” instead of “steep incline.” She does self-initiated self-repair in lines 03 and 04. After pronouncing “steep” in a non-target-like way, she initiates repair with a cutoff halfway through “hill.” The repair outcome with target-like



pronunciation (“steep hill”) immediately follows. Maria does not engage in any side sequence and does not solicit help from the teacher. She is able to provide the target-like repair outcome herself.

### *Storytelling 2*

The repair sequences around the pronunciation of “steep” during Maria’s second telling follow a pattern similar to that of her first telling. First, Maria solicits the teachers help during a side sequence of self-initiated other-repair. And later in the same telling, Maria engages in self-initiated self-repair. Despite these similarities, there are also some notable differences. In Extract 4, Maria describes the hill to her new co-participant Yoko, another native Japanese speaker.

(4)

- |    |    |  |
|----|----|--|
| 01 | M: | So: we take uh the street but that street (.)      |
| 02 |    | → u:h street (0.8) is- is like uh (0.8) ((gestures |
| 03 |    | → steep))-step es- ((gazes at T))-steep?           |
| 04 | T: | → Steep.   |
| 05 | M: | → ((nods, gazes at Y))-steep incline?              |
| 06 | Y: | Mhm,   |
| 07 | M: | ((gestures hill))-It’s like a hill?                |
| 08 | Y: | ((nodding))-Okay,                                  |
| 09 | M: | .h so::: u:h ((gazes at paper))-we were going      |
| 10 |    | (.) ((gestures downhill, gazes at Y))-down=        |
| 11 | Y: | ((nods))   |
| 12 | M: | → =for that eh steep- steep incli[ne ]             |
| 13 | Y: | [(nods))-mhm,]                                     |
| 14 | M: | a:nd ((sits back, gazes at paper))-(1.0)           |
| 15 | Y: | Mhm.   |

Maria begins to signal trouble with long pauses, cutoffs, and “uh”s in line 02. She produces the trouble source in line 03 with an accompanying gesture and follows with a cutoff. (Given that Maria is a Spanish speaker, “es-” is most likely “s-,” which is probably the start of “steep.”) Maria then gazes at the teacher and says “steep” with rising intonation. Even though her pronunciation is target-like in line 03, this does not mark the repair outcome, but rather, the proposal of a pronunciation side sequence. The teacher again provides the correct pronunciation in line 04 and Maria responds with a nod. The repetition in line 05 is not directed at the teacher but at Yoko, her original co-participant. Yoko does not repeat the word as Riichi did, but merely shows alignment with “mhm” in line 06. Although Yoko’s response token signals that she understands and encourages the forward progression of Maria’s story, Maria still provides the added term explanation in line 07: “It’s like a hill?”

An important difference between this sequence and the other sequence where Maria solicited teacher support (Extract 2) is that, in Extract 4, after repeating the word and providing the definition for her co-participant, she moves back into her main storytelling sequence by repeating part of the trouble source again. She signals the return to the action of her story with an inbreath and “so” in line 09, and then she engages in SISR in line 12. She initiates the repair with

“eh” and a cutoff. The cutoff occurs near the end of the troublesome word, which she pronounces correctly. She then completes the repair with target-like pronunciation.

A similar SISR occurs at the end of her storytelling sequence with the same co-participant. She again explains her fear of going down steep hills.

(5)

01	M:	<i>((drops pencil on desk))</i> -<And no:w I- I (don't
02		feel) ↑fi:ne >when I<
03	→	<i>((gestures downhill))</i> -going for a hill or st-
04	→	steep- steep incline?
05	Y:	<i>((nods))</i>
06	M:	<i>((points to self))</i> -Because I feel scared.

In line 03, Maria initiates a repair with a cutoff. In line 04, she says the troublesome word with correct pronunciation but cuts off at the end, and then she repeats the word correctly, providing the repair outcome. The placement of this phrase in relation to its “definition” is notable here. Where Maria follows the phrase with its definition (“It’s like a hill”) in previous extracts, she switches the order here. Through her use of “or,” she avoids the need for an extra turn and presents both phrases—“a hill” and “a steep incline”—as interchangeable.

