Conversations involving speakers whose first language is not the language of the talk have become widespread in the globalized world. Migration, increased travel for business or pleasure, as well as communicating through new technologies across the world, make Second Language Conversations an increasingly common everyday event. Business and commerce, medical encounters, media talk, and governmental activities, as well as everyday encounters at work and in the neighbourhood - even in the family - are frequently conducted in a language which for some, if not all, participants is not their first.

The conversations analysed and discussed in this volume take place in a variety of situations in which people go about their daily routines in work and private life while interacting in a second language. Several chapters in this collection draw on data which have been collected in one or other of these situations. English is the default second language for many multilingual groups of professionals, but throughout this volume other languages can be seen to be used as a second language or lingua franca for all participants (German, French, Japanese, Finnish, and Danish). In the first chapter, for example, surgeons from France, Switzerland and Germany are seen to be holding a video-conference discussion in their own first languages, as well as drawing on English as their default second language.

A major natural habitat for Second Language Conversations is educational institutions, and several chapters draw on data from classrooms.
While talk in second language classrooms occurs naturally and therefore is relevant subject matter for studies in second language interaction, experimental methods of collecting data (for example, through staged interviews and narratives, role-plays, games, and picture drawing tasks) are not. They are staged for the sake of the researchers and their projects. As has been argued (Wagner 1997, 1998a), experimental data are different from naturally occurring data. Talk in experimental environments has no consequences for the participants' lives, and this shows in the range and subtlety of interactional resources deployed in the talk. Experimental settings focus on second language speakers' lack of competence and often make them look less competent and resourceful than naturally occurring data show them in fact to be. Second language speakers appear very different in real life situations - if what they are doing really counts, and if their activities have real world consequences. In these settings they are able to achieve interactionally remarkable feats - as we will demonstrate in section 3 of this introduction, and as a number of the chapters in this volume also show. Naturally occurring data are rich in interactional detail, whilst experimental data tend to be qualitatively 'poor'.

It is the aim of this collection to present naturally occurring Second Language Conversations in a search for grounded descriptions of what speakers in such situations actually do: the degree to which general first language conversational practices are - or are not – employed in achieving successful outcomes for the talk, and the extent to which grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation aid or hinder the mutual constructions by participants of the meanings they attempt to convey and the actions they try to accomplish. This
volume contributes to an exploration of conversations and, more widely, talk-in-interaction, involving parties for whom the language used is not the one they are most at home in.

B The normality of second language talk

The approach taken in this volume assumes language to be embedded in the wider practices of talk, verbal and non-verbal. It also assumes that talk is a collaborative construction by all participants, at all times, so that neither language production nor reception, neither speaker nor listener are privileged in any analysis. Indeed, as Goodwin (1979) shows in his paper on the interactive construction of a sentence, an utterance is an interactional product, the construction of which is massively influenced by the ‘hearers’, to the extent that these hearers can be seen as equal co-producers of the conversation.

Language is thereby assumed not to exist as a discrete set of systems isolated from social, discoursal and temporal contexts, but as always and inevitably emerging from them. Meanings arise out of mutually created discourse, sensitive to what has gone before, and creating conditions for the interpretation of what is said next (cf. Heritage 1984). Language serves as one vehicle for action, which in turn is a crucial element for the creation of the social world. As such, the primary focus in the studies in this volume is on how participants manage to achieve successful outcomes in their interactions, rather than on the ‘deficits’ they may have as ‘non-native’ speakers. Indeed, several chapters demonstrate that apparent linguistic deficits often are not interactionally significant to either the first or second language speaking
participants, whose focus is on the successful prosecution and outcomes of their activities, using whatever means are available.

The main lesson from all the chapters in this collection is that Second Language Conversations are normal conversations. They can be described using the same tools of analysis that have been developed for First Language Conversations in Conversation Analysis. As in first language interactions, the interactive performance of second language speakers is mediated by – or co-constructed with – their interlocutors (cf. Young and He 1998). The importance of the interlocutor was shown by Tarone and Liu’s study (1995) of a Chinese child learning English in Australia, who was observed interacting with three different types of co-participant: teachers, classroom peers, and the researcher (one of the authors who was also a friend of the family). In these different constellations, the child showed very considerable variation in the frequency and function of the grammatical elements he used, as well as the actions he engaged in. For example, with the teacher he rarely initiated turns, and took few risks in departing from the limited set of actions with which he was most comfortable. With peers he was more assertive, initiated more, criticised, argued and even insulted classmates, and overall spoke more fluently. With the researcher-family friend, he also initiated more, used an even wider range of functions, and used his most complex linguistic structures.

Even though Second Language Conversations are ‘normal’, they are different from first language interactions in certain respects. The most obvious difference is that most speakers can easily be recognized as second language speakers due to accent and grammatical irregularities. But are these hallmarks of second language talk necessarily consequential for the course
and the outcome of the interaction? It is the aim of this volume to investigate, in depth, how and when formal deficits impact on the ongoing talk and how speakers handle these matters.

The chapters in the volume explore among other issues whether certain practices of conversation are found more widely or more extensively in conversations involving second language speakers. The main thrust of the existing literature (Brouwer 2000, Carroll 2000, Hosoda 2000, Kidwell 2000, Kurhilla 2003, Rasmussen & Wagner 2000, 2002) has been that no interactional phenomena have been found exclusively in second language talk. To take an example, Wong (2000) and Schegloff (2000a) have discussed whether projected actions (e.g. answers to questions) are systematically delayed in second language talk. It seems to be the case that differences between second language and first language everyday conversations can be explained by their frequency of occurrence. Certain phenomena such as delay, reformulation or certain types of repair may be more common in second language talk, but such talk is not the only environment in which these phenomena are found. It is in this sense that we propose that Second Language Conversations are not conducted in a different way from those in a first language. It is an aim of this volume to further research in this area.

B Conversation Analysis

The methodology in this volume is Conversation Analysis (CA), a distinctive approach to analysing everyday social action and interaction. CA arose from sociology in the 60s and has in later years influenced the study of talk (particularly in sociology, anthropology, social psychology, communication
studies and linguistics), often combined with ethnographic, ethnomethodological and discourse analytic approaches, and including a multimodal perspective (talk - gaze - gesture).

CA describes the orderliness of social interaction as it is accomplished by methods and procedures that participants share. Understanding is an accomplishment of all participants, arrived at on the basis of a wide range of interactional resources.

In the years since its emergence within sociology, CA for a long time remained a minority interest located in the no-man’s-land between a number of disciplines, but its influence has increased in recent years, as interest in cross-disciplinary study has grown. It has sometimes been criticised for what is seen by some as its excessive attention to detail. However, CA work has grown in influence as the robustness of many of its findings have become evident, despite the apparent opacity of its methods to some, and the lack of generalizability of many of its findings.

There have been many introductions to work in CA which discuss in detail its methodology and major findings, many as articles (too many to cite here, but see Schegloff et al. 2002 and Gardner forthcoming for recent summaries), and some as books (e.g. Psathas 1995, Hutchby & Wooffitt 1998, ten Have 1999, and to a lesser degree Markee 2000).

CA work typically starts with documenting audio- and videotaped interactions. The rationale is not to collect a representative sample from a certain population - simply because nobody knows what ‘representativeness in interactions’ means - but to study social life as it is revealed through talk. This
is done through the documentation and analysis of taped interactions which are then studied post hoc in great detail.

CA projects may seem to start on loose ground, as the starting point is to collect and transcribe data before any specific research hypotheses or questions are formed. However, hypotheses will emerge and be systematically tested during transcription and analysis (this is a trait shared to a large degree with ethnographic approaches). A typical CA paper describes the result of the study and does not dwell on the articulation, testing and revision of intermediate analytic hypotheses. CA work is based on an assumption that the phenomenon studied will be found widely or even generally within the community of speakers, as practices of talk must be shared if conversationalists are to attain intersubjectivity – as they clearly do, for most of the time. There will be systematic ways in which parties in conversation do social actions.

Before we discuss the analytic process any further, a brief discussion of the transcription process is necessary (see Atkinson and Heritage 1984; Jefferson 1983, 1985, 1996; Psathas and Anderson 1990). Transcribing is a crucial tool for analysis -a tool which enables the analyst to get beneath the surface of the data to understand the ways in which people come to say and do the things they do.