Overall, the changes in Maria’s repair practices around “steep” from her first to her second storytelling point to an interesting progression. First, within both tellings, Maria moves from self-initiated other-repair to self-initiated self-repair. Also, during the SIOR in the first storytelling sequence, Maria proposes the pronunciation side sequence by uttering a non-target-like version of the troublesome word. During the SIOR in the second storytelling sequence, however, Maria solicits the teacher’s help by uttering a target-like version of the same word. The subsequent SISRs reflect a similar progression. In the SISR of the first storytelling sequence (Extract 3), Maria utters the word incorrectly before arriving at the repair outcome; in the SISR of the second storytelling sequence (Extract 5), she cuts off the correctly pronounced version of the word before arriving at the repair outcome. Additionally, Maria seems to integrate the troublesome word into more complex syntactic structures during her second storytelling, evident in her post-recycled repair format in Extract 4 and her “or” construction in Extract 5. A close look at her third and final storytelling sequence provides even further evidence of development.

### ***Storytelling 3***

The repair sequences around the word “steep” during Maria’s third storytelling are markedly different from the preceding ones. In the following extract, she introduces the situation and the troublesome phrase for the first time to her new participant, Satoru, another native Japanese speaker.

(6)

01	M:	So:: (1.0) u::h (1.2) we: u::h
02		<i>((looks down at paper))</i> ->oh my god hh.<
03		<i>((looks up, gestures))</i> ->Okay.< We were going
04		(.) u:h ↑down for- for- for a s- uh a <u>steep</u>
05		incline? <i>((gestures))</i> -It’s like a hill?

- 06 S: ((*nods*)) >Yeah yeah yeah yeah yeah.<  
 07 M: So:: my bicycle was (.) going  
 08 ((*gestures*))-very fast.  
 09 S: ((*nodding*))-Oh yeah yeah [yeah yeah.]

In this case, Maria engages solely in self-initiated self-repair and does not solicit any teacher support at all. She signals upcoming trouble in line 04 with a pause and “uh” and goes through two consecutive repair sequences in the same line. She treats “for” as a trouble source, initiating the repair with two cutoffs, followed by the repair outcome. The new trouble source then becomes “steep” as Maria initiates a repair with a cutoff “s-” and “uh.” The repair outcome immediately follows as she produces the troublesome word with correct pronunciation and added stress. She follows the completed turn in line 05 with the definition: “It’s like a hill?” This repair sequence marks a clear departure from how Maria began her two preceding storytellings—with self-initiated other-repairs. While the turn is still marked by disfluencies, she no longer draws on “expert” help to arrive at a solution.

As Maria nears the end of her final storytelling, she utters the word “steep” one last time. In line with the organization of her previous two tellings, she connects her past experience to the present. This time, she explains how she has learned to safely use the brakes in order to avoid a repeat of her story.

(7)

- 01 M: ((*points down*))-And no:w when I going  
 02 → ((*gestures downhill*))-do:wn for a steep incline  
 03 o:r a hill or something I use my brake.=But  
 04 ((*points back*))-my back brake. Not my front  
 05 brake.  
 06 ((*nods*))-You [know? ]  
 07 S: [((*gestures holding brake*))-The]  
 08 brake- the brake is broke- broke? Was  
 09 [broke? ]

Maria’s utterance of “steep” in this extract presents almost unmistakable evidence of change. In all the preceding six extracts, Maria engages in repair. Here, she utters the term correctly in line 02 and gives no indication that this word is troublesome for her. There is no repair sequence and the turn progresses without any disfluencies. In addition to this, she employs a much more complex syntactic structure here, with a subordinate clause and the “or” construction we saw in Extract 5.

## Analysis 2: “I promised”

For the second analysis, we return to Maria’s story as she shares it with her three co-participants. This time, as she arrives at the conclusion of her story, she shares her promise to never return to that dangerous hill. Maria expresses this promise in a single sentence, variations of which she repeats three times, once to each classmate. As opposed to the preceding analysis,

which followed eight repair sequences that could be clearly classified as phonological in nature, the extracts here include both phonological and grammatical aspects.

### *Storytelling 1*

Because Maria does not produce this part of her story for the teacher during the planning stage, we begin with her interaction with her first peer: Riichi. Near the end of her story, she describes the consequences of falling off her bike.