One of founders of CA, Gail Jefferson, developed the transcription conventions which are commonly used in CA. The main principle is that precise details of the delivery of speech in time are carefully noted. When gaze and gesture are included into the scope of analysis, this will include these as well. The transcriber will try to catch as many features of the interaction as
possible, even though any transcription is selective and based on the research interests of the researcher (Ochs 1979, Kendon 1982). Transcribing is therefore a first step in the analysis. It puts on paper features of the talk that the transcriber hears, and what the transcriber will later process and analyse. Any analysis also needs continuous access to the original data, a continuous process of refreshing. A transcription line might therefore look as following (transcription conventions are explained in the appendix).

Extract 1 Pollution
Colin and Denise (both Australians) are talking with Edina (German) about pollution. For further information about the data c.f. Gardner, this volume)

1  Colin:  =en’uh- (0.4) s:tea:m,= en’ p’llution’s j’st-;
2  Edina: °hm hm [hm°;
3  Colin:         [b: illowing oud= a:ll tuh ti:me.
4  Denise: ↑Oh ↓b’t ↑wi’v-, (. ) ev’ry country has: (. ) s:ome[.]

In these lines, the transcription notes each repeat of elements of the utterance heard on the tape. Pauses and lengthenings are captured and the transcript follows the sequence of the acoustic phenomena. It is essential for CA - which is a theory and method about social actions unfolding in time through cooperation and the co-construction of the talk by the participants - to note the precise sequential position of any element as it emerges in time.

Jefferson demonstrated this when she started to note laughter not as a comment in the transcription such as ‘participant X laughs’, but by meticulously transcribing each separate pulse of laughter. What then became visible in the
transcription was the collaborative organization of laughter, the participants shifting to produce a burst of air, which over time might develop into joint laughter (Jefferson 1985).

Another obvious feature of classical CA transcriptions is the use of modified orthography. In extract 1, ‘pollution’ is transcribed as \textit{p’lution} and ‘just’ as \textit{j’st.}. Modified orthography makes phenomena visible which later in the analysis may show up to be significant. Unmodified orthography may hide phenomena and therefore foreclose a possible analysis. Jefferson notes as a footnote to the transcriptions of a tape where the speakers vary between ‘day’, ‘dih’ and ‘deh’ when pronouncing names of days (Rahman tapes 1:2:1-2) that “dropping the dialect-particulars obscures a possible phenomenon. ... One possibility is that the ‘correct’ pronunciation occurs when ‘day’ ends a turn-constructional unit”.\footnote{Modified orthography is a resource to detect possible phenomena which can be opened up by systematic transcription. Especially for the transcription of second language talk, this can be an essential feature.}

On the other hand, using modified orthography for transcribing second language talk may stereotype the speaker, may even be read as comic book speech (cf. Jefferson 1996). It may reduce readability, as well as handling data in electronic media. Currently, transcription standards seem to be an irresolvable issue – or, put more positively, an evolving issue. In this volume, the contributors have made cautious use of modified orthography, which - of course - is an analytic decision and may impinge on the analysis.

Whilst data are in the process of being transcribed, CA analysis often proceeds with a process of unfocussed sifting, i.e. practitioners analyse
random sections of the data and notice certain features of the talk. A systematic description of the sequential structures on a single case basis may lead to a candidate phenomenon being revealed, i.e. a potentially generalizable observation about how people co-construct talk and do certain practices in interaction. At this point, a search through the whole available corpus becomes necessary. If it brings about a ‘collection’ of parallel constructed instances, the observations formulated on the basis of the first example can be systematically tested. Sometimes, however, the particular phenomenon turns out to be rare, and researchers need to build up a collection over a number of years.

CA, therefore, is not about single case analyses. Lazaraton describes CA’s goal as building ‘a convincing and comprehensive analysis of a single case, and then to search for other similar cases in order to build a collection’ (2003:3), and goes on to say, ‘the emphasis in CA is on understanding single cases in and of themselves, not as part of larger aggregates of data (2003:3). Understanding each segment in its particularity is surely a major step in a CA analysis, but Lazaraton risks neglecting the point that the real power of a CA argument is based the regularity of behaviour as documented in the collection of cases.

The collection is the crucial part of the entire analytic enterprise. The number of cases in collections may stretch from 20-30 instances to several thousands, depending on the frequency of the phenomenon. Schegloff’s initial collection of phone openings (Schegloff 1968) consisted of 500 cases; for a later paper on the organization of repair, he mentions several thousand instances in the collection (Schegloff 1977 which one is that???)Schegloff et
al??? YES SCHEGLOFF ET AL, the original repair paper). However for rarer types of repair, as for example embedded repairs (Jefferson 1987, Brouwer this volume, Rasmussen and Wagner this volume) or repair in third or fourth position (Schegloff 1992) a smaller collection may have to suffice.

The size of a collection is not the relevant issue, but rather whether a description of a certain phenomenon appears to be stable, that is, do new cases add new features to the description-so-far, or do they challenge the description as it stands. Deviant cases (ones that challenge the description) are in fact usually the most crucial ones, because the description has to be robust enough to be able to cope with them. If it cannot, the study is not ready to be published, or may even have to be abandoned.

Descriptions formulated on the basis of collections are empirically based hypotheses about candidate phenomena. They are testable and can be challenged on the basis of instances that show the initial description of a phenomenon to have been wrong. If a collection is ‘saturated’ (ten Have 1999:132, quoting Glaser and Strauss 1967), new instances will not lead the analyst to changes in the description. This rigid empirical approach partly explains why CA studies have turned out to be remarkably robust over decades when they have been built on such saturated collections. This allows CA to work cumulatively. More recent CA work has been able to build on the early studies of Sacks and his associates, rather than to falsify the early research which began in the sixties.

Single case studies, then, are a launching pad for the main analysis; they are the departure point from which to build a collection, which then allows descriptions to be generalized. In itself, a single case study is only a starting
point (but see, for example, Whalen, Zimmermann and Whalen 1988; Schegloff 1987, 1988), since it still needs validation through a collection. However, single case analyses may illustrate the interplay of activities in their sequential placement, or they may relate to very extended samples of a very ‘large’ size (Egbert et al, this volume, Mori this volume).

All of these steps - transcription, unmotivated looking and the building and analysis of a collection (cf. Psathas 1990) - are analytical. When the analytical work has been completed and a phenomenon has been described exhaustively, it can be recognized in data and allows an understanding of what speakers do when they deploy certain resources.

We will illustrate this with the phenomenon of a collaborative completion, i.e. the completion of an ongoing turn by another speaker (see, for example, Lerner 1993, 1996). Collaborative completions often show a high degree of cooperation between speakers and are often found, for example, in word searches. Here we will discuss a different case, taken from a series of business phone calls between a Dane (S) and a German (B). They use English as their working language.

S had in an earlier call complained that B’s company had not delivered a substantial portion of an earlier order. To document this, S announced that he would fax copies of orders and delivery sheets. The current call starts with B talking about possible solutions to the delivery problems, while S tries several times to find out what had happened to the faxes that B claims not to have received. B even suggests that S might have a fax problem. At this point, S refers to a colleague of B, Mr Schulz, who is normally involved in fax transactions between the two companies.
Extract 2: Fax documents

1 -> S: Yes I ev ↑talk' with-eh with Misteh Shoelssu[h and
2 -> B: [Ye s En Shoelts
3 end me: we ev o:nly: got ↑one pα:ge?
4 S: Yehʒ
5 B: En nohrmally we er sent two page ez on the: second page is
6 also:aehr also some ahrdigls?

(11 lines omitted)

17 S: Neo of course eh eh we we I haa I have: sent it em I send it
18 again?
19 (.)
20 B: [Yuh
21 -> S: [hhh I'll send it
22 -> B: [But
23 (0.5)
24 (S): Uh []
25 B: [] (Well)
26 -> S: [] but but but ·hhh [(now-)
27 -> B: [(But) but we haven't got that
28 (0.3)
29 S: Aha
30 (.)
31 S: I-I send it agāín Bei[hoffhuh ·hhhh
32 B: [Okay¿

Line 1 projects a report by S concerning the mystery of the missing faxes, with B’s colleague Schulz implicated as a significant party. Just before S’s report is to be launched, B starts talking. This is the first possible point where S’s ongoing utterance reaches some kind of completion Yes I have talked with
Mr. Schulz. In CA terms, S is about to finish an ongoing turn-constructional (syntactical) unit - a TCU - and to start a new one which would be the telling of what Mr Schulz might have said or done. TCU endings are routinely places where new speakers start talking (Sacks, Schegloff, Jefferson 1974).