(8)

- |    |    |   |
|----|----|---|
| 01 | M: | I just broke my p[a:nts, ]=   |
| 02 | R: | [[ <i>((nods))</i> ]]   |
| 03 | M: | =and I hurt my [knee?]  |
| 04 | R: | [[ <i>((nods))</i> ]]   |
| 05 | M: | <i>((gazes at paper))</i> -so that's it. <i>((gazes at R))</i> -But I |
| 06 |    | promise <u>never</u> going down <i>((points))</i> -to that            |
| 07 |    | street. <i>((shakes head))</i> -never.                                |
| 08 | R: | \$hehehehe\$ <i>((nods))</i>  |

Maria signals that she is nearing the end of her story in line 05, when she looks down at her paper and utters, “so that’s it.” Then, she returns her gaze to Riichi to add, “But I promise never going down to that street. Never.” This utterance, consisting of one clausal TCU and an increment, is the focus of our present analysis. It is notable that, during this first telling, Maria does not engage in any repair practices. She does not signal trouble, and her speech is free from disfluency markers. In order to make comparisons between this utterance and future ones, it is important to take note of the grammatical make-up of the turn. By beginning with “but,” Maria contrasts the description of her only minor injuries (lines 01 and 03) with her firm promise to never return to that street. She uses “promise” in the present tense and the phrasal verb “going down” in its gerund form. She repeats “never” twice, first with added stress between the two verbs, and second, as an increment at the end of the utterance. Her repetition of “never,” together with her falling intonation, creates a sense that her decision is resolute.

### *Storytelling 2*

During the second round of storytellings, Maria has just described her minor injuries to Yoko, and Yoko asks if Maria still enjoys riding her bike. Maria begins to respond to this question with an utterance similar to that from Extract 8. In this case, however, the utterance sparks a long side sequence where both the pronunciation and grammar of the target sentence become the focus of the learner’s interaction with her peer and the teacher.

(9)

- |    |    |  |
|----|----|--|
| 01 | Y: | But you still lo:ve (.) riding the bi:ke,=             |
| 02 | M: | =↓Ye:s >of ↑course <i>((gestures))</i> -but I          |
| 03 |    | prom- I-< <i>((gazes to paper))</i> -(0.8) I-          |
| 04 |    | <i>((turns to T))</i> -I- you say- I- >can I say< I    |
| 05 |    | promise I promised- <i>((adding extra syllable))</i> ? |

06 T: Promised?-((*target-like pronunciation*))  
 07 M: ((*points behind her*))-Not in past?  
 08 T: In the past?  
 09 [Promised-((*stressing /st/ ending sound*))]  
 10 M: [>In the past.< ]  
 11 Promised?-((*target-like pronunciation*))  
 12 T: ((*nods*))-Mhm. ((*writes "st" in air*))-ss[::t]  
 13 M: [I ]  
 14 promised? ((*gestures to paper*))-This-  
 15 [this sentence is fine?]=  
 16 T: [(*leans forward*) ]

After Yoko's question, Maria confirms that she still loves biking and quickly signals a contrast with "but" in line 02. She initiates repair in line 03 with two cutoffs ("prom-" and "I-") before pausing to gaze at her notes. In line 04 she draws the teacher into the interaction through gaze. She initiates another repair with "I-" in line 04 and, after a few more cutoffs, she arrives at the repair outcome with a question directed at the teacher: "Can I say promise I promised?" With this question, she invites the teacher to provide the repair outcome to the utterance she initiated in lines 02 and 03. Specifically, she appears to be either asking about the past tense pronunciation for the verb "promise" or asking whether the use of the past tense is appropriate here. In response to Maria's non-target-like pronunciation of "promised," the teacher provides the repair outcome ("promised") in line 06. Maria takes issue with this response and initiates a post-expansion ("Not in the past?"), indicating that she heard the teacher's suggestion in line 06 as "promise" rather than "promised." In line 08, the teacher responds to Maria's post expansion with an insert-expansion, repeating "in the past" with rising intonation. But then, without waiting for Maria's response to the insert expansion, she repeats her original repair outcome ("promised") with added stress on the ending /st/ (line 09). This provides the second pair part to Maria's post-expansion from line 07. At the same time, Maria responds to the teachers insert expansion from line 08 by confirming that she wants to know how to say the word "in the past." Directly afterward, she acknowledges that she heard the teacher's response to her post-expansion and repeats the repair outcome ("promised") with target-like pronunciation and rising intonation. In line 12, the teacher confirms that Maria has the correct pronunciation and provides further explanation of the sound. In lines 13 and 14, Maria says "I promised" with target-like pronunciation and rising intonation. This addition of the subject "I" marks an expansion from focusing on the pronunciation of the single verb to the grammaticality of the entire sentence. She then gestures to her notes, saying "This sentence is fine" with rising intonation, making the shift even clearer.