B starts by acknowledging S’s preceding unit (yes) and then produces his own turn, with Schulz now appearing as a witness for B, moving from prosecution to defence, as it were. B’s turn in line 2 and 3 links to the preceding turn with the conjunction and, which signifies continuation of what S had embarked upon. But B does not produce the report projected in line 1. B’s turn is a hostile annexation of the ongoing turn, executed precisely at the place of transition relevance, i.e. the place where S has ended a syntactic unit and B might start up his own talk. S’s projected report about himself and Schulz is changed into a statement about B and Schulz. B thereby deflects a possibly embarrassing detail about the fax transmission, and re-establishes his own point: that he hadn’t received a fax. B’s and S’s activities are actions in the social world. By using interactional tools, e.g. modes of continuation, turn taking at possible transition relevant places, they co-construct their here-and-now activities and prepare the ground for future activities.

A somewhat parallel but more complicated case is found in the second part of the extract. B produces a but in line 22, where he intrudes into S’s ongoing turn. B’s but might link back to his yuh (‘yeah’) in line 20, which is the beginning of a response to S’s prior turn, so the whole unit appears to be a yuh but reaction to S’s turn in lines 17/18. Then in line 26, S triply incorporates the but into his own ongoing turn, but B takes the element back and produces in line 27 a turn extension as a but construction which fits what S had produced.
in lines 17/18 and 21. What B has again done is manoeuvre the perspective from S to one that accords with B’s own position.

In both instances, B deflects the potentially embarrassing topic of how and why the faxes went missing. His contributions draw on the design of units produced by S, and route them in a different direction. He thereby manages to deflect further argument about the faxes. B, and even more so S, are not linguistically very advanced speakers. Nevertheless, B demonstrates an ability to use his resources in an interactionally sophisticated way.

C Repair in interaction

Any element in talk may turn out to give trouble to the speaker or any other participant. In line 1 of Extract 2, the item ‘with’ is trouble marked by a cut-off and an ‘uh’ sound and instantly repaired by the speaker. In line 5, B produces the verb is which turns later out not to fit an upcoming object in plural and is repaired to are in line 6. In this cases, instances of trouble are placed in a speaker’s ongoing turn and are repaired by the current speaker.

Trouble may threaten intersubjectivity, i.e. the joint construction of meaning by the participants in and through sequential order of action and talk. Repairs deal with trouble sources that have been uttered previously in the same speaker’s current or earlier turn or in another speaker’s turn (Schegloff et al. 1977). In this sense, repair is the key resource to protect intersubjectivity in situations where it is challenged. Consequently, repair sequences are a major topic in this volume.

That repair deals with intersubjectivity implies that it does not deal primarily with grammatical mistakes and errors, since there is no one-to-one
the relation between error and threatened intersubjectivity. Indeed, deviations from the linguistic norms of the target language are common and inevitable in second language speakers’ talk, but they rarely create trouble for understanding and meaning (i.e. for intersubjectivity). The fact that repair and correction of linguistic errors are rare shows that the speakers are more oriented to meaning and intersubjectivity and less to form. Not repairing any upcoming ‘mistakes’ means that the imposition of repair on the ongoing interaction is minimized by the speakers. For Second Language Conversations in general, the distribution of repair seems to follow what has been described for First Language Conversations: self-initiated repair in the ongoing turn is the most frequent form of repair, while corrections of other speakers are rare outside of classrooms or similar situations (cf. Rasmussen & Wagner 2000).

Corrections (i.e. other repair) raise a sequential issue. Instead of delivering a turn which is relevant to the ongoing talk, repairs make a reaction to the repair relevant. In this way, repairs stall the progress of the talk and the main conversation has to be re-established. In other words, corrections are ways of re-establishing intersubjectivity, but at the same time they threaten the ongoing talk.