The following extract comes directly after the previous one. After the pronunciation trouble is resolved, Maria does not yet return to the ongoing story, but rather, expands the side sequence to address the grammaticality of the sentence in focus.

(10)

17 M: =just- I just wanna make [sure. ]  
 18 T: [(*nods*)]  
 19 M: I promised never going-  
 20 ((*gestures down*))-go down for that street.

- 21 T: ((gestures with each new word))-I promised never  
 22 to go:  
 23 M: ((picks up pencil, gazes to paper))-°Okay.°=  
 24 T: =down that street again.  
 25 Y: Wait I think [you can say ]=  
 26 M: [((writing))-so I]  
 27 Y: =(shakes head))-I never- I never go there.  
 28 T: ((hand gesture))-Or I never  
 29 [went down that street again.]  
 30 Y: [((nodding))-yeah yeah yeah. ]  
 31 T: >Either [one.< ]  
 32 M: [((writing))-So] I- I promised never (.)  
 33 ((gazes at T)) to go?  
 34 T: ((gazes at ceiling))-↑I promised (.) never to  
 35 go,=I promised to never go,  
 36 (1.0)  
 37 ((gazes at M))->Either one.< So  
 38 ((gesturing with each word))-I promised never to  
 39 go do:wn that street again.  
 40 (1.2)-((M and Y writing))  
 41 M: ((writing))-do:wn,  
 42 Y: ((writing))-down?  
 43 M: ((writing))-that (.) street again.  
 44 Y: ((leans over to see M's paper))-(promised what.)  
 45 M: ((pointing at words on paper))-promised never to  
 46 go down.  
 47 Y: ((returns to paper and writes))-(1.2)  
 48 M: ((drops pencil on desk))-<And no:w I- I (don't  
 49 feel) ↑fi:ne >when I<  
 50 ((gestures downhill))-going for a hill or st-  
 51 steep- steep incline?

At the end of Extract 10, Maria initiates other-repair by asking the teacher to address the grammaticality of a troublesome sentence. In lines 19 and 20, Maria reads the sentence: “I promised never going- go down for that street.” It is notable that her pronunciation of “promised” here is target-like. In lines 21, 22, and 24, the teacher provides the solicited repair by providing a grammatically correct version of Maria’s sentence. Halfway through the teacher’s repair outcome, Maria prepares to write. This signals an even larger divergence away from her original story sequence as Maria assumes the role of a notetaking student. As Maria begins writing and repeating the sentence aloud, Yoko joins the interaction and suggests an alternative sentence that has a similar meaning (lines 25 to 27). The teacher adds to this by providing yet another alternative sentence in lines 28 and 29. Yoko appears to acknowledge and accept the teacher’s contribution in line 30, and the teacher validates both alternatives in line 31 (“Either one.”). Meanwhile, Maria attends to the original correct alternative provided by the teacher and repeats the first part of the sentence with rising intonation (lines 32 and 33).

The teacher gazes up at the ceiling, repeats the phrase, and directly afterward, utters a slight variation of the phrase with the adverb (“never”) splitting the infinitive “to go.” The pauses and raised gaze suggest she is thinking about which structure is best. When her gaze returns to Maria, she tells her that either option is appropriate (line 37), but then repeats the original option in its entirety once more. The teacher has treated Maria’s repetition with rising intonation in lines 32 and 33 as soliciting confirmation that her sentence is accurate. The teacher’s eventual repetition of the sentence in lines 37 through 39 acts as this confirmation. Maria treats this as a satisfactory response, and both Maria and Yoko start writing. From lines 41 to 47, as Maria and Yoko write down the target sentence, Maria now assumes the role of expert to assist Yoko with this.

Maria finally signals a return to the main story in line 48 by dropping her pencil and saying “and now” with a jumpstart. By dropping her pencil, she shows that she is finished writing and is moving back into the role of storyteller. It is notable here that there is no final, complete repetition of the trouble sentence. She repeats “promised” with the correct pronunciation in lines 11 and 14 in Extract 9 and continues to pronounce it correctly when the focus of the side sequence shifts to sentence structure (Extract 10). However, she never repeats the target sentence structure in its entirety, but rather, different parts of it from lines 33 to 47.

### *Storytelling 3*

During the final round, Maria concludes her story for Satoru in a similar way. She describes the minor consequences of her fall (ripped pants and a hurt knee) and describes how she felt during that moment (line 05). Then she utters a sentence similar to the one that sparked a repair side sequence during the previous telling.