Correction of grammatical errors by first language speakers are often produced ‘en passant ‘ (Kurhilla 2000, 2003) with minimal imposition on the ongoing interaction, and mainly focus on ‘simple’ grammatical issues such as morphology and pronunciation. Another way of minimizing the impact of a correction is to embed it into the next action. Brouwer et al. (this volume) show that embedded corrections are found in positions where a lack of correction might threaten intersubjectivity. If a speaker produces a first pair part of an
action sequence, e.g. a question, and if this first pair part contains a linguistic error which has consequences for meaning, then the next speaker may include the corrected element in the second pair part, showing on what grounds he/she construct this next action (cf. Jefferson 1987).

Even though repair is used to work on intersubjectivity, this does not imply that repair of grammatical errors does not happen. Brouwer (this volume) discusses instances where ‘self’ or ‘other’ initiates repair of pronunciation. She shows that repair of pronunciation errors run off as side sequences where the word in need of repair is isolated from the ongoing action and repaired. Then, the prior action is re-established.

Those chapters of this volume which deal with non-educational interactions show clearly that repair of linguistic form seems more to be the business of the second language speakers, that is, repair of form is typically initiated by the second language speaker. Repair of trouble with understanding, meaning and the consequences of actions seems more to be the business of first language speaker.

The discussion so far has consequences for an understanding of ‘uptake’, which is the term used in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) theory (see next paragraph) to refer to the re-production of the corrected form by the speaker of the trouble source. Sequentially, the trouble source, the repair initiation (if there is any), and the repair proper precede the uptake. The concept of uptake shows a marked difference between CA and SLA. While CA is interested in repair as the resource for securing intersubjectivity, SLA theory is interested in recasts and uptakes which are seen to be a vehicle for acquisition. While CA furthers an empirical, descriptive analysis of repair
activities, SLA takes a functional perspective. But, whatever the perspective, repairs in conversation do overwhelmingly orient to intersubjectivity and not to linguistic errors - even though repair of linguistic errors is undertaken in certain environments, and uptake is found in certain positions: in the sequences described by Brouwer uptakes have the effect of bringing the repair side sequence back into the main activity of the conversation. Uptake is also found in the studies of repair and negotiation of meaning in classroom data (Mazeland and Zaman-Zadeh, Mori, Olsher).

**Second Language Acquisition**

The data used in this volume belongs traditionally in the realm of research on second language acquisition. SLA’s main identificational characteristic dates back to Chomsky’s (1968) ideas of a rule based grammar: instead of listing structures in a language, Chomsky suggested writing rules which generate these structures. This opened the way for a dynamic understanding of grammar and had a huge impact on the field of language studies. In the early 1970s, the idea of a generative grammar was adopted into foreign/second language learning and the emerging field was referred to as Interlanguage studies. According to Interlanguage theory, the language of language learners is systematic from the very beginning. Learners’ language may be full of mistakes, but many of these mistakes are systematic and indicate a developing grammar. To treat acquisitional processes adequately in language teaching and testing, research needs to understand the circumstances under which the language of the learners emerges.
Interlanguage was a very important innovative notion. Its assumptions about language and about learning still lie at the heart of SLA: Interlanguage is a cognitive issue. Since the turn of the 20th century, the study of language learning has been in the hands of linguists, who have adopted the methodology of empirical psychology. A large number of theories have been formulated to explain how a language enters the head of a speaker. In these theories, language competence, i.e. the ability to generate the forms of language, is the key term. Language use - or performance - becomes negligible, because - according at least to the earlier Chomskyan argument - it is nothing more than polluted competence.

Mainstream SLA is a conglomerate of theories and methods, but the main glue that keeps the diverse approaches in SLA theory together is the concept of language as primarily form, and the understanding of acquisition as individual cognition, i.e. an accomplishment of the (single) human mind. Theories in SLA model the learner as an input-output processing unit in a sender-receiver model of communication.