(11)

- |    |    |  |
|----|----|--|
| 01 | M: | ((gazes to S))-U::m afortunately (.) u:h                 |
| 02 |    | ((shakes head))-I just broke my pants and I              |
| 03 |    | hurt my knee but (.) that’s it.                          |
| 04 | S: | [O::h.]  |
| 05 | M: | [But I] really really felt scared.                       |
| 06 | S: | ((nods))-mm.   |
| 07 | M: | So I ↑ <u>pro:mised</u> (0.6) ((gazes to paper))-u::m    |
| 08 |    | ((gazes at S, gestures with each word))- <u>never go</u> |
| 09 |    | <u>down-</u> down for that street. [Never.]              |
| 10 | S: | [Yea::h.]  |
| 11 | M: | ((points down))-And <u>no:w</u> when I going             |
| 12 |    | ((gestures downhill))-do:wn for a steep incline          |
| 13 |    | o:r a hill or something I use my brake.=But              |
| 14 |    | ((points back))-my back brake. Not my front              |
| 15 |    | brake.   |

In line 07, Maria begins to share her promise with Satoru, but again appears to find the sentence troublesome. After “I promised,” she pauses, gazes at her notes, and utters an elongated “um.” These disfluency markers initiate repair. As she returns her gaze to Satoru, she provides the repair outcome by continuing the sentence: “never go down-.” She engages in a short SISR

sequence again as she cuts off “down,” repeats it, and completes the turn with falling intonation: “down for that street.” She emphasizes the seriousness of her promise by adding the increment, “Never.”

Maria’s final utterance of this sentence is both similar and different from the previous two utterances in some interesting ways. First, it is notable that she provides the past tense of the verb “promise” with accurate pronunciation and without any sign of disfluency. In Extract 8, she produces “promise” in its present tense form and does not appear to find it troublesome. In Extract 9, she self-initiates a repair on this word and engages in a side sequence where the instructor provides the repair outcome: the verb in the past tense with accurate pronunciation. As she moves on to addressing trouble with the grammar of the sentence (Extract 10), she repeatedly utters the word “promised” with target-like pronunciation. In this final extract, the rest of the sentence is still marked with disfluencies. The emergent grammar of the sentence she finally produces (“I promised never go down for that street”) is closer than Extract 8 (“I promise never going down to that street”) to the grammatically accurate target sentence. In addition to “promise” becoming “promised,” “going” becomes “go,” which is closer to the target infinitive “to go.” Changing “down to that street” to “down for that street,” however, does not necessarily bring her any closer to the target structure: “down that street.” We can see, then, that after a long side sequence to address both phonological and grammatical troubles in a particular sentence, which she herself initiates, her uptake of the target-like alternative provided by the teacher is only partial. While her repeated and accurate utterance of “promised” without disfluency markers suggests that learning has occurred (at least in the short term), her continued struggle to accurately and fluently produce the sentence structure in its entirety shows that the learning is incomplete.

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

These two analyses have illuminated how Maria engages with and works through language learning opportunities on a moment-to-moment basis. In the first analysis, a close examination of changes in Maria’s pronunciation repair practices around one word through a CA framework has allowed us to define and demonstrate learning as more than just a move toward native-like pronunciation. In this case, it has allowed us to see at least three emerging patterns in Maria’s interaction: a move toward more independent repair practices, a move toward phonological accuracy, and a decrease in disfluency markers. First, the transition from SIOR to SISR suggests a growing autonomy and less need for “expert” intervention to arrive at repair outcomes (Schegloff, Jefferson, & Sacks, 1977). Second, Maria’s move from inaccurate to accurate pronunciation of the learning item during points of repair initiation shows that even her “first guess” is becoming more target-like. Finally, her increasing fluency, especially evident in the final extract, indicates that she is finding this word easier to produce. The newfound ease also appears to occur in line with her use of more complex syntactic structures.

In the second analysis, Maria’s development is less straightforward. However, her complicated engagement with and partial learning of the target utterance has illuminated at least three key takeaways. First, we have been able to observe how she demonstrates learner agency when faced with a multitude of unplanned learning opportunities. Moment by moment, Maria is presented with numerous learning opportunities with which she self-initiates engagement. In Extracts 9 and 10, for instance, we see how Maria initiates and then redirects the focus of the



side sequence to address different linguistic concerns. Second, we observe that her role in the classroom is dynamic. It appears that learners, like teachers, are multivocalic (Waring, 2015). Maria moves between many roles and voices within these short transcripts. In just Extracts 9 and 10, for instance, we see Maria shifting from the role of storyteller, to language learner, to language teacher as she initiates a side sequence, solicits the teacher's help, and helps her peer process the new information.

One final observation is that short-term analyses can only confidently address short-term learning. Unlike the two previous takeaways, which concern language learning processes, this one concerns the analytical method itself. This analysis has shown us that we must be cautious of making big claims about learning in short-term CA studies, especially those that follow a single interaction. For instance, if we were to only look at a single interaction of Maria's, like Extracts 9 and 10, we might be tempted to say that she has, in fact, learned the target sentence. She makes her understanding known to the teacher and her peer, even taking on the role of expert to assist her classmate. A subsequent interaction with a new peer (Extract 11), however, shows that this isn't the case, as she does not produce the sentence in a completely target-like way. As the name implies, long term CA studies are in a better position to make claims about long term learning. Short term CA studies that focus on single interactions are valuable in that they look closely at how learners make their understanding known to co-participants. However, as short term studies work to remain close to CA's ethnomethodological roots, in doing so, they may be limiting their ability to make claims about long-term learning outcomes.

Through the first analysis, we can trace a clear progression of a learning item. Through the second analysis, this progression isn't so clear, but adopting a similar analytical approach has illuminated other aspects of the learner's interaction that are important as we strive toward a more holistic understanding of language learning processes. While I do not claim that CA can entirely replace traditional SLA methods and I am doubtful that *all* of a learner's thoughts are made visible to the researcher through their talk-in-interaction, the addition of this method can provide us with a more balanced understanding of language learning. As Wong (2013) explains, "Certainly, if we come at the research puzzle from as many angles as possible, the greater are our chances of glimpsing the total picture" (p. 16). By adopting a participant-relevant perspective, we can expand the focus of language learning research to more fully understand how learners adapt their linguistic and social knowledge to particular environments, act on their current knowledge states, and engage with learning opportunities.

This study offers both a new approach and a new analytical focus to CA literature on language learning. The approach I've adopted is not longitudinal nor does it follow a single interaction; instead, it follows one learner through multiple interactions over a short period of time. While the setting remains the same, the participants change. My analysis above demonstrates CA's analytical potential for examining learning processes during classroom activities on a highly detailed level by focusing on repairs. Repetitive, communicative activities—the analytical focus of this paper—are arguably quite common in the language classroom; however, we still know very little about how learners engage with learning opportunities, solicit help from others, and employ interactional practices as their co-participants change. This paper's focus on unplanned learning opportunities illuminates how a learner spontaneously draws on interactional strategies during an otherwise semi-controlled activity. The approach I've adopted has the potential to illuminate what kind of learning is happening on an unplanned interactional level, which may or may not be in line with the planned learning items in the activity's design.

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## APPENDIX A

### CA Transcription Notations

.	(period) falling intonation.
?	(question mark) rising intonation.
,	(comma) continuing intonation.
-	(hyphen) abrupt cut-off.
::	(colon(s)) prolonging of sound.
word	(underlining) stress.
word	The more underlining, the greater the stress.
WORD	(all caps) loud speech.
word	(degree symbols) quiet speech.
word	(upward arrow) raised pitch.
word	(downward arrow) lowered pitch.
>word<	(more than and less than) quicker speech.
<word>	(less than & more than) slowed speech.
<	(less than) jump start or rushed start.
hh	(series of h's) aspiration or laughter.
.hh	(h's preceded by dot) inhalation.
(hh)	(h's in parentheses) inside word boundaries.
[ ]	(lined-up brackets) beginning and ending of
[ ]	simultaneous or overlapping speech.
=	(equal sign) latch or contiguous utterances of the same speaker.
(2.4)	(number in parentheses) length of a silence in 10ths of a second.
(.)	(period in parentheses) micro-pause, 0.2 second or less.
()	(empty parentheses) non-transcribable segment of talk.

(( ))	(double parentheses) non-speech activity or transcriptionist comment.
{((words))-words}	dash to indicate co-occurrence of nonverbal behavior and verbal elements; curly brackets to mark the beginning and ending of such co-occurrence if necessary; ~ in place of dash to indicate the beginning of talk in the midst of nonverbal conduct.
(try 1)/(try 2)	(two parentheses separated by a slash) alternative hearings.
\$word\$	(dollar or pound signs) smiley voice.
#word#	(number signs) squeaky voice.