Certain branches of SLA have embraced social interaction. This is the case for Interlanguage pragmatics (e.g. Kasper 1998; Kasper and Blum-Kulka 1993; Kasper and Dahl, 1991) and to what has been referred to as the interaction hypothesis, which operate with interaction as a relevant or even central input factor (Ellis 1994; Long and Sato 1984; Doughty, Robinson, Gass and many othersI do the references). The interaction hypothesis in SLA studies interaction between language learners and native speakers or other learners, to build hypotheses about how focus on form can further language acquisition (references will be provided).
Firth and Wagner (1997) criticized SLA’s understanding of language, acquisition and the learner. Their argument was mainly methodological and came out of a CA perspective. The current volume follows up on the discussion that occurred after the publication of the 1997 paper by describing in fine-grained analyses what people do in interaction when they use another language. Especially the chapter by Mori relates directly to the 1997 controversy.

CA based studies describe language as humankind’s major embodied resource for creating meaning, understanding and social order. Understanding the reality of language use is the stepping stone to formulating a theory on language acquisition as a tool for achieving intersubjectivity and engaging in social action. This theory will go beyond the topic of acquiring a new set of forms. Due to its interest in individual cognition, SLA has not yet looked into the question of how a second language works in the world as a tool to achieve intersubjectivity (mutual understanding) between speakers who do not have a common first language.

CA based research is not alone in this endeavour. Related positions are taken by scholars in sociolinguistics and pragmatics, especially in interactional sociolinguistics (Gumperz, Roberts, Saranghi, Rampton, references), intercultural theory (van Lier, Kramsch, references), and sociocultural theory, working in the tradition of Vygotsky and Bakhtin (Hall, Lantolf, Young references). Recently, the metaphor of an ecological perspective on language acquisition and socialization has been brought to the debate (Kramsch 2002) to create a common point of reference. Language ecology, a term coined by van Lier (REFERENCE), understands language
acquisition through an ecological metaphor and in and through interaction in a language other than their first. Understanding language acquisition in terms of language socialization in a complex socio-cognitive ecology (Ochs 2002) may help socially anchored approaches to refine their concept of acquisition and make it more explicit.

This, however, is not the task of this volume, the aim of which is a partial, but nevertheless very detailed, description of the ecology surrounding language acquisition processes. It lays some foundations for further work and points to a revision of the distinction between language use and acquisition. It is part of a wider effort to release second language from the straight jacket of structural analysis and demonstrate that second language use is ‘just’ use of an ordinary language, a field which needs further research before a new theory of language acquisition can be formulated.

The central aim of this volume is to investigate whether a micro-analysis of Second Language Conversations can enhance our understanding of what it means to talk in another language, by broadening the focus beyond the sounds, structures and meanings of language to encompass action sequences, timing and interactiveness, and, as Hall (1997: 218) put it,

to investigate the processes of becoming participants in second language conversations: the processes of the discovery (other- and self-guided) of interactive patterns in the practices in which we engage with others; observation and reflection on others’ participatory moves and the responses to these moves; and our own active constructions of responses to these patterns.
In this sense we envisage the possibility that language teaching pedagogy and research into language learning may come across some enlightening findings within this collection.

**Findings**

Across all chapters in this volume a number of findings are consistent and corroborate earlier research on naturally occurring Second Language Conversations (for an early example, see Hatch 1978). The main lesson from all the chapters is that Second Language Conversations are normal conversations. They can be described using the same methodology that has been developed for First Language Conversations. The chapters by Carroll and Olsher show that second language use, in the same way as first language use, is fully embodied language.

However, there are relatively few instances reported in the studies in this book in which the non-nativeness of one participant leaves systematic interactional traces. Wong discusses instances where the next speaker’s turn is delayed as a result of linguistic deficiencies in the turn produced by a second language speaker. In these cases, the delay of the next turn is a result of the deviant form of the preceding turn. Delays in such positions are not taken as foreshadowing dispreferred actions. This may be one characteristic feature of Second Language Conversations, whereby the dynamics of the turn taking machinery for minimizing overlaps and gaps is relaxed in comparison to First Language Conversations.
In another chapter, which highlights specific features of Second Language Conversations, Gardner found that the first language speakers regularly expand a question into a multi unit format, e.g. they ask a second question directly after the first or they increment the question in other ways. This phenomenon is found in First Language Conversations, but is rare, though it seems to occur more regularly in first language institutional settings (see Linell et al. 2003). This suggests that it is not so much the feature itself, but its frequency which is specific for Second Language Conversations.

A second major finding is that errors and mistakes are rarely consequential. That is, speakers can - but do not have to - orient to grammatical form and make it the focus for some of the talk. This can happen at any time, inside and outside of classrooms. In general, this orientation is, perhaps surprisingly, initiated by the second language speakers, and not by their first language speaking counterparts. Questions implicit in this study include an exploration of the extent to which certain practices of conversation are found more widely or more extensively in conversations involving second language speakers.

A third finding is that whilst second language speakers may not be highly proficient in the language, they are not ‘interactional dopes’ (Garfinkel 1967:68). They are able to engage in quite exquisite activities in the interaction. In other words, they are in this respect just like any other speakers in a socially embedded situation. Mazeland and Zamah-Zadeh show in detail how novice SL-speakers use conceptual, interactional and semantic procedures to clarify with their co-participants the meaning of unknown words.
A fourth finding has to do with identity. In their everyday lives, second language speakers are business professionals, doctors and patients, clients, lawyers, students, friends, roommates, lovers, anything a person can be. Being a second language speaker is not a paramount identity in itself. It is one identity a speaker can adopt. But on the other hand, non-nativeness can be made relevant at any time, by a speaker or by recipients, as well as by different means (by repairs and corrections, c.f. Kurhilla, this volume; Brouwer, Rasmussen & Wagner, this volume; by accent Brouwer, this volume; by delays Wong, this volume; or by reformulations Gardner, this volume). The data used in this volume foreground to a high degree the normality of Second Language Conversation, and less the potentially deficient identity of being a ‘non-native’. This focus is mirrored in the terminology. The more neutral terms ‘first’ and ‘second language speaker’ are preferred to ‘native’ and ‘non-native’ (c.f. Firth & Wagner 1997).

A fifth finding of the volume is that second language speakers are highly versatile. They are able to use a very wide range of interactional resources, and they do it from the very beginning of their language careers. As Carrol’s chapter demonstrates, even his novice second language speakers are not acting deficiently, but are in fact interactionally very efficient, and the seemingly problematic and dysfluent shape of utterances can be understood as sensitive to their turn environment. In other words, practices of turn taking, recycled overlaps (Schegloff 1987) as well as practices of repairs to attract other participants’ gaze (Goodwin 1981), which have been described for ordinary first language interaction, are found in the interaction even of novice SL-speakers, and are found to be doing the same kind of interactional work.
Kurhill shows that features such as delays and other speech perturbations, which at first glance might count as indicative of low linguistic proficiency, can turn out to be predicated on the institutional environment, such as delicate topics in the talk.

A sixth finding is that second language speakers can be very persistent. They struggle for meaning and keep going until they are successful. Egbert, Niebecker, and Rezzara describe a repair sequence which lasts for about two minutes (139 lines of transcription) before two of the participants manage to pronounce a name, *Galileo*, in such a manner that their co-participants are able to identify who is being referred to. During these two minutes, the participants appear to abandon the repair several times, but they return to it again and again until the trouble is resolved. Egbert et al. - as well as other studies - show that second language speakers do not easily abandon topics, but struggle for solutions. This is not surprising when one takes into account that these speakers are not engaged in task completion exercises in the classroom or laboratory, but are engaged in everyday meaning creation and activities which mean something to them. Giving up on a topic might impinge negatively on the speakers' identities as competent social beings. Further, the 'expert' or first language speakers in the environments described in this volume come to the aid of the less expert speakers. Skârup describes a technique which speakers use to change the participant structure such that a less proficient speaker becomes a participant in the group and is able to share the processes of meaning construction.

The work reported in this volume can be seen as an early contribution to an area of inquiry which is gaining increasing attention, namely how second
language speakers use their linguistic and other communicative and interactional resources in talk in the real world. The focus is more on how they use their relatively limited linguistic resources in the second language together with all the other available resources they have at their disposal to achieve successful outcomes as equal, rather than deficient participants in their social worlds. As such, the project is not just about language, or about language acquisition, or even about language use, but rather it is about social action and interaction, with language as one part of the whole story, albeit an important part.

1 This book does not include data from fully bilingual speakers, for example first or second generation immigrants. Consequently, code switching is not a major topic in this book (for an interactional approach to code switching see Auer 1998).


3 Transcription reproduced by courtesy of Gail Jefferson.